

CHANGING DISCOURSE ON WOMEN AND ISLAM IN TURKEY  
IN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **CHANGING DISCOURSE ON WOMEN AND ISLAM IN TURKEY IN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES**

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This thesis provides an analysis of the change of ethnographic discourse on women and Islam in Turkey. Based on the theoretical framework of feminist postcolonial theory it analyses the ethnographic studies as texts and focuses on the concepts of subjectivity, subalternities, otherness, and agency in Muslim women's discursive representations and binarism, Eurocentrism, essentialism in the way discourse is produced. It adopts Michel Foucault's theorization of discourse, knowledge and power as a methodology to present the power relations embedded in the knowledge production process. My analysis takes the social, cultural and political developments in global and Turkish contexts and the paradigm shifts in the feminist postcolonial theory and Middle Eastern women's studies as structural powers that act on knowledge production. With this analyses I present the influence of these powers and also the pathways of development of a counter-knowledge against the formerly dominant Orientalist and Eurocentric ways of knowledge production. Lastly, by providing a general picture of the ethnographic discourse on women and Islam in Turkey, I present the gaps and shortcomings of the discourse and new areas and issues that need to be addressed in the future.

**Keywords:** Women, Islam, Turkey, Discourse, Ethnography

## ÖZ

# TÜRKİYE'DE KADIN VE İSLAM SÖYLEMİNİN ETNOGRAFİK ÇALIŞMALARDAKİ DEĞİŞİMİ

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Bu tez Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam üzerine ethnografik söylemin değişimini incelemektedir. Feminist postkolonyal teorinin teorik çerçevesine dayanarak etnografik çalışmaları metinler olarak incelemektedir ve Müslüman kadının söylemsel temsillerinde öznilik, madunluk, ötekilik ve faillik kavramlarını ve bu söylemin üretiminde ikicilik, Avrupamerkezcilik, özculük kavramlarına odaklanmaktadır. Bilgi üretimi sürecinin içinde saklı güç ilişkilerini göstermek üzere Michel Foucault'nun söylem, bilgi ve güç kuramsallaştırmasını yöntem olarak kullanmaktadır. Yaptığım inceleme küresel ve yerel bağlamdaki toplumsal, kültürel ve politik değişimleri ve feminist postkolonyal teori ve Ortadoğu kadın çalışmaları alanlarındaki paradigma değişimlerini bilgi ürünlerimdeki yapısal güçler olarak kabul etmektedir. Bu analizle bu güçlerin etkisini ve önceden baskın olan Oryantalist bilgi üretimi biçimlerine karşı bir karşı-bilginin geliştirilmesinin yollarını sunuyorum. Son olarak, Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam üzerine söylemin genel bir resmini ortaya çıkararak söylemin açıklarını ve eksikleriyle birlikte gelecekteki olası yeni araştırma alanlarını ve sorunlarını sunuyorum.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın, İslam, Türkiye, Söylem, Etnografi

To my grandmother and my dear friend  
Malahat Türkili

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

As I started this long journey of thesis work I realized that taking a step back from the field and looking at the produced knowledge from a distance has not been a common research endeavour, particularly in the scholarship on Turkey. I was on a demanding and challenging path, the difficulty of which I realized better as the research progressed. I had to create my own tools, draw my own roadmap, invent my own compass and find out my own directions in order not to lose my way. Throughout this difficult journey Prof. Dr. Ayşe Saktanber has offered me best of her advice, experience, critique, and encouragement with grace and patience. After almost all our meetings I left her room with new perspectives, ideas, and new challenges to face which had enormous contribution not only to this thesis study but to my academic development and my world view. I owe her my deepest gratitude for her academic and personal support. I am very much thankful and honoured that Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ayata, Prof. Dr. Aksu Bora, Prof. Dr. Elif Ekin Akşit and Assoc. Prof. F. Umut Beşpinar have accepted to be part of the evaluation process of this study. Their comments and critiques have opened up new paths of development of my analysis and helped to give the final shape to this thesis study.

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My husband, my best friend, my life companion Can Onur has been with me since

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Şemistan or Şemis, the cutest cat in the world, my little friend... My source of happiness and positive energy. She was with me all through my tired and sleepless nights and became my sunshine in the depressive mornings. I owe her special thanks and many hours of play.

If I conducted a fieldwork for this thesis I would have a chance to meet and touch the lives of many people whom I have not known before but who would perhaps become lifelong memories. Dealing with texts for so many years perhaps made me a desk job sociologist but I still feel that I had the chance to have an insight about many special women scholars who made enormous contributions to the knowledge on women and Islam and who gave many women a voice that will be heard, hopefully, forever. This is a chance for me to pay respect to their valuable works and dedicate this thesis to them and the field they opened up.

Lastly, I would like to send my greetings to a colleague whom I never met. For me Hilal Özçetin was only the name of the author of an article that I planned to include in this study. Towards the latest weeks of the thesis study I checked on the Internet to see whether she had any further publications and learned that she was a fresh PhD graduate in Canada when she was diagnosed with a terminal cancer in a short time after she defended her thesis. She passed away after a few weeks' time –at my age. Her PhD thesis was titled *Dressing up Ahlak: A Reading of Sexual Morality in Turkey* because she was very much effected by the murder of Özgecan Aslan. I was deeply sad having learned all these and could not sleep that night. So my dear friend, this thesis is also dedicated to you.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Starting from the 1980s there has been a growing interest in the Middle Eastern societies and Islam by the scholars of social sciences which has been manifest in the increasing number of studies focusing on Muslim cultures. Re-emergence of this interest, which was very popular during the heyday of Orientalism in the late 1800s and early 1900s, cannot be thought without the impact of political and social developments in the Middle East as well as the critiques of modernist, developmentalist theories.

Turkey, as a unique example of modernization in the Middle East, has been going through ebbs and flows of laicism and Islamism since the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the approaches of these ideologies to gender have been constituting a dividing line throughout its secularization history. Particularly, during the last three decades the significant and visible rise of the Islamist movement and its social implications attracted the attention of the Turkish and Western social science researchers more than ever before. In this field of research, women, as the symbols of Turkish modernization and secularization, as the symbols of piety, as the symbols of Turkish national identity, as the symbols of human rights and freedoms, as the symbols of the new consumption culture, as the symbols of patriarchal domination have found their places in the academic literature.

This study that analyses the changing discourse on women and Islam in Turkey in ethnographic studies, aims to reveal the dynamics of power that influence the discourse and trigger/initiate shifts, to show the pathways of development of the formation of a counter-discourse that will challenge the former Orientalist ways of producing knowledge on women and Islam in Turkey, and to address the gaps, neglected issues and problematiques in this discourse. The study argues that shifts in three spheres since the late 1980s have influenced the understanding and problematization of the relationship between women and Islam in Turkey. The first

sphere comprises different states of neo-liberal globalization, the development of the global mass culture as well as the globalization of Islamism; the second one comprises the political context in Turkey that witnessed the rise of Islamist movement and its increasing political power; and the third one comprises the paradigm shifts in the scholarly discourse on the Middle Eastern women that can be named as the emergence of feminist postcolonial theory and its critiques of Orientalism, the responses to the crisis of representation in the social sciences, the development of Middle Eastern women's studies by the contributions of Middle Eastern scholars, and the methodological changes towards reflexivity and multivocality in fieldworks. All these shifts have resulted in the emergence of a counter (ethnographic) discourse against Orientalism while causing the production of knowledge to cluster around certain research questions and issues that address the relationship between women and Islam mostly in relation to the Islamist movement. I argue that this clustering, which indicate the points where social conflicts and struggles of power take place particularly in relation to the divide between secularism and Islamism, also reflect the political nature of knowledge production by revealing the researchers' standpoints in what they exclude from their research and what "truths" they circulate in the academic discourse.

With this study I present the wide range of discursive representations of Muslim women in Turkey which indicates paradigm shifts in the social sciences as well as political, social, cultural, and economic transformations in Turkish society. Secondly, I integrate the critiques of feminist postcolonial theory to highlight how critical is the issue of discursive representation of Muslim women for all the Middle East and the Third World<sup>1</sup> for challenging the Western, Orientalist discourse. Lastly, I aim to fill the gap of a comprehensive analysis of the discourse constituted by studies on women and Islam in Turkey, a country which grapples with all the issues that are hotly discussed in postcolonial theory but has never been colonized, a country which is founded as a secular Republic that aims to approach the Western

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<sup>1</sup> Chandra Mohanty's (1991) defines Third World as "colonized, neocolonized or decolonized countries (of Asia, Africa and Latin America) whose economic and political structures have been deformed within the colonial process, and to black, Asian, Latino, and indigenous peoples in North America, Europe and Australia" (Mohanty, 1991, p.ix). Throughout my study I take her definition as my reference to Third World.

civilization by leaving its Ottoman imperial heritage behind but which is also predominantly Muslim.

The reason why I choose ethnographic studies to observe and analyse these aspects lies in the potential of this method in presenting a vivid and detailed depiction of the social phenomena, and the depth of the data it offers. Therefore these studies provide incomparable insight about women and Islam in Turkey in which Muslim women's representations become even more critical. Most importantly because of the power relations embedded in this method between the researcher and the research subjects, it is more possible to observe in the ethnographic studies the researcher's position and standpoint in knowledge production.

The ethnographic studies on the Middle East and Islam have a rooted Orientalist history that dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to the colonial era, to the beginning of Western political and economic domination of the region. Indigenous/native challenges to the institutionalized, well-established academic Orientalism of the West emerged with the independence movements and decolonization, and generated the field of post-colonial theory in the second half of the twentieth century. However Eurocentrism, binarism and essentialism that mainly characterise most of the Orientalist studies continue to exist in both manifest and oblique ways in a number of contemporary studies on Middle East and Islam and serve preservation of the discursively constructed hierarchy between the West and the East. As for academic interest in women and Islam in the Middle East, it is a relatively recent (or late) and yet very critical phenomenon that owes its emergence mostly to the development of feminist movements and the rise of political Islam in the 1980s. Studies on women and Islam in Turkey constitutes a considerable part of the literature and this study presents the change in the discourse of ethnographic studies conducted in Turkey on this subject through a perspective based on the primary premises and notions of feminist postcolonial critique. Believing that addressing the issues of otherness, alterity, subaltern-ness, subjectivity and agency of the Muslim women portrayed in the studies, and issues of binarism, surveillance, essentialism and Eurocentrism in the way the discourse is generated are fundamental to highlight the traces of the hierarchy at stake, I aim to show that the representation of

Muslim women in this discourse is woven with epistemological power relations rooted in Orientalist and Western ethnocentric perception of Islam and the Middle East. On the other hand, I exhibit the paths of the development of counter-discourses, native responses, and novel perspectives and question their implications and impact with regard to challenging the discursive hegemony and generating a liberating/emancipatory approach to Muslim women in the Middle East.

Since the late twentieth century, Islam has always attracted academic attention unlike any other religion. It is mostly discussed, through a comparison with the West, in terms of its compatibility with the modern or postmodern world together with its radical and fundamentalist interpretations that result in violence that is visible in global terror acts, oppression of women, undermining human rights and democracy. The surfacing and rise of neo-Orientalism is directly linked to this representation and Islamophobia, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, stigmatization and racism are the phenomena that are mostly embodied within neo-Orientalism. It is evident that such line of thought detaches Islam as a belief that primarily defines its believers, isolates Muslim societies from globalization, and ignores their internal dynamics and the vast array of differences among them. However, this is not the only facet of the discussions on Islam. The widespread effects of neoliberalism, multiculturalism and global mass culture force us to think Islam and Muslim societies in relation to the global context. The feminist interventions to these debates is the chief concern of this study because focusing on the relation between gender and Islam actually exhibits that countless aspects of Muslim women's lives are treated as symbols and indicators both by the Muslim societies to declare their identities and by the scholars of gender and women's studies to reflect on the faith-based patriarchy.

In the scholarship on gender in the Middle East, the two main objectives identified by Mounira M. Charrad (2011) are essential: firstly to shatter the widespread "stereotype of the silent, passive, subordinate, victimized and powerless Muslim woman" and second to challenge the thought that Islam is the main determining factor that explains the subordination of women in all Muslim societies in the same way (Charrad, 2011, p. 417) Charrad states that the 9/11 attacks and the

international political context afterwards made these objects even more crucial as the gender has marked the dividing lines in this context between East and West. Agreeing with Charrad, this thesis presents various representations of Muslim women in Turkey in the ethnographic studies and the stereotypes that these representations produce. I also aim to explore the dividing lines, the breaking points between these representations. Tracking the changes occurred in the ethnographic discourse on the relationship between gender and religion is essential, as such an attempt is going to reveal the role of influences like the prevailing paradigms in the Middle East studies, the Turkish socio-political context and the academic debates on women and Islam in Turkey.

### **1.1. The Background and the Setting**

In addition to the social scientific and theoretical frameworks and the social context that shape the way knowledge on women and Islam is produced and Muslim women are represented, the historical process that profoundly influenced the formation of contemporary identities of women in Turkey should be considered in order to understand the ways in which they have been represented in the academic discourse. The peculiarity of the Turkish case among the other Muslim countries in the Middle East is based on the fact that following the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the First World War and the War of Independence Turkey was established in 1923 as a republic under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. As Niyazi Berkes states, “it was not a period during which after each revolution a republic was established.” Even in the Western world there were only a few republican regimes (Berkes, 2014, p. 509).

Soon after it was founded, a series of reforms oriented towards secularization and Westernization were initiated. The Caliphate which had been represented by Ottoman Empire was abolished in 1924, the ministry of religious foundations was abolished, religious orders were abolished, General Directorate of Religious Affairs and the General Directorate of Pious Foundations were established, *medreses* were closed and education was unified under Ministry of Education. In 1926, a new civil code was adopted from Swiss code “to lay the legal foundations of the revolution”

(Atatürk, 1926, quoted in Berkes, 2014, p. 530) that reorganized the family life and women's rights in marriage by outlawing polygamy, giving equal rights including child custody to both men and women in divorce. Regarding these legal reforms Bernard Lewis (1968) notes that there had been reforms in the later periods of Ottoman Empire, but it was the first time that "the intimacies of family and religious life" were dared to be reformed (Lewis, 1968, p. 272). The series of reforms oriented towards secularization, modernization and Westernization of the society followed one another during the early years of the republic. The law that banned *fez*, a men's headdress associated with Islamic and Ottoman attire, and replaced it with the Western hat was adopted in 1925, Koran was translated to Turkish and call to prayer which used to be in Arabic was started to be delivered in Turkish, Arabic script was replaced with Latin script (Berkes, 2014). After the adoption of the civil code the most revolutionary legal reform for women was granting them the vote in 1930 at local elections and in general elections 1934. However, when the suffragette movement in the West is considered, the fact that women's achievement of these rights was not a result of their social movement but the result of the governing elites commitment to the modernization and Westernization has always been an issue of discussion among the feminist scholars (Kandiyoti, 1987; Abadan-Unat, 1981; Tekeli, 1981).

As Binnaz Toprak (1981) argues, the secularization program and the attack on Islam arose from the idea that religion played a central role in the Ottoman Empire and conservatism was associated by the reformers with anti-Westernization. "Indeed the history of the reform movement is the history of a long struggle between the Islamists and Westernizers. (...) Kemalists picked this up and reinterpreted it radically as putting religion under government control" (Toprak, 1981, p. 38). She adds that Westernization efforts which were alien to Islam and the traditions of the country encountered manifest and latent oppositions which hindered the new regimes attempts for structural change. The Islamic theology and traditions were detrimental to the project of Kemalists for three reasons. Firstly, Islam attributed a theological significance to the legal, cultural, and political basis of the society and that had no place in secularism. Secondly, the legitimization of state authority is based on obedience to God in Islam in contrast to the notion of

popular sovereignty in the republican regime. Lastly, the individual is defined within the community of believers in Islamic theology whereas in the republican regime the concept of national identity instead of religious sense of belonging to the Islamic community was developed (Toprak, 1981, pp. 38-39). Secularization meant much more than a set of legal reforms, it meant a redefinition of identity and sense of belonging for the citizens of the Turkish Republic. As Lewis states “Although the regime never adopted an avowedly anti-Islamic policy, its desire to end the power of organized Islam and break its hold on the minds and hearts of the Turkish people was clear” (1968, p. 416).

Despite all the legal reforms, the project of secularization “was never quite as complete as sometimes believed” (Lewis 1968, p. 416). Lewis shows the concealed existence of popular forms of religion in Anatolia as an indication, which became manifest in the Menemen incident in 1930.<sup>2</sup> After the death of Atatürk in 1938, particularly during the mid-1940s when the state authoritarianism was relaxed and there was a greater space for freedom of expression, it was also evident in the discussions in the parliament about whether to tolerate religious education or not (pp. 417-418). The single party regime came to an end and the Democrat Party (DP) was founded in 1946. Democrat Party which “became a more conservative and sometimes even anti-secularist opinion” (Tunaya, 1952, cited in Lewis, 1968, p. 308) and came to power in 1950, call to prayer was allowed to be delivered in Arabic again, Prayer leader and Preacher Schools were opened, government supported pilgrimage, and shrines were reopened (Toprak, 1981, pp. 78-81). After a break to the democracy with a military coup in 1960 that resulted in execution of DP leader Adnan Menderes and two ministers from the government, a new constitution was introduced in 1961. The democratization process that brought along religious freedoms continued by the establishment of National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP) in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan, however the party was closed by the constitutional court on the grounds that it violated principles of secularism. National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP) was founded as

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<sup>2</sup> In Menemen, a district in the Aegean cost city İzmir, a young officer named Kubilay protested a local dervish leader who was giving a speech against the Republic. Kubilay was held down by the supporters of the leader and beheaded. The guilty and the supporters of the incident were severely punished.

the successor of MNP and continued to be active in Turkish politics until it was closed after the 1980 military coup.

Lewis suggests that the revival of Islamism began with the establishment of DP in 1946. As Richard Tapper states (1991), the revival was associated by the scholars during the 1980s mostly with party politics, the role of Islam in the periphery in the continuation of the interests of the dominant groups, and the expression of the discontents of the underprivileged classes in the developed regions. He disagrees with these views and argues that they failed to understand how Islamic revival was spreading from the periphery to the centre. Since the 1950s there was a massive increase in Islamic publishing including prayer manuals and journals, in addition to the “visible symptoms of Islamic activity and identity, such as women’s headscarves and men’s facial hair, mosque-building and the formation of Islamic communities, and the growth of religious education (including unofficial Koran courses) (Gürsoy-Tezcan 1991, Akşit, 1991, cited in Tapper, 1991, p. 10). Şerif Mardin’s comments on the diversity of the reactions about the rise of Islam also show that the issue was very much beyond the secularism/Islamism, centre/periphery dichotomies.

Thus, if we consider the resurgences of Islam in that country since the 1940s, Turkish/laic intellectuals see it as the victory of obscurantism over science, higher bureaucrats as the disintegration of the fabric of the state and the rise of anarchy, ‘fundamentalist’ *Sunnis* as a means of establishing Islamic social control over the community, clerical personnel in the higher reaches of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs as a golden opportunity to establish solid foundation for *Sunni* Islam on a national scale, local sect leaders or charismatic sheikhs with their—often inherited—clientele as a welcome opportunity to widen their net of influence, and *Shii-Alevi*s as a threat to their religious identity (Mardin, 1977, p. 280).

With the 1980 military coup that aimed to end the decades of left-right political polarization and instability in the country, religion was started to be seen from a different perspective. While preserving the basic principle of secularism, Islamic practices, traditions, expressions started to be more tolerated and even supported by the government.

The publication years of the ethnographic studies that constitute the data of this thesis start in the decade following the 1980 military coup which had a devastating impact on the political movements in Turkey. It was also a decade of liberalization in economy and politics and of emergence of religious and ethnic identities. *Anavatan Partisi* (Motherland Party, ANAP), the right wing political party with a neoliberal economic policy, was the only party in the government from 1983 to 1991, Turgut Özal being the party leader and the prime minister until he was elected to be the president in 1989. In a political context in which all the political actors of the country were banned with the coup, ANAP attracted the support of both conservatives and business circles (Turan; 1991; Heper, 2013) For example, Mustafa Şen (2010) explains this support with two factors. One is Özal's belief in private free enterprises and the principles of maximization of profit, competition, risk taking and free market economy and uselessness of state interventions to economy. His ties with Turkish business circles, IMF, World Bank and the US perpetuated the support. Secondly, Turgut Özal also had close ties with Turkish Islamism, being a follower of a religious community, a Naqshibandi brotherhood (Şen, 2010, p. 69). Both of these groups were represented in the party and this divergence gradually turned into formation of two alignments. The fundamentalists and extreme nationalists announced that they formed *Kutsal İttifak* (Holy Alliance) which was a source of concern. Özal, maintaining his influence on the party, gave pace to liberalisation reforms; being aware that with disintegration of Soviets left was no longer a threat. On the other hand, Islamist movements were gaining strength in the Middle East and the Turkic republics in Central Asia and Islamist militancy was regarded not only by Özal and the government but also by the military as a potentially more crucial threat.

Indeed, Islamic fundamentalism was on the rise, being manifest in public life with increasing numbers of mosques, *imam-hatip* (preacher) schools, Islamic publications and also incidences of violent intolerance. On the one hand, as Bahattin Akşit (1991) notes, the graduates of *imam-hatip* high schools entered universities and started to form the Islamic elite, on the other hand conservatism spread to various sections of the society (Akşit, 1991). The economy policies of the 1980s widened significantly the income gap between rich and poor in Turkey, created a

new group of rich people who became visible with their conspicuous consumption and made the poor even poorer Islamic fundamentalism became a form of expression of the inequality and injustice also among the lower classes (Keyder, 2000).

During the 1980s and the 1990s the crises and turmoil in the Muslim territories in the world carried Islam to the international agenda. The Iranian revolution of 1979 had been a milestone in the Western assumptions about the Middle East and Muslim societies and the representations of weak society and strong authoritarian state shattered. Iran-Iraq war in 1980-88, Iraqi army's occupation of Kuwait in 1990 and the intervention of the US in the name of UN and ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict preserved the Western attention on the region. Sadowski (1993) mentions three reflections of this context on the Middle East studies during the 1980s:

First, as Islamic or Islamist movements grew more potent and challenged the ruling authorities, a host of studies of "radical Islam" appeared to reveal how Islamic doctrine disposed believers to form militant groups and contest the authority of the state. Second, as oil prices declined and government revenues dried up, scholars came to appreciate that states in the region were less powerful than they had once appeared. Finally, as the intellectual foundations for the idea of "weak" Middle Eastern societies collapsed, there was a slow growth of interest in studies of mafias, mobs, interest groups, solidarities, and classes that might act as the equivalents of "civil society" in the region (Sadowski, 1993, p. 15).

Dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 was another milestone in world history, economy and politics since it marked the end of Cold War that had been going on since the end of World War II between the US and the Soviet Union. It was encountered by the west not only as a symbol of freedom and democracy against authoritarianism, but also as the defeat of communism by capitalism. Together with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and reunification of Germany in 1990, we can state that a new era of globalization became prevalent. However, the ethnic war between 1992 and 1995 in Bosnia and the genocide of Muslims by the Serbs were real disappointments about the UN, the US and the western public opinion. Unwillingness and passivity of the international actors to intervene the war and cease the genocide resulted in about 100,000 casualties mainly Bosnian Muslims.

To mention but a few most distinguishing features of this new era, firstly it is marked by the rise and expansion of neoliberalism to post-Soviet and Muslim countries. International marketing and mobility of capital, goods and services was seeking new markets to penetrate and developing countries became the new territories that neoliberal economy targeted. For Moudouros (2014), this meant for the Muslim countries to question Islam's compatibility with neoliberalism and also the well-established identification of modernity with the West. Meanwhile the rapid industrial and technological developments in the Asian countries, so called the "tigers of Asia" made them the new actors of global economy. It was a time to challenge the hegemony of the Western powers as the pioneers of modern civilization and globalization and to focus more on discussions of "alternate modernities". Neoliberal globalization functioned to displace the "center of modernity" and the role of the Muslim countries in this context was endeavouring to exclude Western features as they were harmonizing their economies, striving to "bestow the Islamic faith with those characteristics that will transform it into an indispensable element of capitalist development" (Moudouros, 2014, pp. 845-846).

Celebration of ethnic and cultural differences and the emphasis on diversity as cultural asset is another central feature of this era. In Zygmunt Bauman's (1999) terms, globalization characterized by flows of business, finance, trade and information at world scale also includes a "localization" process. Freedom of mobility became a marker of stratification between the ones stuck in their localities and the mobile ones. He claims that the fundamentalist tendencies are the products of the gap between increasingly globalizing elites and the localized others. While a hybridization of culture started to take place in the higher classes, the locals were excluded from the value and meaning generation processes. Another marker of global stratification is consumption which has become an end in itself, a continuous aspiration for the consumers to be fulfilled by instant satisfactions through consuming various objects of desire. Bauman also notes that consumption and mobility are highly dependent on each other in this world order so that the consumers are always in motion seeking new tastes. The advances in information and communication technologies increased the pace of globalization.

The development of a global mass culture which was and continues to be the consequence of accelerated globalization had started to penetrate the lifestyles in the Third World, post-Soviet states and developing countries. This mass culture manifest in consumerism offered numerous choices of lifestyles contradict the uniformity that Islamism demanded as it increasingly permeated to the world of Islam and turned into a cultural invasion (Turner, 1994). One of the several implications of Islam's contact with globalization was its use of mass media and broadcasting to reintroduce and spread its message and reinforce the notion of Islam as a world religion and "international or transnational consciousness among Muslims" (Esposito, 1998, p. 311). Another implication was confronting consumerism and countless lifestyles it offers in addition to praising of hedonism, leisure and self-indulgence. Rising Islamisation was one reaction as a counter movement and the other one was using consumerism as a means of exhibiting an individual distinction based on an Islamic identity (Turner, 1994). Starting from 2000s it can be observed that various lifestyle trends articulating the global mass culture with Islamic ways of life began to gain prevalence. Thus, instead of Islamism vs. globalization dichotomy, it became more possible to talk about Islamism's close association with global trends. Widespread use of the Internet, social media and mobile technologies, development of an Islamic fashion industry which fuse modest dress codes that Islam requires with western fashion, increased mobility and Islamic tourism are some of the indicators of Muslim societies' intensified contacts with other cultures and societies and integration to globalization.

In this context where the rising Islamist movements and a globalizing awareness of cultural diversity come to the fore, how to perceive fundamentalist and militant groups of Islamists has become a source of concern both in Turkey and in the west. While Islamic communities and organizations were growing in number and extent, as Saktanber puts it, it was "quite a painstaking process to distinguish 'innocent' Islamic cultural demands from political i.e. 'hazardous' ones" (2002, p. xvii). In Turkey, where traditional/modern and Islamist/secular dichotomies have always dominated the political history, it was a time to confront the emergence of Islamic activism in public sphere and its cultural expressions in daily life. Modernization

and westernization journey led by reforms of Atatürk and intending to arrive at European Union (EU) membership were feared to be in danger. Turkey's candidacy negotiations with the EU required further reforms of democratization and human rights but politicians who have in the government and the public opinion widely believed that more democracy and freedoms would enable ethnic (namely Kurdish) and Islamist identities to grow stronger. In this conundrum, the country was governed by coalition governments throughout the 1990s and witnessed the rise of Islamist politics.

In 1994 for the first time that an Islamist political party, *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party, RP) achieved a significant success by winning the local elections in 28 cities in Turkey, including the two biggest cities Istanbul and Ankara and in the following years the Islamist political movement continued its success in the elections. In 1995 general elections, the Welfare Party having received 21% of the votes became the leading party and in 1996 in the coalition government established with *Doğru Yol Partisi* (True Path Party, DYP) for the first time an Islamist party leader, Necmettin Erbakan became the prime minister. In the 1999 elections, even though the *Fazilet Partisi* (Virtue Party, FP) which is the successor of RP decreased its votes to 15.4%, it was still the focus of attention. Merve Kavakçı and Nesrin Ünal, the first elected veiled members of the parliament were from this party. Merve Kavakçı, who refused to take off her headscarf during the oath-taking ceremony was protested and removed from the parliament (Göle, 2012, p. 95). This event fuelled one of the hottest debates in Turkey that mainly started in mid 1980s, the issue of veiling in public spaces, with the veiled students at universities. The prohibition of the Higher Education Council against *başörtüsü* (headscarf) had come to effect in 1982 and was subject to many amendments throughout the following years. Veiling was associated with “reactionary tendencies” (*irtica*) in the early 1980s, the ban was lifted in 1987, and in 1989 the decision to implement the ban was left to the universities. In many universities the students were allowed to wear headscarves but in a few secularist universities the ban continued to be implemented (Özdalga, 1998, p.42-49). The ban was strictly implemented after February 28, 1997, which was one of the turning points of Turkish political history. After the National Security Council's decree on this date, the coalition government led by the RP fell

and the party was closed down in 1998 by the decision of the Constitutional Court. The decree has been the embodiment of the deep rooted secularist concerns about the Islamist political movement. 25 February 1998 is another important date, on which Istanbul has witnessed a demonstration by thousands of students having various political tendencies to protest the ban on headscarves and beards in universities and *imam-hatip* schools that give a dominantly religious education.

The 1990s were the years that feminist politics started to develop, women's organizations flourished, gender and women studies departments opened in universities and as Serpil Sancar (2012) explains, the platform created by them succeeded to "make up a balance sheet of women's rights" (2012, p. 14). Consequently it was seen that Turkey was among most problematic countries of the world on this issue. Moreover as a reflection of the third way feminism that had been shaping feminist discussions in many parts of the world, feminism started to be fragmented. Aksu Bora (2011a) states that the strong claim that the woman question was fundamentally a modernization question continued to exist but it was in the 1990s that feminism was able to conflict with this claim. Kurdish and Islamist feminist groups began to make their voices heard as reactionary movements challenging the prevalent Turkish feminism which had a secularist, nationalist, Kemalist and modernist stand. Islamist feminists were criticising not only the western version of modernity and enlightenment imposed on women but also the unjust attitudes and practices of Islamist men. However the political agenda was dominated by the headscarf issue for many years. Kurdish feminists were questioning "the nationalist-patriarchal structure of the Kurdish movement" and at the same time "the Turkishness of feminism, the Turkish nationalism which was infused to it from Kemalism" (2011a, p. 25). Even though it is both impossible -and beyond the aim of this thesis- to provide a full account of feminism in Turkey in the 1990s<sup>3</sup>, it can be stated in Sancar's words that there has been a shift from "women's revolution" to "women's victimization" and "women's issues" (p. 17). Together with writing of histories of women, these developments enabled the women's issues to attract more attention in the public opinion.

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<sup>3</sup> For discussions and accounts of feminism in Turkey in the 1990s see Aksu, B. & Günal, A. (2002) *Türkiye'de 90'larda Feminizm*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları.

The period after the February 1997 resolution resulted in the dissolution of RP and barring of the Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and Istanbul's mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from active politics until 2003, a two years of decline in the political success of Islamist politics and also led to a split in the Islamist movement between the fundamentalist and more neo-liberal Islamists (Çınar, 2008). The latter group formed *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party, AKP) the party which came to power in 2002 election with the 34% of the votes and increased this percentage to 46.5 in the next elections. AKP was elected for the third time as the leading party with the 46.66% of the votes in 2011. Since 2003 AKP had been led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who became the most disputed, criticised, autocratic, and yet the most popular leader of contemporary Turkish politics.

As Ziya Öniş (2015) explains, the period of 2002 and 2007, the first phase of the AKP rule is described as the “party’s golden age” during which there was considerable economic growth, improved relations with the neighbours, and democratization reforms that comprised the areas of minority rights and civil-military relations (Öniş, 2015, p. 23). The prospect of EU membership was the main motivation behind the reforms and thus this early period followed “conservative globalism via the European route” (Müftüler-Baç, 2005, quoted in Öniş, 2015, p. 23). Öniş describes the second phase, from 2007 to 2011, as a relative “relative stagnation” of economic growth and democratization. He associates the decreasing pace of democratization with the stalemate in the EU accession process and reducing hopes of membership. It is also the period in which Turkish foreign policy “became increasingly more assertive, independent with a strong focus on the Middle East”. The third period that starts in 2011 and continues today is characterized with a retreat from democratization “with multiple manifestations of authoritarianism”. Accompanied with slower economic growth and several problems in the international policies that caused problems with the neighbours, this phase “has proven to be a decline” (pp. 23-24).

Since its first elections in 2002 AKP has been carrying out a neoliberal economy program that had been pursuing by the previous governments since 1980. During

the 1990s and 2000s, as Moudouros (2014) suggests, the experience of capitalism in Anatolia strengthened and expanded with an ideological ground merging faith and tradition which gave pace to economic growth and also “accumulation of capital by Islamic business circles” (2014, p. 847). MÜSİAD (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association), which has around 3,000 members representing 10,000 private enterprises is a non-governmental organization which was founded to represent the Islamist business circles. Şen (2010) notes that it had close ties with the RP and now continues to have close ties with the AKP and he demonstrates that a closer look at this association, which has a wide geographical diffusiveness, reveals how Islamist groups are articulated to neoliberalism. MÜSİAD companies being relatively young enterprises is an indication of neoliberal policies preparing a conducive ground for emergence of new businesses. These firms mostly operate in labour-intensive sectors which came to the fore in the post-1980s with the policies privileging export and flexible production. Emergence of MÜSİAD corresponds to a period in which the state’s intervention to economy started to be restricted due to neoliberal policies that encouraged the growth of private sector and export-oriented production in Turkey. At the global scale, small and medium sized enterprises were growing in number and large scale companies were downsizing and decentralizing. While private entrepreneurship was cherished with all its spirit and culture, Islamic entrepreneurs isolated themselves from this culture through their loyalties to political Islam, particularly Sunni Islam, which functioned as a glue to bind all the members of MÜSİAD. The companies of the members were able to find sound financial support by the establishment of Islamist banks and the ties between the entrepreneurs, banks and political parties, namely ANAP, RP, FP and AKP, through establishing joint ventures and attracting savings of Turkish migrants in Europe, and as an outcome of their ties with AKP they were able to receive state credits and to reach public contracts. In line with neoliberals, their members defend privatization and market economy, though their reason is to alter the Kemalist state tradition, its protectionist policies that inhibit competition and efficiency, and the dominance of the secular elites in the state. Lastly, the rise of religious communities, which were banned with the Republican reforms became manifest in the form of non-governmental organizations in the neoliberal period. Through private education and

health establishments, they not only create another financial source but also find support from government's endeavours to privatize public services (Şen, 2010). All in all, contemporary phase of the articulation of neoliberalism and Turkish Islamism have been the driving force of the AKP governments and Islamic business circles. The neo-liberal economic policies of the government and the well-organized political activities of the party gained support from larger segments of the Turkish business world and led to emergence of a new conservative upper-class with new tastes, consumption patterns and life-styles. While underlining the importance of religious freedoms of expression and life styles for the Islamists, the consumer culture of the global capitalism continued to be widespread.

The veiled wives of both Prime Minister Erdoğan and the president Abdullah Gül were the object of a great reaction of the secularists but they became role models for many Muslim women in Turkey (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2005). Their clothing styles, attitudes, opinions and presence in public spaces are closely examined and discussed by both secular and Islamist media. The emergence and growth of Islamic fashion and clothing companies cannot be explained without this new social class and the new urban veiled women who are more visible and active in the public spaces (Gökarıksel & Secor, 2010, 2011).

As the ideological gap between secularists and Islamists in Turkey expanded each year, the political dividing lines got even sharper. While in the 1990s the oppositional relationship between the secularists and Islamists could be defined on the basis of othering of the latter by the former, during the second and the third periods of AKP rule the balances of power changed in the opposite direction. The Islamist movement which was considered as a threat to the secular state order during the 1990s was now in power, occupying central positions in the state institutions and in the parliament, pursuing a religiously conservative political agenda that has been leading to a further polarization with its others –secularists, leftists, Kemalists, ethnic and religious minorities. The gendered political discourse of AKP has caused further social polarization which has been evident in the attitudes of Islamist and secular women towards each other.

Women's support to the political success of the Islamist movement has been noteworthy since the RP period. Taking part in the political campaigns, public relations and charity activities of RP and then AKP have been major spheres in which Islamist women have been active. Besides, Islamist non-governmental organizations and Islamist circles of private sector have been the other public spheres in which Islamist women participate. Headscarf ban in the public sector was a major reason of this tendency until it was lifted in 3 October 2013. However deep engagement of liberalism with socio-cultural conservatism in AKP years was a handicap that prevented Islamist women from occupying leading or publicly more visible positions in politics and private sector. Headscarf which is discussed as an issue of individual rights and liberties turned into a source of injustice for veiled women even within Islamist politics and enterprises as patriarchal descriptions of gender roles continued to circumscribe their social lives. This is reflected to the selection of few but Western looking women as members of the parliament in AKP until recent years and to the Islamist enterprises not offering managerial positions to their veiled women workers in order to have a more democratic and Western outlook and not to receive reaction from the secular and liberal sections of the society. Also Simten Coşar and Metin Yeğenoğlu (2011) describe AKP's version of patriarchy in this respect.

It represents a tactful integration of seemingly contradictory structural assets, which can be observed in the party's liberal approach to the civil societal actors while preserving its anti-feminist stance. This anti-feminism is confirmed in the party's tribute to conservative values, insisting that women consider the domestic sphere their principal locus. AKP's mode of patriarchy shares with republican patriarchy the recognition of the importance of women's public visibility as a testament to the 'modern' outlook. However, while in the republican mode, the concern is with the modern outlook of the nation, for AKP the concern is with that of the party. AKP's mode of patriarchy shares with liberal patriarchy the call for women's participation in the now flexible labour market. Yet it adds a warning about the hardships in intertwining their working life and familial responsibilities. It does so by implying that this involvement may risk the children's well-being, integrity of the family and, eventually, social integrity—thus setting the boundaries of women's primary sphere. (2011, pp. 567-568)

The widest revolts against the government since 1980s have started in 31 May 2013. The peaceful protests that started at the heart of Istanbul against the

redevelopment plans for Taksim square and Gezi Park was harshly intervened by the police. Soon the peaceful local protest turned into massive demonstrations of tens of thousands of people against authoritarianism of Tayyip Erdoğan and AKP across Turkey. Women and men, the old and the children from all political views and beliefs, including some supporters of AKP, attended the protests on the streets. The Islamist yet democratic and modern image that the AKP have been struggling to build up has shattered into pieces as Erdoğan gave even harsher responses to the claims for democracy by the protestors, and as the police continued its violent attacks on the demonstrations. The “real” driving forces behind the rapid, instant and growing reaction was discussed in the media and hundreds of publications in the academic discourse. Claiming for rights on the public spaces where “people manifest their presence and interact with each other” (Göle, 2013, p. 7), a cultural motivation of secular people to express their worries about pressures of the government which interfere with their lifestyles (Atay, 2013), protesting “the enclosure of a public space by capital and the state, and a nationwide assault on the environment” (Özkaynak, Aydın, Ertör-Akyazı, Ertör, 2015, p. 99), a chance for “underrepresented groups including liberals, LGBT community and environmentalists” to make their voices heard (Eskinat, 2013, p. 45) can be considered as some of the most noteworthy and agreed upon reasons of the revolts.

During the 2000s the global agenda was dominated by the US policy of “War on Terror” after the Islamist terror attacks to New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. To fight back al-Qaeda which carried out the suicidal attacks, the Taliban their leader Osama Bin Laden, the US and Britain invaded Afghanistan in the same year. They overthrew the Taliban rule in the country but during the attacks to Taliban camps many civilians as well lost their lives. Over 600 suspected terrorists were kept in Guantanamo Bay detention camp which received fierce criticisms of international public opinion because of its violations of human rights. Following the invasion of Afghanistan, the US War on Iraq began in 2003 and lasted until the last troops returned in 2011. The War on Terror policy, which included fights also in Yemen and Pakistan, fuelled an Islamophobia and racism in the western world. Neither the Islamist terror attacks in various countries nor the Islamophobia faded away during the 2000s and in the first half of 2010s. As mentioned above, it was in

this context that neo-Orientalism surfaced again in political discourse. Sherene H. Razack claims in *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (2008) that the war had three main figures: “the dangerous Muslim man, the imperilled Muslim woman and the civilized European” (p. 5).

These figures animate a story about a family of white nations, a civilization, obliged to use force and terror to defend itself against a menacing cultural Other. The story is not just a story, of course, but is the narrative scaffold for the making of an empire dominated by the United States and the white nations who are its allies. Supplying the governing logic of several laws and legal processes, both in North America and in Europe, the story undertakes the form of stigmatization, surveillance, incarceration, abandonment, torture and bombs (p. 5).

In Giorgio Agamben’s (2005) terms it was a “state of exception”, suspension of the law and human rights by force, for the invaded lands, the Guantanamo Bay detention camp and many Muslim immigrants in the west. Furthermore, as Razack suggests referring to Spivak, the colonial mission of saving brown women from brown men was revitalized in the western public opinion and feminist agenda. She notes that the calls to save the Muslim women “imperilled in patriarchy” with the rise of conservative Islam were hard to resist.

In December 2010 a series of major uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa which was later called “the Arab spring” had an influence on challenging this perspective. Protests that began in Tunisia spread to Algeria, Jordan, Oman, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Iraq, Bahrain, Libya, Kuwait, Morocco, and Syria. In some countries it resulted in government overthrows, in some countries changes in the government and laws and in some to civil war. Whatever the outcome is, it should be regarded as a significant interruption to the neo-Orientalist discourse and its representations of submissive peoples of Islamic authoritarianism. It was a widespread demand for more democracy and human rights, and a struggle against authoritarian regimes by various sections of the societies through occupying public spaces, central squares of big cities, civil disobedience and “rehearsing a new citizenship” (Göle, 2013). The intense use of social media announced the events instantly to the whole world and created a global awareness. On the other hand the upheavals in Egypt gave way to rise of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood

winning the first elections after the 2011 revolution and Mohammed Morsi becoming the first democratically elected president of Egypt. However Morsi's temporary constitutional declaration which was a step taken further away from democracy created unease in the society which ended up in widespread protests across the country in June 2013 which demanded resignation of Morsi. The supporters of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood gathered in Rabia al-Adawiya Square in Cairo occupying the square for several weeks. The military intervention to the protests in Rabia Square turned into a great massacre which killed more than 2000 people.

The political developments in Egypt created feelings of solidarity with the protesters in the Rabia Square in Turkish Islamists. The Turkish president Abdullah Gül, the AKP leader and Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, many other prominent politicians of the party and Islamist circles in Turkey proclaimed their support to Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. The support was a manifestation of both a call out against the military intervention to democracy and the will to create an Islamic social order and globalization of Islam –thanks to the power of mass media, the Internet, and the communication technologies- over ties of global Islamic community.

Another fundamentalist movement, the Islamic State (or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) got militarily organized within the civil war in Syria against the president Bashar Al-Assad. The extremely brutal and ruthless acts of the Islamic State, which find media coverage almost every day, are also shared by the group through their social media accounts which are also effectively used for attracting more supporters all around the world. The tolerant attitude of the AKP governments towards the IS that has been residing and operating in the Turkish-Syrian border, the border towns of Turkey as well as Ankara and Istanbul, has turned out to be another sign of feelings of belonging to and solidarity with the global Islam.

The impact of these political developments and the neoliberal era of globalization with respect to the academic discourse have been to urge the scholars specializing on contemporary Islamist movements to analyse them within the context of their

global ties. Including the ties with the diaspora Muslims majority of whom are minorities in the Western countries, the international activities and networks of the Islamic communities, and the Israel-Palestine conflict that arises common feelings of resentment and antagonism against the Western world in considerable sections of Muslims in Turkey and around the word, this state of global Islam comprises a complex web of relations which cannot be analysed in isolation from one another.

To sum up, since the late 1980s Turkey has been witnessing the rapid rise of Islamisation and conservatism in politics that have been finding greater support from the masses especially during the AKP years. Meanwhile, the processes of building and expressing identities, especially ethnic and religious identities, have become issues of concern for the unitary and secular ideology of the Turkish state. In this cultural milieu we also witness feminist movements getting organized in civil platforms while Islamist and Kurdish feminists diverge from the main group. Islamisation in education through proliferation of *imam-hatip* schools, discussions on secularity of public spaces and the headscarf issue, increasing conservativeness in social life, diffusing network of Islamist movements have all been regarded as central threats to the Turkish Republic founded on the basis of principles of Atatürk. Moreover, the neoliberal policies of governments, especially the AKP government, created a new wealthy class of Islamists while failing to bridge the wide income gap between rich and poor. In these decades the world experienced the beginning of a new phase of globalization as the Soviets dissolved and the Cold War ended. It was the victory of capitalism against authoritarianism and communism. While cultural diversity have started to be celebrated as a richness, the rapid development of communication technologies and mass media, and the increasing and intensifying use of the Internet enhanced the global mass culture to reach more and more societies. Ability to be mobile and to consume has become the indicators of class. Islamic societies also have confronted and adopted the trends of globalization. However the tension between globalization and conservatism, the issue of the limits of democratic rights and freedoms and the right to intervene them turned into international and civil wars, and terror acts deeply affecting both western and the Muslim countries.

This panoramic review presents the distinct social and political conditions in which religious and secular identities were formed in Turkey. However the critical question for the scope of this study is: What has been the impact of the modernization, secularization, Westernization project of the Republic and its drawbacks on women? While the republican regime took significant legal and structural steps towards eliminating gender inequalities, offering women opportunities of education, self-realization and participation to the public sphere in equal conditions with men, it maintained in many ways the patriarchal ideology that associated women with their roles as mothers and wives.

Deniz Kandiyoti (1987) in her article “Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish case” that explores “the diversity and the specificity in women’s experiences in Islamic societies which vary with the nationalist histories and social policies of the countries within which women are located” argues that despite the progressive impact of the reforms of the Republic, women continue to experience oppressions that are also common in other Middle Eastern societies (Kandiyoti, 1987, p. 320, 334). She also argues that “The corporate control of female sexuality, linking female sexual purity to male honour, the segregation of the sexes, and the nature of the female life cycle” are the issues which considerably influence gender experiences of women in Turkey (p. 334). As Serpil Sancar (2014) describes in her study on the conservative discourse about women in the newspapers during 1945-65, the atmosphere of the early republican years that involved ideological tensions between modernity and nationalism was replaced with more conservative values. This replacement was a revival of deep rooted traditionalism in gender roles that was readopted in the conservative political discourse (Sancar, 2014, 21-22).

## **1.2. Organization of the Chapters**

I believe that the distinct modernization experience of Turkey that can be characterized with coexistence of secularization, modernization and Westernization project of the Republic with Islamic revivalism, nationalism, and conservatism makes the task of studying the knowledge production process on women and Islam in Turkey even more necessary, critical, and challenging. The challenge of the task

arises from the multitude of cultural and political reference points to contextualize women's status and relation to Islam. Due to its Ottoman imperial past and the fundamental role of Islam in the Ottoman culture and state tradition, studies on Turkey and its history constitute a significant part of the Oriental studies in the West. On the other hand, with respect to the authoritarian Westernization process that it has experienced and particularly the radical changes and diversities in women's status, feminist postcolonial theory provides valuable tools to understand women's subordination, as well as their discursive representation. Considering the commonalities of women's experiences of subordination with the other Middle Eastern women's experiences, the discussions of Middle East women's studies are clearly very relevant. I take the main critiques of Orientalism, feminist postcolonial theory and the Middle East women's studies that I elaborate in Chapter 2 as my compass and theoretical framework to be able to highlight the Eurocentric and essentialist representations of women that fail to integrate the unique modernization process of Turkey to their analysis.

In Chapter 3, I explain how I adopt Michel Foucault's theorization of discourse, knowledge and power as my methodology to trace the change in the discourse of my data which is composed of the published books and articles based on ethnographic studies on women and Islam in Turkey. His theorization of discourse offers a major perspective in discussing the relationship between power and knowledge, and discourse and domination. Its broad elaboration by Edward Said in his ground-breaking critique of Orientalism has become a milestone in the Middle Eastern studies and studies on Islam. Thus I articulate Foucault's theorization to the methodology of this study for presenting a periodization of the studies on the basis of prominent assertions of truth, widely circulated statements, and valid approaches by relating them to the wider social context in which they are generated. This approach firstly enables me to identify the assumptions, biases, and preconceived thoughts both emerging from and perpetuating the dominant discourse and consequently serving neo-Orientalism and/or discursive subordination of Muslim women. Secondly, it detects the shifts that point to emergence of counter-discourses. After presenting my methodology I highlight and clarify the main concepts that I use in my discourse analysis.

In the Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I present my analysis of the studies divided into three discursive periods. In Chapter 4, I analyse the studies published in 1983-1992 which can be described over their focus on how women's subordination is legitimized with Islamic beliefs and traditions. I attempt to show that these studies have a dominantly Eurocentric and essentialist approach to the subject with their references to Islam and traditions as the main explanations of the gender hierarchy they observe. I analyse the next discursive period that comprises the studies published between 1994 and 2006 in Chapter 5. The studies in this period that correspond to the rise of political Islam focus on the identity of the Muslim women in the cities who are described within the social and political context of Islamist movement. The features of their identity formation, their agencies in creating an Islamic way of life, the headscarf as a symbol of their identities, and their role in the Islamist political movement are the common themes that come to the fore. In Chapter 6, I dwell upon the studies published between 2007 and 2016 that focus on the headscarf and *tesettür* (Islamic women's attire that covers hair, neck, and the body) as a symbol of the changing identities which are defined over their Islamic consumption patterns and on Islamist women in civil society organizations and politics. I contextualize the representations of Muslim in this period within the dominance of neo-liberal Islamism in Turkish politics, neo-Orientalism in the world and in the studies of the Middle East and Islam. In the conclusion chapter I firstly summarize the main arguments of my analysis. Then I present my arguments about the general picture of the discourse, the gaps, shortcomings of it and possible issues and problematiques that remain unexamined so far.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The scholarly roots of the ethnographic discourse on women and Islam in Turkey can be extended to academic Orientalism, which constituted the foundations of the studies about the Eastern cultures. The fact that the field of Oriental studies emerged and developed within the social, political, and economic conditions of the colonial era implies a relationship between imperial domination of the East and the knowledge produced about the dominated territories. However, there have also been paradigm shifts that indicated the rises of different ways of producing knowledge, different perspectives to the Oriental societies that challenged the previous ones. Political challenges to colonialism were manifest in anti-colonial movements and academic challenges to the colonial and Orientalist discourse were manifest in postcolonial theory. A feminist intervention to postcolonial theory and the new phase of Middle Eastern studies and Middle Eastern women's studies in the post-colonial era should also be thought in relation to the scholarly roots and influences of the discourse that I analyse in this study. Besides, the ethnographic studies that I present in the following chapters are a part of the discourse of Middle East women's studies by addressing several issues that are common in this area of research. Moreover, some of these studies open up new discussions about the relationship between women, the Islamist movement and the secular state order and the transformation of this relationship.

Therefore I begin specifying my theoretical framework by briefly reviewing the trajectory of colonial and anti-colonial discourses and identifying the core concepts that I elaborate on throughout my analysis: otherness, alterity, subaltern-ness, subjectivity and agency with respect to the Muslim women portrayed in the studies and binarism, surveillance, essentialism and Eurocentricism with respect to the way the discourse is generated. Then I present a review of Edward Said's classical work *Orientalism* (1979), the Orientalist discourse, neo-Orientalism, and recent critiques of Orientalism to have a closer look at the Orientalist ways of producing knowledge

a about the Eastern, specifically Muslim cultures and the shifts in these ways. Then, in order to discuss more thoroughly my core concepts I will exhibit how they are central parts of the feminist postcolonial theory and the Middle Eastern women's studies.

## **2.1 Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Postcolonial Theory**

Though colonialism is widely associated and used in many cases interchangeably with imperialism, it refers to a particular period of imperialism which had social and cultural impact, in addition to economic and political domination, on the colonized territories. European colonialism in the post-Renaissance era was a “sufficiently specialised and historically specific” type of imperialism to legitimise its distinct political ideology. In addition to the institutionalised perception of the colonies as the suppliers of raw materials for the modern capitalist system, a rigid economic, social and cultural hierarchy was established between the colonizers and the colonized mainly based on race. The idea of the survival of the fittest race, which was a simplistic interpretation of Darwinism worked together with the doctrines of imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to stigmatise the colonised societies as uncivilized. The sexism evident in these doctrines of ‘mankind’ exhibited their association with patriarchy. Therefore, as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (2007) state “colonization could be (re)presented as a virtuous and necessary ‘civilizing’ task” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, pp. 40-41). As many postcolonial theorists argue, this process took place through generating the colonial discourse and producing knowledge about the colonized societies by the colonizers. Though perceiving every piece of information presented in this context as serving colonialism is problematic, the power of Western imperialism on the production of scientific knowledge cannot be underestimated. As Ania Loomba (1998) explains, the writings which constituted the two categories, colonizer and the colonized, as binary opposites had started by the fifteenth and sixteenth century European encounters with Asia, America and Africa. The images and ideas about the barbarians, the uncivilized in these territories had been circulating and creating stereotypes about the non-European peoples and travel writings constituted a significant part of the discourse. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries modern Western

science was deeply integrated to construction of racist ways of understanding human beings. It not only developed to master the world but also worked to displace other systems of knowledge –but not without learning from and incorporating them. The links between economic domination, its social implications and creation of new systems of knowledge was evident. For the people who were represented by this discourse, it was highly difficult to challenge it because they lacked the necessary scientific training in a similar way that the industrializing capitalist countries had. In contrast to the members of the subject races, according to the postcolonial scholars like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, the central figure of the European Enlightenment project, “the humane, and the knowing subject” emerged as the white male colonialist. (Loomba, 1998, pp. 57-66).

The term postcolonial came forward firstly to refer to the condition after colonization and for this reason post-colonialism is a historical, legal and political term. As noted by Mishra and Hodge (1994) “It foregrounds a politics of opposition and struggle, and problematizes the key relationship between centre and periphery” (Mishra & Hodge, 1994, p. 276). However postcolonialism does not always result in a post-imperial status, since history shows that decolonization processes can give way to new (neo)imperial structures and governance. For this reason, as Nichols (2010) argues post-colonial analysis in politics is presented as crucial for studying neo-imperialism (Nichols, 2010). Loomba (1998) suggests that the idea that thinking of postcolonialism not merely as the historical process after colonialism but in a wider sense “as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism”, “allows us to incorporate the history of anti-colonial resistance with contemporary resistances to imperialism and to dominant Western culture” (Loomba, 1998, p.12). Throughout this “long history of contestation” many scholars who had been directly subjected to its effects have written about its nature and resistances to it (Nichols, 2010, p. 113). Nichols also argues that indebted to the reflections of thinkers such as Gandhi and Fanon, late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed the emergence of an academic field, namely postcolonial studies. This new field was associated with literary studies to a great extent, and it was challenging the Western knowledge. Postcolonial thinkers were dealing with issues

like “identity, representation, hybridity, diasporas, migration, etc.” rather than with “direct anti-colonial struggle” (Nichols, 2010, p.113).

Postcolonial theory was a major challenge against the Western, ethnocentric way of producing knowledge and it exposed the crisis of or the lack of representation of the non-Western world in this knowledge. The emergence of post-colonial theory corresponds to the representation crisis in social sciences by the end of the Cold War. It was when the leading paradigms of development and shared legacy of Enlightenment were in the target of post-structuralist and post-modern critics. As Kandiyoti (2002) states, the claims of grand narratives rested on “the exclusion from subjecthood of the non-Western, non-white and women” (Kandiyoti, 2002, p. 279). She explains that modernity was criticized on the grounds that it had a dark side that revealed itself in forms of racism, colonialism and sexism, and the notion of self for the Western subject rested on the construction of a non-Western other. Postcolonial scholarship’s another contribution was its focus on how colonial encounters had a role in shaping national cultures and nation-states. It dwelled upon “the later developmentalisms” in the post-independence states with a critical analysis of modernity (2002, pp. 279-284).

As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2007) argue, the question of the subject is central to how colonized people perceive their identities and their capacities to resist the domination they are subject to. As the twentieth century philosophy shattered the Enlightenment notion of the integrity of the self, the subjectivity started to be discussed as a concept that “problematizes the simple relationship between the individual and language, replacing human nature with the concept of the production of the human subject through ideology, discourse and language” (2007, p. 248). With respect to the issue of subjectivity in the colonial context, Franz Fanon<sup>4</sup> (1952, 1959) notes that the colonial ideology or discourse produces subjects and wants to

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<sup>4</sup> Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) was a psychiatrist, philosopher, and a revolutionary born in Fort-de-France, Martinique. He is the author the books *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), and *Toward the African Revolution* (1964) which were groundbreaking in the analysis of psychopathology of colonization. He studied psychiatry in France and then went to Algeria as a psychiatrist. Because he joined the Algerian independence movement, he was deported. In his books, which were banned and collected right after publication, he analyzed the decolonization process sociologically, psychologically, and philosophically (Cherki, 2011).

sustain both the image of the colonial subject it produces and the devalued image that the colonized subject has of himself/herself. Thus, as he argues, the subject concurs with this particular construction of his/her subjectivity due to his/her powerless position. Yet, he attributes agency to the colonized subject by highlighting the potentials of resistance through recapturing the self or self-consciousness (Fanon, 1952, 1959, cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007 pp. 252-253). Within the framework of postcolonial and poststructuralist theory the concept of agency is elaborated by asking whether the individuals can resist the social institutions that act upon them, whether their actions are autonomous and free or consequences of the imperial or discursive power, and to what extent they can resist the power mechanisms. Two concepts that emerge in relation to the colonial discourse are otherness and alterity. Even though they are mostly used as synonyms, there is a difference that needs to be specified. The role of creating an “other” in the formation of collective and individual identities and defining the self in contrast to the ‘other’ is widely addressed in philosophy, psychology and sociology. In the colonial context creating an “other” entails a discursive creation and epistemological violence, and otherness turns into alterity. It takes place through not only defining them as essentially different from the West but also negating the differences within them. Creation of the Orient, as elaborated by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978), is a prominent example; the Orient is a term that refers to huge territories in the east of Europe and it reduces all the nations into a single category. The process of othering takes place through binarism or binary oppositions which had been initially addressed by the structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) who argued that signs acquire meaning through their opposition to others in his influential book *Course in General Linguistics* published in 1916. In the functioning of imperialism, the opposing differences between the imperial power and the dominated are transformed into a hierarchical relationship, a relation of dominance articulated to essentialism and racism. In the colonial discourse they exist as the distinctions between white and black, primitive and civilized, modern and traditional, colonizer and colonized, and the like. The binary oppositions then work as legitimations of imperial domination on the uncivilized lands. The interruption of postcolonial theory has been to expose the racism and reductionism embedded in

them and to draw attention to the two sided cultural influences during the colonial encounters.

Subaltern, which is defined in *Oxford English Dictionary* as “of lower status”, is a central concept in postcolonial theory that opened up diverse range of discussions on issues of representation, agency and subjectivity of the dominated groups and finally about production of knowledge. It was used by Antonio Gramsci to refer to the classes such as peasants, worker and women subordinated by the hegemony (Gramsci, 1934-35, cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, p. 244) and was adopted by subaltern studies as “as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office in any other way” (Guha, 1988, p.35). This area of study has initially concentrated on the history of the subaltern in colonial India and Gayatri Spivak made a deeply influential contribution by raising questions about representing the subaltern. About the evolution of subaltern studies and the influence of Spivak, Partha Chatterjee writes:

Research into subaltern history has shown that the subaltern was both outside and inside the domains of colonial governance and nationalist politics. To the extent that it was outside, it had retained its autonomy. But it also had entered those domains, participated in their processes and institutions and thereby transformed itself. (...) Why then the search for a “pure structure” of subaltern consciousness? Moreover, argued Gayatri Spivak in two influential articles, subaltern history had successfully shown that the “man” or “citizen” who was the sovereign subject of bourgeois history-writing was in truth only the elite. (...) Subaltern historiography had in fact challenged the very idea that there had to be a sovereign subject of history possessing an integral consciousness. (...) It was only a myth that the subaltern could directly speak through the writings of the historian. In fact, the historian was only representing the subaltern on the pages of history. The subaltern, announced Spivak, cannot speak. (“Reflections on “Can the Subaltern Speak””, 2010, p. 83)

The use of the concept has not stayed limited with subaltern studies and postcolonial theory; women’s studies and Middle East studies also have integrated it to their discussions of oppression and representation of the oppressed groups in the scholarly discourse.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century travel writings, the role of the imperial gaze in informing the Western world about the colonial territories, about the Orient had an evident impact on the literary and scholarly discourse. The discussions on this impact concentrates on the notion of surveillance which is already theorized by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and by Erwin Goffman in *Asylum* (1968) with respect to prison systems to argue that it is a tool that confers power to the observer and being visible makes the observed even weaker and more oppressed. The power issue at stake is also questioned against the backdrop of postcolonial theory with respect to the Western researchers studying the non-Western world, claiming that the former uses his/her power deriving from observing “the other” in knowledge production process.

Identifying this logic of colonial discourse is critical mainly because it structured the way knowledge about the non-Western world has been produced and articulated to constructing discursive hierarchies between the Western and the non-Western world. At this point I should explain my motivation about dividing the world into two categories, which seems like falling in the traps of Orientalism and Eurocentricism while taking a critical stand against the reductionism they embody. Even though the borders of the territories defined as the Western world have never been permanent and the Western and non-Western cultures have been interacting with each other, the distinction played a constitutive role in the formation of Western and especially Eastern identities. Dwelling on the way they are differentiated is helpful, functional, and essential for discussing the power relations that this differentiation denotes. A quintessence of the construction and re-production of the hegemonic relationship between the West and “the rest” is knowledge production as briefly mentioned above. Theories and discussions on Orientalism place this issue at the core of their arguments and seek new ways of knowing the Eastern world while exposing the stereotypes, dogmas, and shortcomings of Western scientific discourses and methodologies.

Reflexivity and multivocality in the methodologies, particularly in ethnographic studies, for studying the non-Western world has long been suggested as solutions to overcome the power relations embedded in the relationship between the Western

researchers and the non-Western subjects of research. The reflexive turn which occurred primarily in anthropology (Geertz, 1988; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Clifford & Marcus, 1986) in the 1980s or since the emergence of postmodern and critical theories in social sciences, undermined the authority of the ethnographer, addressed the inequality of power in the nature of knowledge production and academic writing and asked, as Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh (2013) states, “If the researcher controls the question and decides in the final instance how the subject’s world is re-presented in the text, then how could subject really have voice and be recognized in this process” (Venkatesh, 2013, p. 4). Therefore, the reflexive turn also urges the ethnographers to adopt multivocality in their academic writing. Paul Atkinson (2015) explains that in contrast to the single voice of the author and scattered reported speeches and observations, multiple voices allows multiple actors to exist in the text without being dominated by the authority of a single narrative. A major benefit of the presence of multiple voices in the ethnographic text is that the studies culture or group is represented from multiple viewpoints because the author’s and the audience’s perspectives can be altered. The second benefit is the complexity of the analysis of the ethnographic data it presents rather than a unified text exerts a symbolic violence on the social phenomenon it presents. Atkinson warns that this process is much more sophisticated than quoting informants or including field notes; “The polyvocal text –and hence the analytical strategy that underlies it- does not subordinate the voices and press them into the service of a single narrative. (...) There is no single implied narrator occupying a privileged interpretative position” (Atkinson, 2015, pp. 158-159). A similar warning had been expressed by literary theorist and film-maker Trinh T. Minh-Ha in an interview. She states that multivocality cannot necessarily be a remedy to the hierarchical knowledge as long as it is practised “accumulatively –by juxtaposing voices that continue to speak within identified boundaries” (Chen, 1992, p. 85).

Considering the groundbreaking shift that reflexivity and multivocality led to in social sciences methodology and knowledge production, especially in anthropology, I take them as essential features of formation of a counter-discourse against Orientalist and colonial discourses and regard them as methodological approaches to overcome alterity and subalternness of Muslim women and binarism,

essentialism, and Eurocentrism in the discourse about them. On the other hand, I agree with Trinh T. Minh-Ha that they do not necessarily produce a counter-discourse as long as the researcher maintains her or his authority based on her or his subject position as a Westerner and/or as a scholar who draws Eurocentric boundaries throughout the research process. The distance between the researcher and the research subjects makes the researcher, in Minh-Ha's words, "speak about" rather than "speak nearby" (Chen, 1992, p. 87). She explains "speaking nearby" as "a speaking that does not objectify, does not point to an object as if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place. A speaking that reflects on itself and can come very close to a subject without, however, seizing or claiming it" (p. 87). Minh-Ha regards it as "an attitude in life, a way of positioning oneself in relation to the world" (p. 87).

## **2.2 20<sup>th</sup> Century Orientalism, the Critics of Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism**

Edward Said's well-known book *Orientalism* (1978) has been one of the key studies during the emergence of post-colonial theory. Orientalism is defined in the book as a discourse on non-Western but especially Middle Eastern, Indian and Chinese civilizations produced mostly by Western linguists, historians, sociologists and anthropologists as well as travellers, missionaries, and colonizers. Much earlier than Said, in 1963, Anouar Abdel Malek (1963) had defined in his article "Orientalism in Crisis" the traditional Orientalist as a scholar who is specialized in the knowledge of the Orient, its languages, and literatures. According to Abdel Malek, within the discourse of Orientalism, the Orient and Orientals are taken as "object" of study, labelled as an "other", characterized as passive, non-sovereign, non-autonomous, non-active, and essentialized on the basis of race and ethnicity (Abdel Malek, 1963). The phenomenon of Orientalism is constructed in the social science of European countries in the period of imperialist penetration and implantation and Said claims that the Orient as the Orient was constituted as an outcome of "the collaboration of power and knowledge in the West, a collaboration made possible by the colonial era." (Said, 1978, cited in Dirks, 2004, p. 39). Talal Asad (1980) claims that what Edward Said aimed to accomplish was, "to draw out the structures

of underlying assumptions, themes and motives by which Orientalism, as a complex, occasionally shifting, political-intellectual phenomenon, has been connected to its object" (Asad, 1980, p. 648). He attempted to analyse the authoritative character of Orientalist discourse which is reproduced in scholarly texts, travel writings, and literature (1980, p. 648). Edward Said, in his review article "Arabs, Islam and the Dogmas of the West" published two years earlier than *Orientalism* introduces the fundamentals of his thesis. Macfie (2000) rephrases four dogmas of Orientalism that Said mentions. Firstly, it rests on the assumption that "there is a systematic difference between the West and the Orient" which defines the West as "rational, developed, humane and superior" and the Orient as "aberrant, underdeveloped and inferior". "The second dogma is that abstractions about the Orient based on texts representing a classical Oriental civilization are preferable to direct evidence. A third dogma is that Orient is eternal, uniform, incapable of defining itself and for this reason a highly generalized vocabulary for describing the Orient from a western standpoint is inevitable and objective. A fourth dogma is that Orient is something to be feared or controlled." (Macfie, 2000, quoted in Becan, 2007, pp. 15-16)

In the ground-breaking book *Orientalism* (1979), Said builds up his extended thesis, describing Orientalism as

A style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'. Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind', destiny and so on. (1979, pp. 2-3)

This definition is one of the building blocks of the theoretical framework of this thesis. Said continues that there is a constant interchange between academic and imaginative Orientalism and taking the eighteenth century as a starting point of institutionalized Western domination over the Orient, he argues that Orientalism emerges "as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (p. 3). A dichotomy between East and West is established through the Orientalist discourse that functions as the justification of political, cultural and

economic domination of the former by the latter. It is important to note that he referred to the Middle East when he used the term “Orient” and a great extent of the discourse he reviewed comprised literary and academic works on Muslim societies and history of Islam.

