

MODERNIZATION AND GENDER REGIMES

Life Histories of the Wives of Turkish Political Leaders

Proefschrift

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Samenvatting

Deze studie betreft de levensverhalen van de echtgenotes van vier Turkse politieke leiders. De belangrijkste doelstelling van het onderzoek is het analyseren van veranderingen in genderrol en genderidentiteit en de spanningen tussen beiden in de geschiedenis van de Turkse modernisering in vergelijking met de huidige debatten met betrekking tot gender. Twee belangrijke punten bepalen het algemene kader van deze vrouwenstudie: het eerste punt heeft te maken met het bestuderen van gender niet alleen als een toegeschreven maar ook als een ervaren identiteit. Het tweede punt is gerelateerd aan het situeren van de modernisering in zowel een theoretische als een historische context. Met andere woorden: dit onderzoek gaat dieper in op de verhouding tussen moderniteit en ‘gender’ vanuit de positie van persoonlijke en privé-ervaring in Turkije, door rekening te houden met continu veranderende betekenissen van moderniteit.

In dit proefschrift is de studie van de relatie tussen moderniteit en gender niet beperkt gehouden tot de sociale en politieke context van de late Ottomaanse periode en de oprichtingsfase van de Republiek, maar probeert ze de veranderende en onderscheiden gender-patronen ook na de jaren 50 te analyseren.

Met als doel de status van vrouwen te hervormen, bracht de kemalistische modernisering vrouwen tot actie teneinde deel te nemen aan het maatschappelijke en economische leven, terwijl hetzelfde initiatief hun moderniseringservaring beperkte door de ‘moderne vrouw’ van de Republiek te idealiseren. Een manier van analyseren om te begrijpen hoe de kemalistische modernisering en gender door het gehele moderniseringsproces heen in Turkije in elkaar grepen, is om zich te concentreren op vooraanstaande vrouwelijke figuren, bijvoorbeeld echtgenotes van politieke leiders. De onderliggende vooronderstelling in dit onderzoek is dat echtgenotes van de politieke leiders binnen een specifiek gender regime als rolmodellen fungeren. Tegelijkertijd is hun genderidentiteit opgebouwd als gevolg van hun ervaring met betrekking tot de genderpatronen. Derhalve bevinden hun levensverhalen zich op het kruispunt van deze twee soorten ervaring.

In overeenstemming met de doelstellingen van deze studie is de levensgeschiedenis-benadering toegepast teneinde biografische gegevens (mondeling en schriftelijk) over het eigen levensverhaal van een persoon te verzamelen naast een archiefstudie teneinde een algemeen kader van het contemporaine gender regime te schetsen. Dit onderzoek bevat vier levensgeschiedenissen van echtgenotes van vier politici: Mevhibe İnönü, Berin Menderes, Rahşan Ecevit en Semra Özal, die diachronisch geselecteerd zijn om specifieke

eigenschappen van moderniteit met inbegrip van opvattingen over gender in de moderne Turkse geschiedenis tussen 1923 en vroeg jaren '90 te beschrijven. In het levensgeschiedenis-onderzoek is de steekproef geselecteerd volgens principes van een doelgerichte bemonstering en de essentiële gevallenanalyse is toegepast op het design van het onderzoek. Voor wat betreft mondelinge data-verzameling met betrekking tot het levensverhaal van een persoon, zijn vier vraaggesprekken afgenomen met de echtgenotes, of met hun kinderen voor het geval dat zij niet meer in leven zijn. Bovendien is er supplementaire biografische informatie ook verzameld. De verhalende benadering bepaalde de analyse van de bevindingen, die zowel een evaluatie van subjectiviteit en ervaring als het bereiken van een inzicht in heersende geslachtspatronen beoogde.

Aan de hand van de bevindingen is de conclusie getrokken door middel van evaluatie van de modernisering als gerelateerd aan privé-ervaringen en contemporaine en Kemalistische gender regimes. Dit stelt ons in zekere zin in staat om het succes van deze vorm van kemalisme in het historische proces van de Turkse modernisering te beoordelen.

Er wordt in dit onderzoek gedebatteerd dat de kemalistische modernisering een natie-staat overwoog ten aanzien van het ideaal van een nieuwe familie en de desbetreffende modernisering vereiste dienovereenkomstig dat vrouwen een modern uiterlijk zullen hebben en dat ze zich als beschermers van de nationale solidariteit zullen gedragen. Dientengevolge was het voor de 'nieuwe vrouw' van de Republiek een kwestie om een evenwicht te vinden tussen het modern en traditioneel zijn. Respectievelijk impliceerden dubbele referenten van de genderidentiteit van de kemalistische modernisering tot op zekere hoogte een spanning tussen toegeschreven rollen en doorgemaakte ervaringen gerelateerd aan gender. Derhalve vereiste het een aanpassingsstrategie van vrouwen.

Aangezien hun levensverhalen in deze studie gepresenteerd worden, ondervonden de echtgenotes van de politieke leiders modernisering in zowel politiek als persoonlijk opzicht. Er is verondersteld dat hun ervaringen van modernisering die uit een dialectisch verband tussen de uitvoering van de genderrol en de opbouw van de genderidentiteit voortvloeien, mogelijke spanningen en aanpassingsstrategieën gerelateerd aan gender in de Turkse modernisering ontsluiten. Als we het levensverhaal van Mevhibe İnönü in acht nemen, zien we dat de uitvoering van haar genderrol en de ervaring van haar genderidentiteit samenhangend waren met de contemporaine debatten over echte genderrol voor vrouwen. In een tijdperk waarin gezin werd verheerlijkt als de basis van de natie, presteerde Mevhibe İnönü heel goed als een verlichte, ondernemende vrouw zonder haar vrouwelijke plichten na te laten. Zij vormde een goed voorbeeld van een moderne middenklas-vrouw.

De levensgeschiedenis van Berin Menderes bracht aan het licht zowel de dispaartheid tussen cosmopolitische moderniteit en het ideaal van een eenvormige, nationale moderniteit van het kemalisme als het verschil tussen toegeschreven genderrollen en de werkelijke doorgemaakte ervaringen met betrekking tot de modernisering.

De levensgeschiedenis van Rahşan Ecevit heeft ons de moeilijkheden laten zien van de moderniseringservaring gerelateerd aan de gender in een middenklas-gezin in de vroege jaren van de Republiek. Haar levensverhaal heeft het zichtbaar gemaakt dat de manier en de graad van de modernisering van de vrouwen aan de toestemming en de steun van de echtgenoot/de vader werden gebonden.

Het levensverhaal van Semra Özal stelde een eclectische combinatie van enerzijds de opbouw van de genderidentiteit en de uitvoering van de genderrol en anderzijds de moderniteit voor. Wegens haar moderne uiterlijk en gedrag was zij in die tijd een seculier affichemeisje geworden, ofschoon zij als ‘presidentsvrouw’ een neo-liberaal-, een anti-feministische en een profamiliehouding had ingenomen. Semra Özal zou van haarzelf een bourgeoisie-model voor middenklas-vrouwen kunnen maken; toch niet gematigd, maar wel sjiek.

Concluderend stelt dit onderzoek dat het kemalistische genderregime als gevolg van de marginalisatie van het kemalisme veel van zijn kracht heeft verloren om een kemalistische vrouwenidentiteit tot stand te brengen behalve het continu voordragen van het belang van onderwijs en het er modern uit zien. In plaats daarvan is het een deel van een tweede klasse semiologisch systeem: een mythe.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Recent debates about electing the next president of the Republic which dominated the Turkish political agenda at the time of writing of this work have shown that the wives of political leaders have always been seen as a yardstick for determining the success of the modernization. Whether the wife of Abdullah Gül, the new president of the Republic, Hayrūnisa Gül, who wears a headscarf was modern and could represent the modern Turkish women became one of the main lines of the debate. In public discussions before the election, her level of achievement in the field of modernization was used to evaluate suitability and competence of Abdullah Gül as the would-be President of the Turkish Republic. Those who are in line with Kemalist modernization displayed a deep hesitation about the modernity of the prospective first lady and also expressed their reservations about a first lady with headscarf attending official ceremonies. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a close associate of Abdullah Gül, countered by telling the Kemalists that Mustafa Kemal's wife Latife Hanım had worn a headscarf, too.¹ This was partially true. Although until she married with Mustafa Kemal, Latife Hanım had never worn *çarşaf*; after marriage, Mustafa Kemal and Latife had talked about the model she was supposed to present. So, according to her sister the style of headcover that covered her hair but left all of her face and neck visible, which resembled wearing her hair in a bun had appeared out of a mutual decision to convey a moderate image of Latife.² After her divorce from Mustafa Kemal in 1925, Latife Hanım always appeared in modern fashion and with no scarf on her head. Furthermore, the woman figures around Mustafa Kemal in the following years were always in western attire with a fashionable haircut, so that it is possible to argue that Mustafa Kemal's ideal was not to invent a moderate headscarf but to replace the scarf with a western appearance. Therefore, although the Prime Minister's argument was historically debatable, yet, it can serve to illustrate not only the context of the debate about modernity, but also the historical subjects that figure in this debate: women in general and the wives of political leaders in particular.

Thus, the present work deals with the life histories of the wives of four Turkish political leaders as well as with contemporaneous debates on gender with the aim of analyzing changes in gender role and gender identity and tensions between the two in the history of Turkish modernization. Considering modernization not as confined to constitutive years of the republic but as a continuing social and historical process, this work attempted to go beyond

¹ **Milliyet**, 15.08.2007.

² İpek Çalışlar, "Sırlarıyla Latife Hanım 4", **Milliyet**, 12.11.2005.

the existing studies dealing with gendered identities within the social and political context of the period starting with the late Ottoman years until the early Republican years. Main concerns of this work are twofold. The first concern is about dealing with gender not only as an ascribed but also as an experienced identity. The second concern is about situating the modernization in its theoretical as well as historical context. In other words, the present work takes a closer look at the modern as related to gender, from the locus of personal and private experience in Turkey through considering ever-changing meanings of the modern both as “an instrument of a political project of domination” and as “a potentially liberating historical condition”.³ From this point onwards, the questions how Kemalist modernization has produced and reproduced specific gender regimes and how gender has influenced these modernization processes in Turkey provide us with a general framework for the analysis.

At this point, it is necessary to define the concepts used in this work: Gender, in its most general usage, denotes “a hierarchical division between women and men” embedded in and produced and reproduced at the levels of personal and cultural as well as social processes.⁴ Similarly, according to Connell, dichotomy and difference are the substance of gender.⁵ In the same way, Scott defines gender as a social category imposed on the sexed body.⁶ She also emphasizes that “gender is a primary (but not the only) way of signifying relationships of power”.⁷ Scott means not only the power relation between sexed bodies; she broadens her understanding of gendered power to social hierarchical structures in general because, according to her, “[h]ierarchical structures rely on generalized understandings of the so called natural relationship between male and female.”⁸ Another concept, “gender regime,” is used here to refer to a set of conditions under which a system of relations between men and women occurs, is maintained or changes. Connell defined the gender regime as the intrinsic functioning of gender relations within single social institutions; it is linked to, though not a simple reflection of, the wider gender order of the society.⁹ Additionally, Sancar defined a

³ Sibel Bozdoğan, Reşat Kasaba, “Introduction”, **Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey**, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1997: 6.

⁴ Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott, “Introduction: The Gendering of Sociology”, **Gender, A Sociological Reader**, Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (eds.), Routledge, London and New York, 2002: 1.

⁵ R.W. Connell, **Gender**, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002: 8.

⁶ Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis”, **Gender and the Politics of History**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988: 32.

⁷ Ibid, 43.

⁸ Ibid, 48.

⁹ R.W. Connell, “The State, Gender and Sexual Politics: Theory and Appraisal”, **Theory and Society**, Vol. 19, No. 5, 1990: 523; R.W. Connell, **Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve İktidar**, Cem Soydemir (çev.), Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1998: 166. Connell, places the gender regime as part of gender order of society. Accordingly, gender regime arise from gender relations which are based on reflexive practices (of gender). This four levelled scheme is defined by Connell as the patriarchal chain. Connell, 2002: 54.

gender regime as the articulation of gendered social facts with social power relations, in other words, the articulation of social hierarchies with gendered hierarchies.¹⁰ The latter definition seems to broaden the micro or narrow systems of gender relations of social institutions, associating them with what the former definition defined as the wider gender order of the society. In agreement with the latter definition of gender regime, here, my intention, for the sake of the analysis, is to relate the gender regime with the politics of modernity. In general terms, interrelated functioning of the state, ideologies and political actors contributes to the formation of gendered identities as well as gender systems. As Connell argued, specifically the state appears as the main organizer of the power relations of gender through laws and administrative arrangements.¹¹ In addition to laws and administrative arrangements, another tool of the state for organizing power relations is hegemony, defined by Althusser as the ideological apparatuses of the state.¹² Thus, the state functions to produce and reproduce gendered systems not only by means of concrete measures but also by means of ideological interventions. This last point is strongly related to the role of the state in Turkish modernization. In particular, the state in Turkey, not only provided for women's emancipation through reforms, but also provided women with new appropriate codes of behavior. So, that the state appears as the actor of the politics of modernity in Turkey. Since any political agenda has to deal with the modernization paradigm, so ideologies and political leaders have their shares in the politics of modernity, and hence in the gender regime in Turkey.

In the general picture of the gender regime, the "gender role" constitutes half of a dialectic relationship with "gender identity". While gender identity refers to the "private experience of the gender role", the gender role is "the public expression of gender identity". Through the dialectical relationship between the two, internal experiences connect with external behavior.¹³ Thus, focusing on the life histories of the wives of political leaders and examining the intersection of these two types of experience might reveal much about the prevailing gender regime. Additionally, supplementary data about contemporaneous debates on gender relations might broaden the scope of a study on the gender regime by allowing for considerations about patterns of gender in the society.

¹⁰ Serpil Sancar, "Otoriter Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyet Rejimi", **Doğu Batı**, No. 29, 2004: 200, footnote: 3.

¹¹ Connell, 1990: 520.

¹² Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)", **Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays**, Montly Review Press, New York, 1971: 43.

¹³ Money, cited in Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, **Subject to Biography: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Writing Women's Lives**, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1998: 229.

1. Modernity and Modernization

Modernization not only has its roots in social theory as a way of explaining rapid and fundamental changes mainly in the West but it also refers to process of economic, political, social and cultural transformation which a society goes through with the aim of attaining the level modernity which the Western European societies have achieved. In this respect, modernization is associated with a set of theories that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century as to explain changes in non-western societies. Since modernization has begun in Europe, according to modernization perspective Western Europe represents the example which societies in process of modernization should follow. In this sense, modernization approximates to westernization because it provides non-western societies with the model of western modernity in order to achieve modernity.

Modernization in Turkey had begun as an intellectual endeavor of the Ottoman elite for transforming the state and the society according to a western model which was seen superior in terms of its development and it resulted in formation of a nation state in 1923 that was radical enough to claim breaking ties with the Ottoman past and to accommodate western model of modernity into social and political life of the country. Often found its expression in the term *asrileşmek* (to become contemporaneous, i.e. to become modernized), modernization in Turkey was conflated by westernization and characterized by its accommodation in a non-western context. The course and framework of the debate related to modernization in Turkey provide us with how Turkish intellectuals perceived modernity and modernization and how they conceptualized these to evaluate specific social and political conditions before and after 1923. This effort should include not only understanding intellectual roots of modernization in Turkey, but it is also important to show relatedness of Turkish intellectuals to later changes within and challenges towards the modernization and the way they perceived modernization in the course of time. Drawing such a general perspective about meaning of modernization in Turkey is expected to lay a foundation for analyzing production and reproduction of gender identities in Kemalist modernization and their influences on the modernization process.

1.1. Intellectual Roots of Turkish Modernization

Beginning in the 19th century, Ottoman intellectuals made several connections with modern social thought and related it to the emergent problems confronting the Ottoman state and

society. Having been under the influence of the dissolving political and social structure of the Ottoman Empire, they for the most part were influenced by the organic and progressive themes of modern sociological thinking.¹⁴ Hence, it was not a surprise that their discourse soon turned out to be related with the nation and nation-based theories of social order and secular and scientific approaches to social order.

The Young Turk movement, in particular its most radical wing, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, İTC) lay at the core of intellectual life in the Empire during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In comparison with previous intellectual approaches, they were *avant-gardes*, due to their embrace of western social and cultural values.¹⁵ A major influence on their thinking came from Namık Kemal (1840-1888) who had been a prominent figure among the intellectuals called Young Ottomans. He was first to diagnose European penetration as the reason for the decline of the Empire. Namık Kemal admired the level of development of the West and foretold a path to Ottoman progress through privileging Islam; what he sought was the reconciliation between Islam and certain elements of Western civilization: industry, technology, economy, the press and education.¹⁶ The Young Turks abandoned his idea of reconciliation very soon. They were fascinated by the popular science and materialism of their time. One of their sources of inspiration was Ludwig Büchner, who considered religion a major obstacle to human progress. They were also influenced by social Darwinism as a tool for understanding reality. Additionally, Le Bon, especially his work, *Psychologie des Foules*, attracted them and shaped their elitist view; elitism soon became the prime political component of the Young Turk ideology.¹⁷ This seems in contradiction with what Berkes argued: that the aim of the Young Turk movement was the restoration of constitutional rule and of the parliament.¹⁸ In contrast, according to Hanioglu, the Young Turks have been influenced greatly by Le Bon and their constitutionalism was only conditional.¹⁹ Existence of the parliament was considered valuable if it was composed of outstanding intellectual figures who could act for the people. In fact that the first parliament of the Turkish Republic was composed not of elected politicians but of carefully selected

¹⁴ Yusuf Akçura presented the main three political approaches in the late Ottoman Period as *Osmanlıcılık* (Ottomanism), *İslamcılık* (Islamism) and *Türkçülük* (Turkism) and discussed them in detail in his **Üç Tarz-Siyaset**, 1912. (First published in 1905 in a newspaper in Cairo)

¹⁵ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, **The Young Turks in Opposition**, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1995: 18.

¹⁶ Niyazi Berkes, **The Development of Secularism in Turkey**, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1964: 215–216.

¹⁷ Hanioglu, 1995: 21–23.

¹⁸ Berkes, 1964: 304.

¹⁹ Hanioglu, 1995: 31.

intellectuals was the expression of this elitist view.²⁰ Most Young Turks were influenced by positivism and they had close ties with positivists, among whom was Lafitte, follower of August Comte. One of the reasons why they embraced positivism was that positivists in Europe were critical of European imperial politics.²¹ As for religion, the Young Turks acknowledged the importance of Islam as a ‘social cement’²² in their own society, though for them religion was incompatible with science; hence, they tried to infuse science into a Muslim society by interpreting and representing the scientific view according to Islam.²³

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Ottoman intellectuals fell mainly into three factions. The first group, Garbcılar, favored unconditional westernization. The second group was the clear critic of super-westernization and proposed the restoration of Islam as the religion of the state and the moral order of society. The third group, the Young Turks, especially the CUP, benefited from the general disgust with super-westernization, and around 1900, they evolved a more nationalist outlook, in terms of community of Ottoman-Muslim elements, not yet of Turkish elements.²⁴ According to Hanioglu,²⁵ the nationalist shift among the Young Turks was gradually established between 1902 and 1906. On the other hand Berkes²⁶ marks the establishment of the nationalist society Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*) in 1912 and the publication of the review The Turkish Homeland (*Türk Yurdu*) as displaying the growing support for the nationalist outlook within the Young Turk movement. Whatever the case, with respect to nationalism, among the most important ideologues of the movement after the 1908 was Ziya Gökalp²⁷ who, of all the Young Turks, presented the most systematic, well-synthesized and influential theoretical approach.

Ziya Gökalp became the most well-known and influential figure of the period just before the establishment of the Republic. Inspired by Durkheim, he conceptualized the main features of nationalism in Turkey, which came into reality in the Kemalist modernization project. Similar to Durkheim, Gökalp argued that the individual (*fert*) could only become a person (*şahıs*) as a member of society. According to Durkheim, society was something

²⁰ Ibid, 216.

²¹ Ibid, 203-205.

²² Erik Jan Zürcher, “Kemalist Düşüncenin Osmanlı Kaynakları”, **Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm**, Tanıl Bora (ed. by), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002: 44–46.

²³ Hanioglu, 1995: 31.

²⁴ Berkes, 1964: 337–345; Hanioglu, 1995: 14. For evolution of the Young Turk movement see Erik Jan Zürcher, **Turkey, A Modern History**, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London, 2001: 90–94.

²⁵ Hanioglu, 1995: 211.

²⁶ Berkes, 1964: 246.

²⁷ Hanioglu, 1995: 121.

different from an aggregation of individuals, society was something *sui generis*.²⁸ Thus, like Durkheim, Gökalp privileged society over the individual.²⁹ Besides, as Heyd has described, Gökalp took Durkheim's concept of the *nation* over that of *society* and attributed all qualities found in Durkheim's *society* to his *nation*. The society united by culture, i.e., nation (*millet*), was the last stage of historical progress for a society after it had passed through three stages: the primitive or tribal society (*aşiret*), the society based on ethnical affinity (*kavim*) and the society with common religion (*ümmet*). Thus, according to Gökalp, the true essence of the nation was culture rather than race.³⁰ Gökalp defined culture (*hars*) as unity of language, culture, ideals, and religion, which every nation possesses in its unique form. In this framework, the culture was different from civilization (*medeniyet*), which was defined as the spiritual and material values common to different nations.³¹ Although the distinction between culture and civilization is irrelevant within the Durkheimian theory, according to Heyd, it constituted the distinction between the *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* of Tönnies, who had influenced Gökalp indirectly. According to Tönnies, while *Gemeinschaft* was defined through natural will, self, and possession on the basis of land and family law, on the contrary, *Gesellschaft* was characterized by rational will, personality, and wealth on the basis of money and contractual law.³² In this sense, for Tönnies, *Gesellschaft*, "...gives us the general description of 'bourgeois society'."³³ Tönnies is known having influenced Gaston Richard, who at one time was in the circle of Durkheim and whose works Gökalp had studied.³⁴ Additionally, like the collectivist Durkheim, Gökalp, as the pioneer of nationalist collectivism, acknowledged the function of religion to strengthen national ties.³⁵ As expressed in the title of his 1918 book *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (Turkification, Islamization, Modernization), his idea of the nation was based on the distinction between three compatible and complementary elements: national culture (*hars*), community of religion (*ümmet*) and international civilization (*medeniyet*).³⁶ However, in comparison, despite several commonalities, Gökalp's own definition of the nation was different from that of the

²⁸ Robert Nisbet, "Conservatism", *A History of Sociological Analysis*, Robert Nisbet; Tom Bottomore (eds.), Heinemann, London, 1978: 111-113.

²⁹ Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp*, Luzac&Company Ltd and the Harvill Press Ltd, 1950: 53-55.

³⁰ Ibid, 57-62.

³¹ Ibid, 63.

³² Hans Freyer, 1936, pp. I ff., cited in Ferdinand Tönnies, *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, Charles P. Loomis (trans. and supplemented by), American Book Company, New York (etc.), 1940: 211.

³³ Heyd, 1950: 87.

³⁴ Ibid, 67.

³⁵ Ibid, 101.

³⁶ Ibid, 149-150.

Republican People's Party, as expressed in its 1931 program. In both, a common language, culture and ideals were thought to bind people together, yet what was omitted in the party program was religion.³⁷ Rather, all the Republican reforms dealing with religion were in connection with and influenced by the positivist and materialist *Weltanschauung* of the Young Turks, which aimed to transform Ottoman society into a “modern-scientific society” by freeing it from religion.³⁸ It was a regime based on popular materialistic-positivist ideology and nationalism, with an intrinsic motif of anti-imperialist rhetoric.³⁹ In this rhetoric, the Christian communities of the empire were seen as agents of imperialism.

Thus, the roots of thought about modernization gave the Turkish intellectuals an inspiration for the direction of modernization and served as theoretical sources of reflection about what modernity should be.

Additionally, in order to reveal the meaning of modernity and modernization in Turkey, as mentioned before, it is also important to comprehend later challenges toward and changes within modernization in the social theory and also relatedness and reactions of the Turkish modernizing elite to them.

1.2. Modernization Theory and Turkish Modernization: “Passing of Traditional Society”

What characterizes modernization theory, as mentioned above, is that it is based on classification of newly developing societies of the 1950s and 1960s into transitional categories, in a position of “teleological approximation to the characteristics of ‘already modern countries’”. That is to say, “specific *developmental sequences* [were] extrapolated mostly from the historical modernization process of the West, and injected into universal development ‘laws’”.⁴⁰ It is possible to differentiate two analytical types of modernization: economic modernization and social modernization. While economic modernization was equated with “higher levels of consumption and standard of living, technological revolution, greater capital intensity and rational bureaucratic organization,” social modernization was used to refer to “planned social change, secularism, attitudinal and behavioral changes, heavy public expenditures on education, knowledge revolution through expanding means of

³⁷ Ibid, 151.

³⁸ Ibid, 151; M. Şükrü Hanioglu, “Garbcılar: Their Attitudes Toward Religion and Their Impact on the Official Ideology of the Turkish Republic”, *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 2, Iss. 86, 1997: 146.

³⁹ Hanioglu, 1995: 216

⁴⁰ Karl H. Hoerning **Secondary Modernization: Societal Changes of Newly Developing Nations-A Theoretical Essay in Comparative Sociology**, University of Denver, Denver, 1969-70: 1-3.

communication, instrumental social relationships,...contractual obligations, structural differentiation and functional specialization”.⁴¹

Among the theoreticians of the modernization, due to his interest in the Middle East and particularly in Turkey as the title of his book *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* demonstrates, Daniel Lerner deserves special attention.

In the very first pages of his book, Lerner describes the modernization process in the West and clearly sets the Western model of modernization as historical fact and an inevitable model for the Middle East to follow. He identifies basic characteristics and the sequence of modernization as follows: “increasing urbanization has tended to raise literacy; rising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; increasing media exposure has ‘gone with’ wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation (voting)”.⁴² He emphasizes that, being historical fact and globally relevant, the same basic model should reappear in “all modernizing societies on all continents of the world, regardless of variations in race, color, creed...The *lesson*⁴³ [is] that Middle Eastern modernizers [would] do well to study the historical sequence of Western growth”.⁴⁴

Although he argues that Islam is in a “defenseless” position against the “rationalist and positivist spirit” of modernization,⁴⁵ he also employs the concept of “deviation” or a kind of “deliberative deformation” in order to understand modernization of the Middle East in comparison with the Western model.⁴⁶ Those concepts reflect his attempt to overcome the static meanings implied by the concepts of traditional and modern. According to Lerner, the “dynamic” component of modernization in the Middle East is “transition,” which in fact inspired the title of his book.⁴⁷ The concept of transition not only refers to a specific stage of modernization in the Middle East but also points out the desire of the people to change and be modern. In general, this transition means being not yet fully modern but no longer traditional.⁴⁸

Lerner’s view of modernization wears western garb, so to speak: his extrapolation of a general model from the sequence of western modernization, and evaluation of the Middle East

⁴¹ Francis M. Abraham, **Perspectives on Modernization: Toward A General Theory of Third World Development**, University Press of America, Washington, 1980: 5-8.

⁴² Daniel Lerner, **The Passing of Traditional Society Modernizing the Middle East**, The Free Press; Collier-Macmillan Limited, New York and London, 1958: 46.

⁴³ The emphasis is added.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 46.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 45.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 46.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 49–75.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 111.

with regard to its approximation to the western model are not uncommon and even the rule among modernization theorists. Furthermore, his concluding remarks on modernization in Turkey include such comments as: “The modernized elite of Turkey is well-attuned to the rising and spreading aspirations of the transitional”,⁴⁹ a sentiment common to the modernization theorists who posit national elites to be modernizing actors.⁵⁰ It is possible to detect this notion in the work of both Ziya Gökalp and *Garbcılar* (unconditional westernizers) which are the most influential theoretical sources for the Kemalist modernization. For Gökalp, in societies like Turkey, which was not yet modern, the elite must “go to the people” in order to establish a “national well-being” and bring about a modern civilization.⁵¹ Additionally, the *Garbcılar* gave the elite the mission of bringing about a scientific modern society and sought to keep the masses from political participation.⁵² This was rationalized because “science ... [was] the religion of the elite, whereas religion... [was] the science of the masses”.⁵³ Additionally, it is possible to assume that because of and through the role of the elite as modernizing actors, the elite was expected to behave highly selectively on the issue of what was to be taken to modernize the country, thus, the category of “transitional” in terms of Lerner’s approaches to modernization in Turkey comes into forth in order to explain the course of modernization the country should follow. The last point is apparent in the theory of Gökalp and in the practice of modernization in the Republican period through the Kemalist elites. It is because that modernizing the country was supposed to be the responsibility of the elite who before anyone else was expected to be concerned with the issue of modernizing the country without degenerating its genuine character. This notion finds its expression both in the theoretical framework of Gökalp as the certain selection between *hars* (national culture) and *medeniyet* (civilization) and as will be explained throughout the present work especially with respect to gender regimes in the practice of modernization in the Republican period through the Kemalist elites.

In sum, Lerner echoes what is common to various approaches in the modernization theory that is a kind of imagination or definition of modernity reflecting the characteristics of Western modernization for non-modern societies.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ibid, 166.

⁵⁰ Hoerning, 1969-70: 25.

⁵¹ Heyd, 1950: 69.

⁵² Hanioglu, 1997: 145.

⁵³ Abdullâh Cevdet, 1912: 65-66, cited in Ibid: 135).

⁵⁴ Hoerning, 1969-70: 6.

1.3. Critiques of Modernization Theory and Its Perception by Turkish Intellectuals

One group of critiques of the modernization theory was associated with economics. Latin American objections to modernization theory, beginning with the 1950s, influenced these theoretical approaches with a socialist tone in it.

An early example of Kemalist reading of socialism in 1960s is found in the journal *Yön* (Direction) and corresponding movement. The *Yön* movement attracted many left-wing intellectuals who believed both in Kemalism and in the necessity of socialist class struggle. Actually, the *Yön* to a degree was the successor of the *Kadro* (Cadre) movement of the 1930s. The journal *Kadro* began its publishing in 1932 on the initiative of the former members of the Turkish Communist Party and the Kemalist Yakup Kadri. First supported by Mustafa Kemal, they then reinterpreted the anti-imperialist notion in Kemalism; however, their reconceptualization of étatism in a socialist framework led to controversy within the ruling party that put an end to *Kadro* movement in 1934. Thus, the *Yön* movement was the second example of the reinterpretation of Kemalism in terms of leftist ideology, but this time in multi-party conditions.⁵⁵

Among the underdevelopment theoreticians was Andre Gunder Frank, who was influenced by the Latin American dependency approach and rejected both the modernization theories associated with economic stages of development and those which dealt with ‘modernization’ assessable through social, cultural and psychological categories.⁵⁶ Gunder Frank claimed that these approaches disregarded not only the historical and structural realities of underdeveloped countries, but also the world economic system in which the first world developed at the expense of the third world.⁵⁷

Gunder Frank became quite popular among sociologists in Turkey in 1970s.⁵⁸ According to Öncü, at that time sociologists appeared to accept the similarity of the Turkish case to Latin America in the light of analysis of economic crises and breakdowns of democracy. Keeping in mind the historical sensibilities of Turkish sociology, in other words, the legacy of Kemalism was predisposed to sociological concern, according to Öncü,

⁵⁵ Faruk Alpkaya, “Bir 20. Yüzyıl Akımı: ‘Sol Kemalizm’”, **Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm**, Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekinil (ed.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul: 2002: 477–478.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 27.

⁵⁷ David Harrison, **The Sociology of Modernization and Development**, Unwin Hyman, London, 1988: 80.

⁵⁸ Ayşe Öncü, “Crossing Borders into Turkish Sociology with Gunder Frank and Michel Foucault”, **Contemporary Sociology**, Vol. 26, Iss. 3, 1997: 267.

providing the Turkish sociologist with the opportunity to be “a radical Marxist and a passionate nationalist, wrapped in one”.⁵⁹

Having presented the course of modernization in social theory together with relatedness and reaction of the Turkish modernizing elite, in a way to reveal the meaning of the modernization in general, it is now possible to start analyzing women’s modernization in non-western context in particular, with the aim of assessing the mutual connections between modernization and gender in Turkey.

2. Critiques of Modernization and Women’s Modernization in Non-Western Context

The critiques of modernization will be discussed below in detail in order to evaluate the meaning and practice of modernization in non-western context, especially as related to women. Yet, beforehand, it is important to take a closer look at the modernization in European context which has transformed both political and economic institutions and lives of individual people. Confined to aims of this work, specifically gender transformations, both intellectual and institutional, appear at great importance.

2.1. Modernity and Women

In Western societies, modernity dates back to the Enlightenment of which common features briefly were replacement of the supernatural with the natural, of religion with science, of divine command with natural law, and of religious functionaries with philosophers. This was all materialized on the grounds of reason. The Enlightenment was followed by the French Revolution, which brought about a new way of political organization, i.e., the modern nation-state, and the Industrial Revolution⁶⁰ that led to gradual but substantial transformations in societies’ economic and social ways of life. In the modern nation state,

⁵⁹ Ibid, 267–268.

⁶⁰ In the light of new approaches, it should be accepted that Industrial Revolution was revolutionary in terms of its consequences rather than its speed. Heaton (1933: 5, cited in Hudson, 1993: 13) argues that “[a] revolution which continued for 150 years and had been in preparation for at least another 150 years may well seem to need a new label”. For an extended discussion see Hudson, Pat (1993) **The Industrial Revolution**, Edward Arnold, London (etc.); More, Charles (2000) **Understanding the Industrial Revolution**, Routledge, London, New York; Heaton, H (1933) “Industrial Revolution”, **Encyclopaedia of the social Sciences** VIII, London; Clapham, J.H. (1926-1938) **An Economic History of Modern Britain**, Cambridge; Lipson, E. (1934) **The Economic History of England**, London; Carus-Wilson, E. M. (1943) ‘The Industrial Revolution Reconsidered’, **Journal of Economic History**, III.; Tawney, R. H. (1938) **Religion and the Rise of Capitalism**, London; Nef, J. U. (1934) “The Progress of Technology and the Growth of Large Scale Industry in Great Britain 1540-1640”, **Economic History Review**, V.

political society organized through natural law discarded divinely ordered political system and brought the concept of individual natural rights into forth. Accordingly, social institutions, for example family was regarded not as the outcome of the divine command but as part of the natural law which requires specific obligations from family members according to their natures. In contrast with divine patriarchy, in natural patriarchy, the man, who was a rational individual, as a father and a husband, had his authority over his wife and children. Besides, Enlightenment thinkers in general, elaborated a view of women's nature as governed by feelings rather than reason and as crippled by moral weakness. Yet, towards the end of the 18th century, it was perceived that women's nature, in the right setting, might allow them to use their domestic responsibilities for moral regeneration of the society.⁶¹ This idea found its expression in the ideal of "republican motherhood" which was shared by feminist radicals in the 1780s and 1790s in Western Europe and in the United States. The feminists embraced the ideal of "republican motherhood" as an opportunity to unite public and private responsibilities for women in order to improve the status of women as mothers, who were supposed to raise new citizens.⁶² Similarly, from the late 19th century until the end of First World War, maternity was the common element in the discourse of French feminism. On the eve of the war, maternity was seen as a social function in order to stop decline in fertility in France. In this framework, the feminist movement utilized motherhood as a means of demanding "rights of mothers" and advocated the doctrine of "equality in difference". Demands for the rights of mothers were closely linked with women's employment, thus eventually the French feminism succeeded in guaranteeing legal maternal protection for working women.⁶³ At the time, women's suffrage was far beyond being realized and political demands of feminists received little support, though, women's social worth, exemplified in the ideal of "republican motherhood" or of "the rights of mothers" show that concerns of the nationalist about depopulation or ensuring solidarity provided feminists with opportunities of not only improving their social and legal status, but also breeding a feminist voice.