Discourse, in the sense that Foucault conceptualizes in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977), is the key to his understanding of Orientalism. Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse, which I examine in detail in the next chapter, also constitutes the core of my methodology in this study. From this perspective, Said argues that a scholarly text “is not easily dismissed. Expertise is attributed to it. The authority of academics, institutions, and governments can accrue to it, surrounding it with still greater prestige than its practical successes warrant” (p. 94). The most important implication of the texts is creating “not only knowledge but also the reality they appear to describe” and a tradition or in Foucault’s terms a discourse is produced by this knowledge and reality (ibid.). There is a two way relationship between Western power and the knowledge produced by the West so that they enable and strengthen each other. Said draws attention to this epistemological violence that is crystallized in the othering of the Oriental societies, especially Middle Eastern, Muslim societies in the academic, cultural and political discourse. This relationship is highly related with the issue of representation, in other words the power relation between the represented ones, their representation and the ones who create the discourse of representation. The reflections of this hegemonic and hierarchical relationship are visible in the representations of the Orientals in the discourse and the hierarchical representations perpetuate the hegemony. Moreover as Abu-Lughod notes “Orientalism was not about representations or stereotypes of the Orient but how these were linked and integral to projects of domination that were ongoing” (Abu-Lughod, 2001, p. 105). I contend that the effects of the epistemological violence that Said describes by giving references to mainly British, French and American Orientalisms from the early 17<sup>th</sup> to late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are also detectable in Muslim women’s representations that I analyse in the following chapters. It dictates certain ways of perceiving their status which entails associating the gender issues with the representations of Islam that are produced as a result of centuries of othering, of a

textual reality which has been produced in isolation from its social and historical context and an essentialism to validate a hierarchical relationship between the West and the East.

Authority is another term that Said integrates to his analysis. An intellectual authority of the Western scholarship over the Orient, he believes, must constitute a great part of a description of Orientalism. Authority is “formed, irradiated, disseminated”; “it is instrumental; it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces” (pp. 19-20).

Said’s distinction between latent and manifest Orientalism is noteworthy in analysing Orientalist texts. He describes the first one as “an almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity, and the latter one as “the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth” (p. 206). The changes in the knowledge of the Orient take place solely in manifest Orientalism and latent Orientalism stays stable. The two implications of latent Orientalism that Said mentions constitute the foundation of the binary oppositions which is one of the features that leads to describing a text as Orientalist. The first one is that designating something as Oriental comprises attributing features of backwardness, degeneration, being uncivilized and retarded, which are all attributed also to the undesired elements of Western society. The Orientals were not perceived as people of citizens but problems to be solved, members of a race that “had to be subjected” (p. 207). We can see that this idea not only was valid for the colonial era but also continues to be prevalent in the contemporary international politics, especially about the rise of fundamentalist movements of Islam, and authoritarian leaderships in Muslim countries. Secondly, he argues that once the Orient is differentiated from the civilized west, it is conceived from a male and sexist point of view, which is exclusively seen in travel writings and novels. While Oriental men are viewed in isolation from their communities, as subjects to be feared and disliked, the Oriental women are creations of “a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they

are willing” (p. 207). Furthermore, he remarks that this male conception of the Orient is usually static and fixed. The chances of development, transformation and change are not attributed to the Orient, which is eternally “immobilized and unproductive” (p. 208). Thus its existence is always defined in terms of absences and lacks, of being an outsider of Western culture, in contrast to the presence of the Orientalist who acts as a “superior judge, learned man” (p. 208). The cultural and intellectual movements in the Orient are regarded either as materials for Orientalist’s intellectual activity, or shadows to be enlightened by him/her.

*Orientalism* is a study which has been very influential in post-colonial critique of social sciences but it has many shortcomings and inconsistencies as well. Firstly, it is obvious that Said uses a Western standpoint and Western humanism in order to criticize Western culture. His arguments stay limited in this sense. The book leads to an expectation in the reader of a further criticism of Western humanist discourse of Enlightenment. Secondly, he merely focuses on discourses of colonizers and oppressors and in this sense the book is highly selective of the texts that are used to support its main arguments. And thirdly, the book addresses only to Western male reader. The gender aspect of Orientalist discourse has almost no place in the study. The Orientalist discourse is a highly masculine discourse. It attributes all the essential categories that are attributed to women to emphasize their weakness, inferiority and dependency to the Oriental geographies. This is a point that needs further elaboration and discussion that Edward Said does not deal with.

Bernard Lewis, one of the most renowned contemporary Orientalists, is one of the major critiques of Said and *Orientalism*. Therefore, it will be useful to have a look at his criticisms of the study that he presents in 1993. For Lewis, Said’s Orient is limited to the Middle East and the Middle East is mainly the Arab world and therefore his arguments on the increasing scope of Orientalist discourse are not supported by his narrow focus. Lewis also sees some errors in Said’s historical account. To mention a few of them, Lewis states that the origins of Oriental studies have emerged in Germany, not in England and France, and Eastern studies was much more established and developed in Germany. Secondly, according to Said the English and the British ruled the Mediterranean since the 17<sup>th</sup> century; however

Lewis reminds that Ottomans were ruling the whole Mediterranean at that period. Thirdly, he states that Islamic researches in Europe had started in the Middle Age and they had been about a world that conquers, not that is conquered by the West. These researches had been aiming to establish a defense against the Eastern powers. As Lewis explains, the researches in the later centuries, during the period that West grew stronger would have to be on Turkish and the Ottomans not on Arabs and Arabic. Turkish was the dominant language of the territories beginning from the eastern border of Morocco. Lewis finds problematic the terms that Said uses like “gathering”, “dispossessing”, “raping”, “taking out” about how the knowledge about the Orient is produced. He states that according to Said social science is something countable and limited such that the East was deprived of the knowledge of itself because West took it away. Said’s style is also arbitrary for Lewis because he makes arbitrary choices of the authors and scholars that he cites. He does not mention many of the well known English and French scholars on Islam and Arab studies. He visualizes the Orientalist as an imperialist agent and as a person who uses knowledge for the sake of power. Another point that he misses is the Arab academic discourse on Orientalism. Lastly, Lewis blames Said for having a simplistic approach for the complicated national, cultural, religious, social and economic issues of the Arab world, and for simply blaming the West (Lewis, 1993 – trans. 2007).

Among many other criticisms that *Orientalism* received after its publication, Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia (2001) mention that “Placing the beginnings of Orientalism as late as Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt rather than in the eighteenth-century upsurge of interest in the Indo-European languages better suits Said’s demonstration of European power in the discourse” (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 70). They agree with Lewis that Said ignores the impact of German Orientalism because Germany has not been a significant colonizer of the East. Thirdly, they state that Said fails to mention some Orientalists’ ideas that Eastern cultures were superior in some respects and that there was actually a popular feeling that Orientalist scholarship might challenge the cultural boundaries between the East and the West. Moreover, Said’s emphasis on the relationship between power and

discourse undermines the relationship between discourse and cultural interaction (2001, p. 70).

I regard the criticisms about the wholistic approach of Said towards the Orientalist scholars valid. I present in the following review of Orientalist scholarship, there are well-known Orientalists who can be described as far from being essentialist and Eurocentric. Besides, Said himself accepts that his work is selective, partial, and inconsistent in many respects. However the book's power lies in the new ways of seeing the knowledge production about the East that it presents, the new discussions it opened up in the Middle Eastern studies, the way it presents the power/knowledge aspects in a considerable and undeniable part of the Orientalist scholarship. Before dealing with its contributions, it is useful to take a closer look at the scholarship on the Eastern Islamic cultures and the Middle East during the period that the book analyses to see both the colonialist and challenging lines of knowledge production.

It would not be wrong to argue that Islam attracted the greatest share of the Orientalist attention and it should also be stated that the area of Islamic studies was born within classical Orientalism and Oriental studies have constituted a basis on which studies of Islam and the Middle East have been built upon. However it was far from being a homogenous and unitary discipline; it is not only mainly diversified as German, British, French, and American Orientalisms but also underwent transitions throughout its history. Shedding light on the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars' works is helpful in understanding the emergence and development of the critical paths within the contemporary Middle East studies.

Robert Irwin is one of the scholars who do not agree with the celebration of Said's response to the Orientalist discourse in the academia. He portrays the development of Orientalism in his book *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies* (2007), which was published in the UK and the US and attracted great deal of attention with its counter arguments against Said's and with its encompassing summary of the development of the field of Orientalism. In the chapter titled "The All Too Brief Heyday of Orientalism" he draws a picture of academic Orientalism starting from the World War II until the 2000s.

Irwin dwells mainly upon four branches; namely in the UK, in Germany, in the US and in France. He argues that the academic Orientalism in the UK owed much to the World War II. Before the war, there were limited number of Islam and Arab studies specialists, and after the war historians, anthropologists, sociologists and geographers started to contribute to the field at the newly established departments. During the World War II many Orientalists, among whom are Freddie Beeston, Bernard Lewis, Margoliuth, Hamilton Gibb, and R. B. Serjant worked for the intelligence agencies. Towards the end of the war a major part of the Middle East was directly or indirectly under the rule of the UK. SOAS was full of soldiers and diplomats studying Oriental cultures and languages, the financial funds were raised for the African, Asian, East European and Slavic studies. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* stands out as one of the significant publications; which does not have a counterpart in the Muslim world, except *Islam Ansiklopedisi* published in Turkey. Irwin dwells upon two important names Hamilton Gibb and Arthur John Arberry and three important institutions Oxford, Cambridge and SOAS. Sir Hamilton Alexander Rooskeen Gibb (1895 – 1971) was one of the leading authorities on Arabic culture and language. He was an academician in Oxford until he moved to the US in 1955. He argued that Islamic civilization had been in decline since its golden age, which was the Abbasid period. He was interested at the Arab literature, philosophy and politics believing that Arab nationalism and democracy would come one day and the Orientalists would lose their power to Arab scholars. He also had an interdisciplinary approach that included anthropology as well. Arthur John Arberry, who was Gibb's colleague at Cambridge and also lectured in SOAS, was initially specialized in Latin and Greek and then switched to Persian and Arabic. Irwin states that this was typical for the “Oxbridge Orientalism” (p. 245). He regained his belief in Christianity as he studied Sufis. He was the pioneering translator of Arabic and Persian literature and interpreter of their teachings.

American Orientalism, as Irwin (2008) explains, started in the 1930s with the interest of the US in Saudi Arabia and its rich oil resources. From the 1940s, education opportunities on Islam, Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages started to increase as a result of the ambition to take the place of the UK in the Middle East.

Well-known Orientalists from the UK and Europe were invited to establish new institutions and departments. Gibb came to Harvard, Grunebaum came to Yale, Bernard Lewis came to Princeton, Roger Owen came to Harvard and Joseph Schacht came to Columbia. The brain drain from Europe to the US still continues today. One of the remarkable aspects of the American Orientalism is the number of Arab scholars, even though they still remain to be a minority.

Gustave E. von Grunebaum, one of the European scholars of American Orientalism, made a research in Chicago on Islamic civilization. In this study, he claimed that Islam failed to have a novelty of its own but only could gather elements of other cultures. Muslims limited themselves with conflicts and fatalism. He defined the Islamic civilization in terms of bans, gaps and omissions (Irwin, 2008, p. 249). Other European scholars that Irwin mentions are Oleg Grabar who was specialized in Islamic architecture, Sholomo Dov Goitein who was specialized in religious aspects of Islamic life and economic history of the Near East, Franz Rosenthal who translated Ibn Haldun's *Muqaddimah* to English and worked on opium and gamble in the medieval Islam. As an outcome of Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany, many Jewish scholars migrated to the US and English became the primary language of Orientalism by replacing German.

Irwin states that Marshall Hodgson was one of the first US born scholars who made a significant contribution to Islamic studies. Hodgson tried to separate his way from the German tradition that rested on philological and classical concerns. He criticised the view that Islam had been in decline after its golden age during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. He inspired many historians with his view that Islam had a very important place in world history. In his pioneering book *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* he underlined the importance of the physical conditions of Eurasia in structuring the world of Islam and emphasized the contributions of the Turks, Persians, and Indians to the Islamic civilization. The Islamic civilization was at its climax from the late 10<sup>th</sup> century until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He offered a terminology in his analysis of Islam: "Islamdom" referred to the lands that Muslims and Islam prevailed, "Islamicate" referred to the culture of these lands, and "Oikumane" referred to a world of high culture that was spread to

Europe, Asia and Africa. He had an all-encompassing view of history. As Irwin states, his was not a history of the “victory of the West” (p. 253). He was one of the most influential scholars of Islamic culture and history of Islam.

Albert Hourani (1915 – 1993) wrote a very analytical review of *Venture of Islam* on *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* in 1978. Hourani was born in Manchester, and he was the son of a Lebanese father. He was the author of *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (1962), which was a combination of intellectual biography and history. His well-known book *A History of the Arab Peoples* published during the Gulf War was highly influenced by Ibn Haldun’s historical cyclical model about the rises and declines of the Muslim regimes. He was also influenced by Goldziher. Even though he was a Christian, he was widely associated with the achievements of the Muslims. For Irwin, Hourani tended to undermine the conflicts, wars, poverty, and epidemics of the Arab history as he was a mild person himself. Hourani believed that Orientalism was not an independent discourse and it even embodied the ideas of Darwin and Marx just like the ideas of Herder and Hegel. He had an interest in German Orientalism. He learned from Richard Walzer, who was a close friend of Schacht the importance of academic traditions that were transmitted from one generation of academicians to the next, through a chain of witnesses. He was aware of the fact that British Orientalism was not founded on solid ground, there were few academicians and this led to publications on general issues and a lack of in depth researches. He was a friend of Edward Said but he found it such a pity that Said used the term Orientalism in a negative way (Irwin, 2008). As Abdulaziz A. Al-Sudairi (1999) puts it, even though he discussed the antagonism in Europe towards Islam in his article “Islam in European Thought”, he was not convinced that Western scholars travelled to the Arab lands to dominate them, as he appreciated the “Occidental spirit”, its insistent search for knowledge and interest in getting to know other civilizations (1999, p.174). He was discontented that this provoked the Muslim scholars who believed that Islam could only be properly studied by Muslims. Hourani also questioned why German Orientalists, such as Goldziher, (1850-1921) were not covered in *Orientalism* (Irwin, 2008, p. 256). His academic work can be mainly characterized with “appreciation of the domestic sources of change in modern Muslim history”, “a genuine appreciation of Islam itself, of the

ferment within it, of its court, of its cultural traditions” (Al-Sudairi, 1999, p. 9). He envisioned history in long time periods; he was against jumping into conclusions by looking at short spans as he was also against reaching one-dimensional, simple explanations of political phenomena (Al-Sudairi, 1999).

French Marxist Orientalists had important contributions to the field and these contributions challenge the idea that Orientalism is a unified discourse, as Irwin states. Claude Cohen (1909 – 1991) and Maxime Rodinson (1915 – 2004) are two outstanding scholars in this sense. Cohen, the author of *La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des Croisades* describes Syria during the Crusades as a separate geographical region, not as an extension of Medieval Europe. He was against the historical understanding based on great men's great works. “He denounced what he saw as the amateur historiography produced by imperialists, colonialists, and missionaries, and their excessive preoccupation with the affairs of sultans, scholars and great artists” (Irwin, 2006, p. 254). He did not attribute a major role to religion and philosophy, to Islam as the main explanatory factor, to poetry and literature in the history of the medieval Near East. He was interested in urban communities in Cairo and Baghdad, which could be taken as pioneers of lumpen proletariat. Yet he was doubtful about using the terms ‘feudal’ and ‘bourgeois’ for the Near East and sceptical about the term ‘Asiatic mode of production’. He was an anti-imperialist and he fought for Palestinian rights. Rodinson thought that there were commonalities between communism and Islam. He wrote the biography of Muhammad on the basis of this thought and introduced Islam as a political party. He claimed that Said's Orientalism that was limited with the works of the British and the French, was exaggerated. He found it naïve to set a link between colonialism and Orientalism. He also criticized Said's focus on Arabs on the ground that the majority of the Muslims were not Arabs. Unlike him, he found it irrelevant to seek for intentions behind knowledge for appreciating its value (Irwin, 2008, pp. 257-259).

Ernest Gellner, the author of the book Muslim Society (1981), is one of the significant names in late British Orientalism and he became a harsh critic of Edward Said's arguments. Muslim Society is one of the key publications in Middle East studies. In this book, he focuses on role of ulema, Imams and clergy in Islamic

society and their role in sustaining social integration. He believed that Islam was the most strict monotheist religion. He was also influenced by the sociological approach of Ibn Haldun. He criticized Edward Said by questioning how he could be so sure about his objectivity while blaming the Orientalists for being part of a discursive structure. He added that truth was not dependent on politics and claiming otherwise would be committing the same crime that Said accuses the Orientalists of committing (1993).

Bernard Lewis, the author of *Arabs in History* (1950), *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961), *The Assassins* (1967), *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (1982), *Islam and the West* (1993), *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History from the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day* (1995) and many other important books in Middle East studies and history of Islam, was the prominent representative of British Orientalism until he moved to the US and started lecturing at Princeton University in 1974. Lewis has a very deep and extended knowledge about the Middle East. Nevertheless he was accused, especially by Said, of being a supporter of American imperialism in this region, making essentialist over-generalizations about Muslim societies and defending the superiority of Western civilization against Islamic civilization. In the introduction of *What Went Wrong?* (2002) which Lewis wrote before the 9/11 attacks and which was published aftermath, he states

What went wrong? For a long time people in the Islamic world, especially but not exclusively in the Middle East, have been asking this question. The content and formulation of the question, provoked primarily by their encounter with the West, vary greatly to the circumstances, extent, and duration of that encounter and the events that first made them conscious, by comparison, that all was not well in their own society. But whatever the form and manner of the question and of the answers that it evokes, there is no mistaking the growing anguish, the mounting urgency, and of late the seething anger with which both question and answers are expressed. (p. 3)

This excerpt demonstrates many aspects of his scholarly perspective which have been the target of many critical, post-colonialist thinkers. Firstly he assumes that there is a unitary, homogeneous Islamic world which is even more homogeneous in the Middle East. Accordingly, people in this Islamic world share the same thoughts and feelings, which derive from a feeling of inferiority about their common status against the West. Lewis attributes this inferiority to Islam since he refers to the

peoples of the Middle East “the Islamic world”, which completely neglects social, cultural, ethnic, historical, economic, political and geographical conditions and transitions of the many societies in the region. He not only believes in the superiority of the West against “the Islamic world” but also claims that every encounter of Muslim people with the West inescapably result in their acceptance of this superiority accompanied by an agony and anger about their inferiority. Last but not least he establishes a binary opposition between a geographical concept “the West” and believers of a religion “the Islamic world” which is another indication of an Orientalist and essentialist thinking. He begins his discussion with the history of Islam during the Middle Ages and then in the following chapters he elaborates on the decline of Ottoman Empire and the Turks during the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in contrast to the rise of Western/European civilization and lastly draws conclusions again about the Middle East and the lands of Islam. Obviously this line of thought rests on a supposition of a common essence that Turks, Arabs, and Persians share, which is being a Muslim.

As Dietrich Jung (2011) explains, Ignaz Goldziher, Snouck Hurgronje, Martin Hartman and Carl Heinrich Becker<sup>5</sup> emerge as the leading figures of German Orientalism in the emancipation of the discipline. Said differs German Orientalism as a more scholarly approach from British and French Orientalisms regarding these as associated with justifying colonial and imperial motivations (1994). Even if this perspective is questionable, it is still worth to take it as a starting point for it is a historical fact that while the British and French were engaging in overseas expansion and colonization during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Central Europeans, namely Austrians, Prussians, Saxons and Bavarians were dealing with the threat in their eastern borders, the Ottomans. Thus their relation to the East was mainly shaped on this ground and as Suzanne L. Marchand claims “the worldview of the early modern Central European educated elite can be said to have been far more continental than global and far more religious than ‘cultural’” (2009, p. 29). Germany’s short history

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<sup>5</sup> Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) is a Dutch scholar who specialized in Arabic culture and language. He went to Mecca to study Arab culture and traditions and contemporary Islam and to improve his Arabic. He published *Mecca* (1888-89). He was known with his imperialist standpoint but he was not an essentialist (Irwin, 2008, p. 202). Martin Hartman (1851- 1918) and Carl Heinrich Becker (1976-1933) are the first Orientalist scholars who introduced sociological thinking to Islamic studies (Wokoeck, 2009).

of colonialism was in 1884-1914 and establishment of the discipline of Islamic studies corresponds to this period, the discipline was aimed to provide knowledge for the political strategy about relations with the Ottoman Empire. Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), the most influential of the founding scholars of Islamic studies, was born in Hungary in 1850 and studied in Berlin, Leipzig, Leiden and Vienna in the fields of Arabic, oriental studies, and biblical criticism. Afterwards he travelled to the Middle East and deepened his knowledge on Islam. Having been thinking and working on Judaism since his childhood, Goldziher applied his critical thinking to his studies on this field. He had widely appreciated ground-breaking and pioneering works on Islamic law, history of Islam, Islamic traditions with a critical, many-sided and evolutionary perspective (Dabashi, 2009; Jung, 2011). The most vital contribution of him was his success in proving that most of the hadiths could not be traced to Mohammed and were formulated in the following centuries to solve special social issues (Irwin, 2008). Jung identifies four characteristics that Goldziher and the other founding scholars of Islamic studies shared. First one is that they perceived history from a sociocultural evolutionary point of view which was in contrast with the classical Orientalist assumption that Orient was stagnant. Secondly, articulating their critical stance toward Europe's clergy they brought tradition/modern dichotomy in its sociological sense to their analysis of the distinction between Islamic orthodoxy and contemporary culture and religious reform. Thirdly, they defined religion as a subjective and private phenomenon, thus they did not believe that Islam was incompatible with modernity. They believed that Muslims needed to eliminate their "medieval traditions" in a cultural evolution and adopt the modern model of religion which was based on privacy (Jung, 2011, p. 209). Lastly, they suggested that this evolution could only be achieved through secular education. Thus, the so-called "inferiority" of the Muslim societies was not intrinsic to Islam but could be altered (Jung, 2011, p. 209). On the other hand, Jung also detects the approaches that confirm the essentialist representations of Islam. Firstly, the discipline referred Islam as a whole unity of culture which led to analysing the culture and history of the Muslim societies as the culture and history of Islam and so to religious determinism. Besides, he states that even though all the four scholars aimed to go beyond classical Orientalist attitude of textual and philological study of Islam which meant neglecting contemporary state of Muslim

societies as a subject area, they perceived these societies in a state of “stagnation which called for awakening” and narrated their history as a “history of decline”. They saw religious and political institutions as the source of this decline. These institutions and the *ulama* deviated Islam from its “true” core that was very much in line with Judaism and Christianity and turned it into “the petrified system of Islamic law” (Jung, 2011, p. 211). Most important of all, he argues that the selected themes and popularization of the findings of Islamic studies played part in the perpetuation of essentialism in modern representation of Islam mainly because Islamic law was regarded as the quintessence of Islam which is inherently different from the West. As Jung concludes, this image gained an academic ground through this means of modern production of knowledge.

The most critical question that emerges in the clash between “classical” Orientalists and their critics is whether we should question the political motivation behind the discourse produced about the Orient. In other words, would an academic knowledge lose its validity if it was produced with imperialist aims, with the purpose of dominating a certain geography? The scholars who answer this question in an affirmative way, have the risk of falling into the trap of Occidentalism or at least are subject to doubts about their neutrality. Edward Said faced these criticisms since the publication of *Orientalism*, besides the criticisms about material mistakes, selective use of Orientalist works and omitting the ones that does not serve his arguments, misreading the works that he examines in the book, and naively believing that every Orientalist scholar and discourse was in the service of Western Orientalism.

Before discussing the place of Said’s approach in the contemporary social sciences debates, I would like to mention some of Bryan S. Turner’s (1994) responses to *Orientalism*. Agreeing that a consequence of criticisms about Orientalist literature became an equally destructive Occidentalism, he claims that rejection of the west and the legacy of modernization leads to a “problem of Islamization of knowledge” which means “a defence of a fundamentalist reading of Islamic knowledge and tradition which involve an opposition to secularism and the disenchantment of modernization as conceptualized in Max Weber’s *Sociology of Religion*” (Turner, 1994, p. 7). I agree with Turner on this point. Appreciating indigenous knowledge

in an era that power-knowledge relationship and the Western hegemony are being hotly debated opened new paths in the social sciences discourse particularly in the Third World. However these same paths constitute the basis of this problem by leading to a dead end that contradict with the conditions necessary for the emergence and development of a milieu that will enable the sciences in general and social sciences in particular to flourish freely. Another aspect of this debate that Turner dwells upon is the issue of indigenousness. He asks whether it is possible to talk about an indigenous methodology and epistemology and from a wider perspective whether we can talk about an indigenous rationality in an era that post-Enlightenment ways of thinking and making science diffuse around the world as an outcome of globalization. This brings us to the debates about local/authentic versus global knowledge. As globalization steadily blurs the boundaries between oriental and occidental cultures, he claims that it is not a cognitive threat from universalistic categories of social sciences but a threat from the global exchange of commodities and consumerism which have a critical impact on everyday lives that indigenous knowledge or Islamization of knowledge faces. Thus, in all the claims of producing an authentic, indigenous knowledge I find it useful to keep these two arguments in mind.

The questions of whether there is a real Orient apart from the imagined Orient which is misrepresented in the Orientalist discourse and if there is a real Orient how to represent it without falling into the traps of ethnocentric biases emerge automatically after reading Said's thesis. Daniel Martin Varisco (2006) puts the problem as "If Said claims that Orientalism created the false essence of an Orient, and critics counterclaim that Said himself proposes a false essence of Orientalism, how do we end the cycle of guilt by essentialization?" (Varisco, 2006, p. 292). He suggests that even though many critics of Said have rightfully claimed that his aim was not to provide an alternative or reveal the essence of the Orient and he should not be held responsible for this mission, we still cannot escape from the task of finding unbiased ways of representing reality. This task is one of the most fruitful legacies of Said's thesis.

If Said's mistake was denying the other possible descriptions of the Orient and other forms of its knowledge by the Orientals, which also means denying their agency, then it is vital to identify alternative and counter discourses. Another legacy of Said's thesis can be a task of having a closer look at how the counter knowledge is produced against imperialism. In this respect, Hamid Dabashi integrates Said's arguments in *Representation of Intellectuals* (1994) and "the figure of *the exilic intellectual*" (Dabashi, 2009, p. xiii). By this figure he refers to an intellectual who is in a condition of "anationality", meaning exile, and autonomy and who is in an ironic mode that perceives history from a horizontal rather than vertical point of view. He claims that this way, the exilic intellectual becomes a counter-interpreter and is able to challenge metaphysical categories, and "the politics of 'Truth' is only one such category" (2009, p. 14). Secondly, as a step further from the point that Turner made, Dabashi claims that the West should no longer be the interlocutor of the knowledge produced on the Middle East as the "globalized capital has effectively metasized and knows no centre or periphery to sustain its corresponding illusion of the sovereignty of the owning/knowing subject" (2009, p. xvii). The idea of "Europe" or "West" as the main interlocutor is a meaningless category for him and he finds no use in corroborating this imperial abstraction even through writing against it or for revoking it. As he explains, changing the addressee of the speech away from the people in power, from the sovereign subject, will result both in the speaking to the community which is subject to this power and in speaking back to the sovereignty authoritatively on the basis of the morality of the community it addresses. He argues that this way the crisis of the subject for the post-colonial critique will be resolved. Altering the interlocutor also means recognizing that the centre of production of knowledge is no longer the West. The exilic intellectual is the primary figure for Dabashi for producing a liberating counter-knowledge.

Dabashi's argument seems to offer a revolutionary path in creating a counter knowledge about the Orient. However, in practice "the figure of *the exilic intellectual*" is hard to encounter because of the various boundaries that act on the knowledge production of each intellectual. The expectation of the academic context in which a scholar writes definitely matters for it mostly provides not only the means of knowledge production but also influences the career opportunities or

drawbacks of the scholars. Thus changing the addressee of the scholarly work can have further consequences that the scholar may not choose to grapple with for career prospects or for simply avoiding censorship or penal outcomes. For instance, writing on women's victimization in Muslim countries to a Western academic audience can be rewarding in a Western Orientalist academic context while addressing Iranian women in a scholarly work about women's rights will most likely face legal sanctions in the Iranian context. Therefore, if we do not expect this "*exilic intellectual*" to produce knowledge in isolation, it is essential to turn a critical eye towards the academic and institutional boundaries. Moreover, Dabashi's suggestion neglects the point that contemporary epistemologies bear the legacies of Western ways of producing knowledge so changing the interlocutor cannot always mean challenging the existing centre of production of knowledge. It is a predicament that can be solved by also seeking alternative methodologies to know the non-Western world.

The academic and literary dimension of neo-Orientalism is discussed by Gayatri Spivak (2012) with regard to the post-colonial discourse. She warns that "colonial and postcolonial discourse studies can, at worst, allow the indigenous elite from other countries to claim marginality without any developed doctoral-level sense of problematic of decolonized space and without any method of proper verification within the discipline" (2012, p. 312). And she continues that these studies should expand to transnational cultural studies, otherwise they can "construct a canon of 'Third World studies (in translation)' that may lead to a 'new Orientalism'" (ibid.). This new Orientalism can recreate Eurocentrism and can result in defining the non-Western world on basis of its marginality with respect to the West. Boehmer (1998) finds the symptoms of this tendency of creating a Third World literature in the "enthusiastic exoticizing (and often also feminizing) vocabulary" (1998, p. 18). More significantly, she remarks that transnational capitalism plays a critical role in perpetuating neo-Orientalism through financially supporting academic institutions and studies of postcolonialism. This way, academia is linked to the global capital and the latter demonstrates that it is democratic, open and multicultural. Within this context, which seems to be a neo-colonialism, she finds postcolonial critique ill-equipped in terms of its knowledge on the history and theory of anti-colonialism.

Thus, as she eloquently argues, a discourse that neglects the commonalities of post-colonial nations and the differences in the imperialism in different contexts is created. While overemphasis on marginality and diversity of the post-colonial identities is encouraged, it has “tended to exacerbate the self-referential introversion of the western academy” (p. 20). Mohammad Samiei (2010) regards the role of Muslim scholars in the western academy as influential in challenging the Orientalist dogma that Said expressed as “only the Orientalist can interpret the Orient, the Orient being radically incapable of interpreting itself” (1994, p. 289). Furthermore, he states that Muslim scholars in the West are funded also by some oil rich Muslim businessmen and some Muslim states, which enhances the development of a discourse sympathetic to Islam. Now there is also an academic environment in the West that enables Western and non-Western scholars to be in contact with each other and Samiei mentions that this creates opportunities of close observation which Said had regarded as a lack in Orientalism.

The issue of essentialism which constitutes one of the grounds of the objections against Orientalist discourse did not lose its prevalence. As Dietrich Jung (2011) points out, the reason behind the essentialist image of Islam is defining it on the basis of its moral and legal codes. The assumption that Islam is inherently different from the West because religion and politics are inseparable in Islam also leads to representing this religion as a unified, all-encompassing order that comprises social, cultural, economic and political institutions. He argues that this approach is shared not only by the majority of Western scholars of Oriental studies but also by the majority of the Islamists. Jung also states that this image dominates the contemporary global discourse on Islam as well. This brings us to the discussions of “new Orientalism” (Sadowski, 1993) or “neo-Orientalism”. Present-day Orientalists dealing with issues of modernization and democratization, as Jung explains, continue to perceive Muslim societies by taking Islam as the sole determining factor. To illustrate, the Orientalists of the 1970s and 1980s “were uncomfortable with their predecessor’s claim that Islam promoted political submission – while sharing the conviction that Islam was incompatible with democracy” (Sadowski, 1993, p.17). This view, which had been prevalent with the increasing popularity of Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” thesis, as Dag Tuastad argues, became

evident with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Tuastad, 2003) and was further perpetuated especially in the political discourse after the 9/11 attacks. Neo-Orientalism is articulated to the political view that associates violence and terrorism with Islam, the Arab culture and the Middle East. Tuastad explains this association turning into a symbolic violence by calling it “new barbarism” (2003, p. 591) which refers to conceptions of political violence as an intrinsic feature of peripheral cultures through neglecting political and economic reasons and contexts. As he states, the new barbarism and neo-Orientalism serves to create new images of enemies and dichotomies between “the modern Western state and the peripheralised peoples”, and in consequence to justify economic and political projects in these regions. Aziz Douai and Sharon Lauricella (2014) observe this discourse in Western media within the framework of “war on terrorism” in the decade after 9/11.

Departing from the linkage between Orientalism and neo-Orientalism and the Islamic studies, it is useful to stress the contemporary changes in Islamic studies. I agree with Carl Ernst and Richard Martin (2010) that firstly, the counter discourse or participation of Muslim scholars to the Euro-American scholarship should be regarded as an important element. The increasing number of Muslim students in Islamic studies departments of the western universities is another factor that indicates the continuation of this presence. Secondly, there are recent massive stereotypes of Islam’s relation to violence, terrorism, and women’s oppression fed by popular representations of Islam on media. Thirdly, the links between the last phase of European colonialism, fundamentalism and modernity are integrated to the analyses. Furthermore, the contributions of post-structuralism, deconstruction and literary criticism, gender and women’s studies, post-colonialism and the critique of Orientalism have been shaping the Islamic studies scholarship (Ernst & Martin, 2010). And lastly, a point mentioned by Bruce B. Lawrence (2010), there is a need and a challenge, not only for Islamic studies but for religious studies in general, to link religion to cosmopolitanism and show how the religious communities are bounded within a wider network of “commercial exchange and social comity” (Lawrence, 2010, p. 302). He states that 9/11 attacks made the attention directed away from cosmopolitanism to negative categories like Islamism and fundamentalism. A dyadic understanding is ascribed to the concepts of modernity,

pluralism or human rights vis-à-vis the negative ones and the conflicts are perpetuated. He suggests that both at analytical and practical levels, there is a call for understanding each society and polity in its own local, dependent and existing conditions.

Before ending this elaboration on Orientalism, I think it is necessary to bring about its relation to anthropology because it is widely accepted that anthropology is a product of colonial encounters between the West and the Third World. Many scholars among whom are Edward Said, Talal Asad, and Bernard Cohn, drew attention to anthropology's colonial roots, however Said's challenge "made many anthropologists uncomfortable, defensive and reactive" (Dirks, 2004, p. 38). Nicholas Dirks notes that Said's arguments in *Orientalism* were seen as focusing on politics and epistemology too much rather than economics. However one of his major critics was the shift of the political crisis of anthropology into literature and philosophy. He was uneasy with the 'literary turn' and critical of seeing "historical and political issues treated as questions of reading and writing" (p. 40). He goes on to argue that "he must have been horrified to realize that the greatest impact of Orientalism on many anthropologists was to encourage more attention to poetics of colonialism than to the politics of anthropology" (p. 40). This means ignoring the historical and political background, and the politics of representation that necessitates new forms of ethnographic fieldwork in the postcolonial field. As Dirks underlines, Said's critique of area studies was an important intervention since anthropology was a major branch in these studies, which were both general fields of research and academic institutions. Today it is generally stated that post-war anthropology owes its development to its critical role in studying the postcolonial Orient. In the introduction of *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1980) Talal Asad writes "anthropology is also rooted in an unequal power encounter between the West and the Third World which goes back to the emergence of bourgeois Europe." (1980, p. 16). Through this encounter, the West gained knowledge about the Third World societies that it had dominated. Asad claims that Orientalist scholarship works hand in hand with anthropology in constructing "a particular" Islamic or Africanist tradition that justifies the Western domination and the existence of the colonial ruling classes (1980, p. 118). Dirks also mentions about

anthropologist Bernard Cohn who had been drawing attention to the political implications of colonial sociology since the 1950s. Chon argued that colonial forms of knowledge played a crucial role in not only establishment but also legitimating colonialism. The same forms of knowledge continued their existence in contemporary academic discourse according to Cohn. For instance concepts of tradition and modernity preserve their colonial roots.

Since the 9/11 attacks and United States' war on Afghanistan and Iraq the attention of the anthropologists is focused on Muslim women. It can be argued that post-colonial anthropology entered a new phase as the international political discourse targeted the savage Muslim men who enslaved Muslim women with their religious dogmas. Nancy Lindisfarne (2008) draws attention to this new state of imperialism, namely the American imperialism that forces anthropologists to take a political action. With the pressure of the global political and economic system that seeks to preserve the interests of the US in the Middle East that curtained the social, cultural and historical background of the flourishing fundamentalist Islamic forces in the region, the academics, including the anthropologists started to take violent patriarchy as an essential feature of Islam. This is a "capitalist/Orientalist paradigm" for Lindisfarne which "naturalizes inequality" (Lindisfarne, 2008, p. 28). It questions how domination systems like race, Islamism or patriarchy are linked to structural inequalities like the ones veiled women are subject to. More importantly the paradigm exposes how all types of inequalities are endorsed by force. She continues that in this paradigm gender relations are based on two "lies": it is men's ability and obligation to protect women from external threats and it is men's ability and obligation to protect the society from the evils that are sourced from women. Failing to fulfil these missions is associated with impotency and the failing men are feminized. The paradigm can also work in reverse direction. Lindisfarne argues that it has both "oppressive" and emancipatory" ends in gender relations in the Middle East just as in the issue of veiling (2008, p. 29). Veiling is seen as a protest to capitalism and Euro-American imperialism and it is also used as a method to maintain patriarchal authority. The capitalist/Orientalist paradigm needs to be challenged by insistently questioning the link between American imperialism and issues of gender in the Middle East, and the rest of the world. Naming American

imperialism has become a taboo and this taboo has led to a setback in the anthropology of the Middle East. “Much that is written is as full of holes as Swiss cheese; or more perniciously, it obfuscates, and reproduces new kinds of highly gendered capitalist/ Orientalist discourse” (2008, p.41). From this discussion, it seems evident that the contemporary challenge in front of anthropology, more specifically post-colonial anthropology is to shed light on the opposite direction. Rather than focusing on the patriarchal aspects of Islam in the Middle East, it is time for the anthropologists to question why political Islam and other fundamentalist movements were chosen as the path to resent Euro-American imperialism and the role of American imperialism in the rise of these movements.

Even though it has many theoretical shortcomings, *Orientalism* is one of the major studies that analyse Western hegemonic discourse and continue to be influential in post-colonial analysis. Furthermore, as I explain in detail in detail in the third section of this chapter, it had a significant influence on gender and women’s studies. Orientalism’s shifting meaning from the study of eastern civilizations and languages to a discourse of Western domination of the East is a profoundly discussed issue in the academia. I agree with the view that not every study on the so-called “Orient” carries an underlying intention to dominate. Establishing a hierarchy between East and the West by attributing essential characteristics, making overgeneralizations by neglecting or underestimating cultural diversities come to the fore as the chief symptoms of hegemonic Orientalism. I believe this is the answer to the question how come the studies of some academicians of Islam and Middle East studies, like Albert Hourani’s, were welcome and some are harshly disparaged, like Gustave E. von Grunebaum’s.

### **2.3 Feminist Postcolonial Theory**

Two projects constitute the foundation of feminist postcolonial theory; to insert feminist concerns into conceptualizations of colonialism and post-colonialism, and to racialize mainstream feminist theory. As Reina Lewis and Sarah Mills (2003) argue, except Gayatri Spivak who is a very visible figure, postcolonial studies overlooked the contributions of the dynamism that feminist theory provided for the

critical studies in colonialism, imperialism, race and power. It is more common to see commitments to the works of, for example, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon and Edward Said than the works of women scholars and activists such as Angela Davis, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde or bell hooks. However, according to Lewis and Mills it is clear that current feminist postcolonial theory pressurizes mainstream postcolonial theory by constantly underlining gender issues. Moreover, by “specifying those elements of colonial subjectivities which are masculine rather than general” the theorists were able to deal with complex construction process of national subjectivity and “the elision of the masculine with the national” (Lewis & Mills, 2003, pp. 2-3). This resulted in an analysis of association of femininity and female stereotyping with the nationalist anti-colonialism, whereby the female represents the pre-colonial, the traditional and domestic (Chatterjee, 1989; Lewis & Mills, 2003). In a similar way, feminist postcolonial theory addresses, “the way women have become the potent symbols of identity and visions of society and the nation” in the postcolonial world; the way that women actively participate in feminist debates and struggles; and the ways that the West is brought in contemporary gender politics (Abu-Lughod, 1998, p. 3).

Doing reforms in women’s condition has been in the agenda of both colonisers and the nationalist movements. However, as Ania Loomba (1998) explains, in both colonial and nationalist discourses we cannot learn about their feelings and responses to these changes, they were not located as agents in the anti-colonial struggles. Their subjectivities were overlooked even in the postcolonial theory. Feminist postcolonial theory’s intervention to the way issue of agency is discussed by the mainstream postcolonial theory has been initially through drawing attention to the violence that colonial women were subject to by both patriarchy and colonialism and their non-existence in the political and scholarly discussions that focus on their lives. Gayatri Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988) is a ground-breaking work that integrates the concept of subaltern to the feminist postcolonial theory through exhibiting the absence of women’s voices in the colonial and patriarchal debates about the practice of *sati*<sup>6</sup> and concluding that the

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<sup>6</sup> *Sati* is the practice of widow immolation in India. It was outlawed for the whole country in 1861 by the British rule.

subaltern cannot speak within these debates. Lata Mani (1998) is another scholar who studied the discussions on the practice of *sati* in colonial India in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. She shares the same starting point with Spivak, as she states:

It is my contention that although *sati* became an alibi for colonial civilizing mission on the one hand and on the other hand a significant occasion for indigenous autocritique, the women who burned was neither subjects nor even the primary objects of concern in the debate of its prohibition. They were, rather, the ground for a complex and competing set of struggles over Indian society and definitions of Hindu tradition. (Mani, 1998, p.2)

The issues related with place and representation of women in anti-colonial, nationalist projects have been explored through diverse standpoints. Representation of native women as subordinate and “quietist” and the policies confining women to their traditional gender roles while conferring civil rights and liberties on them continued in the anti-colonial nationalism in the post-colonial period (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 207, p. 95). Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (1994) note that women’s interests were subordinate to the interests of the nation which is defined on the basis of a “masculinist ideology and material power” as discussed by Deniz Kandiyoti and Jean Franco . Yet there is a deep rooted symbolic association of women, usually as mothers, with the nation, and this has implications for the feminist approaches to the status of women. On the one hand it has been and still is equated with the level of civilization of that society; on the other hand it symbolizes the national identity twined with religion and traditions liberated from the colonising powers. The first symbolic association implies, at the ideological level, a universal essential category of women that stays outside the cultural development (Williams & Chrisman, 1994, pp. 193-194). This perception is widely shared by First World feminism, as discussed in detail below. The latter association is mostly adopted by right wing movements in which women also actively take part in some countries as a result of their political rights and become both subjects and objects of conservative discourses (Loomba, 1998).

Another ideological implication of the sexualised representations of colonised societies in the imperial discourse is the myth of the “black male sexual threat to white femininity” which adds a racial dynamic to the sexuality embedded in the civilizing mission (Williams & Chrisman, 1994, p. 193). They argue that this myth

continues to be influential in political and cultural spheres especially with regard to the political Islam. Moreover colonial discourse's association of the colonised others with femininity which dates back to Sigmund Freud's description of women as "the dark continent" is also critically analysed in postcolonial and feminist postcolonial theories (1994, p. 194).

The second main problematic area that feminist postcolonial theory dwells upon is the way Third World woman is represented in Western feminist discourse and its construction as the ultimate "other". Marnia Lazreg (1988) addresses the issue by questioning the nature of the feminist project and its relation to the 'other women' by asking whether the academic feminism is inevitably "Western gynocentric" and exerts a discursive power over the non-Western women. She argues that this Western gynocentrism engendered an "essentialism of otherhood" and contents that it results from failing to comprehend the "intersubjective foundation of difference" which necessitates perceiving the lives of the Third World women as meaningful, as shaped by social, cultural, and economic conditions, and as adapting to, altering or resisting their social environment just like the lives of the First World women. Lazreg suggests respecting their individualities instead of analysing them on the basis of the categories of western feminism. On the other hand she warns that such an approach that follows anti-humanism, the rise of which historically corresponds to the collapse of French colonialism and the end of the Algerian War, bears the risk of essentializing of difference, confining them to the categories such as race and nation. Moreover she highlights the distinctions of "us and them", "subjects and objects" that Western feminism creates on the basis of binary oppositions. Another risk that respecting the individuality of the Third World women bears, as mentioned by Lazreg is "indifference", possibility of saying anything about the non-Western women in the name of documenting their differences. (1988, pp. 96-100). Chandra Talpade Mohanty extensively discusses the same issue in her article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (1999). In her words, "the average Third-World woman" is depicted as victimized and lacking in agency leading an "essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and being 'Third World' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, family oriented, victimized,

etc.)” (Mohanty, 1999, p. 305). She argues that in much of the current feminist discourse, a power is derived from this process of homogenization and systemization of the oppression of women in the Third World. Believing that objectification of women needs to be named and challenged, Mohanty (1999) also argues that this mode of defining women according to their object status, in terms of how they are affected by certain institutions and systems is the characteristic of using “women” as a category of analysis. Categorization of the Third World women as victims of male violence, visualizing them only within familial systems or religious ideologies, or taking them as subjects “in development” are very much characteristics of the Western feminist discourse. Conversely, as Ien Ang (1995) rightly states, in most of the feminist theory whiteness stands as the unmarked category and the others need to be specified: black, Third World, migrant, etc. She continues that accordingly the position of the non-white, non-Western in a white Western dominated world has to be impure and dependent. Representation of the ‘other’ is also a problematic issue for Ang. She asks “How should be the other represented? Or should white feminists refrain from representing the other at all? Would the problem be solved if more ‘other’ women start raising their voices and presenting their points of view?” (Ang, 1995, p. 195). She concludes that once the otherness is represented by the other, the unity of ‘women’ as an essential category of feminism will be disrupted.

When it comes to human rights and activism, whether it is ethical to intervene in some political situations related to female circumcision/ female genital mutilation, the use of burqa and veil, and seclusion is a challenge that contemporary feminist theory faces. Lewis and Mills (2003) suggest “rather than assuming that Third World women can be spoken for and that these practices are simply oppressive, as they seem to many western feminists, women in other cultures need to be consulted and worked alongside so that they set the agenda for political action” (2003, p. 9). It is a matter of acknowledging their agency, just like the agency of the western subject. Ang points out the problems in this multiculturalist approach with respect to the issue of ‘dealing with differences’. She claims that feminism (white/Western) conceives itself as a nation, “a ‘natural’ political destination for all women, no matter how multicultural.” (1995, p. 191). She suggests a politics of partiality which

does not melt the differences in its predefined principles but leaves room for ambiguities. Ang also states that dealing with difference often corresponds to “recognition, understanding and dialogue” (1995, p. 192) with a belief in the power of open communication. However she asserts that there will be barriers in front of an open and honest communication but these barriers should be taken as an asset rather than a drawback.

The assumption that a single feminist standpoint can represent women from all around the world has further consequences in the feminist discourse, among feminist scholars and the Third World women. As Judith Butler (1990) puts clearly “the premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism, understood as a seamless category of women, inevitably generates multiple refusals to accept the category” (1990, p. 14). The dominantly unmarked status of “whiteness” in the feminist discourse compels ‘other’ women to say “I’m a feminist but...” (Ang, 1995, p. 190) or create their own discourses of gender and woman’s rights against the prevailing Western discourse. These two main sites of argumentation can be specifically explored in the scholarly discourse on Middle Eastern women that open up new paths in both in Middle Eastern studies and postcolonial theory.

Contemporary feminist theory, with influences from postcolonial theory, postmodern theory and poststructuralism offers a series of perspectives about doing feminist research which deal with questions of power and representation. Including women’s voices to feminist research has become increasingly widespread in feminist scholarship and has almost turned into a norm. As Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True (2010) note, “Many feminist researchers have been influenced by the research questions generated by women’s movements and consider a moral imperative that their research should include women’s voices” (Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 465). They also mention that the criticisms against the sexism of science invited feminists to study women’s experiences and lives and opened the way for oral history and life narrative methods in history and qualitative methods that use women’s voices in anthropological and sociological studies (Risman, 1993; Harding, 1987; Gluck & Patai, 1991; Oakley, 1981 cited in Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 469). I also consider particularly the impact of subaltern studies in this

epistemological approach very significant in their critiques about the absence of women's voices.

## **2.4 Discourse on Muslim Women in the Muslim Middle East and North Africa**

The initial Western academic interest in women in the Middle East was in the nineteenth century colonial period, maintained the same approaches with the other fields of colonial discourse, namely Eurocentricism, binarism, and essentialism, and continued to be prevalent until the 1970s and 1980s when the feminist postcolonial theory gained strength and Middle Eastern scholars began producing a critical and challenging discourse. Rapid changes in the region that were brought along with modernization, like urban development, emergence of middle-class, increasing access to education, and the civil rights bestowed to women triggered the rise of feminist movements and a growing interest in gender issues. The specificity of this field of academic studies from the other postcolonial studies has been its focus on Islam. Taking Islam as the primary cause, the main explanatory factor in the social and cultural phenomena in Muslim countries has been a common ground in the Eurocentric, Western approaches and this tendency is widely criticized by Middle Eastern scholars.

Marnia Lazreg in her article “Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria” (1988) suggests that Algeria can be an “ideal type” of the intersection between colonialism, social sciences, and discourse on women and elaborates the academic writings on Algerian women by the US, European feminists, and Algerian feminists in her article. She presents how Western academic writings reproduce dominant assumptions about the Middle East which are informed by Orientalist and evolutionary knowledge about Islamic societies that concentrate on religion/tradition paradigm in the way they are rooted in French colonial epistemology. This approach, as she rightly claims, creates “a reductive, ahistorical conception of women” (Lazreg, 1988, p. 85). While Islam emerges as the key factor, tradition is “exemplified by the veil, seclusion, clitoridectomy, and so on” (p. 85). Among these traditions veil has prevalence as an essential symbol of

women through which researchers attribute meaning to the social phenomena which is significantly unfamiliar to them and as a reflection the researchers' suspicions and "mistrust" that makes them perceive it as "a hiding device" (p. 85). Both Islam and tradition are argued to be obstacles before women's westernization. She also presents how this understanding is preserved uncritically in academic feminism despite its obvious weaknesses and states that Algerian women are "subsumed under the less-than-neutral label of 'Islamic women' or 'Arab women' or 'Middle Eastern women'" (p. 87).

Universalism is a common ground that Western feminist writings share about the oppression of the Third World women and Mohanty (1999) illustrates by giving references to studies on veiling in various Muslim countries how methodological universalism is achieved through an arithmetic approach to traditions that involves giving numbers of occurrences. She states that the number of the women who veil is correlated with the universality of sexual segregation and control over women and the meaning attributed to this practice in different countries and social contexts is ignored. She describes the case of Iran as an example in which in 1979 revolution middle class women veiled to express their solidarities with lower class women and after the revolution veiling became mandatory (1999, p. 312).

Mohanty adds another dimension to the reductionism in the way the relation between Islamic ideology and women is described in Western feminism. Agreeing with Mina Modares (1981), she notes that Islam is considered as an ideology isolated from economic and social relations and women in the Islamic societies are accepted to be affected from it in the same way regardless of their social positions (Modares, 1981, cited in Mohanty, 1999, p. 310). She gives Patricia Jeffrey's (1979) study on Pirzada women as an example and criticizes it on the grounds that it exhibits that a unitary notion of Islam, reduces the ideological peculiarities into economic relations, and generalizes them (Jeffrey, 1979, cited in Mohanty, 1999, p. 310)

Another common point of reference shared by Western feminism about Arab and Muslim women is familial systems. This point is addressed again by Mohanty by

referring to Elizabeth Cowie's (1978) argument that the kinship structures have a political nature and they should be comprehended as ideological practices having a political nature that construct and define women within their families (Cowie, 1978, cited in Mohanty, 1999, p. 309). She goes on to explain that it is problematical to assume that the patriarchal kinship structure is the source of women's subordination and women are "sexual-political subjects prior to entry into kinship structures"; and it is equally misleading to assume that there is a single and unchanging patriarchal kinship structure in all the Arab and Muslim societies (1999, p. 309). She argues that the changes and the practices specific to families being neglected, the patriarchal family is described outside history, unchanging since the Prophet Muhammad.

In this respect, it is also necessary to mention Joyce Zonana's (1993) discussion of feminist Orientalism as another path through which Orientalism diffused into representations of Middle Eastern women. Zonana explains that beginning from the 18<sup>th</sup> century travel writings on the Middle East, the notion of Oriental despotism have been integrated to and circulating in the liberal feminist discourse about the status of the Middle Eastern women. She notes that feminists like Marry Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Margaret Fuller, and Florence Nightingale used Oriental images to explain their critiques about the women's problems in the West. They used feminist Orientalism as a "rhetorical strategy" to prevent the feminist claims to be seen as a threat to the society though showing that the origins of the patriarchal domination lied in the East and they had to be cleared away from the Western society in order to make it more "Western" (Zonana, 1993, p. 594). Yet, in contrast to Zonana's arguments that leave no space for the possibility of intercultural communication between women, Özlem Ezer (2012) refers to Charlotte Weber's study on women's congresses organized in the years 1911-1950 which revealed the dialogues between women from various countries. Agreeing with Charlotte Weber, Ezer reminds us in her study on Western women travellers' writings about Ottoman territories and the Ottoman women travellers' writings about Europe that the discourse has not always been pejorative and it even contained some envy for Turkish women, men or Islam (Ezer, 2012, pp. 27-28).

The knowledge about social conditions of women in Muslim societies have been generated dominantly through an essentialist, reductive, and Eurocentric framework until development of ‘other’, ‘indigenous’, ‘local’, ‘alternative’<sup>7</sup>, and Islamic feminisms. Valentine M. Moghadam (1993) summarizes in her study about gender and social change in the Middle East, the debates about the status of women until 1990s. In these debates it is commonly accepted that women had an inferior status compared to men due to the Islamic theology and law. A woman’s place is the household and her role is defined as a mother and wife. Man, who is the breadwinner, has the one-sided right of divorce. The sex segregation is regulated by the notion of family honour, which gives men the right to control women’s mobility and behaviour. Women get married at an early age and give birth to an average of six children. High fertility, low literacy and low labour force participation are associated with low status of women, which is perceived as an outcome of the prevalent role of Islamic law and customs in the society. The contentions about the inferior status of women in the Muslim societies and their religious justifications perpetuate the barriers to gender equality. Education and employment are inconsistent with the women’s most important function, which is reproduction, and therefore women should be restricted to their homes and be secluded in the public domain.

However, as I already mentioned, the gender inequality in the Muslim societies cannot be solely explained by Islam as there are differences among the countries with respect to their adherence to Islamic principles. Even within the same country, the status of women may show great variations. It is also known that gender asymmetry exists in non-Muslim societies as well and Islam is not the only religion that is claimed to reinforce this inequality. As Moghadam states “By examining changes over time and variations within societies and by comparing Muslim and non-Muslim gender patterns, one recognizes that the status of women in Muslim societies is neither uniform nor unchanging nor unique.” (1993, p.7)

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<sup>7</sup> By using these terms I do not mean to suggest that Western feminism has a central place in the feminist discourse and non-Western feminisms do not occupy a space of their own apart from reacting to it. My aim is to locate them in the historical processes that gave rise to emergence of feminist discourses in Muslim societies and I use both of them critically.

Before examining the main issues and subjects of research in the contemporary academic discourse on Muslim and Middle Eastern women, I believe that it is essential to understand the emergence of and changes in the feminist discourse in the Middle East. Deniz Kandiyoti (1996) presents a valuable review of its historical evolution. She explains that the first wave of feminist discourse is strongly associated with nationalist movements especially in Turkey, Iran and Egypt during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There was a tension between two trends in nationalist movements, namely a trend supporting women's citizenship rights and social equality and the anti-modernist trend worrying about the impact of Western values on their culture in post-colonial context. The discursive possibilities of feminist scholarship was structured by encounters with imperial West, agendas of national development and taking Islam as a symbol of cultural identity. The identification of cultural authenticity with Islam resulted in feminist scholarship taking two separate ways: denying that Islam is oppressive for women and claiming that oppressive practices do not belong to Islam. The first direction aims to preserve the dignity of Muslim women against sexually demoralized Western women. The second direction depends on a myth which tells about a golden age of Islam against its contemporary patriarchal interpretations. Kandiyoti states that this strategy opens up the possibilities for "indigenous feminisms" which do not stem from Western influences. It has been very much favoured during the 1980s when Islamist tendencies gained strength as a feminist intervention (Kandiyoti, 1996, p. 10).

However, second wave feminism is characterized by the rise of social science paradigms and developmentalism. Emergence of social science disciplines corresponds to the 1950s and 1960s in the Middle East. The influence of Marxism and modernization theories was crystallized in questions about family and women's roles. Within this line of thought the modern/ tradition dichotomy showed itself in homogenization of non-Western societies as traditional and neglecting various forms of women's oppression in different cultures for the sake of broad socio-economic development indicators (Kandiyoti, 1996, pp.10-11).

After the 1970s more significant influences of Western feminism have been seen. Kandiyoti mentions three groups of scholars as the source of this influence that marks the third wave of feminism:

Western scholars working on the Middle East with a high stake in bringing their Middle Eastern material in line with the various paradigms of academic feminism, Western-trained Middle Eastern scholars, expatriate or locally resident, with multiple reference groups in Western academe and their countries of origin, and locally trained scholars, some with access only to works in translation and to more localized debates (1996, p. 12).

She continues to argue that the outcome has been selective integration of various feminist theory concepts into the Middle East studies. Middle Eastern women were depicted as weak and oppressed or as the embodiment of strength and solidarity. Some perceived the familism of the Middle Eastern societies as limiting, some as rewarding. An enduring concern has been Western ethnocentrism and positioning of the researcher vis-à-vis the so called ‘other’. The liberal feminist approach, with its stress on removing barriers to gender equality, and socialist feminist stress on world systems and dependency theories, colonialism and neo-colonialism in explaining gender equality have found their places in the field.

In the late 1980s the consensus that women “constituted a category sharing a common oppression” (Kandiyoti, 1996, p. 15) broke down and a crisis about difference led to major internal critiques. The US, white middle-class feminism was accused of being racist and ethnocentric, in Europe debates about the cultural rights of immigrants and minorities resulted in multiculturalist policies. Feminist theory was highly affected by these changes in addition to post-structuralism. The last phase is characterized by abandonment of grand narratives but the emphasis on differences which may potentially lead to extreme relativism or “refined conceptions of political alliance” (p.18).

The specific reasons why Middle Eastern women did not relate to Western feminism should also be stated. Saddeka Arabi (1991) summarizes them as “the insistence of Western liberation movement on wages as a liberating force”, “the insistence of Western movements that family and kinship ties are a hindrance to women’s liberation” and “West’s identification of ‘the problem’ of Muslim women

as a religious problem" (Arabi, 1991, p. 104). These factors too had a role in the formation of indigenous feminism or feminisms in the Middle East.

As it can be easily anticipated, Edward Said's work *Orientalism* has changed to a great extent the feminist discourse in the Middle East. As Lila Abu-Lughod (2001) states, firstly it opened a way for others to go beyond Said in "exploring gender and sexuality of the Orientalist discourse itself" (p. 101). She takes the book Colonial Fantasies (1998) by Meyda Yeğenoğlu as an example. Yeğenoğlu criticizes how gender and sexuality becomes a secondary issue in the analysis of colonial discourse in the works of Said and others. In contrast to such a positioning she underlines that "representations of cultural and sexual difference are constitutive of each other" (Yeğenoğlu, 2001, p. 1) Second, *Orientalism* has been a strong basis for the flourishing historical and anthropological research that stated to be going beyond the stereotypes about Muslim Middle Eastern woman. Third, East/West politics, which is a central issue in Orientalism started to be re-examined by the new wave of feminism in the Middle East. Lastly, Said's claim that politics and academics are bound has showed how Middle East gender studies are positioned in a global context. One crucial question in this field is whether local feminisms shall be taken as "indigenous or imported, liberating or disciplinary" as it is very much influential on the debates about which feminism fits the Middle Eastern context (2001, p. 106). She argues that the argument in *Orientalism* that East/West division is not a geographic or cultural issue but an outcome of imperial encounters follows that denouncing feminism "as an inauthentic Western import" is as improper "as celebrating it as a local or indigenous project" (2001, p. 106). The first claim preserves the idea that there is an original culture prior to imperial encounters; the latter overlooks the role of colonialism in the Middle East.

It is beyond doubt that *Orientalism* has had a very significant influence on the studies on Muslim and Middle Eastern women, providing a solid ground to build up a new epistemology against the essentialism, Eurocentricism, surveillance, and binarism in the pre-existing analysis and theorisations on this field. Nevertheless a post-modernist, post-structuralist counter-discourse against the biased representations of Muslim women can also have consequences which, I believe, can

overlook the oppressive aspects of the social structures and ideologies that perpetuate women's subordination. As already noted by some feminist scholars, a potential danger of the book's impact on the Middle East gender studies is a drawback in the critical look at local institutions and politics with the postcolonial and postmodern wave of thought. Haideh Moghissi's (1999) arguments in her book *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis* are valuable in this respect. Moghissi accuses Middle East scholars as making "a costly intellectual experiment" while developing an anti-Orientalist approach with "an uncritical fascination with Western postmodernism" (Moghissi, 1999, p. 63). According to the counter-hegemonic discourse of the scholars supporting this anti-Orientalist trend, the prevalence of some Islamic practices such as hijab and women's seclusion is an outcome of colonialism. The policies of colonialism which put the rights and liberation of Muslim women at its centre created a reaction and resistance which hid women from the Western gaze.

Moghissi notes that the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the assassination of President Anwar el-Sadat in 1981, the Persian Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq reinforced the Western Islamophobia and stereotypes about Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic Orient. The crucial point of difference in these stereotypes was the Islamic gender politics. Inequality against women, their maltreatment, practices like veiling and sex segregation dominated the representations of Muslim women and they were fuelled by everyday racism. To counterbalance this discourse, another discourse was produced which drew attention to the heterogeneity of Muslim societies and differences in Muslim women's status with respect to class, ethnicity and geographical diversities. For Moghissi the sophisticated publications, case studies, and social histories succeeded to a great extent to challenge the Orientalist and neo-Orientalist discourses. However they had to achieve this "without getting caught in an apologetic or self-denying defence of Islamic gender practices or a justification of the oppressive discourses and actions of Islamist ideologies and rulers" (1999, p. 37).

About the impact of *Orientalism* Kandiyoti (1996) argues that firstly there has been a focus on representations and social analysis has lost its place. Secondly, dealing

too much with East/West dichotomy resulted in an overemphasis of the Western hegemony and not enough emphasis on diversities within the Middle Eastern societies. And lastly, a point that Moghissi makes as well, attention has been turned away from local forces, institutions and cultural processes that subordinate women. An internal critique about the gendered power structure in the Middle East is a necessity according to both Kandiyoti and Abu-Lughod.

Considering the evolution of feminist discourse in the Middle East and the impact of *Orientalism*, Mounira Charrad (2011) lists five core objectives scholarship on gender in the Middle East: “the critique of Orientalism past and present; the exploration of the diversity within Islam; the study of the states and gender with respect to symbolic representations, institutions and kin based politics; the analysis of women’s agency; and the debates surrounding feminism and the veil” (Charrad, 2011, p. 418). The first objective is broadly discussed above. The second objective shows itself in the studies about how Islam is lived. Charrad states that women have firstly demanded and created spaces for themselves in ritual practices and notes that women in Iran and Saudi Arabia have been successful in challenging the existing orthodoxy by adopting exclusively female worship practices (Aghaie, 2005, Doumato, 2000, cited in Charrad, 2011, p. 426). Saba Mahmood’s (2004) study on the mosque movement in Egypt and Catharina Raudvere’s (2003) study on a Sufi women’s endowment in Turkey should also be included to these studies. Consciously attributing religious meaning to daily activities such as work, family and political issues is another aspect of how women live Islam. Ayşe Saktanber’s (2002b) study *Living Islam* is such a portrayal. The Turkish Muslim women in the study identify themselves as “conscious Muslims” and this identification results in a search for religiously appropriate ways of organizing daily lives. Their exclusion from the public space opens up new spaces which are in their control and regulation.

There are further studies on women’s agency that Charrad mentions. For example Yeşim Arat’s (2005) account on women in Turkish RP shows that their interpretations of Islam are not in line with secularists’ understanding of the party: “They wanted headscarves but not polygamy and they wanted Islamic state because

they associated it with a moral state.” (Charrad, p. 427). To sum up, in the discussions about women’s agency there are two related lines of thought: the patriarchal structures dominant in family, work, politics and religion and simultaneous challenge of moral boundaries and codes by women through their alternative institutions and daily practices. Over time women “construct new social realities and by so doing, in effect change the rules altogether.” (Charrad, p. 428)

Moghissi (1999), accepting that studies of Middle Eastern women are more sensitive to the complexity of the issue and the discourse is more critical against the Eurocentric representations, argues that the postmodern, post-structuralist trend has the tendency to overlook the role of Islamic institutions and practices in preserving the existing patriarchy. She mentions two groups of scholars in this respect. The first group considers the role of patriarchal factors, internal and global economic and political structures which are important components of the male centred networks. They reject the dominant, essentialist conceptions of Islam and patriarchy. She mentions the names of Badran (1994), Hale (1996), Hatem (1993), Imam (1994), Kandiyoti (1991, 1995), and Sabbagh (1996) among this group. She refers to Kandiyoti who argues that Islam has encountered various cultural complexities which led to different types and levels of patriarchies. These complexities directly affect women’s access to education, employment and politics. The second group of scholars theorize about women in the Middle East by “locating Muslim women in history as social and political agents, not despite Islam but because of it” (p. 39). Afshar (1994), L. Ahmed (1992), Marsot (1996), Najmabadi (1995) are among the names that Moghissi refers to in this respect. Muslim feminists from this group claim that there is an egalitarian and ethical aspect of Islam which is more important than its legalistic aspect, because it entangles the subversion of the sexual hierarchy (Ahmed, 1992). For instance, Riffat Hassan, who is an Islamic feminist scholar working particularly on the issue of women’s equality in Islam, explains women’s status in Muslim societies with the belief among Muslims that men are not equal to women, that they have an advantageous position. Muslim men are attributed the task of determining the theological and sociological status of women to themselves. Moreover they prohibited the emergence of female Islamic scholars and thus women became unaware of their rights in Islam. For

Hassan, women should deconstruct these Islamic discourses and challenge the monolithic power of *ulama*. Including the scholars who contend that Islam is the path to the emancipation of women, this second group of scholars depict “a rosy picture” of women in Islamic societies (Moghissi, 1992, p. 41). Moghissi argues that this picture is as irrelevant to the reality as the Orientalist discourse. In contrast to the victimized image of the Muslim women, this new representation portrays them as independent and conscious individuals who actively participate in political and social life thanks to the veil that they invented as a symbol of indigenous, traditional, non-Westoxicated, and modest life style. Moghissi agrees with the authors who claim that hearing Muslim women’s own voices and life stories is the better way of understanding them. However she is against the overgeneralization of the experiences of these women who “break down certain barriers to their participation in public spaces” by using the veil (p. 42).

Studies on Islamist women in Turkey starting from the 1990s have been a significant intervention to the victimization discourse regarding the women in the Middle East. In addition to Saktanber’s (2002b) ethnographic work that portrays pious women as active agents that build up an Islamic lifestyle to live Islam as conscious Muslims and Yeşim Arat’s work on political activism of Islamist women, we can also mention Catharina Raudvere’s (2003) ethnography on the agency of women in creating a Sufi endowment, the ethnographic works Kenan Çayır (2000) and by Zehra Yılmaz (2015) on Islamist women’s civil society activism. The stress on their agencies is presented in these studies together with their struggles with patriarchal authority in the Islamist movement and their demands from the secular state for rights of religious expression or their struggles of living an Islamic life in a secular social order.

The following sections of this review of studies on Muslim and Middle Eastern women dwell upon some commonly covered subjects that are also specifically relevant for my analysis of the studies in the Turkish context. These are veiling, Islam and feminism, the category of Muslim woman, Islam and modernity, nationalism and state ideologies, and Islamic fundamentalism. Despite the fact that there are commonalities in the way these issues are addressed in Middle Eastern

women's studies, it is vital to understand that the social and political factors in each Middle Eastern country have a determining role in ontological and epistemological levels. Not only Muslim women's experiences but also the boundaries and possibilities of discussing these experiences by the feminist scholars change from one country to another. Besides, as I mention with respect to the issue of Islam and feminism, the role of expatriate or Western trained scholars add another dimension to the feminist debates because they may have more freedom of expression compared to their home countries and they also address a Western audience in addition to their local audience. The unique secularization and modernization history of Turkey and the rise of Islamist movement in this context deserves a special attention in the Middle Eastern women's studies however it is interesting that it has been only a limited part of the debates in this field.

### ***Veiling***

A study that reviews the issue of veiling in Orientalist discourse is by Meyda Yeğenoğlu. In *Colonial Fantasies: Cultural and Sexual Difference in the Discourse of Orientalism* (1998), she takes the veil as a symbol that stands as a core phenomenon in the Western imagination and discourse about the East. The veil represents much more than a religious dress code in this context; it is a symbol that enables the Western viewer to attribute characteristics to the Oriental space which is out of sight. Revealing the mystery behind the veil becomes an issue of domination and control for the colonizing powers. Yeğenoğlu states that veil, which constitutes an obstacle between the Western eye and the Oriental woman's body, keeps the reach of Western eye and desire away from the Oriental woman's body. In her analysis, she lays emphasis on the formation of the veiled woman as a subject who needs to be unveiled, controlled and corrected from a Western colonial perspective. The veil hides the true Orient and reveals its way of existence at the same time. Moreover, for her it essentializes the Muslim, Oriental woman and the Orient as a deceptive being.

Moghissi (1999) is not contented with the studies on veiling and many other Islamic practices failing to address Islamic fundamentalism, particularly to contemporary challenges to feminism. While calling attention to the positive aspects of Islam for

women for fighting the rising Islamophobia in the West, these studies smooth the sharp edges of fundamentalism. She fears that this may lead to an unintentional support to the most repressive political movement in the Muslim countries and validate fundamentalists' solution of attributing women the role of representing authenticity and cultural revival in the struggle against crisis of modernization.

In her deconstruction of the argument that veil is a tool for empowerment, she highlights that in many Islamic countries veiling is not a choice or a tool but a mandatory practice forced by governments, social norms or powerful religious authorities. Moghissi finds the argument that veiling clashes with consumerism and removes class differences "a wishful thinking" (1999, p. 45) and gives examples of higher class women in Iran and Jordan who are consumers of Western fashion. The relationship between veiling and consumerism is discussed in many studies on women and Islam in Turkey, some of which I include to my discourse analysis. Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002), Jenny B. White (2002), Özlem Sandıkçı and Gülistan Ger (2005, 2007, 2010), Banu Gökarıksel and Anna Secor (2010, 2011) are some of the scholars who show that veiling has been increasingly integrated to fashion and consumerism in Turkey since the mid-1990s. In their studies it is commonly argued that veiling styles are loaded with symbols of status, class, prosperity, upward social mobility, and consumerism. Therefore, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, I perceive another power that acts on women's subjectivities with respect to their practices of veiling, which is the power of capitalism. This power on the one hand pressures them to consume and on the other hand make them constantly redefine and negotiate the borders of the appropriate Islamic dress. For the assertion that veiling protects women from sexual harassment, Moghissi argues by referring to the sexual crimes, including rapes and murders, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bangladesh, Algeria, and Iran that the veil does not direct the attention away from women's sexuality.

Charrad (2011) states that veiling did not raise widespread discussions until the 1970s and 1980s. These are the years of Iranian Revolution, Islamic movements and Islamic nationalism. She refers to El Guindi's distinction "The early feminist lifting of the face-veil was about emancipation from exclusion; the voluntary wearing of

the hijab since the mid-seventies is about liberation from imposed, imported identities, consumerist behaviours, and an increasingly materialist culture.” (El Guindi, 1999, cited in Charrad, 2011, p. 430). Nilüfer Göle is one of the first scholars who see the veil as a modern phenomenon. As Haleh Afshar (1997) states Nilüfer Göle (like Leila Ahmed, Fatima Mernissi, Haideh Moghissi and Fatma Sabbah) sees veiling as a political issue for Islamist movements. It takes specific forms and shapes in different Muslim societies. Veiling is an outcome of a process that rebuilds traditionalism for overcoming the problems that modernization process brings along. Göle (1991) maintains that the new style of veiling is an expression of the educated, urban, and conservative Muslim women’s demands of recognition of their identities in the public sphere collectively. According to her, veiled Muslim women gained visibility through Islamism and modernism, and share the same spaces of politics and education with men. There is a new woman under the veil who shatters Islamic gender descriptions. This woman is in contact with modernism which is actually forbid by Islamism, and this contact leads to many paradoxes. Charrad also refers to Leila Ahmed (2005) who agrees with Göle in the sense that Islamist discourses about veiling accept it as a way of welcoming modernity and feminism, however the divinely limits of gender roles preserve the male dominance. Another line of thought in the issue of veiling and agency, claims that the agency attributed to the choice of veiling might be illusionary. Charrad mentions the arguments of Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu (2008) that the Islamist groups associate the choice of veiling with the freedom of religious expression, while harshly opposing the democratic, Western ideals. I agree with Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu as well as Alev Çınar (2008) that the liberation of the veiled women cannot be discussed without addressing the need for a liberal democratic context. The liberation will be illusory if veiled women “cannot find an agency or even recognition as subjects other than as veiled women” (Çınar, 2008, p. 910) and veiled women can find this agency and recognition only in a democratic context where women’s rights are assured. Likewise Lazreg (2009) states that in spite of the claims of agency, veiling “essentializes women as a category, distinct from and necessarily inferior to men” (Charrad, 2011, p. 430). From a critical point of view, Lazreg argues that veiled women are objectified just like advertising objectifies women by exposing their bodies (2009).

The issue of headscarf ban should also be included to the subject of veiling in the Middle East. Turkey as the only secular country in the region with a predominantly Muslim population and also as a country that witnesses the rapid rise of Islamism especially since the 1990s, is a unique case to explore how veiled women's subjectivities and agencies are shaped by their encounters with state secularism. Studies by Elizabeth Özdalga (1998), Dilek Cindoglu (2011) and Anna Secor (2005) clearly show the experiences of exclusion, discrimination, and isolation that the ban at the universities and for the state institutions causes and the feelings of resentment and disappointment that it arises in veiled women. More importantly, the studies present how veiled women are left to cope with Islamic and secular patriarchy that restricts their agencies and opportunities for self-realization. The symbolism of the headscarf as a symbol of the Islamic threat to society was even perpetuated with the ban and created polarizations between veiled and unveiled women in such a way to hinder communication between the two sides. As Saktanber (2006) puts in her article about this symbolism:

Making women's headscarves the object of fear of Islamization has also obscured the common problems that are shared by both secular and devout women. This fear has nurtured an inability to cope not only with differences in society but also with the cultural resemblance between covered and uncovered women, and it is this inability to cope with resemblance, as much as the difference, that forms the basis of all exclusionary politics (Saktanber, 2006, pp. 26-27)

### ***Islam and Feminism***

Different standpoints in feminist scholarly debates on Islam and women play an essential role in the way Muslim women are represented in the academic discourse. Among these standpoints I can mention Western, colonial, First World, Orientalist standpoints that are already discussed above. Islamic feminists and secular feminists constitute a large group of Middle Eastern scholars studying women and Islam.

Secular feminism should be considered as an outcome of modernization and westernization processes in the Middle East. As Margot Badran (2005) notes, its emergence coincides with the urban upper and middle class women's demands for access to the products of modernization like printed materials and the increasing

rate of literacy among them. Islamic modernism and new nationalism were the frameworks of the early feminist discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the twentieth century the secular feminist have become active agents of democratization in the Middle Eastern societies and the discourse shared a “progressive” language with secular nationalism. In her extensive review of feminism in Iran, Valentine Moghadam (2002) describes this group as formed by activists and scholars who strongly oppose grounding women’s rights in Islam and Iran describing the first group as “Islamist feminists”. They assert that the existence of an Islamic Republic is the fundamental barrier to improving women’s status. She names three expatriate scholars who define themselves as secular leftists: Haideh Moghissi, Shahrzad Mojtabi, and Hammed Shahidian (Moghadam, 2002).

Islamic feminisms can be considered as a reaction to secular feminism and the modernist, Western approach it embodies and at the same time, as Badran states, was born at a “moment of late postcoloniality” in dominantly Islamic Middle Eastern states like Egypt and Iran as a result of a discontent with the states’ failure to establish democracy and develop economic prosperity (2005, p. 8). She adds that the new urban groups who felt insecure with cultural anomie and the uneven opportunities of modernity turned to tradition and Islam. It is not possible to describe Islamic feminist scholars within a single group since it diversifies not only with the differences in Islamic thought but also differences in culture and region (Mirza, 2005). Among Islamist feminists, Moghadam (2002) mentions three leading expatriate social scientists who are educated in Iran and the West and have close ties with feminist movement in Iran; Afsaneh Najmabadi, Nayereh Tohidi, and Ziba Mir-Hosseini. As Moghadam states these scholars survey Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) for the features and possibilities that support women’s rights. Mounirra Charrad (2011) contributes to the debate on Islamic feminists by similarly arguing that they do not perceive Islam as the reason of male domination in the Middle East and believe that Qur'an accepts equality among all humans. For some early Islamic feminists like Mernissi (1987) and Ahmed (1992) there was a time when Islam favoured sexual equality but the later androcentric readings of Qur'an by men in power created an understanding that subordinates women. In such a case the advantages of Islamic feminism are also debated. For instance Majid (1998)

claims that it is a powerful alternative to secularist feminism and when Islamic past is recovered, exempt from androcentric interpretations, it will be useful for Muslim women fighting for their rights. On the other hand Mojab (2001) believes that because of focusing too much on religious texts, the role of patriarchy in religion, state, law and culture is undermined in theory and practice (Mojab, 2011 cited in Charrad, 2011). Qudsia Mirza (2005) also directs criticism to Islamic feminisms and searching gender equality within Islamic framework. She states that this has two implications. Firstly, the idea of sexual equality becomes a spiritual, immaterial notion and women and men are defined complementary to each other and on the basis of their devotional duties to each other. Secondly, even though the feminist scholars harshly responded to the justification of lesser right for women in the orthodox interpretations of Islam, they have not handled the question of “when and to what extent the idea of sexual difference is acceptable within scripture” (2005, p. 312). Even though Islamist feminism offers women space to oppose male domination through a religiously legitimate line of thought in an Islamic social order or culture, it still leaves women subject to an ideology that is divinely legitimized, that cannot be challenged. I believe that this is the predicament that needs to be considered in the discussions of Islamist feminism.

Turkey has been a prominent case to observe secular feminism which should be understood as an outcome and expression of Turkish secularization history. In her discussion of the development of secular and Islamic feminisms in the Middle East Aksu Bora (2011b) reminds that women's claims for equal rights in the secular feminist discourse during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire has left their place to the discourse of enlightened women during the period of 1914-1940 which comprises the early years of Turkish Republic and modernization. Bora explains this change with the politics of modernization that took the pre-Islamic history as a reference in establishing new norms about nuclear family, honour, and gender and notes that Egypt and Iran had similar experiences too. The new cultural references demanded a break away from “traditions” (read: traditions of the Islamic history) and enlightened women who would adapt their lifestyles and world views to the new engagement of modern nationalism and feminism in which gender rights were no longer defined as political issues but rather cultural problems. Bora eloquently

argues that this is a very critical point in the discussions of Islamic and modern secular feminisms and makes an essential similarity between these two groups invisible, which is the replacement of political discourse and struggle with cultural concepts and discussions. Therefore the main issues are no longer discussed within the framework of women's rights but their cultural connotations which indicate what is right for women. She asserts that rather than taking the distinction between Islamic and secular feminisms as a given, there is a need to analyse how they are shaped in history (Bora, 2011b, pp. 167-176).

Feminism has not been accepted by the Islamist activist women of Turkey and they often reject to be called as Islamist feminists. Nonetheless I believe that their noteworthy literature on the issues of women's rights in Islam, veiling, and living Islam in state secularism should be considered as part of the discourse of Islam and feminism in the Middle East. A major handicap in circulation of this discourse is that it is published in Turkish.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Category of Muslim Woman***

“Muslim woman” as a category of analysis should be addressed as a notion that requires special consideration. It is discursively created in the colonial and postcolonial contexts, bears several connotations associated with the standpoints from which it is elaborated and these connotations have been transformed in time through epistemological shifts. In the colonial discourse it had connotations of passivity, victimhood, tradition, subalternity, alterity, and subordination together with a curious exotization. Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon (2005) elaborates this discursive production in her investigation of discursive production of the “Muslim woman” in the West and North Africa and agrees on the point that “the Muslim woman” is an invented category. She rejects the Western narrative of the “victimized Muslim woman” and the “Arabocentric narrative in which ‘the Muslim woman’ has no claims because Islam elevated her position fifteen hundred years ago.” (2005, p. 1). This category works both in Orientalist and feminist discourses

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<sup>8</sup> See Şişman, N. & Barbarosoğlu, F. (2000). *Kamusal Alanda Başörtülüler*.İstanbul: Timaş ; Ramazanoğlu, Y. (2012) *İşgal Kadınları: Emperyalist Feminizmle Uyanış Arasında*. İstanbul: Babil; Şişman, N. (2011). *Sinirsız Dünyanın Yeni Sınırı*. İstanbul: Timaş; Aktaş, C. (2005). *Bacdan Bayana*. İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık; Aktaş, C. (2006). *Türbanın Yeniden İcadi*. İstanbul: Kapı.

of West, and in nationalist and Islamic feminist discourses of colonial and postcolonial North Africa. She prefers the word “invention” rather than “representation” since the latter one contains “a binary opposition between true and false representation” and the first one takes the Muslim woman as an “unfixed, yet situated signifier.” (p. 1). The category of “Muslim woman” functions as a fixed category which refers to the otherness and inferior status of Islam in Orientalist discourse. She examines this category with Derrida’s notions of “excess” and “supplementary” meaning that the “Muslim woman” has an “in-between” space (in Homi Bhabha’s sense) that “cuts across the binary oppositions of self and other or slave and master” (p.1). She also claims that the “Muslim woman” is a “semiotic subject” who is a product of supply and demand principles serving political and ideological purposes. This subject is “constituted through previous discourses” but is “historically situated” (p. 2). Her third argument is that the “Muslim woman” is an invented category which is a cultural product that negotiates relations of power in the discourse of European identity, Arab nationalism, Orientalism, or national identities. Similarly Islamic culture is an “ideological or political invention that masquerades as an authentic Islamic tradition” (p. 2). Lastly she claims that discourses on Muslim woman (namely Orientalism, feminism, nationalism) are always varying with respect to the “enunciator’s location within an apparatus of power as she/he negotiates a position from which to speak” (p. 3). For Zayzafoon racial, social, educational, and gender privileges of the creators of this discourse influence how they “invent” the category of the “Muslim woman”.

Miriam Cooke opens its contemporary appearances in discourse to discussion in her “Roundtable discussion: Religion, Gender and the Muslimwoman” (Cooke, M., Ahmad, F., Badran, M., Moallem, M., and Zine J., 2008). By drawing attention to the point that in the contemporary discourse on gender and Islam the “Muslimwoman” appears as a category that “evokes a single identity”, she underlines that the extreme “concern with Muslim women today that veiled and even unveiled women are no longer thought as individuals: collectively they have become the Muslimwoman” (p.91). In this categorization, which is created by outside forces like non-Muslims or Muslim men, veil appears to be the marker that is above nationality, ethnicity, culture and history. Cooke argues that Muslim

women have both an insider and an outsider position within the Muslim communities, and this position is linked to the concept of veiling. While some Muslim women reject this identification, others welcome it. Despite the differences among the women that it refers to, it is a category that connects people in terms of religion and gender. This category works for both the fundamentalist Muslims that “vie for control over women’s bodies” and neo-Orientalists that are keen on preserving the “poor” Muslimwoman in the discourse.

Fawzia Ahmad (2008) approaches the argument from the issue of veiling. She claims that the Muslim women who veil can explain their reasons of veiling as an individual choice but the fact that it brings along a moral responsibility that surrounds and controls their lives transforms them into the Muslimwomen. She also remarks that there may be unveiled Muslim women who consider themselves devout. She asks a series of questions such as whether they will be outsiders or insiders, to what extent they will have a say in their group’s direction and whether she will be respected members of their mosques. Thus the “Muslimwoman” essentialism will be a kind of oppression by the group who associate it with veiling. Ahmad agrees with Cooke’s argument that “this new complex primary identity must be deconstructed and opened to contestation from within” (2008, p.100).

For Margot Badran (2008) the “religiously committed Muslim women” started to challenge the Muslimwoman model since 1980s (2008, p.103). The principles in Qur'an about gender equality that they underline are easier to spread globally with the new information technologies. In the west, soon after the 9/11 attacks they defended the Muslimwoman identity claiming that hijab was an individual choice that freed, not oppressed, women believers of Islam. The academic world as well welcomes the Muslimwomen/Muslim women as an authority. Badran states that around the world they claim and display their diversity in all aspects of their lives so the Muslimwoman as a constructed category proves to have a limited value.

Lastly, in this roundtable discussion Minoo Moallem’s (2008) questions are worth mentioning:

What are the discursive or institutional spaces where nation and empire become compatible in investing in the category Muslimwoman? In which ways do the imperial discourse of liberating Muslim women from their barbaric patriarchal culture and the nationalist discourse of protecting Muslim women from the imperialist West converge and supplement everyday forms of militarism in various sites? And finally, how does such circulation become itself productive of new subject positions? (p. 108)

The post 9/11 political context which generated “War on Terrorism” and entailed a political and military imperial mission of “saving Muslim women”, and specifically “saving Afghan women” marks a shift in discursive representations of “Muslim woman”. On the one hand the concepts of equality, liberty, and universal human rights have gained rhetorical prevalence to justify the mission and this rhetoric is articulated to transnational First World feminist discourse that victimized Muslim women and neglected their agency. On the other hand cultural relativist objections have been voiced against the military violence and the attitudes of superiority that the mission embodies. However, multiculturalism that seeks to understand other cultures in their specificness and likewise cultural relativist approach in anthropology, as Lila Abu-Lughod notes, that contends “it's their culture and it's not my business to judge or interfere, only to try to understand” is not valid anymore. There have been intense historical interactions between cultures and the Muslim women in Afghanistan, like other Muslim women in the Middle East, cannot be understood in isolation from these interactions (2002, p. 786-787).

### ***Islam and Modernity***

Contemporary Islamic cultures’ relationship to modernity and the processes of modernization has been a problematic one not only because modernity is associated with submission to the hegemony of the West but also the erosion of traditional values and norms that it brings alone result in feelings of anomie (Saktanber, 2002). In addition to the role of several economic and political factors following decolonization and independence, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Muslim countries is also a product and embodiment of the reaction to the turmoil of modernization or the crisis of modernity. Even though the history of modernization is as diverse as the cultural variations among Muslim countries, there have been common social transformations.

As *Remaking Women* (1998), the collection of studies on discourses and projects of modernization and postcoloniality in the Middle East edited by Lila Abu-Lughod exhibit, the state rhetoric of modernization, which are actually the extensions of the changes that had begun at the turn of the twentieth century with reforms of the Ottoman Empire and by the civilizing mission of the colonial domination, have involved preserving women's traditional roles in domestic sphere while advocating their public participation as part of national development. Fatima Mernissi notes the social changes in the Middle East during the 1970s and 1980s, as increase in access to education, rise in the average age of marriage, blurring boundaries of sex segregation and sex roles. Mernissi describes the reason of the uneasiness that these changes and consequently women's demands of equality caused in Muslim societies as not a fear from a threat to the past but from what they symbolize for the future: "inescapability of renegotiating new sexual, political, economic, and cultural boundaries, thresholds and limits" (1988, p. 9). Protecting women's honour and dignity in the modernizing world have been an essential part of the quest for authenticity. Women's rights, duties and status have been placed at the core of another debate, which is Islam's compatibility or incompatibility with modernity.

Even though the rise of Islamism and Islamic fundamentalism announces itself as a counter movement against modernization, as many scholars among whom are Abu-Lughod (1998), Zohreh T. Sullivan (1998), Mervat Hatem (1994, 1998), and Nilüfer Göle (1991) argue, they attempt to construct an alternative modernity.

### ***Nationalism and State Ideologies***

*Women, Islam and the State* (1991) edited by Deniz Kandiyoti is the pioneering collection of the studies that analyse women in the Middle East on the basis of political projects, ideologies and historical transformations of nation states, and the way Islam is integrated to state apparatuses. Kandiyoti introduces the collection as an interruption to mainly two ahistorical approaches to Muslim women that also fail to see the variations among Muslim societies; the Western, ethnocentric, Orientalist depictions and the approach of Muslim feminists and scholars that rest on a

progressive interpretation of Islamic texts and early Islam. The book's core argument is

The ways in which women are represented in political discourse, the degree of formal emancipation they are able to achieve, the modalities of their participation in economic life and the nature of the social movements through which they are able to articulate their gender interests are intimately linked to state-building processes and are responsive to their transformations (pp. 2-3).

Kandiyoti explains that by providing case studies from Muslim countries having different histories of independence and modernization, namely Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and Yemen, the book dwells upon four themes: "Islam, nationalism and women's rights", "women, Islam and politics of authenticity", "women, family and the state", and "women, state and the international nexus". The volume has been a significant contribution in the field as it strongly opposed studying Muslim women without differentiating or contextualizing Islam and Islamic political and cultural practices and considering their impact on women's conditions. Shifting the focus from Islam as an isolated category of analysis to various state policies and nationalist projects has been source of inspiration for further studies and discussions. Abu-Lughod criticises the volume on the grounds that it represents women as objects of nationalism and state policies, failed to investigate the ways in which local and Western actors "played off each other", left the relation between reforms about women and politics of modernity unexamined (Abu-Lughod, 1998, pp. 5-6). Mervat Hatem notes that in the formulation of the core arguments of the book, Islam is assumed to be dominating the state agendas and nationalisms in the Middle East are described as merely concerned with Islam, and thus the other factors like class struggles, capitalist or socialist policies that affect women's conditions are not explored (1994, pp. 535-539).

Ann Elizabeth Mayer's (2000) study that describes how the state authorities refrain from developing state policies that defend women's rights by referring to Islamic rules while ratifying Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is one of the more recent studies on the links between women's conditions, Islam, and the state. Mayer states that supporting women's

rights have been a rhetorical strategy of states' spokespersons and states pursue policies that are detrimental to women's rights. She calls the outcome "the new world hypocrisy". She explains that the Muslim countries who violate this international agreement defend their attitude by referring to the divine origins of their domestic laws (2000, pp. 105-106). Mayer's study is important because it reveals the way Islam is used in governmental strategies to deviate from international law and it exhibits that *de facto* policies do not comply with official women's rights rhetoric of governments. However, more importantly, it integrates another dimension to the debate by showing that this attitude is not specific to Muslim countries but observed in the US and Vatican as well and therefore she challenges the assumption that inimical attitudes towards women's rights are not unique to Muslim countries.

### ***Islamic Fundamentalism***

The outcomes of the rise Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East been elaborated within a range of feminist frameworks and each of them has implications for the discursive representations of Muslim women. As also identified by Bronwyn Winter (2001), three problematic frameworks should be examined: Orientalist, multiculturalist, and pluralist discourses. While discussing these discourses Winter highlights five very significant problems in the analysis of Islamic fundamentalism:

- 1) the ways in which Islamism is or is not related to Islam as a whole; 2) the ways in which Islamism is situated in relation to the past and present (the latter usually referred to as modernity, and issue discussed as a "crisis of modernity" and ensuing quest for an authentic identity); 3) legitimization through Western tacit or overt support for "democratization" or opposition to imperialism, or through liberal multiculturalism; 4) consideration of Islamism in isolation from extreme right movements elsewhere; and 5) the qualitative value attributed to women's centrality to Islamism and the related masking or misinterpretation of the relationship between women's behaviour and both culture and/or nation building and religion in general (p. 10).

Orientalism, as already discussed above, is characterized by essentialism, ethnocentrism, and binarism. Moreover while it demonizes Islam, it describes it in contrast to Christianity and isolates it from the social, cultural, and historical context. Multiculturalism and cultural relativism theorized in the Western societies to develop policies about minority related issues have had impact on the discourse

about fundamentalism in Muslim countries. Multiculturalism which owes its emergence to the reactions to the “colonial guilt” of the West has turned into an approach that ignored or tolerated the authoritativeness and oppression in Islamic fundamentalism. Winter eloquently argues that these discourses share the same shortcomings, being essentialist and ahistorical, because they perceive Muslim cultures as homogenous and postcolonial. The third discourse pluralism is adopted by Islamist feminists who defend a progressive reading of Islamic texts instead of orthodox, androcentric interpretations. A very critical implication of this framework that Winter states is failing to take into consideration the importance of how women and religion are appropriated in anti-colonial and nationalist projects and women's subordination is justified on these grounds.

For Abu-Lughod (2011), discussions about Islamism as a threat to women have a central question: “Is it possible that feminist activism against Islamic fundamentalism can work against gender inequality and at the same time cooperate with women activists from Islamic tradition? It has already been the case that feminists from Iran, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey are claiming another vision of Islam for women that is “more dynamic and historically sensitive” (pp.108-109). However it should also be acknowledged that the way Islamic fundamentalism develops in each country as an outcome of different social, cultural, and political contexts. For the Turkish case, as Hilal Özçetin (2009) demonstrates in her study on Islamic feminist civil society organizations (NGOs), state feminism which defends authoritarian secularism has dominated the feminist activism until recently and has not been willing to communicate with the Islamic NGOs. Since the stereotypes about Islamist women are so strong and the fear of an Islamic authoritarianism is so effective that it is not unexpected that Özçetin observes only very limited cases of communication and cooperation despite the efforts of the Islamist women activists. For the case of Iran, considering the authority of the Islamic state, it is evident that there is almost no chance for feminist activism to overtly oppose Islamic fundamentalism. Moreover, the political instabilities that most of the countries in the Middle East live through results in continuously shifting political standpoints, alliances, as well as polarizations and I do not believe that feminist movements and

activisms, whether they are Islamist, liberal or secularist, can stay isolated from these changes.

The numerous standpoints that I attempted to review briefly in this chapter demonstrate that academic knowledge produced on Muslim women is significantly fragmented. Yet it is possible to sketch some main axes of its development and diversification. The early discourse on Muslim women was produced within a colonial and Orientalist framework which cannot be comprehended in isolation from the relations of power and domination between the West and the East. The conditions of Muslim women were perceived and analysed as the symbols of Oriental despotism, patriarchy, and religious fundamentalism without attributing agency to them. The images of the veiled and mysterious Muslim women have come to signify the exotic and concealed essence of the Orient as a whole. On the other hand the so-called “civilizing mission” of the colonial powers to civilize the colonized societies was justified over the discourse of the western, First World feminism. The mission to save Muslim women from the chains of traditions and religion has also influenced the academic and political Orientalist discourse and defined Muslim women as the ultimate “other” of their western “sisters”.

The era that starts with decolonization and independence movements marks a paradigm shift in the production of knowledge on the Middle East and other formerly colonized territories. Influenced by poststructuralist and postmodern theories in Europe, postcolonial theory generated a solid theoretical framework through which biased, ethnocentric, essentialist colonial discourse is harshly criticized. Feminist postcolonial theorists’ intervention to this framework has been addressing women’s subordination by nationalist, anti-colonial projects and their problematic representation in the First World feminist discourse. The concept of subaltern occupies a central place in discussions of agency and subjectivity by postcolonial feminists.

Emergence of the field of studies on Muslim and Middle Eastern women can be comprehended to a great degree within this critical framework, even though most the studies on women in Turkey have a different framework of analysis. Besides, it

involves discussions on Islam's role in explaining social and cultural changes, the changes in women's conditions, and its associations with social institutions. The history of feminist movements in the Middle East that witnessed first, second, and third wave feminisms powerfully created two significant discourses, Islamist feminisms and secular feminism.

The final paradigm shift that profoundly altered Muslim women's discursive representation has been the political context following 9/11 terror attacks in 2001 and the "War on Terror". As the wars in Afghanistan, and Iraq followed by the "Arab Spring" upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa fuelled Islamophobia, the images of victimized Muslim women began to be circulated again for justifications of Western, particularly US military interventions. Counter discourses that draw attention to the racial and essentialist nature of these discursive frameworks are significant not only because they shift the focus to the role of US interventions in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism but also because they effectively spotlight the historical and cultural changes that give way to the increasing gender inequalities.

Transformations of the pathways of producing knowledge on Muslim women are clear examples of the relationship between power and discourse and power and knowledge as theorized by Michael Foucault. It is evident that social and political transformations in the Middle East have a determining role in the emergence and development of feminist discourses and gender and women's studies concerning the region in addition to the discursive periods of western scholarly knowledge on Muslim women. Such an association can also be clearly identified in the case of the knowledge produced on women and Islam in Turkey. Yet, the distinct modernization history of Turkey, its secular state order, and the way these factors influence the development of Islamist movements make focusing on this knowledge particularly critical. The secularization, modernization, and Westernization reforms of the early Republican years that aimed a break away from the Ottoman history and deep rooted Islamic culture had a profound impact on women's agencies and subjectivities, but not in the same way for every woman. While some enthusiastically adopted the new values of the republic, some stayed completely

remote, and some completely opposed. Together with the impact of globalization, and especially neo-liberal globalism, the diversification of identities has become even more inevitable. Moreover it is also critical to ask to what extent women in Turkey had and has a say in the social dynamics and ideologies that aim to shape their identities. I think that with all these questions at stake, studying the relationship between women and Islam in Turkey requires a multidimensional approach that can acknowledge the peculiarities as well as commonalities with the Middle Eastern and postcolonial contexts.

In the following chapter I explain the methodological tools that enable me to trace the power relations and conflicts that leave impact on the way Turkish Muslim women has been studied by Turkish and Western scholars.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY AND THE KEY CONCEPTS**

#### **3.1. Discourse, Knowledge, Power and Foucaultian Discourse Analysis**

Michel Foucault's critical conceptualization of discourse has recently opened new paths in the methodology of social sciences. Discussions about the usage of Foucaultian discourse analysis in sociology, psychology, anthropology, gender studies, postcolonial studies and cultural studies have found their places in the academic literature. As Diaz-Bone, et. al. (2007) state in their examination of the structures, developments and perspectives in the Foucaultian discourse analysis, in this academic context, the conceptual tools and arguments of discourse theory are not limited with linguistics and sciences related to linguistics any more.

Discourse was conceived by Foucault as social structure and discursive practice was a social practice. However, before him it referred to grammatical structure of narratives (Barthes, 1988) and the approaches to discourse was dominantly linguistic. While in socio-linguistic approaches discourse is an interactionist concept, in French structuralism and post-structuralism it is “the underlying deep structure of the human mind (Levi-Strauss) or the human psyche (Lacan)” (Diaz-Bone, et. al. 2007).

Foucault describes in *Archaeology of Knowledge* discourse as “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (1972, p. 80). As Sara Mills (2003) explains in her book on Foucault, he was more interested in the set of rules and structures that make up the discourse rather than the text itself. Secondly, discourse is not equal to language for Foucault and there is no direct relationship between discourse and reality; “rather discourse should be seen as a system which structures the way we perceive reality.” (Mills, p.55) Even though he accepts that there is a non-discursive realm (namely, material objects), he

emphasizes that the way we perceive, apprehend and experience them is dependent on discourse and its structures. Thinking and speaking outside the discursive constraints is almost impossible because it would be being insane or incomprehensible in the eyes of others.

Taking this definition as the basis of the methodology of this study, I take the published ethnographic and field studies on women and Islam in Turkey as a discourse and aim to detect the structures that decisively characterize it. Even a general overview of the studies reveals that the discourse is composed of fragments and periods but identifying the structures that lead to these fragmentations necessitates asking questions specifically about the social, cultural and political context and the social scientific paradigms in general in which the discourse is generated. With respect to the first context, I specifically address the period of the rise of Islamism and its social implications for the relationship between gender and religion in Turkey. Thus it will be possible to discuss the issues of subjectivity and agency of the Muslim women in the discourse. With respect to the second context, I seek the traces of the social scientific paradigms of colonialism and influences of post-colonial critiques about Middle Eastern women to elaborate on otherness, alterity, and subalternities of the Muslim women in the discourse besides the issues of binarism, surveillance, essentialism and Eurocentricism in the way the discourse is generated. This questioning exhibits the framework that yields to formations of particular representations of Muslim women in Turkey. The discursive representations that I will elaborate are significant not only because they are influential in how Turkish Muslim women are perceived but also because they lead to critiques and thus formation of further fragments. The reason why I prefer examining ethnographies and field studies is two-fold. Firstly, the fact that methodologically they have a claim to touch the social “reality” and produce knowledge from this contact and yet they are not and cannot be isolated from the power structures is not extensively inspected concerning the discourse that constitute the data of this study. Secondly, the colonial roots of the ethnographic methodology, meaning studying the Third World, Oriental, “other” societies by western researchers as already discussed by Talal Asad (1973) more than four decades ago, still triggers questions about the possible effects of the nature of the

relationship between the ethnographer and the subjects of research, especially when the subject of research is from the territories that have been defined as the Orient.

To identify the regulative mechanisms of the power structures I will attempt to integrate some of the external and internal exclusion procedures that Foucault describes. It is important to note that the way discourse is regulated is what attracts Foucault's attention more rather than the discourse itself. He states "In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (Foucault 1981, p.52). As he describes in "The order of discourse" (1981) there are three sets of external procedures which constrain discourse; namely taboo, the distinction between mad and sane, and the distinction between true and false. The aim of this study is more interwoven with the third exclusionary practice. According to the third exclusionary practice for Foucault, the experts who are in authority are the ones who can speak on what is true and false. He explains that academia, governments, publishers, etc. support and circulate what they accept as truth and exclude what they accept as false. In *Archaeology of Knowledge* he says "it is always one could speak the truth in a void; one would only be "in true" however if one obeyed the rules of some discursive "police" which would have to be recreated every time one spoke" (Foucault 1972, p. 224). Within the scope of the subject of this study, it would be an inappropriate approach to point out a single authority of truth, and because of that I dwell upon the impact of the two structures I mentioned above. Furthermore I try to observe the recreations of the rules of the "discursive police" in representations of Muslim women, the representations which are circulated as true.

On the production of discourse, there are internal exclusion procedures as well, namely: commentary; the author; disciplines; and the rarefaction of the speaking subject. These internal exclusion procedures are all concerned with distinguishing the authorized and unauthorized discourses. The first one refers to writing about other's texts and literary criticism. Commentary of a text not only keeps the text in circulation as a "true" idea but also attributes a status to the author of the

commentary as a person who mastered the ideas in the text and who can express them even more clearly. Even though he accepts the notion of “author”, Foucault believes that it is used as a way of providing cohesion by the readers. That is why Foucault uses the term author function rather than dealing with the real author. The third internal exclusion which is disciplinary boundary is the limits placed on the subject areas. Within the boundaries of methodological and theoretical tools, some knowledge is excluded and some knowledge is allowed to be circulated. Editorial boards and referees of the academic publications are among the mechanisms that make these decisions. Lastly, by rarefaction of the speaking subject, he means the rules of who can speak authoritatively, who has access to which discourses. In his analysis of university, Foucault examines the process of the circulation of certain types of knowledge and how this leads to an “institutionalization of discourse”. He describes the power relations between the students and the lecturers within this system (Foucault, 1981). Concerning these internal exclusion practices, this study seeks to have a closer look at the methodologies and theoretical tools of the ethnographies and the field studies to identify the boundaries of the knowledge they produce and also to show that these boundaries are neither fixed nor solid. It also shows that the emergence and widening of the academic interest in women and Islam in Turkey illustrates both the redefinitions of the rarefaction of the scholars studying Islam in Turkey with a novel perspective and “institutionalization” of studying Islam through a gender perspective.

In theorization of discourse, Foucault’s other tools are the concepts of episteme, archive, discursive formation, and statement. “Episteme of a period is not ‘the sum of its knowledge, nor the general style of its research, but the divergence, the distances, the oppositions, the differences, the relations of its various scientific discourses’ (Foucault, 1991, p. 55)” According to Sara Mills “Thus what Foucault is trying to analyse is not a unified body of ideas or ‘spirit of the age’ but a set of conflicting discursive frameworks and pressures which operate across a social body and which interact with each other, and these condition how people think, know and write.” (Mills, 2003, p. 63). He perceives not an evolutionary transformation but sudden and radical breaks between the epistemes. Even though Foucault’s description of episteme entails a discourse much more encompassing than the

studies constituting the data of my analysis, it enables me to divide them into three discursive periods. It will be clear that there are certain common themes and subjects of research within the periods, yet there are also diverging frameworks and approaches that reflect the changing impact of the social and political and scientific structures. Foucault's definitions of archive and discursive formation are guiding at this stage of analysis. Foucault describes archive as "the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define ... the limits and forms of sayable" (Foucault, 1991, 59). He describes "discursive formation" as the groups of statements having an influence on how people think and these statements are associated with particular institutions and fields of power. These groupings of statements handle the same issue and produce a similar influence. They reproduce other statements which are in line with their underlying assumptions. Discourses are not necessarily cohesive all the time; they mostly contain conflicting statements. Statement is "an authorized proposition or action through speech". (Mills, 2003, p. 65) What Foucault wants to reveal was the process that produces the statements. He is making an impersonal analysis; he has no interest in the authors of the statements and their intentions. Discourse is a system which is above the statements and the statements are structured by discourse. Hence, in my analysis I focus on the common, circulating statements and discursive formations within the discursive periods to highlight the fields of power and the conflicting statements that indicate the paths of development of counter discourses and see whether it is possible to talk about emergence of some epistemes.

Presenting a depiction of the ethnographic knowledge produced on women and Islam in Turkey is one of the essential aims of this study. In a Foucaultian analysis, knowledge is an integral part and outcome of power struggles and producing knowledge means making a claim for power. Mills notes that "where there are imbalances of power relations between groups of people or between institutions/states, there will be a production of knowledge. Because of the institutionalized imbalance in power relations between men and women in Western countries Foucault would argue, information is produced about women; thus we find many books in libraries about women but few about men." (Mills, 2003, p. 69). Likewise there are more studies on working class rather than on upper and middle

classes and on homosexuality rather than on heterosexuality. The objects of the researches are mostly less powerful ones and this leads to maintaining the disadvantaged position. On the other hand, Foucault maintains that the knowledge produced by the disadvantaged themselves can challenge and change the status quo. It is interesting to observe and assess his contention in the numerous dimensions of the knowledge in question in this study. In Turkey, it is widely accepted that the history of secularization is full of power struggles and conflicts, especially on gender issues. Thus, it is surprising to see from a Foucaultian perspective that the gender-blind social sciences literature on religion in Turkey outweighs, in number and scope, the studies having a gender focus. The reasons of this fact can be the subject of another discussion but the most researched issues provide clues about where power relations and struggles concentrate. To give an example, there are more studies on urban Islamist women than rural Muslim women; there are more studies on veiling and '*tesettür*' than other ritual practices. Moreover, the subject of women and Islam is studied almost entirely with a focus on Sunni, Islamist women and the clash between Islamists and secularists. Other moderate or secular women's relation to religion has not been a focus of attention likewise the religiosity of the non-Muslim and Alevi women in Turkey. It is clear that the number of publications on Islamist women has been drastically increasing while the Islamist movement also has been gaining power, thus it is difficult to argue that the knowledge produced on Islamist women in Turkey in recent years is related to their disadvantaged position. I maintain that it addresses a strikingly new social phenomenon, the new groups of social actors in the Turkish society. All the authors are women and most of them are Turkish, so we can talk about "native" women's discourses opposing to the Western, Orientalist, androcentric discourses. Yet, as I already noted, they should not be seen as unitary and homogenous. Besides, Islamist women have only been to a limited extent a part of the knowledge production through ethnographies and field studies on women and Islam in Turkey.

The concept of "will to know" is a central aspect of Foucault's theorization of power/knowledge. He describes it as an "appetite for information" (Mills, p. 71) that emerged before and resulted in categorization and measuring of objects (Foucault, 1981, p. 55). This "will to know" is neither universal nor timeless but is

reinforced by various institutions such as libraries and universities. It imposes “on the knowing subject, and in some sense prior to all experience, a certain position, a certain gaze and a certain function (...) a will to know which was prescribed by the technical level where knowledges had to be invested in order to be verifiable and useful.” (p. 55). “Will to truth” for Foucault, is a set of exclusionary practices that determines which statements will be circulated as true (p. 56). True statements will be circulated and reproduced in books and articles, will be objects of commentary, will be a part of the common sense or influence common sense. False statements will not be circulated. Foucault aims to analyse the distinctions between what is established as true and false and to reveal the mechanisms that preserve these distinctions.

I also utilize these two concepts in analysing the selected ethnographic discourse. The “will to know” behind the study can directly reveal the specific power structures at work in that knowledge production process, particularly when these structures have Orientalist roots. I integrate this concept by examining where the researcher (the knowing subject) originates her “appetite for information” and by focusing on her gaze and her position. The critiques about the gaze of the researcher and the position imposed on her by the Orientalist, colonial way of producing knowledge have been one of the founding pillars of postcolonial theory and I integrate postcolonial theory’s arguments on binarism, surveillance, essentialism and Eurocentrism through this examination. I also trace the changes in will to know from one period to another to see its implications on the representations of Muslim women. I trace “will to truth” in the most commonly circulated statements in a discursive period. As I point out the internal and external exclusion procedures, the circulated statements emerge as the outcomes of these exclusions.

Through the critical discourse analysis of this study, I intend to illustrate that the processes of producing knowledge are discursive practices that have outcomes for the Muslim women who have long been the subaltern subjects of Middle Eastern studies and studies of Islam. The existing knowledge about them cannot be comprehended without reflecting on the conditions that structure the discursive practices, the conditions that have been drastically changing. Thus Edward Said’s

emphasis on an important distinction that Foucault makes within the concept of knowledge is very relevant for the methodological standpoint of this endeavour. Foucault differentiates between *savoir* and *connaissance* (both of them translates as knowledge, acknowledgement, recognition) and prefers the former over the latter for the object of his study. “The former is unthinkable without reference to conditions and appropriations that make it knowledge, the latter-as Foucault says in a summary of his 1970-71 course of lectures at the College -is best studied as something fundamentally subjective and selfish (interessee), produced as an event of desire (produite comme evenement du vouloir), and determining truth by falsification (determinant par falsification l'efet de verite).” (Said, 1974, p. 31). Thus knowledge (*savoir*) can only be thought in a discursive practice. In other words, knowledge constitutes the space in which the objects of discourse can be spoken about; it is also a field where statements in which concepts operate, are coordinated and subordinated; and lastly it is “defined by the possibilities of use and appropriation offered by discourse” (Foucault quoted in Said, p. 32). Some bodies of knowledge can be independent of sciences but knowledge cannot be without a specific discursive practice and discursive practices can be defined by the knowledge that they form.

As this methodological introduction suggests, discussing the multidimensional relations of power between knowledge and discourse concerning particularly Islam and the Middle East necessitates references to Edward Said’s arguments on Orientalism and Michel Foucault’s theorization of knowledge and discourse. Said’s formulation of Orientalism as a discourse, which enables us to understand it as a systematic discipline by which Orient was produced and managed politically, sociologically, ideologically and scientifically by the European culture, has effects on the status of Foucault’s theorization of discourse. It not only made Foucault a vital figure in post-colonial theory, but also it suggested “an authoritative reading of Foucauldian discourse as a ‘textual attitude’ or a system of textual representation” (Nichols, 2010, p. 120). Foucault has never been after the true or real descriptions, for they can be fictional as well. Sara Mills (2003) argues that it is this point that Edward Said had encountered as a difficulty in his analysis of colonial discourse. While analysing the hegemonic discursive representations of the colonial period, he

desires to reveal the “truth” behind them and make contrasts. However, the strength in Foucault’s approach lies at “detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time” (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). An essential idea underlying not only the post-colonial critique but also discourse analysis as a methodology is drawing attention to power of the context in which discourses are generated. Agreeing with this idea, this study does not entail correction of statements or representations on Muslim women in Turkey but aims to reflect on them through taking the context in which they are produced in to consideration. As Ania Loomba notes “it is useful too to remind ourselves that discourse is not simply another word for representations. Rather, discourse analysis involves examining the social and historical conditions within which specific representations are generated” (1998, p. 97); discourse is imbedded in these conditions, expressed within the framework of cultural, social and scientific practices; it has the power of effecting the practice.

### **3.2. The Methodology in Practice**

The methodological and theoretical framework that I hitherto presented initially highlights the necessity of asking whether the Orientalist, colonial and postcolonial discourses and knowledge on Muslim women in the Middle East had influenced the way the relationship between women and Islam in Turkey has been perceived, apprehended and analysed in ethnographic studies. I take feminist postcolonial theory as a fundamental ground for the critiques of colonial, Orientalist discourse on Muslim women and inspect the methodologies and theoretical standpoints of the studies to present the influence of these two strictly opposing social scientific frameworks. To detect this, I ask four main questions: Are Muslim women’s otherness and subalternnes in the Orientalist, Western, and First World feminist discourses maintained or challenged in their representations? Does the “will to know” of the study include the binary oppositions (particularly East/ West, traditional/modern, Islam/Christianity), essentialist presumptions, and Eurocentric biases which I have tried to review in the previous chapter? Are the well-established power, hierarchy and discursive practices of the formerly institutionalized knowledge and producing knowledge challenged through critically seeking ways of

avoiding reproduction of stereotypes, biases, and essentialist categorizations? How are the “wills to truth” behind the studies linked with the political, social, cultural, and academic context?

Seeking the answers of these questions necessitates identifying four levels of analysis: the political, social, cultural transformations that take place in Turkish society and also at the global level; the researcher’s perceptions of social phenomena; the discursive representations of the social phenomena; and the analysis of the representations. With respect to the first level of analysis, I particularly elaborate the social and political context in which Islamism gained strength in Turkey since the early 1980s, which is the period during which the ethnographic discourse on women and Islam in Turkey is created. The formation and transformation of Islamist women’s identities in this period is a very significant social phenomenon to pay attention to. I relate the second level of analysis, which is about how the researcher perceives the social phenomena, with the academic discipline of the researcher and her/his subject position that influences the will to know of the study and the nature of the power relations in the field. In the third level of analysis I review how the relationship between women and Islam is represented and trace the paradigm shifts in the knowledge produced. In the fourth level, I aim to evaluate the representations by relating them to the other three levels of analysis, to present how and why they change in time, and to discuss their implications for knowledge production and for creating a counter-discourse against Orientalist ways of producing knowledge. The ethnographic studies examined in this study are taken mainly as scholarly texts, thus my research endeavour should be considered primarily as a textual analysis that also aims to contextualize the discursive representations.

I do not suggest that there is a linear progression of the knowledge produced through discursive practices. Even though significant ruptures can easily be noticed between the periods, there are also overlaps and intersections among them. These kaleidoscopic discursive formations are both the subject of my research and where the power relations take place. On the basis of Foucault’s theorization I argue that focusing on the circulated statements within the discursive periods is critical to

reveal the “will to truth”, to specify the structures at work to exclude the statements that are accepted as false.

My research process began by specifying my data as the published ethnographic studies focusing on women and Islam in Turkey, so I started my preliminary analysis by reviewing all the publications that fall into this category. This review enabled me to roughly periodize the publications and group them according to their specific research focuses. I sketched a chronology of the ethnographic studies and specified the borders of the prevailing discourses in three different time periods: The studies on how traditional gender hierarchy is legitimized on Islamic ground are clustered in the period of 1983-1992. The studies about the formation and expression of a new Islamic identity and its others were published in the period of 1994-2006. Finally, the studies that integrated the concept of conspicuous consumption and also the studies focusing on AKP politics could be clustered in the period of 2007-2016. I took the publication years as a reference for periodization instead of the years in which the studies were conducted. Even though I considered that there can be a significant time lag between the fieldwork and the publication, I believe that the researchers are subject to social mechanisms of power that dynamically change as the social context changes throughout the time they spend for analysing their data and writing the text of the publication. In other words, the changes in the social context can have an important impact on how the researcher perceives her or his field data. Therefore this preference makes it more possible to comment on the influence of social context.

It was encouraging to see how this initial periodization more or less overlapped with the political context in which the studies were published for delving deeper into these periods. 1980s and early 1990s were the years that followed the military coup which suppressed all the political and civil activism except the religious ones. There were only a few ethnographic studies published in this period, and all of them were by Western researchers. In my analysis of the first period, I include all these publications and focus more on the disciplinary boundaries, social scientific paradigms, and the subject positions of the researchers as the structures of power that influence the ethnographic knowledge. The researchers’ Western identity and

the anthropological traditions of studying the Third World or the Middle East seem to be much more determining and relevant for analysing the ethnographic discourse in this period. I begin analysing the first discursive period by reviewing the state of the field of anthropology and the Middle Eastern studies. The reason is that all of the researchers in this period are Western anthropologists who came to Turkey to study Islam and local culture with their field's ethnocentric premises which had just started to be discussed. Their subjects and aims of research which are about how gender hierarchy is legitimized on religious, moral, and traditional grounds is an indication of the prevailing assumption that women's subordination is inherent and unchanging in Islam and Islamic cultures. Moreover the ethnographies are far from being reflexive and multivocal as these approaches have only started to be discussed in the 1980s in the field of anthropology. Even though all the studies have an aim to join the discussion and challenge Orientalist knowledge with their data, they fail to achieve this aim. The failure is more evident in the first two ethnographies that I analyse, the studies of Carol Delaney (1991) and Julie Marcus (1992) while Nancy and Richard Tapper's works are less essentialist and Eurocentric with their contextualizations of ethnographic data. After reviewing the texts I particularly focused on the "will to know" in the studies, the statements and methodological approaches that make these studies significantly essentialist and the common statements and the discursive formations that are in circulation among these studies. I direct my attention particularly on women's subalternness, lack of agency, alterity, and victimhood in the ethnographic representations and highlight the Eurocentrism and essentialism that associate the research subjects with rigid traditionalism and neglect the social, political and historical context in Turkey.

The second period marks an important shift in the ethnographic knowledge produced on women and Islam in Turkey in many respects. I contextualize this shift in relation to Islam and Islamist movements in the world and in Turkey during the 1990s and 2000s. However I believe that the striking changes in Islamist movement in Turkey have become the main trigger behind the formation of a new discourse on women and Islam. In the year 1994, in the beginning of the second period, the Islamist RP achieved a shocking success in the local elections. Following that year Islamist movement's popularity and strength continued to increase while causing

anxiety among the secularist sections of the society. The headscarf ban in public spaces caused harsh political debates, headscarved women's public visibility turned into a social issue that signified a threat to the modern secular Republic, and there was a strong othering and marginalization of the Islamist movement. When the Islamist movement came to power with AKP in 2002, it owed its success to its promises of democratization and liberalism for all the sections of society, but the headscarf issue and its social reflections remained untouched for many years more. Therefore an academic urge to understand the development of the Islamist movement and the nature of women's relation to Islamism in Turkey as a country that is distinct from other Muslim countries with its secular state order is very much expectable. The initial publications of ethnographic works by Turkish scholars on women and Islam in Turkey which particularly focus on women in the Islamist movement are an outcome of this urge. The political nature of the produced knowledge is also as much expectable.

The beginnings of this period also coincides with a shift in Middle Eastern studies and postcolonial theory which is very much observable in the ethnographic studies. I present the theoretical and methodological changes in the fields that challenge Orientalist and colonial ways of knowledge production to observe their reflections in the studies of this discursive period. The clearest fact that distinguishes the second period from the first is the increased number of publications which enabled me to group them on the basis of their research subjects: the identity of the Islamist women, pious Muslim women in semi-public spaces of Islamism, veiling, and Islamist women in politics. I did not omit any of the publications and thus I can present the whole picture of the discourse they constitute. There are several theoretical and methodological elements in common among the ethnographies and throughout my analyses I aimed to highlight them in each study. First of all, unlike the first discursive period that studies women and gender in an Islamic society, this period takes Muslim women as a distinct category of analysis. Based on my postcolonial theoretical framework, I observed Muslim women's agencies, subjectivities and alterity; based on my framework of discussions on the Middle East women's studies I observed their relation to modernity, to the state, to the Islamist movement and fundamentalism. In addition to these, I present other issues

and research questions that come to the fore about their identities, their relation to capitalism, their visibility in public spaces, their political activism, and the issue of othering they are subject to and they are involved in. The second common element that differs this period from the previous one is the presence of reflexive and multivocal ethnographies that exhibit the reflexive turn in anthropology and in other social sciences. In this respect I attempt to discuss whether they adopt these attitudes in a way that challenges the previous Eurocentric and essentialist knowledge on Muslim women and maintains the authority of the researcher. Thirdly, it was in the mid-1990s that the ethnographies of Turkish scholars started to be published and became part of the Middle Eastern women's studies literature. Therefore we can expect to observe the emergence of a local response to the Western ethnographic knowledge on women and Islam in Turkey, a response which can also be thought in relation to the other local responses in the Middle East. Besides, I examine the influence of the political setting in Turkey in their knowledge production by specifically asking what their will to truth is, what statements and discursive formations they circulate as true. In the second and the third discursive periods there are studies of all three groups of scholars that Kandiyoti (1996) mentions in her review of feminism in the Middle East: Western scholars, Western-trained expatriate or locally resident scholars, and locally trained scholars. Therefore, their theoretical frameworks and audiences change accordingly and I question to what extent their knowledge production is affected by these factors. The scholars also diversify on the basis of their fields in social sciences. In addition to exhibiting the common elements, I address what questions are not raised, what issues are not discussed or neglected.

In terms of its methodologies, diversity of scholars, and the focus on the category of Muslim women the third period shares similar features with the second period. What differentiate the last period from the previous ones can firstly be explained with the overlap of the political, social, and economic conditions in Turkey and the subjects of research. 2007, the beginning of the third period was the year that AKP was re-elected as the leading party and consolidated its political power in such a way that it started to depart from its previously democratic outlook and rhetoric. From this year onwards AKP politics started to be characterized more with

authoritarianism and conservatism with an increasing neo-liberalism in the economy. However, another critical feature of the Islamist movement behind the AKP was that it was no longer at the margins; it was no longer the “other” of the Turkish Republic. On the contrary, the movement started to occupy a central place in the political sphere with all its references to Islamic conservatism. Moreover, Islamist movement’s engagement with capitalism, consumerism, and globalism shifted the Islamist market to a new level that comprised the notions of style, taste, distinction, and luxury. In the same years Islam and Islamism continued to be in the global agenda being described as fundamentalist, un-democratic, violent, backward and terrorist especially in Western media. It is the period of neo-Orientalism which had begun with the War on Terror right after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. On the other hand as I mentioned in the previous chapter there is a counter academic discourse that highlights Muslims’ engagement with global capitalism and Muslim women’s agencies in adopting an Islamic and modern lifestyles. I take these three influences from Turkey and the world as the contextual factors that act on the ethnographic knowledge production in this period.

Despite the increasing number of field studies on women and Islam in this period, the number of ethnographic studies is rather limited. On the basis of their subjects of research I grouped the publications under two headings: Veiling and consumption and Islamist women in civil society and politics. I decided to leave out two ethnographies because they had research subjects very different from these two groups.<sup>9</sup> I analysed the studies in the first group with respect to all the contextual factors that I mentioned above and highlighted the discursive formations and arguments that differed these studies from the veiling and consumption discourse of the first period by examining how they discuss Muslim women’s agency and subjectivity. I examined their discursive formations with respect to the critiques of neo-Orientalism. Regarding the studies in the second group it was possible to

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<sup>9</sup> The first one is by American anthropologist Kim Shively (2008). The ethnographic study is conducted in an un-authorized women’s Kuran course in a suburb in Ankara and studies the politicization of religious education following the 1997 government crisis in Turkey. The second ethnography is by another American anthropologist Kimberly Hart (2013). The study is conducted in a village in western Turkey to observe rural sunni Islam in Turkey. The second reason I decided to omit this work is that even though it provides a significant analysis of gender relations and ritual practices of women, gender is not at the center of the ethnography’s research problematique.

associate each study with a specific contextual factor and also to comment on their political standpoints.

My analysis of the change in the ethnographic discourse on women and Islam in Turkey frames its questions as follows: What are the common distinctive themes, issues and questions in the ethnographies? What do the predominance and circulation of certain arguments tell us about the epistemic power of the researches? How are (Muslim) women represented in this discourse with respect to their relationship with religion? Can the mostly accused Western, Orientalist, liberal feminist approaches be traced in these studies or were these approaches transformed into a neo-Orientalist perspective? Can we trace the development of a counter-discourse challenging these? What are the intersection points between the global and local context and the knowledge produced and what do these points indicate about discursive power relations? After all, have these representations of Muslim women in Turkey successfully challenged patriarchal and essentialist discourses? Consequently I aim to outline the emergence and development of the knowledge on women and Islam in Turkey while marking the means of producing knowledge and discursive practices that are free from epistemic violence, that challenge discursive subordination of women.

On the basis of the critiques of the feminist postcolonial theory and Middle Eastern women's studies I specify some essential elements of the formation of a counter-discourse which I take as reference points in my analytical discussions. Firstly, the women in the ethnographic studies should have their voices in the discourse. Their agencies should be taken into consideration and their subjectivities should be analysed. However these two notions should be discussed in relation to women's different potentials of altering, transforming or resisting the power of religious ideologies. Women should not be otherized in the discourse which should not be Eurocentric and essentialist. The discourse should not be based on a hierarchical binarism and the analysis of the ethnographic data should be contextualized. Addressing these points for analysing the researches that I have selected bears the risk of overlooking the power of religious institutions and beliefs in constructing a gender hierarchy and preserving it. The risk is mentioned by many scholars of gender in the Middle East, as I presented in the theoretical discussion. Thus, my

theoretical and methodological analysis also comprises two more efforts; focusing at the discursive formations that represent Islam as the sole and inbuilt source of gender inequalities and highlighting the discursive formations that reduce the visible outcomes of patriarchal aspects of Islamic belief to a level of cultural relativity or present them as practices that empower women against the influences of modern, secular, Western, capitalist world. It is a challenging task, yet I contend that it is very much necessary in the formation of a new critical approach to the contemporary relation between women and Islam.

### **3.3 The Key Concepts in the Analysis**

Readers of the discourse on relationship between gender and religion in Turkey frequently encounter the concepts of Islamization, Islamism, and political Islam, post-Islamism, secularism and Kemalism. Thus it is firstly necessary to define these concepts before dealing with the ethnographic discourse on the issue. Turner's (1994) explanation of Islamization from a Weberian perspective regards it as a solution to post-modernism. He suggests "Islamization is an attempt to create at the global level a new *Gemeinschaft*, a new version of the traditional household which would close off the threat of post-modernity by re-establishing a communal ideology". He continues that it is a counter movement against Westernization through the means of Western culture, namely Protestantism. He equates Islamization with "political radicalism plus cultural anti-modernism. Yet, it finds itself in defence of modernization against the ubiquitous "pluralization of lifestyles and life-worlds" in the post-modern context (pp. 92-93). Islamism principally refers to a political movement that aims to rule the society according to the principles of Islam, and the supporters of this movement are called as Islamists. Not all the Islamists share this political aim, some Islamists only define themselves as devoted Muslims who live their lives according to the rules of Koran and who has no intention to change the social order. While fundamentalism refers to a traditionalist version of Islamism, neo-fundamentalism embodies a trans-national and global approach by using "the notion of ummah. Neo-fundamentalism is less concerned with purely political issues targeted by Islamists, and rather focused on the spirituality of individual believers." (Boubekeur & Roy, 2012, p. 5). Post-Islamism

entails a more pluralistic vision for the Islamist ideology and is open to compromises in politics. It does not aim to achieve an Islamist state.

Hakan Yavuz categorizes the Islamic movements in two groups: vertical and horizontal. He describes the vertical movements as state oriented movements and divides them into two groups. The group that adopts legitimate repertoire of action is described by Yavuz as reformist because of its aim to control the state or its policies through a legitimate path founding or forming alliance with a political party. It aims to control education, legal system and social welfare. On the other hand the illegitimate vertical movements are described by him as revolutionary, rejecting the system and using violence. They target the state. He describes the horizontal Islamic movements as society and identity oriented and divides them into two groups. The societal movements (everyday-based movements) use media to construct Islamic identities, use the market “to create heaven on earth”, view Islam as a cultural capital, and use networks for developing empowerment among the members. The illegitimate group of horizontal movements isolate themselves from the political sphere and promote self-purification with an aim of building religious consciousness (Yavuz, 2003, p. 28). This clear, simple and yet very useful typology is very much enlightening for understanding the reference points of Islamic identities that are presented in the literature.

The main principles of secularism can be traced in the argument of Niyazi Berkes (2014) that “the main issue in the subject of secularization is the narrowing down of the space which is regarded as sacred in the economic, technological, political, educational, sexual, informational spheres of life” (2014, p. 23). According to this argument, when I write secularization, I refer to the process that aims to reduce the influence of religion on a wide range of areas that Berkes mentions. Kemalism or Atatürkism refers to the six principles on which Turkish Republic was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. These are republicanism, nationalism, populism, laicism, statism and revolutionism.

### **3.4. What Does Analysing This Fragmented and Changing Discourse Offer?**

As I present in the following chapters, the discourse constituted by the ethnographic studies on women and Islam in Turkey is very much fragmented. Veiling, women's agency and the political Islamist movement, secularism/ laicism and Islamist threat, feminism and Islam, and Islam and consumerism emerge as the mostly discussed issues in the discourse about gender and religion in Turkey. There are important studies on rural and urban Islam as well. Researchers from various disciplines of social sciences, namely sociology, women and gender studies, political science, anthropology, geography, religious studies, cultural studies, Middle East studies have contributed to the production of knowledge on this area. Analysing such a discourse, revealing the discursive period it was produced in; mapping out the networks of circulation of its statements is a demanding task. The major difficulty is that it is hard to argue that there are clear dividing lines between the various fragments of this discourse. On the issue of gender and religion, the result is a kaleidoscopic discourse which has a rich handbag of theoretical influences.

The second reason of the fragmented structure of the discourse is the heterogeneity of Muslim women in Turkey. As it is going to be presented with the ethnographies and field studies, the political and social changes have influenced the Islamic culture in Turkey to a large degree. On the one hand fundamentalist Islam found support from larger segments of society, and on the other hand Western notions like consumerism, feminism, individualism and capitalism started to be internalized in varying degrees by Islamist or Muslim women who define themselves as devoted believers. Starting from the 1980s, Turkey has also witnessed surfacing of a new Islamic way of life and culture with its fashion, literature, cinema, TV channels, magazines, residential areas, holiday resorts, and consumption culture. This culture in fact is not completely isolated from the influences of Western middle and upper class culture, it can even be stated that it became an Islamist version of it in many respects. Thus such a spectrum of cultural milieu influences not only the discourse produced on Muslim women but also Muslim women's interpretations of Islam.

With this research that depicts a broad picture of the ethnographic representations of Muslim women in Turkey, I highlight that the most commonly discussed issues in the Middle Eastern women's studies are addressed and discussed Turkish setting too. However, due to the secular state order and the unique modernization background of the country, these issues arise in conditions specific to Turkey. Encounters of Islamic identities with the secularists and the secular state order are the most critical of these conditions. Therefore a fundamental task of this study is to look at how the discussions of the common issues of Middle Eastern studies are shaped in the specific context of Turkey.

Furthermore, another part of the analysis is comprised of a discussion of what is not discussed, what is neglected, what is not studied, asked and left unexamined. Based on an overview of the incentives, research questions, and challenges of the studies and also an overview of where this ethnographic knowledge is clustered, I highlight the gaps in the ethnographic knowledge on women and Islam in Turkey. I contend that these gaps will also indicate the political nature behind the researcher's choices in knowledge production. As I have mentioned in my summary of Foucault's theorization of discourse, the reverse side of focusing on circulated statements and discursive formations reveals at the same time the structures at work to exclude the statements that are accepted as false. In this sense, I take the excluded or neglected issues, subjects or problematiques to exhibit the political, institutional, social, and cultural structures at work during knowledge production. Moreover by showing the gaps, I suggest new areas of research and new problematiques that need to be addressed in studying the relationship between women and Islam in Turkey.

## CHAPTER 4

### ISLAM AND THE TRADITIONAL GENDER HIEARCHY: 1983-1992

The first discursive period corresponds to the last decade before the First World feminism, Western anthropology and Orientalist studies of Islam started to be challenged by the feminist postcolonial theory and the Middle Eastern women's studies in the late 1980s. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Middle Eastern women were being dominantly studied by Western researchers who followed the colonial anthropological tradition of studying non-Western cultures. In these studies Islam and tradition are taken as the key factor that explains the Middle East and creates "a reductive, ahistorical conception of women" (Lazreg, 1988, p.85). Veil, sex segregation and patriarchal domination were the most commonly discussed subjects in explaining Muslim women's inferior status. Meanwhile, the Orientalist stereotypes about the Muslim world were also being reinforced during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Iran-Iraq War in 1980-88, and the Gulf War in 1990-91 in the West. These stereotypes which were also about women's inferior status, gender inequality, and sex segregation were being reproduced in everyday racism (Moghissi, 1999). It was not until in the late 1980s that the Eurocentric paradigms that saw Islam and traditions as the obstacles to Muslim women's emancipation were shattered by feminist postcolonial critique, the debates around the crisis of representation, and emergence of indigenous feminisms.

The discourse of the studies on women and Islam in Turkey from 1983 to 1992 shares the premises of Eurocentric paradigms even though the authors claim that they aim to challenge the stereotypes that are products of these paradigms. In this period, we see the anthropological studies by four researchers, namely Carol Delaney, Julie Marcus, Nancy Tapper and Richard Tapper. Each study offers an answer to how the traditional gender hierarchy is legitimized on Islamic grounds. Carol Delaney's *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village* (1991) and Julie Marcus' *A World of Difference: Islam and Gender Hierarchy in Turkey* (1992) are the two book length ethnographies of this period. The two studies

will be compared and contrasted on the basis of their anthropological approaches and their effects. Nancy and Richard Tapper's fieldwork in Eğirdir town of south west Turkey will also be elaborated in this chapter. Even though the articles "Gender and Religion in a Turkish Town: A Comparison of Two Types of Formal Women's Gatherings" (1983) by and "The Birth of the prophet: Ritual and gender in Turkish Islam" (1987) is published earlier it will be more fruitful to discuss it at the end of the chapter as it has discursive links to the next episteme as well. Nancy Tapper's chapter "Ziyaret: gender, movement and exchange in a Turkish community" in *Muslim travellers: pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination* (1990) is also based on the Eğirdir fieldwork. It provides insights about Islamic visiting rites of men and women.