With respect to assigning women roles for reproduction and protection of the society, Mosse points out to specific historical context of the 18th century in which rising bourgeoisie society and nationalism used appropriation of sexual identities. The key element of this was the idea of respectability which was used to ensure social order through sexual control of

⁶¹ Jane Rendall, **The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States 1780–1860**, Macmillan, London, 1985: 7–32).

⁶² Ibid, 34.

⁶³ Anne Cova, "French Feminism and Maternity: Theories and Policies 1890–1918", **Maternity and Gender Policies, Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s–1950s**, Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (eds.), Routledge, London and New York, 1991: 119–121.

society.⁶⁴ Since women were seen as morally weak, they were “natural” subjects of sexual control. Therefore, women were given social and symbolic roles and responsibilities. Women were supposed to be mother and protector of both the family and the nation. In that sense, they exemplified virtue. Nationalism also created national woman ideals or icons which were for example Marianne, Britannia, and Germaine. They served ideals of womanhood through which women were idealized and were put firmly into their place.⁶⁵ According to Mosse, everyone in society was assigned to his and her place. While the woman was the reproducer and protector, the man was responsible for maintenance of hierarchy, order and respectability.⁶⁶ Otherwise, the society was threatened of disorder and decline.⁶⁷ The main concern of the age was ensuring the social order that both sociological and political theory was to deal with consequences of rapid and disruptive social and political transformations taking place in Western Europe in 18th and 19th century. Simultaneously, emergence of nationalist formations as well as nationalist struggles in Europe, helped regeneration of moral order of society, in which sexual control of society was one of the central concerns. Gender appropriations by nationalist concerns were in use beyond national boundaries, i.e. in the colonies, as well. For example, Dutch queens at the end of the 19th century, as self restrained wives, virtuous mothers and civilized citizens had not only functioned as the symbols of a society which combined tradition and innovation, but also smoothed the imperialist policies by claiming a civilizing mission for their subjects in colonies through their royal distinction and gender attributions.⁶⁸

2.2. Modernization in a Non-Western Context

The strongest critique related to theories of modernizing the non-western came from Edward Said. He opposed the orientalist discourse of the West in conceptualizing the East, which according to him, functioned to essentialize the concepts of modern and traditional. He claimed that the Orient itself was a constituted entity.⁶⁹ Said’s criticism opened the way for post-colonial theory, which focused on the structure of the relation between western societies

⁶⁴ George L. Mosse, **Nationalism and Sexuality, Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe**, Howard Fertig, New York, 1985: 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 90.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 90.

⁶⁸ Maria Grever, “Colonial Queens”, **Dutch Crossing**, No: 26, 2002: 99–100.

⁶⁹ Edward Said, **Orientalism**, Vintage Books, New York, 1979, *passim*.

and those colonized by them.⁷⁰ Further studies went beyond Said's criticism and showed that oriental discourse functioned not only against those countries which were colonized, but also within these countries. In other words, it was argued that, "[o]rientalist discourse has reproduced itself in the orient via nationalist projects whose fundamental principle was based upon the imperial divide between the Westerner and the native".⁷¹ The Subaltern Studies, inspired from the postcolonial theories, offered an in-depth analysis of coexistent functioning of nationalist and modernizing efforts in non-western societies. Among the representatives was Chatterjee, who claimed that "nationalist thought accepts and adopts the same essentialist conception based on the distinction between the East and the West."⁷² In that manner, the aim of Subaltern Studies was to recover the subordinated subject. Presenting the structure of operating discourse in this way led to a critique of the modern West and of the usage again of the conceptual pair *modern* and *traditional*.⁷³ Similarly Jayawardena contributed to theories about perception and practice of the modernization in the Third World by conceptualizing the experiences and operations related to both gender and feminism. Like Chatterjee, she claimed that the modernization in non-western context was more than derivation of the western modernization; rather she asserted that modernization in the Third World was combined with nationalism in which women's emancipation movements in the Third World have developed as a resistance to both imperialism or various forms of foreign aggression and tradition or obscurantism, in another words, they developed as to draw a borderline between the West and the East. Together with post-colonial theory, the subaltern studies contributed to theoretical efforts for understanding and explaining the relationship between modernization and gender in non-western societies. Strength of their explanation came from the fact that they included in their analysis' the oriental and colonial effects towards or within the non-western societies.

2. 3. Modernization, Nationalism and Women in the Third World

Jayawardena stated that in the countries which faced any type of foreign conquest or aggression, resistance took a bi-faceted shape: on the one hand, the need to sweep away monarchic, feudal and religious structures and on the other hand, the need to modernize the

⁷⁰ Alex Callinicos, **Social Theory: A Historical Introduction**, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999: 264.

⁷¹ Meyda Yeğenoğlu, **Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998: 122.

⁷² Chatterjee, 1986: 38, cited in Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 124.

⁷³ Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism", **The American Historical Review**, Vol. 99, 1994: 1483.

country in a nationalist manner.⁷⁴ In order to attain the ideal of the modern nation-state, the modernizing elite in these countries, in addition to promoting institutional reforms, asserted “the cultural identity of the country in the form of patriotic appeals to arouse national consciousness”.⁷⁵ In this manner, along with the feminist struggle, the “women’s question,” in the hands of modernizing male reformers, was often considered in the context of the resistance to both forms of foreign domination and to existing monarchic, feudal and religious structures.⁷⁶ Jayawardena claimed that women had to be both ‘modern’, which meant being “the negation of all...considered ‘backward’ in the old society” and ‘traditional’, which meant acting as guardians of national culture.⁷⁷ In other words, “the social order connecting the home and the world in which nationalism placed the new woman was contrasted not only with that of western society; it was explicitly distinguished from the patriarchy of indigenous tradition”.⁷⁸ Yet the reformers championed strengthening the bourgeois family, rather than changing the social structure surrounding meanings attributed to family.⁷⁹ Hence, modernizing or emancipating women to a certain degree meant uplifting the women within the family. Furthermore, “women’s emancipation in the context of nationalist strategies in the Third World became part of the ideology of nationalism, democratic rights, economic growth and progress”.⁸⁰ In general, according to Moghaddam, since the resistance in countries under foreign occupation or domination articulated a need to raise women’s status, these resistance movements could be defined as “the women’s emancipation model of revolution”.⁸¹

As aforementioned above, the Turkish intellectuals in the 19th century derived the idea and reflection of modernization from the Western European model. As it was also explained, the need to modernize the country was supposed to be a remedy in the face of European penetration; hence the form of modernization in its general sense was imitation of the modernization within an increasingly nationalist context. In this respect, the issue of modernization in general and the need for modernizing women in particular can be evaluated from the angle of nationalist modernization of the third world in the most general terms as well as of the nationalism emerged in Western Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries.

⁷⁴ Kumari Jayawardena, **Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World**, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1982: 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 8.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 11.

⁷⁸ Partha Chatterjee, “The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question”, **Recasting Women Essays in Colonial History**, Kumkum Sangari, Sudesh Vaid (eds.), Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1989: 11.

⁷⁹ Jayawardena, 1982: 10.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 17.

⁸¹ Valentine M. Moghaddam, **Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East**, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, London, 1993: 71.

2.4. The Turkish Modernization and “Women’s Question”

In the case of the Turkish modernization, Jayawardena argued that the process of resistance to dismemberment took its form as the need to modernize and civilize the country in which women’s emancipation was the core.⁸² Kemalism added the question of women’s status to the process of modernization, which appeared to be the solution to the national question. The view of the “women’s question” of Kemalism was an inheritance from Ottoman society, yet, henceforth, wrapped in nationalist concerns. Ottoman intellectuals were influenced by not only sociological and political thought of the West, but also debates about position of the women in society. Concerned with the issue of improving women’s social status in society, without threatening the traditional gender order, they were mainly inspired by the familial feminism of which motto was “equality in difference”. In this framework, women’s education became one of the main lines of debate that Ottoman feminists defended women’s rights for education considering reproduction of the new generation and hence the nation.⁸³ In such a framework, women’s subordinate role within the family was treated as both the symptom and the cause of backwardness. Hence, the solution to the “women’s question” was considered to be women’s emancipation, which presupposed women’s equality to men and, additionally, reforming the family “as part of Turkey’s commitment to Westernization, secularization, and democracy”.⁸⁴ Gökalp’s theory of nationalism posits the need for reform of the position of Turkish women as among the urgent necessities. His consideration of the women’s issue was based on a collectivist and nationalist understanding that the woman was the center of the family, on which the state was based. He advocated educational opportunities, participation in public life and full political rights for women. Not surprisingly, Gökalp had taken part in the preparation of the 1917 Family Law enacted by the Committee of Union and Progress, which did not prohibit the polygamy, though it allowed women to avoid it.⁸⁵ Soon after the establishment of the Republic, by the adoption of the Civil Code in 1926, Kemalist modernization would answer the nationalist appeals for reforming the women’s position. Additionally, the gendered agenda of Kemalist modernization, not necessarily in terms of Gökalpian concepts of culture and civilization, but in terms of westernization, not only

⁸² Jayawardena, 1982: 33.

⁸³ Nicole A. N. M. van Os, “Osmanlı Müslümanları’nda Feminizm”, **Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Cumhuriyete Devreden Düşünce Mirası, Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi**, İletişim Yayınevi, İstanbul: 2001: 339–344.

⁸⁴ Moghadam, 1993: 82.

⁸⁵ Heyd, 1950: 94–96.

constituted the gender system and predetermined experiences related to gender but also contrasted modernity with tradition and *vice versa*.

When translated into nationalist appeals on the “women’s question”, the poles of this tense relationship between tradition and modernity were defined as *allaturka*, the attitude of the Old Turk,⁸⁶ and extreme modernity (or even unchastity).⁸⁷ These two determinants were indeed merged to frame a general outlook for approaching the “women’s question”. As Durakbaşı has acknowledged, this compound was based on an eclectic interpretation of the “women’s question” in nationalist terms, in which the modernizing ideology was combined with a puritanical understanding of sexual morality for the sake of social order.⁸⁸

In accordance with the fundamental principles of modernization, reforms were implemented to improve the status of women in society. On the other hand, it was thought that the tension between modernity and tradition would be solved, at the expense of tradition, through modernization.

Before explaining the way Kemalist modernization produced and reproduced the ideal woman of the Republic, it is worth emphasizing the need for a closer look at modernity and the value of experiences of modernity. As Kandiyoti argued, the binary opposition of tradition and modernity is an unfruitful debate and what is needed is to go beyond it and focus on key construction of meanings and current contexts of the complicated cultural forms. According to her, such an attempt requires asking some crucial questions about, for example, what is called modern, its changing meaning across different contexts and times, and its sources of legitimacy.⁸⁹

In this framework, what Kandiyoti envisaged is an attempt to re-read the concept of modern itself through an “ethnographic” and critical scholarship. Such an attempt is expected to enrich the analysis of “modernity” by inviting the neglected areas of academic interest into the very center of analysis. Otherwise, as has been the case until recently, any attempt to analyze modernity would continue to be state-centric and institution-centric.⁹⁰ In other words, as explained by Kandiyoti elsewhere, without understanding and the interpersonal

⁸⁶ See page 103 and footnote 40 on page 103.

⁸⁷ Ayşe Kadioğlu, “Cinselliğin İnkârı: Büyük Toplumsal Projelerin Nesnesi Olarak Türk Kadınları”, **75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler**, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998: 96.

⁸⁸ Ayşe Durakbaşı, **Halide Edip Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002: 27.

⁸⁹ Deniz Kandiyoti, **Cariyeler, Bacılar Yurttaşlar Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 1997: 202–203.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 202.

experiences related to modernization and its meaning within a non-western context, we would have to resort to the blunt tools of the modernization theory.⁹¹

What Kandiyoti suggested is also true for gender-related issues in which the modernization perspective defined modernity as a goal for women, rather than a matter of analysis. In this respect, the way the Kemalist modernization produced and reproduced gendered identities and the characteristics of the gendered identities appear as a likely point of departure. Any attempt of the Kemalist modernizers to reform women's social and political status inevitably contained the implicit attempt to limit their experience of modernization, with the aim of creating the ideal woman of the Republic. Yet those women who did not approximate the ideal woman were expelled from the Kemalist modernization discourse. In other words, the Kemalist modernization discourse on women included mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion which were both social and political.

During the first decades of the Republic, when national independence and modernization were regarded almost as synonyms, women as symbols in the forefront of society also contributed to the Kemalist modernization discourse for women. These women not only displayed the image of a "modern woman" of the modern Republic, but also internalized the hegemonic discourse. Additionally, the basic arguments of this discourse permeated feminism in Turkey as well. In this sense, it is possible to mention two processes for the relationship between women and Kemalism regarding the practices of inclusion/exclusion, especially in the first decades.

First, the women who had been politicized during the years of the First World War and the National Independence War voiced their demands for social and political rights after the establishment of the new regime. Social rights were granted to women in 1926 by the Civil Code and political rights in 1934, as the most urgent necessities of the modern Republic. However, in this process Kemalism denied that a feminist background in Turkey had existed since the late Ottoman era. This denial alienated women, both those who were in the feminist movement and those who had identified themselves as part of the nationalist modernization project. Simultaneously, they were also excluded from the nationalist modernization narrative, which instead employed the "state feminism". Hatem defined state feminism as a way of highlighting "the modernist economic, political, and ideological strategies used by the

⁹¹ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Introduction", **Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey**, Deniz Kandiyoti; Ayşe Saktanber (eds.), I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2002: 2.

[...] state to demonstrate its feminist credentials”.⁹² “The narrative of state feminism was also used [...] to explain the ‘investigation from above’ of extensive policies intended to change the status of women...”⁹³ Thus, state feminism succeeded feminism as a social movement. The most striking example of this process was *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women, UTW), which became a purely social club for women when its leader Nezihe Muhittin, who had demanded political rights for women beginning with 1927, was forcibly removed from leadership.⁹⁴ The Union dissolved in 1935 after existing for several years as a social club.⁹⁵

Secondly, because of the reforms, women in increasing numbers took part in public life and began to work as professionals. The first generations of women professionals were similar to Republican men rather than women, in the sense of their “world view and lifestyle”.⁹⁶ They thought that taking part in public life was a condition of women’s emancipation, but they never criticized private life, which was organized and functioned according to the principles of traditional patriarchy. When they criticized it, they criticized remnants of traditions, which were targeted for removal through the gradual process of modernization. According to the modernization narrative, there was a strong and direct link between women’s work and women’s emancipation.

⁹² Mervat F. Hatem, “Modernization, the State, and the Family in the Middle East Women’s Studies”, **Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East**, Margaret L. Meriwether and Judith E. Tucker (eds.), Westview Pres, Colorado, Oxford, 1999: 77.

⁹³ Ibid, 78.

⁹⁴ Yaprak Zihnioğlu, **Kadınsız İnkılâp: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003: 244.

⁹⁵ See, Chapter II, pages, 28, 40–42.

⁹⁶ Frey, 1965: 153, cited in Durakbaşı, 2002: 137.

⁹⁷ See Gökçe Bayrakçeken Tüzel, **Being and Becoming Professional: Work and Liberation through Women’s Narratives in Turkey**, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Ankara, 2004. Bayrakçeken Tüzel argues that professional women internalised professional values above and beyond Kemalist values together with their patriarchal contents. Although being professional has a certain liberating effect on women’s lives, they had to deal with patriarchal manifestations within the practices of professionalism and Kemalism.

3. Scope of the Work

As can be seen, feminist women and women professionals had their place in the Kemalist modernization project as both subjects and symbols. However, neither the exclusion of feminist women from the nationalist modernization narrative nor the potentially conflicting roles which the professional women accepted in public and private life were exceptional in terms of experiencing a gendered modernization. The modernization was believed to create emancipated women; neither this idea nor that the gender relations organized through the modernization project has been questioned. “The result was ‘simulated images of modernity’”.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the complicated and even contradictory production and reproduction of gender relations within modernity has received little serious academic interest in Turkey. Instead, novels or fiction provided distinctive but fluid examples of gender-related identity issues.^{99 100}

For that reason, the present work concerns with the gender regimes which Kemalist modernization has produced and reproduced and the influence of gender regimes on the process of modernization. Considering modernization not only as an instrument of a political project of domination but also as a potentially liberating historical condition, the aim of this work appears as to analyze gender identity and gender role and tensions between these two in Turkish modernization.

From this point further, approaching the modern through the gendered identities of either feminist or professional women is a prime way of analysis. There exist good examples of studies of early feminist or professional women,¹⁰¹ though, in either case, the study—whatever its benefits for providing a theoretical and historical ground for further analyses—focuses only on the years until the 1950s, preventing us from analyzing the changing and differentiating gender patterns since then. Until the 1950s, after which the Turkish political system took a more democratic shape with its transition to the multi-party system, the official

⁹⁸ Kadioğlu, 1994: 635, cited in Mervat F. Hatem, “Modernization, the State, and the Family in the Middle East Women’s Studies”, **Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East**, Margaret L. Meriwether and Judith E. Tucker (eds.), Westview Press, Colorado, Oxford, 1999: 78.

⁹⁹ Kandiyoti, 1997: 144–146.

¹⁰⁰ Among the examples, *Ölmeye Yatmak* by Adalet Ağaoğlu is the first. The author tells the story of the identity crisis of an intellectual woman who grown up in a Kemalist way. Another example among many is *Otuzların Kadını* by Tomris Uyar. In that novel she portrays her mother in the 1930s in comparison with other women of the time. She also intersects the woman of the 1930 with that of her own generation. Another but less-noticed example is *Üç Kadın* by Peride Celal. Peride Celal, who is known for her vast popularity in the genre of romance, tells in this novel the story of three sisters who search for their true identity as women.

¹⁰¹ See Yaprak Zihnioğlu, **Kadınsız İnkılâp: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003 and Bayrakçeken Tüzelt, 2004.

discourse related to modernization had constituted a gender system and predetermined experiences related to gender. After that time, with the spread of alternative approaches to modernization opposing the hegemonic discourse, the idea of the “modern woman” began to change. However, the tensional relation between modern and traditional remained the main determinant in approaches to the “women’s question”; likewise, the “women’s question” has remained the measurement of modernization.

One way of analysis is to focus on prominent female figures, for example, wives of political leaders. Beginning with Latife Hanım, the wife of Mustafa Kemal, the wives of political leaders have constantly been symbols for the direction and degree of modernization, as well as gender role models who contributed to the gender regime. In this framework, wives of political leaders not essentially but historically appear as the foremost symbols and subjects of a prevailing gender regime, i.e., as gender role models. On the other hand, the wives also carry gender identity baggage when they enter prominence as the result of having lived through the experience of the gender patterns. Thus, their life stories are found at the intersection of these two types of experience. To sum up, the wives both experience and contribute to the gender regime as gender role models, which is an inseparable part of their gender identity.

4. Methodology, Research and the Analysis

This work deals with life histories which were gathered through oral sources, as well as through printed material and archival sources. Bertaux defines a life history as different from a life story. According to him, while the latter refers to “accounts of a person’s life as delivered orally by the person himself [or herself]”, the former includes supplementary biographical information drawn from other sources in addition to the person’s own story.¹⁰² Those sources can be official records, letters, and interviews with relatives and friends; this makes a life history superior in scope to a life story.¹⁰³ For the same reason, Bertaux considers an affinity between a life history and a case study.¹⁰⁴ In a similar way, in this work, life histories rest on life story interviews with the wives or with their children if they were no longer alive. The interviews were conducted in the residences of the interviewees, took from 2

¹⁰² Daniel Bertaux, “Introduction”, **Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences**, Daniel Bertaux (ed.), Sage Publications, California, 1981: 7, footnote: 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 8.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 9.

to 5 hours over one or two days and sometimes required two interview sessions. The aim in having recourse to oral sources was to gather the life stories of the wives as they interpreted them. In the case that the interviewee was not the woman whose life story was gathered, the aim was to gather the life story as she had articulated it before.

Oral history as a method of research inquiry arose from the need to use oral traditions of non-literate groups or to supplement data in the absence of written documents.¹⁰⁵ Further, beyond being simply a research method, oral history also led to a theoretical expansion in social sciences and history. As explained by Thompson in the classic 1978 *The Voice of the Past*, oral history has contributed to history in the sense of not only opening up new areas of inquiry such as labour history, family history or demography, but also in shifting its focus.¹⁰⁶ Hence, any social research became more than dealing merely with events, structures or patterns of behaviour; it took into account the way these were experienced and remembered in the imagination of the actors and observers.¹⁰⁷ In fact, according to Portelli, what makes oral history distinct is the fact that it tells less about events than about their meaning.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the importance of oral testimony lies not in its adherence to fact, but rather its departure from it.¹⁰⁹

Considering its methodological novelties, the theoretical quality of oral account is strongly related with the issues of subjectivity and experience. Portelli points out the connection between biography and history, emphasizing the historicity of personal experience and of the individual's role in the history of society.¹¹⁰ As Assmann put it, "[t]he personal experience of history is not only radically subjective, it is also shaped by the generalizing and collectivizing factors of social norms and cultural knowledge".¹¹¹ As personal narratives express subjectivity, thus, that subjectivity tells us about the ways lives are constructed by social actors and the ways culture, institutions and social structures shape actions and outcomes.¹¹² From this point further, the subjectivity of the person who transmits a personal experience gains importance not only in terms of the personal interpretation of experience, but

¹⁰⁵ Paul Thompson, "Life Histories and the Analysis of Social Change", **Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences**, Daniel Bertaux (ed.), Sage Publications, California, 1981: 290.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Thompson, **The Voice of the Past, Oral History**, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988: 6.

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, 1988: 139.

¹⁰⁸ A. Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different?", **The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Form and Meaning in Oral History**, State University of New York Press, New York, 1992: 50.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 51.

¹¹⁰ A. Portelli, "Oral History as A Genre", **Narrative and Genre**, M. Chamberlein; P. Thompson (eds.), Routledge, London, 1998: 25-26.

¹¹¹ A. Assmann, "History and Memory", **International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences**, 2002, available online.

¹¹² Barbara Laslett, "Personal Narratives as Sociology", **Contemporary Sociology**, Vol. 28, No.4, 1999: 400.

also because that subjectivity arose out of a dialectical relation between the individual and the societal, the biographical and the historical. Here is the issue of experience. Unless devalued, the established approaches in the social sciences, among which the feminist approach has been the most enduring, have privileged experience, as the origin of knowledge. Such an attitude opened the way for decontextualizing experience by attributing to the individual a self-evident character. This led to ahistorical and essentialist understanding of both experience and subjectivity. Rather, as it was mentioned about the subjectivity, social and historical processes position subjects and produce their experiences. From this point further, as Scott explained, an individual is not only a person who has an experience, but also a subject who is constituted through experience. This last point necessitates an approach to historicize not only an experience but also the identities it produces.¹¹³ In particular, women's experience cannot be seen as a pre-given ontology that precedes its expression, but as a construction within particular cultures and periods.¹¹⁴ With respect to the specific scope of this work, the life stories of the wives of political leaders were not expected to reflect the universal spectrum of women's experience of modernization or modernity. Rather, remembering the dialectical relationship between gender role and gender identity, their experiences are supposed to illuminate a particular gender regime and some patterns of gender in Turkish modernization. This is not meant to attribute an essentialist or ahistoric character to Turkish modernization and its gender patterns; on the contrary, emphasizing specific social and historical conditions, it allows for contextualizing of the modernity and gender patterns.

The methodological emphasis on oral history and theoretical approaches to concepts of experience and subjectivity determined the methods applied in this work. The work comprises four case chapters based on four life histories of four politicians' wives: Mevhibe İnönü, Berin Menderes, Rahşan Ecevit and Semra Özal. Each of them was selected diachronically to define specific qualities of gendered modernity in modern Turkish history between 1923 and the early 1990s. In this sense, the sampling was *purposive* in accordance with the goals of a *crucial-case* study. According to Gerring, if the general rule that cases are chosen for reasons of analytical utility governs case selection in a small-N sample, it is possible to identify the *crucial case*. In the crucial case study, cases are assumed to be critical to a concept or to a broader body of theory.¹¹⁵ With respect to oral history methodology, as Grele mentioned, cases or related interviews are selected not because they present an abstract

¹¹³ Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience", **Critical Inquiry**, Vol. 17, 1991: 778-780.

¹¹⁴ Rita Felski, **The Gender of Modernity**, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1995: 21.

¹¹⁵ John Gerring, **Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001: 219.

statistical norm, but because they typify¹¹⁶ historical processes.¹¹⁷ The historiographical, not statistical, aims of oral history¹¹⁸ concord with the aims and scope of a case study; it is to seek analytical generalization, but not statistical generalization.¹¹⁹

With respect to analysis, the life stories of the wives gathered through oral sources and complementary data gathered through supplementary sources were considered in the context of methods developed to analyze biographical accounts. Among those methods, Miller presents three approaches: the ground theory approach, the neo-positivist approach and the narrative approach. The first approach rests on an unfocused interview and seeks to generate concepts through sorting and categorizing the data the interview provides. The second approach is based on a semi-structured interview schedule which was set through pre-existing theory and concepts; this type aims to evaluate the pre-determined hypothesis. The third approach, the narrative approach,¹²⁰ guided the analysis in the present research on the life histories of the wives of Turkey's political leaders. The narrative approach rests on the interactivity and narrative character of the interview. As can be seen, the choice of the research approach to a degree determines the interview schedule. In this framework, when the narrative approach guides the research, the interview schedule is expected to be both open, not imposed on the interviewee, and focused because of the existence of guiding themes; the interview is neither totally unfocused nor completely pre-coded. The narrative approach comprises three stages. In the first stage, the factual details of the interviewee's life are determined and ordered in temporal sequence. The first stage might well precede the interview. After the factual data foundation is established, the second stage requires that a thematic field analysis be set according to the narrated life story, which represents a thematic, interrelated, and cross-referential sequence of themes. The third stage deals with reconstructing both the perspective of the past and the meaning of the experiences and with drawing conclusions.¹²¹ At this stage, the main aim of the researchers is to reveal the historical consciousness of the respondent or the person whose life history is reconstructed. The first two stages of the narrative approach, Miller explained, coincide with another approach described by Gagnon, which aims to analyze life accounts. Gagnon himself explains the need to construct a social time-order to reveal the reference points of the personal

¹¹⁶ What is meant is different from a typical case study, a particular form of a case study.

¹¹⁷ Ronald J. Grele, "Movement without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History", **The Oral History Reader**, Robert Perks; Alistair Thompson (eds.), Routledge, London and New York, 1998: 41.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 41.

¹¹⁹ Robert K. Yin, **Case Study Research: Design and Methods**, Sage Publications, London, 1987: 21.

¹²⁰ Robert L. Miller, **Researching Life Stories and Family Histories**, Sage Publications, London, 2000: 145–149.

¹²¹ Ibid, 132–135.

account.¹²² As explained by Gagnon, it overlaps with what Miller described as the thematic field analysis. With respect to Miller's third stage, reconstruction of historical consciousness, Gagnon offers a detailed scheme of analysis. According to Gagnon, who speaks from a bi-disciplinary (sociology and history) background, what allows one to deal with biographical accounts, either of an individual or of collective subjects, is a perception of the *representation of history*, which is the cognitive construction of organizing historical events. This is an act of remembering which presents itself through three ways of the reconstruction of time. The first is historical consciousness *per se*, which is associated with official history or depends on an alternative historical explanation. The second is the social representation of history, which allows objectivization of the past. Finally, there is a personal image of time.¹²³ In addition to this classification, it would not be wrong to assume that two or three of these acts can be found intact in one oral account. This reveals the potential richness of the oral account as a product of reciprocal relations between facts or events and experiences lived through them. However, in terms of strength in probing an understanding of the past, oral or biographical accounts should not be approached at face value. Rather, as Gagnon argued, an archaeological reconstruction of the emergence of each figure of historicity must be derived.¹²⁴ Only by such an archaeological inquiry, may one create sociologically meaningful and historically relevant analyses. Of course, this does not mean undervaluing the credibility of memory; on the contrary, memory adds much to an archaeological inquiry through historicizing both the construction of subjectivity and practice of experiencing. In the present work, for the archaeological construction, not only supplementary sources such as biographical accounts, but also, as mentioned before, complementary sources about contemporaneous gender issues were taken into account. In the general framework of the legal and political agenda for gender-related issues, popular magazines of each period were used to derive popular themes and debates about gender. Complementing the life history analyses with the data of that sort was assumed to lay a foundation for understanding gender patterns.

Another methodological point that should be mentioned is the practice of remembering within the interview situation. The construction of memory is subjective, itself. The interview has special conditions set through the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, the interview is unique, as explained by Portelli: "[w]hat is spoken

¹²² Nicole Gagnon, "On the Analysis of Life Accounts", **Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences**, Daniel Bertaux (ed.), Sage Publications, California, 1981: 53-54.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 54-55.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 55.

in a typical oral interview has usually never been told in *that form* before”.¹²⁵ However, with respect to oral accounts of the life stories of the wives of the political leaders, one may expect a self-conscious difference inherent to all elite interviews. This difference can be defined as a sort of preconstruction of the life story; hence, the oral account may adhere to role constraints and role expectations. Borelli explains this notion in terms of autobiographies of the American first ladies and suggests that the first ladies’ autobiographies will “tell it slant”.¹²⁶ Yet, as the aforementioned interconnectedness of memory and subjectivity/experience suggests, “telling it slant” is already intrinsic to every personal account. Hence, the life stories of wives of political leaders in particular and elite interviewees in general are not so different that there seems no reason to consider them as a separate genre. Instead, in the case of the wives of the political leaders, their articulation of their life stories might reveal their conditions of subjectivity.

In a general framework, this work deals with the life histories of wives of political leaders in Turkey as well as contemporaneous debates about gender in order to reach an understanding of gender patterns and the change in these patterns through a critical understanding of modernity and modernization.

The work comprises four case chapters, excluding the Introduction and Conclusion. The first chapter relies on the life history of Mevhibe İnönü, wife of İsmet İnönü, who was commander of the West Front, representative of Turkey in Lausanne Peace Conference, prime minister between 1923 and 1937, President of the Republic between 1938 and 1950 and the head of the Republican People’s Party between 1938 and 1972. In this chapter, the family history of Mevhibe İnönü is reconstructed first so as to elucidate the early socialization of a young girl in İstanbul two decades before the establishment of the Republic. Second, her marriage to İsmet İnönü and the meaning of being the wife of a commander during the war years, then being a member of the modernizing elite in the capital of the Republic, are analyzed. Cultural codes of the modernization and their traces on women’s lives are considered in this framework. However, the most direct impact on women’s position in society came through political reforms. Hence, the adoption of the Civil Code and granting political rights to women are discussed. Notes on public debates on gender-related issues complement the explanation of the prevailing discourse on women. Another section of the first chapter is about the public missions of Mevhibe İnönü, which provide grounds for

¹²⁵ Portelli, 1998: 24.

¹²⁶ Mary Anne Borelli, “Telling It Slant: Gender Roles, Power and Narrative Style in the First Ladies’ Autobiographies”, **Sex Roles**, Vol. 47, No. 7/8, 2002: 357.

analyzing role expectations for women at the time. The continuing political, social and cultural modernization after Atatürk's death, hence, the reproduction of a specific gender identity, is also discussed. The last section of the chapter discusses the self-identity construction of Mevhibe İnönü, with specific reference to the function of memory.

The second chapter is based on the life history of Berin Menderes, wife of Adnan Menderes, the first prime minister of the multi-party period between 1950 and 1960. The first section of this chapter deals with life of a well-to-do Muslim elite family in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of İzmir. In this respect, prominent figures of the family are presented to illustrate western influences and traces of change in the Empire. The following section is about the marriage of Berin Menderes to Adnan Menderes; that elucidates the difference between class-bound practices of modernization and state-led nationalist projects of modernization. In this framework, the gender role construction of Berin Menderes is analyzed as a mode of contestation of the gendered agenda of the one-party period. The prevailing discourse on women again offers more complete information on the gender regime of the time. The last section of the chapter deals with Menderes's traumatic experience of the political break-up on 27 May 1960 and her subsequent gender identity/role construction.

The third chapter deals with the life history of Raĥsan Ecevit, wife of Bülent Ecevit, who was: prime minister in 1974, 1977, 1978, 1979 and 2002; the head of the Republican People's Party between 1972 and 1980; and the founder and head of the Democratic Left Party between 1987 and 2002. The first section of the chapter deals with the family structure of Raĥsan Ecevit and the meaning of being a young girl in Ankara in the very first years of the Republic. In the following section, which treats the family's transition into modernity, daughter-father relations in particular are analyzed to present cleavages between the nationalist ideals of the modernization and modern practices among the middle class. In the following section, the marriage between Raĥsan Ecevit and Bülent Ecevit is described to emphasize its unique characteristics, which provided Raĥsan Ecevit with opportunities for gender identity construction. The next section is about the political activities of Raĥsan Ecevit, which contributed to the construction of her gender identity/role construction as more than simply being a wife. Another issue raised in the chapter has to do with contemporary gender patterns, discussed in order to emphasize changes in them since the hegemony of the Kemalist discourse on gender of the previous decades. Lastly, the chapter focuses on the role expectations of Raĥsan Ecevit and her self-identity construction.

The fourth chapter examines the life history of Semra Özal, wife of Turgut Özal, who was: prime minister between 1983 and 1989; the President of the Republic between 1989 and

1993; and founder and head of the Motherland Party between 1983 and 1989. The first section of the chapter deals with the family structure and early socialization of Semra Özal, with specific reference to the mythical reconstruction of memory. Later, the chapter elucidates the characteristics of the post-1980s period and draws a general framework of the political, social and cultural changes in Turkey at the time in comparison with contemporary tendencies in the West. The next section focuses on Semra Özal's becoming the first lady. Her public appearances and official responsibilities are also mentioned to outline her mechanisms of gender identity/role construction as first lady. The following section considers the political mobilization of women and changes in gender patterns through analyzing not only newly emerging social movements and contestations of modernization but also popular debates on gender-related issues. The intervention of the state through the Family Research Institute and the Directorate of Women's Status and Problems is also dealt with in this section. Further, the social activism of Semra Özal is examined through analysis of her mobilization in the foundation that she established. The chapter concludes with discussion of the gender identity/role construction of Semra Özal, considering the self-identity construction as well.

Considering the life stories of the wives of the political leaders is an attempt to go beyond the modernization narrative, which counts these women only as symbolic expressions of the relationship between modern and traditional. In view of that, the concluding chapter examines the life histories of the wives of the political leaders with a special concern as to describe the tensional relationship between ascribed and experienced gender identities. The dialectic relationship of their gender identity and gender role is meant to shed a light not only on this tensional relationship but also on characteristic of a prevailing gender regime. From this point further, the conclusion focuses on connections between the gender patterns and the modernization in Turkey in a diachronic sequence and discusses the success of the Kemalist gender regime in retrospect.

CHAPTER 2: MEVİBE İNÖNÜ: AN EXEMPLARY WOMAN OF THE REPUBLIC

“...Why have those women been the ones whose inner worlds have been the least of interest? Why haven’t they been written about with a deep interest of seeing and knowing? When they were written merely from the angle that showed their social missions. The wife of a statesman, head of an association, volunteer nurse, corporal, teacher, the first lawyer, loyal wife, perfect mother...