The ethnographic discourse produced on women and religion in Turkey in this period has been under the influence Orientalist and colonial discourses on the Middle East even though they have strong post-colonialist claims. Portrayal of the Muslim Turkish women as victims of Islamic and patriarchal traditions, comparisons and contrasts with Western societies and Christianity and building up a hierarchy on the basis of differences, failing to see Islamic culture as a diverse and complex set of beliefs and practices, failing to locate the Islamic culture to a global context are some of the shortcomings that characterise these studies as Orientalist. There are central notions that are apparent in Carol Delaney's and Julie Marcus' texts, namely the religious symbols of inside and outside, purity and pollution, and openness and covering. As I will try to demonstrate, these notions not only function as building blocks of their analysis of the legitimisation of gender hierarchy in Islam, but also are part of a Western ethnocentric feminist discourse that represent Muslim women as essentially different from and inferior to Western women. References to the role of Islamic rules and traditions are very much noticeable in their ethnographic accounts. They draw a sharp dividing line between the traditional societies that they study and the modern world such that there are very few grey areas. The studies describe the societies that they study mostly in non-modern terms. I argue that this is because they define a Muslim culture considerably on the basis of Islamic moral codes which makes it primarily traditionalist and unavoidably different from the West. Lila Abu-Lughod (1989) mentions that in

anthropology the dichotomies of primitive and modern, savage and civilized and self and other are prevalent rather than the East/ West dichotomy. Regarding these studies, I suggest that the prevalence of the modern primitive/modern dichotomy is replaced by traditional/modern as long as traditional is pitted against modern which is deeply articulated to the structural inequality between the East and the West. As Abu-Lughod also claims, this fundamental inequality between the Western scholars and their subjects in the non-Western world is effective in complicated ways in the disciplines within which these scholars work and yields a scholarly discourse of a constructed ethnographic area, in this case the Middle East.

The articles by Nancy and Richard Tapper contain conflicting statements within this period. Rather than presenting Islamic orthodoxy as an all-encompassing and a unified order, they engage in revealing the differences between the men's and women's religious beliefs and conducts, specifically in *mevlut* rites and religious visits. Emphasis on the role of the secular state ideology in the formation of Islamic orthodoxy and the articulation of a cultural element, respect, to Islamic ideology of gender are two points that differentiate their studies from the uni-dimensional approaches of Delaney and Marcus. Even though they attribute a certain level of agency to women about their religious rites, in the end they underline the subordination of women and/or male domination. Lastly, the notions of self-expression, mobility and egalitarianism emerge in defining women's agency and challenge to patriarchy in their religious rites. The use of the first two notions which overlap with the highly praised attributes of the new era of globalization beginning with the early 1990s are also common in the portrayal of Muslim women in the next discursive period.

#### **4.1. Carol Delaney and *The Seed and the Soil***

Carol Delaney's study *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village* (1991) is a field work that she carried out in a village in Central Anatolia. She had studied at Harvard Divinity School before her PhD in cultural anthropology at Chicago University. The study is the publication of her anthropological fieldwork

that she conducted during her PhD study.<sup>10</sup> Among the two specializations, the former one dominantly shapes her will to know and guide her analysis in *The Seed and the Soil*. She also follows the colonial anthropological traditions in her methodology and in the way she presents her ethnographic data.

The fieldwork begins in September 1980, on the night of the military takeover and continues for two years. The book, as she states, examines how theories and symbols of procreation are essential in understanding Turkish village society. Suggesting that procreation is taken as a reflection of divine creation in village life, she argues that monotheism is associated with monogenetic theory of creation. She explains gender relations in terms of procreation beliefs that rest on the analogies of the seed and the soil, in which man is associated with the seed and woman with the soil. According to these beliefs world is created by single power which is God and procreation depends on a single source which is men (or the seed). Delaney claims that the implications of the arguments of the book are not limited to the understanding of Turkish village society but are also related to discussions of power and gender in anthropology, religion and modern-day western society.

The book consists of five chapters covering the subjects of the body, marriage and weddings, relatives and relations within the family, the village and its boundaries, and the encompassing context of Islam. Delaney establishes the association between gender and cosmology on the idea that the seed's ability to generate life bestows men power while soil's ability to nurture attributes a passive role to women and associates them with what is created. This is the way gender hierarchy is established in Turkish village society for Delaney. Throughout the chapters which are organized in terms of concentric circles starting from the body and reaching out the global Islamic society, she presents vividly the ways this cosmological hierarchy functions as the organising principle that structures culture. The first chapter addresses the theory of procreation and its expressions in the practices about body care, sexual activity, birth, childcare and childrearing. The second chapter analyses the wedding ritual and marriage with a special emphasis on honour code. In the next chapter deals with how theory of procreation elucidates the villager's notions of

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<sup>10</sup><http://www.carolldelaney.com/bio.html>, accessed on 16 September 2016.

relatedness on the basis of descent and distance and how these relations defined in terms of time and space are effective in expressions of affection and authority. The fourth chapter describes how the procreation symbols have role in conceptualization of space, namely the household, the village and the nation; are reflected in the sexual division of labour in the household; and are integrated to the nationalist rhetoric. Though it is also evident in previous chapters, it is in this chapter that she emphasizes the notion of inside/outside distinction suggesting an association between the interior spaces and the female body, and outside and the male body. Preserving the distinction between inside and outside is essential to maintain purity and honour in all the concentric circles that she describes. The last chapter describes Islam as the most inclusive frame and discusses its cosmological system with a set of rituals.

The book presents a very detailed ethnographic account of a village life in Turkey especially in terms of cultural symbolism and can be considered as an important contribution to the anthropological discourse on Turkey. The reader finds exhaustive information about variety of subjects from government midwives to circumcision of boys (*siinnet*), from the songs sung in the wedding ceremonies to the agricultural plants of the village, from the plans of Anatolian houses to the pillars of faith in Islam. As Hann (1993) argues *The Seed and the Soil* is also a study which brings the relation between Islam, gender and sexuality to the fore through a novel perspective; her cosmological point of view must be regarded as an inspiring way of understanding this relation.

However, there are significant shortcomings in Delaney's methodology and analysis which obscure the novelties. The first shortcoming in the study is the lack of a detailed discussion of her methodology. She prefers to focus on theories of procreation in monotheist religions in the introduction and this preference seems to prioritize her problematization of the relationship between cosmology and religion over informing the reader about the details of her methodology. Secondly, throughout the book, it is easily recognized that Delaney has a narrow interpretation of the ethnographic data. Every aspect of the village culture is associated with the seed and soil metaphor, which leaves no space for other social influences,

resistance, transition and diversity. Moreover, she does not refrain from using “Turkish village” as a generalizing term that neglects the rich varieties of local cultures in Turkey. In her review of *The Seed and The Soil* Leyla Neyzi (1994), having mentioned these points, adds that the link between the procreation theory and the ethnographic data is not successfully problematized. Lastly, as Chris Hann (1993) also mentions in his review, the spelling mistakes of the Turkish words are very noticeable throughout the book for the Turkish readers.

The book can be regarded as a part of the Orientalist ethnographic discourse on women and Islam. It is evident that women are represented as passive believers of Islam, there is little reference to their agency, and it neither attributes agency to men too. Her stress on cosmology in explaining the relation between procreation beliefs and village life attributes an unchanging and timeless character to the village society and the nature of the gender hierarchy she observes. This is supported by her will to know which is informed by her textual approach to Islamic beliefs of procreation rather than by the dynamics of cultural changes in Turkish society, which in turn leads to both making overgeneralizations in her remarks about Turkish nation and misinterpreting the ethnographic data. Besides, we cannot hear the women speak in this ethnography and their representation as passive believers is further strengthened with this lack. As it will be discussed below in detail, its statements on inside/outside, pollution/purity and open/covered dichotomies belong to a wider group of discursive formations constructing a particular way of understanding and representing the relation between gender hierarchy and Islamic faith that serves Orientalism. On the basis of these dichotomies, women are portrayed as submissive Orientals and their lives are depicted as circumcised with religious principles which define a secondary role and status with respect to men. West/ East, modern/ traditional dichotomies are also incorporated to Delaney’s analysis.

Delaney’s ethnography can be considered as part of the discourse of the anthropology of the Orient in the 1970s and 1980s. Lila Abu-Lughod notes that there were three central zones of theory in the anthropology of the Middle East: “segmentation, the harem and Islam... these are the dominant ‘theoretical metonyms’ by means of which this vast and complex area is grasped.” She adds that

the themes of anthropological work in Iran and Turkey, being mostly agrarian and urban-centred, might comprise despotism as well (1989, p. 280). In the discussion about the theme of harem, she rightly argues, the Middle Eastern women inform the anthropological discourse as “a negative foil” (p. 288) and this is evident in Delaney’s study. We cannot see a critical response by the researcher to the pre-existing colonial gaze to the Muslim women in the Middle East. The approach of the book is mostly a perpetuation of the dichotomies arising from the subject positions of Delaney as a Western researcher and the non-Western women she studies. Moreover Abu-Lughod points to the lack of theoretical underdevelopment of the anthropology on the Middle Eastern women, an ineffective aspect of *The Seed and the Soil* as well. Thirdly, Abu-Lughod mentions the curiosity and the demand by the publishing market about the hidden lives of women in the Middle East and the women’s studies being a newly developing field in those decades was not indifferent to it. Veiling is a notion that Delaney uses as a founding pillar in her analysis about many aspects of cultural and religious life and I believe that her numerous references to veil is associated to this tendency in the field. In her text, veil emerges as a metonym for the hidden sexuality in the Islamic culture. In Abu-Lughod’s review, the relationship between ideology and power is noted to be a well-studied and theoretically fruitful theme in the anthropology of the Middle Eastern women. Belief, specifically Islamic belief, is rightly claimed to reproduce gender inequalities. Delaney’s approach overlaps with this line of thought, yet with major gaps I discuss below. Lastly, the attempts to include voices of the “other” which began with the reflexive feminist anthropologists mentioned in the review are not followed by Delaney who prefers to integrate her own interpretations of Islamic rites and beliefs based on her cosmological reasoning. Abu-Lughod finds anthropological theorizing of Islam more promising. Agreeing with Talal Asad to take Islam as a discursive tradition, Abu-Lughod warns “discourses are always multiple and are deployed for purposes by individuals and social groups under given social conditions at particular historical moments” (1973, p. 297). Because Delaney hardly incorporates dimensions of time and social context, we read an almost single dimensional Islam in her study.

It is not surprising to see that the “will to know” of Carol Delaney derives from her investigation of religious texts of monotheistic religions. Throughout the book there are numerous references to Bible, Koran and especially the myth of Abraham sacrificing his son. These close linkages to religious codes of procreation relegate the culture to cosmological codes, as detected by Nükhet Sirman (1993). It isolates the culture from social context and depicts an essentialist and “a static picture” (p. 508). Even though she presents an account of the historical developments in Turkey about the tension between laicism and Islamism, their influence on the village customs and beliefs is not elaborated. Delaney neither mentions the Islamist movement that had started to gain power. Her basis of argumentation is parallel with the line of Orientalist thought that explains social phenomena in the Muslim societies on the basis of Islamic texts and beliefs.

Thus, the reader cannot hear the voices of the villagers in this study. Since, according to Delaney, masculinity (the seed, the life-giver) is in a privileged position in monogenetic view of procreation and the monotheist religions, it should be very crucial to have the women’s, the subordinated ones’, own words. In an era that post-colonial critique and reflexive anthropology was so influential, and also three years after the publication of “Can the subaltern speak?” (Spivak, 1988), it is disappointing to encounter such an absence/silence. Delaney argues that women have no say about this closed system of culture while excluding their voices from the book as well. Therefore, their status as passive believers, subordinated and oppressed ones in this gender hierarchy justified by the divine order, is not shaken in this work. In addition to this, as Neyzi rightly states, women “contrary to our own expectations, are often highly active and powerful in rural Turkish society” (Neyzi, 1994, p. 213). Chris Hann (1993) too, in his review article, dwells upon the same point. Delaney suggests that the answer of the Turks to one of the main questions of western feminist movement, whether women can be deemed to have a right of their own, would be affirmative. Yet Delaney’s insistence to interpret the cultural symbols on the basis of her intuitions, insights and experiences, yields a negative answer. For Hann, this is due to her lack of effort to historically and socially contextualize most of her suggestions. I would argue that this is also due to her “un-reflexive” methodology.

“I did not know what the theory of procreation was, but I knew I would be able to find a place where modern Western scientific theories had not yet fully penetrated” (Delaney, p. 21). It is a statement that Delaney establishes in her study the dichotomy between East and West between modernity and traditionalism. She continues “Turkey is a Muslim country and Islam is one of the three monotheistic faiths in the Abrahamic tradition. Therefore Turkey was arguably a good place to explore the symbolic relationship between procreation and Creation, between genesis at the human and divine level” (p. 21). So we see that she finds an intrinsic association between Islam and being non-modern which she also mentions in her description of Muslim societies. Arguing that in Islam the ideal was not to transform the society but to return to the “pristine” (p. 20) form of it ordered by God and written in Koran – she says as suggested by Muslims and Orientalists among whom there is von Grunebaum- Delaney justifies the dichotomy.

In the chapter about the bodily symbols Delaney clearly argues that “a man’s power and authority, in short, his value as a man, derives from his power to generate life. His honour, however, depends on his ability to guarantee that a child is from his own seed (Delaney, 1987). This in turn depends on his ability to control ‘his’ woman” (Delaney, 1991, p. 39). Moreover, in Islam “man’s procreative role appears to be analogous to God” (p. 34). Thus, man is the owner of woman, children, the animals and the land. Women or the feminine, on the other hand, are associated with the created rather than the creator, they are associated with the world and the soil, and they lack the power to create. “Their identity is somewhat amorphous, and their bodily boundaries are more fluid and permeable” (p. 37). In order to guarantee man having children from his own seed, woman must be covered and enclosed just like the land. Women are not self contained, their bodies are naturally “open” and must be bound, closed and contained by social measures (p. 38). This is at the heart of the legitimization of the gender hierarchy “at all levels of Turkish society, ranging from the household and village to the nation and Islam” (Sirman, 1993, 508). Delaney explains sexual activities, pregnancy, birth, child care, transition to gender, marriage and kinship relations, the village and household structures on the basis of this argument. It is very much obvious that such a line of

reasoning is essentialist. She not only suggests an all encompassing explanation for various social phenomena at the individual, family, village, nation and Muslim community levels, but also rests this explanation on an unchanging essence, a religious dogma. She does not attribute a potential of change and transition, neither she contextualizes the religious discourse that penetrates almost every aspect of social and cultural life and functions in the reproduction of gender hierarchy.

Yet, many of her statements depend on her interpretations. About the sexual topics in her fieldwork, she explains that her accounts are “the result of many discussions, many observations and a certain amount of conjecture” (p. 43). Covering and veiling constitute an essential element of her analysis starting from the chapter about the body in which she states that girls, unlike boys, “are covered in layers of baggy clothes and several headscarves and enclosed in the ‘stone veil’ (Bouhdiba, 1985, p. 36) of the house” (p. 97). In the second chapter which is about the wedding rituals she states “Everything of value has a cover”, “At the same time one could also say that the physical nature of the objects is concealed as if there is something obscene about the naked instrumentality of the objects” (p. 145). It seems that Delaney’s analysis and interpretation owes much to the colonial perception of the Eastern women and the veil. The discussion of Yeğenoğlu (2003) on unveiling and the Western gaze seems relevant here. She argues that the veil, which constitutes a hindrance between the Western gaze and the body of the Eastern woman, keeps the Eastern woman’s body out of reach of the Western gaze and desire. The Western gaze, disappointed with this barrier, questions this veil, this cloth ruthlessly. Delaney starts this questioning with the inner circle of her analysis, namely the body and continues with the household and then carries it to her analysis of Islam in general. For instance “The house, as a material earth structure that encloses and protects its members, is analogous to female body” for Delaney. “Ideally it should be kept *kapali* (closed) to the outside world, an inner sanctuary. The boundary between inside/ outside is well marked... It is represented or ‘covered’ by the man who defends its purity” (p. 114). Moreover, Delaney argues that female body determines the structuring of inside/outside relations within the family. She claims that female body “is generative of notions of enclosing and enclosed. It serves as a symbolic reservoir from which the concepts of inside-outside, open-closed, and

purity – pollution are brought to light and projected onto the social world” (Delaney, 1991, p. 200). The village is also symbolically a female body, in relation to outside it protects and encloses the insider like a womb. Just as Yeğenoğlu (2003) explains, the veil becomes an essential part of the ontology of the East in general in Orientalist sense. This concept that functions as concept/ metaphor plays a crucial role in the foundations of being Oriental, in contrast to the transparency of the West. This transparency is a legacy of the Enlightenment according to Foucault (1980). The East, the Orient is concealed behind the veil and this concealment not only reveals the desire to know the Orient as female, but also becomes one of the essential differences between East and the West. In the Orientalist texts and art what is hidden behind the veil is attributed mostly obscene, sexual and erotic features, which are fantasies of the Western gaze to a great extent. The association between covering, female sexuality and obscenity is an argument that Delaney uses in many other places in the book. For instance, on transition from childhood to a “gendered world” she explains that “as *sünnet* (circumcision) marks the transition of a boy into a gendered world, of which marriage is the fulfilment, so I believe there is an event that marks the transition to a gendered world for a girl, namely ‘covering’” (p. 87). She states that many girls in the village start to cover their heads by the end of primary school, at the age of twelve. “Male sexuality is revealed by the removal of covering (meaning *sünnet*, circumcision), whereas female sexuality is hidden by covering” (p. 87). Then she puts forward her proposition about the association between hair and female sexuality. There is a displacement of shame and obscenity from genitals to hair for Delaney, which is elucidated by the removal of pubic hair. “The headscarf binds and covers her hair and symbolically binds her sexuality” (p. 88). While boys are comfortable about exhibiting their sexuality, girls hide it under layers of clothes and headscarves and behind the walls of the household. Thus women in the city or foreigners “wearing short sleeved or open-necked blouses are considered *cıplak* (naked)” (p. 97). In the chapter about marriage practices Delaney repeats that “after puberty, but before marriage” “her openness (openings) has been closed, covered by her husband, and thus she is no longer perceived as provocative by others” (p. 112). There are other references to hair, covering and asexuality in paragraphs about bride’s preparation for the wedding ceremony. Since “loose hair is felt to be erotic” and showing one’s hair is believed to be sinful, all of the hair of

the bride is braided. The gypsies are “thought to have an unbridled sexuality” by the villagers as they have disordered hair (p. 130). The obscenity and sexuality behind the *kina* ritual among women before the wedding reveals itself in the songs that are sung for Delaney. Even though she states that the sexual references are “obscure”, she suggests that in the song the word paradise refers to sexual intercourse, hands refer to genital organs, the minarets refer to male genitals, and the like.

In the third chapter on relatives and relations, Delaney reproduces her arguments further through emphasizing the patrilineal nature of social life and kinship structures and links these structures to the theory of procreation. After describing the terminology of relatedness in detail, she emphasizes that there is a significant inequality between men and women, which is also stated by the villagers themselves. She exemplifies it through male inheritance but explains it through “a specific theory of procreation. Theories of male inheritance implicitly incorporate a view close to that of the villagers, a view that imagines men as “creators” and “owners” of children, who partake of their essence and are indeed part of themselves” (p.167). Delaney’s descriptions of the patriarchal family and kinship structure in relation to religion validates Chandra Mohanty’s (1999) contentions that in the Western discourse about Muslim women it is assumed that kinship structure is the source of women’s subordination, there is a single patriarchal kinship structure in Muslim societies, and this structure has not been changed since the emergence of Islam (Mohanty, 1999, p. 309). In this chapter, like in the other chapters of the book, Delany does not question the historical change in women’s status and in this chapter she takes beliefs of procreation as the basis of the kinship structure that victimizes women. After dwelling the notion of “*izin*” (“permission to cross boundaries between inside and outside”) which she describes as central to authority relations, being allowed to leave “one’s place of duty” and ultimately “the source or cause of movement” (p. 172), she presents it as the guiding principle of women’s lack of mobility and autonomy through not only contrasting with her autonomy as a researcher who has chosen the subject and the village but also villager women’s inability to understand it. To conclude the chapter she presents her argument of concentric circles through a diagram. The inner circle starts with women enclosed by husband, the next circle is house enclosed by the eldest male,

head of the household, the third circle is village enclosed by *muhtar*, the next circle is enclosed by the head of the state, and the final circle is world enclosed by the god. The male not only encloses but “represents, and forms generative relations between them” (p. 199). As one of the inner circles, village is symbolically female with its corporeality of strongly bound ties of kinship and neighbourhood and “bodiliness is associated with female” (p. 198). The chapter is another example of Eurocentric debates about the Middle Eastern women during the 1990s which commonly accept that women have an inferior status due to Islamic theology, their roles and place is defined within the household, and sex segregation and women’s mobility is controlled by men on the basis of honour codes (Moghadam, 1993).

The fourth chapter analyses the inside/outside distinction more thoroughly and discussed how procreation symbols and meanings conceptualize physical spaces of the house, village and the nation; are reflected in sexual division of labour; and used in the nationalist rhetoric. Regarding the first subject, she emphasizes that the notion of inside/outside defines the physical boundaries, and symbolically the female body is at the core of the analogies where female is associated with inside and male is associated with outside. Her critical argument is that the whole “world becomes an icon of gender as constructed within a specific ideology of procreation” (p. 238). Thus she sees almost no chance of change in women’s status because it requires a change in the symbolic world, which would literally mean the end of the world for the villagers. When it comes to sexual division of labour, the theory of procreation works for devaluation of women’s labour, which is perceived as derivative and reproductive in contrast to the productive labour of men that attributes them power and authority. Delaney states that the value of the work is derived from gender not the work itself. It is evident that Delaney reproduces the Orientalist representations of Middle Eastern women who are victims of patriarchal and religious ideologies through these sets of arguments and detaches their status from the social developments since the foundation of the Turkish Republic that she mentions. No matter what development and change is brought along, gender inequality is perpetuated as the source of legitimacy remains to be God, and thus male.

Delaney's inferences on religion and sexuality shows itself in the most extreme form when she claims that Ka'ba stone at Mecca shows "a remarkable resemblance to a vagina". She continues that "No doubt villagers and Muslims in general, would be shocked by this association. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the Ka'ba is symbolically female" (p. 307). She explains in the footnote that the house of God might be symbolically female and some Muslims agree with this interpretation, and its covering can be a veil.

*The Seed and the Soil* circulates several set of "truths" of Eurocentric biases of the Orientalist discourse on the Middle East and it justifies them on the basis of essences related to religious beliefs of procreation. Within this framework the women are described as subordinate and passive subjects who lack the agency to change or modify the conditions that they live in. Moreover Delaney clearly otherizes them by contrasting their status and world view with her own and with the western society by referring to their strong bonds with traditions. Her methodology that significantly lacks references to women's perceptions of the gender hierarchy apart from some brief statements and explanations about the traditions reflects a First World feminist attitude.

#### **4.2. Julie Marcus and *A World of Difference***

*A World of Difference: Islam and Gender Hierarchy in Turkey* (1992) is an ethnography by Julie Marcus based on her fieldwork in Izmir, the third largest city of Turkey and the largest city of western Anatolia, that she had carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Marcus is an Australian anthropologist and this study is the publication of her PhD thesis work. Her aim in the book is twofold: to present elements of Islamic practice that refer to gender hierarchy and to discuss the politics of knowledge that create modernist, Orientalist, sexist, and racist constructions of the Middle East. In the critical standpoint of Julie Marcus, which she develops through her reviews of travel writings and Orientalist constructions of Izmir in the introductory chapters, gender is the main focus. She agrees with the post-structuralists that knowledge is "constructed and imposed through relations of power" (p.1) and ethnography as well is a product of politics and interests between

the researcher and the researched culture. She asserts “Once the political nature of all knowledge is accepted, the critique of all knowledge becomes possible” (Marcus, 1992, p. 161). As Virginia R. Dominguez (1994) rightly underlines, *A World of Difference* is published in a period where many scholars from North Africa and the Middle East pose a challenge by privileging a “gender gaze” against the Orientalist, post-Orientalist and even some feminist approaches, to understand the conditions of women’s lives. As Yeğenoğlu too states in her review, the central argument of the book is that it is impossible to fully grasp “the question of cultural difference without addressing the question of gender” (1994, p.1125).

In the first four chapters of the book Marcus illustrates her assertion, which is very much parallel with Said’s claim that Orient is essentially constructed by the West. Therefore Marcus is trying to find a “better approximation” (Marcus, 1992, p. 21) by rejecting the question of representation and its outside as she draws attention to the issue of gender. In the first chapter she explains how her motivation to study İzmir was informed by the travel writings and “European preconceptions and fantasies about the Orient” and restates Edward Said’s arguments about power of the constructed historical knowledge. The second chapter presents an overview of the economic history of the city in the Ottoman times by references to its ancient Greek past and why it is called “Infidel İzmir”. In chapter three, titled “Cannibalising the Orient” she discusses the way history and travel writing is gendered, essentially masculine and renders “the dominated groups as feminine” (p. 31). As Yeğenoğlu explains “Indeed, travelling becomes a masculine and sexualized act: it is the rational, masculine subject who penetrates the non-rational, exotic and sensual East” (1994, p. 1125). Likewise, western women’s travel writings which Marcus reviews are not exempt from Orientalism as Marcus presents in chapter four.

Chapters five to nine are about the ethnographic study Marcus conducted in Turkey. Chapter five introduces her core arguments in the analysis of her ethnographic data explains how the gender hierarchy is established in Islam through the laws of pollution and purity, which I discuss below together with the final three chapters. Then she presents her definitions of gender separation, segregation and seclusion

followed by its history in the Ottoman period and a discussion of the impact of economic changes on women's rights. As she introducing this chapter, which is titled "Women's Space, Women's Place", she takes a critical stand against all the associations of harem and the hidden sexuality of the women's space with the Orient. Also she argues that these associations were used for underlining the Western notions of feminism and equality. She presents some historical accounts of women's mobility and use of space during the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman cities as a challenge. Marcus continues that as the industrial capital penetrated Ottoman market it brought together Western values and culture that were highly internalized by a section of the Ottoman elite and these values were in clash with the traditional religious ones. This resulted in more strict seclusion for women. On the other hand she notes that women that she met and observed have a highly mobile, busy, and independent social lives though gender segregation is significantly preserved and she suggests that this can be explained by the pollution law. In the chapter on women's rites, after a detailed description of *Mevlüt* ritual, Marcus proposes that the notion of flow "highlights the distinction between the male and female world views" and associates "the flow of substances across conceptual or physical boundaries" with the law of pollution and purity (p. 129). She ends the chapter by her ethnographic account of the shrine visits of women as an example of who they construct a "women's world" (p. 134). Chapter eight illustrates with ethnographic data the argument that Muslim women's religious practices are marginalized through labelling them as superstition. Marcus concludes the book by suggesting a gendered alteration to Victor Turner's structuralist approach to religion and states:

For reasons which are clear from the analysis of Islamic pollution law and its use in producing a sexual division of space, I came to consider that the sacred structure of Turkish culture (...) represented a dominant but male, model of society. In gendering Turner's sociological model, I sought female structural sacred centres to correspond to the male ones, on the basis of an analysis of women's ritual symbolism locating them in the household and at women's shrines. I also considered that some hierarchy had to be injected into this view of social world, and that the male and female models differed in their boundedness (p.162).

*A World of Difference* can be considered as an endeavour to produce a counter discourse to Orientalist knowledge on the Middle East, however it does not

accomplish its aims due to its several shortcomings. Firstly, because she devotes the major part of her introductory chapters to representations of the Orient in travel writings, she neglects the already existing social sciences literature on the Turkey and the Middle East that have more critical standpoints and her literature review does not present a novel critique to the circulating criticisms of the gendered and racist nature of the Orientalist discourse. Another fundamental problem is that Marcus does not provide information about her methodology. As Zehra F. Arat (1995) also mentions in her review, she does not provide any details of how she conducted her ethnography, she does not mention exactly when and for how long she has visited İzmir, how much contact she had with the people, and also in which part of the city she conducted her fieldwork. Besides, she does not reflect women's insights of their religious practices and their world views. The lack of women's voices, like in *The Seed and the Soil* attributes a subaltern status to them. They do not speak in this study but they are represented by the researcher who narrates and explains their rites and world-views to the readers. These problems not only considerably inhibit generation of a critical discourse but also make Marcus have only a limited understanding of Islam and gender hierarchy in Turkey. Yet, she reaches to several conclusions about Turkey and Islam with only partly referring to the wide range of differences in beliefs and rites. I agree with Arat (1995) that Marcus's book does not present a novel insight. She argues that the book does not have a focus and deals with peripheral issues regarding gender hierarchy and Islam in Turkey. In the first and second chapters, Marcus presents a review of the literature by her predecessors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Arat states that Marcus does not want to fall into the same Orientalist conceptions but she fails to fulfill this intention. She too states that the study lacks references to native scholars' works, especially for explaining why Turkish Family Law did not overcome the subordination of women. She also underlines that Marcus cannot escape from being a prey to ethnocentrism when she repeatedly mentions that "women are able to move freely on the streets without fear of male harassment" (p. 116). This statement can be considered as part of the discourse of First World feminism which circulates women's seclusion as the truth of the Orient and is surprised with the exceptions and unexpected scenes of Muslim women.

Actually many aspects of *A World of Difference* overlap with colonial, Orientalist and First World feminist discourses. First of all, as she explains in the first chapter her will to know derives from travel writings and reinforced by Orientalist constructions of the Middle East which are basically racist and essentialist representations. Thus even though she aims to draw attention to the “maskings and substitutions essential to constructing both a racialised east and a sexualised, eroticised orient”, she cannot help reproducing its discursive formations in the chapters on her ethnographic data.

A closer examination of the second part of the book which is based on her field work reveals that analysis of the how gender hierarchy is legitimized is very much essentialist. Marcus refuses the idea that verses in the Koran can explain the subordination of women, which is a very commonly circulated truth of Orientalist discourse. However she also states “Rather than determining the attitudes to women, Koran can be used to legitimate particular acts or sets of conditions that concern women (and it frequently is) but this use of Koran is part of the politics of the operation of gender hierarchy in daily life, a part of the way in which gender hierarchy and sexuality are negotiated and enforced; it cannot provide an explanation of it” (p. 64). Then she continues that in male view of Islam, all believers are equal before God but “men are in charge of women” (p. 64) by referring to Koran. *Umma*, the moral community of believers preserve and reproduce this doctrine of equality. Men label women’s beliefs as superstition when these beliefs challenge with the mainstream male view of Islam. The five obligations of Islam have a critical role in the relations between men and women, and the purity/ pollution law puts constraints on women about fulfilling these obligations. For Marcus, this is very critical in the underlying logic of the gender hierarchy of Islam, for “pollution must be removed for an individual to be sufficiently pure for prayer and other religious duties” (p. 72). Menstruation and giving birth are causes of pollution and women are not only precluded from the obligations of Islam during these periods but also their impurity gives them a secondary position in the gender hierarchy. Men’s pollution is regarded as somewhat voluntary.

The pollution law is based on the inside/outside distinction of the body, “as two entirely separate domains, domains which must be kept entirely separate and distinct if purity is to be maintained” (p. 73) Delaney’s statements about the inside/outside distinction of the family, the house, and the village as mentioned above, is very much similar to this understanding. Marcus also underlines that the villager’s in her fieldwork all agreed that “it is the purity of the Eastern-Islamic women that marks the difference” between East and West, and/or Islam and secularism and “covering” was essential to preserve the purity of the women (p. 278). Men control and enforce this purity. Delaney suggests that the potential dangers of the outside and the body pollutants are both cultural expressions of the world in general. The maintaining the boundaries between inside and outside, between purity and pollution are necessary for keeping the social order. This emphasis on purity and the necessity of isolating inside from outside is also expressed by Marcus. She focuses on the boundaries of the body, when the boundaries are crossed it causes pollution, as in the case of menstruation and sexual intercourse. Her analysis on gender hierarchy is based on the pollution/ purity law, which is directly related to the separation between inside and outside. Women’s body is regarded as uncontrollable, in other words its pollution is “beyond the control of the mind” and this creates the hierarchy between genders (p. 83). She presents how women are seen as uncontrollable in this logic of gender hierarchy. A point she shares with Delaney is that hair is seen “as a substance in need of control and loosely linked to the order of the moral community” (p. 84). This is very much a biological approach that explains the control over women’s bodies with physical features of the body and shares the same shortcomings with Carol Delaney’s approach to gender hierarchy in *The Seed and the Soil*. Both Delaney and Marcus suggest that there is an essence, an unchanging dogma that determines lower status of women in Islamic gender hierarchy and this is a truth that they circulate through an Orientalist framework. Neither of them attributes agency to the women in the gender hierarchy and refer to women’s potentials in altering the hierarchy. To use a somewhat cliché term, they represent these Muslim women as the victims of a gender hierarchy structured through Islamic beliefs. The widely circulated representations of the Third World woman (victim of patriarchy, restricted with traditions) can clearly be seen in these ethnographies.

Above all Marcus fails to contextualize her explanation of gender hierarchy because the biological focus on inside/ outside and purity/pollution in *A World of Difference* is isolated from the social and historical dimensions, even though she presents an economic history of the city, its ancient Greek origins and reputation as the “infidel” city. Her numerous references to Islamic legal scholars in the section about purity reinforces this focus. A reader with an extended knowledge on late Ottoman history and history of Turkish Republic would like to see references to the effects of secularization and modernization process that Turkey has gone through. Moreover, one can also ask if the district of the city that Marcus visited was not affected from these processes in the country and how come the religious ideology is still so strong to preserve the gender hierarchy. This is a critical aspect that is left out from her analysis, apart from her chapter on woman’s space and mobility. Exclusion of the impacts of modernization and highlighted importance of tradition is consistent with the colonial way of representing the Middle East societies. Also Haleh Afshar (1995) believes that Marcus puts too much emphasis on the purity law and rituals. Even though Turkey is a secular since the early nineteenth century, these rituals are strictly followed in 1978 in Izmir according to this study. Afshar presumes that this may be due to the fact that “she conducted her research at the zenith of Islamic revivalism and among lower-middle-class women, who are usually the most devout supporters of Islam and who understand the faith in terms of its rituals” (1995, p. 208). I can add a point to her critique that the declines and rises in religiosity in Turkey needs further elaboration

It is unfortunate that Marcus, having devoted a major part of the sixth chapter “Women’s place, women’s space” on historical data about the influence of Ottoman economy and law on women’s seclusion, provides little evidence about women’s space and mobility in İzmir during the period she conducted her study. Even in these pages, the reader cannot be sure whether her analysis is derived from her impressions of the fieldwork or secondary sources because the women of İzmir do not speak, they do not have a voice in this representation. On the other hand Marcus proposes a strong argument about the widely circulated truth that private sphere is associated with women and public sphere is associated with men. She states

“Turkish women are rarely secluded but that topographical and social space is clearly gender segregated and women and men do not mingle socially” (p. 116). She explains that women can go out freely, visit their friends, travel, visit shrines and do shopping. However, the shopkeepers, merchants and wholesalers are rarely women. Coffee shops and tea houses are for men, but there is a family room in some restaurants. The mosques are for men. Women whom Marcus meets in İzmir have a social life of their own with their women friends and relatives. Household is a female domain, no matter the male is employed or not, just like the mosque is a male space even though women can enter. As Yeğenoğlu states, in Marcus’s study “each gender may enter the opposite domain but they are excluded from its social and occupational structure” (1994, p. 1126).

The comparative approach of Julie Marcus also deserves special attention. For Dominguez (1994, p.129), Marcus attempts to “transcend the limitations of a rather formal structuralist analysis of women's space, body pollution, and women's rites within the context of Muslim Turkey”. The details that she mentions about the rites has secondary role in her quest for an analysis of gender hierarchy without falling into the trap of “Western ethnocentric feminism”. In this quest comparison appears to be a key point, even though she does not highlight clearly. Dominguez points that she exposes the “orientalizing narratives as negatively comparative” (p. 129), she points out the definition of anthropology as “comparative study of social systems and cultures, which makes the task of comparison explicit” (Marcus, p. 59), and admits that the early focus of text was a comparison between Islam and Christianity. She changed the focus of her analysis by claiming that feminist scholarship did not have to be Orientalist (Dominguez, 1994). Thus we can see that Marcus epistemologically contrasts her work with the Eurocentric knowledge on the Oriental women and ontologically compares women's subordination in İzmir with women's subordination in western societies by reflecting on “The sense of shock at the autonomy and the independence of Muslim women recorded by [western] women observers as being part of their initiation into the world of women” (p. 122) and by hoping to “provide the necessary explanations of the unexpected forcefulness of Turkish women noted by the scholars like the Fallers (1976) and Nancy Tapper (1978)” (p. 124). In her attempt to accomplish this goal she acknowledges that cultural hierarchies and stigmas of inferiority are established in

the process of defining certain personal behaviors as cultural and the concept of culture entails “hierarchical structure of difference” (p. 123). Nevertheless her focus on the way pollution law excludes women from orthodox rites of Islam attributes an essentialist cause to the gender hierarchy she observes, reproduces the Orientalist knowledge that Islam necessarily leads to subordination of women, and leads to othering of the women whom she studies. A third level of comparison is between female and male world-views in which she finds the former more egalitarian and inclusive, however yet it is expressed in gender segregation.

In search for a female world view, she questions the view that allocation of a separate space empowers women or at least ameliorates their inferiority in gender hierarchy. She derives this female world view from Turkish women’s rites. While she defines the household as the “spatial centre for women’s public, sociable and religious lives”, in her description of women’s Islamic rites *mevlut* and visits to shrines emerge as the symbols of female world view. This world view is more egalitarian but it does not pose a challenge to the male structure since it is regarded as superstitious. In the chapters about women’s rites, she describes the *mevluts* and shrine visits of women. *Mevlut*, “a formal performance of the medieval poem, the *Mevlid-i Serif*, describing the birth and life of Muhammed” (p. 125), is an important household rite for women. It is mostly held with a group women on the seventh and fortieth day after a death and then on the anniversaries. The ritual is also held by the men of wealthy families in the mosques, but Marcus claims that women’s *mevlut* “offers an alternative world view, one which is distinctively, although not exclusively, female” (p. 126). It is accepted by men as a legitimate rite, unlike other rites that exclusively women perform. Marcus draws attention to the focus of women’s *mevluts* on birth and motherhood. However the arguments that she provides about how this rite represents a female world view opposed to the male one are very weak. She remarks that women’s *mevluts* are egalitarian and open to all but she does not give any evidence of why and how men’s *mevluts* are exclusionary. Secondly she claims that women’s *mevluts* are inclusive and participatory, as women mingle, turn touch each other; regardless of their social or cultural categories. Zehra Arat explains in her review article that what Marcus was not aware of several aspects of *mevluts*: “the lyrics of *mevlut* are written by a man;

it is usually read by a male hafiz, even if the audience is female; in addition to being held at a house or a mosque following family events such as birth or death, *mevlut* gatherings take place regularly at mosques on *kandil* nights; since the mid-1970s, thanks to technological advancements, such readings at mosques on special days are televised and the entire household can watch and perform the rites at home; and the turning-and-touching, serving sweets and rose water, and everything else that Marcus had observed at the household *mevlut*, are actually followed in male gatherings as well?" (p. 126). Lastly, Marcus states that the association between the usage of white in *mevlut* scarves and birth and women is in contrast to the association between black, pollution and birth. However, it can also be interpreted as an exceptional case, since it is the birth of the prophet, not an ordinary baby. The birth of Muhammed is itself a divine miracle according to Islam, thus there is no possibility that male or female any Muslim to regard it as pollution. This section on *mevlut* is important for it highlights women's agency in creating an egalitarian and inclusive symbolism in their religious rites, in this sense it can be argued that she adopts the critiques of postcolonial theory to her analysis. On the other hand, her lack of comprehensive Islamic knowledge on the subject and absence of women's voices which can be read as the reflection of the distance between the First World feminist researcher and the Muslim women she studies, results in the fallacies that Arat mentions.

Marcus places the notion of flow in the centre of her argument, claiming that flow is associated with pollution for the male world view and it is associated with purity in female world view. She bases this argument on her observations and analysis of *mevlut* rituals and interpretations of men and women. The second aspect of the opposition between men's and women's world views is based on the distinction between 'acceptable' Islam and superstition. Marcus claims that the shrine visits of women, like other rites of women, are regarded as superstition and women's rites have a subordinate place from the men's view. She states "Men are often very disparaging of women's religious practices and clerics particularly so, for they are often regarded as unIslamic" (p. 131). This is another misunderstanding of Marcus. Not only is it hard to make this generalization in Turkey, but also the shrine that she describes in the book needs to be seen from a different perspective as well. The

visits to the shrine that is the tomb of *Susuz Dede*, is regarded as superstition because *Susuz Dede* “is not one of the recognised saints of Islam” (p.132). Marcus is aware that there are many well-known shrines in Turkey visited by both men and women. The rituals at *Susuz Dede* are not specific to this shrine but “widespread among the rage of pilgrims at Turkish shrines” (p. 133). There are also other men who are integrated to this space, the *hucas* and men sacrificing the cocks brought by women to the shrine.

On the other hand, like the section on *mevlut*, the section of the pilgrimage, the shrine visits of women can be also read as representing women’s agency. Her account of the shrine rites explain how women’s journey’s, prayers, recitals from Koran, walk around the tomb while unwinding cotton, sacrifices of cock or sheep, donations or distributions to the poor create a sacred space, even though the rites and the shrine is condemned by men. Men’s disapproval of *Susuz Dede* leads to making this space a gendered one in which women socialize in a “friendly, pious and supportive atmosphere that was both relaxing and enjoyable” (p. 131).

She actually contributes to the representations of Muslim women subordinated by patriarchal Islam by claiming that women’s rituals are labelled as superstitious. Women are moved to the periphery of Islam with the laws of pollution for Marcus and more importantly this peripheralisation prevents them being full believers in the eyes of men. Thus women’s rites are also undervalued and regarded as superstition. Marcus claims that this is how gender hierarchy in Islam works for Turkish women visiting shrines. This reflection of the gender hierarchy is very much dependent on human biology and the shortcomings of this reference which were mentioned above can be restated. On the other hand she attempts to present an alternative women’s world to the one in the Orientalist texts and also to the male’s world of Islam. This world view is more egalitarian, open and universal, and praises birth and motherhood in contrast to the male world view of Islam that sees birth and blood as black and polluting. Even though it is not the intention of this thesis to ‘correct’ any of the statements of the analysed discourse, it can at least be stated that Marcus does not question whether women’s religiosity is respected at all by their husbands or fathers. Her focus on shrine visits seems to lose this point and cannot escape

representing women in a subordinate, dominated position. The women's world view that she aims to put forward does not convincingly challenge the Orientalist discourse.

The discrepancy between the critical, postcolonial standpoint in the introductory chapters of *A World of Difference* and the chapters on the analysis of the ethnographic study can be traced on several other grounds. Haleh Afshar (1995) too, though she is content with the chapters in which Marcus presents her critical approach to Orientalism, finds the ethnographic study unsatisfactory in many respects. She notes that Marcus dismisses the Koranic verses and puts the categories of pollution in the centre of her arguments about women's exclusion from the public space. This is very much contradictory with both the historical evidences of "forgotten queens of Islam" and the women prime minister of Turkey. I contend that both of these points arise from the fact that the legitimization of women's subordination in Islam is not considered within the social, political and historical context. Her limited ethnographic data, which she fails to comprehend and contextualize, give clues about neither urban nor rural life of İzmir, which is the third largest city of Turkey well-known with its commitment to secularism and Westernization. We cannot trace any effect of social changes that the city has gone through on religious lives of women. Nazlı Kibria too states that "I found myself wishing for more information on women's experiences and views of these religious activities. I also wondered about the significance of the women's religious world for other aspects of women's lives, as well as the effect of changing social and economic conditions on women's religious practices" (Kibria, 1994, p. 254). Some criticisms of Chris Hann are also worth to mention here. Hann stresses that Marcus not only leaves out many relevant works of Turkish scholars on gender hierarchy but also leaves "virtually no space for the voices of the people with whom she worked" (1993, p. 233). He regards it as "a missed opportunity" that the reader cannot find insights about the urban Turkish women that would complement Carol Delaney's accounts in *The Seed and the Soil*.

Marcus claims to reveal and challenge the false representations of Turkish women in the Orientalist texts that she reviews in the introductory chapters. However, as

Said strongly suggests, the critique of Orientalism is not about correcting the discourse but about highlighting how it creates hegemony, a cultural domination. Thus, it is difficult to say that Marcus achieves to provide such a challenge, especially with her misunderstandings of various religious practices.

Marcus and Delaney converge at several points that characterise their studies as Orientalist. Most important of all, their analyses do not refer to the time and context of their subjects of research. They do not provide any information about the social and political changes that Turkey has gone through and the influence of these changes on the communities that they have conducted their studies. The relationship between gender and religion has been very much influenced by the secularist reforms in the early decades of the republic and also by the religious communities which started to gain power by 1970s and 80s. Both communities seem to be isolated from these influences according to these studies. This leads to an essentialism and reproduction of the stereotypes that dominate the debates about Middle Eastern women in social sciences until 1990s. Marcus and Delaney represent the communities noticeably as stagnated and traditional Oriental societies isolated from the impacts of and reactions to modernization which is very much a Eurocentric bias.

As Salomon and Walton (2012) also argue the common and very fundamental fallacy of Delaney and Marcus about their interpretations of principles and related practices of Islam is that they take their central categories of Islam and believers as given. They neglect the point that there was and continues to be a vast array of interpretations of Koran among Muslims across the world and a unitary category of a believer is also questionable (Salomon and Walton, 2012). It is widely discussed in religious studies that how a religion is perceived and understood and thus lived is very much bound to countless factors, social, cultural, economical, geographical, historical and personal. As Fatmagül Berkay explains, religion is articulated to a certain society through a two way process of adaptation, it alters its certain elements and changes some characteristics of the society. No religion stays in its original, pure form. Thus, she suggests that in analysing the status of women in a religious group, it is essential to consider economic, social, political and cultural conditions

besides the principles and nature of that religious faith (2012, p. 15). Hence it is misleading to accept the version accepted among the communities they research as a universal principle of Islam entailing certain forms of gender hierarchy. In these studies Islam is taken as an isolated category of analysis, which is due to their neglect of Islam's relationship to politics, economics and culture in Turkey. Consequently, Islamic faith is presented as the sole reason of gender hierarchy.

They rest the founding pillars of their arguments, namely inside and outside distinctions, and purity and pollution, on that single version and ultimately reach general conclusions of how the gender hierarchy is established in Islam in the most extensive sense. Ruling out the other possibly influential factors serves the reproduction of stereotypical images of Islam. They also seem to take the notion of faith and being a believer as homogeneous in itself. The problem is that we can never know the degree of a believer's faith and devotion. This means that the attitudes and behaviours that the scholars attach to Islamic explanations may have various other causes and serve different aims. Such an approach plays a critical role in the reproduction of stereotypes of Muslims. Marcus attempts to articulate a more dynamic and multi-faceted point of view in her analysis of women's *mevluts* as she shows their distinct features and shrine visits as she gives an account of its emergence, development and challenge to men's orthodox views. Yet, the main principles that she presents as the source of gender hierarchy remain untouched. As a result they are represented as victims of essentially patriarchal elements of being a Muslim.

Their tendency to make over generalizations about Turkishness is another shortcoming of these ethnographies. The reader can encounter several statements with the words "Turkish village" in Delaney's study, which is a significant fallacy considering the high variety of local customs and beliefs even in a single region of Turkey. Likewise, Marcus does not refrain from using expressions "Turkish women" and "Turkish men".

Julie Marcus derives her "will to know" from Orientalist travel writings of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Her aim is to challenge them, to falsify them, to correct them.

Delaney derives her will to know from holy books and religious myths. Neither of them integrates the scholarly works on Islam, rural or urban life, and gender in Turkey to the aims of her study. The authors do not make references to the relevant sociological, anthropological and historical studies on their issues while presenting the aim, scope and the background of their ethnographies. This is another reflection of taking Islam as an isolated category of analysis, exempt from social changes. A certain branch of Orientalist scholars have argued that Islam has lived its golden age in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. and after that period it has been in decline. It moved away from egalitarianism and progress and as Gustave E. von Grunebaum argued it could be characterised with fatalism and bans (Irwin, 2008). It seems that both Marcus and Delaney share this perception and thus have an ethnographic approach that has weak ties to the social context of the study and sometimes has a serious lack of knowledge about Turkish culture. As a result they fail to explain why Islam plays such an important role in these women's lives, whether there are other factors that create this gender hierarchy, in other words whether there are other reasons behind this seemingly Islamic hierarchy, the effects of the tension between republican secularism and the revival of Islamism and the agency of women in their beliefs and practices of Islam.

They have conflicting discursive frameworks. On the one hand they share the arguments of postcolonialism and poststructuralism, on the other hand they cannot isolate themselves from Orientalist biases. Thus it is evident that their claims of postcolonial stand stay at the rhetorical level and do not penetrate into their researches.

#### **4.3. Nancy and Richard Tapper and the Eğirdir Study**

British anthropologists Nancy and Richard Tapper wrote on their fieldwork in Eğirdir, a small town in south west Anatolia, in a series of articles which also have a special focus that makes it necessary to include in this discursive period. The article "Gender and Religion in a Turkish Town: A Comparison of Two Types of Formal Women's Gatherings" (1983) by Nancy Tapper is an early publication on women and Islam in Eğirdir based on the author's initial five week long fieldwork in Eğirdir.

As Tapper explains, the article can be regarded as part of the anthropological discourse that examines the role of religion in structuring women's lives and gender roles in general and "religious beliefs and practices and conceptual systems of women" in particular (p. 71). She analyses and compares two gatherings of women, one is receptions days which has a secular character and the other one is *mevlut* which has a religious character and concludes by suggesting several areas in which religious codes about women shape and are shaped by women's social lives. Through her analysis, she points to a major contradiction that she observes, which is between the "effectively enforced model of male domination and the highly valued status of motherhood".

Tapper describes the reception days as an afternoon gathering held in a woman's house in which kin, friends, and relatives are invited to socialize, which depend on reciprocity and which have a secular nature. She states that around fifty or sixty guests are invited and there is a formal atmosphere as women are dressed up and the house is cleaned and tidy. She contrasts these gatherings with the freedom of the townsmen to socialize in public spaces. After describing the *mevlut* rites, gatherings of around sixty women invited by a woman hostess to listen to the recital of the poem *Mevlidi Şerif* by a cantor, she explains their similarity with reception days. Tapper introduces her main argument as she explains the differences of *mevlut* from the reception days.

The structure of reception days expresses an equality among middle class women, while the actual content of the meetings differentiates them, both among themselves and from other women in the community. In both respects women are separated from each other and identified in terms of their attachments to men. The structure of mevluts is unequal and implicitly admits the status differentiation between families in the community; nonetheless the content of the mevlut meetings unambiguously focuses on feminine support, solidarity and equality (p. 76).

She continues that the existence of these formal gatherings may prevent women to understand two areas of conflict in their roles and values as women and believers. The first one is being a mother and a wife and the second one is the way they are regarded as subordinate to men but at the same time are "in practice, differentiated in terms of men" (p. 77). While women are claimed to be equal to men in Islam, except being physically weaker, they are strong figures with respect their

motherhood roles with a deep authority on their sons. This is also expressed in *Mevlidi Şerif* in through exalting motherhood of the prophet Muhammed's mother Emine. However, Turkish women use their authority to make their son's feel superior to women and have the right to control them, which in turn leads to gender seclusion and women to differentiate in terms of their relations to men. Tapper contextualizes her argumentation by giving information about class differences in Eğirdir and the range of its religious beliefs and rites.

Nancy Tapper engages with a multifaceted approach to the relation between women and Islam in Turkey as she integrates several factors like social class, state secularism, religious orthodoxy and local culture to her analysis. In this sense the study radically diverges from the studies by Delaney and Marcus and can be considered as apart of the critical discourse of Middle Eastern women's studies against the essentialism of colonial discourse that lacks analysis of social conditions and sees Muslim women as a homogenous group. In addition to these, she presents a more refined argument about the subordination of women by referring to their power as mothers and to their status differences defined on the basis of their relation to men and attributes a certain level of agency to them in their social gatherings. The power of orthodoxy and patriarchal ideology is claimed to be still strong and effective in structuring their social relations, mobility and religious practices.

Due to her limited experience in the field, Tapper prefers to support her analysis by referring to the existing anthropological studies on the subject instead of referring to Islamic knowledge, which is another aspect that differs the study from Orientalist studies. Yet the lack of women's voices is still a shortcoming of her methodology that fails to reflect their subjectivities and in-depth information about their religiosity.

Nancy and Richard Tapper's article "The Birth of the Prophet: Ritual and Gender in Turkish Islam" (1987) is a significant article to be mentioned in this discursive period. The authors dwell upon the *mevlut* ritual from a different perspective than *A World of Difference*. They reject the dichotomy of orthodox versus popular in anthropology of Islam and summarise their main argument as "The religious

activities of men cannot be explained solely in terms of their degree of ‘orthodoxy’, and those of women should not be dismissed *a priori* peripheral to those of men” (p. 69). They suggest that Islamic practices can always entail “an intrinsic relation between gender and religious orthodoxy” (p. 69). The studies on religion in the Middle East are dominated by Orientalists and theologians who present some practices and beliefs as orthodox and others as peripheral. The orthodox beliefs are secured by the urban, male, literate elite. The authors claim that the orthodoxy of men’s daily practices of Islam is not unproblematic at all and women’s practices of Islam should not be assumed less important than men’s. What anthropology of Islam lacks for Nancy and Richard Tapper is a viewpoint that links gender and religion. They suggest that women’s practices of Islam, men’s practices of Islam, the relation between these practices and their relation to other Islamic practices should be considered. Thus we can understand that their will to know rests on their critique of lack of the gender perspective in anthropology of Islam, and the lack of plurality of Islamic practices and connectedness, a critique that feminist postcolonial theory had been expressing in the 1970s and 1980s.

As the authors mention, this is the first sociological analysis of *mevlut* rituals of men and women. Before giving details about the ritual, they give a detailed account of the poem. Throughout the article they make comparisons with Christianity and in the first place mention how the poem evokes similar emotions to a Muslim as the birth of Jesus evokes to a Christian. In this sense their statements are seeking commonalities between Islam and Christianity rather than reproducing binary oppositions.

They describe the social context of their study by providing information about Eğirdir, its local population, near history, economy and political affiliations the information that ethnographies of both Marcus and Delaney omit and that relates Islam and religiosity with their social environment. Contextualization of their ethnographic data distances the study from essentialism. We learn that the townspeople of Eğirdir are both committed republicans and devoted Muslims who vote for the left of centre-right party in local elections and right of centre party in

general elections. The economy depends on the apple orchards, the townspeople define themselves as classless, and there is an apparent homogeneity in population.

The *mevlut* ritual in Eğirdir as well has different connotations for men and women though they agree that *mevlut* is “essentially religious and spiritual” (p.76). While men, following the official view of the local religious authorities, tend to reject the Islamic significance of the ritual claiming that the hymns are not Koranic, women attribute it a higher significance. Women believe that their rituals and services show that they are “more caring and consciously religious than men. Women sometimes add that they need to be more religious than men because they have been told (by men of religious establishment) that they are more sinful than men” (p. 76). This statement introduces how women feel about their rituals, and this perspective is significantly different than perspectives of Marcus and Delaney.

As described in the article the *mevluts* that men attend take place in occasions of death, marriage, circumcision and *Kandils*. These are mostly about cornerstones of life-cycle and exclusionary for women. They are formal, short, show little variation and leave little space for emotions. On the other hand almost all women’s *mevluts* are held in the occasions of death. They are more ceremonial and emotional and they last much longer. Men perceive emotionalism in women’s *mevluts* as approaching to Sufism but “most women feel to be laudable expressions of piety” (p. 78). Marcus puts forward the lyrics of the poem and its stress on the birth of the prophet and exalted motherhood in her analysis of this rite. However Tapper and Tapper take the rite as an expression of women’s piety. Lastly, they argue that it is an occasion that “reinforce relations of support among them” an occasion for “self-expression and leadership outside the household” for the attending women who live according to the traditional gender roles (p. 82). Tappers’ emphasis on self-expression and leadership can be read as references to women’s agency and subjectivity, but secluded nature of the space that the rite takes place can also have a facilitating effect in these.

In the section on the relationship between religion, gender and the state, drawing attention to the secularist ideology of the Turkish state that banned “un-orthodox”

religious gatherings, the authors state that women's Friday gatherings and *mevluts* were held in private houses while men's religious performances stayed confined with the mosques as religious spaces in control of the state and orthodoxy. The differences in men's and women's religiosity is explained by the authors on this ground, which is another aspect that distances the study from essentialism. They argue that men's *mevluts* take place in mosques in a rather formal fashion "conveying the generalized blessings of God" (p. 84). However women's *mevluts* highlight "the promise of individual salvation offered to all Muslims" by praising and idealising motherhood and child birth (p. 84). An intimate emotional bond is established through this way between the participants of the *mevlut* and the Prophet. This approach is shared by Julie Marcus as well. Tapper and Tapper converge with Marcus that men disparage women's *mevluts*, yet this study suggests that it is a paradox that men "tolerate and even encourage" women's participation.

Shrine visits, another rite that constitutes an important section of the ethnographic account of Julie Marcus is studied by Nancy Tapper as well, in Eğirdir. Tapper introduces her study in her article "Ziyaret: gender movement and exchange in a Turkish community" (1990). She asks two main questions in this study: why women, rather than men more commonly visit the shrines and why this *ziyaret* (the shrine visit) is disparaged by men. She states that the critical element of the notion of *ziyaret* is respect, to a person or a religiously recognized shrine. Secondly she suggests that as the secular Turkish Republic destroyed the shrines of Eğirdir and orthodox Islam became mosque-centred, men and the religious authorities disdain shrine visits and faith in the saints. Her third argument is that *ziyaret* as a word has different associations with concepts ranging from pilgrimage, journey, and movement to strolling and its meaning is derived from all these concepts. The last and the most critical argument of the chapter is that in Muslim studies, mostly religious activities and practices of men are privileged against women's and this reinforces the gender bias "that is intrinsic to Muslim cultural traditions themselves" (p. 237). She analyses the relationship between gender, movement and the rite of *ziyaret* in two categories: the occasions that men and women participate together and the occasions that only women participate outside home. Tapper

claims that the second category is the one that perpetuates the constructions of gender hierarchy.

Tapper agrees with Marcus that Islam creates and structures a gender hierarchy; however she sees respect as the source of this hierarchy. Respect (*saygı, hürmet* in Turkish), reinforced with various forms of etiquette and constraints of movement determines the relations between men and women, young and old, and educated and uninformed. Respect for God is the analogy of all social relations including the gender relations. “The analogy is developed in the context of gender in terms of an elaborate theological anthropology which associates men with greater and women with less reason (*akıl*) and control over their animal souls. Women, in order to merit God’s promise of salvation, must overcome, through discipline and control, the impediments associated with their carnal nature” (p. 239). Women’s subordination is justified on this ground for Tapper and she questions how “women who are defined as intrinsically inferior come to terms with their inferiority” (p. 239). She suggests that the ideology of respect has a complex link with *ziyaret* which provides women a certain autonomy while perpetuating their subordination in the end.

The nature of women’s subordination and freedom is traced on their mobility which is also related to the gendered space segregation. In the category of the movements that men and women participate together she describes hajj of pilgrimage, *ziyarets* and religious fests (*bayrams*) and family picnics. In the category of women’s journeys she describes visiting days and *mevluts*, *ziyarets* to shrines and women’s picnics. She argues that the activities or the rites that women attend with their husbands have an egalitarian message. The *ziyarets* that women participate without their husbands are usually disparaged. Especially the *ziyarets* to shrines are seen by men as an example of women’s inferiority, yet they are occasions in which women have a certain freedom of movement as they travel alone to the shrine, they have an unmediated faith-based relationship with the saint they visit and construct their self-identities. These aspects of shrine visits are also shared by Marcus.

Tapper adds another dimension to her analysis and argues that the “modern” women of Eğirdir have a similar attitude with men towards *ziyaret*. Thus the modern/

traditional dichotomy is integrated to the analysis. Modern women of Eğirdir, “whose education, economic and/or marital status links them closely to the secular ideals of the Turkish Republic, do not seek the opportunities for self-expression” (p. 246). They believe in the gender equality in theory, and in practice “devalue” the gatherings that women participate separately and exalt their shared identity (p. 250). When modern women host *mevluts*, it is in a more formal fashion similar to men’s. It is the “traditional” women of Eğirdir who visit shrines, host *mevlut* recitals in their homes, and attend the picnics. What Tapper does not mention is the emphasis and encouragement of the republican secularist ideology on participation of women in public spaces together with men. Seclusion of women did not belong to the modernizing (westernizing) outlook of the young republic.

Tapper’s approach differs from approaches of Julie Marcus and Carol Delaney in the sense that it articulates the social and historical background of the town and the history of secularization in Turkish Republic to her analysis. Moreover she recognizes the heterogeneity of women in Eğirdir town in terms of class and status thus she shatters the statements of Orientalist representations that perceive Muslim women as influenced by Islamic beliefs and practices in the same way. Both in this article and in the one co-written with Richard Tapper discussed above she aims to challenge the academic tendency in the Middle Eastern and Islamic studies to take the orthodox Islam as male-centred and women’s Islam as peripheral, secondary, unorthodox. However in the final analysis Muslim women in Eğirdir in particular and Muslim women in Turkey in general are represented as women who accepted their inferiority to men, who internalize this inferiority on the religious grounds. The repeated use of the word intrinsic for describing the gender hierarchy is noticeable. A cultural notion, respect, being explained that it works for the legitimization of subordination of women on Islamic grounds supports the tendency to suggest an essence in the gender hierarchy and it is this essence which is determines the limits of women’s agency.

#### **4.4. Concluding Remarks on the First Period**

All the studies in this discursive period share a common fundamental point, which is the recognition of the necessity of integrating a gender perspective to the anthropology of religion, and more specifically anthropology of Islam. The discursive formation which claims that it is not possible to fully grasp the Islamic culture without asking questions of gender exists in their theoretical frameworks. These studies are important for being the first fieldworks in Turkey with this approach.

The ethnographic discourse of this period is rather limited to be analysed as a discursive period but, it is still possible to observe a common representation of women in Islam in Turkey. Islam being a religion that establishes a gender hierarchy is the general presumption. The circulating truth of this period is that it subordinates women, determines their status in the household and in the society; women's lives are bound with traditions. The four authors make the point that Islam is the source, for the justification and explanation of women's subordinated status in Turkish society. Moreover, they all have an essentialist tendency to perceive this subordination as an inherent, ever-present, unchanging and inescapable condition for women, though women have gendered spaces, rites, occasions and opportunities for self-expression, leadership, and movement to a certain extent. In this respect it is possible to argue that the influence of Orientalist and First World feminist discourses is visible since women's subjectivities are described in terms of their status in the Islamic gender hierarchy and they are attributed a very limited agency to alter the gender inequalities.

There are two problems with the knowledge production process in this period: analysing Islamic gender hierarchy as isolated from social, cultural, historical and political influences and being informed by Eurocentric biases and Islamic texts and the lack of women's voices explaining how they perceive the relation between their beliefs and subordination. The contextualization of the relationship between gender and Islam differs Nancy and Richard Tapper's studies from *The Seed and the Soil* and *A World of Difference*, however the second problem which perpetuates the

subaltern status of women who are claimed to be already subordinated by religious values and rites, exists in all studies.

Direct comparisons on the basis of binary oppositions between the Muslim women in the studies and the western world constitute only a very limited part of this period but the representations of women have common points with the othering of the Middle Eastern Muslim women in the First World feminist discourse.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE “NEW” ISLAMIST WOMEN: 1994-2006.**

This discursive period should be understood in relation to a paradigm shift which is the outcome of several significant transformations in the late 1980s and early 1990s that were highly influential both in the social context of Turkey and the Middle Eastern studies. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union a new era of globalization, which was marked with the expansion of neoliberalism to the post-Soviet and Muslim countries around the world. With this trend, Muslim countries started to discuss Islam's compatibility with capitalism, neoliberalism, and modernity (Moudouros, 2014). It was also the globalization era of the rise of the emphasis on diversities, identities, and localities. The neoliberal global mass culture resulted in both the rise of Islamism as a reactionary identity movement and Islamic culture to adopt consumerism as a way of expressing identities. The development of communication technologies and mass media significantly enhanced the globalization of the Islamic culture and Islamist movements (Esposito, 1998).

The crisis of representation in social sciences that was highly influential in the emergence of postmodern, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theory during the 1980s was even more evident in the 1990s, by end of the Cold War. It was when the developmentalist theories collapsed and the paradigms that rested on the shared legacy of Enlightenment were subject to erosion. It became evident that all these theories and paradigms rested on the exclusion of the non-Western subjects from subjecthood (Kandiyoti, 2002, p. 281). As Steven Seidman (1994) states, while poststructuralist philosophers like Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard were questioning the foundational discourses and paradigm of knowledge of Enlightenment, other areas of specialization like feminist theory, queer theory, anthropology, urban studies, and history were also addressing the crisis of representation in their fields (Seidman, 1994, p. 9). A paradigm shift in studying the non-Western world was happening. Particularly for the feminist theory and discussions in the Middle East,

the shift meant that the argument that women “constituted a category sharing a common oppression” failed and the discussions of indigenous feminisms began (Kandiyoti, 1996, p. 15).

The beginnings of the academic interest in Islamist women of Turkey in the late 1980s and early 1990s can be associated with this paradigm shift. Even though the initial publications of ethnographic studies on Islamist women are seen in the mid-1990s, the fieldworks of many of these studies began during the late 1980s. The will to represent Islamist women, who had been represented neither in the political sphere nor in the academic discourse is an interruption to both the gender-blind perspectives in the academia and the developmentalist approaches to Islamism in Turkey. The discussions of women’s rights in Islam and Islamist feminism is a reflection of the shift in the Middle Eastern women’s studies. Besides, there was also a methodological change which involved the reflexivity, sensitivities of feminist ethnography and giving voice to women.

The authors of this period are from the three groups that Kandiyoti (1996) regards as the source of third wave of feminism in the Middle East: Western scholars who study the Middle East within the framework of various paradigms of academic feminism, Jenny B. White, Catharina Raudvere; Western-trained Middle Eastern scholars who are expatriates or who live in Turkey that write in reference to both Turkey and Western academe, Yeşim Arat, Yael-Navaro Yashin, Ayşe Saktanber; and locally trained scholars, Aynur İlyasoğlu, Kenan Çayır. In most of their studies we can observe a challenge to the reductionist Orientalist representations of victimized Muslim women and a focus on their agencies. Additionally, there are two Western-trained scholars from the field of marketing, Özlem Sandıkçı and Gülistan Ger who have several publications on Islamic clothing industry and two Western scholars Michael Humpreys and Andrew D. Brown who have a work on Islamic veiling and institutional identity. The marketing studies by the former group are particularly significant as they constitute a different line of knowledge.

The most significant and distinguishing aspect of the knowledge on women and Islam in this period is its emphasis on the encounters of Islamism and secular social

order. The place of religious, more specifically Islamic tradition in the modern Turkish society is attempted to be defined and regulated since the early years of republic. For the secular state ideology the answer was undoubtedly the domestic sphere and it was an issue of private life. As the political Islamist movements in the Middle East and in Turkey gradually gained prevalence, the answer was no longer that clear. Islamic traditions that were thought to belong to the Ottoman past, and that were given no role in the foundation and development of modern Turkish Republic were surfacing from the private realm to the public life. It can be due to the dominant secular ideology of the state, the pervasiveness of leftist movements that focused on class inequalities that the relation between gender and religion was not an issue of interest in the Turkish academia until the 1990s.

Binnaz (Sayarı) Toprak (1981) is one of the few scholars who had been suggesting that reforms about women's emancipation in Turkey could not go beyond a state ideology of Westernization and could not be influential in transforming traditional sex roles bound by Islam that had been prevailing in the majority of Turkish women's lives. The rural population, the periphery, remained almost unaffected by the reforms and the liberated urban women in the cities were between an equal status attributed by law and the traditional values about women's place in the society. This latter group who benefited from the reforms had interiorised the Islamic ethic, were refraining from promiscuity and openly challenging male authority. Furthermore Toprak describes the emergence of a third group that had an Islamic cultural orientation, a counter-elite at the centre who were mostly associated with NSP<sup>11</sup>. She claims that "Kemalist reforms concerning the emancipation of women have not only failed to penetrate the periphery but are also being challenged at the center.... The Islamic framework concerning sex differences is operative at both elite and mass levels. At the mass level, the Islamic concept of women has never been seriously challenged" (1981, p. 292). Even though her analysis may seem to underestimate the impact of reforms, it puts forward how Westernization and modernization encountered a resistance both from urban and rural population and how this resistance enhanced preservation of widespread gender hierarchy based on

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<sup>11</sup> NSP ( National Salvation Party – Milli Selamet Partisi), an Islamist party that was in the coalition government in Turkey 1974.

Islam and traditionalism. Moreover, the emerging counter-elite that Toprak observed during the early 1980s, grew in number and influence during the 1990s in the urban setting. Most of the studies published in the second and third discursive periods focus on the women of this counter-elite.

The second discursive period which starts with the work of Aynur İlyasoğlu, *Örtülü Kimlik* (*Veiled Identity*) in 1994 and lasts until 2006 can be characterized with the interest in the new urban Muslim, Islamist, veiled women and their processes of identity formation. In the studies analysed in the previous section, we see that woman is depicted as a dependent figure that is influenced, controlled and dominated by Islam and patriarchy. In this period we can witness the emergence of the Islamist women as a distinct category of analysis and research subject and it seems to be the most distinguishing feature of the studies. It is even possible to talk about the beginnings of an objectification of Islamist women as the number of the studies increase year by year.

The 1990s and early 2000s were the years that Islamist movement was gaining strength despite the secular state still being strong. The political agenda being dominated with the discussions on the Islamist threat and the increasing presence of veiled women in public space and politics directed attention to this new social group. Together with the strengthening of the feminist movements and scholarship in the 1990s, sociological, political, anthropological studies were mainly addressing this “new Islamic women” (White, 2005) who became, as Saktanber puts it, the “other as a Muslim in Turkey” (Saktanber, 1994). The first section of this chapter analyses the publications focusing on their experiences and processes of identity formation. In addition to Ayşe Saktanber’s (1994) and Jenny White’s (2005) articles, I also included Kenan Çayır’s (2000) study that analyses the Islamist women’s identities within the context of a civil society organization.

As the field studies on women and Islam in culture and daily life also exhibit, the emergence of the identity of the middle-class pious Muslim Turkish woman is an urban phenomenon. These new groups of women in the city have been subject to the complexities of conflicts of rapid modernization and globalization together with

the internal dynamics of Islamist movement while growing in number and producing a strong and distinctive cultural capital of its own starting from the early 1990s. Unfortunately there are not many comprehensive book-length ethnographies about the new Muslim women. Ayşe Saktanber's study *Living Islam: Women, Religion and the Politicization of Culture in Turkey* (2002b), which is conducted in an urban middle-class Islamist community is a very important work in this sense and thus it is analysed in the second section. Cihan Tuğal (2004) states "For the past fifteen years, scholars have over-reacted to the dominant Kemalist paradigm, which pictured proponents of Islamism as poor, rural, and thus ignorant, and have alternatively portrayed them as middle class, upwardly mobile, and 'conscious'" (2004, p. 517). Saktanber's approach may not be an over-reaction but is a reference point about this new portrayal of Muslim woman in the sociological discourse in Turkey. The second book that I included to this section is an ethnography of a community of urban Muslim women is by Catharina Raudvere. *The Book and the Roses: Sufi Women, Visibility and Zikir in Contemporary Istanbul* (2002) is a study on a group of middle-class, educated Sufi women who founded a religious endowment and thus gained visibility, recognition and power. However, as Müge Galin explains in her review, "They have to battle both the male-dominated Muslim community and the mainstream secular society that limit their sphere of action. Therefore, Raudvere aptly asks how these women express their spirituality. How do they gain legitimacy for their rituals?" (2007, p. 114). I believe that reading Saktanber's and Raudvere's studies together is important for they portray women within their closed Islamic communities in two big cities and their efforts and experiences in creating an Islamic way of living within the boundaries of their communities.

The issue of veiling, especially in the public space, in state institutions, at universities has started to be analysed in various field works in this discursive period (İlyasoğlu, 1994; White, 1999; Humpreys & Brown, 2002; Navaro-Yashin, 2003; Sandıkçı & Ger, 2005). Veiling has been a central issue in Turkish political life and modernization, in Islamist movements, and in feminist discussions in Turkey. It is the major symbol of Islamic identity, a source of dispute in terms of democratic rights, a central concept in the contemporary feminist discourse. The

issue surfaced in the early 1980s when Islam became more visible in public spaces with the headscarved students at the universities and there happened a clash with the secularist state order and ideology and it led to a polarization between Islamists and secularists in Turkey. Moreover, as Göle (1991) states veiling is also an expression of the problematic relationship between contemporary Islamist movements and Western modernity embodied in women. Veiling in its contemporary form conveys the political concerns of the Islamist movements in general and the approval of the Muslim women's identity in particular. It is the most distinctive feature of the modern Islamist movement that is built on the tension between Islamism, traditionalism and modernism (1991, p. 17). Last but not least, the role of the veiled women in the contemporary self-definition of the secularist/Kemalist women in opposition to Islamism in Turkey cannot be underestimated. This section has a critical look on the way the role of veiling in this polarization is analysed and on its implications in terms of women's discursive representation in within the framework of different feminist standpoints. The agency of the veiled women is a central question. The representation of veil as a passive submission to Islamic and patriarchal way of life and as an active choice that enables the modern Muslim women to take place in public life constitutes the two edges of the discussion. We can also see the emergence of discussions about Islamist women and veiling, the outcome of power struggles between secularism and Islamism in Turkey. As I mentioned in the third chapter in my overview of Foucault's discussion of power and knowledge, production of knowledge is a result of "institutionalized imbalance in power relations" (Mills, 2003, p. 69). It can be argued that increasing number of publications on this field is an outcome of a demand for more power by Islamist women from the state authority which reflects a secularization project.

The 1990s were also very significant for the Turkish feminist movement because women's civil society activism started to get organized while the the movement got divided as the Kurdish and Islamist feminists started to challenge the previously dominant secular, nationalist, Kemalist feminism. Moreover, as Serpil Sancar (2011) notes there was a shift of focus in the feminist discourse from "women's revolution" to "women's victimization" and "women's issues" as a result of the

discussions of democracy and women's rights. We can observe the reflections of the new agenda in the studies on the veiling issue that take Islamist women's headscarf as a matter of religious freedoms and women's struggle with both Islamist and secular patriarchy.

The growth of Islamic enterprises that were loyal to the political Islamist movement provided not only provided financial support to the Islamist parties but formed a new Islamist market that offered consumption choices to their Islamic customers to express their religious identities. The *tesettür* business which started to create its own design and fashion in the 1990s, has become the most prominent, visible, and debated one within the market. It is evident that the studies discussing *tesettür* as a consumption pattern are related to this economic trend that has social and cultural manifestations.

The new Muslim woman is studied in social sciences discourse in this period as a political figure as well who actively participated and played an important role in the success of the Islamist movement. The last section covers two significant publications that specifically study the Islamist woman in the political sphere (Arat, 2005; Saktanber, 2002a). The role of the women in the Islamist political movements in Turkey deserves a special focus, even though there are a very limited number of fieldworks in this period. Yeşim Arat's fieldwork with the Ladies' Commissions of the Islamist Welfare Party and its leading figures provides a valuable insight. In *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics* (2005), Arat draws challenging Muslim women portraits that goes beyond the well-known dichotomies of the Western feminist literature.

### **5.1. The New Identity as the “Other”**

In the neoliberal globalization era which is marked by emphasis on identities and localities it is not surprising to see that the Islamist movement started to be analysed as an identity issue in Turkey and the relationship between women and Islam was analysed in many ethnographic studies as an issue of formation of a new identity.

The first study in this section is the article of a Turkish sociologist Ayşe Saktanber. “Becoming the “Other” as a Muslim in Turkey: Turkish women vs. Islamist women” (1994) which approaches the subject by focusing on the othering process in the formation of Islamist identities. Saktanber’s ethnographic research was part of her PhD thesis research at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, Turkey which also received support from The Social Science Research Council in New York and Center for Islamic Societies and Civilizations at Washington University in Missouri.<sup>12</sup> It was conducted in an urban complex in Ankara founded by a group of middle-class people having an aim of constructing an urban space to live Islam in a conscious way. She has been working on issues of gender and contemporary Islam in Turkey and thus the the study should be read as a part of the literature of sociology, gender studies, and sociology of Islam in Turkey. For this reason the study significantly diverges from the anthropological studies in the first discursive period with its theoretical discussions and conceptual tools. The emphasis in the article on othering should be thought in relation to the polarization between the secularists and the Islamists and the encounters of the Islamist movement with the secular state order. I analyse her ethnography in detail through her book *Living Islam* in the following section. Here I would like to focus on her representation of the Muslim women’s identity.

In her theoretical framework she employs Anthony Giddens’ concept of life politics in discussing how the self identity is formed through the creating ways of living that entail self actualization and “politics of public presentation of the self” (p. 99) and then integrates Tzvetan Todorov’s and Michael Gardiner’s discussions of Mikhail Bakhtin’s theorization of the formation of the self which necessitates a “continuous dialog with the other” (Gardiner, 1992, cited in Saktanber, 1994, p. 105). She states her aims as “to explain how Muslim women’s identity is subjectively constituted through reflexive social action in the process of becoming the “other” in contemporary Turkish society” (p. 104) and “to explore the ways Muslim women become crucial agents in the daily articulation and reproduction of Islamic ideologies and the development of various strategies – what I term *strategies of*

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<sup>12</sup> Even though Ayşe Saktanber received her academic degrees from METU, I considered her as a Western-trained scholar due to her experience in the US for this study. Besides, METU should also be regarded as a university that offers a Western-oriented education.

*containment and resistance vis-à-vis the secular ethics of modernity*" (p. 105). Her interruption to understanding of women's identity "vis-à-vis modernity, be they Muslims or not" is on the grounds that it makes women "objects of history" (pp. 104-105). She draws attention to Muslim women's self narrations of being subject to othering and the sense of injury and pride that this process causes.

Following the theoretical introduction she presents self-narratives of the two women in her study, accounts from their life stories that explain their routes to becoming conscious Muslims by emphasizing the efforts and individual choices that makes the transformation of their identity possible. In the next section she describes the urban complex that she studies through explaining highlighting the ideologies and social practices that the community adopts and reproduces to live Islam as conscious Muslims in a modern and globalizing social context and to differentiate themselves from the Western others. The following section elucidates Saktanber's standpoint on dialogical nature of the identity of the Muslim women as she dwells on the beliefs of the Muslim women in her study about women's status in Islam. She notes that women create an "intellectually active milieu intended to facilitate consolidation of an alternative Islamic life style while at the same time strengthening their faith in Islam" through reception days, organizing seminars and panels (p.115). Challenging Nancy Tapper's arguments about women's inferiority, she argues that these activities not only strengthen them with respect to men but also bestow them a personhood status in the community and as a result enable them to develop opinions about the status of women in Islam and in other ideologies, mainly in feminism. As they exalt women's rights in Islam, they negate feminism as a myth of emancipation that actually involves exploitation of women. They emphasize the "relationship of complementarity" of men and women in Islam instead of the discourse of equality and contend that *takva*, approaching God through faith and worship, is the means to superiority and his judgements must be accepted as they are (p. 118). Yet, men are given the duty to protect women who are depicted as the source of life, source of desire, humans sent on earth to realize God's will in the myth of *Adem* (Adam) and *Havva* (Eve). She calls the practices of polygamy, husband's right to exert violence on their wives and control over their movements and socialization as the "blind spots" of this discourse of

complementarity (p. 120). Saktanber's stress on the determining role of faith is more evident in her notion of "discourse of gratitude" which emerges as a strategy of Muslim women to cope with the resentment caused by the restraints on their worship and public status due to their physiological conditions (p. 122). This discourse is based on thankfulness and is against unfaithfulness and questioning of authority. She draws attention to the divergence of women on the basis of their traditionalist and open-minded interpretations of gratitude and modesty as the latter group defends questioning and eliminating the traditional patriarchal restrictions from Islam. Her analysis ends with the conclusion that all the deeds and actions of the women, like men, are for preparing for the other world, towards winning God's favour.

In the process of constituting a Muslim identity, then, *the third*, the superaddressee in the Bakthinian sense, is ultimately God. Hence the deeds and thoughts of Muslim women are shaped "prior to all speech", by an image, God, whose absolutely just and responsive understanding is presumed. After all, Muslims are people who stand before God torn between hope and despair (p. 124).

In the conclusion section Saktanber presents the ways traditional gender roles are defined in different spheres of life in Turkey; the legal code, modern women's magazines, politics, and the state. She argues that many critical issues of the feminist discourse have not been addressed and were not given priority until the political context of the early 1990s which witnessed the challenge of Islamist politics and the active role of Islamist women in this movement who adopted many features of the women's rights discourse. She sees this context as an opportunity for both "Turkish" and "Muslim" women "to question the androcentric frame of references of Western democracy, civil society and rational individuality" (p. 130).

The study is based on a rich theoretical discussion on the fundamental role of "other" in identity formation and how it is related to what she calls "politics of public presentation of the self" (p. 99). She defines the "dual sense of injury/pride" as a central feature of the identity of the Muslim woman in her self narrations as she becomes the "other" (pp. 105-106). I think that we can see the conceptualization of injury as another version of the discourse of victimization of Muslim women in First World feminism, but this time it is not the patriarchy or Islam but the secular

social order that causes their victimization. On the other hand pride is a reference to their agency formed through their individual choices of following the path of Islam.

Saktanber prefers to call the women in her fieldwork as Muslims rather than Islamists because they are uncomfortable with the latter term. She quotes one of their statements:

Why do they call us *İslamcı* (Islamist), Ayşe Hanım? It sounds something like *köfteci*. Aren't we all Muslims? Why do they set us apart like that? (p. 106).

In the footnote she explains the statement:

In Turkish the suffix “-ci” or “-ci” refers to the seller or producer when attached to the name of any particular commodity. Thus *köfteci* is someone who sells köfte (a Turkish food). Thus Muslim woman's humorous utterance shows the incongruity in the usage of the term *İslamcı*, as if the person is selling Islam! (p. 106).

This seems like a minor detail in the representation of Muslim women but it has several connotations. Firstly it exhibits Saktanber's interruption to the use of the term Islamist in the academic and political discourses through reflecting the voice of the women who becomes the object of these discourses. Moreover it reflects the sentiments of a woman about the othering she is subject to through an inappropriate labelling. Thirdly, since the woman sees a unity in being Muslims, it makes us meditate on what creates the divergences as we read through their self-narratives.

The subjectivity of the Muslim women is defined in the article with reference to the constituents of their identity which are simultaneously structured by the Islamic faith and the process of becoming the other which comprises the influences of the social forces of secularism, modernism, Westernization, and globalization that act on the dialogical process of formation of the self. From the perspective of postcolonial theory it is apparent that there is a significant stress on Muslim women's agency and individual choice in their development of their subjectivity and realization of an Islamic way of life. At the same time there is also a stress on their submissiveness to Islamic orthodoxy, which Saktanber illustrates on their ideas about the issues of women's status in Islam with the notions of “complementarity discourse” and “discourse of gratitude”, even though she

introduces the notion as a “series of strategies to decrease the unpleasant effects of Islamic rules which tend to restrain the scope of behaviour and self-actualization of Muslim women in a modern social context” (p. 122). I believe that it should be difficult task to differentiate faith from strategy from women’s accounts and it can be read as Saktanber’s inference or hope that these women actually question the male dominance that restrain their lives but refrain from openly expressing it.

Another study in this discursive period on the new Islamist identity is by Jenny B. White who is an anthropologist from the US and a renown scholar of Turkish studies with her numerous books and articles based on her fieldworks in Turkey. “The Islamist Paradox” is published as a book chapter in *Fragments of Culture: The everyday of modern Turkey* (2002) edited by Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber. It is based on the author’s ethnographic research between 1994 and 2002 in Ümraniye district of Istanbul.<sup>13</sup> White aims to discuss the rhetoric of the Islamist movement that attempts to create an elite Islamist identity and argues that in practice this identity is very much fragmented on the basis of gender and class in contrast to the rhetorical emphasis on the unity of the Muslim people. She argues that “cultural identity, socioeconomic class and politics are, in fact, inextricably entwined in the everyday context of political action. As a consequence, Islamists are faced with the paradox of trying to create an elite Islamist identity within a populist movement” (p. 191). Besides, the Islamist women’s attempts to live the “lifestyle” of the “new Islamic woman” is dependent on their economic limitations of their class. She specifies three “contradictory impulses” in the Islamist movement: “a populist non-recognition of class, status, and to some extent, gender cleavages in the party; the attempt to situate itself as the party of the poor and disadvantaged; and the attempt to re-classify Islamic symbols as elite cultural markers” (p. 192) and thus draws attention to the complexity of the Islamist mobilization and the insufficiency of the accounts of identity politics that were widely in circulation in

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<sup>13</sup> Jenny B. White’s ethnography which this chapter is based on is published as a book, titled *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A study in vernacular politics* (2002) and some of her arguments in this chapter are supported with detailed ethnographic data in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book titled “Islamist Elitism and Women’s Choices” (pp. 212-241). Because her book does not specifically focus on women and Islam in Turkey, to represent the ethnography I preferred to include “The Islamist Paradox” in which White elaborates on the new identity of the Islamist women.

the political discourse of Turkey throughout the 1980s and 1990s and suggests there is a need to see relationship between social class and political mobilization.

In the section titled “The Culture of Politics” White introduces her arguments about how the attempts to create an Islamist elite work to obscure the differences in class. She mentions that in reality the economic elite of the Islamist movement is rather different from the so-called Islamist elite of Ümraniye, which she describes as a working class neighbourhood. Yet, as she explains, the Virtue party has a strategy to hide the distinctions in the “mystique of egalitarianism” through “extending the label ‘elite’ socially downwards to make it accessible to anyone wearing Islamic dress and engaged in political activism or attending university” (p. 198). Then she describes a Virtue Party rally in İzmit to show the messages of unity and populism in the political symbolism of the party and the contradictions that simultaneously take place during the event in which the mayor of Istanbul Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the party leader Recai Kutan are invited to meet the Virtue Part activists. A film which contains images of the Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz from Motherland Party in a luxurious dinner invitation followed by images of poor children collecting bits and pieces from garbage. After the video the mayor gives a speech loaded with messages of equality, human rights and democracy. White also describes the dramatic and enthusiastic atmosphere of the rally, the special segregation of the audience –yet she sits in the men’s section with four other women, right behind Erdoğan and Kutan- and the eloquence of Erdoğan’s speech. The next section titled “The Politics of Culture” presents the distinguishing characteristics of the rally from the rallies of the other political parties: “segregation of the audience”, “homogeneity of the dress”, “complete absence of markers of social class in the audience” (p. 205). She notes that the connotations of the film in the rally are the oppositions of “covered/uncovered, sharing/keeping, equality/ unequal differentiation” and together with “narratives of loss and desire” (p. 205). Within this symbolic framework women are associated with desire -a point also illustrated in Saktanber’s article with the myth of Havva- and women’s virtue is associated with the virtue of the nation. This is the ground that political symbolism of the Virtue party entails

covering (*kapatmak*) both of women and the desire, the need, for equal economic opportunities and political justice.<sup>14</sup>

White elaborates the notion of *tesettür*, the Islamic dress code for particularly women that mainly symbolizes virtue, morality, space segregation, and modesty and requires covering of the head, neck, and the body, in the section that she describes a henna ceremony, a tradition of women's gathering before wedding. In her account of the ceremony, she explains *tesettür* as a complex practice which has many other associations like Islamic elitism, upward mobility, urban life-style, and possessing Islamic knowledge in contrast to the traditionalism and ignorance of the village life and claims that there is a significant heterogeneity in the practices and meanings of *tesettür* among women. Henna ceremony depicts the social dynamics of the formation of an elite Islamist identity with the aim of orthodoxization of Islamic practices and highlights the process of "de-proletarianisation" for evading the working-class backgrounds through religious education and becoming "conscious" Muslims (p. 208). She highlights the similarities between the Islamist movement in Turkey and Khomeinism in Iran and argues that "the contradictions between the interests of an Islamic elite and those of the masses were obscured by Islamic symbolism, imagery and rhetoric representing the unity of all Muslims and a classless Islamic society characterized by social justice" (p. 209). Then she exhibits the viewpoints of activist men and women in the Welfare/Virtue Party on the issue of women's rights to illustrate a contradiction between the Islamist activism and cultural values. Based on her interviews with the activists of the party in Ümraniye she shows that while women tend to perceive the Islamist movement as a means through which they can demand more autonomy for Muslim women, men want to perpetuate traditional gender roles and increase their own autonomy and authority.

White's study concludes that the contradictions arising from the gap between the party rhetoric and the cultural, gender and class facets of its activism and daily practice indicate that identity politics is an insufficient concept in explanation of Islamist movement. In this sense it is very significant that it adds new dimensions to

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<sup>14</sup> As noted by White as well, covering also means taking care of when it is used with the noun need.

the debates on Islamist identity which mainly bring forward its elements of faith and othering. The strength of her elaborations on the importance of class differences in the actualization of the rhetoric on an elite Islamist identity is that she reminds us the social dynamics that act on formation of an identity through the contradictions that she addresses and there is no reference to Islamic texts or knowledge in her analysis of her ethnographic data. Thus it is evident that she acknowledges the invalidity of the essentialist understandings of Muslim woman's identity.

It is also important that White takes the rhetoric about an elite Islamist identity as a distinct category of analysis that articulates a set of symbols and that functions as a mobilizing tool in political Islam. The women in the study are not described as figures who passively adopt the rhetoric but as agents who demand more autonomy and power vis-à-vis men as they take part in political activities that publicize it. Even though she attributes agency to the women in her study, she notes that the internal power structure of the movement is so androcentric that women cannot achieve the social status they desire. Women's lack of economic power and education are also equally important factors that reduce their chances of social advancement and make them more vulnerable in the gender hierarchy. The subjectivities of the women are shaped by the social context that these opposing factors clash.

When we consider the arguments about women's political activism and demand for upward mobility through their individual choices of adopting *tesettür* and her methodological standpoint that gives voice to women, we can state that women are not attributed a subaltern status in this study. On the other hand, White observes them as subalterns insofar as "socioeconomic class continues to be important as an organizing principle, although not as a 'consciously felt subaltern collective identity'"(Kearney, 1996, p. 174, quoted in White, p. 2014).

Ayşe Saktanber's stress on the process of becoming an other as a constitutive aspect of the Islamist identity can also be traced in White's study. However White observes an economic ground in this process because the movement predominantly gives messages about economic inequalities in the society and the party's solidarity

with the poor, whom they also call “*mağdur kesim* (victim sector)”, the ones neglected by the Western, liberal, modernist political movements (p. 198).

White presents us the fragmented nature of the movement by shattering the myth of unity of the Muslims by focusing on the gap between its lower class women activists and economic elite. This approach articulates a socioeconomic aspect to the discussions of modern/ traditional, secular/ Islamic dichotomies. However I cannot regard it as an attempt to challenge the binarism because it not only reproduces the discursive formations that associate Islam with traditionalism in terms of gender roles but it also suggests that this association is bound by class when she explains that Islamist movement find support in lower class and a tendency to defend women's traditional gender roles with an increasing conservatism is observed both among the supporters and the party members, especially among men. Even the women activists who believe that they achieved more autonomy and self realization within the political activities and that women needed education and work, do not challenge this traditionalism entirely when they claim that “women's first responsibility is to make a home for her husband and children” (p. 211).

Lastly point that I would like to mention in this study is that White's analysis of the symbolic meanings of covering and desire in the political discourse of Virtue Party echoes Carol Delaney's analysis of covering in the previous discursive period, with an extension to the fields of economic and political justice. This excerpt demonstrates White's reading of the film shown in the rally and illustrates my point:

Women are the central locus of desire, not only in the traditional sense of sexual shame and danger, but in an expanded referential sense of political, social and economic desire. Likewise, virtue is demonstrated not only be covering (*kapatmak*) the female body to eradicate men's longing, and marrying channel it, but also by covering and taking care of (*kapatmak* is also used in this sense) the needs of the poor through assistance. (...) Loss does not refer only to loss of virginity and honour, but also to hunger and injustice. Longing is for economic and political justice, not only physical union. Women's virtue becomes national virtue. Desire, projected onto the political screen, structures the aims of Islamist elite with the lifestyle of the urban poor, who fear poverty and sexual dishonour and who subsist by

means of strong norms of mutual assistance and the control of women's bodies and movement. It is the resonance of the political message with local desire that fuels emotion and support for Virtue (p. 205).

In contrast to the anthropological studies of the first discursive period, White's arguments and approach to the social and political context in Turkey is very much dynamic and multidimensional. Instead of studying the status of Muslim women in relation to beliefs and traditions she aims to understand it in relation to the contemporary dynamics of Islamist movement in Turkey and integrates a class dimension to her analysis. The category of Muslim women which is widely used in the Middle Eastern women's studies literature corresponds to the category of Islamist women in this study mainly because her identity is perceived within the collective identity of the Islamist movement. Another indication of "The Islamist Paradox's overlap with the contemporary critiques in the social sciences is the reflexivity and multivocality in the study. White puts forward her identity as a Western researcher by depicting its contrast with the crowd in the Virtue Party rally she describes. Her seat among male audience in the segregated seating plan in the stadium highlights her distinction as a women in a very much androcentric environment and also as a non-Muslim who is not dressed like the other women in similar Islamic outfits. We can hear multiple voices in the article but most of these voices are of prominent male leaders in the Islamist movement. I consider this preference as a result of White's purpose of underlining the patriarchal discourse and hierarchy in the movement. She presents some ethnographical data about women in the sections on Ümraniye to elaborate the social, cultural, and class meanings of *tesettür* clothing. White's methodological approach cannot be regarded as, in Minh-Ha's expression, "speaking nearby" Islamist women but can still be regarded as a counter-example to "speaking about".

The article targets a Western audience but is in dialogue with the works of Turkish scholars, some of which I also review in this study. For instance while disagreeing with Ayşe Ayata and Binnaz Toprak on the subject of the use of identity politics in Turkey (Ayata, 1997 and Toprak, 1994, cited in White, 2002, p. 191), she refers to Aynur İlyasoğlu's argument on self representation of Islamist movement through style as a key symbol and her description on Islamic elites (İlyasoğlu, 1994). She

refers several times to Nilüfer Göle's study *Forbidden Modern* (1994) in her description of the new Islamist elite. White agrees with their depictions of this group which is characterized by their higher education and urban lifestyle and therefore circulate a discursive formation about the identity of the Muslim women in the Islamist movement. This discursive formation indicates the major change in the representation of Muslim women, who are no longer depicted as rural, backward, uneducated, and victim of traditions, that reflects a discursive reaction to Orientalist stereotypes and also the tendency to see these urban Islamist women as the power behind the political rise of Islamist movement.

One shortcoming of White's analysis is her neglect of the impact of global market economy in Istanbul that not only shapes the class structure in the city but also influences the rhetoric and organization of the Islamist movement. The economic power of the Islamic capital that created the new Islamic upper class and the driving force of the Islamist movement cannot be understood without thinking it in relation to globalization of Islam in the late 1990s that also include its integration to the global market economy. Moreover the party rhetorics about the liberal upper classes of the country is at the same time a major critique of global mass culture.

Kenan Çayır's study on Islamist women in civil society is the last study I want to analyse in this section that portrays their identity. "İslamcı Bir Sivil Toplum Örgütü: Gökkuşağı İstanbul Platformu" ("An Islamist Civil Society Organization: Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform") is published in *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri (New Public Faces of Islam)* (2000) edited by Nilüfer Göle. The book is an edited volume based on a workshop organized at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul with Göle and her students from the sociology department of this university. At the time of the publication of the book, Çayır had a masters degree from the this department and this chapter is based on his thesis study supervised by Göle. Göle describes the book as the product of a workshop that tries to understand the transformation of the Islamist movement and its different faces, discourses, and lifestyles which became visible in public spaces. She observes an individualization in the dynamics of Islamic culture and states that "the Muslim identity no longer needs to refer to a collective Islamism" (Göle, 2000, p. 11).

The study which is conducted in Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform is an attempt to understand the identity of the Islamist women in the 1990s and also to compare it with the identity of the Islamist women in the 1980s. The study asks "what style of language these women develop, how they define the status of women in social life, what types of roles they suggest for women in private and public life, how they position themselves in the qutodian and how they construct their identities" (pp. 41-42). Çayır reminds us that 1980s were the years that the headscarf issue was in the agenda of the country with the demands of the veiled university students whose discourse was interwoven with anti-modernism and radical Islamism while 1990s were years that these women have become university graduate professionals who raise questions about the status and roles of women in the domestic and public spheres, in the Islamist movement and in Turkish society. The study is based on surveys, in-depth interviews, the bulletins of the platform, and observations in the platform's panels.

Before sharing the details of the profile and discourse of the platform, Çayır argues that the visibility of the veiled girls at the universities in the 1980s resulted in the discussions about women's status in the society, modernity, equality, laicism and public space as well as traditional Islamism that associates women with the private sphere. Like Saktanber (1994) he states that in this context the identity of the Islamist woman "was defined with a reactionary attitude developed against tradition or Kemalism, in other words, in reference to the 'other'" (p. 43). It was in the 1990s that Islamist women's status in the movement was questioned and their visibility was also related to their lifestyles and social practices (p. 44). Çayır evaluates the development of Islamist women's movement in Turkey within the framework of new social movements of the 1990s which are distinct from the movements of the 1970s and 1980s with their demands for recognition of differences, equality, social recognition and participation. Another point that he makes is that while primarily the concepts of oppressor and oppressed were discussed in the previous decade, during the 1990s subjects like Islamic holidays, celebrations, and weddings were discussed because of the fact that Islamic lifestyles were no longer marginal and were more visible. Therefore, agreeing with Nilüfer Göle he argues that instead of

perceiving Islamism as a transient reactionary movement and categorising Islamist women as passive/active, traditional/modern, it is necessary to analyse the daily practices of the movement and the identities of its actors (Göle, 1997, p. 69 cited in Çayır, 2000, p. 44). Çayır's main challenge to the binarism in the existing discourse is this point. Furthermore, with respect to the Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform, he discusses whether we should understand the visibility of the Islamist women as a reaction to the economic and political problems or in relation to the new politics that express an identity construction and demands for equality and the reflection of new life styles, values, and norms and whether the Islamist women reinforce the totalitarian aspect of Islamism or widen the scope of civil society by bringing their practices to the public domain (p. 50).

The platform, which is the first platform of Islamists in Turkey is composed of 41 civil society organizations, has attended several national and international congresses, is knowledgeable about laws about women, and unites women's organizations that are nationalist and active in the fields like art, education, and culture. Most of the members of the platform are university graduates, professionals and married women from Istanbul and the platform rejects any connections with the Welfare Party. One of the main themes that come to the fore in the platform is the concept of identity that they discuss in reference to their roles as mothers and their domestic and public roles idealized in reference to the golden age of Islam. "Other" who is either defined as the feminist or Kemalist is another theme that is discussed in the platform. They also have a critical attitude towards the gender inequalities within the movement and Çayır sees a potential in the platform that can transform the gender relations among the Islamists. He also suggests that the Islamist women who are engaged in struggles against these "others" as well as cooperations with them have become subjects and individuals. "Redefinition of women's domestic roles" of women, particularly exaltation of their roles as mothers is an important subject in the platform and the subject involves education of mothers in the fields of religion and social sciences for developing a "scientific" motherhood (p. 61). They also redefine the private sphere in a way to enable women to be "productive while fulfilling their roles as mothers and housewives" (p. 62). When it comes to the issue of the visibility of Islamist women in the public spaces,

Çayır argues that they regard their “veiled identities”<sup>15</sup> as means of their participation to social life (p. 64). He also states that these women defend equal rights of women in the public sphere and justify these demands by giving examples from the early years of Islam as well as the need in the society for women professionals who can understand and serve other women. In the conclusion part, he underlines the agency of the Islamist women that can challenge the borders of the public space defined by Kemalist modernization and expand the civil space with “their veiled bodies and distinct social practices” (p.67).

In the depiction of the Islamist women in Rainbow Platform we see how their identity is formed within a social movement that aims to redefine women’s roles and the borders of the public and private spaces. The Islamist women’s movement and the Islamist woman as an individual are explored in relation to each other and also with respect to their transformations in the 1980s and 1990s. This approach enables us to perceive it also as a collective identity and its changing dynamics. Therefore is representation is far from being essentialist. On the other hand it is suggested that Islamic belief has still an influence on the identity formation that makes the women hold conservative ideas about their role in the family life, which I believe is very much dependent on the access of women the means of self-realization and career development. For instance we learn from the accounts of Sibel Eraslan, the former head of the Welfare Party Ladies Commission of Istanbul that she and the other politically active Islamist women were not traditional mothers and wives at all. It is conflictual that they aim to redefine the private space in a way that women will be productive at home and will not have to work outside. The agency of the Islamist women that Çayır underlines is also manifest in their attempts to challenge the gender inequalities. This time references to Islam and its practices in its golden age function as an empowering tool. When it comes to the subjectivity of the women in the movement, Çayır introduces the notion of visibility

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<sup>15</sup> “Veiled identity” (*örtülü kimlik*) is the title of the book by Aynur İlyasoğlu published in 1994 which I examine in the section on veiling. Çayır’s use of the term shows that it has turned into a statement in circulation. The term is significant for representing the main common discursive formations and approaches in the knowledge about women and Islam in this discursive period. In this knowledge women are described in terms of their individual identities in addition to their relation to the collective Islamist identity; veiling is seen as an essential part of the identity of the Muslim women and is discussed as an issue that is at the heart of the discussions around Muslim women’s public participation, visibility, and confrontation with the secular state order.

in addition to the “others” and the domestic roles. I will discuss the notion of visibility in the next section in more detail but here I would like to note that it has become a core aspect of Islamist women’s recognition in the public sphere. About the others of the Islamist women, he mentions Islamist men in addition to the widely circulated truth that feminists and Kemalists are considered as the main “others”. With their stance against the Islamist men in the movement who pay lower wages to veiled women whom they employ or who do not let Islamist women to achieve higher ranks they are described by Çayır as agents who have the potential to change the relations between Islamist men and women.

In representations of the Islamist women in the study, traditional and modern are suggested to be integral part of their identities and self-definitions. The modernity of the women is described by their participation to public sphere, work life and civil society as well as their demands for gender equality. Their traditionalism is evident in their references to the importance of women’s roles as mothers, their references to the golden age of Islam, and their views about the jobs that are suitable for women. Considering these tendencies, instead of defining them as traditional or modern, Çayır prefers to see them as subjects still in transformation and states “The question of whether women as “actors of history” will bring totalitarian side of Islam forward or bring a more individualist understanding of Islam through becoming a “subject” lingers on our minds” (p. 59).

In these three studies which aim to understand the identity of the Islamist women who are the actors of the Islamist movement in Turkey, the concept of othering is a common point that needs further elaboration. The articulations of self/other problematique as a fundamental aspect of identity formation to the Islamist women’s identity marks a major shift in the discourse on women and Islam in Turkey. It is a change from perceiving and representing Muslim women within the boundaries of Islamic beliefs and practices to understanding them in relation to their conflicts and struggles with the dynamics of the social order and the political context they live in. As I present in the other studies of this period and the next, the shift that was initiated by Saktanber has led the several other scholars to study Islamist women’s identity in relation to its others who are most commonly specified

as the feminist women, Kemalist women, and the Islamist men. State secularism and secular social order in Turkey should also be included as the contextual factors that act on the self/other problematique of Islamist women. Islamist women's status in the public and private spheres, their culture and daily life, their political participation and rights have started to be analysed with respect to the axis of their oppositional attitudes, reconciliations, dialogues or victimizations with respect to their others. The specificity of the Turkish setting in understanding the relation between women and Islam in Turkey, unlike in any other Middle Eastern country, arises the necessity of addressing the issue of othering. Referring to the processes of othering makes the debates about the areas in which power struggles of Islamist women, namely their public participation and demands for equal rights on the basis of gender and religious beliefs, concentrate possible. On the other hand it bears the risk of reductionism that divides Turkish women mainly in two groups: Islamists and Kemalists. Feminists can also be named as the third group but their emphasis on secularism makes it possible to categorize them together with Kemalists as a single other for the Islamists. Such a simplistic portrayal is way too far from representing the heterogeneity of Turkish women and can reproduce all the paradigms about the East/West dichotomies. Even though it may seem like a paradox when we consider the profound effect of the Islamism/secularism conflicts on the Islamist women's identities, the alternative path of producing knowledge on Islamist women's identity can be raising questions about its encounters and dialogues with women who do not define themselves as primarily Kemalists and feminists and who do not have reactionary attitudes towards Islamists.

The second major common point in the studies is that the identity of the Islamist women is studied both as an individual identity and as a collective identity of the Islamist movement. It indicates another shift from describing them within their patriarchal families, their household duties, their roles as wives and mothers to describing them as individuals and actors of the Islamist movement. While the former way of understanding them, which was prominent in the studies of the first discursive period, is the approach of Orientalism and First World feminism, the latter way is an aspect of the counter-discourse that challenges the essentialist and Eurocentric representations of Muslim women. However I attribute this shift also to

the changes in the places of research and the fields of the researchers. Formation of both collective and individual identities of the Islamist women was possible in the globalizing capitalist liberal urban context that demands its dwellers to participate in public life through education and work to survive economically, provides a conducive environment for the flourishing of diverse identities, for the organization of civil society and political movements. Therefore a change of focus from a rural context to an urban context in studying religious identities brings along all these aspects of urban life that shapes individual and collective identities. But how can we explain the change of focus? The preference of the researchers of the first period, who were Western anthropologists, to analyse the relationship between women and Islam with reference of Islamic traditions reflects the colonial anthropological approach that perceives Muslim societies as traditional, rural, and shaped by patriarchal family structure. Even in the ethnography by Julie Marcus which was conducted in İzmir, we cannot observe Muslim women's lives in relation to the city and their individualities. They are defined in relation to their gender roles within the family. However, in this period the works of Turkish sociologists –and political scientists as I present in the following sections- dwell upon the urban context to observe the Islamic identities in relation to modernity. Jenny B. White's interest in the urban context can be explained with the shift in anthropology to study the modernization dynamics in Muslim societies as a result of the critiques of postcolonial theory and Middle Eastern scholars.

Hitherto I tried to shed light on some of the representations of the identity of the Islamist women and introduce the main themes that are at stake in the discourse on this identity. The discursive formations on the constitutive role of being and/or becoming an other in the Turkish society, adherence to traditional gender roles despite the relative autonomy and self-realization gained through education and work, aim to achieve an orthodoxy in Islam, becoming *şuurlu* (conscious) Muslims, and the role of covering are commonly circulated in these representations. In the following sections I will try to present how these discursive formations are linked to specific subjects that the ethnographic studies discuss.

## **5.2. Pious Muslim Women in Semi-Public Spaces of Islamism**

Ethnographies analyzed in this section are selected and grouped together for two reasons. Firstly both are conducted with closed religious communities. Second, they provide an insight about how urbanization and modernization are experienced by the women in these religious communities, how their religious activities and mobility is influenced by these factors and the role of the spatial organization of the communities. Istanbul and Ankara, two metropolitan cities of Turkey, are respectively where the researches took place.

The term “visibility” emerges as a key explanatory factor in public participation of Islamist women in Turkey. Before reviewing how it is articulated to the analysis, it is beneficial to have a look at theorization about seeing, visibility, recognition and power in social sciences and philosophy. Andrea Brighenti (2007) presents a fruitful discussion about taking visibility as a separate category of analysis in social sciences. He begins with stating the relational character of visibility that is constituted by the mostly asymmetrical connection between seeing and being seen. Referring to Erwin Goffman’s theorization, he states that normalcy bears in itself a condition of invisibility and transparency, being “unmarked, unnoticed, unthematized, untheorized” (Goffman, 1971, cited in Brighenti, 2007, p. 326). This perspective explains why the public participation of Islamist women, who are noticed through their veil in a sphere of which normalcy has a secular character. Thus “when something becomes more visible or less visible than before”, Brighenti suggests asking “who is acting and reacting on the properties of the field, which specific relationships are being shaped” (p. 326). It is no doubt that vision is related with power, it empowers the seeing subject and conversely being seen means being at the reach and control of the actor who sees. Therefore the visibility of Islamist women in the discourse should bring along questions of power relations between them and the social actors to whom they are visible. Since seeing is conditioned by the social and interactional ways of creating meaning, he argues that Foucault’s (1972) differentiation between the visible and the articulable related with the discursive realm should be reconsidered as these two are always together. In other words, how we see things is bounded by the discourse and the discursive realm is

not independent from how we see. For the context of this study, there are three pillars of analysis regarding the implications of this theorization: How the Islamist women are seen in the public space, how the author explains this visibility and how the author sees them. Visibility has a strong association with recognition and recognition has social consequences for especially minority groups. Brightenti notes that this association is not linear and various degrees of visibility have different outcomes. Below the threshold of “fair visibility” there is an issue of being unnoticed, ignored, excluded, unseen and invisible and above the threshold there is a zone of “super-visibility” to such a degree that the visible subject is paralysed. On the basis of the discourse analysed in this study, it can be argued that during the 1980s and 1990s visibility of the Islamist women in Turkey gradually shifted above the threshold, approaching a zone of super-visibility in certain social and political contexts (for instance in 1999, when Merve Kavakçı, the first member of the parliament who wore headscarf from Islam-oriented Virtue Party, encountered harsh protests of secular parliamentarians and ultimately was barred from her position). Moreover gender is a critical aspect of the issue of visibility, especially when the gaze is male and visible is female. It is extensively discussed in the discourse about veiling and Islam that the codes of behaviour and dress and the extent of mobility of the Muslim women, and thus the definition of public and private spheres are determined as to protect the honour of these women from the male gaze. Nevertheless, it is observed that these codes and definitions are constantly negotiated and transformed as modernization and globalization penetrates Islamic culture and life-style. Brightenti also claims that “the issue of access to the places of visibility is a political question” in order to be represented, in order to have our voices heard but the ways and modes of access determines how we are represented (p. 333). While visibility is empowering when it brings social recognition, in a disciplinary context of surveillance it is disempowering, as discussed by Foucault (1977).

*The Book and the Roses: Sufi women, visibility and zikir* (2002) is an ethnography by Catharina Raudvere, a Swedish researcher of history of religions. The study locates visibility at the core of its analysis. In the first pages of the book she writes about how her interest in Sufi women of Istanbul arose with a video that she saw at

a seminar of a *zikir* ritual<sup>16</sup> of a religious community in Istanbul and questioning the place of women in this practice who were watching the worship behind a lattice. Leaving aside the mysticism, Orientalist connotations and global popularity of Sufism, she explores Sufi women's religious practices, especially *zikir*, and activism with the ethnography she conducted in Görenli Mehmet Efendi Endowment for 14 months from 1993 to May 1998. The notion of women's religious activism is central to the aim of the book. Raudvere notes that recent religious activism of women brought a new space to the agenda, a semi-public space in which women from diverse backgrounds could come together. She explains the aim of the book as studying the collective activities of women in these semi-public spaces and not discussing religious experiences in Sufi rituals. She acknowledges the importance of the political context in Turkey in studying religious activism in general and women's Sufi groups in particular. With this study, she presents an alternative analysis of Sufi tarikas which neglect the social activities and interactions that take place within these communities. She argues that the gatherings of these communities that take place at homes should be analysed as a social activity rather than a religious one. In this sense *The Book and the Roses* diverges from classical Islamic studies which I briefly described in Chapter 2 in my review of the Orientalist discourse and takes religious communities as dynamic and interactive social groups that are not isolated from the political context that surrounds them.

The book is also a manifestation of the paradigm shift caused by the new era of globalization in the 1990s that emphasized diversities, identities, and localities by leaving the grand narratives and theories of developmentalisms aside. As a scholar of history of religions Raudevere's focus on the collective identity of a small Sufi community in Turkey is a break away from the classical studies on Sufism and Islam that neglect diversities among Islamic societies. Moreover, as I present below, it is a challenge to developmentalist and secular feminist arguments that see religion and piety as an obstacle in women's empowerment and assume that secular social order and education will create enlightened individuals who will not be religious

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<sup>16</sup> *Zikir* literally means invocation. As an Islamic rituals it involves repetitive reciting of the names of Allah and certain prayers.

and traditionalist. Lastly, Raudvere pays special attention to the forces of globalization and the influence of the urban context in analysing the endowment's relations with the outside world. She meets the challenge that is caused by the blurring boundaries of indigenousness in the global era.

The first chapter deals with the political and cultural history of religious communities in Turkey from the 1920s to the 1990s. After reviewing the existing literature on Middle East women's studies on religious practices and Sufism, she introduces the endowment and her methodology of feminist ethnography. The endowment is composed of urban, middle-class, educated, young women who are trying to find their way to preserve and practice a religious tradition in an increasingly globalizing city. This is the "new Islamist woman" that we encounter in the related discourse. She argues that in the studies on Muslim women during the 1940s and 1950s, there is an impression that women are less pious, knowledgeable and strict when it comes to religious obligations (Fernea & Fernea, 1972, cited in Raudvere, 2002). This was mainly due to the restrictions about women's religious participations in the mosques and partially due to women's less visibility in the houses to the male researchers. However, the studies from the 1970s onwards an increasing interest emerged to the religious lives of women, and Islam was no longer used as a unitary explanatory factor, factors such as ethnicity, social class and age were included to the analysis.

As Raudvere explains, during the 1920s, the early years of Turkish Republic, together with many other secularization reforms, all the religious institutions related to Sufism were closed down, so there remained no possibility of existence for an organization of religious women. An important implication of these bans was making Sufi women even more invisible. However, gradually these bans were unofficially and officially eased and *tarikas* (religious cults) continued their activities. Raudvere argues that the endowment she studied was under the influence of both secular state ideology and the centuries old Sufi tradition and history. The semi-public space that she examines is *vakif* (endowment), a term both refers to women's group as a social organization and a spatial organization, the meeting place for their religious and charity activities. Establishing the endowment makes

them visible and respected in their social environment, attributes legitimacy to their activities and bestows them a certain power as Sufi women. Throughout the book she uses the words Islamist and Muslim interchangeably and uses Islamism to refer to political Islam, being very much aware of the dichotomies between Kemalism, secularism, and Westernization and Islamism.

Rather than individual identities, she deals with the collective identity of the Muslim women who define themselves as conscious Muslims, activists and charitable women. Raudvere notes that the endowment pursues a battle, an ideological struggle against two sections of the society; namely the patriarchal Islamist men and the people who do not define themselves as religious. As I have mentioned in my theoretical framework, this point is widely stressed in the discourse of Middle East women's studies and also stated in most of the studies that I analyse in this chapter. Within this context she aims to find out how they achieved their legitimacy and preserved their authority.

Contrary to the thesis of victimization of women by the processes of globalization and urbanization, Raudvere presents "religious women as an active operative part of these changes" (p. 83) claiming that emergence of religious women's groups in public has an empowering aspect for the women and a developmental aspect for the society. Gönенli women who are subject to globalization through media and visitors, though they are critical of the global flow, are described as connected to the world. In the social context which witnesses a clash between homogenizing and authoritarian pressures of Sunni orthodox religious teachings and calls for the recognition of the heterogeneity of religious groups (like Alevis), this group of women are enabled to organize activities and hold meetings in mosques. Thus, they benefit from the space that urbanization and globalization generate for diversities while declaring their independence from other groups and organizations. Moreover, unlike many other religious groups, Gönенli endowment does not claim any political power, though their public religious activism is considerable.

As an outcome of urbanization, many women work outside and for religious women who used to have a very limited mobility, this means traveling to distant quarters of

the city, meeting other people with professions while obeying the religious codes of behavior and dress. Raudvere claims that, contrary to the expectations, religious women are very active in the city for going to work and participating religious activities. She suggests “This new visibility runs counter to the routine dichotomy public-private, men-women that is prevalent in many secularization/ modernization theories” (p. 85).

The second chapter titled “Gönenli’s group: Sufi women constructing rooms of their own” is about the establishment of the endowment, its relations to outside, its activities and about Gönenli Mehmet Efendi, the religious leader that the endowment was established in the honour of, and his significance for the group. She puts emphasis on the strong stand that Gönenli women take not only against the state authority on religious activities but also against certain aspects of Islam that confine women within the boundaries of household, the private sphere. She depicts a vivid picture of Muslim women’s agency with respect of the semi-public space that they created and their independent religious activities (gatherings and worships), charity activities organized in this space, and their business activity through a small shop in the neighbourhood. Gönenli endowment, a gendered religious space outside private sphere, or a semi-public space in Raudvere’s terms, constitutes an example of a gendered space that enables women to engage in religious and social activities outside their homes, yet with its organization it is isolated enough to preserve its dignity in Islamic terms. Women are carefully visible in their activism and mobile in the urban context, yet the privacy of religious gatherings is respected.

Furthermore by giving a detailed account of pilgrimage (*hac*) tours to Mecca that the *vakif* organizes, Raudvere exhibits that the women enjoy a significant mobility with this journey, “even married women with family responsibilities” “even for women unaccompanied by a close relative”(p. 128), they gain a respectable status, they engage in globalised Islam by meeting –though not personally interacting due to language problems- other Muslims from all around the world, bringing back souvenirs of *hac* and highly socialising through home-coming gatherings organized for showing respect to them. Women going to *hac* also share their sacred memories

with the group and these memories create a “social memory” (p. 130) among them and this is not their only contribution to the group. The tours are highly appreciated as they enable many low-income women as well to fulfil their religious obligation and because of this it is an outstanding activity that enhances collecting funds. Raudvere notes that these enabling activities were not without challenges and difficulties. The women have to negotiate with the disapproving neighbourhood, especially with men. Since it was not common to see women theologians assigned to public duties, the gendered space of the endowment gives the opportunity to the women in the group who mostly graduated from religious high schools and divinity faculties to share their intellectual theological knowledge.

Raudvere’s stress on empowerment of women is supported by the religious authority they selected to spiritually guide the endowment. Group’s identity is highly associated with and defined on the leadership of Gönənli Mehmet Efendi whom women call *hoca*. Gönənli Mehmet Efendi, as described in the second part of the chapter is recognized with his piousness, decades of religious teaching, independent stand distant from Sufi groups and other religious communities, long-term commitment to sermons for women, and his adaptation to the circumstances of the modernising Republic. She explains that this status of deceased *hoca*, leaves women “vulnerable” especially in the public space (p. 164). They receive objections from the men in their families for protecting the honour of the women when they are in the endowment and by questioning the connections with a deceased theological guide. Outside home, they encounter the disapproval of the visitors from Islamist groups who imply that the endowment is a public space and that women should behave accordingly. Besides, they receive criticisms from Sufi circles about the validity of the *zikir* practices of the group, which they pay utmost attention. It seems that they meet and overcome these challenges while protecting and sharing his teachings. Meanwhile, they continue charity activities and worshiping practices with an effort to balance Sunni theology and Sufi rituals. Clearly, his character, teachings and services generate the foundation of the groups’ identity and offer them an attitude to differentiate themselves from other religious groups.

The last chapter examines *zikir* ritual in Görenli Mehmet Efendi Endowment and ends with a description of women's *zikir* in *Halveti Cerrahi Tariqat* in Istanbul. It is the most vibrant chapter of the book with its exhaustive description of the rituals. Noting that women's worshipping practices should always take place at homes or in a sexually segregated space, she states that women's religious activities in Turkey are mostly hidden. Another reason for hiding *zikir* from public is its illegality and thus Görenli women, like other Sufi groups, do not publicly announce it. *Zikir* in this endowment is a ritual that attributes a local identity and respectability to the group and is a manifestation of harmony and commitment among the core members of the endowment. So not every member, but a selected group of women who are considered to achieve a religious maturity, and proved a long lasting devotion to Allah and to the endowment can attend *zikir*. Perhaps more importantly, this ritual grants an authorization, a leading role to women to organize the most honourable practice of worshipping. Even though there is a person who leads *zikir*, according to Raudvere's accounts lack of hierarchy in the group is the most distinctive difference of women's practice from men's in tariqats.

*The Book and the Roses* is a significant contribution to the ethnographic knowledge on Islam in Turkey. Based on an extensive fieldwork, it provides detailed information specifically about Sufi rituals and worships. The strength of the book lies in its successful articulation of the discussions of modernization, visibility, and mobility of Muslim women in an urban context to its analysis of Görenli endowment which is represented as a symbol of women's agency and self-realization.

In the introduction Raudvere seems to reveal her will to know when she explains that she owes her curiosity for her research subject to the video she saw of *zikir*. The gender segregation due which men participate *zikir* in the room and women participate from a closed gallery catches her attention. In addition to this, she states that her impressions about Sufism are based on Anne-marie Schimmel's (1975, 1978, 1998) literary approach to Sufism that highlights poetry, miniature and music. Even though this introduction evokes a Western feminist standpoint and an Orientalist curiosity, Raudvere's study diverges from these discourses as it focuses

on women's agency and religious activism. While she attempts to differentiate her status from the Western gaze mystified by *zikir*, she cautiously refrains from revealing her personal standpoint, beliefs and feelings both in the field and in the book. She introduces herself merely as a Swiss researcher to the group even if the group insists on seeing her as a Westerner, a Christian and a respected guest. Considering the extensive place of examples of reflexive anthropology in the methodological introduction of the study, as Anne-Sofie Roald (2005) also notes in her review, this choice leads to a curiosity in the reader about through which perspective she selects her data, and how she experiences and analyses the field (Roald, 2005). Raudvere's effort for neutrality can be read, for instance, where she explains her status as a researcher in observing *zikir*.

I make no claims to be drawing on my experience of the ritual – I have been an observer and a guest – nor do I claim to have access to the women's inner experiences. My interest lies in what is expressed in words and bodily movements, and how symbols are communicated during and after the ceremony. (...) The present study asks how these women expressed themselves. It is impossible not to be affected by the rhythm, the sighs, and the repetitive songs. But my chief experience cannot become the main instrument for reading meanings into other women's life-worlds, or be used as a tool for understanding of the local meaning of ritual (p. 184).

The way Sufi women are represented in Raudvere's study should be analysed with respect to their visibility and agency in creating a semi-public space. At this point, it is helpful to wrap up how she contextualizes visibility throughout the book so far. Remembering that the book opens up with a scene in which women who are invisible behind a lattice watch a *zikir* of men in a *tarika*, later describes the spatial organization of Gönenli endowment that avoids male gaze; then explains the ambitions of the women as to be visible with their charity and religious activities but invisible to male gaze individually, it can be suggested that she invites the reader to comprehend different relations of power acting on different cases of in/visibility. In the first case it is evident that Islamic organization of space defines women's place –literally and hierarchically- in *zikir* in that *tarika*. It is their invisibility in *zikir* that attracts the attention of Raudvere as a researcher and leads to visibility of Gönenli women in the academic discourse on Sufi women. In the gendered semi-public space of the endowment, religious codes of honor is

accompanied by abstaining from sexual aspect of visibility that objectifies women. Visibility of the activities of the group in the public sphere as a whole is a source of empowerment and recognition while refraining from the surveillance of secular state authority. Women's personal mobility and public visibility for work and religious activities in a metropolitan city means being seen in public space furnished with secular codes. Developing a multifaceted approach to *being seen*, Raudvere goes beyond the unidimensional approach of the colonial Orientalist discourse and its focus on "unveiling" the Muslim women for saving them from their seclusion. As it is discussed within the scope of the previous episteme, veil signifies a barrier between the Western gaze and the ultimate reality of the Middle East and Islam in this discourse. Raudvere shifts the argument from the seeing/ veiling dichotomy to a level that includes processes of modernization and urbanization, mobility of women and empowering and disempowering aspects of visibility of Islamist women. In this sense, it is a radical break from the previous discursive period.

The Görenli women according to this portrayal not only are empowered to resist patriarchal domination to a great extent but also confront the arguments that Islam is the main source of women's submission. It is a thought-provoking case that a group of pious women who define themselves as conscious Muslims gather through their Sufi orientation and establish an endowment that suggests new paths of mobility and activism for the other Muslim women in Fatih, a neighbourhood well-known with its history of religiosity, conservatism and Islamic communities. A strong agency and independency that takes its strength from belief contradicts with Orientalist, colonial narratives of passive Muslim women subordinated by Islam. This is ultimately an anti-Orientalist representation of Muslim women.

Contrary to the extensive usage of public/ private dichotomy in the discourse on women and Islam, she introduces an alternative case that shakes the applicability of the dichotomy. Establishment of the *vakif* illustrates an outcome, a product, a sign of Sufi women's agency in public sphere. Yet it is neither organized nor treated as a public space unless there is a presence of men, which happens very rarely. *Vakif* both provides a secluded, "home-like" place for religious rites and other activities of the endowment and serves as a path that connects women to the outer world, as a

means of mobility and also receiving appreciation. (p. 121) It neither fully supports the argument that women's emancipation can be achieved through participation to the public sphere, nor the argument that women are oppressed in the private sphere. This can be explained by neither the association between emancipation and participation to public sphere, nor submission of women in private sphere. The space that is alternately transformed by the group for different functions, is not described as leading to their oppression. Raudvere describes its peculiarity as:

The establishment of a formal vakif situated in an apartment with a home-like interior design made it impossible for the women to keep up any absolute distinction between public and domestic space. This absence of a formal demarcation apparently served as part of the strategy applied by the women as they balanced on the threshold to public spaces. The women acted jointly as an institution, although a small one, with the prime goal of protecting the visiting individuals from any criticism or slander (p. 121).

When it comes to modern/traditional dichotomy, Raudvere underlines that women in the endowment definitely define themselves as traditionalists and associating modernity with the West, they have a completely negative attitude towards modernization. On the other hand she contextualizes their activism within the social conditions of a modern urban life, when she mentions that women are middle-class and educated; integrated or subject to globalization by means of the hac tours they organize, the use of Internet technology, and encountering different lifestyles as they become mobile in the city. She also notes that the spiritual leader of the endowment, Gönенli Mehmet Efendi could be defined as a modern hodja whose life story did not contradict with modernization and development processes of Turkish Republic as he adopted a Western style of dress in public spaces in the early years of the Republic, delivered sermons to women, and worked as a state imam in Istanbul for all his work life.

Raudvere's perception of Gönенli endowment as a group of empowered and emancipated women is marked with the closing remark of the third chapter: "The women at the *vakif merkezi* had achieved what Virginia Woolf long ago pointed out as necessities for intellectually emancipated women: money and a room of one's own" (p. 229). Hence it cannot be argued that she perceives the Muslim women she describes as subalterns. On the other hand she does not give voice to women that

she studies for two reasons. She explains the first one as women's disapproval for any recording of their voices because of religious reasons and thus Raudvere has to rely on her written notes. The second one is Raudvere's tendency to give priority to observation as a methodological standpoint. Despite Raudvere's detailed ethnographic account and observation notes about the endowment and *zikir* rituals, the lack of women's own words, expressions of their thoughts and feelings remains to be a gap in their representation.

Ayşe Saktanber's book *Living Islam: Women, religion and the politicization of culture in Turkey* (2002b), is a significant challenge to the widely circulated "truth" that attributes a political character to the Islamist movement as it invalidates the distinction between political Islam and cultural Islam with its stress on everyday life suggesting that living Islam is a continuity between public and private. She describes her aim as to shed light on the questions that the Islamists themselves ask about living Islam in Turkey in stead of going after the widely asked questions about discrepancies between Islam and a secular society, reasons behind choosing an Islamic way of life and not being satisfied with Westernization and modernization project. Placing gender at the core of her research question, she asks "why women are the target of Islamic revivalism and how they came to be the chief actors in the effort to build an Islamic way of life" (p. xxv). In her fieldwork that she conducted from 1989 to 1993 in Ankara, in a *site* (residential area) created and constructed by the collective effort of a group of Islamists dominantly from Milli Görüş (National Vision)<sup>17</sup> and some prominent members of Nakşibendi order's Zahid Kotku branch to live Islam as *şuurlu* (conscious) Muslims, she observes how women become core symbols of the Islamist movement, how they organize their everyday life in the domestic space while making an effort to express Islamism publicly by altering the meaning of 'private'. She integrates Pierre Bourdieu's (1989) theorization of "taste" to her analysis to exhibit the ways of Islamists to differentiate themselves from the other middle-class sections of the society. Moreover she aims to examine othering of Islamist women by Turkish modernization and the ways Islamist women cope with this process. She attributes a central importance to active participation of women in Muslim societies in

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<sup>17</sup> National Vision is the political and social project of Welfare Party led by Necmettin Erbakan.

“reshaping the conditions of political participation, cultural difference, freedom of expression and thereby democracy” rather than being “passive recipients” (p. 18). Her introduction of the concept of “politicization of culture” is a refined argument about the political attempts of expanding the private to the social sphere for “actualization of a middle-class ethos for an Islamic social order” (p. 18) and generating a new content and meaning to this sphere, and Islamist women, through organizing the private sphere, are active participants of these attempts of ultimately creating an Islamist social order.

In chapter one titled “A Signpost of Islamic Revitalization: Women”, Saktanber firstly reviews how women are perceived in Muslim societies and in Islamic ideologies and draws attention to the emergence and development studies on women and Islam in Turkey in relation to Islamic revivalism. She accounts the story of her access to the *site* in the second chapter and provides the details about the way she presented her identity and gained consent and trust in the field despite the concerns of the women whom she contacts related preservation of the seclusion of the *site* and their privacies. Lastly she describes her methodology which she describes as ethno-sociology and which is composed of a survey questionnaire, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, participant observation, and surveys of “literary publications, television programmes, and movies on video in order to better evaluate the discourses that partly shape the imagery of the inhabitants of the *site*” (p. 92). The third chapter provides a “sociological profile” of her informants and interviewees, majority of whom are women and the next chapter addresses the “assumptions which lie behind the demand to live Islam as ‘conscious Muslims’” as a challenge to processes of Turkish modernization, westernization, and secularization (p. 126). In chapter five and six Saktanber presents her analysis of her ethnographic data. She firstly examines the ideological, political and emotional references and the boundaries of the religious community’s imagination of an ideal Islamic society. Then she provides further details about elements of inventing and Islamic way of life by particularly focusing on the process of identity formation of the Muslim women in the community through their self-narratives.

*Living Islam* is a study that is built upon a rich theoretical framework, comprehensive information about the historical, social, and political background of the Islamist movement in Turkey, and multi-dimensional approach to the role of women in inventing an Islamic way of life as the political sphere extends to the private. It stands out as an important reference book in the Middle Eastern women's studies also due to its elaborations on the peculiarity of Turkish context. On the other hand the middle-class character of the field of the study seems to lead her to define Islamist movement as a middle-class phenomenon and underestimate its fragments in upper and lower classes that Jenny White (2002) draws attention to. Cihan Tuğal (2004) also mentions this point by arguing that there is a tendency in the academic discourse to fail to consider the "creative (not simply "rural" and "ignorant") input of non-middle class sectors" and states "*Living Islam* reproduces this new academic common sense to the extent that it treats Islamism as a new "middle class ethos" without reflecting in-depth on the fact that this study is conducted within the confines of a place that is exclusively and intentionally middle-class" (2004, p. 517).

When it comes to representation of Muslim women, seclusion should be taken as one of the central concepts. The *site* with its mosque, school and *awqaf* (plural form of *waqf*, or *vakif*, charitable endowment) is constructed as a secluded space to live Islam as conscious Muslims (p. 61). The seclusion works for preserving the dignity of the community, the dignity of women on the basis of Islamic norms. Thus even though their aim is to construct a model of an ideal Islamic society, being accused of challenging the secular state authority is not a concern for this *site* because they do not believe that they do anything wrong, but just live according to principles of Islam. The essential concern is contamination by the influences of non-believers and doing any harm to Islam through revealing their private lives to "others". In this sense seclusion is also at the centre of their perception and feeling about the "others" of the society who are the secularists. Being open to others had resulted in abusing and misusing the information about their private lives by secularists. The reasons behind seclusion is parallel with women's reasons of not participating to Saktanber's study. Constructing a model of an Islamic society similar to the ideal one during the age of Prophet Muhammad, is an equally fundamental motive for

establishing a secluded *site*. Saktanber's conceptualization and description of this space is another interruption of this study to the public/private dichotomy. The *site* can be regarded as a semi-public space, like Gönenli Mehmet Efendi Endowment in Raudvere's ethnography, created for the purpose of having an isolated place organized around Islamic principles. The bonds of solidarity and trust among the dwellers function like the social ties within a religious community, even though the community and political affiliations of the dwellers are diverse. It is not an easily accessible place, though at certain times, i.e. when there are sermons of well-known community leaders, it receives large numbers of guests to its mosque. Not only religious activities but also charity activities, theological seminars and discussions are organized by the dwellers. There is a high level of socializing among the families through informal visits as well. The *site* can be regarded as the quintessence of not only the othering of and being isolated from the secular social order outside but also an outcome of the othering they have been subject to.

Saktanber explains that she has three assumptions behind her preference of women as her research group. Firstly, she perceives women as the main agents of family life, secondly she argues that Islamist women in everyday life are the active representatives of Islamic lifestyle, they are "main actors in the task of rendering Islam into a living social practice, and this gives them a crucial role in the daily articulation and reproduction of Islamic ideologies" (p. 98). And thirdly, she states that "so-called" Islamist women have become symbols and representatives of the Islamist movement for both secularists and the followers of the movement. The research group selected through snowball sampling consists of 25 families consisting of 120 people. Though the interviews are mostly conducted with women and their teenage daughters, there is also a 20% of male interviewees. The group is described as married women and men living in nuclear families. Most of them are in their 30s and 40s, husbands are averagely 4 years older than their wives. All the marriages are arranged, official and have religious recognition. There is a wide gap in the level of formal education between husbands and wives, only four women are university graduates in contrast to men who are dominantly university graduates. Nevertheless Saktanber emphasizes that all the women had received informal religious education either in Koran courses or by private teachers at home at

different levels and lengths. Majority of the women are housewives due to their education levels and preferences for having a religiously modest life, and the small group of working women are preachers, Koran teachers, secondary-level teachers and one of them is a private teacher at home. In contrast to women, men have much higher ability and opportunity to work outside. The families have an average number of three children and raising them according to Islamic principles and bestowing them Islamic consciousness is the utmost priority of the parents. As Saktanber notes, girls are mostly sent to religious schools “where they will not be forced to bare their heads” and that will “prepare them for their roles as future mothers” (p. 110) while mothers prefer sending their sons to private high schools. For both boys and girls, religious education have central importance in terms of the ‘cultural capital’ that the families share. Majority of the interviewees who were born in different cities of Turkey, moved to the capital city as they got married and majority of the children are the first generation that are born in a metropolitan city.