‘Those women’ were women who could overcome all those ‘ill eyes’ over them, without losing their balance. They were the ones who had to read in Latin alphabet the next day, although they were writing in Arabic script the day before; they were the ones who had to regulate the degree of intimacy with great caution and meticulous attention as they danced with men who were total strangers to them; those who looked properly dressed although they gave up the *yaşmak* and *çarşaf*.

...Even if the Great Principles of the Republican Revolution and the leaders of those principles were backing you, still these were not deeds easy to accomplish. Now it seems easy to tell”.

The above quotation from novelist Adalet Ağaoğlu¹ pinpoints the ways in which Mevhibe İnönü, wife of the Turkish Republic’s second president İsmet İnönü, experienced modernization as a living symbol of the modernization—and how her experience has been underestimated. Despite historians’ disinterest in Mevhibe İnönü, her life story and experience with modernization have much to tell about gendered identities throughout the late Ottoman era and the early Republican period in Turkey.

1. A Young Girl in the Westernizing Empire

1.1. Her Childhood

1.1.1. War Years and the Migration

Mevibe İnönü was born in 1897 in İstanbul. Her mother was Saadet Hanım and her father was Zühtü Bey, who died of tuberculosis when Mevhibe was only three years old. Both Saadet Hanım and Zühtü Bey had immigrated from Zıřtov, Bulgaria during the Ottoman-Russian Wars of 1877-1878².

“[In] the war of 1877-1878 [...] the Russian armies moved [...] across the Balkans into eastern Rumelia and mounted indiscriminate attacks against the civilian Muslim, chiefly Turkish, population with the intention of driving them away from the territory that was to become Bulgaria”³. During the 1877-1878 wars, approximately 250,000 to 300,000 of the

¹ Cited in Ayşe Durakbaşı, “Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey”, **Deconstructing the Images of ‘the Turkish Woman’**, Zehra Arat (ed.), Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1998, 150-151.

² Gülsün Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 1995, 10.

³ Kemal Karpat, **Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics**, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1985, 71.

Muslim population, most of whom were ethnically Turks, were killed and approximately 1.5 million of them migrated to the Ottoman territories⁴.

Like most of those families, both of Mevhibe's parents' families came to İzmir first, and then settled in İstanbul⁵.

After Zühtü Bey died, Saadet Hanım and the young Mevhibe continued to live in their mansion (*konak*)⁶ in Süleymaniye with Hanim's father-in law Mehmet Ağa⁷.

1.1.2. Mehmet Ağa

Mevhibe's grandfather was a respectable authority figure. On all festal days, the entire family used to visit him and kiss his hand in respect. In return, he would give them—especially the children—candy wrapped in a piece of cloth⁸.

He owned some property and would attend to those affairs at home. He also used to receive his visitors at home, in the reception room in the *selamlık*, a separate section for men which existed in almost every house in cities of the Empire⁹.

Mehmet Ağa's authority at home was beyond question. He had a firm character which did not allow him to express his feelings. Thus, Mevhibe sometimes used to find herself in a difficult situation, trying neither to anger her grandfather nor to upset her mother. Even Mevhibe's name implicated a controversy; her grandfather always preferred to call her Emine¹⁰.

Mehmet Ağa was a religious, even ascetic person. He used to attend mosque for the Friday, morning and feast prayers. Nevertheless, stating that women should stay at home for prayer, he never allowed the family women to attend mosque, except for the evening prayer following breaking the fast in Ramadan (*teravih* in Turkish and *taraweesh* in Arabic). He did

⁴ Ibid, 75.

⁵ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 9.

⁶ An 'urban mansion' (*konak*) indicates the typical residential form of a two-generation, multiple-family household of the urban elite (Alan Duben, Cem Behar, **İstanbul Households, Marriage, Family and Fertility 1880-1940**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, 71).

⁷ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 10.

⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁹ Ibid, 13.

¹⁰ Ibid, 15.

not like the *Mevlids*,¹¹ either. Additionally, in accordance with the traditional Islamic prohibition,¹² there existed no picture at home.¹³

Mehmet Ağa used to meet all the household needs; in particular, he was responsible for shopping. Mevhibe İnönü's daughter Özden Toker argued that it was customary at that time for men to do a family's shopping.¹⁴ What she stated corroborates a traditional separation of public space—public activities, which were conducted by men—from the private space of women. In Mevhibe İnönü's childhood, the division of the mansion into two separate sections, *harem* and *selamlık*, and the strict control of the grandfather over the women's relation to the outside world denote such a differentiation between the life of men and women. This will be discussed further below as related to women's lifestyles.

According to Özden Toker, Mehmet Ağa was very careful in his shopping to purchase only domestic goods and no imports. This probably stemmed from his ascetic and traditional, conservative attitude in the face of the consumerism proliferating in westernizing quarters of the Empire. As Özden Toker noted, *Süleymaniye*, the district where the family lived, was very different from the westernized district *Beyoğlu*, home to elegant shops filled with European goods.¹⁵ Since the 16th century, Beyoğlu had hosted European embassies, European travelers, and as a result, European-style hotels and recreation places. Beyoğlu had become a corridor through which Western habits, fashion, culture and life style penetrated İstanbul.¹⁶ In contrast, *Süleymaniye* was an isolated and secluded district, which allowed its residents to keep and maintain a rather traditional life. Aydemir even mentions Süleymaniye as an extreme Muslim district¹⁷. As Işın explained, topographic settlement in İstanbul was based on the composition of the different quarters, of which each was a coherent unit of shared cultural values. It was this quarter-based living that determined familial and domestic living. After the 18th century, according to Işın, the quarters were transformed into residential areas of people who shared a

¹¹ Mevlits are occasional gatherings of women at home. A woman leads the meeting by reciting laudatory poems and prose narration of the birthday of the prophet Hz. Mohammed. Afterward, guests enjoy food and drinks served by the host and chat.

¹² The prohibition of images is based on the Koranic view that God is the great fashioner who creates forms and calls the forms into existence in accordance to His will (Sura VII, 10; III, 4; XL, 66; LXIV, 3; LIX, 24). *Hadith* follows the same direction: that whoever imitates God's work of creation will be punished on the Day of Judgment (Ahmed b. Hanbal, vi, 36). Moreover, it is stated, "houses which contain images, dogs and ritually impure people are avoided by the angels of mercy" (al-Bukhari, *Bad' al-Khalk*, bab 17, etc) (C.E. Bosworth, [et.al] (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Volume IX, Brill, Leiden, 1997, 889-890). Additionally see Mazhar Ş. İpřişoğlu, *İslamda Resim Yasağı ve Sonuçları*, YKY, İstanbul, 2005.

¹³ Bilgehan, *Mevhibe*, 16.

¹⁴ Interview conducted with Özden Toker on 20 May 2005, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid, 2.

¹⁶ Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmet Mithat Efendi*, Ankara Üniversitesi Yayınları, Ankara, 1975, 101.

¹⁷ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam İsmet İnönü*, C.I, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1968, 121.

similar economic and social status. Hence, members of the high stratum began to reside in Beyoğlu and Boğaziçi, while Fatih, Bayezıt and Aksaray, which surround the Topkapı Palace, became the residential areas for the middle classes. In this framework, as Işın¹⁸ accurately stated, borders of a quarter marked degrees to which residents lived in ‘modern’ ways. Naturally, some manifested their criticism of modernization as criticism of the westernizing quarters. Mehmet Ağa’s attitude towards the western goods was representative of the prevalent lifestyle in Süleymaniye.

Preferring domestic goods was also very much related with financial, symbolic and religious matters. As Göcek stated, the sultan introduced sumptuary laws in order to limit extensive consumption of foreign goods. Such consumption would lead to a deficit in the treasury, but this also represented the sultan’s attempt to regain control of social life, in other words, to preserve the ‘natural order’¹⁹. With respect to religious matters, Göcek stated that perception of consumption in Islam did not permit conspicuousness or luxury. The verses in The Koran ordered believers “not to eat up their property among themselves in vanity” (Bakara II: 188; Al-I Imran III: 29) and “to lower their gaze and be modest” (Nur XXIV: 30). Otherwise “[...] a shameful doom awaited those ‘who hoard their wealth and enjoin avarice on others, who spend their wealth in order to be seen of men’ (Nisa IV: 37, 38)”²⁰. Mehmet Ağa may be seen as having both these motivations: on the one hand preserving a natural order, and on the other hand obeying religious rules. For example, during the Feast of Sacrifice Mehmet Ağa would sacrifice an animal for sake of God, but he also drape the garden in order to hide this from any outside gaze.²¹

1.1.3. Women’s Life

As mentioned above, the family mansion was divided into two sections as *harem* and *selamlık* and life in the mansion was organized according to traditional rules. The residents of the *harem* comprised not only Saadet Hanım and her daughter Mevhibe, but also an old woman, a distant relative whom Mevhibe called *Haminne* (Grandmother). Additionally, there were: girls who assisted with the housework, a female cook, a gardener, and a succession of little

¹⁸ Ekrem Işın, “Tanzimat Ailesi ve Modern Adab-ı Muaşeret”, **Sosyo-Kültürel Değişme Sürecinde Türk Ailesi**, C.I, T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırma Kurumu Yayını, Ankara, 1992, 218.

¹⁹ Fatma Müge Göcek, **Rise of Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire Ottoman Westrenization and Social Change**, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, 39.

²⁰ Ibid, 37–38.

²¹ Interview, 5.

girl foster-children who were raised to be company for Mevhibe.²² The first girl was Ayşe from Zıstov. She was the same age as Mevhibe.²³ Afterwards, there would be more girls coming and going to the mansion as foster children.²⁴

Despite the common belief that ‘slavery’ was prohibited in 1847, it persisted in the Empire until the twentieth century in the form of domestic slavery.²⁵ The Crimean War is considered to be a turning point with respect to the transformation of domestic slavery into a kind of adoption. Between 1864 and 1866, the state distributed Caucasian migrants into households as adopted children in order to protect them from becoming slaves. A clandestine slave trade persisted until 1908. It seems that the state promoted a sort of adoption policy in which an adopted child was more than a servant but almost equal to a slave,²⁶ a policy meant to eliminate slavery officially. In fact, according to the population records (*tahrir defterleri*), the number of the foster children rose three times more during the years between 1885 and 1907 than in previous periods.²⁷

The position of Ayşe in the household was in accordance with her social status as a foster child. The mansion was divided not only according to the living areas of the women and men, but also according to different social status among the women. For example, while Saadet Hanım and Mevhibe used to sleep in their own room upstairs, *Haminne* and Ayşe used to sleep in the living room in downstairs.²⁸ The women used to spend their time in the *harem* section of the mansion, in the kitchen, or in the garden, which was surrounded by high walls separating it from the outside. The women used to have their dinners together sitting around a large, round tray in the *harem*. Mehmet Ağa used to have had his own dinner before in the *selamlık*²⁹ that was characteristic of traditional upper-echelon families.³⁰ The doors and the

²² Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 12.

²³ Ibid, 11.

²⁴ Interview, 10.

²⁵ Gökçen Alpkaya, “Tanzimat’ın ‘Daha Az Eşit’ Unsurları: Kadınlar ve Köleler”, **OTAM**, Sayı: 1 (Haziran 1990): 6. Faroqi mentions about a similar custom, which persisted until the early twentieth century. In this case, [a] poor family would send a daughter to become a servant in a wealthy household when she was still a young girl. There she would be brought up and supported while carrying out duties which varied according to her age. When she was ready to marry, the family, which employed her, would provide her dowry. At the beginning of her service it would have been agreed whether her parents or the family for which she worked were to select her husband. In most cases this agreement seems to have been an oral one, but occasionally it would be entered in the *kadi*’s register”. (Suraiya Faroqi, **Subjects of the Sultan, Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire**, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London, 2000, 113).

²⁶ Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, **Nimetsinas**, 1995, first edition in 1901 cited in Ferhunde Özbay, “Türkiye’de Evlatlık Kurumu: Köle mi, Evlat mı?”, **Bilanço 1923-1998: “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin 75 Yılına Toplu Bakış” Uluslararası Kongresi**, Cilt 2, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1999, 280).

²⁷ Ibid, 279–281.

²⁸ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 12.

²⁹ Ibid, 11.

³⁰ Duben, Behar, 206.

windows of the hall upstairs, the *selamlık*, were always open except on the days when the grandfather had guests.³¹

There were four other mansions around the mansion where Mevhibe lived. The household was in contact with the neighbors. As mentioned in the biography of Mevhibe İnönü, visiting each other's homes was the main activity of the women. However, it seems that the women of Mevhibe's household were not regularly engaged in the other activities common among the women at that time such as shopping, going to picnics or visiting public baths.³² In fact, Mevhibe, her mother and the rest of the women used to have their baths at home. Their large built-in cupboards with zinc coating inside, where bedding was stored during the day, used to function as bathrooms.³³ As mentioned in the book and also related by Özden Toker, Mevhibe's grandfather forbade her (and probably her mother Saadet Hanım as well) to pay overnight or extended visits to friends, neighbors or relatives.³⁴

In addition to the conventional activities explained by Akşit³⁵, women in fashionable outfits appearing in streets, marketplaces, and patisseries was already the subject of the sultan's imperial orders between 1770 and 1836. According to Akşit, the imperial order as an instrument of controlling women revealed a contradiction in the state's reaction toward women's modernization, the state acknowledged women's advancement by addressing women directly as social agents, while at the same time resisting this advancement. Similarly, Mehmet Ağa's authority within the household did not mean complete control over the women; rather he was already feeling implicitly threatened by modernization. His attitude towards Mevhibe supports the idea that while he desired to socialize her as a cultivated woman, he at the same time set limits against further effects of modernization.

Mevhibe started school when girls' education had been on the state's agenda since the Tanzimat. However, she would not benefit from further education. After completing primary school, she could attend secondary school only for one year until her grandfather decided that this much education sufficed for a girl. Although Mevhibe felt very disappointed, she could say nothing against this decision.³⁶

The issue of women's education was part of a broader concern, translated into the popular language of the intellectuals as the "women's question". Uplifting women was seen

³¹ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 13.

³² Suraiya Faroqi, **Subjects of the Sultan, Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire**, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London, 2000, 106-107, 148.

³³ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 12.

³⁴ Interview, 4.

³⁵ Elif Ekin Akşit, **Kızların Sessizliği, Kız Enstitülerinin Uzun Tarihi**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, 35–71.

³⁶ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 16–17.

as a requisite of the modernization of the country. Accordingly, though Mehmet Ağa did not favor further education of women, he did not ignore the “women’s question” altogether. To some extent, he allowed Mevhibe to know social life. He let Mevhibe attend the cinema and theater with the daughter of Hacı Hafız Efendi and an older woman. They had seen the movie “La Dame aux Camellias”, and the plays “Neron”, “Roma Yanıyor” (Rome in Fire), and “Fanfan Claudinet”. On one occasion, Mevhibe had even attended one of the speeches of Halide Edip.³⁷

Mevhibe started to wear the traditional *çarşaf* when she reached thirteen. This was a sign that she was not a child anymore.³⁸ Already, her grandfather was anxious to marry her off as soon as possible. Yet he passed away in 1914, when his granddaughter was seventeen years old.³⁹

As for the foster child Ayşe, she had already married somebody of whom Mevhibe’s grandfather did not approve. In the biography of Mevhibe, Bilgehan, granddaughter of Mevhibe İnönü, told the following story: The grandfather had let Ayşe go to school along with Mevhibe. However, she quickly became bored and gave it up. She learned how to read and write later, apparently to be able to exchange letters with a young man whom she had met in the street on the way to a neighbor’s house. In the end she eloped with him, beginning what would prove an unhappy marriage. The grandfather, on the other hand, had desired to marry her to a civil servant.⁴⁰ This discourse is very much compatible with the prevailing attitude toward foster children at that time. Although they were treated almost equally, at the same time they were seen as requiring strict control to educate such ignorant girls and prevent them from flirting with men. Marrying off a foster child with a dowry appears to be the greatest favor bestowed on a foster child at that time.⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid, 19–20.

³⁸ Ibid, 19.

³⁹ Ibid, 24.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 25.

⁴¹ Özbay, 285.



Mevhibe Hanım in *çarşaf*.

1.2. Marriage

The Grandfather Mehmet Ağa passed away without marrying off Mevhibe, yet Saadet Hanım agreed with him that they should marry off her daughter at an early age.⁴² In the days following the passing of the grandfather, a middle aged, wealthy man who was a distant relative asked to marry Mevhibe. Saadet Hanım approved him as the groom, although Mevhibe found him too old. Before the final decision, Saadet Hanım asked a *hodja* to lie down to sleep to ask divine guidance through dreaming (*istihare*). The *hodja* on behalf of the

⁴² Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 20.

divine guide approved the marriage, so that Mevhibe became engaged to the man. However, in the end, since Mevhibe was not happy at all, the engagement was cancelled.⁴³

In those days, Saadet Hanım and Mevhibe visited their neighbor Cevriye Hanım, who was living in Kütahya with her family for seven months. Cevriye Hanım was also looking for a girl to marry to her son İsmet, who at that time was a colonel in the Ottoman army.⁴⁴ İsmet agreed only on the condition that he could see the proposed bride. At that time, the man seeing the bride-to-be and then making up his mind was not a common custom.⁴⁵ Rather, the couple was supposed to meet and like each other after the arrangement but before the wedding.⁴⁶ Mevhibe already knew colonel İsmet; she had seen him from the window.⁴⁷ Once again, Saadet Hanım asked a *hodja* to ask the divine guidance, the result was positive.⁴⁸ Saadet Hanım had never thought to marry off her daughter with a soldier, because if Mevhibe married a soldier, the ongoing wars meant that she would surely live a hard life. However, Cevriye Hanım was very determined and Mevhibe agreed. As for Colonel İsmet, he could see Mevhibe through the keyhole while Saadet Hanım and Mevhibe were drinking coffee with Cevriye Hanım in their house.

1.2.1. İsmet İnönü

Mustafa İsmet İnönü was born on 24 September 1884 in İzmir. He was the second of the five children of Hacı Reşit Bey and Cevriye Hanım. Hacı Reşit had studied law and worked as a civil servant at various levels in the judiciary.⁴⁹ He was born in Malatya; however, the family had migrated to Malatya from Bitlis. İsmet İnönü's grandfather Hacı Fettah Efendi was a merchant⁵⁰ and belonged to the local elite in Malatya.⁵¹ Hence, he wanted his son Reşit to maintain the mercantile business. Reşit, however, wanted a university degree, and left Malatya for İstanbul against his father's will. After graduating from the law faculty in the *Darülfünun*, he started to work in the judiciary in İstanbul where his boss was the older

⁴³ Ibid, 26.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 26–29.

⁴⁵ Metin Heper, **İsmet İnönü: The Making of A Turkish Statesman**, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1998, 54.

⁴⁶ Duben and Behar, 95.

⁴⁷ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 24.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 30.

⁴⁹ Heper, 9, Aydemir, 24–26.

⁵⁰ Interview, 6.

⁵¹ Heper, 9.

brother of his future wife Cevriye Hanım. Considering that the boss had European manners, he thought that this marriage could be suitable⁵² for a promising civil servant.

Cevriye Hanım was fourteen years old when she was married with Hacı Reşit Bey in 1880. She came from a well-educated family. Her family, like Mevhibe's, had migrated to İstanbul from Zıştovi, Bulgaria after the Crimean War of 1877-1878.⁵³

İsmet İnönü's father Hacı Reşit Bey was religious and authoritarian. İsmet İnönü said in his memoirs that even when he was the commander of the army he had a fairly distant relationship with his father.⁵⁴ The family lived in a four-story mansion in *Süleymaniye*, divided into harem and selamlık quarters. On the ground floor, there was a large dining room where all members of the family, including the women, dined together; this was quite extraordinary at that time.⁵⁵ Western table manners, which were first adopted by Ottoman Christians and Jews, had penetrated to the middle classes—specifically, bureaucratic families—by the early twentieth century.⁵⁶ The family also had several servants, including a male cook. As Özden Toker explained, although the cook answered to Cevriye Hanım, they never saw each other. An elevator functioning between the kitchen and the upper floor was the only way of communication and service.⁵⁷ Such a domestic organization exemplifies the acceptable limits of modernization in everyday life. Namely, Hacı Reşit Bey approached modernization through his profession and the quarter in which they lived; subsequently he became a member of the bureaucratic elite, among those who first practiced the Western manners. However, the ambivalent coexistence of modern and traditional in the Tanzimat era engendered provisional solutions. Thus, the western manners were constantly interpreted according to basic social norms, values and identities. Therefore, as Ahmet Mithat described, the main feature of the Tanzimat modernization was indeed *mülemma* (heterogeneousness and disorganization) rather than a complete political and social project.⁵⁸

İsmet İnönü attended primary school and military junior high school (*askeri rüştiye*) in Sivas, where his family resided for six years before moving to İstanbul. In 1898, the family moved to İstanbul and İsmet İnönü entered the artillery school there (*Topçu Harp Okulu*, generally referred to as *Mühendishane*). After graduating from this school, he continued with

⁵² Interview, 6.

⁵³ Heper, 10.

⁵⁴ Sabahattin Selek (yay. haz.) **İsmet İnönü, Hatıralar**, C.I, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 1985, 17

⁵⁵ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 40–41; Interview, 7.

⁵⁶ Duben and Behar, 209.

⁵⁷ Interview, 7.

⁵⁸ Okay, 358.

further education at the Artillery Academy.⁵⁹ In junior high school in Sivas, he had learned French. When he was at the artillery academy, he began learning German. As he thought that relations between the Ottoman army and the German army would advance, learning German could pave the way for a promising career.⁶⁰ After graduating from the Academy with an honors degree, he continued his education at the Staff Officers' College (*Erkan-ı Harbiye*) where he met Mustafa Kemal and other future leading figures of the National Campaign: Ali Fuat (Cebesoy), Kazım (Karabekir), and Fethi (Okyar).⁶¹ During his school years, İsmet İnönü visited his uncle in İzmir every year. In İzmir, he could study western manners and try to improve his French. After graduation, he was first assigned to the second army, in Edirne, in 1906. There, he met prominent figures of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and joined this clandestine organization. İsmet İnönü built up the Edirne branch of the CUP.⁶² During the Meşrutiyet (restoration of the constitutional law), he played a major role as the commander of the third army.⁶³ He also took part in the counter army operation against the reactionary movement of 31 March 1909. Later, in 1910, he was assigned to Yemen and stayed there until 1913. The same year, İsmet İnönü was assigned as the military adviser in the negotiations with Bulgaria in Berlin that put an end to the Balkan Wars.⁶⁴ Then, in 1914, he received a promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel (*Yarbay*), and was sent to the first army in Thrace. In 1916, when he married Mevhibe Hanım, he was back home in İstanbul.⁶⁵

1.2.2. The Wedding and After

İsmet Bey was 32 and Mevhibe Hanım was 19 years old at the time of their wedding. The wedding took place with the couple sitting in separate rooms; it was a religious marriage ceremony. Two days later, they could meet for the first time and have a small chat.⁶⁶ The wedding reception took place two weeks later. The guests enjoyed food and drink in both houses: the house of the bride and the house of the groom. İsmet Bey participated in the wedding reception in the bride's house after the dinner was over in his own house.⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Heper, 16–17.

⁶⁰ Aydemir, 30.

⁶¹ Aydemir, 31.

⁶² Heper, 17.

⁶³ Faik Reşit Unat (yay. haz.), **İsmet İnönü, Biyografi**, Maarif Matbaası, Ankara, 1945, 10.

⁶⁴ Heper, 18–19.

⁶⁵ Heper, 20.

⁶⁶ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 31.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 34.

Mevhibe's wedding dress was from "Maison de Blanc", a very fashionable and Parisian shop. It was decorated with lacework on tulle with pearls on it. Mehmet Ağa had already bought furniture for the sitting room before he passed away, but Saadet Hanım ordered bedding as well, from the same shop.⁶⁸ As Okay argued, luxury consumption was tolerable in the case of weddings. Some wealthy families used to even bring wedding dresses directly from Paris. Additionally, since the wedding ceremony took place separately for women and men, the women used to feel quite comfortable in adopting western-style wedding dresses.⁶⁹ Afterwards, at a wedding in Konya, Mevhibe Hanım was surprised to see the bride with short hair, because the bun was the conventional hairstyle for all women.⁷⁰

After the wedding, the young couple could spend only 21 days together. Subsequently İsmet Bey had to leave for the Caucasian, then the Syrian front. He returned home fourteen months later.⁷¹ Before he left, he gave Mevhibe Hanım a present, a piano, to keep her busy while he was away. He might have also hoped that the piano would kindle an inclination in Mevhibe toward western values and manners.⁷² In the Tanzimat era, letting children take piano lessons from foreign teachers had become a very popular practice for elite families. Hence, the piano was one of the permanent furniture items in wealthy houses at that time.⁷³ Following the custom, İsmet Bey found a female piano teacher from the local Greek community in İstanbul. He assumed that Mevhibe Hanım would learn to play pieces from western classical music. The western music sounded very weird to her, however, and İsmet Bey suggested that perhaps it was in fact better if she played allaturca. In the end, the piano took its place in the attic.⁷⁴ Later, in the 1930s, İsmet İnönü would bring home another piano and a piano teacher, but this time for their daughter Özden.⁷⁵

The First World War had started and the Ottoman Empire had joined in on Germany's side before İsmet Bey was assigned as a staff officer in Thrace. He had just left the Syrian front for İstanbul when the armistice was signed on 31 October 1918⁷⁶. In İstanbul, he was

⁶⁸ Ibid, 34–37.

⁶⁹ Okay, 143.

⁷⁰ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 95.

⁷¹ Ibid, 30.

⁷² Ibid, 39.

⁷³ Okay, 353.

⁷⁴ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 39–40.

⁷⁵ Interview, 30.

⁷⁶ The Armistice of Mudros, "[...] 25 articles[,] contained provisions such as the military occupation of the straits, control by the Entente of all railway and telegraph lines, demobilization and disarmament of the Ottoman troops, except for small contingents needed to keep law and order, surrender by all Ottoman troops in the Arab provinces and the freeing of all Entente prisoners [...] The most dangerous clause [...] was article seven, which stipulated that the Entente had the right to occupy and place in the Ottoman Empire if it considered its security to be under threat" (Erik Jan Zürcher, **Turkey, A Modern History**, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London, 2001, 138).

appointed undersecretary at the Ministry of War in the İzzet Pasha Government. The İzzet Pasha Government was established after the wartime CUP leaders handed over governmental power and fled abroad.⁷⁷ The İzzet Pasha Government was a moderate CUP government involving such Unionist leaders as Rauf (Orbay) and Fethi (Okyar), who had introduced İsmet Pasha to the CUP before 1908.⁷⁸ However, the government soon lost power, at which time İsmet Bey was assigned to be the military representative to the Commission on the Preparation of Peace.⁷⁹ He served in this position until fleeing to Anatolia to participate in the national independence movement.

2. The National Campaign and Mevhibe as Wife of a Soldier

After staying in İstanbul to meet and consult with friends, Mustafa Kemal had already moved to Anatolia in May 1919. He was in Anatolia on an official mission, but he spent much of his time organizing an armed resistance movement and securing public support for the resistance.

Leaning on the article seven in the Mudros Armistice, the Greek army, backed by Britain, occupied İzmir on 15 May 1919. On 16 March 1920 British troops ventured into the imperial capital, İstanbul. Beforehand, however, the Unionist-weighted government in İstanbul had declared before the parliament the creed of the national resistance movement, *Misak-ı Milli* (National Pact). The manifesto consisted of the resolutions of the Erzurum and Sivas congresses, and remained as the principal guidance throughout the war and the main set of principles of the national program. *Misak-ı Milli* (National Pact) was based on the principles:

1. “The territories inhabited by an Ottoman Muslim majority [...] formed an indivisible whole, but the fate of the territories inhabited by an Arab majority which were under foreign occupation should be determined by the plebiscite”
2. “A plebiscite could determine the fate of the ‘Three Vilayets’ of Batum, Kars and Ardahan [...]”
3. “The same should hold true for the fate of western Thrace”

⁷⁷ Zürcher, 139.

⁷⁸ Aydemir, 123.

⁷⁹ Heper, 20; Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 48.

4. “The security of the capital, İstanbul, and of the Sea of Marmara must be ensured. The opening of the straits to commercial shipping would be a subject for discussion with other interested countries”
5. “The rights of minorities would be established in conformity with the treaties concluded between the Entente and European states”
6. “The economic, financial and judicial independence of the empire should be ensured and freed from restrictions [...]”⁸⁰

Upon the British occupation of İstanbul, the parliament was abolished. This meant transferring the resistance movement to Anatolia so completely that Mustafa Kemal, on behalf of the *Heyet-i Temsiliye* (Committee of Representatives), declared the National Assembly to be held in Ankara.⁸¹

İsmet Pasha departed for Ankara on 8 January 1920. As Mustafa Kemal wished, he started to work as a member of the Military Council of High Officers (*Erkan-ı Harbiye*). He stayed there for one month and then returned to İstanbul to work on organization of military sources. Upon the occupation of İstanbul, on 19 March 1920, İsmet Pasha fled to Ankara in a private's uniform.⁸² He arrived there on 9 April 1920 and participated in the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 23 April 1920 as deputy of Edirne. He then was elected Chief of the Military Council of High Officers (*Erkan-ı Harbiye Reisi*). The urgent task before him was to build up a regular army with which to defeat foreign occupation.

Since he had left for Ankara illegally, the Ottoman Government in İstanbul condemned İsmet Pasha in absentia to death. İsmet Pasha was considered a rebel like others involved in the resistance in Anatolia; Mevhibe was seen as the wife of a rebel. With the family under surveillance and İstanbul insecure, Hacı Reşit Bey departed with the entire family for their hometown, Malatya, in July of 1920.⁸³ The journey from İstanbul to Malatya was very difficult and long for Hacı Reşit Bey. After forty days, on 29 September 1920, he passed away. Soon after, İzzet, Mevhibe's first child, also died. İzzet had had several health problems since his birth on 7 December 1919.⁸⁴

In the meantime, İsmet Pasha was given a new rank, the Commander of the Western Front. He then commanded and led the most important battles against the Greek army in the

⁸⁰ Zürcher, 144.

⁸¹ Aydemir, 134.

⁸² Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 55–60.

⁸³ Ibid, 65–69.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 70.

İnönü district.⁸⁵ As having the honor of being the commander of the İnönü battles, Mustafa Kemal would award him the surname “İnönü” in 1934. After the battles, he moved his military headquarters to Akşehir and asked the family to move closer. In 1922, the family departed for Konya. On the way from Malatya to Konya, Mevhibe was no longer the wife of a rebel, but that of a victorious commander. She became the most prestigious guest of all gatherings and granted high social status due to her husband.⁸⁶ Although she was proud of this, she thought that it was a temporary situation; she did not expect it to continue in the future. She hoped that once the war ended they would return to İstanbul. What she wrote in her notebook when they arrived at Şehirkışla reveals her state of mind: “Şehirkışla is a very beautiful and lively district. There is a lovely mosque. The announcer (*müezzin*) summoned the *ezan* (call to prayer). I remembered İstanbul. My Dear God, I do not know how to thank you. If you wish, I will return to my dear İstanbul”.⁸⁷ However, apparently İsmet Pasha was aware that destiny of the family would change according to that of the country. He rented out the mansion in İstanbul and asked Mevhibe Hanım to decide which furniture would stay and which they would take.⁸⁸ Özden Toker said that Mevhibe Hanım always regarded the house in Süleymaniye as home, as the place where she had roots.⁸⁹

While the family was in Konya, the National Campaign reached its final stage with the army’s defeat of the Greek occupation of İzmir. That defeat, on 3 October 1922, would pave the way for the Mudanya Armistice. While İsmet Pasha was on the way to Mudanya, the family arrived at İzmir where they met with broad excitement and hospitality.⁹⁰ The Mudanya Armistice was signed on 11 October 1922. The armistice marked the European states’ recognizing the government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly as the true representative of the country.⁹¹ Subsequently, the Turkish government was invited to take place in negotiations for peace. The Turkish government abolished the sultanate on 1 November 1922.⁹²

Soon after the Mudanya Armistice, İsmet Pasha became Foreign Minister of the Ankara government. For the peace conference, which would take place in Lausanne, Switzerland, Mustafa Kemal appointed İsmet Pasha the leader of the Turkish delegation.⁹³

⁸⁵ Ibid, 71.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 79–80.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 85.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 92.

⁸⁹ Interview, 8.

⁹⁰ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 101.

⁹¹ Heper, 23.

⁹² Zürcher, 168.

⁹³ Heper, p. 23-24; Zürcher, 168.

The Lausanne Conference marked the beginning of a new phase, not only in the sense of emergence of a new Republic on Anatolian soil, but also in the sense of extreme transformation of people's lives—including Mevhibe İnönü.

3. Becoming a Role Model (1923-1938)

3.1. The Lausanne Peace Conference

The conference started on 20 November 1922 with participation of Turkey, Great Britain, France, Italy, Greece, as well as Romania, Soviet Union, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Georgia on related subjects.⁹⁴ The most important issue was the borders of the Republic. Except the borderline with Syria, which had already been established according to the Ankara Convention between Turkey and France on 20 October 1921, neither the borderlines with Greece and western Thrace, nor the borderline with Iraq could be established.⁹⁵ The same was true with respect to depths of the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁶ After long discussions without any result, the conference was interrupted on 4 February 1923 and the Turkish delegation headed by İsmet Pasha returned to Ankara. With the efforts of the Secretary General of the conference and the French delegation, and especially with the sincere letter of Lord Curzon, the head of the British delegation, which refreshed the hope for peace, the conference started again on 23 April 1923.⁹⁷

3.1.1. Mevhibe in Lausanne as the Symbol of Turkish Women, Meeting the West in Lausanne: Training Period for Identity Construction

At the second term of the Lausanne Conference, some of the delegates' wives came along, including Mevhibe Hanım. İsmet Pasha and Mevhibe Hanım departed from İzmir for Lausanne via İstanbul. They stayed in İstanbul for a while, and Mevhibe Hanım visited her former house and the neighbors in Süleymaniye.⁹⁸

In addition, she went shopping in İstanbul and bought a coat for Lausanne trip. As mentioned in the biography of Mevhibe, İsmet Pasha had explained her about the attire in Lausanne on their way to Istanbul. Moreover, he had explained the reforms which would be

⁹⁴ Zürcher, 2001: 168.

⁹⁵ Mehmet Özel (ed.), **Lausanne on its 75th Anniversary**, The Ministry of Culture of the Turkish Republic, Ankara, 1998, 30.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 34.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 35.

⁹⁸ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 115.

implemented in the new regime with which Mevhibe Hanım, too, had to keep step. In response, Mevhibe Hanım had expressed her hope that the next generation would adapt more to modernity. İsmet Pasha prodded her then that from that moment on, she could no longer be simply ‘the wife of İsmet Pasha’; Mevhibe had to become a role model in her own right.⁹⁹ This story seems fictitious at first, but Özden Toker confirmed the conversation and added more to it. As she told, before they left for Lausanne, one of the neighbors of Mevhibe Hanım asked her to pass on an appeal to İsmet Pasha. However, İsmet Pasha refused the appeal and asked his wife not to interfere in such issues any more. As Özden Toker put it, İsmet Pasha gave the first and the clearest example of how he trained Mevhibe Hanım as role model and a first lady. As Özden Toker put it, modernization started with Mevhibe Hanım.¹⁰⁰

İsmet Pasha and Mevhibe Hanım left İstanbul for Lausanne on 18 April 1923. The woman, Mevhibe, standing next to her husband, İsmet Pasha, at the station was not wearing the *çarşaf*.¹⁰¹ They arrived at Lausanne on 21 April 1923. The letter Mevhibe Hanım wrote to her mother-in-law the next day expressed her protest against the conventional attire in Lausanne as follows: “My dear mother-in-law, we forgot to take out the hat which İsmet Pasha would wear when we entered Lausanne, from the coffer for clothes. Thus, he had to wear a calpac. How nice it is! It would be better if he never appear with a hat!”¹⁰² From arrival until departure, Mevhibe Hanım wrote frequent letters to her mother and mother-in-law. She reported on the conference, exchanged best wishes and greetings with them and, more importantly, expressed her impressions of Lausanne, which had surprised her because of its wealth.¹⁰³ Since everything was so unfamiliar, she sometimes felt uneasy. However, İffet Hanım who was there with her husband Rıza Nur kept Mevhibe Hanım company. They soon became close friends. Mevhibe Hanım always went out with İffet Hanım and thus got to know the milieu better.¹⁰⁴ Mevhibe Hanım wrote in one of her letters: “İffet Hanım knows French. She is the granddaughter of the deceased Ali Rıza Pasha who was one of the ministers of military. Her family resides in Nice. Her father is Şükrü Pasha and her uncle is Süreyya Pasha, the chief of the Red Crescent in İstanbul”.¹⁰⁵ Both encounters with the West and with the Empire’s own high society were new to Mevhibe. Yet she did her best to adapt herself to the life in Lausanne. In the letter, she wrote on 18 May 1923, she explained: “I go out with a

⁹⁹ Ibid, 116–117.

¹⁰⁰ Interview, 10.

¹⁰¹ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 117.

¹⁰² Ibid, 121.

¹⁰³ İnönü Arşivi, no. 2701.

¹⁰⁴ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 132–133.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 125.

coat. Since nobody wears *çarşaf* here, I do not wear it either”.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, she was critical of the customs and maintained this tone in her letters. İsmet Pasha wished Mevhibe Hanım to learn French like some of the other wives of the delegation. He found a teacher, who would come to the hotel regularly. However, although she later regretted it, Mevhibe Hanım resisted this idea fiercely. The French teacher was a man and it seemed unacceptable to her to be in the same room with a strange man.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, she most probably still thought of Lausanne as a temporary home. In the letter of 18 May 1923, she described more about the *çarşaf* issue: “You ask about my *çarşafs*. I had the black one sewn. I had a tuck put in the front and in the back. The cloak was not finished yet. I will get it soon”.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, in her letter on 30 July 1923, she asked her mother-in-law which color she would prefer for the *çarşaf* for winter.¹⁰⁹ She would probably buy the cloth from Lausanne.

One day Mevhibe Hanım received a parcel from a very luxurious shop in Lausanne. It comprised a suit, a dress and a beautiful coat, each of which was very fashionable and European. Soon she learned that these in fact were for Latife Hanım, the wife of Kemal Atatürk. Later with the encouragement of İsmet Pasha, from the same shop, Mevhibe bought a cloak and two hats, which she would wear during the ceremony of the signing of the treaty.¹¹⁰

Mevhibe Hanım would meet Latife Hanım in January 1924, when she was still in İzmir before moving to Ankara. When Mevhibe Hanım gave birth to Ömer, Latife Hanım visited and greeted her. Latife Hanım, the wife of the president and Mevhibe Hanım, wife of the prime minister were almost the same age, yet, as Mevhibe Hanım knew, they were extremely different in lifestyle and character. That visit marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship.¹¹¹

3.1.2. Western Influence on İsmet Pasha

Although he guided and trained Mevhibe Hanım in emulating the West, İsmet Pasha did not have much experience of the West either. For him, meeting Westerners, both at the Lausanne Peace Conference and earlier, seems to have played a critical role in his development. Earlier, in June 1914, İnönü and his close friend and colleague Kazım Karabekir had visited a number

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 133.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 123–124.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 133.

¹⁰⁹ İnönü Arşivi, no. 02715

¹¹⁰ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 139–141.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 167–169.

of countries in Europe, including France and Germany. They visited museums, palaces, parks, and the opera and so on. On this first trip to Europe, they were able to observe social life in Europe. What surprised him most in Europe was the extensive participation of women in social life and the workforce. He understood that the level of development in Germany reflected the fact that women worked together with men in the service of the community. According to him, it was not a matter of emancipation for women; rather it was a matter of duty towards the community. He would later note that he understood when he was in Munich that since women did not participate in Ottoman social life, national power decreased by fifty percent.¹¹² During the conference, İsmet İnönü also spent an extended time in Lausanne, which impressed him in all senses.

With respect to women's emancipation through equal participation into social life, İsmet İnönü told an anecdote in his memoir about German women who pushed men out of a crowded bus stop on a rainy day. The anecdote reveals a sense of mockery rather than a sense of foresight.¹¹³

As for the question of attire, İsmet Pasha did not complain about Western dress. He claimed that he got used to the European mode of dressing in Lausanne. Both İsmet Pasha and Mevhibe Hanım wore hats when they were in Lausanne. After returning to Ankara, İsmet Pasha did not wear the calpac anymore.¹¹⁴ The hat must have seemed a requirement for modernization to him.

3.1.3. Peace Treaty and a New Beginning

The rough discussions of the second term of the conference, which had started on 23 April, finished on 17 July 1923. The Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed on 24 July 1923. The Lausanne Peace Treaty consisted of a preface and five chapters discussing the issues of borderlines, capitulations, minorities, war indemnity, the debts of the Ottoman Empire, the straits and the exchange of Greek and Turkish people¹¹⁵. The Treaty not only established peace, but also reorganized the political, legal, economic and social relationships between

¹¹² Selek, 91.

¹¹³ Ibid, 91.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 114.

¹¹⁵ See Fahir Armaoğlu, **20.Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi: 1914-1980**, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Ankara, 1994; Seha Meray, **Lozan Barış Konferansı**, Ankara Üniversitesi Yayını, Ankara, 1972-1973; Yavuz Abadan, **Lozanın Hususiyetleri: Harp Sonu Muahedelerine Nazaran**, Yay.y., İstanbul, 1938; Dışişleri Bakanlığı, **Lozan Barış Antlaşması**, Çoğaltma, Ankara, 1984; Nihat Erim, **Devletlerarası Hukuku ve Siyasi Tarih Metinleri**, C.1., Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 1953; Ali Naci Karacan, **Lozan**, Latin Matbaası, İstanbul, 1978; Sabahattin Selek (yay.haz.), **İsmet İnönü, Hatıralar**, Olgaç Basımevi, Ankara, 1985-1987.

Turkey and the European states. In other words, it was the declaration of the recognition of independence and sovereignty of the Turkish nation.¹¹⁶ The Lausanne Peace Treaty attained all aims of the National Pact, which had been declared in 1920.¹¹⁷

Mevhibe Hanım attended the ceremony of the signing of the Treaty in the Ceremony Hall of Lausanne University. She was wearing her new coat and a black hat.¹¹⁸ Since her appearance did fit the classical image of the Ottoman woman, the foreign press were highly interested in her. They asked for a small interview, but Mevhibe Hanım, as she would do throughout her life, kept her silence.¹¹⁹

İsmet Pasha and Mevhibe Hanım left Lausanne for İstanbul on 6 August 1923. Against İsmet Pasha's wish, she refused to return to the country looking like a European woman. She wore a coat and covered her hair.¹²⁰ Upon arriving at İstanbul, as Özden Toker told, she had thought that they would directly go to their house in Süleymaniye. However, she was told that they would stay at Pera Palas Hotel where special ceremonies would take place and they would receive their guests. As Özden Toker put it, she must have thought that the homecoming was the end of their public life.¹²¹ Instead, it was only the beginning.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly acknowledged the treaty on 23 August 1923.¹²² The Turkish Republic was founded on 29 October 1923. Mustafa Kemal was the president and İsmet İnönü was the first prime minister. The Republican People's Party (RPP, *Halk Fırkası*, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası* after 1924), which was founded on 9 September 1923 by Mustafa Kemal, its president, shaped the regime for the following two decades, until 1945. Those decades were the years of consolidation of the regime through extensive reform policies of modernization and secularization. On 19 November 1923 İsmet Pasha was elected as the vice-president of the RPP; after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk passed away, he would take over the presidency in 1938 and remain president until 1972.

3.2. Ankara: Identity Construction as the Role model

Ankara, in the heart of Anatolia, was proclaimed the capital on 13 October 1923. Ankara had already headquartered the national struggle since 1920. From then on, Ankara contained the

¹¹⁶ Özel, 41-52.

¹¹⁷ Özel, 94; Zürcher, 169.

¹¹⁸ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 150.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 154.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 157.

¹²¹ Interview, 9.

¹²² Özel, 82.

nucleus of the nation state. Falih Rıfkı Atay described Ankara as follows: “Now Ankara is the center of the spread. The elite who cultivated here are spreading from the center to every quarter of the country. Ankara is the basis of the national unity [...] Ankara is something fresh and great both nationally and internationally.”¹²³ While residing in İstanbul was considered shameful, residing in Ankara was considered honorable.¹²⁴

Although Ankara was the city where the core of the regime resided, it still lacked basic facilities. Riding horseback was the only mode of transportation for Mustafa Kemal and for İsmet Pasha to arrive at the National Assembly in the Ulus district from their residence in Çankaya. The deputies, staff officers and journalists had trouble finding places to stay and to dine. Because of the poor living conditions, they were also not sure whether to bring their families to Ankara. The atmosphere in Ankara in those years was thus akin to a scout club for boys.¹²⁵

3.2.1. Social Life and the Women’s “Reception Day” (*Kabul günü*) in Ankara

The wives and the children of the governmental, military and intellectual cadre of Ankara started to come to Ankara in the first years following the proclamation of the Republic.¹²⁶ Thereafter, the limited social life of Ankara was to change through the contribution of women.

Mevhibe Hanım came to Ankara in June 1924. She had lived for a while in İzmir where she gave a birth to Ömer, the second child of the couple (after İzzet who died early of health problems). In Ankara, they first resided in the station building and later moved to *Pembe Köşk* (The Pink Mansion). *Pembe Köşk* was an old house in a middle of a vineyard in Çankaya when İsmet Pasha bought it. He had the house renovated and painted in pink; thereafter, it was referred to as *Pembe Köşk*.¹²⁷

Hence, after a sort of preparatory experience in Lausanne, Mevhibe Hanım started her new life at *Pembe Köşk* in Ankara.

The first thing Mevhibe Hanım did was to visit Latife Hanım, the wife of Mustafa Kemal, in her residence in Çankaya.¹²⁸ As mentioned above, they had first met in İzmir. Afterwards they would pay mutual visits to each other. Although they were quite different in

¹²³ Falih Rıfkı [Atay], 29 Birinciteşrin [October] 1933, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 8

¹²⁴ Bilgehan, *Mevhibe*, 173.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 163.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 172.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 171–179.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 172.

lifestyle and in worldview, Mevhibe Hanım admired Latife Hanım a lot. As Özden Toker explained, Latife Hanım had done everything that Mevhibe Hanım had not. She knew three languages, she studied in the university at Sorbonne in France and she knew much that Mevhibe Hanım did not know. According to Özden Toker, Mevhibe felt a sort of admiration mixed with envy for Latife Hanım. Mevhibe Hanım wished that she could have had such a good education as Latife Hanım.

Fixing a reception day soon became a conventional custom among women in Ankara. It probably became so after Latife Hanım announced her reception day. Every Saturday Latife Hanım received her guests at the presidential residence in Çankaya. At those gatherings, Latife Hanım was more than a host: more like a teacher. Not only because she was a well-educated and modern woman, but also because she was the wife of Mustafa Kemal, was she respected broadly. So, at the reception days, she would speak to her guests about various subjects, among which were good manners, equality between men and women, music and so on. Thus, the reception day of Latife Hanım was like a sort of weekly course for women.

Mevhibe Hanım's reception days were the first and the third day of each month, which she maintained so for many years. However, the reception day at *Pembe Köşk* was quite different from that at the presidential residence in Çankaya. It was more like a family chat. Mevhibe Hanım used to serve cookies and the pastries which she baked herself and ask guests about their children, families and daily issues.

Mevhibe Hanım was also in close contact with the wife and families of Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu), Falih Rıfkı (Atay), Abdülhak (Renda) and Zeki (Apaydın). All were the families which had been involved with the national independence struggle from the beginning and from then on were among the governmental elite of Ankara. She also tried to keep in contact with her neighbors in Süleymaniye. Among the new friends, Mevhibe Hanım was very close to Leman Hanım who was the wife of Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu). She was a very stylish and cultivated woman. She could speak French, English and German fluently. She had been abroad in Europe for many years. Hence, she was a very enlightened figure.¹²⁹ Thus, Leman Hanım was the first woman who came to *Pembe Köşk* wearing a hat. Cevriye Hanım, Mevhibe Hanım's mother-in-law, found this funny and advised her not to overshadow her beauty with such a weird accessory.¹³⁰ However, similar to her friendship with Latife Hanım, Mevhibe Hanım liked and admired Leman Hanım and maintained friendship with her for long years.

¹²⁹ Interview, 14–15.

¹³⁰ Bilgehan, *Mevhibe*, 190.

As Özden Toker explained, in those years, the women of the *Pembe Köşk* did not yet keep step with modernization.¹³¹

3.2.2. The Ball in 1927: Presenting the First Lady

The years between 1925 and 1927 were somewhat troublesome. The Kurdish uprising—Sheik Sait Rebellion, as it is known—the establishment and close of the Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*), the İzmir conspiracy, and the trial and execution of former CUP members disrupted political and social stability¹³². Hence, Mustafa Kemal wished to organize a ball in order to conjure up the eagerness and the excitement of the first Republican years again.

However, Mustafa Kemal had divorced Latife Hanım in August 1925 and sent her to her parents' house in İzmir. For this reason, he thought that it would be more convenient if İsmet Pasha and Mevhibe Hanım hosted the ball at the *Pembe Köşk*. *Pembe Köşk* was so small for such an occasion that İsmet Pasha had to have a ballroom built and attached to the main building.¹³³

This ball in 1927 was the first¹³⁴ in the Republican period.¹³⁵ Later balls would take place either at the Restaurant Karpiç or at the hotel Ankara Palas and take a more institutional form. Official balls, for instance, took place each year on September 29, the day the Republic was proclaimed.

Mevhibe Hanım was aware of the importance of the ball for Mustafa Kemal and İsmet Pasha. For this reason, she paid special attention to how she would appear at the ball. She had her dress brought from Belgium. It was a v-neck, half sleeve, long, purple colored dress. With respect to hairstyle, after long consideration she decided to appear in the ball without covering her hair. She went to the Belarusian hairdresser, the one and only hairdresser of Ankara.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Interview, 14–15.

¹³² See Zürcher, 2001: 175-183.

¹³³ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 195.

¹³⁴ “Although it is not known when the first ball was organized on Ottoman lands, it is more than probable that since the 18th century embassies and trade ships hosted balls. It is known that in 1829, the Ottoman dignitaries had attended a ball organized by the British embassy. In 1832, the Fleet Admiral Çengeloğlu Tahir Pasha gave a ball in Mahmudiye Galleon, hosting ambassadors, Ottoman dignitaries, and the Sultan. In 1839, Mahmut the second organized a ball in the palace with participation of members of the Harem as well. Following the Tanzimat years, the balls, official and unofficial, became frequent, mostly around the Beyoğlu district” (Okay, 1975, 107-18).

¹³⁵ Interview, 17.

¹³⁶ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 196; Ibid, 17.

Soon after the ball started, Mustafa Kemal arrived at *Pembe Köşk*. İsmet Pasha, in tailcoat, and Mevhibe Hanım, in the purple dress, met him at the door. Mustafa Kemal greeted Mevhibe Hanım by kissing her hand. She interpreted this as appreciation for her courage to appear in modern fashion. Mustafa Kemal opened the dance floor with Mevhibe Hanım.¹³⁷

Because of the fact that Latife Hanım was not the first lady any more, Mevhibe Hanım found herself as the only woman affiliated with the two top figures of the political cadre, her husband İsmet Pasha and the president Mustafa Kemal. She became the one and only first lady of the new Republic. Thereby, *Pembe Köşk* began to represent the house of the Republic, and the household of the *Pembe Köşk* to represent the model household of the nation.

After the ball, at night, İsmet Pasha and Mevhibe Hanım chatted about the ball. She mentioned the daughter of the French Ambassador who wore a décolleté dress and attracted much attention. Mevhibe Hanım still found her dressed decently. Upon hearing this, İsmet Pasha had encouraged Mevhibe Hanım to wear that style of dress. He considered it completely compatible to be dressed up in modern fashion, and be chaste and decent at the same time.¹³⁸ However, Mevhibe Hanım had enough hardship by both appearing in a modern dress without covering her hair and dancing in a western manner with Mustafa Kemal.¹³⁹ After that ball, Mevhibe Hanım never covered her hair but always dressed in a rather conservative manner.¹⁴⁰ She wore half-sleeve dresses, but never went out in those outfits alone; rather she wore a jacket or a coat over them.¹⁴¹

It was very difficult for Mevhibe Hanım to reconcile the traditional and the modern. As Özden Toker put it, most of the times it was a matter of sacrifice. In fact, what she managed to do was to determine the level of the sacrifice according to the requirements of the social roles she held. For example, she did not attend any gathering except those which were ceremonial. The performance of the first ladyship was nothing more than fulfilling a duty.¹⁴² The same was true with respect to foreign trips. In 1931, she accompanied İsmet Pasha in Greece. She was supposed to represent “the new Turkish woman” abroad. Before leaving for Greece, she first went shopping in Istanbul. When they arrived in Athens, Mevhibe Hanım

¹³⁷ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 197.

¹³⁸ Interview, 19.

¹³⁹ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 201.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 198.

¹⁴¹ Interview, 18.

¹⁴² Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 192, 201; Ibid, 18-19.

was wearing a brown suit and a hat.¹⁴³ She later accompanied her husband to the Soviet Union in April 1932 and to Italy in May 1932.¹⁴⁴

Mevhibe Hanım's calculated sacrifices, along with what national ideals required from "the new woman," contributed to the way Mevhibe İnönü became a role model. Through her social activities, Mevhibe İnönü the role model reinforced the gender identity for women that was pushed by the national reform movement. Before describing her social activities in detail, it is better to envision the general framework of gender construction for women in this period.

4. General Framework of Gendered Woman's Identity

4.1. Kemalist Reforming for Women

In addition to extensive modernization and secularization of the society, the Kemalist regime took two important steps to emancipate women: adoption of the Civil Code, and granting women political rights.

4.1.1. The Civil Code

The adoption of the Civil Code in 1926 was important not only because it influenced people's daily lives the most, but also because it represented the climax of the Unionist "National Family" ideal.

With the adoption of the "1917 Family Decree," the Unionists started to secularize and modernize the traditional family according to the nationalist reorganization of social life; in other words, according to the model of "milli aile" (national family). The decree was the first direct state intervention into the private realm of the family.¹⁴⁵ For this reason, it is the first milestone in the process of the secularization of the family.¹⁴⁶

The "1917 Family Decree" comprised articles related to marriage and divorce. The decree legitimized bigamy for men but necessitated the authorization of the wife for polygamy. Another reformist article was about divorce: under specific circumstances, the

¹⁴³ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe**, 211.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 212–217.

¹⁴⁵ Zafer Toprak, "II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Devlet, Aile ve Feminizm", **Sosyo-Kültürel Değişme Sürecinde Türk Ailesi**, C.I, T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırma Kurumu Yayını, Ankara, 1992, 229; Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey", **Women, Islam and the State**, Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.), Macmillan, London, 1991, 27.

¹⁴⁶ Kandiyoti, 27.

wife was allowed to divorce her husband.¹⁴⁷ These reforms paved the way for transformation from the patriarchal traditional Ottoman family to the monogamous nuclear nationalist family.¹⁴⁸

The decree, put into effect on 8 October 1917, stayed in effect only until 19 June 1919¹⁴⁹. However, it is possible to say that until the adoption of the Civil Code in 1926, the 1917 Family decree was in effect *de facto*.¹⁵⁰

The National Assembly probably considered reclamation and amendment of the “1917 Family Decree” just after its abolition in 1919.¹⁵¹ However, extensive reform of the private realm of the family was achieved with the adoption of the Civil Code, adopted from the Swiss Code in 1926. According to İnan, two basic principles of the code were the abolishment of polygamy and establishment of equality in the case of divorce.¹⁵² The preamble of the code as declared at the Assembly stated intent to uplift the Turkish woman, but also was intent to recognize and uphold the patriarchal hierarchy within the family; so the Civil Code in fact legitimized the existing gender inequality before the law.¹⁵³ According to İnan, this was because of the need to protect the family, emphasizing the man’s responsibilities as head of the household. Woman was considered the basic element of conjugal marriage and the family.¹⁵⁴ In fact, the gender role framework, established by the Civil Code determined gender relations in society. According to Kandiyoti, the patriarchal organization of gender relations by the state replaced the traditional and religious patriarchal organization. In other words, the state emancipated the women, yet did not liberate them.¹⁵⁵

4.1.2. Political Rights for Women

¹⁴⁷ Mehmet Ünal, “1917 Tarihli Hukuk-i Aile Kararnamesi”, **Aile Yazıları, Temel Kavramlar, Yapı ve Tarihi Süreç**, Ahmet Çiğdem, Beylül Dikeçligil (yay. haz.), Başbakanlık Basımevi, Ankara, 1991, 397.

¹⁴⁸ Zafer Toprak, “The Family, Feminism and the State during the Young Turk period, 1908-1918”, Paper presented at the “Workshop on Turkish Family and Domestic Organization”, New York, 23-25 April 1986 cited in Kandiyoti, 36.

¹⁴⁹ The 1917 family decree was in effect for many years in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, which after the Mudros Armistice went under the mandate of France and Britain. Additionally, it was in effect in Hatay until the accession of Hatay into the Turkish Republic in 1939 (Ünal, 1991: 383).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 383.

¹⁵¹ Afet İnan, **Atatürk ve Türk Kadın Haklarının Kazanılması, Tarih Boyunca Türk Kadınının Hak ve Görevleri**, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, Ankara, 1975, 159.

¹⁵² Ibid, 160.

¹⁵³ Yaprak Zihnioğlu, **Kadınsız İnkılâp: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, 182.

¹⁵⁴ İnan, 160.

¹⁵⁵ Deniz Kandiyoti, “Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case”, **Feminist Studies**, Vol.13, No.2 (1987 Summer): 71.

Women were granted political rights in municipal elections in 1930, and subsequently in general elections on 5 December 1934. This was the climax of the reforms aimed at total secularization and modernization. Additionally, it corroborated the official ideology—, which persisted until recent decades—that Kemalism freed women from the shackles of tradition and provided them with all civil and political rights.

Political rights for women grew from both social and political transformations, since the Tanzimat era heralded activity of well-educated, intellectual women and an urgent desire to prove the democratic traits of the new Republic. However, in this respect Kemalism not only created but also championed a sharp split between the past and the Republican era.

Mevhibe and İsmet İnönü's second child, Erdal İnönü—who later would be among the founders of Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*)—wrote in his memoir that the manipulation of women was part of Kemalist policy. He cited a story from Nevber Sevüktekin, who at the time was the vice-president of the Benevolence Association (*Yardımsevenler Derneği*). According to Nevber Sevüktekin, before the municipal elections in 1930, Atatürk told Nevber (Sevüktekin) and her friends that it was time to give political rights to women. He said that Turkish women should have political rights like the European women. Then he explained to them that the Assembly would give them the right to vote and to be elected in the upcoming municipal election. However, as he put it, it was necessary for women to declare their wish to have the political rights. As he explained, they had to express their wish by a street demonstration. As Nevber (Sevüktekin) related, they were scared and unsure what would happen to them, but had no choice but to follow Atatürk's order. As Erdal İnönü quoted, Nevber (Sevüktekin) and her friends did what Atatürk wanted from them to do; they made a demonstration just like the suffragists in Britain. Consequently, they were arrested but soon they were released.¹⁵⁶

In the years of consolidation of the rule of the one-party state, both feminism and feminists were effaced through the substitution of new “feminists” for those who were too radical for the state. The elimination of “suffragette” Nezihe Muhittin from the presidency of the Union of Turkish Women (UTW, *Türk Kadınlar Birliği*)¹⁵⁷ and consolidation of a new cadre within the UTW which declared the more-moderate policy of benevolence, taking care of children and educating illiterate women is an example of this process.¹⁵⁸¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Erdal İnönü, *Anılar ve Düşünceler 2*, Yorum Kitapları, İstanbul, 1998, 81.

¹⁵⁷ Zihnioğlu, 244.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 250.

¹⁵⁹ See, Introduction, 20–21.

Moreover, with respect to the matter of granting political rights to women, Kemalism would create its own heroine, Afet İnan. Afet İnan was one of the adopted daughters of Mustafa Kemal. She met Mustafa Kemal in 1925, soon after she graduated from the Training School for Teachers for Girls (*Kız Öğretmen Okulu*) in Bursa.¹⁶⁰ She did her PhD work on history in Switzerland with the full support of Mustafa Kemal. In the following years, she became the mouthpiece of Mustafa Kemal in his effort to create the Turkish national historiography. Afet İnan taught history first at the Training School for Teachers of Music and then in Ankara University, but she always remained “the student of the national history”.¹⁶¹

When Afet İnan was teaching civic law at the Training School for Teachers of Music, as she mentioned several times, she had a difficulty that forced Mustafa Kemal to take immediate action on the issue of the political rights for women. The anecdote, as cited by Afet İnan was as follows: One day in the classroom, she had done an exercise about the electoral system. The students were supposed to vote for their representatives, among whom there were girls, as well. There a boy brought the teacher Afet İnan’s attention to the fact that as long as women were not given political rights by law, it was impossible to exercise such an election with girls even in the classroom. Afterwards, with deep disappointment, she spoke to Atatürk. He appointed her, on hearing the story, to give a speech on women’s rights.¹⁶² He even thought about the dress she would wear during the speech. It was a formal black suit. Additionally, he asked Hamdullah Suphi¹⁶³ to train the inexperienced Afet İnan in public speaking, to ensure the fluency of her speech. Despite all this, in the end Mustafa Kemal decided that she would not be able to speak in front of the masses. Hence, he told her that it would be better if she recited what he gave her to say. Indeed, Afet İnan made the speech in the way he advised.¹⁶⁴

In this speech, she advocated women’s political rights based on three principles, as follows:

1. Giving political rights to women is a democratic requirement as well as a national duty

¹⁶⁰ Özgür Sevgi Göral, “Afet İnan”, **Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Kemalizm**, C.II, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, 220.

¹⁶¹ Ayşe Durakbaşı, **Halide Edip Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, 145–146.

¹⁶² A. Afetinan, **Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler**, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Ankara, 1959, 246.

¹⁶³ Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöven was the Minister of Education in 1930. He reactivated the *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearts) and initiated lectures and courses and exhibitions to spread the nationalist ideas. The Turkish hearts were superseded by Halkevleri (People’s Houses) in 1932. (Zürcher, 2001: 188).

¹⁶⁴ Interview, 21–22.

2. Women have interest in engaging with the politics
3. Women have duties in the society.¹⁶⁵

The speech also appeased those who were afraid that once women acquired rights, they would leave the home and devote themselves to party politics. As argued in the speech, this was an inappropriate appraisal. She argued instead that only if they reached a level of political culture and could enjoy freedom could women socialize their children in a proper manner.¹⁶⁶

Soon after, The National Assembly granted women political rights in the municipal elections. In the following days, the Benevolence Association (*Yardımsevenler Derneği*) announced a visit to the Minister of the Internal Affairs Şükrü Kaya to thank him for giving women the right to vote and to be elected in the forthcoming municipal elections.¹⁶⁷ Mevhibe İnönü, the honorary president of the association, was among them.¹⁶⁸

The amendment which granted women the right to vote and being elected in the general elections, succeeded the previous one on 5 December 1934. The newspaper *Cumhuriyet* announced the amendment as follows: “Turkish women took the greatest right of all rights”.¹⁶⁹ The illustration below the headline illustrated official ideology: that the new regime freed women from being isolated behind the lattice, and led them to address the public, even from the pulpit of the assembly. However, the illustration can also be considered as demonstrating in particular that nothing but electoral rights could change the social and political position of women. This amendment was the climax of Kemalist reforms for women.

¹⁶⁵ Afet (İnan), “Türk Kadınının İntihap Hakkına Dair Mühim Bir Konferans”, *Türk Yurdu*, Sayı: 27-28, 1930, 68.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 67.

¹⁶⁷ Zihnioğlu, 254.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 254; Interview, 22.

¹⁶⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 Birincikanun (December) 1934, 1.



That the new Republic granted the Turkish women with political rights without any restriction just after or simultaneous with some of the European states, some of which gave women the right to vote and stand for elections after the Second World War¹⁷⁰ was a novelty which became a foundation of the modernization in the new regime. Yet, partly because the new regime claimed electoral rights for women as a success of the Republic, giving women the right to vote and stand for election could actually been achieved through personal initiative of Mustafa Kemal. Preceding debates in the Turkish National Assembly had shown that there was a political support for women's suffrage among the deputies as well as opposition. In 1923, during the debates about amendment of the Electoral Law Tunalı Hilmi Bey, the deputy of *Bolu*, proposed political rights for women; because, according to him, women had fully merited to be regarded as full citizens because of the significant role they played in the Independence War. Nevertheless, Tunalı Hilmi met with a fierce opposition. Subsequently, one year later in 1924 during the debates about amendment of the Constitution, reaction to women's suffrage had reasonably cooled down. This time pro-suffrage deputies could express their ideas in the National Assembly.¹⁷¹ Besides, as explained before, there was a vibrant group of women outside who advocated right to vote and stand for elections for women. Headed by Nezihe Muhittin, they had founded the Union of Turkish Women (UTW)

¹⁷⁰ Germany in 1918, Netherlands, to stand for elections in 1917, to vote in 1919, Sweden in 1919, Portugal, with restrictions in 1931, Belgium, to vote in 1919, to stand for elections in 1921, lifted restrictions in 1948, United Kingdom in 1918, lifted restrictions in 1928, France in 1944, Italy in 1945.

¹⁷¹ Bernard Caporal, **Kemalizm Sonrası Türk Kadını III**, Çağdaş Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık Ltd. Şti., 2000: 55-58

in 1924 and starting from the early days of its establishment advocated political rights for women. Yet, political authority regarded both their attitude and demands too radical¹⁷². Eventually as mentioned before, the fierce suffragist cadre within the UTW was eliminated in 1927. In fact it was a precondition for the government, i.e. Mustafa Kemal, to claim giving electoral rights to women as part and parcel of the new regime.

The women in İstanbul and in Ankara met the amendment with exhilarated celebrations and public meetings. They also sent broad numbers of telegrams to the National Assembly. On December 6, Teachers of the Ankara High School for Girls published a call for women for a meeting in the People's House in Ankara (*Ankara Halkevi*). Similarly, in İstanbul, the women gathered in the RPP building on the initiative of the members of the İstanbul municipal committee Nakiye, and with the participation of both members of the Union of Turkish Women and a delegation of women university students. They decided to make a declaration to express their gratitude to Atatürk and the Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, and organized a meeting in İstanbul.¹⁷³ The next day in Ankara, the women gathered in the *Halkevi* building and expressed their gratitude to Atatürk and to the others, subsequently walking to the National Assembly. In İstanbul, women were still busy with organizing a public meeting. The UTW published a call inviting women to the Bayezit Square on December 8 at 10 am.¹⁷⁴ On that day, women gathered in the Bayezit square. Among them were the members of the city council, members of the UTW, graduates of the İzmir High School for Girls who were university students at that time, members of the Mothers' Association, members of the Board for the Protection of Children, members of the Turkish Red Crescent, and university students. At Bayezit, first Saadet Rıfat from the UTW and then Nakiye made speeches. Afterward, the crowd headed for Taksim Square where they laid five garlands against the monument of Atatürk. Additionally, İffet Halim Oruz from the UTW made a speech.¹⁷⁵

Simultaneously, a new debate started to take a place—first, on the pages of the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, then in the media as a whole. As the newspaper reported, on the same day the amendment was discussed and ratified at the Assembly, the deputies had also discussed whether women should be subject to conscription.¹⁷⁶ On this issue, the newspaper *Akşam* conducted interviews with some intellectual women. İffet Halim Oruz from the UTW

¹⁷² Ibid, 59–60.

¹⁷³ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 Birincikanun (December) 1934, 8.

¹⁷⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 7 Birincikanun (December) 1934, 1, 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 Birincikanun (December) 1934, 6.

¹⁷⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 Birincikanun (December) 1934, 1.

stated that she was sure that women could take their place in the army, either at the front line or behind the front line. Safiye Hüseyin brought another perspective to the debate by telling that women could not be in the military, because women were peaceful. Aliye Esad, who was general secretary of the UTW at that time, approached the question from a nationalist angle and suggested that if those who granted the political rights to women asked them to join the army, they would rush to do so with heart and soul.¹⁷⁷

On 12 December 1934, the Ankara radio station broadcasted a conference on the issue of conscription of women. Women speakers addressed the audience as “Daughters of Atatürk, Turkish women” and then addressed Atatürk in a mystifying manner: “Atatürk, we have one more wish about national affairs. We want to be soldiers [...] Atatürk, when will you give us this?”¹⁷⁸

Two days later, on 14 December 1934, the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* published a survey about the conscription of women. Respondents had agreed that women could and should serve behind front lines. Moreover, single responses reveal social perceptions of gender equality. One of the respondents stated that women had already served in the military as soldiers during the Independence War. Another one, a doctor, argued that women were not able to serve in the military as soldiers, because military service would harm fertility. According to him, women’s duty instead was to rear robust children. Another woman asked: if women were soldiers, who would rear the soldiers? That respondent also stated that if necessary, women should only serve behind the front line. Similarly, another woman respondent stated that it was better if women reared good soldiers.¹⁷⁹ The only conclusion that can be drawn from the responses is that biology determined the social identity of women and women were, before anything else, considered as mothers of the nation.

Since any political action and the whole media were under the strict control of the one-party regime, the way the debate about the conscription of women evolved becomes interesting. It could have never happened without approval from the top. Hence, it would not be wrong to suggest that the whole debate was an attempt from above to gauge public opinion. Still it is possible to argue that the press more or less reflected the social agenda.¹⁸⁰ In this framework, considering the main themes and debates which took place in popular press at that time can be illuminating for exploring general perceptions about gender patterns.

¹⁷⁷ **Akşam**, 9 Kanunuevvel (December) 1934, 7.

¹⁷⁸ **Ulus**, 12 İlkkanun (December) 1934, 5.

¹⁷⁹ **Cumhuriyet**, 14 Birincikanun (December) 1934, 1; 5.

¹⁸⁰ Ayşegül Yaraman, **Türkiye’de Kadınların Siyasal Temsili**, Bağlam Yayınları, İstanbul, 1999, 77.

4.2. The Public Discussion about Women

4.2.1. The Masculinized Women

One of the most persistent themes of the public discussion about gender patterns was the fear of “masculinization” of women which dominated the public discourse for over a decade.