This profile of the “conscious Muslims” is significantly different from portraits of Islamist women in the studies discussed so far in this period. In stead of educated, working women who are active participants of public life while enjoying a considerable mobility, openly or indirectly demanding more rights and freedoms for veiled women in the public sphere, we encounter pious women who stay within the boundaries of traditional gender roles through giving priority to domestic life and religiosity for creating an Islamic way of life. This time women’s agency and achievements in the quotidian and the domestic space for the realization of an ideal Islamic society emerges as the key of the success of the Islamist movement, in contrast to the path that passes from the struggles of Islamist women in the public space. In the previous cases the empowerment of Islamist women comes along with stepping out of the domestic space, making their identity visible through challenging the norms of patriarchal Islam and secularism at the same time. However in Saktanber’s study empowerment of women is defined in terms of their roles as wives and mothers and their piousness in domestic space. Their subjectivities are shaped by these roles in addition to impact of othering and their agencies are defined in this study in terms of their roles in realization of an Islamic way of life.

This difference can be attributed to the contextual differences between Istanbul and Ankara, the former is the biggest metropolitan of Turkey with its cosmopolitan social structure, high level of globalization, economic development dominated by private business, and cultural diversity accompanied by income gap, competition, and rapidly increasing population due to migration; Ankara, the capital city of Turkey is dominated by the centre of state institutions, universities and a modest social and cultural life; and during the years of Saktanber's study was still considered as the symbolic centre of the secularist state ideology. This may result in differences not only in the attitudes of Islamist movement in these two cities, but also women's perceptions of their identities in the society. Even though such an inference is beyond the research question of this thesis, I would suggest that it should be regarded as a factor in contextualization of the findings of this study and analyzing the social dynamics that affect Islamist women's identities.

Richard Sennett's (1992) theorization of politics of resentment is articulated to the analysis of the expressions of the women about how they feel relieved by living in an Islamic social environment, away from the harassments and criticisms of 'others'. The politics of resentment, "is a way of playing on the anger of people who feel excluded from the circles of the privileged (without however, aiming to destroy the privilege itself), and on the envy and shame arising from status injuries" (Saktanber, 2002b, p.175). The two modern aspects of it are relevant to Saktanber's analysis of her research, namely the belief of people having the lower status about the unfairness of the means of achieving power and the "anti-urban bias" that leads to a "fraternity" of the inner group against the outside and their "emotional withdrawal from society" (pp. 176-177). She argues that formation of a "counter-society" by Islamic activists is associated with resentment (Sivan, 1985, cited in Saktanber, 2002, p. 180). Within this framework that puts a great emphasis on isolation of the excluded sections of the society, she introduces how the Islamic way of live is invented in the *site*. The families that are described as middle and lower class share many aspects of the lifestyle of others in their class in terms of decoration, cooking, indoor clothing and receiving guests, besides the social activities like charity activities, voluntary associations, intellectual seminars and

meetings. What differentiates them is their refusal of habits like having alcohol, dancing, gambling, celebrating Western and Christian oriented days, financial investments of interest, etc. Women follow the rules of *tesettür* especially in the presence of other men. They pay attention to keeping a balance between modern urban life and Islamic rules when raising their children. Mentioning that home has a central importance in Islamic way of life, Saktanber claims “for the kind of trust involved in the attachment of members of an Islamic community to their living space, the protection of women and children from the outside world is a central issue” (p.195). The most significant aspects of living in this *site* are presented through long excerpts from the in-depth interviews with women and these are the sense of security and trust in the social environment, “the possibility of self-actualization as a conscious Muslim without the fear of being harassed” (p.201), the civil inattention to obey Islamic rules about behaving modestly in public, and a hospitable and friendly social environment based on solidarity. She suggests that these aspects that maintain privacy and Islamic seclusion at the same time gives women a greater sense of freedom. The political successes of the Islamist movement in Turkey leads to a more open social life in the *site*. These features of the *site* make it a safe space that gives women a freedom of mobility and socialization within its borders but at the same time a social mechanism of surveillance that regulates and controls their activities and behaviour. What needs to be underlined is that Saktanber’s profile of Muslim women is an analysis that scrutinizes the established contentions about oppression of Muslim women through their seclusion in the private sphere.

In the “self-narratives of Muslim women”, women’s consciousness and agency in transforming their lives in a truly Islamic way, the mutual respect between the spouses and cultural capital of Islam that they share, and women’s stressful sentiments and experiences about being veiled in a secular society are the subjects that Saktanber selects. A sense of individual choice, freedom, and pride in following the Islamic path and their contentment with their marriages is evident in the narratives, whereas relations with outside is a source of tension in women’s lives because of the reactions they receive for being an “Islamist”. Saktanber notes that the label “Islamist” that has connotations of ignorance in secular public opinion

is harshly rejected by these women defining themselves only as “conscious Muslims” who put not only practical but also intellectual effort in living Islam. This is new way of identification, which is also mentioned by Raudvere (2002) about the women of Gönenli Mehmet Efendi Endowment, that differentiates them from secular Muslims and other who have a weaker knowledge of Islam. In these narratives “true Islam” is seen as the only key to women’s emancipation and happiness, a point also stressed in the studies by Hülya Demir (1998) and Aynur İlyasoğlu (1994). Thus Western-oriented theories of feminism do not find supporters among them. Yet women’s rights in Islam and feminism emerge as frequently discussed issues in their intellectual and religious meetings. This is because they compare the status of women in Islam with other ideologies. For instance, they believe that Islam gives women the right to choose between working outside and staying at home, in contrast to Western feminism that sees emancipation of women in achievement of economic independence. However, they argue that this is not only inconsistent with women’s nature but also turns them into sexual objects. They stress that when a Muslim women complies with the rules of sexual segregation and veiling, it is not to obey men but God, who knows the best for humans. Men are not regarded as superior to women since “superiority could only be obtained by *taqwa* (*takva*, piety) that is, by getting closer to God through worship and being always conscientious in the application of His rules” (p. 220). Moreover women are believed to be source of life and thus it is men’s duty to protect their women. At this point of analysis Saktanber restates her response in her article “Becoming the Other as a Muslim in Turkey”:

Thus, this discourse, like any other, had some blind spots. It could not, for example, explain polygyny, nor could it deal with the ‘right’ of husbands to punish their wives by beating them ‘even softly’, and to control their physical movements and the circumstances under which they might receive visitors. When pressed to answer, Muslim women immediately resorted to ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’, always bringing up the conditions under which such controls could become necessary (p. 222).

These women who at the same time disapprove violence against women, defend monogamy, and believe in gender equality, may not be considered as empowered and emancipated from a feminist perspective. Moreover, their seclusion to private space may not always be their preference but may be a result of the lower level of

formal education, which may also be a discouraging factor in seeking the ways to challenge the official and unofficial restrictions to their participation to work life. Indeed, some excerpts indicate that some women with higher level of education are more supportive to women's public participation and do not refrain from challenging the male authority. Mothers want their daughters to receive a better education than they had. In this sense, the Muslim women in the research group can be regarded as neither homogenous in their attitudes to women's public participation nor submissive to patriarchal interpretations of Islam.

Throughout the book Saktanber maintains her feminist standpoint that she declares as:

as a sociologist who is deeply concerned about gender inequalities and sees them as some of the most fundamental problems in society to be investigated, without however, essentializing the issue, I have always perceived those women who cover their heads first as women, before becoming conscious of and distracted by their headscarves (pp. xxiv-xxv).

Thus she not only devotes many sections to contextualize her study but also pays attention to give voice to the women and this attitude makes the study significantly reflexive and multivocal. Together with the manifest and repeated stress on their agency, we cannot argue that Muslim women are subalterns in *Living Islam*.

*Living Islam* shares some critical points with *The Book and the Roses*. In both studies seclusion works as an enhancing factor in developing a sense of community and generates an environment for self-realization of Muslim women where they are agents of creating a culture of living Islam as conscious Muslims. The boundaries between public and private is blurred in the semi-public spaces, in the *site* in Saktanber's study and in the endowment in Raudvere's study, where private is no longer limited to the domestic space. As I already discussed, the issue visibility has a central role in the agencies of the women in the Gönenli Endowment. It is also important in the agencies of the women in the *site* as they become invisible to the "others" while become visible in their efforts within the community as agents of creating a moral order of Islam in a modern and secular society. Visibility outside the communities in both studies means challenging secularism, which perceives Islamist women, who are more visible than Islamist men with their *tesettür*, as a

threat, an “unintended consequence of Turkish modernization” (Saktanber, 2002b, p.18). However in both studies, women’s efforts stay limited with self-realization within the limits of Islamic rules, they do not aim to challenge or alter the patriarchal practices, norms, and traditions that are justified on religious grounds. The answer to the question how far women’s agency in producing an Islamic lifestyle in obedience to codes of Islamic morality can be considered as empowerment is optimistic for Raudvere. Saktanber’s answer lies in the fact that women have become objects of both Islamic and secular ideologies exerting control over the private sphere, which is mainly organized by women (2002b, pp. 236-237).

### **5. 3. Studies on Veiling/ Headscarf/ Head Covering/ *Tesettür***

The ethnographic discourse on veiling in this period focuses on a wide range of aspects of the subject. It is studied as an essential element of Islamist women’s identity (İlyasoğlu, 1994; Humpreys & Brown, 2002), as an expression of individualism and agency (Genel & Karaosmanoğlu, 2006), as a marker of upward social mobility (White, 1999), as well as a commodity through which Islamist women express their taste, style, individuality and class. Even though each approach may have shortcomings or blind spots, the diversity of way veiling is analysed indicates that the practice is no longer perceived in the academic discourse merely on the axis of oppression and empowerment and a counter-discourse is produced against the Orientalist representations of veiled women as objects of desire.

*Örtülü Kimlik: İslamcı Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşum Öğeleri (Veiled Identity: Elements of the Formation of Islamist Woman’s Identity)* (1994) is a book published in Turkish by Aynur İlyasoğlu. İlyasoğlu is a Turkish scholar who received her PhD at Marmara University in Turkey and the book is the publication of her doctoral thesis study. It is based on the author’s analysis of the literary texts by Islamist authors and her case study in religious neighbourhoods of Istanbul. In-depth interviews with educated and veiled women and participant observations constitute her field research. Observing a simultaneous existence of traditionalism and modernity, she asks how veiled women who are attempting to construct a new identity, re-establish

the definitions and categories that modernity brings along. She argues that for these women veil is a manifestation of the redefinition of the transitivity/ intransitivity between public and private spheres. One of the key concepts of this study is “distinguishing strategies”<sup>18</sup> that İlyasoğlu uses to define the strategies of Islamist women to emphasize their beliefs and distinctiveness while enabling them to participate to the public life. These strategies are also functional in the sense that they enable these women to create their own paths of modernization. She observes three dimensions in veiling or *tesettür*: religious codes, codes of honour, and aesthetic elements.

She begins her analysis with a comparative history of the interplays between woman question, state and reformist ideologies in Egypt, Iran and Turkey. She claims that themes like “ameliorating the condition of women” and “education of women” are the themes that the politically prominent men made use of to transform themselves to modern men through a pro-feminist ideology during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For Turkish republican reforms, she mentions that the legal framework of the woman question were designed by the attempts of men, who were the leading forces of the reforms. Arguing that dress has been a symbol of cultural polarization in Turkey since late Ottoman period, she argues that *tesettür* became a symbol of Islamist distinction in the context of cultural polarization between urban and rural, and modern and traditional.

In her chapter that covers a brief discussion of body and sexuality in Islam, she argues that body is an outcome of the interplays between the self and the identity and then she overviews how body and sexuality is perceived and regulated in Islam. Attributing legitimacy to sexuality only within marriage, Islam requires neutralization of it in the public space. *Ten*, which partially refers to skin and complexion, is the embodiment of sexual instincts, desires and sensitivities and thus the body is the focal point of interactions between *ten* and the self. Veiling or *tesettür* provides a reconciliation at the borders of private and public space between body/*ten* and body/self. Before presenting her case study, İlyasoğlu takes a look at

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<sup>18</sup> In the original text the term is “ayrımlayıcı stratejiler”. It is mostly probable that the word “ayrımlayıcı” is derived by the author from the word “ayrim” which means “distinction” to refer to the specificity of the strategies that aim to create a distinction.

the Islamic womanhood in literary texts. She analyzes two texts by two Islamist authors in the third chapter, suggesting that they reveal an auto portrait of Islamist women, reflect their state of womanhood and how they construct the image of Islamist woman. In the next chapter İlyasoğlu presents her analysis of her fieldwork data. As she explains, her will to know behind this study arises from her need of knowing better the veiled women, who are culturally and ideologically distant even though they live in the same society. This way, she positions herself as an outsider to this group. The study takes place in several districts of Anatolian side of Istanbul which she was not familiar with and which are known to be prevalently conservative. She conducts in-depth interviews with a questionnaire to frame the interview with 21 veiled women, two of which filled the questionnaire in written form. She makes observations in the field as well. Lastly, İlyasoğlu explains the logic of mediation between public and private spaces. She differentiates between modern women and Islamist women suggesting that private space is expected to change as modern woman participates to public life whereas private space expands to public space when Islamist woman steps into the latter one and veiling or *tesettür* emerges as the symbol of mediation between these spaces. The notion of public morality, which is one of the central issues for Islamist movement is also incorporated to this mediation.

With this study, Aynur İlyasoğlu draws a portrait of the veiled women through examining their interactions with modernity. The book is a contribution to the knowledge produced on the new group of Muslim women in terms of the experiences and thoughts of this groups that it reflects. To some extent it fulfils its aim which is to draw attention to the inapplicability of the binarism attached to the categories of modern and traditional in the case of middle-class, veiled women in Istanbul. On the other hand, the book's arguments which bear postcolonial feminist influences evident in her stress on the agency of the women in *tesettür*, have several shortcomings. As I will illustrate below, with its overemphasis on veiling, the study falls into the traps of essentialism. Besides, she reproduces the discursive formations that construct secular and Islamist woman as opposing identities.

One of the major shortcomings can be noticed in the chapter titled “Cinsellik ve Beden Üzerine” (“On Sexuality and Body”), which dwells upon the link between sexuality, body and veiling of women. The link has two important implications. Firstly, it constructs the female body as a sexual object that needs to be controlled and covered with *tesettür*. Even though the concept of *ten* applies to both male and female body, it is the latter that has to be fully covered according to Islamic principles. İlyasoğlu explains this inequality between the sexes by stating that “Determining the covering of female body by the rules is related to perceiving it as a sensitive being up to every cell of its physical existence” (p. 67). This statement reproduces the arguments of Carol Delaney about covering that I have discussed in my analysis of *The Seed and the Soil* (1991). Secondly, defining women’s identity on the basis of its social relations and interactions through the dress code it adopts is a rather limited and unitary approach that can lead to suggesting simplistic categorizations of veiled and open women. Additionally, also women’s subjectivities are defined by İlyasoğlu on the basis of their decisions to veil, which actually initiate the discussions on issue of the modern/traditional dichotomy.

The chapter on her literary analysis is constituted by her review of two literary books by well-known Islamist women writers. The first novel *Müslüman Kadının Adı Var*<sup>19</sup> is by Şerife Katırcı. It is the story of a young woman, Dilara, who successfully graduates from faculty of medicine, chooses an Islamic way of life and *tesettür* during her summer break in her hometown in Anatolia, leaves aside the material, worldly concerns and follows a spiritual and intellectual path. She falls in love with a teacher who is the first inspiration of her choice and meets him by chance in Mecca, when she was sent there by the hospital that she works. She marries him in Mecca as if it is a divine gift for her devotion. İlyasoğlu points out some similarities between Dilara and Feride, the protagonist of an early republican novel *Çalikuşu* by Reşat Nuri Güntekin. In this novel Feride, who is a young teacher, travels to Anatolia to spread the republican ideals. Both Feride and Dilara are educated women who walk independently in their career paths. İlyasoğlu underlines that Dilara owes this aspect of her womanhood to the education reforms

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<sup>19</sup> The title of the book which means *Muslim Woman Has a Name*, evokes the title of the popular feminist Turkish novel by Duygu Asena, *Kadının Adı Yok* (*Woman Does not Have a Name*), which was a best-seller in Turkey.

of the republic. She observes a social feminist standpoint in both novels. İlyasoğlu observes at the same time a distinctive femininity in the case of women who chooses an Islamic way of life, a femininity that is hidden and obscured in their inner worlds. As discussed in the previous chapter, references to a hidden femininity under the veil of the Muslim woman can be considered as a fantasy of the Western gaze (Saktanber, 2006, Yeğenoğlu, 2003). In this literary text where there are only minor signs of feminine attitudes of Dilara, yet, depending also on some (!) statements of her respondents, İlyasoğlu infers that women with Islamist tendencies perceive femininity as part of their private lives in contrast to its manifestations in public space. The association of private life and expressions of femininity is very much in line with the Orientalist discourse. The encounter between Dilara and her secularist professor at the faculty is another critical point of the novel for İlyasoğlu. The over-feminine style of Dilara before *tesettür* and later her veil are both despised by the woman professor who stands out as the symbol of the ideal republican woman who is modest and virtuous yet educated, elite and modern. İlyasoğlu states that seemingly the professor has a “measure of being honourable”, which is “neither *tesettür* nor freely exposing the body” (p.77). In this analysis, she both highlights the dichotomy between the Islamist/ pious and modern/secularist women of Turkish Republic that is commonly discussed in studies on gender and religion in Turkey and indicates that there is a point that they meet, which is objecting the expression of sexuality in public life. About these two woman characters of the novel, it should also be noted that the depth of analysis dedicated to Dilara is denied to the professor. The professor is merely a stereotypical “other” in the novel and this representation is not noticed by İlyasoğlu. In conclusion, İlyasoğlu leaves her analysis of this text with a question mark, stating that we do not know what happens after Dilara and her husband make up a family. She seeks for the answer firstly in her analysis of the texts by Cihan Aktaş and then in her case study.

The two stories titled “Üç İhtilal Çocuğu” (“Child of Three Revolutions”) and “Teşekkürü Hakettiniz Bay Yargıcı” (“You Deserved Thanks Mr Judge”) by Cihan Aktaş are about the disappointments of Islamist women with their marriages. Their beliefs in marriage as an institution in which they would pursue an Islamic life are

shattered as their husbands' worldly concerns and Westernized habits emerge. The women, who were active defendants of Islamism during their university years and who challenged traditional gender roles become housewives and mothers after marriage lose their voices, and return to Islam to find solace. İlyasoğlu suggests that their radical identities within the Islamist movement before marriage are imprisoned and fading out, and the radicalism of their husbands are limited only to politics and public life. While men easily adopt to modern life, women demand the voice that they have lost. İlyasoğlu notes "In the final parts of stories the women are depicted as silent and idle, to find their voices, once more, they turn towards their beliefs, because it is the belief which gave them the necessary voice to defend themselves once upon a time" (p.86). She associates the demands of voice in the stories with Western feminism, particularly American feminism, however it is also one of core concerns of postcolonial feminism that seeks to make the voices of the women in the non-Western world heard without breaking free from their religious identities. Thus it is interesting that İlyasoğlu acknowledges the importance of adherence to Islamic belief in creating them a space of existence without relating it to the abundance of discussions on this issue in feminist postcolonial theory and Middle East women's studies.

In her endeavour to know better the Turkish women in *tesettür* and overcome the distance she has with them, she makes interviews and observations in Istanbul's dominantly Islamist neighbourhoods like Fatih, Şehzadebaşı, and Cerrahpaşa. She states that in selecting her research group the question of to what degree the ideal types of "traditional woman" and "modern woman" corresponds to reality has been determining. In this bipolar typology where veiled women fitted into the category of traditional, paid work was suggested to be an indicator of modernism. Aiming to blur this categorization, İlyasoğlu selects her group of respondents from working women. The characteristics of the research group; urban, working, veiled, and modern are also seen in many other studies of this discursive period. As she also mentions, it is consistent with Göle's (1991) arguments that women adopting an Islamic way of life is an urban phenomenon. Furthermore, this study displays the tendency that the decision to veil is taken while pursuing university education, in

the social environment of the university. İlyasoğlu suggests that it is another fact that blurs the dividing lines between modern and traditional.

The women in the research group are the first generation of university graduates and paid workers in their families meaning that they indicate a radical break in gender roles compared to previous generations. Their mothers are primary school graduates and have no work experiences. Accordingly, as İlyasoğlu states, we can think that while determining the limits of a new identity of being an educated, working and veiled woman they have a comparatively loosely defined area of mobility. The support of the mothers in their education and career is also noteworthy to mention in the sense that it challenges traditional gender role models. In the next section İlyasoğlu presents some accounts about the problems that her respondents encountered about being veiled in their work lives. She argues that being harshly excluded from public sector, these women continued their careers in a closed religious social environment and this leads firstly to isolation from the rest of the society and secondly to strengthening their Islamist identity. Accordingly, we can argue that while the decision to veil, studying at university, and working are presented as the factors that enhance the agency of the Muslim women in the study, their self-actualization is limited by the dominantly secular social environment.

When it comes to their husbands and marriages, majority of the respondents state that they met their husbands during university years, at work or within a group of friends, and that their husbands share household responsibilities. Resting on this information İlyasoğlu suggests that the categorical judgements about “enslavement of women in Islamic marriages” should be open to discussion. Moreover, women in the research group state that their husbands are university graduates, work in high status jobs for the state or private sector or are self-employed. She concludes that these couples make up an elite group and this supports the arguments that the new Islamist elite is no longer solely at the margins of the society. Though her definition of elite needs clarification, this is one of the circulated discursive formations that circulate in the knowledge about the new Islamist identity. As I have discussed above, Jenny White (2002) develops the idea and suggests that Islamist elite

identity spreads from the economic elites of upper classes to the lower classes through adopting *tesettür* and acquiring Islamic knowledge.

It is understood from the conclusions in the section about work life that being veiled is a major factor in making decisions about work for the women in the research group. Half of the respondents have professional jobs and most of them work in the workplaces that allow veiling and only a minority of them (civil servants) unveil at their workplaces. When their motivations behind having a professional job and paid work is asked, they highlight altruistic aspects of working, such as being helpful for the society and helping people. At the same time they aim to show progress in their careers. For İlyasoğlu, this explanation seems like a reconciliation or a continuity between conditions of the modern life and Islamist world view about women. They not only demand a status in public life but also they differentiate their identity from other modern working women with the meanings they attribute to work. This argument of İlyasoğlu reproduces the cultural and discursive othering between the veiled and secular women. Assuming that the so called “modern” working woman only works for material aims is a totalizing way of thinking. Such an inference underestimates the possibility that “other” working woman can have idealistic motivations for work. For a study that aims to question the binarism and essentialism in the use of the categories of traditional and modern, this is a shortcoming in the analysis. While examining the various aspects of the new Islamist identity, the rest of the society is perceived through a superficial and holistic approach. This gap prevents the study to reflect the continuities and meeting points between the categories of modern and traditional.

We learn that half of the respondents decided to veil during their university education in the years 1980 and 1981. As she describes, these years correspond to the military regime in Turkey which had a sterilization project against rightwing and leftwing movements together with a support to Islamism. Meeting other veiled students emerges as the second important factor. As previously discussed, tendency of Islamist veiling is specific to cities. İlyasoğlu also explains that about the reason behind this tendency, women mostly mention wrongdoings in the society, the peace that comes along with belief and the limitations of a materialistic world view. To

conclude the chapter, she refers to the case study of Arlene Elowe Macleod on a group of veiled lower-middle class working women in Egypt in 1983-84, arguing that focusing on the role of veiling both as a sign of protest and association with the traditional patriarchal gender roles Macleod fails to mention its role in struggle against the hegemony. I think that Kibria's critique of Macleod's study is relevant to mention here. She states "While Macleod focuses on the women's ideological need to affirm their traditional gender identities, studies of conservative women's movements around the world suggest that it is often the economic attractions of the patriarchal family system that lead women to forms of protest that are traditional in character" (Kibria, 1994, p. 254). It is also evident that İlyasoğlu as well fails to contextualize the rise of Islamism in the universities during the 1980s. It is not clear why 1980s was a suitable environment for the flourishing of an Islamist identity, which was non-existent in the previous generations, why specifically Islamism but not any other political thought or ideology was seen as the remedy for the women who started veiling in their university years. The major question seems to be why the military regime had been a conducive political environment for Islamism. This question seems to be widely ignored, omitted or silenced in this discursive period. The story of the emergence of the new Islamist identity is never complete without searching for this answer. As discussed in the first chapter, Nancy Lindisfarne (2008) suggests that the answer should be searched by taking the role of American imperialism into account. The capitalist/Orientalist paradigm that is articulated to American imperialism works for naturalizing the hierarchy between the First and Third World, associating femininity with the East and "superstition, tradition and primitiveness with Islam" (2008, p. 28). Turkey's NATO membership and Turkish army's close relations with the US are major factors that should not be underestimated in the analysis of the rise of Islamist movements in Turkey. Lindisfarne connects these pieces on the basis of class inequalities and argues that veiling is not only a means of a protest against American imperialism, Western middle-class values and feminism, modernization project of the Turkish state but also defend certain patriarchal aspects of Islam. She rightfully claims that this perspective turns the attention away from all other social inequalities. Another perspective can be that American imperialism that supports the rise of Islamism in the Middle East and this leads to an association of religion and traditionalism with

this region and justifies and naturalizes the hierarchy between the first and Third World. Thus a certain way of analysing gender and religion in the Middle East is imposed upon social sciences.

She argues that the new Islamist identity functions as a shield that protects the self, socially and culturally. Signifying a body closed in itself, the woman in *tesettür* at the same time differentiates a new identity simultaneously from men and women, West/ modernism and locality/Islamism. Giving references to Cihan Aktaş as well, she concludes that Islamist women strive to create a place for themselves in public life while preserving their Islamist beliefs and create their own versions of modernity while stepping out of the traditional gender roles defined by patriarchal domination. As Saktanber argues, the identity of the veiled women is studied “as something to be compared and contrasted with assumed identity of modern Turkish women in general, and Kemalist women in particular” (2002b, pp. 52-53). I believe that this way of representation of Muslim women, which is also manifest in *İslamci Kadının Aynadaki Sureti*, reproduces in an essentialist way the discourses that construct Islamist and secular identities as the ultimate others. Last, but by no means the least, it neglects the question of to what extent Kemalism was successful in delivering its promises to women (Acar, 1990, 1991 cited in Saktanber p. 53). It takes secular modern Turkish women’s identity as an unquestionably liberated identity which is a very problematic assumption (Kandiyoti, 1987).

Another study that particularly focuses on the constitutive role of dress in formation of identities is by Michael Humphreys and Andrew D. Brown (2002). Their article “Dress and Identity: A Turkish Case Study” is based on authors ethnographic study at an all-female department of vocational school of a university in Ankara between February 1995 and May 1996. Their aim of research is to draw attention to the question “How is dress linked to contests regarding group and organization identity?” in management studies and attempts to understand “how people come to understand and attribute meaning to their work organizations” in identity narratives (pp. 927-928). Thus at this study we encounter an academic perspective different from sociology and political sciences, but I take it as a part of the discourse on

women and Islam in Turkey because it explores the meanings of headscarf as a political symbol and instrument.

After briefly reviewing the literature on the role of discursive power on individual identities, narrative identity, the pluralistic nature of organizational identity, the role of dress as an expression and symbol of identity, and meanings attributed to headscarf, they reveal their standpoint.

The headscarf is, of itself, neither liberating nor oppressive, and that the power relations with which it is associated are situated not only in the meaning with which it is invested but also in the circumstances under which it is worn. (Franks, 2000, p. 918 cited in Humphreys & Brown, 2002, p. 931).

Their research methods are composed of semi-structured and formal interviews and informal conversations with students, formal faculty members and administrative staff, observations, and reviewing a wide range of documents and texts including web pages, letters, memos, scholarly articles, magazines and newspapers. Considering their status, which they express as Western, English, male, Christian researchers in a context of cross-cultural ethnography at an all female faculty in a secular Muslim country, the dynamics of othering, cultural distance, and the power relations between the ethnographer and the informants become even more critical in their study. They also mention “the need for critical self-reflexivity” and “producing ‘thick description’” as elements of their methodological approach (Geertz, 1973, cited in Humphreys & Brown, 2002, p. 933).

In the *Prolegomena* section they aim to present a concise information about the history of the headscarf issue in Turkey starting from early republican years where they wrongly state that veil was banned by Atatürk with the so-called 1925 Hat Laws, which were actually only about adoption of hat for men and did not address women's attire (p. 934). Mentioning the headscarf ban for the state officers and the university students in the 1980s and 1990s together with the rise of Islamism, they state that their respondents wanted their narratives to be understood in this context. The following section, which is the identity narrative of the faculty, is based on the accounts of the faculty staff who narrate the story of the vocational school, “which was founded in 1934 in order to ‘train women according to the principles of

Atatürk' and to instill in our students 'patriotism and national ethics' (40th Anniversary Prospectus, 1974)" (p. 936). According to the narratives, this founding principle of the institution, which was administered by a director appointed by Ministry of Education, had been central to its identity until it was connected to Hera University<sup>20</sup> and thus was subject to YÖK. The student profile started to change as the selection procedure was replaced with central university examination, so students from lower classes, having a lower level success compared to the previous high profile ones were able to and did enrol to the faculty and some of these new students were veiled. The academic staff who define themselves as secularist and Kemalist were utterly disappointed with this change, and fear that Islamism will ultimately change the identity of the institution.

In Ankara when I was a student, we were like models for the rest of the people, but today the school is full of people wearing scarves. The mentality has changed and we are going backwards and the fundamentalists are now getting a hold on training and education in Turkey. (Art Professor) (p. 937)

While we acknowledge that 'It's what is in the head that counts not what is on the head' (ex-student and ex-member of staff), we nevertheless see the wearing of headscarves as an affront to Atatürk: 'He Atatürk] was the *true* prophet – but we are not allowed to talk like that any more' (Head of Textiles). (p. 938)

Humphreys and Brown discuss this narrative in the next section and examine the influence of the existence of oppositional identities on the identity of the organization, in particular the co-existence of Kemalist and Islamist identities in the faculty.

Certainly I am not in a position to review the article in the field of managerial sciences. However there are very critical points to be raised, since it also produces knowledge related to women and Islam in Turkey. First of all, it is striking to see that there are very limited references to Turkish scholars both in the discussion of the political background of the issue and the analyses regarding Kemalist and Islamist identities. They ignore a vast range of publications and considering their Western identities, this results in their failure to overcome their distance to the research subject. Secondly they represent Kemalist and Islamist identities at the

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<sup>20</sup> It is a pseudo name.

faculty with very sharp distinctions and take them as homogenous and essential categories. They put too much stress on their oppositional character and fail to see their interactions and potentials of change. Finally, and most importantly, we do not hear the voices of the students, particularly veiled students who are otherised both by the faculty staff and the authors of the article. They are completely silenced; we do not hear their stories, experiences, feelings about studying at a Kemalist institution and about having to deal with changing policies regarding headscarf. We only hear their stories through the observations and experiences of the staff. They are represented not as agents but as intruders to the organizational identity. Moreover, according to this extremely simplistic representation that turns the veiled students to subalterns, it seems like being veiled is the sole determining factor, the only component in their Islamist identity.

Humphreys' and Brown's study reproduces the commonest binary oppositions of Orientalism. The opposition between modernity and progress associated with Kemalism and traditionalism and backwardness associated with Islamism is not only manifest in the narratives of the faculty staff but also in the discursive formations of the article. It seems that the authors' references to poststructuralist and postcolonial approaches in field studies were replaced by a Eurocentric attitude towards Islam in the way they analyse their own field.

Yael Navaro-Yashin's (2003) article "The Market for Identities: Secularism, Islamism, Commodities" which is published as a chapter in *Fragments of Culture* addresses the subject of Islamist identity and veiling from the point of view of consumerism. Navaro-Yashin was born in Istanbul and received her BA in sociology from Brandeis University (1991) and PhD in anthropology from Princeton University (1998) in the US. The study is an "ethnography of consumerism and contemporary politics of culture" that questions the binarism that associates Islamist lifestyle with culture and secularist/Westernist lifestyle with consumption (p. 221). She examines manufacture of the veil and portrait of Atatürk as means to express and construct Islamist and secularist/Westernist identities respectively based on her fieldwork that she conducted in Istanbul "in the Islamist veiling sector, in marketplaces for religious commodities, in public centres for the

manifestation of politics of identity, and among secularists” in mid-1990s (p. 222). Arguing that Islamist and secularist cultures had already involved commodification of their symbols, she brings to light the politics of culture that is transformed into “a war over symbols” (p. 223).

Navaro-Yashin explains the Özal period of the 1980s as the economic and political background of commodification of identities while the economy was fuelled with privatization, opening up to foreign companies, and development of a free market. Both secular and Islamist businessmen benefited from these developments but the expansion and success of this latter group which were composed of smaller companies from Anatolia was rapid and striking. Thus consumer culture of Islamism too could find commodities to meet every need and taste of the “Muslims” in these companies. She notes that it was during the rise of Islamism and these economic developments that the market for *tesettür* attire was created and the *tesettür* companies offering veils and overcoats with fashionable designs were founded. Their style became soon fashionable among covered students and working women and the brands started to be compared according to their qualities and styles.

On the other front of the market war, Navaro-Yashin presents “secularist commodities” (p. 228). She describes the leading secular clothing companies of Turkey as companies that compete with European brands. In the mid-1990s the companies began to express their identity as producing a secular and modern lifestyle and as followers of Atatürk’s vision and values. Another group of commodities that took part a leading role in the war was Atatürk paraphernalia which was released following the election victory of RP in 1994 and received a significant demand from Atatürkist people, especially from private sector. Navaro-Yashin argues that “As new goods were put on the market by companies trying to lure their customers towards innovation, new forms of ‘being’ or ‘identity’ were shaped as well. Business began to craft and sell ‘Turkish authenticity’ whether secularist or Islamist” (p. 230).

After describing the first shopping malls of Istanbul, which were opened in the 1980s and early 1990s and presented themselves as the modern, Western, European,

Atatürkist spaces of shopping, and mentioning the Islamist reactions to the malls' upper-class consumerist culture, she depicts the department store of one of the biggest Islamist clothing brands, *Tekbir*.<sup>21</sup> As indications of her reflexive and multivocal methodology she presents long quotes from her interview with its owner about the company and his views about veiling and his customers, and then shares her impressions and analysis of the fashion show of the brand in which famous, secular, Westernist Turkish models took stage and the symbols of authenticity, modernity, modesty, and femininity juxtaposed. To conclude the chapter, Navaro-Yashin repeats her arguments that the secularists and Islamists are involved in the same market of capitalist consumption and the contemporary identity politics is evolved in this market context which is connected to the international market economy. She also underlines the fact that Islamists are as effective actors as secularists in this market.

"The Market for Identities: Secularism, Islamism, Commodities" is a study that offers a significant depth of analysis to the relationship between consumerism and formation of political identities. The way it problematizes the deep-seated binarism in the analysis of Islamism and secularism by perceiving Islamism as an identity isolated from modernity and globalization is skilfully supported with evidences from the field. It should be considered as a reference work on the subject of veiling, fashion, and Islamism.

Navaro-Yashin's study shows that the alterity of the Islamist identity vanishes in the world of consumption. Fashion and design mediates an Islamic practice to the commodified symbolism of the market economy. The Islamist women's identity is not represented as an essential "other" but as an identity sharing similar aspirations, like the desire to look elegant and fashionable, with the secularist/Westernist identity. In this sense it presents an alternative argument against the studies that bring the fundamental role of othering that shape Islamist women's identities and emphasize the polarization between Islamists and their others. According to this representation, consumption patterns and lifestyle become an essential factor in the

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<sup>21</sup> Navaro-Yashin explains *tekbir* as "the Islamic word for a call to cry 'God is great' (*Allahüekber*). *Tekbir* precedes the call to prayer (the *ezan*) and the performance of the *namaz*" (p. 234).

subjectivity of the Islamist women, just like it is in the subjectivity of the secularist/Westernist women. Moreover capacity to consume becomes a marker of agency. Though I agree with Navaro-Yashin that global consumer culture has had a remarkable role and impact in the 1980s and 1990s, which is also noted by Baumann (1999), I do not think that it can be an all-encompassing explanation of formation of Islamist women's identity. However, it is important that the focal point of this study indicates the formation of a discursive framework in the representation of Muslim women, a framework that directs attention away from the references to faith and politics to the material world of consumption as a marker of identity. One major shortcoming of focusing on the symbolism of consumption is trivializing its implications for gender equality. It should not be ignored that the relation between consumption and identity is mostly about the distinctiveness of women's identities; it does not play the same determining and distinctive role in men's identities. Besides, the study does not address the point that unlike the veil, Atatürk's paraphernalia are not gender specific. Therefore I believe that women are represented as more subject to the currents directed by the global market economy, and Islamist women's identity is represented as even more vulnerable.

Jenny B. White's another book chapter based her fieldwork in Istanbul, Ümraniye is "Islamic Chic" published in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local* (1999) edited by Çağlar Keyder. The chapter begins with a scene in 1987 on a bus in which three girls in *tesettür* talking about a TV serial about War of Independence on Turkey and stating that their favourite scenes were the ones with horses and Ottoman tents. White notes that besides exalting Atatürk's deeds, the series included references to Islam, which was an unusual thing to see in on state television until the 1980s not to challenge the republican values. She also notes that on the other hand Islam was always in the daily lives of Turkish people.

This introduction is followed by short background information about secularisation reforms of Turkey and the historical process that gave way to the rise of Islamism. She explains that after the 1980 military coup, which was the third after 1960 and 1971 coups, Islam was supported by the military and afterwards by the Özal

government “as a coherent mold to shape society away from feared socialist and communist designs” (p. 78) and also “as an alternative to Kurdish separatism” (p. 79). At the same time Turkish economy was opened to the world market and this development led to income inequalities and domestic migration to big cities, particularly Istanbul, “the Turkish gateway to the world” (p.79). Creation of wealth brought along aspirations of many for upward mobility, the aspirations and hopes that pass through the path of faith expressed with Islamic symbols like Islamic dress. White argues that the political and economic power of Islamist circles made Islamism respectable and Islamic symbols chic.

It is in this context that *tesettür* fashion emerged and Islamic chic “spilled to the streets” (p. 80). White underlines the heterogeneity of Islamism or political Islam, its followers, symbols and values and also state that not all bearers of the symbols have political orientation to the Islamist political party, RP. Comparing two weddings in Ümraniye, one in a mosque hall and the other at a restaurant, she illustrates her argument that the covering styles of women depends very much on economic conditions and wearing *tesettür* does not necessarily denote support to the RP and sometimes it is adopted as an urban version of rural traditional clothing style. On the other hand there is a group of Muslim elites who “want to make an impression” and “to recapture the fashion belonging to the upper classes” as they socialize in modern daily life.

Next, White describes and contrasts the attitudes of civil society activities of a secularist NGO, Association for the Promotion of Modern Living (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Vakfı*) and Islamist civil society groups. While the agenda of the former is dominated by defending the secularist lifestyle, the latter is described by White as having “a counterelite and a counterculture”; being much more mobilized and active; occupying central positions at the state, economy, and media; giving priority to face to face interaction with potential supporters, particularly the lower class neighbourhoods in big cities. (p. 87). Considering the new urban classes she states “They are people who until recently had been at the margins of a nation dominated by secularist elites. They have a desire, as much as these elites, to participate in the material welfare of a modern nation” (p.88). In the last section, she recounts the

story of the changing lifestyle of a lower-class family from a formerly squatter neighbourhood of Istanbul as they achieve a relatively better economic status. The two daughters of the family, which used to be modest and traditional but not too religious, choose the two diverse paths of modernization and upward social mobility in Istanbul. The one, who resisted an arranged marriage and eloped but ended up in a traditional marriage, adopts a modern and “open” style of dress while her sister adopts *tesettür*.

In White’s study the concepts of power, social mobility, social class, consumption, and desire come to the fore in a social context constantly in transformation due to the currents of migration, urbanization, dynamics of civil society, and market economy. The agencies and subjectivities of the women in *tesettür* are shaped by the simultaneous effects of all these factors which constitute a way too complicated explanation than the stereotype of veiled Islamist woman whose sole motive is supporting political Islam. In White’s examples from the field we see that for the Muslim women who are at the margins of the society, upward social mobility is expressed with *tesettür* and economic prosperity is expressed with a better quality and fashionable scarf and other attire - despite the critical attitudes of the intellectual elites of Islamism. This tendency is explained by White with the “new era of Islamic respectability” that is the outcome of the economic, social, and political achievements of the Islamist groups (p. 80). Thus women who become Islamic chic, seem to have a higher status and more economic power. Accordingly while their subjectivities are changed by social mobility, their agencies are led by desire to achieve a better life. White also notes that through civil societal groups “Islamists women have also become mobilized. Taking part in Islamist activities has allowed religious women of lower classes to attend university and to become upwardly mobile and politically active” (p. 87). However White does not mention here, though later she did in her article “The Islamist Paradox” (2002), that in many cases this mobilization is controlled by men or at least cannot fully challenge the traditional gender roles imposed on women by the Islamist discourse. For instance in the case of women’s activism in the RP before its election success in 1994, women’s mobilization did not result in higher positions in the party politics for women because the male members of RP believed that a woman’s primary role was

in the private sphere. We also do not know whether adopting *tesettür* brings more social control upon women in spite of achieving a higher status.

White perceives Islamism as a modern ideology, whether it is political, social or personal. Therefore she does not associate it with traditionalism and she neither has an essentialist perspective about it. On the contrary she states “The Islamists are actively engaged in formulating Islamic thought, sometimes with reference to Western literature and thought, to fit modern problems. Many are active seekers of an alternative Islamic road to modernity” (p. 80). This is another example of the statements about Islamism’s alternative modernity that are in circulation in this discursive period. Seeing it as an alternative, as a “counter” movement discursively locates it at the margin of the society which also characterizes the knowledge on women and Islam in this period.

About Islamic consumption culture and veiling “Aesthetics, Ethics, and Politics of the Turkish Headscarf” by Özlem Sandıkçı and Gülistan Ger (2005) provides one of the most detailed accounts. The perspective of Turkish scholars Sandıkçı and Ger is rather different from the other studies dealing with *tesettür* as both scholars are from the field of marketing. Özlem Sandıkçı received her BA at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, MBA at Birmingham University, UK and her PhD at Pennsylvania State University in United States. Gülistan Ger received MBA at METU and PhD at Northwestern University in US. Their paper that focuses on the practice on head covering and reveals its dynamics of fashion, taste, and aesthetics suggests that a solely political and symbolic approach to headscarf neglects the material and aesthetic aspects embodied in the practice and “the struggle between remaining faithful to the Koranic principles on religiously appropriate dressing and constructing a fashionable, beautiful and modern appearance” (p. 61). Because of this specific focus, the paper should be considered as part of the discursive formation on women, Islam, and consumerism in this period.

Like the several other authors analysed in this period, they too mention the neo-liberal Özal period as a turning point in political Islam and intensification of the polarisation between secularists and Islamists. In line with the other descriptions of

the “new” identity of the Islamist women, they state “It was primarily the young, urban and educated women who wore the *türban* (a large scarf that tightly covers the head, ears, the neck and the bosom)” and explain that 1990s were years that “an Islamist bourgeoisie with a taste for conspicuous consumption began to emerge” (p. 62). The diversity of clothes started to be offered in the market for Islamist women and in addition to its political symbolism, *türban* became “an object of material culture, subject to various consumption and production dynamics” (p. 62). The ethnographic study of Sandıkçı and Ger on the relationship between head covering practices, faith and fashion is shaped by these concerns. They define their informants as “middle and upper-middle-class, urban, educated Islamist women covered by their own will, who exhibit, and sometimes openly admit, their interest in fashion and being fashionable” (p. 63). Their data collection involves in-depth interviews in Ankara and Istanbul, interviews at Islamist clothing shops and observations in fashion shows, hotels and other spaces that Islamist women attend, photographs that taken by the authors in addition to the pictures they included from printed media. The variety of their field methods that are used in this study, enable the authors to provide a detailed account of the urban practice of veiling.

It is significant that they quote passages from Koran that are related to the appropriate behaviours, including clothing and exhibit that the essential principle on this subject is modesty. The passages are useful for they allow the reader to have a point of reference about the faith dimension of the practice and draw attention to the gap between what Islam orders and how it is interpreted and realized. However, unlike the studies in the first discursive period, they are not taken as references to explain the status of modern veiled women. On the contrary, the study illustrates the inappropriateness and insufficiency of essentialist readings of Islamic principles to understand its contemporary rites and practices. Sandıkçı and Ger note that even though the principle applies for both men and women, it is particularly women’s dress at stake because they have a higher possibility of arousing desire in men. Besides, they also illustrate that there is consensus neither about the particular codes and rules of modesty nor about the practices of *tesettür*. Thus, the authors underline the fact that *tesettür* has become a matter of individual choice and interpretation shaped by “a creative and resourceful negotiation of the subjective meanings, social

influences and the fashion dynamics” (p. 66). This point of view works to challenge the essentialist interpretations of veiling and integrates a multi-dimensional analysis to the knowledge on veiling practices. It also describes the influences that shape women’s subjectivities. In the following sections the authors explore the details of fashion design and styles of headscarves and major social influences like the headscarf style of the first lady or a style seen on a popular TV series, with the accounts of veiled women and shopkeepers of the *tesettür* shops. According to the accounts, for a veiled women the efforts of being faithful and fashionable starts with selecting the right scarf that suits their face and clothes and continues with acquiring the ability to tie it in a “*düzgün* (straight, shapely, smooth, rounded and symmetrical)” (p. 73) way and take care of it correctly. Considering all these efforts, Sandıkçı and Ger find it paradoxical that the work of covering the hair has come to resemble the hair grooming rituals that McCracken describes (McCracken, 1988, cited in Sandıkçı and Ger, 2005, p. 75). Another paradox that they mention is that while Islam does not approve wastefulness and luxury, the practice of head covering has turned into a completely opposing reality as the informants of the study admit that they have tens of headscarves and can pay higher prices for certain brands. All the effort and expenditure is justified on the ground that Islam wanted its believers “to be clean, well groomed and pleasant looking” (p.76). This is the third point that the paper exhibits the significant gap between the social reality and the Islamic principles.

With their analysis of the practice of head covering they suggest that there are spaces in which fashion and Islam coexist in complicated, heterogeneous, and unstable ways. Taking fashion as a modern phenomenon, they argue that the headscarf becomes an object that not only shatters the “linear and structural reading of the relationship between Western fashion and modernity” but also makes the veiled women “subjects as well as objects of modernization” (p. 78). Sandıkçı and Ger also restate the widely circulated argument that while veiling gives a sense of empowerment to the ones who adopted it as an individual choice, it perpetuates too the argument that women are sources of temptation and thus must be veiled. The authors rightly point to the fact that the male control over women’s bodies and autonomy is not specific to Islam but also prevalent in fashion. Thus I think that the

limits of women's agencies are drawn by their efforts to have a pleasant outlook that also expresses faithfulness to Islamic principles and the market forces of modernity that make certain commodities desirable to achieve this outlook. It is important that the authors do not underestimate the androcentric nature of these limits while also attributing an agency to women through their power of negotiation:

What happens initially as a contradiction emerges as a creative and skilful negotiation of the principles of Islam and the ideals of beauty and fashion. Paradoxically, the headscarf offers women possibilities as well as limitations in constructing a modern identity. (p. 80)

The researches that analyse veiling and *tesettür* as a field of consumption constitute a significant line of discourse and argumentation within the Middle Eastern women's studies and particularly within the ethnographic discourse on women and Islam in Turkey. They reproduce and develop the arguments in the Middle Eastern women's studies in this period that veiling is a modern, contemporary and urban phenomenon and a conscious and individual choice which is not traditionally oppressive but liberatory (Göle, 1996). However, these studies tend to undermine the role of Islamic fundamentalism that preserve the divinely limits of gender roles (Ahmed, 2005) and thus smooth the oppressiveness of fundamentalism (Moghissi, 1999) by discussing veiling as a consumption culture. Secondly, as I already argued, they also tend to undermine the fact that Islamist women are objectified as capitalism and fashion industry become entangled with Islamic market. Lastly, particularly with respect to the ethnographic work of Sandıkçı and Ger, there is a need to address how producing knowledge about culture has become part of the Eurocentric and capitalist modes of knowledge production. As Vinay Bahl and Arif Dirlik (2000) warn that the repudiation of Eurocentrism cannot be possible without a critique of the metanarrative of capitalism and will serve to obscure "the hegemony of Eurocentric modernity through the agency of capitalism" (Bahl &Dirlik, 2000, p. 9). If we assume that the studies of consumption and *tesettür* have an aim to challenge Eurocentrism in creating a challenging discourse about Muslim women through focusing on their new urban Islamic culture we need to question to what extent they critisize capitalism. As Bahl and Dirlik argue,

Cultural knowledge of this kind, however is intended not to recognize and respect the culture of others, but to render more efficient the management of

a ‘multicultural’ workforce and the marketing of commodities. The new recognition of non-Euro-American cultures, in other words, implies not an end to Eurocentricism, but appropriating Eurocentric modernity cultures that are rendered into capitalist modernities (Bahl &Dirlik, 2000, p. 9).

With respect to the peculiarity of the Turkish context regarding the discourse about veiling, headscarf ban at the universities and for the state officers should be considered as a deeply effective factor in the identity formation of the urban, veiled, educated women. As also Elizabeth Özdalga shows in her study *The Veiling Issue, Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey* (1998) which presents accounts of veiled women who were subject to the ban at their university years or work life, they had to cope with significant psychological problems because of the choice they were forced to make between self-realization and their faith in Allah. In one of the cases presented in the studies, an informant who studied at the Faculty of Law tells the story of another veiled student who had to leave university because of the ban and were forced to get married by her family if she did not comply with the rules and pursue her education. Since the girl suffered from depression, the informant wanted to contact her.

So, one day I decided to take my own mother and my sister along and pay a visit to their home. If we made it into a regular family visit the mother wouldn't be able to reject us. We talked to the mother about our friend's depressed situation and asked what she really wanted to do with her. “Do you want to kill your own daughter?” we asked. After that visit the girl broke her silence, but this time she started to speak a lot, in an abnormal way. She would come to the university and enter the lectures, with her Islamic garb on, even though she knew it was forbidden. And that was not all: she would monopolize the discussion, interrupt the teachers and behave in a way that was crude and very awkward compared to her usual manner. (1998, p. 58)

A veiled a mathematics teacher at a state lycée who is pressured by the school administration to unveil and threatened to be dismissed, accounts her stressful experience in the early 1980s as follows:

These administrators pushed on, as if I were totally ignorant. They were not only threatening to fire me, but to withdraw my teacher's certificate as well. During one of these encounters I said, “You cannot dismiss me, and if you do, I know my rights.” “If you are going to fight against me, I'll fight back. Then I'll apply to the European Commission of Human Rights, since you are violating my rights as an individual.”

This time the person in charge seemed baffled. “Where have you learned all these things?” he asked. “I have studied law.” I said. “and I have a degree from the Faculty of Political Science.” Upon hearing this, the director became more careful, since he realized that the person in front of him was not daft; but this did not prevent the whole encounter from turning into a fierce duel of words.

Just imagine! At that time I was pregnant, and as if my delicate condition did not matter at all, the bickering went on for about an hour.

When I left the place I was very upset. I wasn’t able to keep my tears back anymore. I went down toward Sultan Ahmed [the Blue Mosque], and there a garbage collector saw me, and asked: “Oh dear, why are you crying?” “I can’t help it,” I replied, “I’m being dismissed from work.” Then I sat in the mosque crying for two hours, without being able to stop. Thus my tensions and feelings were discharged. (1998, pp. 69-70)

Just as the decision to adopt an Islamic way of clothing, the new urban veiled women’s attitudes towards the headscarf ban, which is not officially but culturally extended to many other spaces of social life, and strategies to cope with the problems that it has caused are directly influential on their agencies and subjectivities.<sup>22</sup> From a postcolonial feminist point of view, the subaltern status of these women is changed as they become agents who actively develop ways of dealing with the pressures of the secular state ideology and Islamic fundamentalism that hinder their self-realization, as they have their own voices and make these voices heard. I think that this transformation is also reflected to the academic studies in this period which are more and more willing to hear and present them. The headscarf issue has also been widely part of the political discourse that Islamist women engage with, which I dwell upon in the next section.

#### **5. 4. Islamist Women in Politics**

The visibility of the Islamist women in public sphere was significant in the field of politics in such a way to have a role in the success of the Islamist movement, thus it attracted a considerable academic interest. In this section I aim to trace Islamist

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of how headscarf ban operates as a “biopower” in gendered spaces of social, political, and religious life see also Anna Secor’s (2005) study “Islamism, Democracy, and the Political Production of the Headscarf Issue in Turkey” based on focus-group discussions that she conducted with Islamist men and women.

women's representations in the studies focusing on women in the Islamist politics of first RP and then FP. These studies are very critical in the sense that they portray Islamist women's activism in the political sphere in Turkey which is dominated by men and secularism.

*Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics* by Yeşim Arat (2002) is a distinctively illuminating study focusing on Ladies' Commission of Welfare Party. Arat is a Western-trained Turkish scholar who received her BA at Yale College and PhD at Princeton University in politics in the US. Using qualitative methods, mainly in-depth interviews she aims to "examine the conflictual relationship between secularism and Islam in a liberal democracy" (p.1) and show that Islamist women's activism both challenged what was attributed to Islamism by the secular state and what Islam can involve in a secular political order. Arat claims that through the experiences of the Welfare Party women "we can assess how religion can assume new meanings, threaten or expand the boundaries of secular democracy, and reshape socio-political reality" and maintains that "liberal democracy could enrich itself by accommodating these groups rather than excluding them" (p. 2). From the Introduction of the book it is clear that the role that she attributes to the women activists of Welfare Party is a significantly transformative one. Besides she underlines that it is important to focus on women's activism not only because Turkish modernization project and Islamist discourses define themselves on the basis of women's roles and status but also women are marginalized in the political field despite their expanded social rights (pp.7-8).

She explains her will to know with the success of the ladies's commissions of the party and their striking political activism. She states,

The intensity and extent of Refah women activists engagement in politics was striking even beyond the Turkish context. It had long been argued that women lacked interest in politics. Even though feminist literature clearly contested the claim and argued that women were more involved and interested in politics than the orthodox political scientists assumed, women have not been militant activists in large numbers within the party ranks. Women have been known to support conservative causes (for example, the New Right in the United States) and to be actively involved in Islamist movements (such as the Iranian Revolution). However in Turkey, there was

an Islamist political party in a secular democratic polity through which women engaged in politics (p. 9).

There is a need to pay attention to some implied binarisms in this explanation. By juxtaposing the terms women and militant activism, cases from the US and Iran, Islamist political party and secular democratic polity she highlights several polarizations and otherings. She actually points the contemporary locations of local and global power struggles that shape her academic interest and indicates that the study targets Western as well as non-Western readers. Moreover, in addition to challenging the previous Orientalist representations of Muslim women in the field of anthropology, she announces that this study will be a challenge to the “orthodox political scientist’s representations of women.

The first chapter examines women’s rights and status throughout the modernization history of Turkey by particularly focusing on the headscarf issue as an embodiment of the tension between secularism and Islamism in order to contextualize the Islamist women’s activism. The chapter also outlines the divergence of the standpoints of feminists and Islamists. The second chapter firstly examines the Welfare Party and the conditions that gave rise to its increasing appeal since it was founded in 1983 and then gives information about the emergence, evolution, goals and organization of the ladies’ commission. In the next chapter Arat explores the diverse background of the women in the commission who shatter the assumption of the secularists that the republic bestowed women autonomy and rights so that they would not be drawn to Islamism. Through the life stories of the activist women we learn their motivations to join the commission. Arat summarizes the main reasons as:

For some, coercive policies of the state and the illiberal environment at school or at home, particularly over the headscarf issue, precipitated the process of engagement with the party. For others, the lure of the active party organization and the help, solidarity, or the promise of an ideal community that its members extended was crucial in recruitment. In either case there was neither violence nor repression on the part of the Islamists who recruited women to their ranks. Ironically, secular repression or the defensive measures of the secular establishment in public or private life had the unintended consequence of making the Islamists more attractive. For those coming from traditionally religious families, as much as others coming from

more secular backgrounds, becoming a party member and working for the party was a means of self-realization. (p. 67)

As these reasons exhibit, the strongest point in the chapter about the individuality of the women is that the assumptions about the “false consciousness” of the previously secularist women who are in the commission cannot be relevant “without establishing an essentialist conception of the ‘right consciousness’” (p. 68). The second important point is that despite the success of the commission, its members were excluded from the decision-making positions and finally dismissed from the Fazilet Party (Virtue Party) which was founded for replacing the Welfare Party. Arat demonstrates that women’s exclusion resulted from an overlap of dominant gendered traditionalism in the movement with women’s belief that they were working for God’s sake rather than for achieving posts in the party.

In the fourth chapter “Mobilizing for the Party: From the Personal into the Political” we have a closer look at the activities of Welfare women and see how they benefit from the porous nature of the boundaries between political and the private and also between secular and religious. The activities of the commission range from educational seminars to picnics, from weddings to condolence visits, from tea chats to visits to schools in which they establish networks with a friendly and tolerant attitude. The mobilization of the Welfare women was possible due to their success in bringing political issues to the private spheres that they visit and bringing the demands and thoughts expressed in the private spheres to the party politics. Arat focuses on the world views of the women in the commissions and what they think about Islam to comprehend the way these views make them successfully work as a community. She also notes that “Trying to understand what Islamists believe might be a step toward expanding democratic inclusion, if not solving all the tensions between Islam and democracy” (p. 90).

In the conclusion chapter, Arat repeats her argument that as the case of the Islamist women prove, “the development of liberalism in a Muslim context is not only possible but also necessary” (p.109). Besides, she also argues that their case is also important because it shows that state cannot maintain its secular ideology despite the presence of these activists. The Islamist women who were educated in a secular

system could live and express their identities in Islamist politics, yet this politics was rather different from the threatening Islamism that is defined by the state. The women were able to challenge the assumption that women are excluded from politics by means of the public/ private divide. I believe this is one of the most significant contributions of the study to the discourse on women and Islam in Turkey. Lastly she concludes that in the secular Turkish context “liberalism infiltrated Islam, at least partially, in the way some women lived Islam”, “it expanded the reach of liberalism and deepened its practice even when it only partially shaped the lives of women who lived Islam through politics” (pp. 113-114). Alev Çınar (2006) contends in her review that this argument is not fully illustrated and clarified in the study and we cannot fully understand how women were able to liberalize Islamist and secularist discourses (2006, p. 488). Not agreeing with her, I think that the diverse background of the women activists enables them not only to integrate a more liberal attitude and discourse to the movement but also through their public relations activities to bring Islamism to the non-Islamic spheres.

Beyond its argumentation about the changing borders between liberalism, Islamism, and secularism, *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy* challenges in many ways the essentialist category of the Muslim women victimized by Islam through the portraits of the women activists of Welfare Party. It portrays Islamist women as active agents and empowered women who successfully created a space in the Islamist politics through bringing the political issues into the private sphere and the private concerns to the political sphere. Being responsive to different demands and needs and tolerant to different political views and respecting human rights (particularly about religious freedoms and headscarf issue), they could gain support or attract attention in a wide range of sectors of the society. Their subjectivities are shaped by their liberal interpretations of Islam in addition to resisting how secularism defines and perceives Islamist women. The women’s stress on their autonomous individuality and their free choice in choosing an Islamic way of life is also repeatedly mentioned by Arat. Headscarf issue is particularly critical in terms of their identities and subjectivities since all the women believed that it is a command of God and women are “neither too weak nor too strong” for wearing it

(p. 104). Defending the right to wear the headscarf is stated in the book as the women's main reason to engage in the political activism. Arat notes that their resentment about headscarf ban at the universities was primarily due to the obstruction of their and their children's secular education, not because of being denied the right of religious practice (p. 104). Thus we can reach the conclusion that self-realization and career development is prioritized over religious practice. However their victimization resulting from the headscarf ban turns into a political expression of their identities in the Ladies' Commission of Welfare Party.

Yet, the study also reveals that the Ladies Commission is surrounded by patriarchal traditionalism of the party. Firstly the name of the commission is determined by male members of the party as "ladies'" instead of "women's". The exclusionary meaning of the term implies a higher class character to the commission and many women opposed the name because it does not embrace lower classes. However another equally important problem is that "being called a lady meant you had to conform to certain socially acceptable norms and values, the commissions reflected the conservative bias the party had toward women" (p. 29). Secondly, Arat mentions that the party program had no reference to women but had references to family, ladies, and mothers, and thus to traditional gender roles of women. A reflection of this attitude was manifest in the headscarf issue. Their support to the women was not expressed as a women's issue but an issue of religious freedoms and this indicates that the party clearly refrains from using a feminist discourse. Thirdly, women's dependency on the male members of the party for the funding of their relatively larger projects and for utilities like cars, auditoriums, and videos make them exert an auto-censure on deciding the activities. Last but not least, there is an evident glass ceiling that prevent women from achieving higher positions in the party and finally dismiss them after the election success. Women's struggles with these predicaments can be read as a clash between traditionalism and liberalism which was not resolved within the short life-span of the ladies commissions and I believe that this clash is more critical than the modern/traditional dichotomy which is challenged to a large degree by the new urban identity of the Islamist women.

Another study on women in Islamist politics in this period is by Ayşe Saktanber (2002a). “Whose Virtue is This? The Virtue Party and Women in Islamist Politics in Turkey” is a field study published in *Right-Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World*, edited by Paola Bacchetta and Margaret Power, on the symbolic feminization of the party politics of Virtue Party based on interviews with the leading members of the Ankara Greater Municipality Ladies’ Commission of the Virtue Party and its predecessor Welfare Party, with the female members of the parliament of the Virtue Party, as well as on party’s publications and media coverage (p.71). Like Yeşim Arat does in *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy*, Saktanber shows that women’s activism in the party did not result in a change in the party politics, discourse and attitudes about gender issues. Being not as optimistic as Arat, she finds women’s activism in the party symbolic rather than potentially transformative.

After reviewing the history of the women’s status and rights in the modernization process of the republic, she underlines the fact that during the 1980s veiling of the university students started debates between secularists and Islamists and these debates trivialized other issues of gender in the country and describes how veiling was seen as a threat to the secular principles of the republic in those years. Saktanber then argues that the spread of education in the republican years had resulted in formation of both secular and Islamist elites (Mardin, 1989, cited in Saktanber, 2002a, p. 73) who developed the Islamist ideology that not only structured the political Islamism but also accommodated “a discourse of gender complementarity” through a selective use of women’s rights which did not challenge Islamic definition of gender roles (p. 73). The Islamist movement also developed a discourse that suggested redefinitions of modernity and democratization that was benefited in mobilization of women in Islamist politics. Saktanber has a skeptical approach to these redefinitions and scrutinizes their impact. Following the rise of feminist movements in Turkey in the 1980s, women started to take part in party politics which also comprised “the new and rapid politicization of provincial middle- and lower-middle-class women” who primarily defined themselves as Muslim (p. 75). The “symbolic feminization” of the right

wing movements was also accompanied by economic liberalism in the 1980s (pp. 75-76).

Saktanber describes the discourse of the Virtue Party as tender by referring to its symbolism connoting love, affection, fraternity, gentleness, and poetic romanticism and argues that the social and political activities of the party was not as gentle as the discourse, especially for its women activists. In the section about the hardships that women face in their efforts for the success of Welfare and Virtue Parties, Saktaber refers to Arat's findings about the well-organized and wide-spread structure and propaganda activities of the ladies' commissions and the exclusionary attitude of the Welfare Party to the prominent women actors (Arat, 1998, 1999, cited in Saktanber, 2002a, p. 78). Despite their success in the 1994 election which made Tayyip Erdoğan the mayor of Istanbul, the party even banned women from being candidates in parliamentary elections by referring to the headscarf ban in the parliament and women's inability to get the support of male delegates for being candidates. Saktanber notes that women in the party did not resent this decision and continued their support even more eagerly. 1999 was year that Merve Kavakçı was elected as a member of the parliament and received very harsh reactions when she came to the parliament to take her oath with her headscarf. Despite the discussions she triggered about the Islamic threat to the secular republic, Saktanber states that "She gave an edge to the ascendancy of what I call the symbolic feminization of Turkish right-wing politics: the gaining of political credit both by and over women, hence guaranteeing an image of being modern, liberal, and democratic" (p. 80).

The next section portrays the women in the commission by explaining their ideological grounds and forms of political attachments. Saktanber observes that faith is the primary reason that both motivates and encourages them to work for the party, yet it is also the main factor that makes them vulnerable to the gendered practices and approaches. Because of their faith, women willingly support men in the political sphere as well as private sphere while at the same time achieve a state of personhood as women who play an active role "in the advancement of their community in addition to the role they play in the family" (p. 80). At this point I should note that in this study women's subjectivities are thus claimed to be shaped

by the roles assigned to them by their faith, which requires supporting men both in domestic and political spheres and their individualities are of secondary importance. Besides the framework in which they define their individual identities is not based on equality but on the Islamic notion of equity and complementarity between sexes. Saktanber argues that women's innate characters that are defined in Islamic faith as caring mothers is the ground that legitimizes their voluntary efforts in the movement. Their devotion to God makes them more submissive to the gender inequalities but also more trustable in the eyes of the people that they reach. Combined with the common culture of womanhood that they utilize, they successfully convince the potential supporters of the movement.<sup>23</sup> Saktanber concludes that even though these activist women organize and engage in a wide range of public activities, their ultimate aim remains to be building an Islamic order, not achieving gender equality or questioning the moral codes that subordinate women and she does not expect to see a change in this ideological framework. In other words, what this study suggests is that women's agencies that lead them to activism in Islamist politics neither bring further opportunities of advancement in their career nor make them interrupt the perpetuation of gender inequalities in the political and private sphere. From the perspective of party politics, they continue to be objects rather than subjects of Islamic politics.

Even though it may not be appropriate to compare the methodology of these studies because the latter one which is a book chapter can only provide a limited idea, I would still like to note that unlike Yeşim Arat's presentation of her multivocal and reflexive methodology, Saktanber prefers to concentrate on sociological analysis about the gender symbolisms in the party politics instead of reflecting her subject position and including the voices of the respondents.

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<sup>23</sup> Anna Secor (2001) eloquently presents reflections of discourses and practices of Islamist politics in lower class neighbourhoods of Istanbul in her article "Toward a Feminist Counter-geopolitics: Gender, Space and Islamist Politics in Istanbul". The study completes the picture of women and Islamist politics with its focus on the women voters' side.