This was a kind of sensitivity peculiar to post-war societies, where throughout the war years, due to the replacement of a male workforce by a female workforce in all sectors of social and economic life, the psychosexual balance of social roles changed. Hence, a German doctor, Albert Moll, argued in a textbook that the degeneration of fertility caused the masculinization of women. In a similar manner, the French scientist Huot supported the same argument in a scientific article published in *Mercure de France*. In the article, he described new types of women. He used the term masculinization and warned society against a moral crisis which would cause a mixture of the existing sexes.¹⁸¹

In 1931, on the pages of *Aile Dostu* (Friend of Family), Selim Sırrı dealt with the same issue, also using the term *erkekleşme* (masculinization). He suggested that the women needed to set up a social environment for their own intellectual, psychological and physical development, in accordance with their aptitude and ability. However, that should not threaten the existing gender order, because according to him a masculinized woman would be just as miserable as a feminized man. He argued: “Our women should prove themselves in science, literature and in industry. However, the main duty awaits them at home [...] we want to see them as enlightened mothers in the first place; being an enlightened mother requires hard work”.¹⁸²

In 1936, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın complained that women, while competing with men in social life, had almost transformed into men sentimentally. He argued that while women of the past were poetic and unapproachable, modern women (due to the equality of the sexes) adopted men’s feelings. That, according to him, even penetrated love, which was not appealing and powerful anymore.¹⁸³ Later he would define the lost type of woman as the “romantic woman” and therefore the old type of love as “romantic love”.¹⁸⁴

Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar dealt with the same subject in his short play *Kadın*

¹⁸¹ Süheyla Kadioğlu, **20. Yüzyıl ve Kadın, Batı Ülkelerinde Kadın Hareketleri**, Gri Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2005, 83–84.

¹⁸² Selim Sırrı, “Kadınların Hakkı”, *Aile Dostu*, No.1 (Şubat 1931), 7.

¹⁸³ Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Değişen Kadın”, *Yedigün*, Sayı: 158, 1936, 5.

¹⁸⁴ Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Kadınlar Hakkında bir Telakki”, *Yedigün*, Sayı: 585, 1944, 4.

Erkekleşince (When Women were Masculinized), dated 1968. He claimed, especially in the last scene of the play, that masculinization of women, and thus confusion of the gender roles, led to moral anarchy and then social anarchy. According to Gürpınar, competition with men estranged women from both marriage and motherhood, i.e., from childbearing and childrearing, which he considered women's most important social duty towards the homeland. Furthermore, he suggested that a nation would survive only by means of harmony between husband and wife. When necessary, he wrote, women were welcome to perform men's duties, but on the condition that they did not confuse their own gender role.¹⁸⁵

Each of the contributors argued that the reforms related to emancipation had caused a masculinization of women. While the emancipation of women was something desirable as a prerequisite of modernization, any change in gender roles was undesirable. The modernization of women destabilized men's gender identities as well.

The fact that many articles appeared in the press in those years promoting marriage can be considered in this framework. In fact, the subject of the "bachelor's tax" was one of the most heated debates in the popular press. A popular magazine *Asrın Kadını* (The Women of the Age)¹⁸⁶ conducted a survey among female university students about the bachelor's tax. The students agreed that such taxation would be improper, because according to them every single girl eventually had the will to marry. However, they argued, it was true that higher education and work life estranged women from marriage.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, the same magazine published an article in one of the following issues about "bachelor's insurance", which as reported had been put into practice in the United States. According to the article, bachelorhood was a matter of risk just like an accident or death.¹⁸⁸

4.2.2. Classification of Women

Classifying women according to the classes to which they (in fact their fathers or husbands) belonged and their lifestyles was popular in those years. It was done on the one hand to reveal the disparity between the excessive modernization of the high-class women and the authenticity and the moderate modernization of the middle or lower-middle class women. On

¹⁸⁵ Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, **Kadın Erkekleşince**, Atlas Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1968, 79–80.

¹⁸⁶ **Asrın Kadını**, "Kadınlarımıza Soruyoruz", Cilt: 1, Sayı: 1 (Haziran 1944), 12.

¹⁸⁷ See also "Bekârlık Vergisi: çok çocukları da dinleyelim", **Cumhuriyet**, 22 March 1929; Yunus Nadi, "Bekârlık Vergisi", **Cumhuriyet**, 31 March 1929 (cited in Duben-Behar, footnote 43, pg. 104).

¹⁸⁸ Fethi Kaçel, "Bekârlık Sigortası", **Asrın Kadını**, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 3, 1944, 3.

the other hand, the aim was to exhibit an ideal.

In 1937, *Resimli Ay* (Illustrated Monthly) published an article, probably written by Sabiha Zekeriye Sertel, dealing with such a classification. According to the article, women in Turkey were composed of four different groups: The women of the high stratum, the women of Kadıköy-Suadiye, the women of Ankara and the women of Anatolia and Thrace. The first two were quite similar to each other with respect to the fact that those women were unaware of the political and the cultural reforms and had no role in the family rather than a consumer of luxurious goods. The only difference was that while the first group of women was more westernized, the second group of women maintained the oriental image, namely the image of an oriental princess. The women of Ankara were defined as examples of Turkish mothers and Turkish women in the full sense. They were described as elegant, pure in external appearance, and chaste. Yet, they were not uplifted enough to follow the social and intellectual movements. Instead, they were seen as capable of sustaining a home, which was the most important duty of a wife or a mother in the article. The women of Anatolia and Thrace were those who worked either in the factories or in the fields.¹⁸⁹

In 1944, another popular magazine, *Türk Kadını* (The Turkish Woman) published another classification by Muzaffer Sezer. According to the classification, women comprised three different groups. In the first group, were the women who through high social status of their fathers or husbands could get education and improve their intellectual traits. Those intellectual women were supposed to educate good children. The second group of women was the housewives who resided in cities or in towns. They were relatively well-educated, but were still expected to take care of their husbands and their children. The third group was peasant women, who were regarded in the article as the basis of the Turkish Republic. However, they were in need of education in order to give a proper education to their children.¹⁹⁰ In fact, what is so striking is that such a policy argumentation had taken place on the pages of *Türk Kadını*, which was the bulletin of the Board for Protection of Children (*Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*). The editor of the magazine was Fuat Umay, presented in *Türk Kadını* both as the head of the Board for Protection of Children and as the deputy of Kırklareli in the National Assembly. Additionally, he was among the founders of the Benevolence Association.

In the following year, the same author, Dr. Muzaffer Sezer, would assert the place of women in society as follows: “Today women are not in the secondary position; they are

¹⁸⁹ **Resimli Ay**, “Türk Kadını Meselesi”, No: 12 Şubat 1937, 1-4.

¹⁹⁰ Muzaffer Sezer, “Cumhuriyet Devrinde Kadın Politikamız”, **Türk Kadını**, Cilt 1., Sayı: 8, 1944, 5.

fellows of and friends to men. Nevertheless, we should admit that it is not possible in the whole world to get rid of the egoism of men, so women have nothing to do but to accept this as a matter of nature and regulate their relations accordingly. Except the very limited number of women who are in work life because of economic reasons, the rest of women have to accomplish their plans for the future and to work at home”.¹⁹¹ In 1947, a scientific article by Nermin Abadan Unat titled “Working Women and Marriage” appeared in *Çalışma* (Work). The article in some respect was a response to the ongoing discussion about women’s genuine role in society and the compatibility of work with domestic duties. After repeating the fact that women in large numbers had started to work during the First War years, Abadan Unat reminded readers that those women had not abandoned their domestic duties. Still, according to her, those women met with a sort of social intolerance.¹⁹² According to Abadan Unat, since marriage did not have either a positive or a negative effect on men with respect to work, hence, it would be improper to treat it as a subject matter as related to women. Moreover, since the modern organization of social life supplanted women’s past roles as domestic worker, mother, and teacher and so on, middle class women had more spare time to enjoy life. They should use their time by working for the sake of the development of society.¹⁹³ Actually, Nermin Abadan was among those women who benefited from the *opportunity space* Kemalist reforms created¹⁹⁴ to have a university education and to get a profession. In her memoir, she tells about her achievement and praises Kemalism for realizing equality between men and women. She, in person, exemplifies what Kemalist reforms had provided women; nevertheless, in the face of the public opinion her voice was quite alone.

4.2.3. Motherhood

As mentioned above, the whole debate was more or less focused on women’s ultimate and principal role, the motherhood. Motherhood was seen as part of the framework of national ideals, which designated the limits of women’s emancipation.

In an article titled “The Girls of Today”, which appeared in the newspaper *Ulus*, girls were described as more self confident, free to practice a profession, socially active and

¹⁹¹ Muzaffer Sezer, “Bugünkü Hayat Şartlarına Göre Kadın Nasıl Olmalıdır?”, *Türk Kadını*, Cilt: 2, Sayı: 1, 1945, 4.

¹⁹² Nermin Abadan, “Çalışan Kadın ve Evlilik”, *Çalışma*, Sayı: 12 (Şubat 1947): 16.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 17.

¹⁹⁴ Yeşim Arat, “1980’ler Türkiye’inde Kadın Hareketi: Liberal Kemalizmin Radikal Uzantısı”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, Sayı: 53, (Bahar 1991): 79.

fashionable than in the past. Towards the end, it was argued that girls could only be sorry because of the fact that they were not born male.¹⁹⁵ What the article meant was different indeed, but it was certainly true that not being born male was the main reason women were not yet liberated. In 1944, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın dealt with the same issue and complained about the rakish manners of the girls at that time. Still, he was sure that they would eventually become caring mothers and devoted wives. As he stated, men could trust modern women.¹⁹⁶ The role of women as mothers was inarguable, since motherhood, as expressed several times, was the true and primary duty of women towards society.¹⁹⁷ In this respect, the magazine *Türk Kadını* (The Turkish Woman) represented the climax of the reciprocity of biology and nationalism by arguing that women as biological and social reproducers were the basis of the organism called ‘nation’ or ‘homeland.’¹⁹⁸

4.2.4. Home

The nationalist appropriation of women¹⁹⁹ into the Republic was bringing another social institution forth: the Home. In Gökalp’s solidarist model of society, the home had become the basis of the national social order. This idea was expressed in a very striking manner in the editorial of *Ev-İş* (Home-Work) by Tahsin Demiray as follows: “We established a Republican, nationalist, reformist, populist, étatist and secular regime. This exceptional revolutionary regime is the guarantee of Turkish society both for the present and for the future [...] the regime stands on the society and vice versa and [...] both of them stands on the home, which is and will be the basis of all of the reforms, the Republic and the society.”²⁰⁰ In one of the following issues, the magazine showed the interior of the home. As it can be seen below, the imagined woman in that home, “the woman of the reform (*inkılap kadını*)”, was neither more than a cushion pattern, nor was expected to embroider that cushion pattern for her veteran father.

¹⁹⁵ **Ulus**, “Bugünün Genç Kızları”, 17.1.1939.

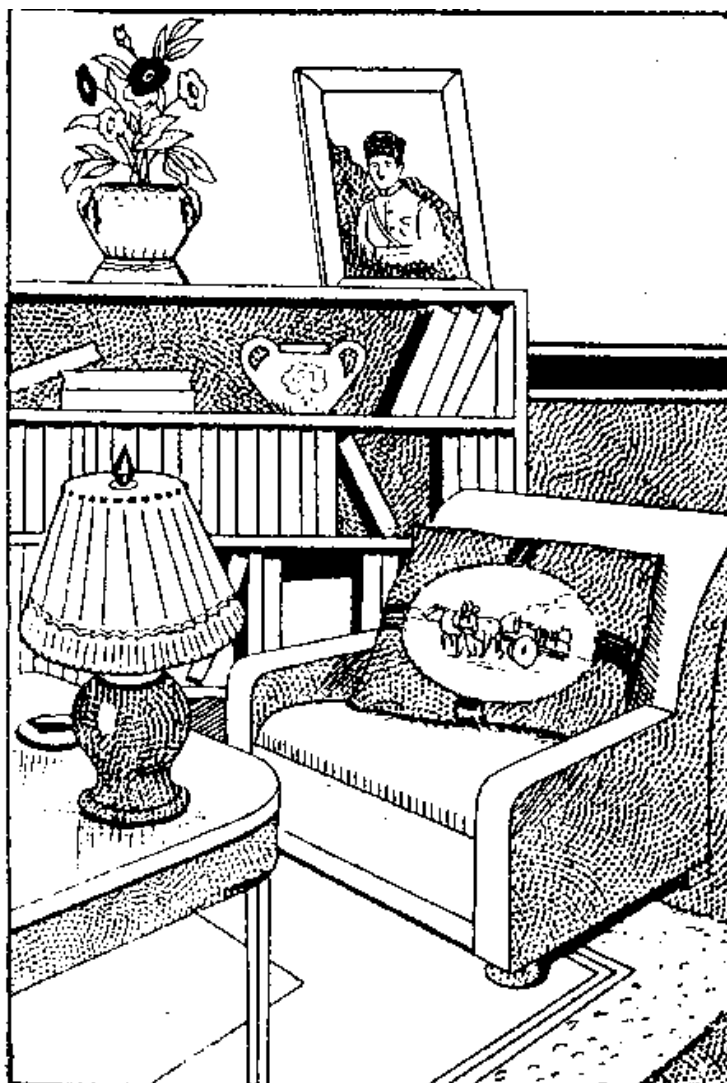
¹⁹⁶ Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Modern Kadınlarımız”, **Yedigün**, Sayı: 586, 1944, 4; 17.

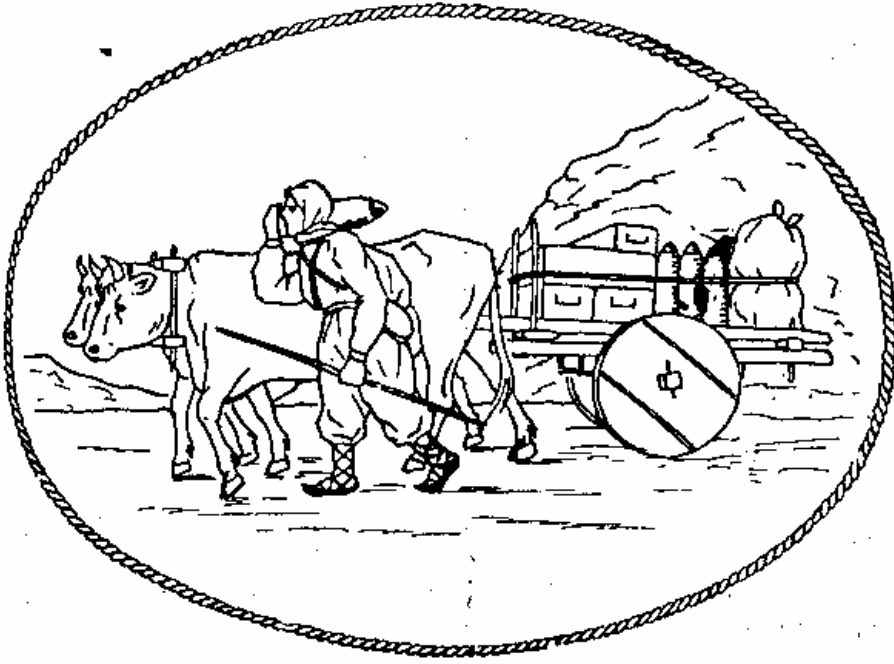
¹⁹⁷ **Asrın Kadını**, “Niçin Çıkıyoruz”, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 1, 1944, 1–2.

¹⁹⁸ Tarhan Toker, “Anne Kadın”, **Türk Kadını**, Cilt: 3, Sayı: 1, 1946, 3.

¹⁹⁹ It is in fact patriarchal appropriation of women, which “includes not only that of women’s labor, but all aspects of women from their sexuality to psychological care” (Colette Guillaumin, “The practice and Power of Belief in Nature, Part 1: The Appropriation of Women”, **Feminist Issues**, Vol.1, No.2, 1981, cited in Sylvia Walby, **Theorizing Patriarchy**, Blackwell, Oxford, 1998, 175). In this respect, it can be extended to refer to collective appropriation of women (Danielle Juteau, Nicole Laurin, “Nuns in the Labor Force: A Neglected Contribution”, **Feminist Issues**, fall, 1986, cited in Walby, 175).

²⁰⁰ Tahsin Demiray, “Niçin Ev-İş?”, **Ev-İş**, Sayı: 1, 1937, 1.





The text below explained how to apply the cushion pattern and furthermore presented the intrinsic gender agenda as follows: “Here we provide one of the models that every Turkish girl will gladly embroider. The model, which lively demonstrates the heroic efforts of the Turkish women in the Independence War, would adorn the armchair in which your veteran father takes a rest every day.”²⁰¹

Within this framework, it would not be improper to associate the home, as the basis of the regime and the society, with the *Pembe Köşk*. Indeed, as mentioned in the book *Mevhibe*, the *Pembe Köşk* was the first to implement modernizing reforms; the household of the *Pembe Köşk* was emblematic of the reforms. However, as soon as a mission as the role model ended, they closed the door and could live briefly as a simple, ordinary and happy family. Similarly, despite the compulsory reformer role, Mevhibe Hanım somehow could remain the same woman as before. While managing a harmonious family life, she could preserve her beliefs and traditions as well.²⁰²

Social responsibilities Mevhibe Hanım held also necessitated further social activities, which contributed to the gender regime as well as the identity construction of Mevhibe Hanım as a role model.

²⁰¹ Ev-İş, “Milli Elişi Örnekleri: 5, İnkılâp Kadını (Yastık)”, Sayı: 9, 1937, 5.

²⁰² Gülsün Bilgehan, *Mevhibe II, Çankaya’nın Hanımefendisi*, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 1998, 35.

4.3. Public Missions of Mevhibe Hanım

4.3.1. The Benevolence Association (Yardımsevenler Derneği)

Yardımsevenler Derneği (the Benevolence Association) was founded in 1928 by the initiative of Fuat Umay who, as mentioned above, was the deputy of Kırklareli in the National Assembly and the head of the Board for Protection of Children (*Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*). On 29 January 1928, he called the women of Ankara to found an association to protect and support poor women who had become much poorer during the war years. He thought that any kind of support of women, in other words, of mothers, would reach children too. The association had its first meeting in *Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti* (the former name of the Board for Protection of Children) on 19 February 1928 and took the name of *Himaye-i Etfal Kadın Yardım Cemiyeti* (the Women Benevolence Association of Protection of Children).²⁰³ Mevhibe Hanım was among the participants and became the honorary president of the association. Among other participants were Fuat Bey and the wife of Fuat Umay, wife of Celal Bayar, Tezer Taşkıran and the wife of the Minister of Justice.²⁰⁴ The founding members comprised: Dr. Fuat (Umay), Mevhibe (İnönü), Fitnat (Çakmak), Nevber (Sevüktekin), Reşide (Bayar), Nimet (Uybadın), Melahat (Özbudun), Tezer (Taşkıran), Seza (Lostar), Süreyya (Ağaoğlu), Sevda (And) and Belkıs (Odman).²⁰⁵ The organization's goals included: establishing workshops, opening libraries and classrooms, providing free medical examinations, employing women with children, providing poor women with midwives, and accommodating children of working women in the nursery of the Board. The association differentiated itself from classical philanthropic organizations by introducing the principle of "labor for assistance".²⁰⁶

Despite the fact that the association was known by the public as the Association of Assistance for Poor Women, it is hard to find any single document to verify the name²⁰⁷ except the letter of Atatürk. Atatürk objected to the name of the association and expressed his criticism in 1938 by a letter as follows:

"Poor woman implies woman with nothing. However, woman is naturally an eminent being. Poverty cannot be attached to woman. To denominate woman as poor means to claim poverty

²⁰³ Türkiye Yardım Sevenler Derneği, *70 Yılım Öyküsü, Türkiye Yardım Sevenler Derneği, 1928–1998*, Mars Ticaret ve Sanayi A.Ş. Ankara, 1999, 11.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 14.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 1.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 16.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, iv.

of the whole humanity that spread out of her. That could have been possible if humanity was so. With respect to the fact that woman reared the person who works, meets with success, becomes rich in all senses, would it be proper to describe her poor ?”

Thus, Atatürk gave an order and the name of the association changed to the Benevolence Association, which has existed until the present.²⁰⁸ Today, a statue of Atatürk stands in front of the main building of the association in Ankara. On the statue, a caption of the letter of Atatürk is presented: “Poverty cannot be attached to woman. Woman is naturally an eminent being”.

Except the periods when İsmet İnönü was not in power, Mevhibe İnönü was always in close contact with the association. She attended all meetings and activities. Her presence and activities in the association would reach its climax during the period of *Milli Şef* (National Leader). In a general framework, Mevhibe İnönü appeared as the emblem of the common concerns of national solidarity and development. She in a sense was a revolutionary symbol of women’s contribution to national defense.²⁰⁹

4.3.2. The Union of Turkish Women (UTW) (Türk Kadınlar Birliği)

“The International Union of Women” (IUW) held its 12th international congress in İstanbul in April 1935. The UTW hosted the conference; however, its hospitality would come to an interesting end. The UTW, founded in 1924, declared its abolition at the end of the conference. Latife Bekir Çeyrekbaşı, the head of the Union, announced the abolition by a farewell speech and added that since the new regime granted all rights of women, there was no need for a women’s organization; the former members of the union could take part in other charitable organizations.²¹⁰ As Toprak stated and as Zihnioğlu emphasized, the ‘top’ had decreed the abolition of the Union.²¹¹ Although between 1924 and 1934 transformation of women’s status was accomplished by the state, the state at the same discouraged women from taking any autonomous political initiative.²¹²

In the spring of 1949, the UTW was established for the second time, with the goals of protecting the rights given by Atatürk to women, upraising women culturally, and developing

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 21.

²⁰⁹ Zehra Celasın, **Tarih Boyunca Kadın**, Ülkü Kitap Yurdu, İstanbul, 1946, 6.

²¹⁰ Zihnioğlu, 257–258.

²¹¹ Ibid, 258, Zafer Toprak, “1935 Uluslararası ‘Feminizm Kongresi’ ve ‘Barış’”, **Düşün**, (Mart 1986), *passim*.

²¹² Nermin Abadan-Unat, Oya Tokgöz, “Turkish Women as Agents of Social Change in a Pluralist Democracy”, **Women and Politics Worldwide**, Barbara J. Nelson, Najma Chowdhury (eds.), Yale University Press, New Haven, 1994: 709; Kandiyoti, “End of Empire...”, 41.

women's understanding of democratic rights and responsibilities. Mevhibe İnönü was the honorary president of the Union. Founding members comprised: Latife Bekir Çeyrekbaşı, deputy of İzmir in the Assembly; Dr. Makbule Dilan, deputy of Seyhan; Mebrure Aksoley, deputy of Ankara; Kamile Erim, wife of Nihat Erim; Neriman Sirer; Aliye Beyazıt; Lamia Fenmen; Mediha Eldem;²¹³ and Nacile Biran. The founders announced the program and emphasized that the Union would be beyond party politics and act to assemble Turkish women. They visited İsmet İnönü, the National Leader; he promised to support the Union and expressed his wishes for success. Thus, after the Benevolence Association, Mevhibe Hanım began to contribute to another of the biggest women's actions of the Republican era.²¹⁴

Below is a scene from a briefing by İffet Halim Oruz. Over the women's shoulders, *Artemis*, the virgin Greek goddess of the hunt, wild animals, healing, wilderness, chastity and childbirth, seems to observe the clumsy steps of the new women of the Republic.



In June 1949, the RPP undertook to establish separate women's branches. In the petition to the head administrative council of the RPP, T. Fikret Sılay, RPP secretary general, explained that since women had to spend their time mostly at home, they could not participate

²¹³ Mediha Eldem (1906-1975) is among the first women physicians of the Republican period of Turkey. Beyond her valuable contribution to the field of gynecology, she was also appreciated for her social works (Berna Arda, "30'lular Kuşağının Önemli Bir Temsilcisi: Dr. Mediha Eldem", **Ankara Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Mecmuası**, Cilt 55, Sayı 2, 2002, 109-110). She was the head of the Benevolence Association between 1948 and 1975. Additionally, Eldem helped found many associations. The street where the Benevolence Association existed has named after her Mediha Eldem Street by the Municipality of Ankara.

²¹⁴ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe II**, 149.

in party politics; so women's branches were expected to gather women to discuss RPP politics regarding conditions of women.²¹⁵ The first article of the statute attached to the petition stressed the equality between men and women and stated the role of the branches as to proliferate the ideology of the party among women and to provide social services. Article 8 reserved the administrative counsel's right to abolish any branch in case of social dissatisfaction or any decay in family life, which was seen as the basis of the society.²¹⁶ In other words, on the eve of democracy, the RPP was officially specifying woman's primary duty as her domestic and maternal duties and limiting women's political activity to social activities and voting.

5. İsmet İnönü, National Leader (Milli Şef) and Years of the Second World War - Reproduction of Identity Construction of Mevhibe İnönü as the Role Model (1938-1950)

On 10 November 1938, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk died in İstanbul of ongoing health problems. The next day, on the 11th of November, the National Assembly elected İsmet İnönü as the second president of the Republic.²¹⁷ In December 1938, the RPP held an extraordinary congress and by a statute change made Atatürk as the "eternal party chairman" and İsmet İnönü as the "permanent party chairman". Atatürk had already been made the "permanent party chairman" by the statute of 1927. Making İsmet İnönü the "permanent party chairman" would mark a continuation in the regime.²¹⁸ Therefore, İsmet İnönü would be referred to as the new national leader and this phrase gave its name to the period until 1950.²¹⁹ Although the second extraordinary congress of RPP on 10 May 1946 abolished the position of "permanent party chairman", it would not be wrong to extend the period until 1950. As Koçak argued, the years between 1946 and 1950 can be regarded as a transition period when national leadership vanished gradually.²²⁰

After Atatürk's death, there had been speculation over whether the reforms would persist and even whether the regime would endure.²²¹ The speculations were mainly about the reforms regarding adoption of the Latin alphabet and women's rights. In his first speech as the second president of the Republic, İsmet İnönü answered those speculations and declared that

²¹⁵ BDA-CA, BCHPK: 490.01: 188847.

²¹⁶ BDA-CA, BCHPK: 490,01: 94615.

²¹⁷ Zürcher, 192.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 193; Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938–1945)*, Yurt Yayınevi, Ankara, 1986, 67.

²¹⁹ Koçak, 67.

²²⁰ Cemil Koçak, "Tek Parti Yönetimi, Kemalizm ve Şeflik Sistemi: Ebedi Şef/ Milli Şef", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Kemalizm*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, 380.

²²¹ Koçak, *Milli Şef Dönemi*, 59; Zürcher, 193.

he would defend all the reforms.²²² The next day Yunus Nadi wrote in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* that he would not hesitate to call İsmet İnönü “the second Atatürk”.²²³ İnönü defended and promoted republican reforms and contributed authoritarian and charismatic leadership to the regime until 1945. Hence, the years between 1938 and 1950 mark the reproduction and reshape of the Kemalism.²²⁴ Mevhibe İnönü maintained her identity as role model within the one-party regime of the post-1938 years with special attention to highlighting a modern woman figure of the Republic.

5.1. Mevhibe Hanım as the Pioneer of National Fashion

Mevhibe Hanım had appeared without a headscarf first in the ball in 1927 and from then on became the pioneer of modern fashion in the Republic. She had a special interest in fashion. Özden Toker suggested, “My mother was interested [in fashion], for example she ordered models or sometimes dresses from ambassadors from abroad”.²²⁵ She had been able to establish a style of her own. Araz describes how she was perceived at the time in Ankara: “Mevhibe Hanım in those years was the focus of fashion for the women of the new Republic. [She was] not only the focus of fashion, but also of respect and elegance”.²²⁶ This was because the fashion of Mevhibe Hanım, as Araz put it, was based on simplicity. In other words: “She was always fashionable and elegant but never dressy. Her hats, her handbags, her gloves were always selective and well-matched. Her hairstyle, her make-up and her perfume were the expression of a clear conscience and an inner balance”.²²⁷

In later years, especially as from 1930s, the İsmet Pasha Institute for Girls started to sew dresses of Mevhibe Hanım.²²⁸ Araz confirms this and further suggests that it was known well by the public: “İsmet Pasha Institute for Girls used to make her dresses. The women of Ankara talked about whatever she wore as if it was a big event. I remember what my mother often said: ‘So simple and so fashionable at the same time, but how?’”²²⁹

İsmet Pasha Institute for Girls was the successor of the Industrial Schools for Girls, which had been opened up first in 1865. The aim was to educate daughters of the Republic as trained housewives. The schools were supposed to serve the national ideals in the general

²²² Koçak, *Milli Şef Dönemi*, 59

²²³ Yunus Nadi, “Atatürk ve İsmet İnönü”, *Cumhuriyet*, 12.11.1938, cited in Koçak, *Milli Şef Dönemi*, 60.

²²⁴ Koçak, “Tek Parti Yönetimi..”, 123.

²²⁵ Interview, 17–18.

²²⁶ Nezihe Araz, *Mustafa Kemal’in Ankara’sı*, Dünya Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1998, 11.

²²⁷ Ibid, 91.

²²⁸ Bilgehan, *Mevhibe II*, 50.

²²⁹ Araz, 91.

framework of social solidarity.²³⁰ After the İsmet Pasha Institute for Girls was founded in Ankara in 1927, other schools followed it in different cities. The schools were open to all girls who completed primary education. The education was based on a five-year program which included two departments of vocational training, as well, which started in 1933. These departments were fashion-flower making (ornament and decoration) and dressmaking.²³¹

At that time, İsmet İnönü was regarded as the father of these institutes.²³² The fact that Mevhibe İnönü did not order her dresses from abroad but instead had her dresses sewn at the institutes was indicative of her support as a role model of the institutes and their ideals. Additionally, she appeared at the exhibitions and events organized by the institutes. A photograph showing Mevhibe Hanım with her daughter Özden examining handiworks at one of the institutes' annual exhibitions was granted much space in the pages of *Kadın-Ev* (Woman-Home), the bulletin of the İsmet Pasha Institute for Girls.²³³

Hasan Ali Yücel, at the time the Minister of Education, explained the ideals of the institutes on the pages of *Kadın-Ev*. According to him, the Republican educational system was very much concerned with making the Turkish woman in all parts of the country—from cities to far-off villages—a housewife, a mother, a fellow to her husband, and a respectable woman. Therefore, the institutes for girls, the evening craft schools for girls and village classes for women were the instruments of a mass education campaign.²³⁴ As it can be seen, the final goal of the Ministry of Education was to educate and train girls and women who lacked opportunity to have higher education or profession as functioning elements of an idealized solidarist society.

In 1944, the İsmet Pasha Institute for Girls had an exhibition at the International İzmir Exposition. The magazine *Asrın Kadını* reported the exhibition with the headline “the New Turkish Fashion at the İzmir Exposition” and presented photographs of its pavilion. It described “the Turkish Fashion” as follows: “The national costume of Turkish woman was made up-to-date in the workshops of the İsmet Pasha Institute for Girls [...] they were adapted to the fashion of today. Even old Turkish motifs were used to create new silver-gilt thread motifs. By this means a new Turkish fashion has been invented”. With respect to whether it was adoptable, the magazine mentioned the women who in recent years started to appear in those costumes. The national fashion had already become very popular in Ankara,

²³⁰ Akşit, *passim*.

²³¹ (<http://ktogm.meb.gov.tr/Dosyalar/Tarihcel.html>).

²³² Akşit, 164.

²³³ “Sergiler”, *Kadın Ev*, Sayı: 1, 1943, 4-5.

²³⁴ Hasan Ali Yücel, *Kadın Ev*, Sayı: 1, 1943, 1.

according to the magazine. As it was reported, in a ball in Ankara, about fifty women wore such costumes and met with great admiration by all.²³⁵

Mevhibe Hanım also wore such costumes at similar occasions. It is possible to find examples of these in the album published by the İnönü Foundation. The album, titled: “Mevhibe, an Exemplary Woman of the Republic”, presents chronologically the dresses which she wore²³⁶. Even the dresses she wore even in her daily life exemplified the style she invented, which defined national fashion. In this respect, as Araz stated, for many years Mevhibe Hanım had acted as source of good manners; she had been a lively model for Turkish women.²³⁷

5.2. the Second World War (1939-1945) and Identity Construction as a Nurse

The Second World War between 1939 and 1945 overwhelmed much of the world, resulting in massive destruction, immense suffering and mass civilian death as well as military death. The war eventually sparked fundamental political and social changes all over the world.

By means of a highly controversial diplomatic policy, İsmet İnönü managed to keep Turkey out of the war.²³⁸ Yet the foreign policy of the war years led to controversy not only in international affairs, but also in domestic affairs, which were largely dependent on the international political situation. The main controversy was over economic deterioration. In addition to increased defense expenses, breakdown both in the balance of exports and imports and in the distribution of goods and income had led to an economic bottleneck.²³⁹ Eventually, people’s dissatisfaction superseded the relatively ambitious mood of the early years of the Republic and obliterated RPP’s power, bringing the Democratic Party into power in 1950.

As was in the case in World War I, women took part in the war in great numbers, both by replacing men in the workplace and by serving behind the front lines. However, since the Second World War was the only true war which engulfed the whole globe, war conditions demanded much more of women’s participation. In addition to paid work and voluntary services at hospitals or nurseries, women also took part in the army in Britain and the USSR.²⁴⁰ Since Turkey did not face direct aggression, conscription of women did not become

²³⁵ “İzmir Fuarında Yeni Bir Türk Kadın Modası”, *Asrın Kadını*, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 4, 1944, 6-7.

²³⁶ Gülsün Bilgehan, *Örnek Bir Cumhuriyet Kadını Mevhibe İnönü*, T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, Ankara, 1996.

²³⁷ Araz, 91.

²³⁸ Zürcher, 214.

²³⁹ Koçak, *Milli Şef Dönemi*, 244–247.

²⁴⁰ Kadioğlu, 250–260.

an issue in the war years. However, nationalist appropriation of women was at hand in the sense of nationalist and ideological mobilization.

On 27 April 1941, in the newspaper *Ulus*, Übeyde Elli, on behalf of the Benevolence Association, called women to work in the service of the country. She put forward three areas of service: 1. Preparing tourniquets and other sanitary materials in the depot of the Ministry of National Defense. 2. Sewing clothes for military hospitals in the Sanitary Institute of the Ministry of Health. 3. Attending the nursing course that would take place in Cebeci Hospital. In the newspaper, Mevhibe Hanım was also reported to have prepared tourniquets in the depot of the Ministry of Defense. The newspaper published a photograph of Mevhibe Hanım on the first page while she was making a tourniquet; together with a photograph of the tourniquet, she made.²⁴¹ That photograph, published by several newspapers, afterwards became one of the symbolic expressions of the war years.²⁴²



²⁴¹ Übeyde Elli, “Türk Kadınının Orduya Yardımları”, *Ulus*, 27 April 1941, 1,4.

²⁴² *Kadın Gazetesi*, 1 March 1947, Türkiye Yardımsevenler Derneği, 23.

On 3 May 1941, the newspaper *Ulus* announced the opening of the nursing and sewing course, sponsored by the Benevolence Association. The news reported the attendance of Mevhibe Hanım.²⁴³ On the next day, a call to women by Mevhibe Hanım was published on the first page of *Ulus*.²⁴⁴

CALL FOR DUTY TO TURKISH WOMEN

Turkish Woman;

We are in such conditions that the Turkish country demands from each individual more than the daily endeavor.

These are the days which inspire consciousness and activity in women and men, in the whole nation.

Turkish woman stands always next to the man as his fellow. It is again time to bring a light to this eternal feature. The Benevolence Association provides you with opportunities and stands ready to be a guide to you, first in Ankara to be a voluntary nurse in the service of national defense, to service at military hospitals at various ranks, to prepare and to sew the material which the army needs.

There exist similar opportunities in every city.

I am calling all Turkish women to be beneficial in social life and to be ready for national service.

Mevhibe İnönü

Mobilization of women by the Benevolence Association continued in 1944 through the voluntary communication course at Post, Telephone and Telegraph Administration.²⁴⁵ Mevhibe Hanım attended the inauguration and followed the first lecture.²⁴⁶

Meanwhile, in 1944, series of earthquakes struck Bolu, Gerede, Düzce and Çerkeş. İsmet İnönü visited the seriously affected areas²⁴⁷. Mevhibe Hanım accompanied him during

²⁴³ *Ulus*, 3 May 1941, 2.

²⁴⁴ *Ulus*, 4 May 1941, 1.

²⁴⁵ Türkiye Yardım Sevenler Derneği, 24.

²⁴⁶ Bilgehan, *Mevhibe II*, 94–95.

²⁴⁷ Due the fact that those were the years of economic deterioration and social dissatisfaction under a one-party regime, the authoritarian rule of the party—in other words, that of the national leader—was the main political instrument at the time. Promulgation of the personality cult of İsmet İnönü as the national leader was part of the authoritarian rule. The fate of a photograph which had been taken during İsmet İnönü's visit to the areas struck

the trip. Soon after returning to Ankara Mevhibe Hanım applied to the course to become a voluntary nurse. A few months later, in May, she received “the certificate number one” in the graduation ceremony. During the ceremony, members of the Benevolence Association expressed their gratitude to Mevhibe Hanım, “the nurse number one”, “the greatest woman of the nation”, “symbol of virtue and sympathy,” and “the founder of the Association”. Later, during the ceremony, Mevhibe Hanım delivered the voluntary nurse graduates their certificates.²⁴⁸

The press consolidated her identity construction as the nurse. For instance, the magazine *Asrın Kadını* (Woman of the Age) published an article about the School of Nursing. In the article, the magazine mentioned Mevhibe Hanım as “the nurse number one” and presented the photograph of her with a nurse cap on her head.²⁴⁹ Moreover, an actual incident would crystallize the nurse image more than the initial appraisal. The newspaper *Ulus* published a photograph on the first page that had been taken while Mevhibe Hanım was treating a young teacher who was one of the victims of the earthquake. The next day T.İ. and Sabahattin Sönmez mentioned the photograph in their columns in *Ulus*. Immediately after, the monthly magazine *Türk Kadını* (the Turkish Woman) allocated some pages to that photograph and the two articles. In the article written by anonymous T.İ., Mevhibe Hanım had been reported to treat the patient with tenderness of a mother. According to T.İ., all mothers and nurses should have taken her as a model.²⁵⁰ Similarly, Sabahattin Sönmez had mentioned Mevhibe İnönü with great respect: “We knew the mother who was treating the patient with tenderness and sympathy. She was Mevhibe İnönü, who always had been a model for Turkish women”.²⁵¹

During the war, scarcity of paper afflicted all publishers, which had to buy the paper from the state. Thus, the newspapers and magazines had no choice but to remove pages for

by the earthquake, exemplifies the way the personality cult was perpetuated. It was a photograph of İsmet İnönü with an old woman, who was leaning to him with sorrow as he held her with his arm. The photograph appeared in the press to highlight the popular leadership of the president. However, the opposition interpreted it just the opposite, because İsmet İnönü had smiled. The same photograph appeared on Red Crescent stamps in the same year, but this time without a smile on İnönü’s face. Instead, probably by using the most advanced technological apparatuses, a sad expression had been put on his face. In the first year of the multiparty regime, in 1946, the stamp was published again. Apparently, somebody must have hesitated whether to publish the former version or the latter version. Eventually, the stamp was published as two versions: the smiling version and the sad version. (Burak Filateli A.Ş., **Pullarla İsmet İnönü**, Burak Filateli A.Ş., İstanbul, 1996, 89-90).

²⁴⁸ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe II**, 91–92.

²⁴⁹ **Asrın Kadını**, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 5, 1944, 5.

²⁵⁰ T.İ., “Bir Numaralı Hemşire”, **Türk Kadını**, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 2, 1944, 5.

²⁵¹ Sabahattin Sönmez, “Türk Kadınına Verilen Bir Ders”, **Türk Kadını**, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 2, 1944, 5.

women and sport.²⁵² Additionally, the press was under strict control of the president.²⁵³ The newspapers were ordered not to publish commentary columns on the war, but to give a place instead for news about the national leader and his family.²⁵⁴ Considering those factors, it becomes evident that the news and photographs of Mevhibe Hanım were meant to affect public opinion of the national leadership, as well as mobilizing women through nationalist ideals and providing them with a role model.

5.3. Reproduction of the Identity as the Pioneer of the Reforms

In addition to the above-mentioned social and political activities, Mevhibe İnönü was performing other duties actively as the wife of the National Leader. These included both duties related to internal affairs and external affairs; stiffening her role as a pioneer of the reforms.

Almost every Saturday, Mevhibe Hanım and İsmet İnönü went to classical music concerts given by the Presidential Orchestra at the Cebeci Academy of Music in Ankara.²⁵⁵ This had become a ritual, and these concerts were even called “İnönü Concerts” at the time. The Presidential Orchestra, former “the Orchestra of the Caliphate”, had given its first concert in Ankara in 1924. In April 1924, the Orchestra moved to Ankara from İstanbul by the decree of Mustafa Kemal, who undertook the issue of institutionalization of western classical music in Turkey.²⁵⁶ The main reason behind the choice of allafranka music, as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk put it, was that the allaturca did not fit into the revolutionary transformation the country achieved.²⁵⁷ Atatürk’s choice was inspired by Ziya Gökalp’s ideas on music: that national music had to replace the decadent art music of the Ottomans. According to him, the national music was to be born from a synthesis of indigenous folk music and western music. Atatürk, in a speech at the National Assembly on 1 November 1934, stressed the backwardness of allaturca music vis-à-vis the westernization the country underwent.²⁵⁸ Subsequently, the radio station was barred from broadcasting allaturca music.²⁵⁹ Efforts to create a national music had

²⁵² Bilgehan, **Mevhibe II**, 55.

²⁵³ Zürcher, 214; Koçak, **Milli Şef Dönemi**, 354; Altan Öymen, **Bir Dönem Bir Çocuk**, Doğan Kitapçılık, İstanbul, 2002, 167.

²⁵⁴ Can Dündar, **İnönü Belgeseli**, 1999.

²⁵⁵ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe II**, 48.

²⁵⁶ Şefik Kahramankaptan, **İsmet İnönü ve Harika Çocuklar**, Ümit Yayıncılık, Ankara, 1998, 36.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 43.

²⁵⁸ Metin And, “Atatürk and the Arts, with Special Reference to Music and Theater”, **Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey**, Jacop M. Landau (ed.), E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1984, 219–220.

²⁵⁹ Kahramankaptan, 45.

already started by sending students abroad for higher education in music. Moreover, foreign musicians, composers, teachers and conductors were invited to Turkey. The first generation of composers, known as ‘the Turkish Five’, consisted Cemal Reşit Rey, Ahmet Adnan Saygun, Ulvi Cemal Erkin, Necil Kazım Akses and Hasan Ferit Alnar, who pursued higher education in abroad on state scholarships. These composers focused on creating new national music by incorporating folk music into western musical forms.²⁶⁰

İsmet İnönü encountered western classical music, which would later become part of his life style,²⁶¹ first in Yemen. As he told in his memoir, he found a gramophone and many gramophone records which had been left behind by a French construction company. Since he and his friends were in great need of music there, they started to listen to the records. Operas, symphonies... were so completely unfamiliar to them that they sometimes could not bear the noise of the recordings and gave up listening. However, he gradually started to get accustomed to and even like them.²⁶² Then he had realized that “[the] people too could come to like Western music if they listened to it all the time.”²⁶³

İsmet İnönü had his second experience of classical music while he was in Germany with Kazım Karabekir in 1914. They had gone to the opera. However, it had turned out to be a kind of torture rather a pleasure in the end.²⁶⁴

Disappointed with Mevhibe Hanım’s experience with the piano, in 1938, he would encourage his daughter Özden to play piano. Simultaneously, he would take lessons to play violin.²⁶⁵ İsmet İnönü also took political initiative on the institutionalization of classical music. In this framework, People’s Houses (*Halkevleri*) and Village Institutes (*Köy Enstitüleri*) acted as instruments of mass education. Additionally, the Ankara Opera House, the first concert at which was performed in October 1961, was established with İnönü’s special support.²⁶⁶ Likewise, he paid special interest to two fabulously talented children, İdil Biret and Suna Kan, who both would become great musical artists. He led the National Assembly to supply education for them on state scholarships in abroad.²⁶⁷

With respect to whether Mevhibe Hanım ever enjoyed classical music, according to Erdal İnönü, second child of the family, she could eventually manage to have a taste for it.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁰ And, 220–221.

²⁶¹ Kahramankaptan, 92.

²⁶² Selek, 72- 73.

²⁶³ İnönü, cited in Heper, 45.

²⁶⁴ Selek, 92.

²⁶⁵ Kahramankaptan, 70.

²⁶⁶ *ibid*, 75–84.

²⁶⁷ *ibid*, 94-106.

²⁶⁸ İnönü, 97.

Yet, according to Özden Toker, Mevhibe İnönü listened to classical music only in the concerts, but at home, she liked listening to allaturca music, especially the famous composer and singer Münir Nurettin Selçuk.²⁶⁹

Another popular event of the time was horseracing. It was such an occasion that notable figures of Ankara, always in the most fashionable attire, always gathered in Ankara Hippodrome. İsmet and Mevhibe İnönü, who both were very interested in horse riding, attended the races almost every week.²⁷⁰ Actually, horse riding in the manège in the courtyard of the Pembe Köşk had become a habit for the couple, especially in the 1940s.²⁷¹

Mevhibe Hanım was among the first women who drove a car at the time in Turkey. She had learned to drive when she was in Vienna for a short time for medical treatment in 1932.²⁷² After returning to Ankara, she got her driving license in 1932 and started to appear in the city while driving a car.²⁷³

Throughout the period, she continued to accompany İsmet İnönü on foreign and domestic official trips, attend receptions, and host many guests in the *Pembe Köşk*.²⁷⁴

Around 1947 she was the most important guest of almost every reception, including even religious gatherings like *Mevlids*.²⁷⁵ This will be mentioned below as related to self-identity construction.

5.4. Self-Identity Construction of Mevhibe İnönü- a National-Western Character

Starting with the days of the Lausanne Conference, Mevhibe Hanım had been in the foreground during the radical political and social transformations. While she was the representative of the modern women of the Republic, she at the same time was to be a role model for those who were yet to be modernized according to the nationalist ideals of the young Turkish Republic. Coming to terms with modernization was also the case for her. Hence, she could blend self-identity construction and identity construction as a role model. Mevhibe İnönü's son Erdal İnönü accurately defined this blend as the “national-western character”. According to him, although Mevhibe Hanım's fellows—ambassadors' wives—

²⁶⁹ Interview, 31.

²⁷⁰ Bilgehan, *Mevhibe II*, 32.

²⁷¹ *ibid*, 47.

²⁷² Bilgehan, *Mevhibe*, 222.

²⁷³ Bilgehan, *Mevhibe II*, 227, 280.

²⁷⁴ *ibid*, 35–115.

²⁷⁵ *ibid*, 134–135.

were elegant and aristocratic figures; there was an implicit difference between Mevhibe Hanım and them:

“My mother regarded them as the people of a different world. She could adopt the modernity they reflected only if it would not change her normal life. Although she knew almost all of those women from their first years in Ankara, they, even then, were in such a mood that it was apparent that they had come from a different environment; they were the representatives of İstanbul elite.”²⁷⁶

As mentioned at the beginning, Mevhibe İnönü was from a very conservative family in İstanbul. Since Mevhibe Hanım met the ideals of modernization only after she married İsmet Bey, her modernization might be considered late and insufficient. However, according to Erdal İnönü, her slow and late modernization rather ensured a harmony between the modernization of Mevhibe and İsmet İnönü and that of the masses. Mevhibe İnönü had adopted the westernization of the Republic gradually and while doing so, she had tried to reconcile it with traditional culture. The result was a synthesis. For that reason, as Erdal İnönü suggested, his family reflected an image far apart from the image of the half-Westernized or pseudo-Western Turk.²⁷⁷ That was a theme of the late Ottoman era, one often used in Turkish literature to ridicule and criticize rapid or rootless westernization. Mevhibe İnönü’s daughter Özden Toker supported this idea by suggesting that her family was not a model *for* the society, but it was a model *of* the society.²⁷⁸ Indeed, the national-western character which Mevhibe İnönü invented was her own contribution to the construction of her identity as a role model. While Mevhibe İnönü was performing modernity at the forefront of her society, she could reconcile the demands of modernization with the remnants of tradition. Not only this reconciliation but also the way it became part of her identity construction represents an achievement vis-à-vis modernization.

With respect to religion, for instance, contrary to the extreme secularism of the one-party regime, Mevhibe İnönü had continued to practice religion. Even then, although never seen, everybody knew that she was fasting during Ramadan, praying five times a day and reciting the Koran at home, that she had even invited an imam to the *Pembe Köşk* to teach her children basic Islamic principles. This, interestingly enough, is noted in her biography as follows: “As soon as Mevhibe Hanım performed religious practices, she changed her clothes

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 92.

²⁷⁷ İnönü, 92–93.

²⁷⁸ Interview, 16.

and appeared in front of the public as a modern woman of the Republic”.²⁷⁹ “That is to say, the *Pembe Köşk* had represented the best example of a secular life”.²⁸⁰

After the transition to a multi-party system, in the late 1950s and in the late 1960s as well, the national-western character, the plainness and the secularism which the family practiced had been used as an ideological instrument against the lifestyle promoted by the Democratic Party of Adnan Menderes. Özden Toker published interviews and serials on the pages of the weekly magazine *Akis*, owned by Metin Toker, the son-in-law of İsmet İnönü. She called Mevhibe İnönü an exemplary spouse and presented sketches from the daily life of the family to show how plain their life was.²⁸¹

6. Conclusion

İsmet İnönü passed away on 25 December 1973 when he was 89 years old. Ten years later, in 1983, Mevhibe Hanım and the children Ömer İnönü, Erdal İnönü and Özden Toker founded the *İnönü Vakfı* (İnönü Foundation) in order to collect historical materials and to pass the intellectual and historical legacy of İsmet İnönü on to the next generations. As the fellow of Atatürk and a great political leader, İsmet İnönü deserved to be commemorated.²⁸² In addition to activities like organizing conferences, promoting researches and publications and initiating commemorations, The Foundation recast *Pembe Köşk* as a museum which opens its doors to the visitors at special occasions.²⁸³ *Pembe Köşk* once again is at the focal point of the Republican history, but this time only symbolically.

Mevhibe İnönü became the president of the Foundation when it was founded in 1983. However, her contribution would be more than in name alone, because what she had collected and kept throughout the years would provide the foundation with a great deal of visual and material resources. Özden Toker stated that Mevhibe İnönü was not very willing to talk about her life. As she remembered, Mevhibe Hanım “used to keep saying: ‘Why are people curious about us? My life is a life just like anybody’s. Like anybody else, I have a husband and children. What is the difference?’ [...]” She had never acknowledged her life as worth telling about.²⁸⁴ This modesty may have been only part of the story, however, Mevhibe İnönü left to

²⁷⁹ Bilgehan, **Mevhibe II**, 78–79.

²⁸⁰ *ibid*, 220.

²⁸¹ “CHP, Bir Ömür Boyunca”, **Akis**, 19 September 1957; Özden Toker, “Bayan İnönü İsmet”, **Akis**, 3 April 1961; “Mevhibe İnönü: Örnek Bir Eş”, **Akis**, 3 July 1964.

²⁸² *İnönü Vakfı ve Pembe Köşk*, leaflet, 2–3.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, 2–3.

²⁸⁴ Interview, 1.

the next generation information on every detail of her life, including letters, photographs and even patterns for dresses. This can be considered an attempt to tell about her life and the desire to reveal the interior of the *Pembe Köşk*, which had symbolized her ladyship. Beyond that, Mevhibe İnönü can be considered to have put a mark on the history of the early Republican period for those who would dare to look at it from an alternative angle.

Modesty of Mevhibe İnönü was indeed outcome of the national-western identity construction. At the same time it concided with nationalist modernization desires which required women to be modernized without threatening their social roles as daughters, wives and mothers. From this point further, what implicit attempt of Mevhibe İnönü that is to tell about her life provides us with is the opportunity to understand and comprehend construction of gender identities and gender roles by nationalist modernization of the new Republic that constituted the aim of the present chapter.

Mevhibe Hanım passed away on 7 February 1992 when she was 95 years old. Top politicians, bureaucrats and military officers attended the funeral. Among of them were the president Turgut Özal and his wife Semra Özal, the ministers, deputies of the Social Populist Party (SHP, SPP) and of the True Path Party (DYP, TPP), Bülent Ecevit, the president of the Democratic Left Party (DSP, DLP), and his wife Rahşan Ecevit, the vice president of the Homeland Party (ANAP, HP), Şevket Yılmaz, the president of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Turkey (TÜRK-İŞ, CTUT), İhsan Doğramacı, the president of the Board of Higher Education (YÖK, BHE), the general manager of TRT (the Institution of Turkish Radio and Television), the vice president of the Welfare Party (RP, WP), the head of the constitutional court, the mayor of İstanbul and İzmir, The Chief of the General Staff, and high ranked military officers.²⁸⁵

Whatever was written about Mevhibe İnönü in the days following her death praised what she represented all her life. Even the condolence notices highlighted her ladyship and her role as a model for women.²⁸⁶

Cumhuriyet reported her death as follows: “The lady of the *Pembe Köşk* died”²⁸⁷ and then underlined that she was always seen a half step back from her Pasha.²⁸⁸ *Milliyet* appraised her as the pioneer of the modern Turkish women and a true madam. According to the newspaper, while she always backed her husband, he had also backed her to be a leader

²⁸⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, 10 February 1992, 1, 17.

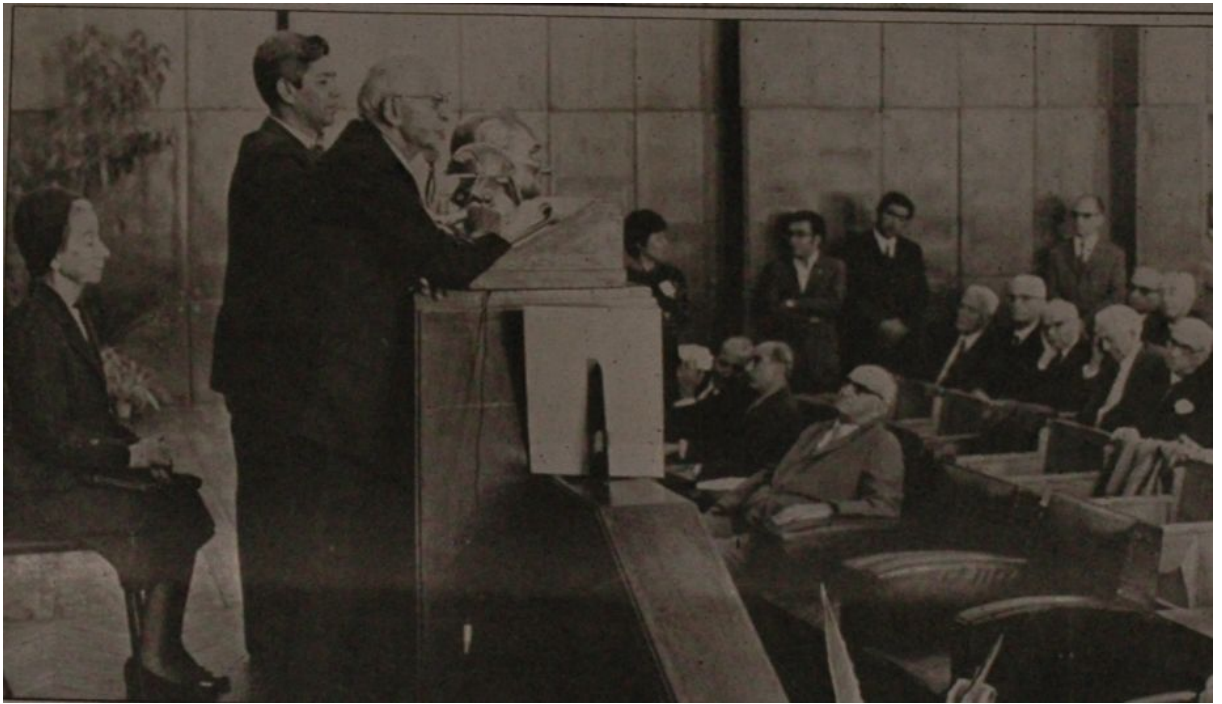
²⁸⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1992.

²⁸⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1992, 1.

²⁸⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1992, 3.

for the uplifting of Turkish women.²⁸⁹ Nuriye Akman in *Hürriyet* stated that she had been a moderate housewife, a devoted wife and a good mother; she had left doing politics to her husband.²⁹⁰ According to her, Mevhibe Hanım—while passing from *çarşaf* to suit and from behind the lattice to ballrooms, while riding horses or driving a car—had remained a good wife to her beloved Pasha and a good mother to her children.²⁹¹

Mevhibe İnönü was the symbol of women for whom it was hard to adopt modernization, and the role model for them to enjoy the benefits of modernization. Overall, her gender identity represents the general framework of the gender regime of Kemalist modernization, which superseded traditional-religious patriarchy by integrating women into nationhood as reproducers of both national solidarity and further generations.



Mevhibe İnönü was always seen a half step back from her Pasha.

²⁸⁹ *Milliyet*, 8 February, 1992, 12.

²⁹⁰ Nuriye Akman, *Hürriyet*, 9 February 1992, 4.

²⁹¹ Nuriye Akman, *Hürriyet*, 10 February 1992, 4.



The statue in courtyard of the *Pembe Köşk* depicts Mevhibe and İsmet İnönü.

CHAPTER 3: BERİN MENDERES: A LOW-PROFILE SPOUSE OF THE 1950s

1. BERİN OF EVLİYAZADES

1.1. The Evliyazade Family in İzmir at the Turn of the Century

Berin Menderes, the wife of Adnan Menderes, first prime minister of the first government of the multi-party period of the Republic, was born into the well-known, wealthy Yemişçibaşı family of İzmir. She was the third and the last child of Naciye (Evliyazade) and İzzet (Yemişçibaşı), after a boy named Samim and a girl named Güzin.¹



Berin in the middle with her cousins

The Yemişçibaşı and Evliyazade families had both migrated from the town of Buldan (in Denizli) to İzmir around the first half of the 19th century; they also had a kinship relation with

¹ Interview conducted with Aydın Menderes on 09.09.2003 and 11.09.2003: 1.

each other. In the early 18th century, the railroads connected İzmir to the West Anatolian hinterland. Additionally, topographic changes then had started to transform İzmir into a lively center for both commerce and culture.² The city began to attract both foreign merchants and small and mid-sized merchants from the local neighborhood. Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi, grandfather of Berin Menderes, was a merchant when he migrated to İzmir. He became mayor of İzmir in 1875 and 1892 and his son Refik Bey also would later become mayor at the end of 1918.³ Additionally, Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi was a member of the assembly *Ayan* (Assembly of Regional Notables) established in 1876.⁴ While members of the Evliyazade family mostly took positions in state offices, the Yemişçibaşı family was known as merchants in the food sector.

The Evliyazade family also had a kinship relation with the Uşakizade family, one of the most prosperous merchant families in İzmir. The Uşakizades were one of the few Turkish Muslim families to gain their wealth through intermediation between the European merchants and the merchants of the Anatolian hinterland.⁵ Latife, the well-educated, multilingual daughter of the Uşakizade family, was married to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk between 1923 and 1925.⁶ There were considerable similarities between the Evliyazades and Uşakizades with respect to lifestyle, apart from their kinship. Both maintained residences in the Frankish quarter of the town. The Uşakizade family lived in a three-storied mansion in Göztepe.⁷ The Evliyazade family, while first residing in Tilkilik,⁸ known at the time as one of Turkish quarters,⁹ later moved to a mansion in Karşıyaka. For better understanding of the family's

² Tuncer Baykara, **İzmir Şehri ve Tarihi**, Ege Üniversitesi Matbaası, İzmir, 1974: 402.

³ He resigned when the British navy first came to the coast of İzmir in 1918 on 6 November (Bilge Umar, **İzmir'de Yunanlıların Son Günleri**, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 1974: 43). According to Umar (1974: 43, footnote 5), his resignation can be seen as a defensive act, avoiding his being in an official position just before the Greek occupation of May 15, 1919.

⁴ *Kanun-ı Esasi*, the first constitutional document in Ottoman Empire went into effect in 1876. This document established a parliament composed of two assemblies, one of which was *Heyet-i Ayan* (Assembly of Regional Notables) and the other was *Heyet-i Mebusan* (Assembly of Cabinet Members). Both the chair and the members of *Heyet-i Ayan* were to be appointed by the Sultan. In order to be appointed as a member of the *Heyet-i Ayan*, one should be a person in whom everybody had confidence. Additionally, he should have held important duties in the state and be known by all. This was a lifelong membership (Cemil Koçak, "Meşrutiyet'te Heyet-i Ayan ve Heyet-i Mebusan", *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1985: 961).

⁵ Yücel Yaman, **Yurt Ansiklopedisi**, C. 6, Anadolu Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1983: 4293.

⁶ For Latife Uşşakî and her tempestuous marriage and divorce see Pınar M. Yelsalı Parmaksız, "Personal Memory versus Official History: Repressed Memory of Latife Uşşakî", A Paper Presented at the European Social Science History Conference, Amsterdam, 22-25 March 2006. The paper deals with controversies around the personal archive of Latife Uşşakî; İpek Çalışlar, **Latife Hanım**, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2006.

⁷ Interview, 2003: 6-7.

⁸ Soner Yalçın, **Efendi, Beyaz Türklerin Büyük Sırrı**, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2004: 15.

⁹ Baykara, 1974: 41.

lifestyle, we should take a close look at the situation determining the way of life in big cities of the Empire, and especially in İzmir.

Indeed, the social and cultural climate in the big cities like İstanbul, İzmir, Beirut, and Salonica was unique when compared with other cities in the Empire and rural areas of Anatolia.¹⁰ In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire underwent a radical transformation which influenced the state, the society and the economy on a large scale. This does not, however, mean that previous centuries were static;¹¹ rather what the Empire looked like at the turn of the century was the outcome of the changes that took place in previous centuries. The capital İstanbul, the seat of the Palace that possessed all economic, governmental and military power, was the heart of the Empire. From the early 17th century İzmir also began to attract Dutch, English, French, and Venetian merchants along with Armenian, Greek, Jewish and Muslim traders because of both external and internal factors. In addition to its geographical condition, suitable for international trade, it also provided “a vigorous and innovative pocket of *laissez-faireism* within the strictly statist Ottoman economy and society”.¹² In short, the 19th century was “...identified as a period of coastal revival, owing to the growth of trade with Europe”.¹³

Because of relations with the West through goods and institutions, a third, powerful component compounded the existing interaction on the coast: Western ideas,¹⁴ which aroused a considerable eagerness for a Western way of life among the people living in the big cities. Those who first espoused the Western way of life were of course foreign residents of these cities (merchants, officials of foreign affairs and their families), non-Muslim Ottoman subjects and afterwards the much of the Muslim Ottoman elite. As Fawaz noted for Beirut, the economic wealth of the merchant class allowed them to import a Western lifestyle in the areas of their house furnishings, public activities, clothing, and education.¹⁵ Such an adaptation of the Western lifestyle in the big cities was also combined with the adoption of Western literary forms such as newspapers, short stories and novels.¹⁶ This widespread

¹⁰Alan Duben; Cem Behar, **İstanbul Households Marriage, Family and Fertility 1880-1940**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991: 7.

¹¹Ethem Eldem, “İstanbul: From Imperial to Peripheralized Capital”, **The Ottoman City between East and West Aleppo, İzmir, and İstanbul**, Edhem Eldem [*et.al*] (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999: 196.

¹²Daniel Goffman, “İzmir: From Village to a Colonial Port City”, **The Ottoman City between East and West Aleppo, İzmir, and İstanbul**, Edhem Eldem [*et.al*] (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999: 89-90.

¹³Leila Tarazi Fawaz, **Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut**, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1983: 1-2.

¹⁴Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1996: 117.

¹⁵Fawaz, 1983: 123.

¹⁶Göçek, 1996: 119.

enthusiasm for anything coming from the West was also part of new awareness about social and political issues concerning the Empire. Furthermore, İstanbul now had a crop of intellectuals—who were educated in newly established schools, or who had become acquainted with Europe—and these were influenced by Western ideas and lived in a Western way. Hence, İstanbul was also the capital of the move towards westernization and modernization.¹⁷

Although this also occurred in the Empire as a whole, İstanbul became the city where the growing divide between modernity and tradition was most drastically reflected. The topographic transformation which İstanbul experienced was the expression of this divide. The imperial household and the ruling elite began to move from the historical center of the city to new mansions along the shores of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. This move to the Frankish quarter of the city included growing adaptation to the Western lifestyle.¹⁸ We can detect a similar topographic migration in İzmir as well. Just before the First World War, except Konak (the administrative center of the city), the entire shore from Konak to Karşıyaka was the place for foreign merchants or officials and non-Muslim Ottomans to reside. Although this quarter of the city was called the *Gavur* İzmir (Infidel İzmir), there were, especially in Karşıyaka and Göztepe, some residences belonging to wealthy Muslim Ottoman elite.¹⁹ The physical move outward in both cities was the manifestation of a kind of tendency among the elite of İstanbul, Salonica and İzmir to come closer to each other even if they belonged to different religious communities. It can be said that sharing a common public space to an extent created a shared social sphere for these groups in İzmir from the 17th century—when foreigners and non-Muslim Ottomans led a wholesale transformation in the city²⁰—to the 19th century.²¹ By the 19th century, İzmir resembled a European city.²² Before the First World War, having adjusted to the requirements of its denizens' new lifestyles, İzmir had become a city with consulates of almost every European country, 15 hospitals, 81 pharmacies, 57 hotels and 30 nightclubs (*Gazino*).²³

¹⁷Eldem, 1999: 197.

¹⁸Eldem, 1999: 202-203.

¹⁹Yaman, 1983: 4287.

²⁰Goffman, 1999: 93.

²¹François Georgeon, "Sunuş", **Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yaşamak**, François Georgeon; Paul Dumont (ed.by.), Maide Selen (trans.by.), İletişim yayınları, İstanbul, 2000a: 20.

²²Goffman, 1999: 125.

²³Yaman, 1983, 4287.

1.1.1. Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi: Man of Transition

Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi was the mayor of İzmir, first in 1875 and later in 1892. The status of municipality was granted to İzmir in 1874.²⁴ On 9 June 1875, the governor Ahmet Rasim Pasha appointed Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi mayor, replacing İzmir's first mayor, Yenişehirizade Hacı Ahmet Efendi. Nevertheless, soon after, Hurşit Pasha replaced Ahmet Rasim Pasha as the governor, and the former recalled Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi on 22 January 1876.²⁵ It was almost standard custom for a new governor to replace the existing mayor of İzmir. As a result, the municipality governance was largely dependent on the governor. In 1892, for the first time in İzmir, an election was held to select the new mayor. Evliyazade Mehmet came in second in the election, after Uşakizade Sadık, who would later resign. In the end, Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi became the new mayor of the city on 6 April 1892.²⁶ While mayor, he increased the number of official staff members in the municipal body (*kalem*) and the number of municipal doctors up to four. Additionally, during his term, a new municipality building was built that is still in use today.²⁷ However, during his term as mayor, the municipality lost all its autonomy and became a simple branch of the governorship. Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi resigned in 1895. The succeeding mayor was Hacı Mehmet Eşref Pasha, an appointee of the new governor, Kamil Pasha.²⁸

According to his great-grandson Aydın Menderes,²⁹ Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi was a man of the transition between old and new. He had paid considerable attention to his children's education, which at that time was a modern attitude. However, he had continued a traditional way of life and networking. He had led construction of the *Şadırvan*³⁰ of the famous Hisar Mosque³¹ in İzmir.³² In addition, he was known for hosting a public dinner at his mansion during Ramadan. The breaking of the Ramadan fast traditionally necessitated great shows of hospitality by elites, state officials, and pashas, who were supposed to host big groups; this was a matter of personal and social honor. Although this was common at the end of the 18th century and during the 19th century, from the beginning of the 20th century on the

²⁴ Erkan Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e İzmir'de Belediye (1868-1945)*, Dokuz Eylül Yayınları, İzmir, 1998: 58; Yaman mentions the date 1871, 1983: 4276.

²⁵ Serçe, 1998: 58-59.

²⁶ Serçe, 1998: 75.

²⁷ Yaman, 1983, 4276.

²⁸ Serçe, 1988: 77.

²⁹ Interview, 2003: 1-2.

³⁰ The fountain is used for ritual ablutions and usually located in the middle of the mosque's courtyard.

³¹ Even today, the Hisar Mosque is the most popular mosque of the city.

³² There exists also an Evliyazade Mosque in İzmir, Baykara, 1974: 49. Although there is no information whether the family built it, the name of the mosque indicates probability that this is the case.

situation began to change.³³ Especially after the 1908 *Meşrutiyet II* (Second Constitutional Era), the traditions accompanying Ramadan began to be seen as signs of backwardness.³⁴ Thus, the social meaning of Ramadan along with the practice of public gatherings began to be replaced by the notion that religious practice should be experienced mostly in privacy.³⁵

Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi, thus, seems to stand in a domain in which old habits meet and sometimes contradict contemporary needs. While Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi was a lively example of the “man of transition”, his son Refik Evliyazade, just as much an emblem of the changes his generation experienced as his father had been, exemplified “the man of *Tanzimat*”.

1.1.2. Evliyazade Refik Bey: Example of “the Man of *Tanzimat*”

As can be expected, the best type and degree of Westernization was a frequent topic of popular debates in the late Ottoman era, especially beginning with the *Tanzimat* era (1839-1876). These concerns on the extent of Western influence on society found expression in the characters of the *Tanzimat* novels. The most striking example in such novels was “...the half-westernized or pseudo-western Turk and the critique of him and his character”.³⁶ This theme was used repeatedly by authors “...who meant to ridicule Westernization”,³⁷ such as Namık Kemal in *İntibah*, Nabizade Nazım in *Zehra*, Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem in *Araba Sevdası*. However, the first and the most important example of all these was Ahmet Midhat Efendi’s *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* (Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi). In this novel, Ahmet Midhat presents two contradictory characters; one of these, Felatun Bey, is “...an empty-headed, fashionably dressed young man who seldom goes to his work at the office (*kalem*) and spends all his inheritance on his mistress in Beyoğlu”.³⁸ On the other hand, Rakım Efendi stands as a clear opposite to Felatun Bey. The opposition between these two characters exists on two levels. Ahmet Midhat focuses on the contradiction between Felatun Bey’s laziness and Rakım Efendi’s diligence, and adds to this opposition by ridiculing Felatun Bey’s imitateness and

³³François Georgeon, “İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete İstanbul’da Ramazan”, **Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Yaşamak**, François Georgeon; Paul Dumont (der.), Maide Selen (çev.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000b: 68.