## **5.5. Concluding Remarks**

In this discursive period it is very much possible to observe the shifts and transformations in the three spheres that I specified to frame my analysis. With respect to the first sphere, which comprises the changes at the global level and in the era of neoliberal globalization, focus on individual and collective identities of Islamist should be seen as the most prominent feature. Inline with the celebration of diversities, emphasis on localities and individualities and critique of developmentalist approaches to the non-Western cultures in the new era of globalization after the late 1980s, the studies on women and Islam in Turkey started to focus on the identities of the Islamist women and aimed to understand them by leaving the previous ethnocentric stereotypes that associate Islam with traditionalism and backwardness behind. The focus on new identity of the urban, middle and lower-middle class Islamist woman is what characterizes this discursive period and contrasts Muslim women's Orientalist representations as passive believers and victims of traditional gender hierarchy in the previous period.

One major novelty and also a shortcoming is that this identity is described to a large extent by references to its others. These others are mostly stated as feminists and Kemalists are commonly circulated and a great emphasis is put on how these others have a constitutive role in the identity formation. In contrast to the first discursive period in which we encounter epistemological othering of the Muslim women through the Orientalist discourse produced about them, the discourse in this period examines their ontological othering and make it an integral part of their representation. Nevertheless, I believe that too much stress on its role in the identity formation tends to overlook the possibility of co-existence, interaction, or merging of these so-called opposing ideologies. As Homi Bhabha's (1993) theorization of hybridity suggests, our assumptions about the homogeneity, authenticity, and purity of cultural systems and statements are doomed to fail when we consider the "contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" in which they are constructed (1993, p. 36). Such a hybridity is recognized in the discourse with respect to Islamist women's adoption of modernity, frequently describing it as an alternative style of modernity. Bhabha explains this condition as

Such cultures of a postcolonial contra-modernity may be contingent to modernity, discontinuous or in contention with it, resistant to its oppressive, assimilationist technologies; but they also deploy the cultural hybridity of their borderline to ‘translate’, and therefore reinscribe, the social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity. (p. 5)

On the other hand feminists and Kemalists are mostly stated to be the ultimate others whom Islamist women construct their identities against. However the influence of feminist discourses is evident in the way Islamist women refer to women’s rights in Islam, despite their refection of Islamist feminism, and the influence of Kemalist reforms is evident in the desires of many veiled students to pursue their education at secular universities. This point of view rarely exists the studies that I analysed in this chapter, except the studies by Hülya Demir (1994), Ayşe Saktanber (2002b), and Yeşim Arat (2005).

An outcome of the discourse on othering is that the search for a common ground to bring major gender issues to the fore could not gain pace. From this perspective it can be argued that it is not women but patriarchal discourse that benefits from presenting Islam and Islamism as a counter discourse against modernity, feminism and secularism because it weakens the chances of development of common responses to gender inequalities. Furthermore, it bears the risk of reproducing essentialist categorizations and neglecting the potentials of transformation. Last, but not least, it has reduced the diversity of identities of women in Turkey into two camps and thus neglected the presence and influence of other women who do not primarily define themselves as Muslim/Islamist and secular/Kemalist on the contemporary politics and culture in Turkey. Raising questions about Muslim/Islamist women’s dialogues with these women would open up a new area of discussion, reveal new social dynamics that influence formation of Islamist identities, and challenge the discourse of othering that mainly describes Islamist identities that remain isolated within their collectivities.

Another prominent discursive formation in this period refers to consumption as a constitutive element and expression of identity. I think that in addition to the factors like rapid urbanization, economic liberalization and increasing popularity of the Islamist movement among lower classes as well as higher classes, it is also

connected to the globalization culture that promotes consumption which has become an end in itself and makes ability to consume as a marker of stratification (Baumann, 1999, pp. 92-99). Thus including consumption culture to the contextualization of the formation of Islamist women's identity is highly related to this particular aspect of globalization. The power of consumption culture structures firstly the practices of veiling in a way that *tesettür* becomes not only commodity but also an object of desire to express upward social mobility as well as loyalty to an increasingly popular political movement and secondly the way the relationship between Islamist women and modernity is perceived and analysed in the academic discourse. The shortcomings of focusing on consumption as a marker of Islamist identity is underestimating the moral codes of behaviour that it entails and the role of these codes in the way women make their life choices.

The social and political context in Turkey during the period in which these studies were published is also a critically influential factor on the way knowledge about women and Islam is produced. As explained in almost all the studies, these years were years that fears of secularists and Kemalists about the Islamist threat in the country dominated political discussions and deeply effected the social encounters between the two sides. Particularly the headscarf issue and Merve Kavakçı case triggered harsh attitudes in secularist and Kemalist women towards headscarved women and political Islam. The perceived threat was even more serious when the Welfare Party and then Virtue Party achieve significant successes in the elections. The subject attracted a great deal of academic interest and Turkish scholars started to make researches and publications to understand the nature of the transformation of the Islamist movement and the status and role of women in this transformation. Being influenced by the political polarization between the two camps resulted in paying less attention to the hybridities and grey zones in the ethnographic knowledge produced about identity formation of the new Muslim women. In Foucault's terms, this political context influenced the archive "the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define ... the limits and forms of sayable" (Foucault, 1991, 59) and also will to truth, the set of exclusionary practices that determines which statements will be circulated as true (1981, p. 56). Therefore, if I return to my point about overemphasis on othering, I would argue

that the political context determined what was appropriate to suggest and what was thinkable about Islamist women's identities and evidently, the possible dialogues and interactions of Islamist women with the women who neither define themselves as Islamist nor Kemalist remained out of the ethnographic discourse.

Another outcome of the structural power of the political context has been reducing the understanding of the relationship between women and Islam to understanding the Islamist women. I believe that it is equally important to direct attention how other women's (the women who do not primarily define themselves as Muslim or Islamist) relation to Islam have been affected by the increasing presence of Islamism in the agenda of the country and in public life. How do these social changes influence their religious practices, beliefs, and values? Does the rise of Islamism make these women more religious or cause a change in their attitudes about being religious? These questions continue to be left out of the ethnographic discourse on women and Islam in the third period.

The third outcome is an overemphasis on the collective identity of Islamism and neglect of other possible collective identities that Islamist women may feel a sense of belonging. In the first period women were described within the family and kinship structures and thus a shift of focus on the individual and collective Islamist identity is a major change in the discourse. Even though several studies note that women's gender roles as mothers and wives continue to have an utmost importance in the Islamist movement, most of the ethnographic studies do not specifically define women within their familial relations. Therefore another possible set of research questions on the subject of Islamist women can address their associations with other collectivities, such as civil society organizations, neighbourhood communities, leisure activity groups, hobby courses and clubs, alumni associations, and the like. Considering that the new identity of the Islamist women is an urban phenomenon, it is not possible to ignore the influence of these communities.

The shifts in the scholarship in the Middle Eastern women's studies can also be observed. As I have presented in my theoretical discussion, agency and subjectivity of the Muslim women have constituted a significant part of the literature on veiling,

modernity, feminism, and fundamentalism in this field. Agency of the Islamist women is strongly emphasized in almost all the publications analysed in this chapter. Choosing an Islamic way of life is explained as a conscious choice which also brings alone two main sources of difficulties: male domination and lack of gender equality in Islamism. Women overcoming the pressure and difficulties resulting either from patriarchy or secular state ideology are represented as success stories or challenging examples against the Orientalist discourse.

The issue of veiling/ *tesettür*/ headscarf is at the heart of the discourse in this period. In her article “Women’s Subordination in Turkey: Is Islam Really the Villain?” (1994), Ayşe Kadioğlu has a vital interruption to the debates on the Islamic practice of veiling. She argues that these debates “shifted the argument away from universal feminist claims regarding private and public role dichotomies” to women’s outlook and this brought along the hindrance of “development of feminist movements from below in Turkey” (1994, p. 647). I agree with Kadioğlu that the debates shifted the feminist focus away from various other oppressions and subordinations that women face in domestic as well as public spaces, the studies by Kenan Çayır (2000), Jenny White (1999), Ayşe Saktanber (2002a), and Yeşim Arat (2005) show that her latter argument do either injustice or fail to foresee the Islamist women’s activism in politics and civil society. On the relationship between practice of veiling and women’s agency and empowerment I also agree with White’s concerns:

While the women who cover by choice feel a sense of empowerment provided by the choices and personalization they make, the practice itself reinforces the assumption held by some of the interpreters of Islam that women arouse temptation and threaten male honour. While women view covering as a conscious personal choice in search of a modern Islamic identity of an elite status, male control over female sexuality and presence in the public space has primacy over women’s autonomy and control over their bodies (White, 2002).

Unlike the previous discursive period, it is not easy to describe their discourse as overtly Orientalist or postmodernist considering the methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and feminist standpoints in the studies. The Muslim women’s representations as subalterns are no longer prevalent. The analyses of the ethnographic data are contextualized and are much more refined and sophisticated than the first period and this is manifest, as I have underlined in my analysis of the

studies, in the challenging of well established binaries: public/private and traditional/modern.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **WOMEN IN THE AKP YEARS 2007-2016: CONSERVATE POLITICS AND NEOLIBERALISM**

The global agenda about Islam and Islamist movements during the years 2007-2016 has been dominated by the ongoing War on Terror by the Western powers against Islamist terrorism which reproduced Orientalist stigmatization of Muslim societies in the Western public opinion. The new phase of Orientalism or neo-Orientalism revitalized the colonial mission of saving brown women from brown men (Razack, 2008), created new images of the Muslim enemies and associated their culture with political violence, terrorism and barbarism (Tuastad, 2003). The new images of the Muslim cultures helped to create new dichotomies between “the modern West and the peripheralised peoples” that would serve the aims of the economic and political projects in these regions (Tuastad, 2003, 591). Even though the Arab Spring, the uprisings which began in 2010 in the Middle Eastern countries’ against the authoritarian governments, had an impact about shattering the essentialist image of these societies, the emergence of another global threat of terrorism from the region perpetuated Islamophobia in the West.

Another form of neo-Orientalism or “new Orientalism” (Spivak, 2012) could be encountered in the academic literature. As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, Spivak (2012) warns that the intellectual elites of the non-Western world can recreate Orientalism and Eurocentrism by describing non-Western societies in terms of their marginality to the West. The role of transnational capitalism in supporting the studies of postcolonialism and their overemphasis on marginality had already been mentioned by Boehmer in 1998. In this period there is also the influence of the Islamic capital that funds the academic studies sympathetic to Islam that leads to the formation of a different discourse that challenges the Orientalist dogma that the Orient could only be studied by Orientalists (Said, 1994, cited in Samiei, 2010). As Ernst and Martin (2010) argue, the current state of Islamic studies has been very much influenced by the Muslim scholars to the Western scholarship, Muslim

students in the Western universities, and the discussions that address the links between European colonialism, Islamic fundamentalism and modernity through the theoretical frameworks of poststructuralism, postcolonialism, deconstruction, and gender and women's studies. The last point to mention is the challenge for religious studies to link religion with cosmopolitanism and the networks of commercial exchange (Lawrence, 2010, p. 302). I believe that the state of scholarship on the Middle East during the 2000s is very much marked by the increasing number of Middle Eastern scholars and their works. As Samiei (2010) states and now there is an academic environment in the West that enables an intensity of dialogue between the Western and Middle Eastern scholars. It is no doubt that such interactions create new pathways of producing knowledge in the Middle Eastern studies.

For the Turkish social and political context, this period can be defined as the golden years of neo-liberal Islam and the years of increasing authoritarianism and conservatism of AKP governments. 2007 was the year that AKP won the years parliamentary elections as the sole ruling party for the second time. The perpetuated success indicated that the party and the Islamist movement achieved a stable power, Islamism was no longer at the margins of the society but had a central and leading position in the political sphere. Islamism which had been described as alternative became mainstream. A social, cultural, and economic transformation within the movement also accompanied and shaped the altered status and outlook of Islamism. As Atay (2011) states, "we have arrived at the days on which headscarf started to be a 'cosmetic' accessory rather than being a religious or political symbol"; we encounter a life in which verses of Koran became advertisements (2011, p. 85). He describes the turn of 2000s as the years that witnessed the decline of political Islam in Turkey and in the world and the "cropping up" of commercial Islam. Month Ramadan which reminded obligations of Islam became a consumption fest both for the people who observe fasting and who do not. *Tekbirs* of radical Islamists after the Friday prayer were *out* –in popular jargon- while the Islamist clothing company Tekbir which represented the commercial Islam was *in* (p. 85). I regard the period after the 2007 elections as the culmination of these trends. In the first section of the chapter that includes studies by Özlem Sandıkçı and Gülistan Ger (2007, 2010) and Sertaç Sehlikoğlu and Fahri Karataş (2016) they are commonly depicted as veiled

women who are very well integrated to the urban upper and middle class life style while creating their own tastes and consumption patterns as well as adopting the tastes and styles of the Westernist, secularist women.

On the other hand an increasing conservatism and authoritarianism replaced the more moderate attitude of the first years of AKP government. Ziya Öniş (2013) who notes that in a political context in which European Union had less influence on domestic politics, the military was no longer a military actor, AKP's understanding of globalization shifted to a "a more Asian style globalism," which he describes as a system in which

economic success through global integration and diversification of markets still occupies the center stage, but combined with a less ambitious or minimalist understanding of democracy, which basically accepts the notion of electoral democracy, but is less interested in pushing the frontiers of liberal democracy beyond a certain threshold (2013, p. 114).

He argues that a possible outcome of this shift is distancing from democratization reforms and approaching to conservative and religious values (p. 114).

AKP's discourse and policies about gender issues were also shaped by this tendency. Feride Acar and Gülbano Altunok (2013) define the AKP politics as neo-conservatism which "identifies the state, including law, with the task of setting the moral-religious compass for society, and indeed for the world" (Brown, 2006, p. 697, quoted in Acar & Altunok, 2013, p. 15) and by examining the policies of the AKP governments about sexuality, reproduction and family show that interaction between neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism had detrimental effects on gender inequality during the AKP years. AKP has obscured its anti-feminist stand by its efforts to create a modern outlook for the party by recognizing the importance of women's public visibility, but on the condition that women's traditional gender roles are not challenged. AKP policies encouraged women to take part in the flexible labour market by reminding them that their main duties are their family and children (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011, pp. 567-568). Party's attitude to keep up with the modern outlook while being the keeper of traditional gender roles has also been actualized within the party politics about women's activism and political participation. The ethnographic study by Ayşe Ayata and Fatma Tütüncü (2008)

which focus on women's activism in AKP are in the second section of this chapter in relation to this attitude. On the other hand Berna Turam's (2008) study presents a different facet of the women in AKP in their non-resistance to the othering by the secular opposition.

The rise of political Islam in Turkey cannot be explained without referring to the power of religious communities, which were actually banned with the Republican reforms. As Mustafa Şen (2010) explains, in the neoliberal period the religious communities became visible in public in the form of non-governmental organizations. Thus the academic interest, an example of which I include in this chapter, in the Islamic civil society organizations can be associated with the new public appearance of the religious communities that caused a change from perceiving them as illegal communities excluded from the secular social order to perceiving them as civil society actors. The ethnographic work in this period by Zehra Yılmaz (2015) that studies Islamist women's movement in civil society organizations is related to this change.

In addition to the influence of the global and local context and the shift in the Middle Eastern and Islamic studies, an important common feature of these ethnographic works that differs them from the studies in the previous period is the they represent Muslim women. The category of Muslim woman continued to exist in the category of Islamist woman however these women are represented as much more powerful agents in reference to the status of AKP and the Islamist movement. We can observe this change especially in the works by Özlem Sandıkçı and Gülistan Ger (2007, 2010), Sertaç Sehlikoğlu and Fahri Karataş (2016), Berna Turam (2008) and Zehra Yılmaz (2015). The Islamist women are not described as struggling for participation to public life, as women being at the margins of the society, as the women otherised by the secular social order, as victims of Islamic traditions and patriarchy. On the contrary they are described as agents who are very much integrated to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of the society, particularly to globalization and the consumption culture, and who have power to create social change. Therefore these representations constitute discursive formations that challenge neo-Orientalism in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies.

## **6.1. Veiling and Consumption**

The discursive formations about the Islamic consumerism and the meanings of headscarf as a commodity was a considerable part of the discourse in the previous period. The significant increase in the number of publications on this subject during the years 2007-2016 can be explained with the changes in the social and economic context in Turkey under the dominance of neoliberalism. The evidence of “Asian style globalism” described by Ziya Öniş (2013) and the rise of “commercial Islam” described by Tayfun Atay (2011) can be seen in the expanding and diversified Islamic market, the visibility and diversified demands of the new Islamist upper classes and in the way Islamist women are described in the ethnographies. What differs these studies from the discourse on veiling and Islamic consumption in the second period is their emphasis on Islamist women’s increased power as consumers who have a significant influence on the market.

Özlem Sandıkçı and Güliz Ger (2001, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2010) have a number publications, one of which I analysed in the Chapter 5 about Islamic consumerism. The articles which I include in this section and which are based on the same ethnographic study that I dwelled upon in the previous chapter are “Constructing and representing the Islamic consumer in Turkey” (2007) and “Veiling in Style: How Does a Stigmatized Practice Become Fashionable?” (2010). What I aim by including these to my analysis of the third discursive period is to observe whether there have been an influence of the social context on the way Muslim women are represented in the studies. The first article focuses on the representations of women in *tesettür* in the advertisements and commercial imagery and how these representations are influenced by the globalization dynamics of consumerism, capitalism, and politics at the local and international levels. The aim of the study is explained as showing “how Islamic industry plays on cultural difference and similarity and fabricates the ideal of a “modern” *tesettürlü*<sup>24</sup> woman is attainable through consumption” (p. 190).

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<sup>24</sup> -*li*, - *li*, -*lu*, *lü* suffixes means with in Turkish. Thus *tesettürlü* woman literally means woman with *tesettür*.

The changes in the head covering practices from *başörtüsü*, a casually tied scarf that shows neck and some hair used in rural areas or by elderly women, to *türban*, a scarf that covers hair and neck, that started to be worn by young, educated women in the cities in the 1980s are mentioned by the authors who also add that 1990s *türban* and the long, loose overcoat became symbols of political Islam. Then they elucidate the development of the *tesettür* market in the 1980s and 1990s and state that by the 2000s long overcoat and large headscarves had come to be the style of the urban poor while the urban middle and upper class *tesettür* “met fashion” (p. 195).

In the section titled “*Tesettürlü* Women in the Marketing Imagination” the controversies caused by Tekbir Giyim’s fashion show is highlighted as an embodiment of “the new understanding of *tesettür*” which is an articulation of Western capitalism and marketing to Islamic clothing. Sandıkçı and Ger examine the change in the advertisements of the *tesettür* companies in this respect and discuss how Muslim women are represented throughout the years. They argue that there is a shift in their representations from a “pious woman” to a “modern consumer” (p. 197). While the former was defined in reference to its difference from the secular in addition to its courage to look different from the uncovered and traditional women, the latter emulated the “fashionable Western-looking woman” (p. 197). “Pious women” are also shown without a face to be identified, their subjectivity is deliberately erased, they are abstracted from the social and material world. The authors explain this as religiosity operating “as an equalizing and homogenizing factor that dissolves individual identity within a uniform and anonymous Islamic identity” (p. 198). However I think that this is more about the concern that showing women’s faces publicly in an advertisement would be sinful. Sandıkçı and Ger argue that in contrast to the pious women who was “appealed by indoctrination” in the messages of the advertisements, “the modern consumer is seduced through the beauty of covering” (p. 200). In their analysis of 2004 catalogue of a clothing company, they draw attention to how contemporary style fashion photography is used to present a “stylish consumption adventure” that indicates “mainstreaming” of Islamic fashion. An important point they make is that

just like the photography of the other fashion styles, the images highlight the pleasures about dressing and grooming and they “turn the women into bodies to be looked at” (p. 201). They argue that this advertising style has also two functions; to change the stereotype of Islamist women as a threat and to make the covered women proud of their fashionable outlook just like the uncovered women. However, as Sandıkçı and Ger strongly assert, as the Islamist fashion challenges one stereotype, it reproduces another, that is the feminine identity defined over being beautiful and attractive. The development of the market is also examined in the article with respect to its adaptation to international influences and globalization which meant that *tesettür* companies developed skills of marketing and detecting the consumers’ needs and the consumers started to demand new products that would express their identities and status. The 9/11 attacks was a critical influence on the market due to the circulating discourse about radical Islamists which in turn resulted in a decreasing demand for dark colours and large headscarves. The study lastly examines the two major groups who oppose Islamist fashion. The first one, orthodox Islamists, criticize it on the grounds that it is “degeneration” and “commodification” (Barbarosoğlu, 2005 and Durmuş, 2003 cited in Sandıkçı & Ger, 2007) and the second one, secularists think that they disguise their radical ideology under fashionable clothes and also find this style tasteless and do not refrain from criticising it by using the jargon of paparazzi programs.

With this article, we can clearly trace the emergence and transformation of the *tesettür* market which enables us to understand it the change in consumption preferences of veiled women as a manifestation of the transformations in their identities. It is seen in the advertisements that piety and conservatism lose their impact while taste and style start to be fill their space. I believe that during these radical makeovers women’s subjectivities begin to be subsumed by consumerism and their agencies are gradually reduced to their selection of commodities. This latter aspect constitute their common ground not only with many other non-Islamists in the society but also with neo-liberal global culture. Sandıkçı and Ger develop this argument further in the next article but still regard Islamic consumerism as a binding element of the collective identity of the new elite Islamic community.

Sandıkçı and Ger present the findings of their ethnographic study more extensively in the second article “Veiling in Style: How Does a Stigmatized Practice Become Fashionable?” (2010) and explore how stigma status of *tesettür* changed and the practice turned into an appealing and popular choice. The article clearly shows with numerous accounts of covered women that *tesettür* or covering is no longer a marginal and stigmatized life choice belonging to periphery like it used to be in the 1980s and to some degree in the 1990s.

Two processes which changed the stigma status of *tesettür* are identified in the study as personalization and aestheticization. The informants who tell that they decided to adopt *tesettür* willingly and after a thoroughly mediating period in the 1980s, in the midst of political turmoil of right/left polarizations were seeking stability and boundaries to feel safe. The feelings of pride was accompanied with feelings of belonging and solidarity in the new Islamic communities that they met while they were coping with the outside pressures as well as the headscarf ban. As Sandıkçı and Ger note “The new community helped them endure various criticisms such as “You are wasting your youth” from uncovered friends and family. The uniform look of the 1980s *tesettür* provided a feeling of camaraderie” (2010, p. 24). The fragmentation of *tesettür* styles and discourses was an outcome of concerns for personalization and aestheticization. The former means redefining the limits of being faithful and modern and through this process of redefinition and renegotiation everyone finds her own “personal *tesettür*” which has a softer style (p. 26). At this point the authors remind us that the tension between “religious modesty and fashionable, tasteful and beautiful appearance” are both “embedded in patriarchal relations” (p. 27). The process of achieving beauty and elegance has two legitimating grounds. Firstly, it serves a holy purpose, which is to inspire others for covering and secondly, they believe that “God is beautiful and likes beautiful things” and thus *tesettür* should be beautiful (p. 27). As a result, the covering practice becomes routinized and it is no longer a stigma.

The later phases of the transformation is contextualized by referring to the 1997 military declaration, 9/11 attacks, headscarf ban in France, the power of Justice and

Development Party in Turkey, and the development of the Islamist market. In addition to these, the new Islamist bourgeoisie and their conspicuous consumption resulted in normalization of *tesettür* through fashion. The statements that Sandıkçı and Ger use in their depiction of the contemporary Islamic consumerism and *tesettür* not only describe the new styles but also reflect the context of neo-liberal Islam or in Atay's words, "commercial Islam" (2011, p.85).

Equipped with their new economic and political power and determined to exhibit a pleasing, modern, and tasteful look, a new middle and upper-middle class, or a "religious bourgeoisie," emerged as avid practitioners of conspicuous consumption. Either as wives of businessmen, politicians, or bureaucrats who displaced or coexist with their secular colleagues, or as professionals employed by Muslim businesses and municipalities, these faithful women are keen consumers. In search of an aesthetic look with scarves that complement their skin and outfits, we witnessed that sometimes over 60 scarves sit unused in a drawer as fashions change. Wardrobes are also filled with brand-name handbags and shoes to complement the color of their scarves and trendy outfits and mark their newfound status. Despite the Muslim ideal of freedom from waste, the pursuit of aesthetics makes them *indulge in shopping*<sup>25</sup> (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2011, p. 28).

This passage that illustrates the consumption habits of the new upper class Islamist women also clearly exhibits the *zeitgeist* for the consumers of the neoliberal age, a scene of a continuous search for goods that reflect not only the taste and status of their owners but also represent the latest trends.

The aim to achieve an appealing and a modern look by dressing in a similar way with the uncovered women is considered important for not looking "strange" (p. 28). One informant explains that "I dress well, harmoniously. Then it looks familiar to people. When they see that the clothes they wear are also worn by a covered woman, they might think 'the covered aren't abnormal people; they dress like us'" (p. 28). On the other hand the limits of the concerns for not looking strange is drawn by paying attention to not looking indecent, meaning sexually feminine. Sandıkçı and Ger note that it is at this point that modernity and secular women are perceived as the others.

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<sup>25</sup> The emphasis is mine.

In the discussion section of the article the authors elaborate the dynamics that influence the subjectivities and identities of the women in *tesettür* who engage in continuous negotiations of free-will and restrictions. The routinization and normalization of *tesettür* as a stigma is stated to be a manifestation of the emergence of Islamist elites who develop their own tastes and styles with reference to their faith as well as modern trends in the market economy. The authors reach the conclusion that *tesettürlü* women in particular and Islamist elites in general do not oppose the market trends but use them “to resist the existing social order and build a new one” (p. 33).

These two articles which are based on a comprehensive ethnography that utilized a number of field methods which were conducted in several spaces of Islamic culture reveal that coming together of neo-liberalism and conservatism in Turkish context has had a deep impact not only on the identity formation of the Islamist women but also on their discursive representations. In the articles by Sandıkçı and Ger we can trace the shift in the subjectivities of Islamist women. During the 1980s and early 1990s faith and difference from secularism and Western modernism were determining in addition to being severely subject to othering were determining in the subjectivities while in the later years consumption has come to be the major means to define identity. In a neo-liberal context where conspicuous consumption is predominantly involved in expression of identities, veiled women's subjectivities seems to be dissolved into an object status of consumerism. In these articles the agency of the Islamist women in the 1980s is defined over her free will to adopt *tesettür* and pursue a modest Islamic life while for the later years it is defined over her decision to choose the commodities offered by the fashion trends in the Islamic as well as global market and to create demand for new goods and services. Moreover Islamist women's object status as consumers of Islamist fashion is further perpetuated by their adoption of fashion industry's discourse that defines feminine identity defined over being beautiful and attractive. I agree with Sandıkçı and Ger that the extensive influence of global fashion on women's subjectivities is not specific to Islamist women but a general phenomenon, but for the case of veiled women they coexist with the other restricting moral and religious codes of attire that compel women to chose which restrictions or dominant discourses to submit.

In the studies on veiled women and consumerism, including the studies by Sandıkçı and Ger, the dichotomies traditional/modern, Islamist/ secular, backward/ progressive are discussed through referring to the distinction that the Islamist women want to create through their tastes and styles in the sense that Bourdieu (1989) theorizes. It is evident that this binarism which is central in the Orientalist and First World feminist discourse and builds an essentialist discursive hierarchy between Muslim women and the Western women is now established between the new upper and middle-class urban Islamist women and rural and lower class veiled women. While the former is described as a fragment of modern culture and as progressive, the latter group is described both by the urban Islamist women and by the scholars as traditional and backward or at the very least the lower class newly urban women who is struggling for upward mobility and for catching up with the trend. Each shift in power that carries the peripheral groups to centre creates new hierarchies.

Another recent study on women and contemporary Islamic consumerism is by Turkish scholars Sertaç Sehlikoğlu and Fahri Karakaş. Sehlikoğlu received her PhD in anthropology from Cambridge University and Karakaş received his PhD in management from McGill University in Canada. In the abstract of their article titled “We Can Have the Cake and Eat It too: Leisure and spirituality at ‘veiled’ hotels in Turkey” (2016) they state that they study Islamic consumption and leisure patterns by dwelling on the bridging of neo-liberalism and Islamic identities. The authors base the aim of their ethnographic study on *tesettür* hotels in Turkey upon this perspective. These alternative hotels offer services that are compatible to Islamic way of living and besides the pleasures and luxury offered in other hotels.<sup>26</sup> Gender segregated swimming pools, saunas, and recreation areas are designed to satisfy their women customers; religious talks, Friday prayers, and Koran reading sessions are organized for spiritual concerns; special menus and evening prayers are offered

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<sup>26</sup> The first Islamic hotel of Turkey, Caprice Hotel was opened in 1996 in Aegean coast of Turkey. A case study of the hotel by Mücahit Bilici (2009) examines it as a new public space of Islamic identity that functions as a filter through which the new Islamist upper classes create a status for themselves. See “İslamın Bronzlaşan Yüzü: Caprice Hotel örnek olayı” in (ed.) Nilüfer Göle, *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri*, (pp. 216-236), İstanbul: Metis.

during Ramadan to attract pious families. The authors note that the services are getting more personalized and diversified as the number of hotels increase. The study focuses on the consumption practices of female customers “as part of defining and redefining their newly developing identity that is Islamic and spiritual, as well as modern and luxurious” and asks how the prevalent discourse of capitalism and Islamism are materialized in the spaces of leisure via consumption (p. 158).

After the section that describes the articulation Islamic and capitalist references that are materialized at these hotels and that create an environment in which Islamist subjectivities evolve by being triggered by global aspirations and lifestyles, Sehlikoğlu and Karakaş summarize the marketing strategies as offering an alternative holiday in which commodity turns into “a performative experience” loaded with Western style symbols and pleasures. The authors then draw attention to the rising Islamist bourgeoisie and how their lifestyles have become mainstream. The statement of a hotel customer that the authors quote clearly shows the new status and demands of this new bourgeoisie: “We have every right to have fun and enjoy the wealth of the country as much as they do. Thank God, we now have opportunities for that” (p. 161). As the authors also note, the sense of empowerment and rebellion is evident which is not limited with their desires about enjoying their wealth but, more significantly, influential in their struggles with patriarchal systems embedded in secularism and Islamism. Sehlikoğlu and Karakaş emphasize the agency of Islamist women by stating that they open up spaces by mobilizing the Islamist business and also as consumers of the Islamist enterprises, which tend to be male-centred, demand better quality goods and services for women. Describing women’s agency through their status as consumers is very much parallel with the arguments about veiled women’s consumerism in *tesettür* clothing.

In the results section of the article the first point they mention is the desire expressed by the women customers to escape from the routine of everyday life by having “diverse, powerful, and unique experiences” (p. 163) which is actually not specific to these customers but very common in the contemporary global societies. However the customers are content that they can access these experiences without being in the *haram* zone in which they can even seek more stimulating and

adventurous experiences. The second point is the spiritual aspects of holidays in *tesettür* hotels which is mentioned as another escape from the daily routines of the material world. Sehlikoğlu and Karakaş note that especially during Ramadan the demand of the Islamist families who want to “combine spiritual fulfilment with relaxation with family” is at its peak (p. 165). One women customer expresses their holiday as “We can combine holiday and spirituality here. It is a breathing space for our souls and also a place for developing heartfelt connections among us” (p. 165). However experiencing spirituality at a holiday space designed to offer the luxury and pleasure bears a paradox in itself which is also mentioned by the authors as the third point which they call “spiritual dissonance” (p. 165) and explain by addressing the contradiction between the Islamic principle of avoiding waste and extravagance and the high quality holiday experience that turns into “commodity fetishism” (Marx, 1976, cited in Sehlikoğlu & Karakaş, 2016, p. 166). Yet, they argue that the dissonance does not mean being distant to moral constrains, as one interlocutor explains:

I sometimes feel guilty staying in these six star resorts and enjoying open buffet while there is poverty in every corner of the world. On the other hand, sometimes I feel, why shouldn't we enjoy our life as Muslims? When we experience abundance, we can show more gratitude and thanksgiving to God (p. 166).

As the ethnographic study of Sehlikoğlu and Karakaş shows, the case of Islamic hotels in Turkey is another embodiment of neo-liberal Islamism in Turkey with their integration of capitalism and consumer culture to an Islamic lifestyle. The article supports the widely circulated argument in the discourse on women and *tesettür* fashion that the role of women's agency in the formation and development of this market through their demands for specialized and better quality commodities is very significant. Moreover, in addition to the discussions of headscarf in the formation and expression of their identities, leisure comes to the fore with this article as another sphere entangled with Islamic consumerism which indicates the new subject positions of Muslim women who no longer struggle in the thresholds of participation to public sphere but demand reorganizations of public spaces for their leisure activities. However I agree with Sehlikoğlu and Karakaş that this agency is based on their status as consumers and “Although they have created feminine, modern and Islamic sites of leisure in *tesettür* hotels through their struggle with

double patriarchies – that of the Islamists and the secularists – they need Islamist capitalism’s subsistence for the survival of their victory” (p. 167). Therefore it is important to recognize that the agency of the Islamist women is still limited by the patriarchal capitalist constituents of the market economy and Islamist business. Their double struggle with the secular and Islamist systems of patriarchy stays at the consumption level and focusing on their agency as consumers leads to neglecting the lack of their presence as leading agents of Islamic business. As Zehra Yılmaz (2011) righteously argues, *tesettür* fashion, Islamic hotels, and other forms of Islamic consumerism have become the signifiers of contentment in the Islamic lifestyles. Nevertheless Muslim women who have come to be the representatives of the new Islamic consumerism, fashion and luxury with their increased presence in public life “could not become a shareholder of the Muslim capital” (2011, p. 812).

To sum up the main critical points in these three articles, personalization of the goods and services in the Islamic market and personalization of styles and consumption patterns is stressed. This emphasis signifies the divergence from the emphasis on the collective Islamist identity in the previous discursive period. Secondly, by arguing that Islamist women no longer want to be marked by their difference of piety but by their similarity of lifestyles, the authors create a discursive formation that challenges the discourse of othering that underlines the deep polarization between the Islamists and the secularists. Thirdly, the demand for luxury by the Islamist women is emphasized by juxtaposing it with piety. The demand for living an Islamic way of life by luxurious services and goods seems to be an unexpected phenomenon considering the efforts of the Islamists to create more conservative and modest ways of living Islam as *şuurlu* Muslims in the 1990s. Lastly, as I noted above, the notion of agency of Muslim women is equated or reduced to agency in consumption and in their demands from the market. All these points can be associated with the impact of the rising economic and political power of the Islamist movement and its integration to neoliberal globalization. As part of the Middle Eastern women’s studies literature, these articles can be considered as a counter-discourse against the rising neo-Orientalism that studies the non-Western world by either exotising the cultural variations (Boehmer, 1998) or defining them

in terms of their marginality with respect to the West (Spivak, 2012) because Muslim women's lifestyle's similarities with the western culture.

Even during the later years of AKP governments and the heyday of neo-liberal Islamism, headscarf issue continued to effect the lives of many Muslim women in Turkey and continued to be part of the academic discourse. In this respect the field study of Dilek Cindoglu (2011) should be mentioned as an important work that powerfully reveals the impact of the headscarf ban for the university students and state employees which also spilled over into the private sector. *The Headscarf Ban and Discrimination: Professional Headscarved Women in the Labour Market* is published as a report of the research conducted in Ankara, Istanbul, and Konya for Democratization Program of TESEV (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı – Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation). It comprises interviews, focus groups, and group interviews with opinion leaders, professional and veiled married/single-employed/ unemployed women and with men married to veiled professional women, with 79 people in total.

I would like to briefly mention the findings of the research which shows that headscarf ban has a negative influence on the employment of the veiled women not only in the state but also in the private sector and that the visibility of the veiled women is a hampering factor in their recruitment, in the wage policies, work performance, and in their promotions. Various pressures arising from either business sphere or domestic traditional gender roles are the difficulties that prevent veiled women to participate to work life. Cindoglu argues that the professional veiled woman who cannot find a job believes that she is not respected in the domestic sphere and her desire to participate to public life increases (p. 7). She describes the negative attitude of the private sector which is manifest in various ways towards the veiled employees as the “spillover effect” and notes that the private sector expect their veiled employees to be “invisible” (p. 8).

Cindoglu presents the numerous ways veiled women encounter discrimination in work life, among which are discriminations at the hiring stage, in memberships to professional associations, and promotions. With respect to the attitudes of the

family members of the veiled women, the research shows that women had gone through several conflicts particularly with their parents because of their decisions to wear headscarf despite the ban. The parents mostly support education and professional lives of their daughters and ask them to submit to the ban. Moreover, another finding that challenges the expectations that associate veiled women with traditionalism is that women do not consider motherhood as not an hindrance to their work life. They resist the religious discourses that state that women do not have to work outside and prefer to participate to work life at least in the civil society. Lastly the research shows that the spillover effect of the headscarf ban on the private sector leads to discrimination of women in the latter sphere in an almost indistinguishable way.

Cindoglu states that the experiences of the headscarved women who were subject to the ban when they were university students<sup>27</sup> and then when they started to participate to work life cause long lasting feelings of offence and disappointment (p.43). An important finding in the study is that veiled women continue to face discrimination even in the companies in the Islamist business sector, who perceive them as a labour force that have no other choice but to work in an Islamic company and this perception puts them in a vulnerable position to accept lower wages (pp 92-93). Moreover women are still given posts at the “backstage” in order not to present a conservative image to their customers.<sup>28</sup>

The research of Cindoglu presents a strikingly different depiction of veiled women from the studies on Islamic consumerism and challenges the discourse that women's empowerment and agency can be read from their lifestyle and consumption patterns by reminding that the headscarf issue continues to limit women's public participation and self realization in numerous drastic ways. The study also exhibits that the spillover effect of the headscarf ban is articulated to the

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<sup>27</sup> In their study based on in depth interviews with veiled students in Turkey and Northern Cyprus Beybin Kejanlioğlu and Oğuzhan Taş (2009) also present detailed accounts of these students who had experienced emotional predicaments because of the ban and decided to wear wigs to pursue their studies which caused further emotional problems.

<sup>28</sup> The findings of Cindoglu about Islamic business sector are also supported by Meryem Karaca (2013) with a field study on veiled professional women working in conservative enterprises.

patriarchal nature of the state and private sectors and turns headscarved professional women into a fragile labour force. According to Cindoglu, despite the discriminations and pressures, women's subjectivities cannot be defined within traditional gender roles ascribed to women by Islam as women struggle to overcome these challenges.

## **6.2. Islamist Women's Movement in Civil Society and Politics**

*Dişil Dindarlık: İslamcı Kadın Hareketinin Dönüşümü* (*Feminine Piety: The Transformation of Islamist Women's Movement*) (2015) is a recent and comprehensive study of Islamist women's movement by Zehra Yılmaz. Yılmaz is a Turkish political scientist who received her masters and doctoral degrees at Ankara University. *Dişil Dindarlık*, which is published in Turkish, is based on her doctoral thesis study. The study is important not only because it contextualizes the movement within the dynamics of globalizing Islam but also because it successfully presents the diversity within the movement by focusing on critical issues about women's rights and gender inequality through the in-depth interviews conducted with women from numerous groups of Islamist women's NGOs, other Islamist NGOs, Gülen community, and Directorate of Religious Affairs. Because of this variety and the depth of the data that she presents from her fieldwork, I take it as an ethnographic study on women in Islamist civil society. She explains her aim as to read how local dynamics of Islamist civil society is related to neo-liberal globalization and to discuss with respect to postcolonial theory how neo-liberal globalization is appropriated by the local agents by taking Islamist women's movement as a case of reference. Moreover, she argues that particularly women's rights issues which are mostly attempted to be envisaged as global values, are always subject to local politics and this fact made her focus on the local's relation to neoliberal globalization rather than neoliberal globalization's relation to the local (p. 31). I consider *Dişil Dindarlık* as a work that meets the challenge of contemporary studies on Islam of understanding religious communities in association to a wider international network, globalism, and of cosmopolitanism in addition to relating them to their own local conditions (Lawrence, 2010). In this sense it has a distinct contribution to the ethnographic discourse on women and

Islam in Turkey which has been contextualizing its problematiques mostly with respect to the local transformations and transitions of Islamist movement.

In the first chapter Yılmaz firstly addresses the global Islam during the 1990s that was characterized by terror, anti-capitalism and anti-modernism skilfully integrates postcolonial theory to her discussions of the use of the concepts of subaltern (Spivak, 1988, cited in Yılmaz, p. 39) and victim in the Islamist discourse while integrating the concept of hybridity (Bhabha, 1984, cited in Yılmaz, p. 50). She argues that within the framework of Islamist women's movement in Turkey we can see that “‘subaltern’ is victimized and made to be a part of relations of dominance” particularly over the headscarf issue (p. 46) and explains that when the category of subaltern which is meant to include any silenced group is turned into category of victim to resist the hegemonic powers that exclude one certain group (headscarved women), victimhood becomes essentialized. According to Yılmaz the victim or the oppressed benefit from this condition and seek ways to share the power of the hegemony through using his or her victimhood and hybridity in the way theorized by Bhabha works to lead to creation of spaces and opportunities that soothes the grief of the victim and give a share from the power of the authority (p. 53). As I mentioned in my discussion about the role of othering in the identity formation, hybridity is a necessary challenge to taking secular and Islamist identities as essential categories and it creates the conducive discursive framework to see how the two categories are influenced by each other. Yılmaz sees a potential of power demands by the victimized side in these interactions and sees ultimately a possibility of change in who occupies the powerful positions. Thus it can be deduced from her argument that victimized groups' route to power passes from hybridity and victimization becomes no longer an oppressing emotion in their subjectivities. As an activist explains the case in the next chapter with respect to the change in the status of Muslims in the AKP government:

(...) today there is a changing Muslim profile... A Muslim profile that tasted power emerges... the years of 96 and 97 are important... These times are the periods that Muslims started to hold the power in their hands. That time is the period in which Anatolian capital that is called ‘Anatolian Lions’ is revitalized, a period in which the Muslim could say I'm here. I mean I am talking about a profile of a person who moved from cleaning jobs to other classes. I am telling this because with this self confidence he or she may

have got stronger, taking a revenge may be a too strong expression, but a little bit about their victimization. It seems that Muslims are out of their victimization in a self confident condition, in a condition that they can raise their voices... (p. 99).

The theoretical framework that Yılmaz adopts is another distinctive aspect of the study. Among the researches that I analysed in this study, it is the only one that has a perspective based on postcolonial theory. The absence of a postcolonial perspective in the discourse can be explained with the general idea among secular feminists that it is irrelevant to the Turkish context since Turkey has not been a colonized country and Turkish history of modernization is incomparable with the colonization history and the civilizing mission it realized. On the other hand as Yılmaz also notes, the critiques of postcolonial theory has been welcomed by the Islamist scholars to analyse the outcomes of state secularization and modernization which has turned into internal Orientalism (p. 197). Therefore it can be argued that the preferences of theoretical frameworks can indicate a political standpoint in knowledge production. On the basis of her integration of the concepts of hybridity, subalternnes and victimhood, it can be seen that the standpoint of Yılmaz cannot be categorized as secular feminism. On the other hand she is also distant to Islamism by her focus on the potentials of achieving power through the victim status. I associate this standpoint with the influence of the momentum of the political power that the Islamist movement gained especially since 2007 with the AKP governments in such a way to make its previous rhetoric of victimization by secular modernization invalid.

In the second chapter Yılmaz explores how Islamism in Turkey is articulated to globalization and observes this process by focusing on Gülen community's strategy of negotiation that aims to "articulate Islamists to globalization and remove the distinction between secular and religious spaces" by carrying religiosity to every space through individual conducts (which means engaging in economic activities for men), behaviours, and outlooks (which means wearing headscarf for women) as a means to struggle with Orientalism that victimizes Islamists. Accompanied with integration to globalization, this shift in means of struggle requires a new interpretation of Islamic lifestyles (pp. 77-78). The new Islamism that is

characterized by redefinitions of and negotiations with Western modernity that involved re-interpretation of Kur'an, flows of information that connect Muslims globally, diversification in terms of Islamic beliefs and practices, and yet pursuing its function to impose a sense of community and traditionalism to the lonely individuals of the modern times. Yılmaz notes that questioning of traditionalism in gender issues is not possible within the Islamic communities and rational readings of Koran was initiated at the Divinity Faculty of Ankara University and by Islamist women. She argues that "Women have taken part in globalization and re-interpretation of Islam as important actors" (p. 95). Yılmaz attributes a great role to Islamist women in the transformation of Islamism and refers to their attitudes of adopting victimhood to achieve and maintain their share of power. She argues that the distinctiveness of the AKP period arises from the adoption of victimhood and turning into a discourse of revenge softened with articulation of the discourse of democratization and civil rights. Meanwhile, as Yılmaz notes, Islamist women continue to be uncritical about women's traditional gender roles. Yılmaz successfully addresses the global links of contemporary Islamist movement and it is important that she does not see Islamist women only as objects of the globalization and communities, on the contrary she recognizes their central position. However, even though I acknowledge the contribution of her discussion of victimhood about the changing power dynamics of Islamist movement, I do not agree with her that all Islamist women benefit from their discrimination and victimization for achieving power considering that not every case of victimhood turns into a success story, as shown by Cindoğlu (2011), and not every powerful Islamist women have a history of victimization. This seems to be an overgeneralization as well as injustice to the wide diversity of struggles for empowerment among Islamist women by reducing their agency and self-realization to a discourse of agony.

The third chapter is devoted to discussions about feminism and Islamist women's movement as Yılmaz asks questions about women, Islam, and feminism to the women she interviews. When asked whether they are feminists or not most of the women define herself as primarily Muslim, while some of them define as "Muslim feminist" and others completely refuse to call themselves feminist (p. 153) and yet they develop a local understanding of feminism or from time to time utilize its

arguments in some issues. Yılmaz states that almost all of the women whom she interviewed believe that Islam bestows women every right they need and women's bodies belong to God, not themselves; they completely reject homosexuality and abortion; believe in preservation of the traditional family and gender roles based on complementarity. On the issues of body, gender roles, and sexuality, she underlines women's solid conservative standpoint and she is convinced that there is no hybridity or potential of change despite the overarching impacts of globalization. I find this assumption problematic too considering her theoretical framework that attempts to avoid essentialism. Moreover, as Sultan Yavuz Özinanır (2015) mentions in her review essay, there are some challenging cases that headscratched women support LGBT activism.

Yılmaz lastly attempts to explain "how the link established by the Islamist women between their visibility in their *tesettür* in public spaces and their traditional roles turned into political gains" (p. 181) and notes in the first place that conscious choices of adopting *tesettür* have become the symbol of liberation as well as sources of discrimination. Yılmaz firstly discusses of commodification of *tesettür* in the Islamic fashion industry by showing its central role in the political tension between the discourses of imposed veiling and the discourse of selection/preference of Islamic clothing styles. This point is a contribution to the existing discourse on veiling and consumption and also the discussions on the othering of the Islamist women by secularists. She notes that it is widely stated by the Islamist women that the tension arises from secular women's neglection of Islamist women's conscious choice of *tesettür* styles which is the symbol of their modern middle-class positions (p.192). Then she quotes statement of Merve Kavaklı who explains the othering and discrimination practices against veiled women with an analogy with apartheid and through articulating the concept of being black. Kavaklı explains her aim in this analogy to make the issue more comprehensible in the international discourse and attract the attention of international public opinion. Yılmaz states that with the reference to a common victimhood, it is aimed to address an imagined global community of Muslims. Another case that Yılmaz mentions the "No votes if there is no veiled candidate" campaign which was successful in attracting media attention but could not achieve support from AKP,

particularly from male Islamists. Women's claims for their right to pray in the mosques, which are predominantly male spaces in Turkey, and also their agencies to create their own religiosities apart from Islamic communities are other cases in which women's public participation is turned into claims for equal rights, even if they did not turn in to political gains. The last discussion of Yılmaz resonates Raudvere's ethnography in the previous discursive period. She notes that in the Islamic discourse women are dominantly associated with domestic spaces and Gülen community's organization of women is based on this association while it also transforms homes into in-between spaces in women's participation to public life (p. 230). Following Raudvere's (2002) study of the semi-public space of a Sufi community, Saktanber's (2002) study of an Islamic residential complex, Arat's study of ladies' commissions of Welfare Party that also involves the study of how political issues enter the private domain, Yılmaz draws attention to how the borders between public and private are bound to be challenged with the transformations within the Islamist movement. In all the cases mentioned in *Dişil Dindarlık* the issue of visibility of the Islamist women leads to redefinitions and negotiations of the borders of the spheres which are determined by patriarchal systems. This is the process that Yılmaz describes as feminine Islamization of public space. The studies by Raudvere (2002), Saktanber (2002b) and Yılmaz (2015) overlap with Mounira Charrad's (2011) argument that the contemporary studies on the women in the Middle East tend to focus more on how Islam is lived. She notes that the studies on women's demands and endeavours to create their spaces and ritual practices to live Islam show that they have been successful in challenging orthodoxy through these means (Charrad, 2011, p. 426).

In terms of its methodological approach *Dişil Dindarlık* cannot be regarded as reflexive because Yılmaz clearly refrains from integrating her subject status to her analysis. On the other hand we can hear the voices of many Islamist women from the civil society organizations, prominent members of the Islamist women's movement, and women from the Gülen community. This preference helps her to present the transformation of the Islamist women's movement from the perspective of its own members and reduce her distance to the research subjects. Considering

that the book targets Turkish audience, it opens up the possibility of these voices to be part of the local discussions of Islamism.

The polarization between Islamist/ religious Muslim/ pious women and secular and Kemalist women that prevents the two sides to develop dialogue and cooperation is a reflection of the deep divide in the politics which got even deeper in many respects with the AKP period. However the reactions driven by the polarization are different for each side. Berna Turam (2008) delves on these reactions in her ethnographic research on Kemalist and pious women leaders and presents the study in her article “Turkish Women Divided by Politics: Secularist Activism versus Pious Non-Resistance”. Turam is a Turkish scholar of sociology who received her PhD at McGill University in Canada and is an associate professor of sociology and international relations at Northeastern University in the US. The article is published a year after her well-known ethnographic work on Gülen community, *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement* (2007).

Based on her participant observations and ethnographic interviews that she conducted with women leaders of Islamist and Kemalist politics, Turam compares their different patterns of political engagement. She notes that the research began prior to the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007 which she describes as “a politically shaky milieu” (p. 476). She examines the “confrontational activism of radical secularists whose collective action against political Islam mainly undermines pious women in headscarves rather than Islamist movement *per se*” in contrast to the “development of individualized forms of ‘politics of non-defiance’” (476). Therefore she locates the political context in Turkey right at the heart of her research subject. By considering her academic position, the study can be thought as targeting a Western, particularly academic audience who is also familiar with her previous ethnographic work on Gülen community. Considering that the American agenda was dominated by the War on Terror and Islamophobia, this research can also be read as an attempt to shatter the stereotypes of radical Islamism and its threatening collective identity and activism. Her emphasis on the individualized non-defiance of the women leaders of the Islamist movement can be associated with this attempt.

Turam's selection of her research subjects is the major problematical aspect of the study that seems to be serving the political purpose of the study and thus determines her knowledge production. She selects her Kemalist interviewees among the organizers of anti-Islamic protests which gathered millions of people in many cities of Turkey. In her group of pious leaders there are female members of the parliament of AKP, the wives of the ministers of the AKP government, and the wife of the president. I find her selection of women leaders in the latter group very problematic for the reason that she assumes the wives of the ministers and the president to be political leaders and gives no information about whether the women members of the parliament had been involved in Islamist political activism. Thus the group becomes incompatible with the Kemalist group and their answers have the potential to be misleading if they are not engaged in activism. Turam accepts the limitations of her choice but still considers her attempt as to present "just one snapshot (among many possible others) of a broader transformation regarding the radicalization of secularists and de-radicalization of Islamists in Turkey (Turam 2007, 2008; Özyürek, 2006; Tugal, forthcoming, cited in Turam, 2008, p. 477).

She describes pious women as people who are not only religious but people who attribute a core value to it in their lives. They do not have a plan to change the social order but they give priority to faith in the public sphere as well as other spheres of life. They avoid conflict with secularism, they are loyal to their nation and state, they have not been part of any collective action and wait for the political reforms that will amend state's secularist authoritarianism. Their ages vary between early twenties and late forties in contrast to the significantly older women in the Kemalist group. The women in the second group is described by Turam as women who base their lives and activism on laicism, defend the control of religion by the state, defend state feminism, and advocate "military's dominant role in protecting the secular Republic" (p. 478).

Turam explains the significant political developments and crises that lead to fierce reactions of secularists and then introduces her arguments about radical secularist women. She shares her impressions from the streets protests against secularist

backlash and quotes the statements of the organizers of the protests. One respondent expresses her fear of sharia (Islamic rule) and being like Iran and another Kemalist women says that they have no problem with Muslims, they are Muslims themselves but are against the use of headscarf as a political symbol. Turam argues that the fear of Kemalist women make their attitude towards veiled women even more hostile than towards Islamist men and this attitude prevents them from producing creative solutions for the common problems of women. One respondent also adds a feeling of responsibility to the fear from Islamic authoritarianism.

If Sharia [Islamic law] comes, we, the Turkish women, will suffer most from it. Islamist women do not understand this. Similar to Iranian women who participated in the revolution, they seem to invite the devil that will harm them most. Considering their short-sightedness in this matter, it becomes the sheer responsibility of Kemalist feminists to protect the future of Turkish women (p. 483).

Fear is accompanied with frustration of observing their life values are being eroded and their secularist struggles of emancipating women are “defeated” (p. 484). The Kemalist women now see the secular state official at high position as the guardians of the secular Republic and they are disappointed by the support of the EU and US to the democratization reforms of AKP that aim to limit the authority of the army.

On the other edge of the polarization Turam describes pious women who deliberately chose to stay silent and avoid tension and conflict. A public figure in AKP explains this choice.

If our headscarf has become the trigger of so much hostility and divide in society, I think we, the pious women, should just take a step back in order to stop this negative energy. I am not arguing for defeatism, but I feel responsible as a covered woman to diffuse this never-ending tension, as it has only caused futile confrontation and nothing productive . . . I don't believe a cause can be won through so much pain, hatred and hostility . . . at least not according to my faith (p. 486).

Turam states that since they have this point of view the AKP women do not involve in collective public action but support EU reforms that will open up more space for democratic rights and freedoms. One point that she misses, I think, is the power position of these women who support a party which has been achieving a significant success in the elections of the last decade. Since AKP has become the governing party, the veiled women and Islamic politics are no longer at the margins of the

power mechanisms and it is the Kemalist side who have already lost their governing position and turned into an oppositional group against the ruling party. So it does not make sense for the AKP women to organize protests and engage in political activism when the solution of the headscarf issue is only a matter of time. Besides as Turam also notes, the respondents in this group are the ones who prefer “to relate to state as individuals”, this makes them “good citizens” vis-à-vis the state and acquire more respect and recognition (p. 486).

The outcomes of non-resistance are positive for these women however, as Turam also notes, the outcomes of their silence cannot be positive for all Turkish women. Their reluctance to engage in collective action not only hinders prospective cooperation and interactions with other collectives of women but also prevents them from addressing common gender problems in the society. She also adds that this choice also reproduces the stereotypes about submissive pious women. After arguing that Kemalist women who see the pious women as a threat to their social lifestyle stay blind to the transformation of the pious identities in the urban context and fail to grasp the economic upward mobility that brings along and increasing level of education and shift to a more Western lifestyle, she states that both groups stay unwilling to communicate with each other. In her conclusion, she also notes that the divergence between the two groups is even perpetuated as the social and economic differences are levelled out.

The article clearly demonstrates how reproduction of stereotypes in the political sphere serves to deepen the divergence between two ideological groups in Turkey and underlines the urgent need to overcome the prejudices and reluctances to cooperate. On the other hand her selection of the group of the pious women whom she describes as leaders determines the way she formulates her research question. By forming this group she automatically assigns the wives of the minister and the president a leadership position as if it is a necessary outcome of political power and does not mention in any way how these women actualized their leadership without even engaging in organization of a collective action. When it comes to the female members of the parliament which she claims to include in her study, she refrains from presenting the voices of these women who are actually supposed to be in

active politics. One member of the parliament that we hear in the study, Suna Memecan was not known as a political figure in Islamist movement before she was elected in 2007 and her non-resistance is more related to her disinterestedness rather than to a strategy of remaining silent. “She also denies any need for the feminist defense of pious women’s rights. When I asked about her gender politics, Memecan answered, ‘just because I am a woman, I do not have to have political agendas for women’” (p.488). As Nükhet Sirman also notes, many female members of AKP were not among the women activists of the movement (Sirman, 2007, cited in Turam, 2008, p. 488). Moreover, by selecting more “silent” leaders of the Islamist movement, she creates a depiction of Islamist women in a way that they will not be perceived as threats to the secular social order and also represents them as the victims of symbolic violence exerted by the Kemalists.

Another outcome of her analysis of pious women’s non-resistance to the secular pressures and reactions against the headscarf and more generally to their public visibility is that it perpetuates the discourse of gendered politics of the Islamist movement that had expelled its outstanding women activists. As a result, we encounter in the study and also in AKP politics women who do not question and challenge the patriarchal discourse that eliminates women’s activism and who are represented as the female leaders of Islamist politics.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, when we consider Islamist women’s activism in civil society platforms as presented by Çayır (2000), Özçetin (2009), and Yılmaz (2015) the argument that pious women stay non-resistant does not seem complete, if not valid.

A detailed study by Ayşe Ayata and Fatma Tütüncü (2008) focusing on women politicians and politics of AKP provides a much more comprehensive analysis. Ayşe Ayata is a political scientist who received her BA at METU and M.Sc. and

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<sup>29</sup> Özlem Tür and Zana Çitak (2006) state in their study focusing on women’s auxiliaries of AKP that they have been successful in attracting many disinterested women to AKP politics and aim to be the mediators of a transformation in the society towards gender equality. When it comes to the headscarf issue Tür and Çitak mentions two groups of people in the auxiliaries, the ones who believe that the problem will be solved with economic progress and the others who raise their voices for lifting of the ban and for the solution of the issue. Both groups trust Tayyip Erdoğan as a leader to solve the problem and follow his order of not causing conflict and tension in the society over headscarf issue (p. 272). Thus submission to Erdogan’s orders should be included to the reasons of women’s non-resistance.

PhD at University of Kent in the UK in the field of political science. She is a faculty member of the Political Science and Public Administration Department at METU. Fatma Tütüncü received her BA, M.Sc. and PhD degrees in the field of political science at METU. She teaches politics at Abant Izzet Baysal University in Bolu, Turkey. Their article “Party Politics of the AKP (2002–2007) and the Predicaments of Women at the Intersection of the Westernist, Islamist and Feminist Discourses in Turkey” is an ethnographic study in politics that draws attention to the political strategy of AKP that comprises a wide range of discourses including Islamism, feminism, Westernism, and liberalism but with a “meticulous selectivity” (Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008, p. 363). The authors critically ask “what are the repercussions of this strategic mentality in terms of the women’s question? Does it attract various women’s groups and thus create solidarity among different voices? Or on the contrary does it not truncate or even silence the demands of women?” and analyse these issues on three angles: “women’s representations and visibility, changes in political ideology and rhetoric, and the adaptation of party organization to the demands of women” (p. 363). The article argues that “even though there has been an increased visibility of women in the AKP politics, this has not lead to an increased representation of women, or any kind of structural change. Gender issues have been subsumed under ideological debates of Islam, secularism and westernization” (p. 366).

The conservative rhetorics and policies of the AKP and the oppositional reactions to against these transformations of Turkish politics marks the political context in Turkey since 2002. It is clear that the implications of conservatism of AKP in gender issues have determined the will to know of this study and caused an academic interest in the party politics and rhetoric about gender and women’s rights. The study should be seen as a feminist intervention to the political and academic literature that celebrates the neoliberalism of the party politics. In terms of the ethnographic literature on women and Islam in Turkey it should be read in relation to Ayşe Saktanber’s (2002) and Yeşim Arat’s (2005) studies on women’s auxiliaries of RP/FP to observe the reflections of the political change in the representations of the Islamist women in Islamist party politics.

In their research Ayata and Tütüncü utilize several methods that include participant observations and informal conversations during the Second Congress on the Women in Local Governments at the Bilkent Hotel, Ankara, semi-structured interviews with 15 women at the head office of women's auxiliaries and the headquarters of AKP in Ankara, review of several newspapers, as well as AKP's web sources, pamphlets, and bulletins. They present the politics of the party from 2002 to 2007 which corresponds to the first period of AKP governments.

They explain the historical background behind the rise of AKP as well as emergence of Islamist and feminist movements, the ideas that these movements had shared and how they come to be opposing sides. Then they note that rise of AKP has shifted the oppositional positions in the headscarf debates with its stress on democratization reforms that also included reforms about women's rights required by the EU and the establishment of women's auxiliaries that were composed of veiled and unveiled women. The women auxiliaries of AKP readopted the methods of Welfare Party Ladies Commission and made home visits before 2003 elections and they became strikingly successful in many provinces of Turkey. Appreciating their support, Erdoğan organized women congresses and asked them to take care of the poor, elderly, and handicapped in every corner of Turkey; allowances, health-care, free meals and other services to the poor became a central in the agenda without, however, offering structural solutions to poverty.

Ayata and Tütüncü then address the particular issues that create controversies in AKP politics about women. Firstly they focus on the debates about women's political participation. While Erdoğan and other leading women party members argue that it is women's personal reasons like shyness, disinterestedness, motherhood and home duties that prevent women to enter the political sphere. Ayata and Tütüncü regard this explanation as a contradiction when the success of the strategy to bring politics to women's homes is considered. The authors also observe that women in the auxiliaries do not see these as obstacles to their participation. Quota as a solution to women's under-representation is rejected both by the leading male politicians of the party and by the women that the authors interviewed on the grounds that women do not need it and it is an insult to them.

However women also accept that in practice they cannot overcome the male dominance in their party activities, as one women from Kırklareli organization explains, “women have the responsibility but have no authority in the AKP” (p. 376). Ayata and Tütüncü further argue that the complete devotion required by the party also demands privileging collectivity rather than individuality and thus causes discouragement in women. “Underlining such discouragement is its conservatism revolving around the family friendly policies, blended with religious patriarchy” (p. 377). The debates about the private sphere is presented in the next section and Ayata and Tütüncü regard them as central to understand the patriarchal face of AKP starting from its political discourse that strongly associates women with motherhood. They show that the publications, statements and projects of Ayşenur Kurtoğlu, a founding member of AKP, represents the conservative family discourse of the party. She states in an interview:

Our greatest and not yet spoiled value is our family system. We should be protective to our families. We should mostly protect and greatly care for the family institution . . . Today, technology, television and internet are threats against the family structure. In the last three or four years the rate of divorce has increased because of economic conditions and the family life has been shaken. Economic crisis has negative influences on the family. We should talk about them. Universities, government, NGOs and local governments should cooperate and do something for solving these problems (Zaman Daily, August 21, 2003, quoted in Ayata & Tütüncü, p. 379).

The second case mentioned in the article that illustrates the patriarchal ideology of AKP regarding the private sphere is the adultery debate initiated by Erdoğan’s demand for bringing legal punishment to adultery claiming that “We should take all precautions to protect the Turkish family” (p. 380). Ayata and Tütüncü state that his demand was supported by a public survey in September 2004 which revealed 84% positive opinion about the legal punishment to adultery. Despite harsh reactions from feminists, the male party members defended the punishment by claiming that it protects women. In the conclusion, the authors emphasize that despite the claims of AKP that it separates religion from politics, in practice the politics of the party is based on Islamic principles which is most evident in its approach to gender issues.

Ayata and Tütüncü convincingly show that women’s participation and activism in AKP is dominated by patriarchal Islamist references of party politics, discourse, and

organization. Concerning the central debates that the article elaborates, it can be argued that both patriarchy and Islamism are at work to constrain women's individualities and turn them into collective subjects within the movement. The question of to what extent women can and are willing to resist this double authoritarianism remains to be a critical one. The authors mention that there are some opposing voices but they seem to be very weak in the male dominated hierarchy of the party. Ayata and Tütüncü also point the changes in women's opinions in the direction of the party ideology particularly on the issue of women's political representation. This indicates that there are cases in which subjectivities are transformed under the influence of the ideology of AKP in a way to defend its conservative policies and thus reduce the possibilities of opposing gender inequalities in the political sphere and developing solutions and policies to alter the gender hierarchy in the private sphere.

The article supports the arguments by Saktanber (2002) and Arat (2005) that women's agencies which bring them to Islamist party politics encounter gender discrimination legitimated by traditionalism and Islamic principles. However Ayata and Tütüncü also show that women's auxiliaries of AKP diverge from the Welfare/Virtue Party Ladies Commissions in their more radical attitude that defend the patriarchal Islamist ideology of the party and their demands and expectations for more spaces of upward mobility.

Ayata and Tütüncü clearly reflect their subject positions as feminist scholars and their field experiences. The details about the field experience of the researchers also support their arguments about the gendered rhetoric and organization of AKP. There are many voices from the prominent party members to the women from the auxiliaries in the article which vividly present the conflicting standpoints.

### **6.3. Concluding Remarks**

In my analysis of this discursive period I firstly aimed to present how the two themes of research, consumption and politics that I analysed in the previous period have changed in terms of the circulated statements and discursive formations. I also

aimed to observe how the change in the political milieu with the AKP in the government and the conservative and neo-liberal policies caused a transformation in women's representations. In the first section that focuses mainly on headscarf and *tesettür* as a symbol of Islamic consumerism, we observe the influence of "commercial Islam" (Atay, 2011) in Muslim women's lives and in their representations. The dichotomies of traditional/modern and progressive/backward are defined over the practices of consumption in the discourse. Firstly, as in the previous period, consumption is stated to be an integral part of their subjectivities, it is presented as a form of expression of their identities and tastes that implies their difference from the lower classes and similarity to the upper-class unveiled women. Visibility is associated with expression of identity, and subjectivities are shaped by consumption choices which are also means of expressing the new Islamic identity in the neo-liberal years. I consider this tendency as an outcome of another patriarchal domination over women, which is the domination of the market economy, particularly the Islamic market. I call it patriarchal because it is dominated by male entrepreneurs who are unwilling to share their economic power with women. While their Islamic belief reminds the women to preserve their modesty, the market pressurizes them to consume conspicuously by constantly changing fashion, offering new designs, and warning them not to stay out-of fashion. This is not a one way process since women themselves have turned into "good consumers" who demand new goods and services, however this transformation only keeps them in the viscous circle of consumption. Certainly this cycle is not special to *tesettür* market but is a general trend in fashion, but what makes the case of *tesettür* market particularly critical is its articulation to Islamism. A shortcoming of the consumption approach is defining the subjectivities of the Muslim women over the tension or negotiation between consumption and faith which is actually a very much reductionist analysis that neglects other possible tensions, conflicts, ideologies and experiences that shape their identities. For this reason I find the study of Dilek Cindoglu (2011) significant. In her study, we can observe a very critical tension that influences the subjectivities of the veiled women, which is the headscarf ban that limits their chances of education and employment. Cindoglu presents many cases that even though many of the women in her study have the economic power to consume, they are not content and satisfied because their opportunities of self-

realization are restricted. Another important finding of Cindoglu is that because the Islamic capital exploits veiled women's vulnerable status in the labour market, the women are further isolated. Therefore Cindoglu shatters the idea that Islamic identities are also formed by the ties of community of Islamic believers by showing that the power of the market economy triumphs over the sense of belonging.