³⁴Georgeon, 2000b: 125-126.

³⁵Georgeon, 2000b: 134.

³⁶Niyazi Berkes, **The Development of Secularism in Turkey**, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1964: 284.

³⁷İnci Enginün, “Turkish Literature and Self-Identity”, **Ottoman Past and Today’s Turkey**, Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), Brill, Leiden, 2000: 222.

³⁸Enginün, 2000: 222.

eagerness for conspicuous consumption.³⁹ Such an attitude has been called, beginning with Ahmet Midhat, as “...*alafranga* (from the Italian *alla franga*). It was in contrast with *alaturka*, the attitude of the Old Turk”.⁴⁰ Similarly, according to Sirman,⁴¹ Ahmet Midhat culturally delegitimizes “...would-be aristocracy of the big mansions...” in his novel, while valorizing “...the serious and ambitious men of the traditional quarter...by attributing to them the (constructed) morality of the imagined organic society of the past”. Indeed, Ahmet Midhat presents this contrast even in the names of his characters; while *Bey* refers to a modern way of naming, *Efendi* reminds us of the old, *alaturka* society.

In the case of the Evliyazade family, we need not go far to detect this kind of Western influence; Refik Bey, Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi’s son, was a vivid example of a man of *Tanzimat*. From Aydın Menderes’s narration, we can glean that he was Western in his attire and interested in horseracing, but did not add anything to his family’s wealth.⁴² He established the Smyrna Races Club together with Mr. Patterson, the British Consul General. In 1950, his son Nejat Evliyazade would be among the founders of the Turkish Jockey Club.⁴³ It is worth of mention that just as the Frankish quarter of the town was called “İnfidel İzmir,” according to Aydın Menderes, Evliyazade Refik carried the same epithet: “*Gavur* Refik” (İnfidel Refik).⁴⁴

This rather simplified image—“İnfidel Refik”—aside, Evliyazade Refik was concerned with politics, too. As mentioned before, like his father, he was among the mayors of İzmir, but his own municipal service was very much politically oriented. Following the constitutional revolution of 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) had given a boost to reformist policies in the Empire. Aiming to create a national bourgeoisie and to reform social life, the CUP paid special concern to İzmir along with İstanbul. The Unionist Celal Bayar came to İzmir as the representative of the CUP and appointed Rahmi Bey, who was quite an influential figure within the organization, as governor of İzmir. Rahmi Bey appointed Evliyazade Refik mayor in 1913 and used his own authority to ensure that Refik Bey stay in that position.⁴⁵ At the end of the First World War, the CUP lost all its credit and

³⁹ Berna Moran, **Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I, Ahmet Mithat’tan A. H. Tanpınar’a**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998:: 39.

⁴⁰ Berkes, 1964: 284.

⁴¹ Nükhet Sirman, “Gender Construction and Nationalist Discourse”, **Gender and Identity Construction Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey**, Feride Acar; Ayşe Güneş Ayata (eds.), Brill, Leiden, 2000: 173.

⁴² Interview, 2003: 2.

⁴³ <http://www.tjk.org/kurumsal/tarihce.aspx>.

⁴⁴ Interview conducted with Aydın Menderes on 11.01.2004: 5.

⁴⁵ Serçe, 1998: 141.

support. Eventually, the wartime leaders of the Committee yielded the power to Ahmet İzzet Pasha's new government and left the country just before the armistice was signed in 1918.⁴⁶ Soon afterward, the new government recalled Rahmi Bey from his governorship. Correspondingly, after the signing of the Mudros Armistice on 31 October 1918, Evliyazade Refik Bey resigned from the municipality on 6 November 1918.⁴⁷

On 15 May 1919, relying on Article Seven of the Mudros Armistice, the Greek army entered İzmir, backed by Britain. The city was under occupation until 9 September 1920, when the Turkish army defeated Greek troops in İzmir. After the Turkish takeover, the city was in urgent need of reconstruction; thus, an election was held in October to form a new municipal council. The council, of which Evliyazade Refik was a member, selected Şükrü Kaya as mayor. At the time, Şükrü Kaya was in the Turkish delegation at the Lausanne Peace Conference. Soon thereafter, he was elected to the National Assembly and left İzmir for Ankara. On 2 October 1923, the municipal council selected Evliyazade Refik as the new mayor. Yet, 12 days later, on 14 October, using health problems as a pretext, Evliyazade Refik resigned again. The next election for the renewal of the municipal council was due January 1924. In the meantime, the Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed on 24 July 1923. Correspondingly, the Turkish Republic was founded on 29 October 1923. Mustafa Kemal was the president, and he founded the People's Party, which he was to head, on 9 September 1923. Surprisingly enough, just before the municipal election, the İzmir branch of the People's Party introduced a new list of candidates. Direct intervention by the Party determined the results of the election. The new municipal council was fully composed of candidates from the Party.⁴⁸ This meant the elimination of the former cadre, including Evliyazade Refik.

From this point further, it would not be wrong to describe Evliyazade Refik Bey as standing in a position between his father's rather defensive Western adoptions and the stance on the West of his sister Naciye Hanım—and later, her daughter Berin Hanım as well—which was full moderate and synthesized modernity. Even before the founding of the Republic, the members of the Evliyazade family more or less practiced the modernity the new Republic brought about. This included the family women as well as the men.

⁴⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher, **Turkey, A Modern History**, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London, 2001: 139.

⁴⁷ Serçe, 1998: 149; Umar, 1974: 43.

⁴⁸ Serçe, 1998: 172-176.

1.1.3. Naciye Hanım: Halide Edip of İzmir

Naciye Hanım was the second child of Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi, after Refik. She was the mother of Berin Menderes. One thing about Naciye Hanım on which all authorities agree is that she was a very influential figure at the time and the first woman writer of İzmir.⁴⁹ She wrote in newspapers, even in *Servet-i Fünun*,⁵⁰ gave speeches, engaged in social issues and participated in the intellectual life of her time in a very active way.⁵¹ The letters she wrote in the journal *Gencine-i Edep*⁵² were considered a very important step for women's rights.⁵³ In these letters, she reflected her disapproval towards women's indifference to the press and encouraged them to read much more than ever.⁵⁴ *Gencine-i Edep*, a literary periodical, was founded in 1908 as one of the very few magazines in İzmir published in Turkish.⁵⁵ The editorial board sent a copy of the first issue to Naciye Hanım. Naciye Hanım then sent a letter to the board to thank and congratulate them. The journal published the letter in the fifth issue. In this letter, in addition to praise, she criticized the journal and suggested that a few pages should have been allocated as women's pages. According to her, that section should have contained pieces to further women's position in society. The journal, she wrote, should reflect not only men's voices but also women's voices. By running pieces by women writers, the journal could also encourage women to submit more writing.⁵⁶

In another article she wrote in *Kadın* (Woman), Evliyazade Naciye made it clear why advancing the position of women in society was so important. This article was a letter to the members of the *Kırmızı Beyaz Klübü* (the Red and White Club) in Salonica. In the article,

⁴⁹ Bezmi Nusret Kaygusuz, **Bir Roman Gibi**, İhsan Gümüşayak Matbaası, İzmir, 1955: 42.

⁵⁰ The first issue was published in 1891. At first, the journal aimed to include knowledge about natural sciences, but after 1895, Recaizade Ekrem encouraged young authors to come together around the journal, which led to a transformation in its focus: from natural sciences to literature (Varlık, 1985: 119). Afterwards, "[t]he journal *Servet-i Fünun* was the organ of the 'New Literature' (*Edebiyat-ı Cedide*) movement, late nineteenth-century followers of the French symbolists. The *Servet-i Fünun* movement aroused the wrath of most elements of Ottoman society, both the modern nationalists like Gökâlp and the traditional minded modernists like Ahmed Midhat, all of whom shared an antipathy for such cosmopolitan, 'unTurkish' elements" (Duben and Behar, 1991: 94).

⁵¹ Interview, 2003: 2.

⁵² This journal was published after the declaration of *Meşrutiyet II* on July 24, 1908, in the period between November 8, 1908 and August 27, 1909, in İzmir. Ziyaettin Efendi, who had translated a dictionary titled *Ferhenk-i Ziya* from Persian to Turkish, was the publisher and Mahmut Fuat Efendi (1869-1913), one of the delegates of the Committee of Union and Progress, was the editor-in chief (Kaygusuz, 1955: 42). The journal ran articles and translations about peasants and women rights (Zeki Arıkan, "Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet Dönemlerinde İzmir Basını", **Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1985: 110).

⁵³ Arıkan, 1985: 109.

⁵⁴ Kaygusuz, 1955: 42.

⁵⁵ Baykara, 1974: 111.

⁵⁶ Naciye Evliyazade, "Gencine-i Edep Heyet-i Tahririsi'ne", **Gencine-i Edep**, No: 5, 5 Kanunuevvel 1324/18 Aralık 1908: 52.

Naciye Hanım stated that the women of Salonica and İstanbul were fortunate for enjoying their liberties; they had opportunities both to have an education and to take part in social life. The women of İzmir, however, still lacked those liberties and opportunities because of traditional-minded, even backward fathers and brothers. Yet, according to her, those men were not aware of the fact that “the status of the women in a society is the measure of the degree of its development”.⁵⁷ At the time, intellectuals did not commonly believe that women’s existing position in social life had no relationship with the demands of modernization.⁵⁸ At the end of the article, Naciye Hanım announced that just like their sisters in Salonica and İstanbul, women in İzmir had started to work toward uplifting women’s status in society. In order to do so, they had started to publish newspapers and pamphlets and had founded clubs and commissions. Finally, she invited all the women of İzmir to join this process and gave them the formula: courage, work, progress...⁵⁹

According to her grandson Aydın Menderes, if Halide Edip was a prototype of the intellectual Ottoman woman, it was possible to portray Naciye Hanım as the Halide Edip of İzmir.⁶⁰ He compared her intellectual qualities with Halide Edip’s, and concluded that like Halide Edip, she was nationalist, both conservative and modern at the same time, and even ‘feminist’. In fact, there are many differences as well as commonalities between these two figures.

Naciye Hanım is to be analyzed both as a product of her personal uniqueness and as that of the social and political changes since the 19th century in the Empire. Comparisons between Naciye Hanım and intellectual women of her time will serve to portray her better.

Evliyazade Naciye married at a very young age with the aged İzzet Bey. While in rural Turkey, at the time, “[t]he age differential between husbands and wives was low...[the opposite of] this was found among the elite of the major metropolises...”, where “...age at

⁵⁷ Naciye Evliyazade, “Meyus Oldum”, **Kadın**, No: 23, 20 Şubat 1324/5 Mart 1909: 6-9.

⁵⁸ Şerif Mardin, **Türk Modernleşmesi, Makaleler**, Mümtaz’er Türköne; Tuncay Önder (eds.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1994: 75. It is possible to detect this line of reasoning related to women throughout the modernization process beginning with the *Tanzimat* (1839). As a result of the search to find the main reasons for underdevelopment of the Empire and to prevent it from collapse, some reforms related to women’s role in society began to be discussed. It was argued that it was the secondary position of women in social life which caused underdevelopment of the Empire (Şirin Tekeli, “Türkiye’de Kadının Siyasal Hayattaki Yeri”, **Türk Toplumunda Kadın**, Nermin Abadan-Unat (ed.by), Türk Sosyal Bilimler Derneği Yayını, İstanbul, 1982: 377). Women’s position in social life was recognized both as a cause of the existing situation and as a symbol of its incipient transformation. In this frame, the traditional life style began to be criticized and intellectuals in favor of a radical Westernization of Turkish society came out with demands such as “...the abolition of polygamy, free choice of feminine garments, freedom of choice in matters of marriage, free circulation in the streets, and the establishment of girl’s schools at all levels” (Nermin Abadan-Unat, “Movements of Women and National Liberation: The Turkish Case”, **Women in the Developing World: Evidence From Turkey**, University of Denver, Denver, 1986a: 13).

⁵⁹ Evliyazade Naciye, 1909: 9.

⁶⁰ Interview, 2003: 2-3.

marriage for males remained high from at least the 1890s to the 1930s, whereas the age at marriage for women rose considerably after the turn of the century”.⁶¹

İzzet Bey was a merchant, and also taught Persian and Arabic courses at the *Rüştiye* (secondary school).⁶² Additionally, Kaygusuz⁶³ mentions him as the head of the general secretariate (*Mektubi Kalemi Birinci Mümeyyizi*)⁶⁴ of provinces.⁶⁵ Evliyazade Hacı Mehmet Efendi’s personal network was probably influential enough⁶⁶ not only for his own family but also for new members of his family to benefit from.

Since Naciye Hanım married İzzet Bey at such an early age, she is thought to have encountered both classical literature and modern literature, including such writers as Tevfik Fikret, Halit Ziya and Reşat Nuri, and to have gained her enthusiasm for writing, during her marriage.⁶⁷ Although Makbule Hanım, Naciye Hanım’s sister, was also very active in social life and was an intellectual Ottoman woman, Aydın Menderes said that:⁶⁸ “Naciye Hanım was unique and much more sophisticated”.⁶⁹

Because of his old age, İzzet Bey died just before the First World War, when Naciye Hanım was quite young. Indeed “...only about 35 percent of all fathers were actually alive to witness [for instance] the marriage of their first-born [child]...especially prior to World War I...”⁷⁰

In speaking about Naciye Hanım’s authorship, Aydın Menderes was quite sure that she began to figure as a public intellectual with her writings and speeches after the 1908 *Meşrutiyet II*.⁷¹ In the milieu of the *Meşrutiyet*, the politicization of the masses and rapid

⁶¹ Alan Duben, “Turkish Families and Households in Historical Perspective”, *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 10, Iss. 1, 1985: 86.

⁶² Interview, 2003: 1.

⁶³ Kaygusuz, 1955: 41-42.

⁶⁴ *Mektubi Kalemi* was the name of secretariat, which does works of ministries and governorship (Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü II*, MEB Yayınları, İstanbul, 1993).

⁶⁵ The Minister of Internal Affairs, with the governor’s recommendation, appoints the head of the general secretariate of provinces (Engin Berber, *Yeni Onbinlerin Gölgesinde Bir Sancak: İzmir, 30 Ekim 1918-15 Mayıs 1919*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul: 45). According to Berber (1999: 45), İzzet Bey was appointed head of the General Secretariate by Hamdi Bey in 1918. According to Aydın Menderes, however, the factuality of this appointment year is dubious. Aydın Menderes (2004) suggested that İzzet Bey probably died before 1918. He told that as far as he knew, İzzet Bey was not alive during the Greek occupation. He thought that he had died just before the First World War. Aydın Menderes also noted that he did not know whether İzzet Bey had ever worked as an official, but he thought that if he had, it would not be a surprise because such a position was quite suitable for his intellectual qualities.

⁶⁶ Interview, 2003: 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 2-3.

⁶⁸ Kaygusuz (1955: 42) notes that other good pieces written by Makbule Hanım were also published in various journals.

⁶⁹ Interview, 2003: 4.

⁷⁰ Duben, 1985: 93.

⁷¹ Interview, 2003: 26.

changes in the social and political life of the Empire created new opportunities for women. According to Afetinan,

“...as a result, the educated class among women expanded. Women writers began discussing their ideas more freely in their writings and so made themselves felt in society. These women insisted that learning was essential to women if they were to achieve emancipation”.⁷²

In her aforementioned letter published in *Gencine-i Edep*, Naciye Hanım praised freedom as glorious and wrote of the *Meşrutiyet* as a time of happiness. She stated, “Humanity should do whatever is needed for progress and the uplifting of the homeland. We should rise from now on”.⁷³ As mentioned above, she also asked the editorial board to allocate a women’s section. In fact, beginning with the *Meşrutiyet II*, both the number of articles related to women and that of journals or newspapers published by women increased.⁷⁴ In her memoirs, Halide Edip noted that she began to publish her writings in the time of the *Meşrutiyet*.⁷⁵ In those days, she was threatened by death by those opposed to the Committee of Union and Progress. As she explains in her memoirs, she could not understand the reason for this because she thought she wrote only about social and literary issues that should not bother anyone. She refused to cease writing because the people who had threatened her were not only CUP oppositionists but were in fact also against any modern and progressive ideas. Her husband Salih Zeki also encouraged her to continue to write.⁷⁶ This support from male family members was also reflected in the life of Evliyazade Naciye, according to Aydın Menderes, who mentions such support from Naciye’s brother Evliyazade Refik and also from her husband, İzzet Bey.⁷⁷

Halide Edip, the daughter of Edip Bey, who was among officials in the Palace, was a member of the İstanbul elite.⁷⁸ She attended to the American College for Girls in İstanbul and took private lessons at home from a young age.⁷⁹ She was acquainted with Western ideas and a Western way of life due to both her education and her class. It is worth noting here that a western woman, visiting the American College in 1900s, described her impression of students at the College in the following manner: “I could not help wondering how many English and American girls of their age would be capable of a similar feat in a foreign language!”⁸⁰

⁷² A. Afetinan, **The Emancipation of the Turkish Women**, UNESCO, Amsterdam, 1962: 40.

⁷³ Evliyazade Naciye, 1908: 51.

⁷⁴ Leyla Kaplan, **Cemiyetlerde ve Siyasi Teşkilatlarda Türk Kadını (1908-1960)**, AKDİTYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 1988: 11.

⁷⁵ Halide Edip Adivar, **Mor Salkımlı Ev**, Atlas Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1970: 128.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 131.

⁷⁷ Interview, 2004: 1.

⁷⁸ Ayşe Durakbaşı, **Halide Edip, Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002: 134.

⁷⁹ Murat Uraz, **Kadın Muharrirlerimiz II**, Tefeyyüz Kitabevi, y.y: 241.

⁸⁰ E. S. Stevens, “The Womankind of Young Turkey”, **Contemporary Review**, Vol. 99, 1911: 538.

As mentioned before, the articles written in increasing numbers by or about women were mostly concerned with women's level of education. Education was regarded as a key to women's advancement, the extent of which was seen as a measure of social modernity.⁸¹ Halide Edip was the head of the Society for Uplifting of Women (*Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti*), which aimed to improve women's education and culture without abandoning traditions.⁸² As explained above, Naciye Hanım was primarily concerned with women's education.

Intellectual women who wrote about women's rights at the turn of the century were radical enough to demand wholesale change in society;⁸³ however, for many of them the idea of equal rights for women was not in contradiction with the principles of Islam. Islam was seen as both a legitimating force for demanding women's rights and a source for an authentic identity for women. For instance, Fatma Aliye,⁸⁴ while criticizing discrimination against women in a radical way,⁸⁵ also advocated a kind of education which combined *alafranga* and *alaturka*.⁸⁶ The most important aspect of education, according to her, was self-discipline (*Hüsn-i Terbiyye*), which could be found both in *alafranga* and *alaturka*.⁸⁷ Thus, Fatma Aliye defended a moderate line of balance between these two extreme positions. She stated that only Turkish families who knew French and were still affiliated with their own customs could explain to the West that Islam was not an obstacle for women's education.⁸⁸

While women's journals⁸⁹ were providing outlets for individual women to express themselves, women's organizations grouped and organized these individual voices and demands.⁹⁰ These organizations were places where women's activities around various concerns were planned.⁹¹

Women's activism at that time went hand in hand with the reforming policies of the CUP. Hence, the idea of a national family (*milli aile*) was part of the social reform supposed

⁸¹ Kaplan, 1998: 16-19.

⁸² Ibid, 39.

⁸³ See Kaplan, 1998: 16-19, for some quotations from women writers. For more on the feminist movement in the Late Ottoman Era, see Serpil Çakır, **Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 1994 and Yaprak Zihnioğlu, **Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadınlar Birliği**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003.

⁸⁴ Fatma Aliye, born in 1864, was the daughter of Cevdet Pasha and also a well-known writer. She was educated at home through private courses. She made the first translation and published the first novel (in 1892) by a woman author (Uraz, y.y., : 210).

⁸⁵ Durakbaşı, 2002: 106.

⁸⁶ Mübeccel Kızıltan, "Öncü Bir Kadın Yazar: Fatma Aliye Hanım", **Journal of Turkish Studies**, Vol. 14, 1990: 291.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 295.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 291.

⁸⁹ For detailed information about women's journals, see Çakır 1994: 23-42.

⁹⁰ Çakır, 1996: 22-23, 43.

⁹¹ For detailed information about women's organizations, see Çakır 1994:43-78 and Kaplan 1998: 36-63.

to accompany the political reforms which began with the *Meşrutiyet*⁹². The underlying principle was that any political revolution could not be complete before a social revolution was achieved.⁹³

In the following years, especially after the defeats in the Balkan Wars, nationalist concerns became one of the causes that gathered women around several organizations. These organizations both provided people who suffered due to the war conditions with social services, and also worked to elevate the national consciousness.⁹⁴

Furthermore, another important factor in the socialization and mobilization of Ottoman intellectual women was the trauma of the Greek occupation of İzmir. This added to their disappointing experiences of the Balkan Wars and the First World War. The defeats after the Balkan Wars and the armistice signed after the First World War had led to a great shift in the popular mindset and created the idea of nationalism among Ottoman Turks. Celal Bayar depicts this sentiment in his memoirs, noting a growing reactionism towards non-Turks in Ottoman society.⁹⁵ In the case of İzmir, he describes the nationalization of Infidel İzmir as a vitally important matter.⁹⁶ Reaction throughout the Empire against the military occupation meant mounting action on the part of women in addition to men in social and political life. As noted by Abadan-Unat,

“It was the tremendous shock which shook the country...which mobilized Muslim women of all walks of life. A national crisis contributed, among other things, to the rising consciousness of all Turkish women. Traditions and morals were pushed aside; Turkish women and Turkish men began to raise their voices and appeal to world’s public opinion”.⁹⁷

In her memoirs, Halide Edip explains the shock she felt when she learned of the occupation of İzmir and describes her own nationalist awakening.⁹⁸ During the occupation of İzmir, she was invited to speak at the American College for Girls. The subject was education and she, as the speaker, was representing the Turks. She had considered changing the subject of her speech, since she wanted to talk about İzmir; she controlled herself, however, and did not change the subject. She had begun to identify emotionally with her country as well and found an inner force:

⁹² Ibid, 104.

⁹³ Fatmagül Berktaş, **Tarihin Cinsiyeti**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003: 104.

⁹⁴ Kaplan, 1998: 44-58. Kaplan describes the example of *Osmanlı Hanımları Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti* (Society of Ottoman Ladies for National Defense). For details, see Kaplan 1998: 44-58.

⁹⁵ Celal Bayar, **Ben de Yazdım, Milli Mücadeleye Giriş**, Sabah Kitapları, İstanbul, 1997: 91-110.

⁹⁶ Bayar, 1997: 108.

⁹⁷ Nermin Abadan-Unat, “Socioeconomic Change, Sex Roles and the Family”, **Women in the Developing World: Evidence From Turkey**, University of Denver, Denver, 1986b: 14.

⁹⁸ Halide Edip Adivar, **The Turkish Ordeal**, New York, 1928: 23-24.

“The pink-cheeked young representatives, all dressed in bright colors, their eyes happy, had just left the platform. Here she was, Turkey in black, her cheeks pale, her eyes sorrowful, her shoulders bent. Yet she was stronger than the victors and their force and joy. She had internal force of her martyred race and their sublime faith in their rights”.⁹⁹

In the following days, Halide Edip spoke at the public meetings organized against the occupation of İzmir. Subsequently, Halide Edip fled to Anatolia with her husband Adnan Adıvar and joined the national resistance movement led by Mustafa Kemal. From that moment on, Halide Edip appeared differently to the public eye. She was modest, socially and politically active, and morally upright like the heroines in her own novels.¹⁰⁰ In return, she became a well-respected member—and the only woman member—in the National Campaign. In 1926, during the trial of the İzmir conspiracy,¹⁰¹ she and her husband left Turkey again until 1939. In this exile, she wrote several novels and memoirs, including the wartime memoir “The Turkish Ordeal,” published in the United Kingdom in 1928.

Evliyazade Naciye was in İstanbul at the time of the occupation of İzmir. According to Yılmaz Karakoyunlu, who published a semi-historical novel partly about the Evliyazade family, Halide Edip sent a telegram to Evliyazade Naciye to let her know about the difficult situation. In the telegram, Halide Edip also invited Naciye Hanım to attend a public meeting in İstanbul’s Sultanahmet Square.¹⁰² On 23 May 1919, in the Sultanahmet Square, Halide Edip made a very sentimental speech arousing the nationalist feelings of the crowd. Evliyazade Naciye, as Karakoyunlu argued, was in the audience as the special guest of Halide Edip.¹⁰³

Aydın Menderes¹⁰⁴ related that according to family anecdotal tradition, his grandmother took the news of the Greek occupation very hard. According to him, when Naciye Hanım—who at the time was in İstanbul—heard that the Greek troops took İzmir, she fainted.

The Greek occupation of İzmir began on 15 May 1919 and ended on 9 September 1922. As Yaman noted,¹⁰⁵ these dates conscribe the historical frame within which the National Campaign took place. In other words, the Greek occupation of İzmir turned to be a

⁹⁹ Ibid, 24.

¹⁰⁰ Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler*, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 1997: 146.

¹⁰¹ See pages, 26-27.

¹⁰² Yılmaz Karakoyunlu, *Yorgun Mayıs Kısrakları*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2004: 63. He personally confirmed the event mentioned in the novel.

¹⁰³ Karakoyunlu, 2004: 72.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, 2003: 5.

¹⁰⁵ Yaman, 1983: 4287.

catalyst that transformed a general uneasiness among the people into a resistance movement.¹⁰⁶

Naciye Hanım remembered the ensuing weeks in İzmir as full of the emotional torture of being under occupation. She remembered especially the period between August 30 and September 9, when the Greek army had been defeated but the Turkish army had not yet arrived at the city, as an endless wait.¹⁰⁷ Umar¹⁰⁸ described the situation as disorderly, and some sources mention looting in the city.¹⁰⁹ When the Turkish army arrived at the city, both Naciye Hanım and her daughter Berin Hanım left their house with bottles and glasses in their hands to bring water to the tired soldiers. Aydın Menderes said that although he had heard this story several times both from his grandmother and his mother, each time they told the story it carried the same excitement they must have felt at the time.

Indeed, in addition to the modernized qualities of Naciye Hanım, what Aydın Menderes emphasized most in discussing his grandmother was her patriotism. In doing so, he differentiated between nationalism and patriotism. He stated,

“...and nationalist. I want to emphasize her nationalism. It (to be nationalist) was naturally very common in those days, but it had nothing to do with the nationalism as Ziya Gökalp defined it; she was not nationalist in that manner. Still, she shared the sentiment of other enlightened people who were against the foreign conquest, as well as the impulse to save the empire.”¹¹⁰

Menderes never uttered the word patriotism, though the way he tried to explain the nationalist sentiment of Naciye Hanım rings of patriotism rather than nationalism.

Despite Aydın Menderes’s analogy between the two women, unlike Halide Edip, Naciye Hanım did not devote herself to the National Campaign headed by Mustafa Kemal. She might have had many reasons for this, such as limitations as a result of being under an actual foreign occupation in İzmir, as Aydın Menderes noted.¹¹¹ In fact, in İzmir at that time there was strict censorship of the press and an ever-present threat of being arrested by the occupying forces.¹¹² Thus, there was no clear resistance against the occupation and many people who could have organized it had already been arrested or fled to Anatolia.¹¹³ No further piece of writing by Evliyazade Naciye is extant. According to her grandson, it was the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 4292.

¹⁰⁷ Interview, 2003: 5.

¹⁰⁸ Umar, 1974: 264-265.

¹⁰⁹ Yaman, 1983: 4293.

¹¹⁰ Interview, 2003: 3.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 3.

¹¹² Umar, 1974: 229.

¹¹³ Ibid, 233.

special atmosphere of İzmir at the turn of the century that stimulated her to write.¹¹⁴ The favorable effects of the *Meşrutiyet* on Turkish identity included a revival of the press and renewed interest in social and political life.¹¹⁵

Nevertheless, Naciye Hanım remained a modern, intellectual and patriotic Ottoman woman; she does not appear to have experienced the ideological shift experienced by many during the transition from empire to nation state. Although very class-bound, Naciye Hanım was already experiencing the modernity which the nation state aimed to create. As mentioned before, her modernism was a moderate type, but not in the sense of the limited modernity sought by the Republic. The limited modernity of the Republic was based on the national social order and on progress according to the Western model. On the one hand, a common language and shared culture and values were components of a national social order. On the other hand, secular, scientific principles rather than religious norms were essentials of that progress. The modernity Naciye Hanım experienced was rooted in the social, cultural and political climate in which she lived. Although Aydın Menderes¹¹⁶ emphasized that her modernism was far from simply an imitation of the Western way of life, he also mentioned that in a city like İzmir, one may propose a Levantine¹¹⁷ influence on Muslim elites;¹¹⁸ inevitably, according to him, there must have been an interaction between the Levantines and Naciye Hanım and her family.¹¹⁹ Menderes took pains to define the type and degree of such an interaction. He stated that Naciye Hanım had Levantine neighbors and that she maintained friendly relationships with them. Also, sharing a similar social class position had probably created a common cultural and social milieu between her family and the nearby Levantines. In any case, Menderes emphasized that her modernism was an amalgamation of the Western and the authentic (Ottoman). It is certain that she was modern in her attire and lifestyle, but this modernism was complemented by a kind of conservatism: not religious, but social conservatism.¹²⁰ In this sense, what he meant by conservatism contrasts with the idea of being

¹¹⁴ Interview, 2004: 2.

¹¹⁵ Zeki Arıkan, "İzmir in the Period of the Second Constitution 1908-1918", **Three Ages of İzmir**, Virginia Taylor Saçlıoğlu (ed. and trans.), Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 1993: 221.

¹¹⁶ Interview, 2003: 3.

¹¹⁷ "*Levantines*, a term which acquired a pejorative sense, denoting a hybrid race, not fully Oriental nor quite accepted socially and culturally as being Western, 'tainted with a remarkable degree of moral obliquity'" (De Groot, Alexander H., "Protection and Nationality. The Decline of the Dragomans", **İstanbul at les Langues Orientales**, Frederic Hitzel (ed.), L'Harmattan, Paris, 1997: 235).

¹¹⁸ Interview, 2003: 8.

¹¹⁹ Interview, 2004: 5.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 5.

mondain (Mondanite).¹²¹ Aydın Menderes quoted Naciye Hanım as repeatedly saying that “our religion is not an obstacle to progress”.¹²² Here, a similarity with Fatma Aliye’s moderate modernity should not be overlooked. Naciye Hanım, according to Aydın Menderes, was trying to combine the Western and traditional; in other words, while adapting a Western way of life, she had also chosen to preserve traditional, social and cultural manners to an extent. Taking an affirmative position towards religion was not a contradictory behavior for Naciye Hanım. Instead, she was positioning herself between the backwardness associated with unexamined religiosity and from the immorality and superficiality associated with excessive Westernization.

Aydın Menderes presented Naciye Hanım’s modernism in relation with her music preference. He said that she never gave up listening to *alaturka* music.¹²³ As mentioned above, “old and new or *alaturka* and *alafranga* were the terms in which the changes were mentally separated and comprehended” and it was “an almost natural tendency” to examine one’s social environment in İstanbul,¹²⁴ and possibly in İzmir, through these concepts. In other words, *alaturka* and *alafranga* marked the battleground an individual must navigate in considering how to adopt a modern manner without clearly contradicting current social norms. This also applied to role expectations for an individual within an acceptable framework. For example, regarding women, Ahmed Cevad states in his book *Bizde Kadın* (Women in Our Society) (1913) that: “we ought to understand that women as our mothers, wives, sisters and friends always represent our other half. If we want to create a society similar to the Anglo-Saxons’...we as men should resemble Anglo-Saxon men, and our women should resemble Anglo-Saxon women”.¹²⁵ This idea was the result of an agreement among intellectuals¹²⁶ that women’s existing social position in social life had not adapted to

¹²¹ French word *mondain* here refers to imitating the West in the sense of trying to be elegant, fashionable and European.

¹²² Interview, 2004: 3.

¹²³ As the part of the modernization project, broadcasting *alaturka* music on the radio was forbidden in 1934 through a declaration of Ministry of Internal Affairs. The ban was meant to train people to listen to western music in order to be fully civilized or modern.

¹²⁴ Duben; Behar, 1991: 246.

¹²⁵ Cited in Durakbaşı, 1998: 40.

¹²⁶ It is possible to detect this line of reasoning as related to women throughout the process that began with the *Tanzimat* (1839). A result of the search for the main reasons for underdevelopment of the Empire and ways to prevent it from collapse, some reforms related to women in social life began to be discussed. It was argued that it was the secondary position of women in social life which caused the underdevelopment of the Empire (Tekeli, 1982: 377). Women’s position in social life was recognized both as a cause of the existing situation and as a sign of any transformation (Yaraman, 1999: 42). In this frame, intellectuals began to criticize the traditional lifestyle and intellectuals in favor of a radical Westernization of Turkish society came out with such demands as “...the abolition of polygamy, free choice of feminine garments, freedom of choice in matters of marriage, free circulation in the streets, and the establishment of girls’ schools on all levels” (Abadan-Unat, 1986b: 13). Men,

the demands of modernization.¹²⁷ Accomplishing this adaptation, however, was a matter of establishing a balance between *alaturka* and *alafranga*. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, in his novel *Mürebbiye* (Nanny) (1898), reveals the two sides of the balance. He accuses his character *Nebahat*, a symbol of women in general, to have gone too far in order to be emancipated, thus neglecting her natural duties in the name of ‘civilization’.¹²⁸

1.2. Education and Naciye Hanım as an Intellectual Role Model for Berin

According to Aydın Menderes, Naciye Hanım was a clear role model for her daughters, especially in terms of her authorship.¹²⁹

According to Menderes,¹³⁰ Naciye Hanım attributed particular importance to the education of her children. She encouraged both her son and her daughters to learn a foreign language and tried to awaken in them an inclination toward literature. It is worth noting that while she sent her son to Hungary for higher education, she preferred to keep her two daughters nearby, encouraging them to attend missionary schools¹³¹ to learn French.¹³² This was, in accordance with the 19th and 20th century; rule that primarily girls from wealthy families had the opportunity for modern education. This modern education included instruction in Western languages and Eastern languages such as Persian and Arabic, as well as philosophy, literature and music. Teachers would come to wealthy families’ mansions periodically to teach girls of the families.¹³³ Sometimes these private courses were complemented by school education, as in the case of Halide Edip. After her education at home, she was sent to the American College for Girls on her father’s wishes. Berin Hanım’s and her sister’s attendance at missionary schools was part of a new phenomenon among the

ironically, dominated the discussion of women’s modernization. The way in which women addressed the ‘women question’ was quite different, at least in its rhetoric (Durakbaşı, 1998: 37).

¹²⁷ Mardin, 1994: 75.

¹²⁸ Kandiyoti, 1997: 141.

¹²⁹ Interview, 2003: 7.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 3-4.

¹³¹ As a result of the changes in the 19th century, there were four types of schools in the Empire. The first group included traditional Muslim schools (*mektep*) and schools where Islamic knowledge was taught (*medrese*). The second group included secular schools established by the state during the *Tanzimat* period. The third type of schools comprised schools established and financed by non-Muslim Ottomans (*millet*). And the fourth group was that of the missionary schools, where some Muslim children were also educated (Erik Jan Zürcher, **Turkey, A Modern History**, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London, 2001: 66).