By analysing the studies by Sandıkçı and Ger and Sehlikoğlu and Karakaş, I find the arguments of Bahl and Dirlik about the relationship between postcolonial critique, Eurocentrism, and capitalism very relevant (2000, p. 9). Without making a critique of capitalism a fully fledged critique of Eurocentrism is not possible. Capitalism works to appropriate cultural differences in the form of tastes and lifestyles by making knowledge of culture as part of its management strategies. In these ethnographic studies we can already see that it turns Islamic women to Islamic consumers and the authors of the articles do not present a strong critique about it, mainly because they are from the fields of marketing and business administration, except Sehlikoğlu who is an anthropologist. It is also manifest that anthropological knowledge and methodology is also appropriated by the field of marketing.

In the next section I analysed the studies focusing on Islamist women in civil society and politics. Yılmaz (2015) describes the Muslim women in Islamist NGOs as highly active and empowered. They are attributed a considerable agency in transforming or altering the inequalities that they encounter, but in much different ways and directions. Zehra Yılmaz regards the victimization of the Muslim women as their reference point to initiate a change and achieve power. According to the analysis of Yılmaz, as women define themselves as victims of Islamic and secular patriarchy, they turn into agents who have the potential to alter the inequality. This is a challenging argument against representing Islamist women as subordinated by Islamic patriarchy and secularism. However since it reduces their agencies into victimization, it fails to take into consideration other possible paths that Muslim women pursue their struggles to overcome the inequalities. Moreover as in the cases of the veiled women who are unemployed or who could not pursue their education due to the headscarf ban, not every victimization is transformed into achievement. On the other hand, the successful incorporation of globalization into the analysis of

Islamist women's movement is a strong point in the study as it contextualizes women's activism in a much broader web of social relations. However Yılmaz also points the fact that the global ties do not influence the traditional values on gender, sexuality, and feminism that act upon women's subjectivities.

The last two studies are on women in the AKP politics. Berna Turam (2008) contrasts the political reactions of the two ideologically opposing groups of Turkey, the Islamists and Kemalists/Secularists. The comparison is formulated on a methodologically problematic ground by Turam. The women in the pious side of the opposition are selected from the wives of the ministers and also women members of the parliament who are already in a powerful position and who are not political activists. Thus they prefer to keep their silence. The Kemalist women are selected among the people who organize republican rallies that millions of people attend, and thus who can be expected to be more assertive and aggressive. Kemalists use a discourse that crudely labels Islamist women as backward, traditional, and as a threat to society. Just like the divergence of the ideologies of the two groups, the ways they are represented also diverge. Islamist women are described as modest and silent in contrast to the elitist and aggressive Kemalist women. I believe that this categorization could only be verified with this particular selection of respondents, thus it is very much misleading that Turam reaches general assumptions based on her field data. Her analysis produces stereotypes of two identities particularly in a way to support the argument that Muslim women are victimized and silenced by the secularists. Besides, it reproduces the secular/Islamist dichotomy. I regard Turam's representation of the AKP women as a significant example of the political nature of knowledge production.

The ethnographic study of Ayata and Tütüncü focuses on the real women activists of AKP and show that their agencies and individualities are suppressed by the dominantly patriarchal discourse of the party. The study is a critical interruption to the political discourse of AKP that uses discourses ranging from feminism to Islamism and liberalism in a strategic way. The strength of their analysis arises from their focus on how the male dominated party structure subordinates women rather than how women are subordinated. Throughout the article they exhibit many cases

in which women raise their voices and put their efforts to overcome the male authority. On the other hand they also present cases that women who defend the Islamic patriarchy of the party are at higher posts together with more liberal women members of the party who are in the showcase. These three groups of women indeed show how skilfully the party organization uses women for different tasks and not leave space to any female opposition. The study shows that women's subjectivities are shaped and agencies are constrained or at least used by the patriarchal Islamic party politics.

The ethnographic studies of the third period can be regarded as a discourse that challenge the neo-Orientalist stereotypes about Muslims in the Western public opinion. Each study constitutes a different challenge against the marginalization of Islamic cultures with their stress on the power and agency of Muslim women. Moreover the studies tend to emphasize the individuality of these women, except *Dişil Dindarlık* which focuses on their collectivity in civil society. This aspect also differs them from the previous period that also focuses on collective identities.

## CONCLUSION

The process widely referred as Islamic revitalization in Turkish political discourse is mostly perceived as a political threat to the secular state order and the manifestation of this threat is regarded as the presence and visibility of veiled women in the public sphere. Just as emancipation of women had central importance in Turkish modernization, defining women's roles and status in the public and domestic sphere is also at the forefront of Islamist movement. The complexity of the historical background of this social context and the current influence of neoliberal globalisation are what makes the understanding the status of women in Turkey a challenging task. I believe a more challenging task has been the attempt to critically analyse how women and Islam is understood and represented in the academic discourse.

On the other hand the fact that the history of the ethnographic knowledge produced on Muslim societies is marked by Orientalist and colonial scholarship and the knowledge produced on Muslim women is marked by first world Eurocentric feminism makes it essential to investigate the impact of these scholarships. I also believe that the power of ethnographic studies in presenting the social phenomena and their roots in colonial anthropology make analyzing the subject of women and Islam in the ethnographic discourse more critical.

In this study, I analysed the changing discourse on women and Islam in ethnographic studies and exhibited the power dynamics that have an influence and cause shifts on the formation of this discourse. I identified three spheres as structural powers that influence knowledge production. The first sphere corresponds to globalization and its two different eras. The second sphere is the social and political context in Turkey and the increasing power of the Islamist movement that brought it from being otherized and marginalized to the status of being the largest political power in the country. The third sphere is the academic sphere that comprises the fields of postcolonial theory, studies of Islam, and Middle Eastern women's studies and the shifts in their methodologies and epistemologies, such as

the reflexive turn and the cultural turn. All these shifts have resulted in the emergence of a counter (ethnographic) discourse against Orientalism while causing the production of knowledge to cluster around certain research questions and issues that address the relationship between women and Islam mostly in relation to the Islamist movement. I argue that this clustering, which indicate the points where social conflicts and struggles of power take place particularly in relation to the divide between secularism and Islamism, also reflect the political nature of knowledge production by revealing the researchers' standpoints in what they exclude from their research and what "truths" they circulate in the academic discourse.

The critical questions behind this attempt are derived from the arguments of post-colonial theory, post-colonial feminist anthropology and women's studies in the Middle East which I presented in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I attempted to clarify my methodology of Foucaultian discourse analysis and how I used it as a tool to divide the studies into periods and to highlight the circulated discursive formations while I identify the assumptions, biases, and preconceived thoughts as well as discursive breaks and emergence of counter discourses. I clarified the central concepts that I use throughout my analysis

In the Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I presented my analysis of the studies divided into three discursive periods. In Chapter 4, I analysed the studies published in 1983-1992 which can be described over their focus on Islamic beliefs and traditions to understand women's subordination. The discursive formation which claims that it is not possible to fully grasp the Islamic culture without asking questions of gender exists in their theoretical frameworks. These studies are important for being the first fieldworks in Turkey with this approach. I attempted to show that these studies have a dominantly Eurocentric and essentialist approach to the subject with their references to Islam and traditions as the main explanations of the gender hierarchy they observe.

I analyse the next discursive period that comprises the studies published between 1994 and 2006 in Chapter 5. The studies in this period that correspond to the rise of

political Islam focus on the identity of the Muslim women in the cities who are described within the social and political context of Islamist movement. When describing this identity, references to its others who are mostly stated as feminists and Kemalists are commonly circulated and a great emphasis is put on how these others have a constitutive role in the identity formation. In contrast to the first discursive period in which we encounter epistemological othering of the Muslim women through the Orientalist discourse produced about them, the discourse in this period examines their ontological othering and makes it an integral part of their representation. In Chapter 6, I included the studies published between 2007 and 2016 that focus on the headscarf and *tesettür* as a symbol of the changing identities which are defined over their Islamic consumption patterns and on Islamist women in civil society organizations and politics. I contextualized the representations of Muslim in this period in the dominance of neo-liberal Islamism in Turkish politics.

Believing that addressing the issues of otherness, alterity, subaltern-ness, subjectivity and agency of the Muslim women portrayed in the studies, and issues of binarism, surveillance, essentialism and Eurocentricism in the way the discourse is generated are fundamental to highlight the traces of the hierarchy at stake, I examined these notions in each study for exhibiting paths of the development of counter-discourses against the Orientalist and first world feminist discourses that created and perpetuated hierarchies between the Western and non-Western subjects.

This overview of the ethnographic studies clearly shows that there is a critical break between the first period and the two periods after that. As a result of the shifts in postcolonial theory, studies of Islam and the Middle Eastern studies the authority of the Muslim women has been acknowledged. These women started to have a voice in the ethnographic discourse and their subaltern status have thus been altered. Moreover the reflexive turn in anthropology changed the methodologies in a way to integrate the subject positions of the researchers. These two changes can be observed in the ethnographic researches in the second and third periods. In contrast to the ethnographies by Carol Delaney, Julie Marcus and Richard and Nancy Tapper, the texts started to adopt a language that speaks nearby Muslim women

rather than a language that speaks about. I consider these as an essential condition for producing a counter-knowledge against Orientalism. Yet, I also presented that in some studies reflexivity and multivocality did not overcome the ethnocentric approach that the researcher maintains.

Secondly, in the latter periods a category of Muslim women has been created and this category is associated with Islamist and veiled women. The studies in the first period did not use the term and perceived women only as believers of Islam. The difference signifies that from the 1990s onwards Islamism started to be used as the primary descriptive term to indicate the collective identity of women within the Islamist movement.

The contextualization of the ethnographic data has been another change in the way knowledge produced about Muslim women in Turkey. Except *The Seed and the Soil* and *A World of Difference* all the studies contextualize their analysis in relation to Turkish history of modernization and/or the rise of the Islamist movement in a secular social order. This discursive practice is an essential characteristic in contrast with the essentialist knowledge production about the Muslim cultures that explain women's status on the basis of Islamic texts and beliefs and analyse these cultures in isolation from social, cultural, political, economic influences and transformations. Besides, it draws attention to the uniqueness of Turkish modernization and secularization among other Middle Eastern and Muslim countries and addresses the necessity of considering this peculiarity in discussing the relationship between women and Islam.

While in the first period the agency of the women is almost neglected and women are represented as victims of Islamic traditions, the discourse in the second and third periods acknowledges the agency of the Islamist women. Their agencies are discussed with respect to their conscious choices of veiling and adopting an Islamic way of life as well as in their struggles with the Islamist patriarchy and the secular social and state order. How they alter the conditions they live in, how they create their spaces, how they participate to public life are described to highlight their agencies. The subjectivities of the Islamist women are mostly defined in reference

to their association with Islamism. However the influence of modernity, globalization, and consumption culture have come to be other important factors.

The prevalence of binarism which constitutes the basis of the analysis of the ethnographic data in the first period cannot be observed in the following discursive periods. Particularly the discussions in the Middle Eastern studies and postmodern theory about the blurring boundaries between public and private, traditional and modern, Western and Eastern have been thoroughly effective in the ethnographic knowledge on women and Islam in Turkey. At the same time the ethnographic knowledge that presented the new Islamist women in Turkey as modern, educated, urban, elite as well as pious has challenged the binaries and has become part of the discussions on Islam and modernity in the Middle Eastern women's studies. Eurocentricism and discursive othering of the Islamist women in way they were adopted is the first ethnographies cannot be observed in most of the studies in the later years. Nevertheless Eurocentricism continues to exist in concealed forms in the studies about Islamic consumption that fail to address the role of capitalism.

The political context in Turkey, particularly the turning points in the political success of the Islamist movement have had a considerable power in shaping the wills to know of the researchers and also their analyses and argumentations. I associate the discursive formations on othering of the Islamist women and the role of the secularists/ Kemalists/ feminists as others in the identity formation of these women. As I discussed in Chapter 5, I consider this tendency very much problematic for the reductionism it entails. I also observed the change in the representations of Islamist women from being described at the margins of the society to being described as powerful actors who have the potential to create social change. The years in which the Islamist movement have been in the government with AKP and occupied decision making positions correspond to this change. These years of AKP governments are also characterized by the coexistence of neoliberalism, Islamism, and conservatism. Thus the ethnographic studies on Islamist women in civil society and politics of the last period should be read in reference to the peculiarity of the AKP politics.

I analysed the role of the different states of globalization with respect to two turning points. The first one is marked by the post-Soviet era, end of the Cold War, collapse of developmentalist theories and as a result the increasing emphasis on cultural diversities, individualities and localities and the rise of Islamist movements. I contend that the discourse on Islamist identities should also be thought as a reflection of this trend of globalization. The next turning point is the period after the 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror that revitalized the Orientalist stereotypes through Islamophobia and created neo-Orientalism. I reviewed several studies in the third discursive period as part of a counter-discourse.

The broad picture of the ethnographic discourse analysed in this study reveals that the research subjects and problematiques of the second and third periods are clustered around certain areas of research and certain issues. Lastly, I would like to present these clusters and their implications. It is very striking that most the ethnographies published in the second and third periods were conducted in Istanbul, except the ethnographic studies by Saktanber, Ayata and Tütüncü, and Humphreys and Brown which were conducted in Ankara. The development of the Islamist movement and Islamist women's identity is discussed mainly as an urban phenomenon and being urban is reduced to a great extent to being an Istanbulite. Even though the city is the cultural and financial heart of Turkey and hosts a great deal of ethnic, political, cultural, class diversity, the unbalanced focus on Istanbul indicates a total neglect of the other urban centres in Turkey. Besides, there is a need to understand and analyse the data of the ethnographies within the social dynamics of Istanbul which are incomparable to the rest of the country. Nowhere in Turkey the pace and impact of globalization is so evident and determinant. Çağlar Keyder (2000a) describes Istanbul in the 1980s and 1990s as a global city that hosts high numbers of companies which operate in relation to the international market economy, that is the centre of the finance sector, that offers a new upper class life style with its shopping malls, luxury boutiques and cafés, that brings a variety of world cuisine and fast food chains to local and international customers, that is also the centre of art events, festivals and night life (Keyder, 2000a, pp. 23-24). On the other hand with its population which was 5.8 million by 1985 and reached to 10

million by 2000<sup>30</sup>, it is the leading destination of migrants from all around the country. The outcome has been increasing number of *gecekondu* neighbourhoods which turn into signs of income gap and unequal access to fundamental public services.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the problems of rapidly increasing population the city also has been grappling with the problems of fraud, corruption and illegal flows of money (Keyder, 2000a, p. 31). Even considering these few facts about Istanbul requires us to see that any ethnographic data should not be analysed without referring to the peculiarities of the city. In the ethnographic discourse on Islamist women, we should understand that their identities are shaped by the dynamics of the changes in the Islamist movement which is adapted to the social dynamics of Istanbul on the one hand and on the other hand through their encounters with and adaptations to the metropolitan globalizing culture of the city. Indeed, they have become the part of that city culture. It also makes reaching to general conclusions about Turkey based on ethnographic data from Istanbul problematic.

The ethnographic knowledge on women and Islam deals completely with Sunni Islamist women and fails to see the diversities of women and their relation to religion. Women from different ethnic origins, different religions or sects of Islam are not present in this knowledge. Based on Foucault's argument that production of knowledge indicates the imbalances of power we claim that Islamist women's identities and lifestyles are the manifestations of power conflicts. Nevertheless we cannot assume that there are no power conflicts in other women's relation to religion considering the history of minorities in Turkey. In this case the lack of knowledge production indicates an intentional neglect of these issues, I suppose, because of the fact that Sunni Islam, Islamist movements, and fundamentalism have a long history of academic interest and they do not seem to lose their popularity in the near future.

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<sup>30</sup> TÜİK (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu – *Turkish Statistical Institute*), <http://raporty.tuik.gov.tr/17-09-2016-13:16:37-53213821218212334321248707883.html> and <http://raporty.tuik.gov.tr/17-09-2016-13:18:38-157017796597432855622090833.html>, accessed on 17.09.2016. For an analysis of population growth of Istanbul and other metropolitans of Turkey, see Demir, K. & Çabuk, S. (2010). "Türkiye'de Metropoliten Kentlerin Nüfus Gelişimi", *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 28(1), pp.193-215.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the history and transformation of illegal housing in Istanbul, see Keyder, Ç. (2000b). "Enformel Konut Piyasasından Küresel Konut Piyasasına" (pp.171-199) In (ed.) Çağlar Keyder *Istanbul: Küresel ile Yerel Arasında*. İstanbul: Metis.

Very few number of male scholars doing ethnographic study on Islamist women shows that the subject remains to be a women's subject. In the scholarly discussions about conducting ethnography it is commonly stated that men cannot have access to women's private sphere in the Muslim world and this fact significantly limits the research process. However the blurring boundaries between public and private minimizes this limitation even for studying the pious women who have become very active in the public sphere. Another clustering can be observed among anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists. All the anthropologists who study the subject of women and Islam in Turkey are Western women. Sertaç Sehlikoğlu can be thought of as an exception but she is a social anthropologist who received her PhD at Cambridge University, a veiled woman, and a women's right activist. All of these factors can explain her proximity to the subject. On the other hand the sociologists and political scientists are Turkish women scholars, except Kenan Çayır. This pattern reveals that the subject of women and Islam is perceived within the field of culture by the Western scholars and the colonial roots of the anthropology continue to linger in knowledge production. On the other hand the interest of the Turkish sociologists and political scientists indicate that they perceive the subject as part of the social dynamics and politics of the country. I believe that their contribution to the Middle Eastern women's studies literature is critical in this respect.

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## APPENDICES

### A. THE LIST OF THE PUBLICATIONS ANALYSED

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- Yılmaz, Z. (2015). *Dişil Dindarlık*. İstanbul: İletişim.

## B. CURRICULUM VITAE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Onur, Petek  
Nationality: Turkish (TC)  
Date and Place of Birth: 14 July 1982, Ankara  
Marital Status: Married  
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### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU European Studies	2007
BA	METU Sociology	2004
High School	TED Ankara College	2000

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2008-2009	Hacettepe University, Oncology Hospital	Project Assistant
2010-2012	Ankara Jazz Society	Editor
2012-2013	Middle East Technical University, International Cooperations Office	Research Assistant
2014- 2014	Ankara Jazz Society	Editor
2007-present	Freelance translator	

### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Basic German, Basic Italian

### PUBLICATIONS

Conference Proceedings:  
“Conceptualization of space in the ethnographic discourse on gender and religion in Turkey”  
15<sup>th</sup> International Cultural Studies Symposium, Ege University, Turkey. 6-8 May, 2015.

“From Orientalism to cultural relativism: a critical discourse analysis of field studies and ethnographies on women and Islam in Turkey”

1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Knowledge and Politics in Gender and Women's Studies, Middle East Technical University, Turkey, 9-11 October 2015.

**Book Translations:**

Strauss, Leo. (2011) *Doğal Hak ve Tarih*, Say Yayınları. Trans. Murat Erşen, Petek Onur (from the English publication of *Natural Right and History*. 1953)

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**HOBBIES**

Pastry, Photography

## C. TURKISH SUMMARY

Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam konusunda değişen söylemi etnografik çalışmalarında inceleyen bu tez, söylemi etkileyen ve değişimleri tetikleyen/ başlatan güç dinamiklerini ortaya çıkarmayı; Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam üzerine önceki Oryantalist bilgi üretme biçimlerine meydan okuyacak bir karşı-söylemin oluşumunun gelişmesinin yollarını göstermeyi ve bu söylem içindeki eksiklikleri, göz ardı edilen sorunları ve problematikleri ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, 1980'lerin sonlarından bu yana üç alandaki değişimlerin Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam arasındaki ilişkinin anlaşılmasında ve sorunsallaştırılmasında etkili olduğunu iddia etmektedir. İlk alan neo-liberal küreselleşme, küresel kitle kültürü ve ayrıca küresel İslamcılığın farklı evrelerini kapsar. İkinci alan Türkiye'de İslamlığın yükselişine ve artan siyasi gücüne tanıklık eden siyasi ortamı kapsar ve üçüncü de Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarında feminist postkolonyal teori ve onun Oryantализm eleştirilerini, sosyal bilimlerdeki temsil krizine yanıtları, Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarının Ortadoğulu akademisyenlerin katkılarıyla geliştirilmesini ve saha çalışmalarında düşünümselliğe ve çokselsiliğe doğru değişimleri kapsar. Bütün bu değişimler Oryantализmin karşısında bir karşı (etnografik) söylemin ortaya çıkışmasını sağlarken diğer yandan da bilgi üremesinin kadın ve İslam konusunu çoğunlukla İslamlı hareketle ilişkili olarak ele alan belirli araştırma soruları ve meseleleri etrafında kümelenmesine neden olmuştur. Özellikle İslamlık ve sekülerlik arasındaki ayrımla bağlantılı olarak toplumsal tartışmaların ve mücadelelerin meydana geldiği noktalara işaret eden bu kümelenmenin aynı zamanda bilgi üremesinin siyasi yapısını araştırmacıların neleri araştırmanın dışında bıraktıkları ve hangi "hakikat"leri akademik söylemde yaydıkları ortaya çıkararak yansittığını iddia ediyorum.

Bu çalışmaya Türkiye'deki Müslüman kadınların söylemsel temsillerindeki geniş çeşitliliği sunuyor ve bu çeşitliliğin sosyal bilimlerdeki paradigma değişimlerini yansittığı kadar Türkiye'deki ve dünyadaki siyasi, kültürel, toplumsal ve ekonomik değişimleri de işaret ettiğini gösteriyorum. İkinci olarak Müslüman kadınların temsili sorununun bütün Ortadoğu ve Üçüncü Dünya için ne kadar kritik olduğunu

vurgulamak için feminist postkolonyal teorinin eleştirilerini kullanıyorum. Son olarak, postkolonyal teoride sert bir şekilde tartışılan meselelerin tamamıyla uğraşan ama hiç kolonileştirilmemiş bir ülke olarak, Osmanlı imparatorluk mirasını geride bırakarak Batı medeniyetine yaklaşmayı amaçlayan ama çoğunluğu Müslümanlardan oluşan seküler bir cumhuriyet olarak kurulan bir ülke olarak Türkiye'de İslam ve kadın üzerine çalışmalardan oluşan söylemin kapsamlı bir analizinin eksikliğini doldurmayı amaçlıyorum.

Bu yaklaşımları gözlemlemek ve analiz etmek için etnografileri seçmemin nedeni bu yöntemin toplumsal olguları canlı ve detaylı olarak sunma kapasitesi ve sunduğu verilerin derinliğidir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmalar Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam konusunda kıyaslanamaz bir içgörü sağlamaktadır ve Müslüman kadınların temsilini daha da önemi hale getirmektedir. En önemlisi, bu yöntem içinde saklı olan araştırmacı ve araştırma özneleri arasındaki güç ilişkileri sebebiyle, etnografik çalışmalarda araştırmacının konumunu ve duruşunu gözlemlemek daha fazla mümkün değildir.

Ortadoğu ve İslam hakkındaki etnografik çalışmaların 18. yüzyıla, sömürge dönemine, Batının Ortadoğu coğrafyası üzerindeki siyasi ve ekonomik hâkimiyetinin başlangıcına uzanan köklü bir Oryantalist tarihi vardır. Batının kurumsallaşmış ve yerleşik akademik Oryantализmine karşı yerel okumalar bağımsızlık hareketleri ve dekolonizasyonla ortaya çıkışmış ve yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında postkolonyal teori alanını oluşturmuştur. Ancak Oryantalist çalışmaların çoğunun temel özellikleri olan Avrupa-merkezcilik, ikilik ve özculük Ortadoğu ve İslam hakkındaki günümüz çalışmalarında hem açık hem de üstü kapalı biçimlerde var olmayı sürdürmekte ve Batı ve Doğu arasında söylemsel olarak kurulmuş hiyerarşinin korunmasına hizmet etmektedir. Ortadoğu'da kadın ve İslam konusu ise görece yeni (ya da geç) ve yine de ortaya çıkışını 1980'lerde feminist hareketlerin gelişimine ve siyasi İslam'ın yükselişine borçlu olan çok önemli bir konudur. Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam hakkındaki çalışmalar bu yazının dikkate değer bir bölümünü oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışma da Türkiye'de bu konuda yapılmış etnografik çalışmaların söylemindeki değişimi feminist postkolonyal teorinin temel öncüleri ve nosyonlarına dayanan bir bakı açısıyla sunmaktadır.

Çalışmalarda tasvir edilen Müslüman kadınların ötekilikleri, madunlukları, öznellikleri ve faillikleri meselelerini ve söylemin oluşma biçimindeki ikilik, gözetim, özcülük ve Avrupa-merkezcilik meselelerini işaret etmenin söz konusu hiyerarşinin izlerini vurgulamakta temel öneme sahip olduğuna inanıyorum. Bu sebeple bu söylemdeki Müslüman kadın temsillerinin kökleri İslam'ın ve Ortadoğu'nun Batılı ve Oryantalist etnomerkezci algısına dayanan epistemolojik güç ilişkileri ile örülü olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlıyorum. Diğer yandan da karşı söylemlerin, yerel tepkilerin ve yeni bakış açılarının gelişme yollarını gösteriyorum ve onların söylemsel hegemonyaya meydan okumaları ve Ortadoğu'daki Müslüman kadınlara dair özgürleştirici/ özgürlükçü bir yaklaşım oluşturmaları bakımından etkilerini sorguluyorum.

Cumhuriyet'in sekülerleşme, modernleşme ve Batılılaşma farklı modernleşme projesi ile İslamcılığın yeniden canlanması, milliyetçilik ve muhafazakârlığın bir arada bulunmasıyla nitelenebilen Türkiye'nin kendine özgü çağdaşlaşma deneyimi, Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam konusundaki bilgi üretimini inceleme işini daha da önemli, kritik ve zor bir hale getirmektedir. Bu işin zorluğu kadınların statüsünü ve İslam'la ilişkilerini bir bağlama yerleştirmede çok fazla referans noktasının bulunmasından kaynaklanır. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu geçmişi ve İslam'ın Osmanlı kültüründeki ve devlet geleneğindeki temel rolü nedeniyle Türkiye ve onun tarihi hakkındaki çalışmalar Şarkiyat çalışmalarının önemli bir parçasını oluşturmaktadır. Diğer yandan Türkiye'nin tecrübe ettiği otoriter Batılılaşma süreci bakımından ve özellikle kadınların statüsündeki radikal değişimler ve farklılıklar bakımından feminist postkolonyal teori kadınların hem ikincil konuma itilmesi hem de söylemsel temsilleri açısından önemli araçlar sunar. Bunların yanı sıra, Türkiye'deki kadınların deneyimlerinin Ortadoğulu diğer kadınların yaşadığı eşitsizlikler ve sorunlarla ortak noktalarının bulunduğu bu tez çalışması için Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarının tartışmalarını elbette ki çok ilgili ve yararlı hale getirir. Dolayısıyla bu teorik çerçeve kapsamında Oryantalist söyleme karşı ortaya atılmış temel eleştirileri, feminist postkolonyal teorinin itirazlarını ve Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarının tartışmalarını pusulam ve teorik çerçevehem olarak kabul ediyorum ve bu çerçeveye Türkiye'nin kendine özgü modernleşme sürecini analizine dahil etmeyen özcü ve Avrupa-merkezci kadın temsillerini ortaya çıkarıyorum.

## **Teorik Çerçevenin Temel Kavramları**

Bu söylem incelemesi çalışmasının temel kavramlarından biri olan özne sorunu, Ashcroft, Griffiths ve Tiffin'in (2007) tanımladıkları üzere sömürge halklarının kendi kimliklerini maruz kaldıklarını hâkimiyete karşı direnme kapasitelerini nasıl algıladıkları sorunudur. Yirminci yüzyıl felsefesinin benliğin bütünlüğüne dair Aydınlanma düşüncesini sarstığından bu yana öznellik ideoloji, söylem ve dil ile bağlantılı olarak tanımlanmaya başlamıştır. Sömürgecilik bağlamında öznellik ise Franz Fanon'un (1952, 1959) belirttiği gibi kolonyal ideoloji ve söylemin özne yaratma gücü ve öznenin bu üretimi kabul edip sürdürmesi anlamına gelmektedir. Ancak Fanon yine de öznenin bu öznelliğe karşı direnç gösterme potansiyelini yok saymaz. Postkolonyal teori bağlamındaki ikinci önemli kavram failliktir. Bu kavram, bireylerin onları etkileyen, onların üzerinde güç sahibi olan toplumsal kurumlara direnerek direnemeyeceklerini, bireylerin eylemlerinin bağımsız ve otonom mu yoksa emperyal veya söylemsel güçlerin birer sonucunu mu olduğunu ve bireylerin bu mekanizmalara ne derece direnebileceklerini sorgular. Bu iki kavram kolonyal söylemde ötekilik ve öteki olma hali kavramlarıyla birlikte tartışılmaya başlanmıştır. İkisi anlamca birbirine yakın olsa da aradaki farklılığı belirtmek önemlidir. Kolektif ve bireysel kimlik oluşturma süreçlerinde bir “öteki”nin yaratılması ve öz benliğin bu “öteki”ne karşı özelliklerle tanımlanması felsefe, psikoloji ve sosyoloji alanlarında tartışılmıştır. Kolonyal bağlamda ise “öteki” yaratmak söylemsel bir yaratmayı ve epistemolojik şiddet içérir ve “ötekilik” öteki olma haline dönüşür. Bu süreç sadece ötekilerin Batıdan özde farklı olarak tanımlanması demek değildir, aynı zamanda ötekilerin kendi aralarındaki farklılıkların da yok sayılması ile gerçekleşir. Edward Said'in *Oryantasyonizm (Orientalism)* (1978) kitabında ileri sürdüğü gibi Doğu'nun yaratılması bu sürecin onde gelen ve en belirgin örneklerinden biridir. Kolonyal söylemde ötekileştirme ikilikler yaratma ve bu ikilikleri hiyerarşik olarak tanımlama ile gerçekleşir. Siyah/beyaz, ilkel/medeni, geleneksel/modern, sömürge/sömürmen, Doğu/Batı ikilikleri bu söylemde sıkça yer bulmuş ve medeni olmayan topraklar üzerindeki emperyalist hâkimiyetin meşruiyetini sağlamak amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Postkolonyal teorinin bu söyleme müdahalesi, bu ikilikler içine yerleşik ırkçılığı ve

indirgemeciliği ifşa etmek ve sömürge dönemindeki kültürel karşılaşmaların karşılıklı etkiler bıraklığına dikkat çekmek olmuştur.

Madunluk kavramı postkolonial teoride güney Asya toplumlarının tabi kılınma biçimini tanımlamak için kullanılmıştır (Guha, 1988, s. 35). Gayatri Spivak'ın ünlü makalesi “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (“Madun Konuşabilir mi?”) (1988) madunların kolonyal yönetim ve milliyetçi siyaset altında seslerinin duyulmamasına ve burjuva tarih-yazımının da dışında bırakılmış olmalarına işaret eder. Kavramın kullanımı postkolonyal kuram ve madun çalışmaları ile sınırlı kalmamış kadın çalışmaları ve Ortadoğu çalışmaları onu baskısı ve baskılanan toplulukların akademik söylemdeki temsillerini tartışmada kullanmıştır.

19. yüzyıl seyahat yazısından bu yana Batı dünyasını sömürge toprakları ve Şark'a dair bilgilendirmeyi amaçlayan emperyal bakışın ve gözlemin edebi ve akademik söylemde dikkate değer bir etkisi olmuştur. Gözlemleyen, bakan Batılı özneyle gözlemlenen, izlenen Doğu özne arasında kurulan güç ilişkisi antropolojik bilginin ve araştırma yöntemlerinin de kökenlerinde yatar. Doğu “öteki”ni gözlemekten kaynaklanan güç, Batılı olmayan dünyaya dair bilgi üretimi sürecinde de belirleyici olur ve bu iki dünya arasında söylemsel hiyerarşiler yaratır. Oryantalist bilgi üretimi ve Oryantalist söylem Doğu ile Batı arasındaki farkların bu şekilde inşa edilmesine dayanır ve başta Edward Said'in eleştirileri olmak üzere Oryantizm üzerine eleştiriler Doğularındaki stereotipleri, dogmaları ve Avrupa-merkezci bilimsel söylemleri açığa çıkararak Doğu'yı bilmenin yeni yöntemlerini arar.

Bu yeni yöntem arayışları içerisinde etnografilerin düşünümsellik ve çokselsilik temelinde şekillenmeye başlaması önemli bir yer tutar. Postmodern ve eleştirel teorinin ortaya çıktığı dönemde yani 1980'lerde antropoloji alanında araştırmacının otoritesini sarsan ve bilgi üretiminin yapısındaki güç ilişkilerini eleştiren düşünümsel metodoloji (Venkatesh, 2013, s. 4) etnografları hem kendi özne konumlarını sorgulamaya hem de araştırmaya kendi sesleri dışındaki sesleri de dahil etmeye zorladı. Paul Atkinson'ın (2015) açıkladığı gibi yalnızca yazarın kendi sesinin olduğu etnografi çalışmalarına karşılık çokselsi çalışmalarında araştırma

öznesi olan farklı aktörler bilgi kaynağı olarak tek bir anlatının gölgesinde kalmadan metinlerde yer alır ve böylece birçok farklı grup, kültür ve bakış açısı etnografik metinde temsil edilmiş olur. Ancak Atkinson bu seslerin tek bir anlatıyla ve/veya anlatıcıya hizmet edecek şekilde kullanılmasının çokselsilik anlayışıyla örtüşmeyeceğini de belirtir. Antropolog Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1992, s. 85) da çokselsiliğin ve düşünümselliğin, sesler belirlenmiş sınırlar içinde konuşmaya devam ettiği sürece hiyerarşik bilgi üretme biçimlerine çare olamayacağını söylemiştir. Minh-Ha aynı zamanda bu hiyerarşije çözüm olarak araştırma öznesinin “hakkında konuşmak” yerine araştırma öznesinin “yanından konuşma”nın gerekli olduğunu savunur. Böylelikle araştırmacının araştırma öznesine olan mesafesi ortadan kalkacak, araştırma öznesi nesneleştirilmeyecek ve hiyerarşi oluşmayacaktır. Ben de etnografi incelemelerimde bu tartışmaları göz önünde bulunduruyorum.

## **Metodoloji ve Analiz**

Bu tez çalışmasının analiz yöntemi Michel Foucault'nun söylem, güç ve bilgi üretimi üzerine kuramsal tartışmalarını temel almaktadır. Foucault'nun söylem tanımına dayanarak etnografik çalışmaların oluşturduğu metinleri bir söylemin bileşenleri olarak inceler ve metinler arasındaki dönemsel değişiklikleri analiz edebilmek için onun epistem kavramını kullanır. Bu kavram üzerinden o dönemdeki yapısal güçlerin insanların nasıl düşündüklerine, bilgi ürettiklerine ve yazdıklarına etki ettiğini göstermek için etnografik çalışmaları üç söylemsel döneme ayırır. Yapısal güçler söyleme etki eden başta bahsettiğim üç alandan oluşmaktadır: küreselleşme bağlamı, Türkiye'deki siyasi, kültürel, toplumsal bağlam ve feminist postkolonyal teoriyle Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarından oluşan akademik bağlam. Her bir dönem içerisinde yayılan ve belirli “hakikatleri” doğru kabul eden söylemsel oluşumlar, ifadeler, yaklaşımlar mevcut olduğu gibi o dönemin söyleminden dışlanan veya görmezden gelinen yaklaşımlar ve “hakikatler” de mevcuttur. Foucault bunun nedeninin bir dizi iç ve dış dışlama mekanizması olduğunu öne sürer. Ben de sözünü ettiğim üç bağlamı ve araştırmacının özne konumunu aynı zamanda birer dışlama mekanizması olarak inceliyorum. Bu mekanizmalar aynı

zamanda araştırmacının bilme isteğine de yön vermektedir ve böylece bilgi üretimin aşamalarına da etki eder.

Kullandığım teorik ve metodolojik çerçeve Oryantalist, kolonyal ve postkolonyal söylemlerin ve Ortadoğu'daki kadınlarla ilgili bilginin Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam arasındaki ilişkinin ne şekilde algılandığı, anlaşıldığı ve analiz edildiğini etkileyip etkilemediğini sorma gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Feminist postkolonyal teoriyi Müslüman kadınlar hakkındaki kolonyal, Oryantalist söylemi eleştirmede temel olarak alıyorum ve bu iki zıt yaklaşımın etkilerini sunmak üzere çalışmaların metodolojilerini ve kuramsal duruşlarını sunuyorum. Bu etkileri tespit etmek için dört temel soru soruyorum: Müslüman kadınların Oryantalist, Batılı ve Birinci Dünya feminizmi söylemlerindeki ötekiliği ve madunluğu korunmuş mudur yoksa sarsılmış mıdır? Çalışmanın “bilme isteği” ikili zıtlıklar (özellikle Doğu/Batı, geleneksel/modern, İslam/Hıristiyanlık) içermekte midir? Önceki baskın ve kurumsallaşmış güç, hiyerarşi ve söylemsel pratikler stereotiplere, önyargılara ve özcü sınıflandırmalara meydan okuyacak şekilde yeni bilgi üretme yolları aramakta mıdır? Çalışmaların arkasındaki “hakikat isteği” siyasi, toplumsal, kültürel ve akademik bağlamla ilişkili midir?

Bu soruların yanıtlarını aramak dört analiz seviyesi belirlemeyi gereklidir: Türk toplumunda ve küresel düzeyde meydana gelen siyasi, toplumsal ve kültüre dönüşümler, araştırmacının toplumsal olgulara dair algısı, toplumsal olguların söylemsel temsilleri ve temsillerin analizi. İlk seviyeye ilişkin olarak özellikle Türkiye'de 1980'lerden bu yana İslamcı hareketin güç kazandığı toplumsal ve siyasi ortamı dikkate alıyorum. Bu dönem aynı zamanda Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam üzerine etnografik söylemin oluşmaya başladığı dönemdir. Bu dönemde İslami kadınların kimliklerinin oluşumu ve dönüşümü dikkat edilmesi gereken bir toplumsal olgudur. İkinci analiz düzeyini araştırmacının akademik disipliniyle ve onun çalışmanın bilme isteğini ve sahadaki güç ilişkilerinin yapısını etkileyen özne konumuyla ilişkilendiriyorum. Üçüncü analiz seviyesinde kadın ve İslam arasındaki ilişkinin nasıl temsil edildiğine ve üretilen bilgideki paradigma değişimlerine bakıyorum. Dördüncü seviyede ise temsilleri diğer üç seviyeye ilişkilendirerek zaman içinde neden ve nasıl değişiklerini ve Oryantalist bilgi üretimine karşı bir

söylemin nasıl üretileceğine dair etkilerini sunuyorum. Bu tez çalışmasında incelenen etnografik çalışmalar temelde akademik metinler olarak kabul edilmiştir, dolayısıyla çalışmam öncelikle söylemsel temsilleri bir bağlam içerisinde inceleyen metinsel bir analiz olarak düşünülmelidir.

Söylemsel pratikler aracılığıyla üretilen bilgide çizgisel bir ilerleyiş olduğunu öne sürmüyorum. Her ne kadar dönemler arasındaki önemli kırımlar kolaylıkla fark edilebilse de aralarında ayrıca örtüşmeler ve kesişmeler de mevcuttur. Bu kaleydoskopik söylemsel pratikler hem araştırmamın konusunu oluşturuyor hem de güç ilişkilerinin var olduğu alanları işaret ediyor. Foucault'nın kuramsallaştırmasına dayanarak söylemsel dönemlerin içinde yayılan ve aktarılan ifadelere odaklanmasıın “hakikat isteği”ni ortaya çıkarmak ve yanlış kabul edilen ifadeleri dışında bırakmak üzere iş başında olan yapıları belirlemeye çok önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum.

Araştırma sürecim verimi Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam odaklı yayınlanmış etnografik çalışmalar olarak belirleyerek başladı ve böylece bu kategoriye denk gelen her yayını gözden geçirerek ön analizime başladım. Bu gözden geçirme yayınları kabaca dönemlere ayırmamı sağladı ve onları özel araştırma odaklarına göre gruplandırdım. Etnografik çalışmaların bir kronolojisini çıkardım ve üç dönemde öne çıkan söylemlerin sınırlarını belirledim: geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet hiyerarşisinin nasıl meşrulaştırıldığı hakkındaki çalışmalar 1983-1992 yıllarını kapsayan dönemde kümeleniyordu. Yeni İslami kimliğin ve onun ötekilerinin oluşumu ve ifade edilişi hakkındaki çalışmalar 1994-2006 yıllarında yayınlanmıştı. Son olarak da gösterişçi tüketim kavramını entegre eden çalışmalarla iktidardaki İslami eğilimli Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (AKP) siyasetine odaklanan çalışmalar 2007-20016 yıllarını kapsayan dönem içinde gruplandırılabilirdi. Dönemleştirmede araştırmanın yapıldığı yılı değil yayınlandığı yılı referans olarak kabul ettim. Saha çalışması ve yayınlanma arasında büyük bir zaman dilimi olabildiğinin farkında olmama rağmen araştırmacıların saha verilerini analiz ettikleri ve araştırmayı yazıya döktükleri dönemlerde meydana gelen toplumsal değişimlerin birer güç mekanızması olarak bu sürece etki ettiği kanaatinde olduğumdan böyle bir tercih yaptım. Diğer bir deyişle, toplumsal bağlamda olan değişimlerin araştırmacının saha verisini nasıl algıladığı üzerinde önemli bir etkisi

olduğuna inanıyorum. Bu sebeple bu tercih toplumsal bağlamın etkisi konusunda yorum yapabilmeyi daha mümkün hale getiriyor.

Bu ilk dönemleştirmenin çalışmaların yayınlandığı siyasi bağlamla aşağı yukarı nasıl örtüştüğünü görmek dönemlere dair incelememi daha da derinleştirmeme dair bana işaret verdi. 1980'ler ve 1990'ların başları dinî eylemcilik dışında bütün siyasi ve sivil eylemciliği bastıran askerî darbeyi izleyen yıllarda. Bu dönemde yayınlanan sadece birkaç etnografik çalışma vardı ve bunlarında da tamamı Batılı araştırmacılar tarafından yapılmıştı. Carol Delaney'nin kitabı *The Seed and the Soil* (1991), Julie Marcus'un kitabı *A world of difference: Islam and gender hierarchy in Turkey* (1992), Nancy ve Richard Tapper'in makaleleri "The birth of the prophet: Ritual and gender in Turkish Islam", (1987) ve Nancy Tapper'in makaleleri "Ziyaret: gender, movement, and exchange in a Turkish community" (1990) ve "Gender and religion in a Turkish town: a comparison of two types of formal women's gatherings" (1983) bu dönemde yayınlanan çalışmalardır. İlk döneme dair analizimde bütün bu çalışmaları dâhil ettim ve etnografik bilgiyi etkileyen güç yapıları olarak akademik disiplinlerinin sınırlarına, sosyal bilimlerin paradigmalarına ve araştırmacıların özne konumlarına odaklandım. Araştırmacıların Batılı kimlikleri ve antropolojinin Üçüncü Dünya'yı veya Ortadoğu'yu çalışma gelenekleri bu metinleri incelememde daha belirleyici oldu. Bunun nedeni bütün araştırmacıların Türkiye'ye İslam'ı ve yerel kültürü araştırmak üzere kendi alanlarının daha yeni yeni eleştirilmeye başlayan etnomerkezci öncülleri ile gelen Batılı antropologlar oluşudur. Toplumsal cinsiyet hiyerarşisinin dinî, ahlaki ve geleneksel temellerle nasıl meşrulaştırıldığıyla ilgili olan araştırma konuları ve amaçları, kadınların eşitsiz konumunun İslam'ın ve İslami kültürlerin temel ve değişmez bir unsuru olduğu varsayımdır. Ayrıca bu etnografi çalışmaları düşünümsel ve çoxsesli olmaktan uzaktır, zira bu yaklaşım antropoloji alanında 1980'lerde tartışılmaya başlanmıştır. Her ne kadar bütün çalışmalar tartışmaya katılmak ve Oryantalist bilgiye kendi verileriyle karşı çıkmak amacını taşısa da bu amacı gerçekleştirmede başarısız olmuştur. Başarısızlık Delaney ve Marcus'un çalışmalarında daha bariz bir şekilde ortadadır. Nancy ve Richard Tapper'in makaleleri etnografik verilerini Türkiye bağlamında değerlendirmede daha başarılı olduğundan daha az özücü ve daha az Avrupa-merkezci olarak nitelendirilebilir.

Metinleri değerlendirdikten sonra özellikle çalışmaların bilme isteklerine, çalışmalardaki ifadelere ve yöntemlere odaklandım ve onları neyin özcü yaptığını ortaya çıkarmaya çalıştım. Ayrıca bu çalışmalar arasında yayılan ortak ifadeleri ve söylemsel oluşumları gözlemedim. Kadınların madunluklarının, fail olmayışlarının, öteki olma hallerinin ve dinî geleneklerin kurbanları olarak anlatılmalarının, araştırma öznelerinin katı bir geleneksellikle özdeşleştirilmelerinin ve Türkiye'nin toplumsal, politik ve kültürel bağlamının göz ardı edilmesinin bu çalışmaları Avrupa-merkezci ve özcü hale getirmekte olduğunu gördüm.

İkinci dönem Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam hakkındaki etnografik bilgide birçok açıdan önemli bir değişime işaret eder. Bu değişimi 1990'larda ve 2000'lerde dünyada ve Türkiye'de İslam'la ve İslamcı hareketlerle ilişkili olarak anlamak mümkündür. Ancak Türkiye'de İslamcı hareketteki çarpıcı değişimlerin kadın ve İslam konusunda yeni bir söylem oluşmasını tetiklediğine inanıyorum. İkinci dönemin başlangıcı olan 1994 yılında İslamcı Refah Partisi (RP) yerel seçimlerde şaşırtıcı bir başarı elde etti. O yılın ardından İslamcı hareketin popülerliği ve gücü, toplumun laik kesimlerinde bir endişe yaratarak arttı. Üniversite öğrencileri ve devlet memurları için geçerli olan başörtüsü yasağı sert politik tartışmalara neden oldu; başörtülü kadınların kamusal alandaki görünürlükleri modern laik Cumhuriyet'e karşı bir tehdit simgesine dönüştü ve İslamcı harekete karşı güçlü bir ötekileştirme ve marginalleştirme vardı. İslamcı hareket AKP ile 2002 yılında iktidara geldiğinde, başarısını toplumun bütün kesimleri için demokratikleşme ve liberalleşme vaatlerine borçluydu. Buna rağmen başörtüsü sorunu ve ona karşı toplumsal tepkiler daha uzun bir süre varlığını sürdürdü. Dolayısıyla laik bir devlet düzenine sahip ve bu özelliğiyle diğer Müslüman ülkelerden ayrılan bir ülkede İslamcı hareketin gelişimini ve kadınların İslamcılıkla olan bağlarını inceleme ve anlama isteği oldukça beklenilen bir durumdur. Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam üzerine Türk araştırmacıların ilk etnografi yayınları özellikle İslamcı hareket içindeki kadınlara odaklanmıştır. Üretilen bilginin siyasi tabiatı da aynı şekilde beklenen bir sonuçtur.

Bu dönemin başlangıcı ayrıca Ortadoğu çalışmalarında ve postkolonyal kuramda, etnografik çalışmalarında da gözlemlenebilen bir değişime tesadüf eder. Birinci

Dünya ülkelerini merkez kabul eden, Aydınlanmacı ve Batı modeli kalkınma temelli görüşlerin sert eleştirilere maruz kaldığı; sosyal bilimlerde Batılı-olmayan öznelerin temsil sorununun tartışıldığı ve düşünümsellik ve çokseslilik tartışmalarının sosyal bilimler yöntemlerini etkilediği bir değişimdir bu. Oryantalist ve kolonyal bilgi üretme biçimlerine karşı yapılan eleştirilerin yansımalarını bu dönemde görmek mümkündür. Ayrıca ikinci dönemdeki çalışmaları önceki dönemden ayıran en açık özellik yayınların sayılarındaki artıştır ve bu sayede onları araştırma konularına göre grplara ayırmam mümkün oldu. İlk bölümde Jenny B. White'in "Islamist Paradox" (2002), Ayşe Saktanber'in "Becoming the other as a Muslim in Turkey: Turkish women vs Islamist women" (1994) ve Kenan Çayır'ın "İslamcı bir sivil toplum örgütü: Gökkuşağı İstanbul Kadın Platformu" (2000) makalelerini İslamcı kadınların kimliği başlığı altında inceledim. İkinci bölümde Ayşe Saktanber'in *Living Islam: Women, religion and the politicization of culture in Turkey* (2002) ve Catharina Raudvere'nin *Çağdaş İstanbul'da sufi kadınlar* (2003) kitaplarını İslamcılığın yarı-kamusal alanlarında dindar kadınlar başlığıyla inceledim. Örtünme ve başörtüsü konusunu Aynur İlyasoğlu (1994), Özlem Sandıkçı ve Gülliz Ger (2005, 2007), Jenny White (1999), Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) ve Humphreys ve Brown'un (2002) etnografik çalışmalarında analiz ettim. Son olarak Yeşim Arat (2005) ve Ayşe Saktanber'in (2002) çalışmalarını politikada İslamcı kadınlar başlığı altında gruplandırdım. Yayınların hiçbirini elemedim ve böylece oluşturdukları söylemin tam bir resmini sunabiliyorum. Çalışmalarda ortak birçok teorik ve kuramsal ortak nokta mevcuttur. Öncelikle kadınları ve toplumsal cinsiyeti İslam toplumu içinde ele alan ilk dönemin aksine bu dönemde Müslüman kadın ayrı bir analiz kategorisi olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Postkolonyal teoriye dayanan kuramsal çerçevehem temelinde bu araştırma metinlerinde Müslüman kadınların failliklerini, öznelliklerini ve öteki olma hallerini gözlemledim. Ortadoğu kadın çalışmaları tartışmalarına dayanan çerçevehem temelinde ise bu Müslüman kadınların moderniteyle, devletle, İslamcı hareketle ve köktendincilikle olan ilişkilerini gözlemledim. Bunlara ek olarak onların kimlikleri, kapitalizmle ilişkileri, kamusal alandaki görünürlükleri, siyasi eylemcilikleri ve hem maruz kaldıkları hem de kendilerinin de içinde olduğu ötekileştirme meselelerini ele aldım. Bu dönemi bir öncekinden ayıran diğer unsur araştırmacıların özne konumlarını analizlerine dahil etmeleri ve etnografilerin çoksesli olmasıdır ki bunlar antropolojideki ve sosyal

bilimlerdeki düşünümsellik değişiminin bir yansımasıdır. Üçüncü olarak, Türk araştırmacıların etnografilerinin basımı 1990'ların ortasında başladığından ve Ortadoğu kadın çalışmaları yazınının bir parçası haline geldiğinden Türkiye'de kadın ve İslam konularında Batılı etnografik bilgi üretimine karşı Ortadoğu'daki diğer yerel söylemlerle de ilişkili olarak düşünülebilecek bir yerel bir tepki söyleminin oluşmasını bu dönemde bekleyebiliriz. Bunlara ek olarak Türkiye'deki siyasi ortamın bilgi üretimine etkisini çalışmaların hakikat isteği nedir, hangi ifadeleri ve söylemsel oluşumları yasmaktadırlar diye sorarak inceledim. İkinci ve üçüncü dönemlerde Deniz Kandiyoti'nin (1996) Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarını değerlendirdiği yazısında bahsettiği üç grup araştırmacıyı da görmek mümkündür: Batılı araştırmacılar, Batılı eğitim almış yurtdışında yaşayan veya ülkelerinde kalan araştırmacılar ve yerel eğitim almış araştırmacılar. Dolayısıyla kavramsal çerçeveleri ve hitap ettiğleri okuyucu kitleleri buna bağlı olarak değişmektedir. Bu sebeple bilgi üretimlerinin bu faktörlerden ne ölçüde etkilendiğini de sorguladım. Son olarak, araştırmacılar sosyal bilimlerdeki alanları bakımından da farklılaşmaktadır. Ortak noktaları göstermenin yanında ele almadıkları, göz ardı ettikleri veya tartışmadıkları araştırma sorularını ve sorunları da işaret ettim.

Metodolojileri, araştırmacıların çeşitliliği ve Müslüman kadın kategorisine odaklanmaları bakımından üçüncü dönem ikinci dönemde benzer özellikler taşır. Son dönemi ikinci dönemden ayıran unsurlar öncelikle siyasi, toplumsal ve ekonomik koşullarla araştırma konularının örtüşmesiyle açıklanabilir. Üçüncü dönemin başlangıcı olan 2007 yılı AKP'nin ikinci kez tek parti olarak hükümet kurmasıyla sonuçlanan seçimlerin olduğu yıldır. Dolayısıyla İslami hareketin ve AKP'nin gücünü hem arttırdığı hem de sağlamlaştırıldığı dönemdir. Ayrıca AKP 2007 yılı sonrasında önceki demokratik görünümünü ve söylemini geride bırakmış ve otoriterleşme ve muhafazakârlık parti siyasetinde ağır basmaya başlamıştır. Ancak İslami hareketin bu dönemdeki bir diğer özelliği artık toplumun dışında veya kenarında yer almaması, artık Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin "ötekisi" olmamasıdır. Tam aksine hareket siyasi alanda İslami muhafazakârlığa yaptığı bütün atıflarıyla merkezi bir konuma sahip olmuştur. Dahası, İslami hareketin kapitalizmle, tüketim kültürüyle ve küreselleşmeyle entegrasyonu İslami pazarı stil, zevk, farklılık ve lüks kavramlarını içeren yeni bir seviyeye taşımıştır. Aynı yıllarda İslam ve

İslamcılık küresel gündemde ve özellikle Batı medyasında köktendinci, demokrasi karşısında, vahşi, geri ve terörist tanımlamalarıyla yer almayı sürdürmüştür. 11 Eylül saldırısını izleyen Teröre Karşı Savaş yıllarıyla başlayan neo-Oryantalizm dönemidir. Diğer taraftan önceki dönemde olduğu gibi Müslümanların küresel kapitalizmle yakınlığını ve Müslüman kadınların hem İslami hem de modern yaşam tarzlarını vurgulayan bir akademik karşı-söylem ortaya çıkmıştır. Dünyadan ve Türkiye'den bu üç etkiyi bu dönemdeki etnografik bilgi üretimini etkileyen bağlamsal etkenler olarak kabul ediyorum.

Bu dönemde kadın ve İslam alanındaki saha çalışmalarının sayılarının artmasına rağmen etnografik çalışmaların sayısı sınırlı kalmıştır. Araştırma konularına göre yayınları iki başlık altında incelemek mümkündür. Örtünme ve tüketim başlığı altında Özlem Sandıkçı ve Gülistan Ger'in "Constructing and representing the Islamic consumer in Turkey" (2007) ve (2010) "Veiling in style: How does a stigmatized practice become fashionable?" makaleleri, Sertaş Sehlikoğlu ve Fahri Karakaş'ın (2016) "We can have the cake and eat it too: Leisure and spirituality at 'veiled' hotels in Turkey" makalesi ve Dilek Cindoğlu'nun (2011) *The Headscarf Ban and Discrimination: Professional Headscarved Women in the Labour Market* kitabı yer alır. İlk üç makale turban, örtünme ve İslami tüketim konularını tartışırken son çalışma turban sorununun İslamcı kadınlar üzerindeki etkilerini sergilemektedir. İkinci grup ise Zehra Yılmaz'ın (2015) *Dişil Dindarlık* kitabı, Berna Turam'ın "Turkish women divided by politics: Secularist activism versus pious non-resistance" makalesi Ayşe Ayata ve Fatma Tütüncü'nün (2008) "Party Politics of the AKP (2002–2007) and the Predicaments of Women at the Intersection of the Westernist, Islamist and Feminist Discourses in Turkey" makalesinden oluşmaktadır. Konuları bu iki grubun çok dışında kalan iki etnografi çalışmasını ise dışında bırakmaya karar verdim. Bunlardan ilki Amerikalı antropolog Kim Shively'in Ankara'da kadınlara özel bir Kur'an kursunda yaptığı etnografi çalışması, diğeri ise yine bir Amerikalı antropoloğun Kimberly Hart'ın bir Batı Anadolu köyünde dindarlık üzerine yaptığı etnografi çalışmasıdır. Bu çalışmayı dışında bırakmanın bir diğer sebebi Hart'ın kadınların dindarlığına dair önemli antropolojik bilgiler sunmasına rağmen araştırma sorusunun merkezine toplumsal cinsiyeti koymamış olmasıdır. Bu son bölümdeki ilk grup çalışmaları yukarıda

belirttiğim bağlamsal etkennlere göre inceledim ve bu çalışmaları önceki dönemdeki örtünme tüketimlarındaki söylemden ayıran söylemsel pratiklerin ve tartışmaların altını çizdim. Özellikle Müslüman kadınların failliklerini ve öznelliklerini nasıl tartışıklarını inceledim. İkinci gruptaki çalışmaların her birini belli bir siyasi etkenle ilişkilendirdim ve aynı zamanda araştırmacıların siyasi duruşlarını da inceledim.

Feminist postkolonyal teorinin ve Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarının eleştirileri temelinde Oryantalist bilgi üretimine karşı bir karşı-söylem oluşumunun bazı temel unsurlarını belirledim ve analitik tartışmalarımın içinde bunları referans noktalarım olarak kullandım. Birincisi, etnografik çalışmalarında kadının sesinin var olması gerekliliğidir. Faillikleri dikkate alınmalıdır ve öznellikleri analiz edilmedilir. Ne var ki bu iki kavram kadınların dini ideolojilerin gücünü değiştirmek, dönüştürmek veya onlara direnmek üzere farklı potansiyelleriyle ilişkili olarak tartışılmalıdır. Kadınlar Avrupa-merkezci ve özü olmayan bir söylem içinde temsil edilmelidir ve söylemsel ötekileştirmeye maruz kalmamalıdır. Söylem hiyerarşik ikiliklere dayanmamalı ve etnografik veri bağlamı içerisinde analiz edilmelidir. Seçtiğim çalışmaların söylemini incelerken bu noktaları ele almak toplumsal cinsiyet hiyerarşisinin yaratılmasında ve korunmasında dinî kurumların ve inançların gücünü gözden kaçırın riskini taşır. Risk, Ortadoğu'daki toplumsal cinsiyet çalışmalarının birçok araştırmacısı tarafından dile getirilmiştir. Dolayısıyla kuramsal ve metodolojik çerçeveyi iki çabayı daha içermektedir: İslam'ı toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliklerinin tek ve bütünsel nedeni olarak gören söylemsel oluşumlara odaklanmak ve İslâmî inancın ataerkil özelliklerinin açık sonuçlarını kültürel görelilik düzeyine indirmek veya onları kadınları modern, laik, Batılı, kapitalist dünyanın etkilerine karşı güçlendiren pratikler olarak sunmak. Bu zorlu bir uğraştır ama yine de kadın ve İslam arasındaki günümüz ilişkisine yeni ve eleştirel bir yaklaşımın oluşması için gerekli olduğuna inanıyorum.

## Sonuçlar

Türkiye'de Kadın ve İslam hakkındaki söylemin genel resmi bize gösteriyor ki söylemsel dönemlerin ikincisi ve üçüncüsü ilk dönemden dikkate değer bir biçimde

farklılaşmaktadır. Yukarıda saydığım nedenlere ek olarak başka birçok nedenden söz etmek mümkündür. İlk dönemdeki çalışmalar kadını aile eve akrabalık yapısı içinde incelerken sonraki dönemlerde bireysel kimliği ve İslamcı hareket içindeki kolektif kimliği üzerinden incelemiştir. Bu fark, 1990'lardan itibaren İslamcılığın kadınların kolektif kimliklerinin birincil tanımlayıcısı haline geldiğini göstermektedir.

Etnografik verilerin bir bağlam çerçevesinde analiz edilmesi de diğer bir değişim olmuştur. *The Seed and the Soil* ve *A World of Difference* dışındaki bütün çalışmalar analizlerini Türkiye'nin modernleşme tarihi ve laik bir devlet içinde ve toplumsal düzende İslamcı hareketin yükselişi bağlamıyla ilişkilendirmiştir. Bu söylemsel pratik kadınların İslam toplumlarındaki statüsünü özü bir biçimde İslam temelinde açıklayan söyleme karşı önemli bir özelliklektir. Bunun yanı sıra Türkiye'nin kendine özgü modernleşme ve laikleşme tarihinin kadın ve İslam arasındaki ilişki tartışmasına dâhil edilmesinin önemini gösterir.

İlk dönemde kadınların faillikleri neredeyse tamamen göz ardı edilirken ikinci ve üçüncü dönemler İslamcı kadının faillliğini kabul eder. Kadınların failliği örtünme ve İslâmî bir yaşam tarzını benimseme kararları temelinde olduğu kadar onların İslamcı ataerkilik ve laik toplumsal düzen ve devlet düzeni ile de mücadeleleri temelinde de tartışıılır. Yaşadıkları koşulları nasıl değiştirdikleri, kendi mekânlarını nasıl yarattıları, kamusal alana nasıl katıldıkları failliklerini vurgulamak için anlatılır. İslamcı kadınların öznellikleri çoğunlukla İslamcılıkla bağlantılı olarak tanımlanır. Ne var ki, modernitenin, küreselleşmenin ve tüketim kültürünün etkileri diğer önemli faktörler haline gelmiştir.

İkiliğin yaygın oluşu ilk dönemin etnografik söyleminin temelini oluşturuyorken onu izleyen söylemsel dönemlerde gözlemlenmez. Özellikle Ortadoğu çalışmalarında ve postkolonyal teoride kamusal ve özel, geleneksel ve modern, Doğulu ve Batılı arasındaki ayrimın bulanıklaşması hakkındaki tartışmalar, Türkiye'deki kadın ve üzerine etnografik söylem üzerinde etkili olmuştur. Aynı zamanda Türkiye'deki yeni İslamcu kadınları modern, eğitimli, kentli, elit ve aynı

zamanda dindar olarak sunan etnografik bilgi Ortadoğu kadın çalışmalarında İslam ve modernite tartışmalarının bir parçası olmuştur.

Avrupa-merkezcilik ve İslamcı kadınların söylemsel olarak ötekileştirilmesi ilk dönemde mevcutken sonraki yıllarda gözlemlenmez. Ancak Avrupa-merkezcilik kapitalizmin rolünü açıkça eleştirmekten çekinen İslâmî tüketim hakkındaki çalışmalarda örtülü olarak mevcuttur.

Türkiye'deki siyasi ortam, özellikle İslamcı hareketin siyasi başarısının dönüm noktaları araştırmacıların bilme isteklerinin şekillenmesinde ve ayrıca analizlerinde ve argümanlarında etkili olmuştur. İslamcı kadınların ötekileştirilmesi ve laik/Kemalist/feminist kadınların İslamcı kadınların kimlik oluşumdaki öteki oluşları konusundaki söylemsel oluşumları bu ortamla ilişkilendirmek gereklidir. Ancak içinde barındırdığı indirgemecilik sebebiyle ötekileştirme söylemi sorunludur. Siyasi ortamın yansımalarından bir diğeri de AKP'nin neo-liberal, İslamcı ve muhafazakâr politikalarının bir arada bulunmasının sonucu olarak incelenebilecek sivil toplum ve siyaset içindeki kadınlar üzerine yapılan çalışmalardır.

Küreselleşmenin farklı evrelerini iki dönüm noktası etrafında incelemek mümkündür. İlk Sovyetler Birliği ve Soğuk Savaş sonrasında kalkınma teorilerinin çöktüğü ve kültürel çeşitliliklerin, bireyselliklerin ve yerelliklerin vurgulandığı ve bu arada İslamcı hareketlerin dünya çapında da yükselişe geçtiği dönemdir. İslamcı kimlikler üzerine üretilen söylemin küreselleşmenin bu eğiliminin bir yansımıası olarak da düşünülmesi gerektiğine inanıyorum. İkinci dönüm noktası 11 Eylül saldırılarının ve ABD'nin Teröre Karşı Savaş siyasetinin canlandırdığı Oryantalist önyargılar, İslamofobi ve neo-Oryantализm dönemidir. Üçüncü dönemdeki çalışmaları bunlara alternatif bir karşı-söylem olarak da okumak mümkündür.

İkinci ve üçüncü söylemsel dönemdeki etnografik bilginin bazı araştırma alanlarında ve belirli konular üzerinde kümelendiği açıktır. Örneğin, araştırmaların neredeyse tamamı İstanbul'da gerçekleştirılmıştır. İslamcı kadın kimliğinin büyük

ölçüde kentli bir olgu olduğunu ileri sürüldüğünü dikkate alırsak, kentli olmanın da İstanbullu veya daha az bir ölçüde Ankaralı olmaya indirgendiğini görebiliriz. Türkiye'nin diğer kentleri tamamen görmezden gelinmiştir. Ayrıca İstanbul'un dev bir metropol olarak kente yaşayan insanların kimlik oluşumuna kattığı unsurlar İslamcı kadın kimliği analizinde dikkate alınmamıştır. Ayrıca İslamcı hareketin de bu kozmopolit ve küresel kentte oluşma ve gelişme dinamiklerinin de başka hiçbir kenttekine benzemesi beklenemez. Araştırmaların çoğunun bu kentte yapılmış olması, bu araştırmaların genel olarak Türkiye'deki İslamcı hareketle ilgili sonuçlara varmalarını sorunlu hale getirmiştir.

Bu tez çalışmasında incelenen araştırmaların hepsinin ortak noktası ise tamamen Sünni Müslümanları kapsamaları ve kadınların dinle olan ilişkilerindeki farklılaşmaları göz ardı etmeleridir. Farklı mezheplere ait veya farklı dinlere mensup kadınlar araştırmalara konu edilmemiştir. Foucault'nun bilgi üretiminin güç dengesizliklerini işaret ettiğine dair görüşüne dayanarak İslamcı kadınların kimliklerinin ve yaşam biçimlerinin güç çatışmalarının yoğunlaştığı noktalar olduğunu iddia edebiliriz. Ne var ki diğer kadınların dinle ilişkilerinde güç çatışmalarının olmadığını varsayılamayız, hele de Türkiye'deki azınlıklar tarihini düşündüğümüz zaman. Sünni İslam'a, İslamcı hareketlere ve köktendinciliğe olan ilginin uzun bir akademik tarihi vardır ve bu konular yakın bir gelecekte popülerliğini kaybedecek gibi görünmüyör.

İslammci kadınlarla ilgili çok az erkek araştırmacının araştırma yapmış olması konunun hala bir kadın konusu olarak kaldığını göstermektedir. Etnografik araştırma yapma üzerine akademik tartışmalarda erkekler araştırmacıların kadınların özel alanına erişimlerinin olmadığı ve bunun da araştırmada sınırlayıcı bir etken olduğu söylenir. Fakat modernleşmeyle kamusal ve özel alan arasındaki ayımların belirsizleşmesi ve dindar kadınların kamusal alanda daha çok var olması sınırlayıcı etkiyi ortadan kaldırmaktadır. Bir başka kümelenme antropologlar, sosyologlar ve siyaset bilimciler arasında gözlemlenebilir. Bir istisna dışında antropologların tamamı Batılı kadınlar, siyaset bilimcilerle sosyologların neredeyse tamamı Türk kadınlardır. Bu görünüm kadın ve İslam konusunun Batılı araştırmacılar tarafından kültürel alanın bir parçası olarak algılandığı ve hatta

antropolojinin kolonyal köklerinin hala derinlerde var olduğu gerçeğini gösterir. Türk araştırmacıları tarafindansa toplumsal dinamikler, ülke siyaseti ve kadın hakları sorunu olarak görüldüğünü ortaya koyar.

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