¹³² At the turn of the century, French was prominent as the language of education. “[T]he Ottoman state also employed the French language as its principal Western language; French was taught to all members of the Ottoman transnational chamber of the ministry of Foreign Affairs” (Göçek, 1996: 4-6). Consequently, this emphasis on French was accompanied by French influence on Ottoman literature and social and political thought.

¹³³ Durakbaşı, 1998: 129.

upper class families. In fact, according to Aydemir, the way the daughters of the Evliyazade family were educated had always attracted attention in İzmir.¹³⁴ Apart from learning French, according to Aydın Menderes, another reason for Naciye Hanım to send her daughters to missionary schools was the general lack of girls' schools.¹³⁵ When one notes the fact that, in 1914, there was only one school of higher education for girls in Istanbul, with 63 students, in contrast to 23 schools for boys,¹³⁶ one may understand this lack. Nevertheless, the wartime conditions meant that Berin Hanım could not attend to school on a regular basis, but she learned French very well, and kept reading in French throughout her life.¹³⁷

When I asked Aydın Menderes whether his mother ever wanted to have a profession, or whether she ever wished for education in any special field, he replied that she was happy with what she became, that she never wanted to be a different kind of person. But, he continued, she continually said things like: "I wish we had such-and-such house," "I wished we lived in such-and-such place," or "I wish we lived in much more calm, far from this chaos".¹³⁸ Such statements might lead us to label Berin Menderes as a woman with domestic rather than intellectual concerns. On the contrary, as the wife of a Prime Minister, Berin Menderes was probably justified in yearning for peace and quiet; this should not lead us directly to dismiss her intellectual goals. In this sense the way of connecting these two issues, which Aydın Menderes did seemed striking to me. It represents the general argument about women's education that it was necessary for women to educate next generation properly.

In any case, education of women did not necessarily threaten traditional gender roles. Actually, according to Duben and Behar,

"Despite [the] developments [1913-1926], support for the traditional sexual division of labor was repeatedly featured in the family magazines and newspapers of the period: the husband being responsible for 'external affairs' (*umur-u hariciye*), which basically meant providing an income for the family, and wife for 'ordinary domestic affairs' (*umum-u adiye-i beytiye*), which meant running the house and raising children. What changed were the emphases, not the cultural definitions or actualities of the gender-based realms and responsibilities".¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Sevkettin Süreyya Aydemir, **Menderes'in Dramı**, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1969: 75.

¹³⁵ Interview, 2003: 8.

¹³⁶ Mehmet Ö. Alkan, "Modernization From Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism", **Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey**, Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), Brill, Leiden, 2000: 125.

¹³⁷ Interview, 2003: 9.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 12.

¹³⁹ Duben and Behar, 1991: 220.

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that gender relations are experienced differently based on different variables like class. As Tekeli argued, though work was a necessity for women of the peasant and industrial classes, it was not so common among the women of the bourgeoisie, and even denied by them.¹⁴⁰

2. Marriage: “I Never Thought I’d Marry a Farmer”

In 1928, Berin Hanım married Adnan Bey; at that time, he was engaged in farming as a big landowner in Aydın. When Adnan Bey had seen Berin Hanım and decided, he wanted to marry her. Berin Hanım’s mother Naciye Hanım told her daughter that a farmer from Aydın had asked for her hand and then asked her daughter’s opinion. Berin Hanım did not take this offer seriously. She said:

“...despite the fact that I was living in İzmir, I had no idea what kind of a city Aydın was, or how life as a farmer could be. I was raised as quite modern, compared with the time we lived in. I did not know that whether I could adapt myself to life on a farm. I had never been in Aydın, I had never seen it. Moreover, I was not so willing to marry a farmer...I wanted to marry someone who was a merchant, and had goods, property. Both my mother’s side of the family, the Evliyazades, and my father’s side of the family, the Yemişçibaşıs, was merchants. I could not imagine a different kind of marriage, for all marriages within our family were this kind of marriage. Besides, I was planning on continuing to live in İzmir. Leaving İzmir for Aydın, marrying a farmer...It seemed impossible to me...”¹⁴¹

Her resistance to the match was to be expected. It was in fact the rule for girls of the İzmir Westernized bourgeoisie to marry merchants or intellectuals who had considerable education and knew French.¹⁴² Berin Hanım’s mother¹⁴³ and brother planned to introduce Adnan Bey to Berin Hanım in a cafe which belonged to her uncle, where the family spent some time every

¹⁴⁰ Tekeli, 1977: 299, cited in Abadan-Unat, 1986b: 14.

¹⁴¹ Lütü Oflaz (1986a) “Berin Menderes Anlatıyor”, *Güneş Gazetesi*, 10.09.1986.

¹⁴² Henri Nahum, “1900’e Doğru İzmirli Bir Yahudi Ailesinin Portresi”, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Yaşamak*, François Georgeon; Paul Dumont (der.), Maide Selen (çev.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002: 204.

¹⁴³ When Berin Hanım was preparing for their weekly outing to the cinema, her mother came to her room and advised her daughter to pay special attention to her clothing (Oflaz, 1986d). Although the time was three years after the establishment of the Republic, the way she tells the story reveals that the Western style of domestic organization was already appropriated in their mansion. Indeed, in “...the early nineteenth century, important furnishing changes were taking place. At the port city of İzmir, homes of wealthy merchants were filling up with goods from Paris and London, including knives, forks, tables, chairs, and English fireplaces along with English coal. By the end of the century, chairs, tables, beds, and bedsteads had become relatively common in elite homes in İstanbul and the port cities and were spreading to inland cities and towns. As the new furniture moved in, the functions of Ottoman domestic spaces changed. Multi-purpose rooms of the past became single purpose. Separate bedrooms, living rooms, and dining rooms emerged, each filled with specialized furniture that could not be moved about or stored in order to use the room for another purpose” (Quartet, 2000: 153).

weekend before going to see movies. Berin Hanım, however, refused to meet him. Later on, he came to their house and they met and decided to marry.¹⁴⁴

Here it should be noted that arranged marriages were criticized broadly beginning with the *Tanzimat* era, and the practice was equated with backwardness. “By the turn of the century, some men and women of the elite came to regard love...[not affection]... as a proper stepping-stone to marriage”,¹⁴⁵ and especially after the 1908, “[l]ove marriages received greater legitimacy in the Ottoman İstanbul with the increase in modern publications...advocating a freer choice in such things”.¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, “[a]rranged marriage did not necessarily mean that the young couple did not see each other or even get to know one another before the wedding...The line between arranged marriages and love marriages was often not as clear as polemic about them would have us believe”.¹⁴⁷ Fersoy states that the Evliyazade family was a modern family, so it was quite normal for them to allow a young couple to see and know each other.¹⁴⁸ Thus, one can define a marriage as modern as long as the pair was allowed to meet to get to know each other, even if the match was not based on romantic love it could be replaced by affection. As can be detected in Berin Menderes’ statement, social status and class were still important factors in the arrangement of a marriage at the time.

¹⁴⁴ Oflaz, 1986a.

¹⁴⁵ Duben and Behar, 1991: 91.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 100.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 95.

¹⁴⁸ Orhan Cemal Fersoy, **Bir Devre Adını Veren Başbakan Adnan Menderes**, Mayataş Yayını, İstanbul, 1971: 41.



Berin Menderes and Adnan Menderes, in the first years of their marriage

2.1. Adnan Menderes

Berin Hanım had never thought she would marry a farmer,¹⁴⁹ and in fact, it was very difficult for her to imagine what a farmer would be like. In any case, Adnan Bey had a unique personality and would not have fit any stereotypes she might have had. Adnan Bey was from the famous Katipzade family of Aydın province. He grew up in Karşıyaka, İzmir, which he had said he remembered from his childhood. Adnan Menderes attended the American College

¹⁴⁹ Oflaz, 1986a.

in İzmir.¹⁵⁰ He also played football¹⁵¹ when he was 20 years old in the Gymnastic Society (*İdman Yurdu*), founded in the autumn of 1919 after the dissolution of the teams *Altay* and *Karşıyaka*. The team was composed of both the remaining players of these teams and students of the High School of İzmir (*İzmir Sultanisi*).¹⁵²

Aydın Menderes felt that because it was quite daring at that time for a provincial man to seek the hand of the daughter of such a family in Karşıyaka, his father Adnan Menderes must have had some unique qualities.¹⁵³ According to Aydın Menderes, his paternal grandfather was a friend of Refik Bey. Berin Hanım said that in the couple's engagement period, Adnan Bey used to come to their house, and her mother Naciye Hanım and Adnan Bey would talk about politics;¹⁵⁴ this may indicate that Adnan Bey was intellectual enough for her mother.

Although Adnan Menderes was interested in politics, according to Çulhaoğlu, he was younger than the generation of the men who led substantial changes in the Empire from the *Tanzimat* onwards.¹⁵⁵ That generation included those born between 1880 and the 1890s who were educated in state schools established during the *Tanzimat* era. They had had their political experiences during the *Meşrutiyet* and later on during the Balkan Wars, the First World War and the National Campaign. Adnan Menderes was born in 1899 and he was only nine years old during the *Meşrutiyet* and 18-19 years old when the First World War ended. So he was deprived of the educational experiences and spirit of that generation.

Although he had been drafted into the army just before graduation from the American College, his military service did not last long. While he was on the way to the Palestinian Front, he learned that the Mudros Armistice Agreement (October 30, 1918) was signed and went back to his farm in Çakırbeyli.¹⁵⁶ During the first years of the National Campaign, he organized an armed band called *Ayyıldız* (The Crescent and the Star) and fought against the occupation with Yörük Ali. After the establishment of a systematic army, he served in the Koçarlı Local Draft Office while continuing to farm in Çakırbeyli.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ Interview, 2003: 18.

¹⁵¹ Actually, football was first introduced into country in 1890 by the English resident in İzmir. The Turkish teams *Karşıyaka* and *Altay* were founded in 1912 and 1914 followed them (Umar, 1974: 236).

¹⁵² Umar, 1974: 238.

¹⁵³ Interview, 2003: 19.

¹⁵⁴ Oflaz, 1986a.

¹⁵⁵ Metin Çulhaoğlu, "Adnan Menderes: Demokrasi Şehidi mi, 'Demokrasi' Kurbanı mı?", **Homopolitikus, Lider Biyografilerindeki Türkiye**, Seyfi Öngider (der.), Aykırı Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001: 80-81.

¹⁵⁶ Interview, 2003: 11.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 19-20.

Adnan Menderes began his political life in the Free Republican Party (FRP) (*Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) in Aydın. Fethi Okyar founded the FRP on 12 August 1930 in accordance with Atatürk's wish to diagnose and control the rising opposition. The opposition was the outcome of two sets of difficulties: first, people involved in commercial agriculture were suffering from declining prices as a result of the Great Depression in the world market (1929), and second, the Republican People's Party was tightening political control within the country.¹⁵⁸ As a big landowner and a farmer in the region of İzmir, Adnan Menderes was probably among those who were dissatisfied with the existing situation.

The FRP attempt proved to be a short-lived experiment. After the FRP was dissolved in November 1930, Adnan Bey and the former FRP members were invited to the Republican People's Party and elected to the Assembly in 1931, an inclusion aimed again at reducing the opposition's power. In 1945 he, Celal Bayar, Refik Koraltan and Fuat Köprülü founded the Democratic Party (DP, *Demokrat Parti*). After the elections in 1950 he became the Prime Minister and remained in power until the May 27, 1960 coup d'état.¹⁵⁹ In that coup d'état, he and the DP deputies were imprisoned. After long court sessions, Adnan Menderes was sentenced to death and subsequently executed with two other ministers.

2.2. Berin Menderes: Wife of a Landowner in Çakırbeyli

Before Berin Hanım and Adnan Bey got married, they had agreed that the work needed on the farm necessitated their spending most of the year in Çakırbeyli. In winter, however, Adnan Bey had promised his wife that they would travel wherever she wanted: İzmir, İstanbul, or even abroad. Berin Hanım also extracted his promise not to engage in politics.¹⁶⁰

Berin Hanım became worried about political engagement after Dr. Nazım's execution. Dr. Nazım was the son-in-law of Evliyazade Refik Bey. During the days before the constitutional revolution of 1908, Dr. Nazım stayed in İzmir incognito. He rented a shop-apartment owned by Evliyazade Refik.¹⁶¹ Later, in 1912, he married Beria Evliyazade, the daughter of Refik Bey. A foreign company mentioned as "van-der-zi", which was probably a Dutch company named "van der zee" had sent the new couple to Salonica with a ferry as a

¹⁵⁸ Cem Emrence, "Politics of Discontent in the Midst of the Great Depression: The Free Republican Party of Turkey (1930)", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 23, 2000: 6.

¹⁵⁹ Ekrem K. Uykucu, *1919'dan 1973'e Kadar Cumhuriyet Tarihi Ansiklopedisi*, Kervan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1973: 181-184.

¹⁶⁰ Interview, 2003: 14; Oflaz, 1986a.

¹⁶¹ Nezihe Araz, "Soylu Bir Ailenin Öyküsü", *Hürriyet*, 07.03.1978a.

wedding present.¹⁶² Dr. Nazım was among the wartime leaders of the CUP who fled to Europe before 1918. After the establishment of the Republic in 1923, Dr. Nazım would no longer be among the establishing and governing elite. On the contrary, he was now among the accused during the trial of conspiracy against Atatürk in 1926.¹⁶³ Dr. Nazım, together with other suspects, among them the most important CUP members, was sentenced to death on 24 August 1926 and executed on the same day. He was among suspects who were sent to the Independence Tribunal in Ankara. Although this was certainly a political trial, it was not simply anti-Unionist. Rather, former Unionists were seen as potential competitors and dangers for Mustafa Kemal's leadership.¹⁶⁴

This was of course a catastrophic incident for the family, damaging their reputation and ability to identify themselves with Republican nationalism and ideals. Yet, as Aydın Menderes noted, Dr. Nazım was not a political icon within the family especially after the beginning of the National Campaign. The family did not share Dr. Nazım's critiques of Atatürk. Instead, they identified from then on with Tevfik Rüştü (Aras).¹⁶⁵ He had married Evliyazade Naciye's younger sister Makbule in 1912. He was one of the Western educated, intellectual and reformist men of the CUP. He had met Mustafa Kemal when he was in Salonica in 1918 and then became a loyal friend and colleague to him. From 1925 until 1938, when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk died, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs. When Tevfik Rüştü's daughter Emel married Fatin Rüştü in 1934, the wedding ceremony took place in the *Dolmabahçe Palace* with the honorary guest Mustafa Kemal in attendance.¹⁶⁶ In fact, from the very beginning, Dr. Nazım and Tevfik Rüştü Aras had belonged to opposing sectors in the Committee of Union and Progress. Thus, after the establishment of the Republic, Dr. Nazım was excluded, then eliminated. However, the family's closeness to the political elite led them to regard the incident with gravity. Just after the incident, Evliyazade Refik took his daughter Beria and his grandchild to Europe,¹⁶⁷ an act that can be explained as an attempt to both keep them away from the turmoil and to avoid any further political difficulties for the family.

It is also interesting to note that because Atatürk maintained a certain mystique as the commander of the national army and the founding father of the Republic; he was seen as exempt from making mistakes. Instead, Atatürk's Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü, became the

¹⁶² Nezihe Araz, "Soylu Bir Ailenin Öyküsü", *Hürriyet*, 05.03.1978b.

¹⁶³ For details, see Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905-1926*, Brill, Leiden, 1984.

¹⁶⁴ Zürcher, 1984: 156-160.

¹⁶⁵ Interview, 2004: 3.

¹⁶⁶ Nezihe Araz, "Soylu Bir Ailenin Öyküsü", *Hürriyet*, 14.03.1978c.

¹⁶⁷ Araz, 1978a.

lightning rod for criticism. It must have been much easier to criticize İnönü than to criticize Atatürk. In any case, Berin Menderes and her family might have preferred to differentiate between criticism of mutable politics and criticism of the Republic, identifying themselves with Republican ideals and nationalism despite changing political climates. Later, after Adnan Menderes was executed in 1961,¹⁶⁸ Aydın Menderes had a conversation with Berin Menderes that indicates how she felt about patriotism and its relationship with political allegiances. After the coup d'état of May 27, while watching the ceremonies of a National Holiday on the television, Berin Menderes was greatly emotionally affected. Someone present asked her: "Why, Berin Hanım, did you become so affected? That was the same army that executed your husband." She had replied as follows: "You never experienced any kind of foreign occupation, so it is impossible for me to tell you what this means to me."¹⁶⁹ As illustrated in this anecdote, Menderes's sentiments about the nation, like those of her mother Naciye Hanım, resemble patriotism. This patriotic manner was combined with a modernist perspective that she had held for some time before the establishment of the Republic.

Berin Menderes and Adnan Menderes spent the first years of their marriage in Çakırbeyli. They moved upon Adnan Menderes's election to the Assembly in 1931. Aydın Menderes depicts those early days as peaceful and full of harmony and love.¹⁷⁰ However, he thinks that the decision to leave İzmir for Aydın might have been a bold and brave step for his mother, because, for example, even electricity would not come to Çakırbeyli until 1973. Between Karşıyaka and Çakırbeyli lay not only kilometers, but centuries, according to Aydın Menderes.¹⁷¹ Berin Menderes might have been comforted on the road to Aydın by the presence of her piano, a vestige of her lifestyle in İzmir.¹⁷² No doubt, her bringing her piano along was emblematic of her intention to maintain part of that lifestyle. However, we might say that the woman traveling from İzmir to Aydın was still Evliyazade Berin, not yet Berin Menderes. When she finally decided to donate her piano to the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*), this indicated a deeper personal transformation since her time in İzmir.¹⁷³ The People's

¹⁶⁸ After the coup d'état on May 27, 1960 Adnan Menderes was imprisoned in *Yassıada* with all other members of the Democratic Party for 16 months. In the ensuing trials, he was found guilty, sentenced to death, and executed on September 17, 1961 (Uykucu, 1973: 181-184).

¹⁶⁹ Interview, 2003: 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 15-17.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 15.

¹⁷² Ibid, 10.

¹⁷³ The People's Houses were officially opened in February, 1932. "The decision to establish the Houses was an action supplementing [Kemalism] with the ultimate purpose of expanding modernization in all fields" (Kemal Karpas, "The People's Houses in Turkey, Establishment and Growth", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 17, Iss. 1/2, 1963: 58). In other words, the aim was to root the regime among the masses, especially the Anatolian masses, through adult education. The Houses contained nine sections: 1. Language and Literature 2. Finearts 3. Drama 4.

Houses were officially opened in February 1932. Adnan Menderes had joined the RPP in December 1931; thereafter, he became the deputy of Aydın in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Soon after, in May 1931, İsmet İnönü founded the government. According to Çelik, between 19 February 1932 and 4 March 1932, Adnan Menderes was the deputy responsible for the People's Houses, as head of the administrative committee of the RPP in Aydın.¹⁷⁴ Thus, one might argue that the family moved to Ankara in the first months of 1932 and Berin Menderes donated her piano to the People's Houses as part of this move. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the donation of the piano can be seen to symbolize a second phase in Berin Menderes's identity construction. Through Menderes's donation to the People's Houses, the piano—normally an item of furniture only in private houses of a certain social status and with certain levels of Westernization—hence entered the service of modernization and mass education, both centralized and administered by the hand of the New Republic.

3. Becoming a Low-Profile Spouse

3.1. Ankara: The Capital of Mustafa Kemal

Ankara, especially during the first decades after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, was where the spirit of innovation, optimism, hope and pride of the modernizing elite became concrete. The introduction of new architecture and city planning in Ankara not only represented the modernization and civilization of a small town through western principles, but also implied and modeled a new way of life for the Turkish people. Additionally, the fact that Atatürk resided in Ankara was one of the reasons Ankara became symbolic. In his novel titled *Ankara*, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu reveals the importance of Ankara for the nationalist and the republican imagination. *Selma*, the heroine, experiences a mental transformation during a tour of the city when she first sees the Mustafa Kemal House in Çankaya:

“This view [the Mustafa Kemal House in Çankaya] became an allegoric one in the eyes of Mrs. Selma. She felt humility in her heart similar to that felt when standing before sacred

Sports 5. Social Assistance 6. Classes and Courses 7. Library and Publications 8. Village Development 9. History and Museum (Karpat, 1963: 60). In 1951 the Democratic Party confiscated all their property and put an end to the People's Houses (Karpat, 1963: 67).

¹⁷⁴ Bilgin Çelik, “Tek Parti Döneminde Aydın'ın Sosyo-Kültürel Yaşamında Halkevi'nin Yeri”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, Sayı: 66, Cilt: 11, 1999: 40-41.

monuments. She thought for a while and then, when she raised her head, found everything around her to be different. This young woman was now seeing Ankara in a totally different way”.¹⁷⁵

As understood from Aydın Menderes’s stories of Berin Hanım’s life in Ankara, she shared such a mythic view of Atatürk. He said that “[Ankara] was a sacred city for people in those years. Before all else, Atatürk was there”.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, when asked about Berin Hanım’s relationship with Latife Uşakizade, Aydın Menderes said that Berin Hanım had always said that she was very sorry about Latife Uşakizade’s relationship with Atatürk; she used to say, “I wish it had not ended in that way”. Although Berin Hanım was very sorry for Latife Hanım, she used to find it impossible to criticize Atatürk because he was sacred for her.¹⁷⁷ Despite many reasons to criticize Atatürk, such as the execution of Dr. Nazım, Berin Hanım was like many who witnessed the foreign occupation and lived at that time; Atatürk meant the National Campaign and he was beyond any discussion.

Furthermore, Aydın Menderes said that although Ankara was a newly established city, it was extremely lively. The balls for the most part determined the liveliness of the city. Almost each governmental or social institution organized a ball for special occasions. When Aydın Menderes talked about the balls, he referred to the balls of the Republic. Nevertheless, Adnan Menderes and Berin Menderes had never attended the balls; moreover, Adnan Menderes did not pay any attention to his wife’s wish to attend.¹⁷⁸

The social significance of the balls provides hints of the context of the new way of life imposed by the modernizing authority. These balls were organized each year on the anniversary of the establishment of the Turkish Republic and were a ritual through which the Kemalist elite both showed off and enjoyed their new way of life.¹⁷⁹ Beginning with the first official Republican Ball in 1927 in Ankara, the balls became the embodiment of the new Western character of the Republic.¹⁸⁰ The women who attended the balls in Western evening dresses were prominently featured in the iconography of the regime as the “new women” created by the Turkish Republic.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Ankara*, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1964: 59.

¹⁷⁶ Interview, 2003: 7.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 7.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 27- 28.

¹⁷⁹ Durakbaşı, 2002: 137.

¹⁸⁰ Funda L. Şenol Cantek, “Yaban”lar ve Yerliler, *Başkent Olma Sürecinde Ankara*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003: 264.

¹⁸¹ Deniz Kandiyoti, “Patterns of Patriarchy: Notes for An Analysis of Male Dominance in Turkish Society”, *Women in Modern Turkish Society, A Reader*, Şirin Tekeli (ed.by), Zed Books Ltd., London and New Jersey, 1995: 311.

However, both the symbols by which the Kemalist elite represented their modernization and the actual ideas and styles they considered modern tended to alienate the masses from the Republican ideal. As explained by Karaosmanoğlu,¹⁸² “dress reforms, a national issue for many, had become a competition to be more and more *monden*”¹⁸³. From this viewpoint, one may imagine why Adnan Menderes did not want his wife to attend the balls: because of the masses’ alienation from the elite, he might have been privy to negative rumors about the balls. The notion that women in “immodest” party dresses danced with men there was anathema to the people.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, many people regarded the balls as a social activity of higher classes and as a symbol of ostentation.¹⁸⁵

Aydın Menderes agrees that because of these rumors it is understandable that his father had some moral reservations about attending Republican balls.¹⁸⁶ Although Adnan Menderes was not a well-known figure in those years, he was studying law at the University and spent most of his time either in the University or in the library of the Assembly; still, it was strange for a RPP deputy, according to Aydın Menderes, to refuse to attend the balls. Nevertheless, according to Aydın Menderes, Adnan Menderes behaved in this way in order not to give his family a bad name. All the same, Adnan and Berin Menderes used to meet with other deputies and their families, go out for dinner at the famous Karpiç Restaurant¹⁸⁷ (one of the prestigious venues in Ankara),¹⁸⁸ spend summers in İstanbul and in İzmir, go swimming, and so on. Thus, in Aydın Menderes’s words, they maintained their way of life.¹⁸⁹ Hence, considering the symbolic importance of the balls, what Adnan Menderes rejected was to be associated primarily with the Kemalist elite and with what the Kemalist elite represented as modern.

The political position that Adnan Menderes took as related to the balls was related to the recognition among politicians of the masses’ desire for non-elitist political alternatives.¹⁹⁰ The masses’ disapproval of elitist politics was compounded by their growing dissatisfaction with the strict economic policies of the RPP, especially during the Second World War. Recognition of this need was the basis for the nascent opposition and the embryo of the

¹⁸² Karaosmanoğlu, 1964: 99.

¹⁸³ The author means the French word *mondain* and uses it in a Turkish novel as it is pronounced. This proves that the French word *mondain* was part of the Turkish spoken language of the time, with the sense of being refined, elegant and European.

¹⁸⁴ Şenol Cantek, 1999: 266.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 272.

¹⁸⁶ Interview, 2003: 28.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 30.

¹⁸⁸ Şenol Cantek, 1999: 280.

¹⁸⁹ Interview, 2003: 29-30.

¹⁹⁰ Çulhaoğlu, 2001: 92.

Democratic Party. The policies that the Democratic Party pursued stemmed from this growing disapproval of elitism among the masses and the interests of certain social groups that supported the Democratic Party. “When the Democratic Party first challenged the People’s Party in the in the Eighth Assembly (1946)”, argues Frey,¹⁹¹ “extremely significant differences in social background distinguished the two parties. Substantially fewer Democratic deputies were ‘officials’...and more were ‘local’” than in the People’s Party. Similarly, “with the electoral victory of the Democratic Party in 1950, landlords and professionals...relied initially on small landowners, merchants, and craftsmen and families with an established social status in the local community...acquired government power and replaced the bureaucratic intelligentsia”.¹⁹² This victory also heralded a change in the “basic justification for strong rule”; the Democratic Party was no more the guardian of the the modernist reforms. For them the fact that the “basic reforms had been accepted by public and that no organized group challenged them, [meant that] most of the population had become familiar with the new way of life”.¹⁹³ Furthermore, they agreed to reverse the hierarchy of the modernization reform implementation. In the past, reforms had implemented from above, but it was seen as necessary to break this line of reforming in favor of a from-below approach.¹⁹⁴ The DP mobilized the elements of popular culture instead of administering cultural reforms, as had been done by the Kemalist ruling elite. Nevertheless, according to Sarıbay, the difference between the Republican People’s Party and the Democratic Party was small in sense of politics.¹⁹⁵ As Heper noted,¹⁹⁶ “the Democrats...were in effect opposed to the bureaucratic intelligentsia, not to the transcendentalist¹⁹⁷ state itself”. In this sense, the leaders and founders of the DP were not outside of this elite circle, but they still were compelled to

¹⁹¹Frederick W. Frey, “Patterns of Elite Politics in Turkey”, **Political Elites in the Middle East**, George Lenczowski (ed.by), American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, 1975: 64.

¹⁹² Kemal H. Karpat, “Ideology in Turkey After the Revolution of 1960”, **Social Change and Politics in Turkey, A Structural-Historical Analysis**, Kemal H. Karpat [et.al], Brill, Leiden, 1973a: 58.

¹⁹³Kemal H. Karpat, “Change and Modernization of Social Groups”, **Social Change and Politics in Turkey, A Structural-Historical Analysis**, Kemal H. Karpat [et.al], Brill, Leiden, 1973b: 320.

¹⁹⁴ Celal Bayar, **Başvekilim Adnan Menderes**, İsmet Bozdağ (der.), Baha Matbaası, İstanbul, 1969: 40-41.

¹⁹⁵ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, “The Democratic Party, 1946-1960”, **Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey**, Metin Heper and Jacop M. Landau (eds.), I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd., London, 1991: 126.

¹⁹⁶ 1985, cited in Sarıbay, 1991: 126.

¹⁹⁷ “...[T]ranscendentalism’ has been explained as the belief that man is first and foremost a member of a moral community. In its extreme manifestation, however, the state can be regarded as being immersed in the person of the ruler. Civil servants are virtually tools of the ruler. Thus, it is no wonder that the most valued characteristics of a government servant is his devotion to the person of the ruler. Such a state of affairs became even more apperaent during the later years of the DP. Indeed, similar to the Republicans, the Democrats sought to put all institutions under the party control.” (Sarıbay, 1991: 126-127).

emphasize their distance from elitism, which they criticized. Instead, to a certain extent, they focused on their commonalities with the masses for justification of their rule.¹⁹⁸

A second reason for Adnan Menderes not to attend the Balls arises from this last point: his abstention from the balls would be a means of differentiating himself from both society and politics of the Kemalist elite. As Aydın Menderes also emphasized, Adnan Menderes tried to keep his wife and his family out of politics whenever possible, except situations where protocol required their inclusion.¹⁹⁹ This holding his family life private in itself bore political meaning and would have been seen in opposition to the frequent public presences and active roles of both the wives of the Kemalist elite and Kemalist women. Hence, what Adnan Menderes had expected from his wife, in Aydın Menderes's words, was to be a *low-profile* spouse.²⁰⁰ This identity was maintained carefully and did not escape public notice.

3.1.2. Berin Menderes as a *Low-Profile* Spouse

When I asked Aydın Menderes whether Berin Hanım ever wanted to attend the Kemalist balls, his answer was “No, she did not.” Then he added that his mother never made this a big issue and that she did not object to her husband's decision at all.²⁰¹ Being a *low-profile* spouse was a role constructed for Berin Menderes by Adnan Menderes. In accordance with this role, she did not attend any social activity that might have political consequences, did not accompany Adnan Menderes on official trips to foreign countries, and did not appear in the press. However, it is not true that she never objected to this role. For example, when I asked Aydın Menderes whether there were any disagreements between his parents, he said that only official trips to foreign countries constituted a problem for his mother.²⁰² In all, she adapted successfully to her new situation,²⁰³ internalizing the identity construction of *low-profile* spouse and maintaining it throughout her husband's political career and even after May 27, 1960.

As I mentioned before, donating the piano to the People's Houses was a symbolic turning-point in the identity construction of Berin Menderes. In the same way, once it was

¹⁹⁸ Çulhaoğlu, 2001: 93.

¹⁹⁹ Interview, 2003: 26, 33.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 33.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 28.

²⁰² Ibid, 48.

²⁰³ Ibid, 55.

internalized, different aspects of this identity were maintained and stiffened by Berin Menderes's actions. She constructed herself as a *low-profile* spouse through self-abnegating behaviour. She behaved in accordance with how she was supposed to behave. This is most apparent during the years when Adnan Menderes was Prime Minister. During those years, even the domestic organization of their house changed according to the centrality of the Prime Minister.²⁰⁴ The biggest change in their private life was dinners where ministers, prominent figures of the Party, and deputies of the Assembly would meet and speak about politics. Organizing the menu, supervising the maids, preparing the table and sometimes welcoming the guests were among the duties of Berin Menderes. However, neither she nor their children joined them at the table. According to Aydın Menderes, those dinners represented the public sphere. He means the sphere of politics or that of the state, in the classical meaning of the term. "Only after the guests left and some familiar people stayed at the table, would my father call my mother or sometimes us [children] to the table to join them," he said.²⁰⁵

Contrary to her public image, Berin Menderes was interested in politics. In particular, she used to listen to the radio, read all the newspapers and follow the Party congresses.²⁰⁶ However, this was within the confines of a personal interest, because her presence in the political area was considered inconvenient. She tells an anecdote about a Party congress she attended:

"We never went together. I have never been next to him at the platform. I used to go to the meetings as an ordinary citizen. The last meeting I had been at was in Ankara in 1957...I became very excited after his speech. I could not help going towards the platform in order to congratulate him for his speech. I could go next to him with the help of people who knew me. Adnan saw me and said: "Wait, you cannot come to the platform. You may fall down and hurt yourself. I will come down". He came down and shook my hand..."²⁰⁷

Moreover, she adds, "In the past this was the rule. Unlike the wives of the prime ministers of today, I never used to go to the meetings and never stood next to him when he was giving a speech".²⁰⁸ Harika Yardımcı, who was wife of the one of DP ministers at the time, confirms this. She states that, at the time, the wives of the politicians were considered outside of the political climate, and they were very careful not to interfere with politics.²⁰⁹ Aydın Menderes said that beyond meeting the disapproval of Adnan Menderes, taking part in politics was

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 31.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 46.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 48.

²⁰⁷ Lütü Oflaz, "Berin Menderes Anlatıyor", **Güneş Gazetesi**, 09.09.1986b.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Nalan Kayhan, "Bir Demokrat Bakan Eşi", **Elele**, Ağustos, 1987: 36.

simply not a goal of his mother.²¹⁰ It seems again that she behaved as she was expected and supposed to behave. In addition, it can be suggested that her behavior supported the “rule”, i.e. the existing role definitions for women in society.

Although taking part in social organizations and associations was generally accepted as among the conventional roles of wives of political leaders at the time, Berin Menderes did not take part in these, either. Except a few tea parties or similar events, she avoided taking an active role in social life. It is sure that there was intensive demand for her membership or her support among social organizations, but according to Aydın Menderes, she was very careful about any engagement with organizations of any kind to avoid anything that might lead to an undesirable political situation.²¹¹

Similarly, her relation with the press typifies her role as a *low-profile* spouse. In the magazines published during the period in which Adnan Menderes was active in politics, it was possible to see interviews with, photographs of, or news about other members of the Party or deputies and their families. However, Berin Menderes appeared in the press neither alone nor with Adnan Menderes. Of course, there was public curiosity about her, but journalists were not informed about her activities and she must have refused their demands to interview her.²¹² There was perhaps a tacit agreement between the Prime Minister and journalists. Kemal Bağlum, who was a journalist at that time, tells an anecdote in his memoirs that may hint at such a tacit agreement:

“One day I visited Celal Yardımcı, the Minister of Education. Just before leaving, I told him that I entered the University. However, he replied, ‘Not yet, Mr. Kemal. I did not approve your appointment and I will not approve it’. I became surprised. I asked why, and his answer was: ‘The newspaper you work for is interfering in my *harem* every day. Sadun Tanju is writing about my family every day’.”²¹³

The way Yardımcı referred to his family, as his *harem*, is quite interesting. Such a usage is reminiscent of the conceptualization of the family life as sacred, segregated and even prohibited to outsiders.²¹⁴ Furthermore, it points out the patriarchy inherent in this conceptualization, which has the head of household determining access to his family (wife

²¹⁰ Interview, 2003: 48.

²¹¹ Ibid, 37-39.

²¹² Ibid, 43.

²¹³ Kemal Bağlum, *Anpolitik 1945–1960*, Bilgi Yayınları, Ankara, 1991: 108.

²¹⁴ For a broader discussion about *harem* see Leslie P. Pierce, *Imperial Harem*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993.

and children).²¹⁵ However, according to Mükerrerrem Sarol, who was the friend and colleague of Adnan Menderes, Adnan Menderes went wrong in keeping his wife out of his social and political life. Instead, he argues, he should have benefited from her wife's intellect, virtues and knowledge of foreign language.²¹⁶

At the same time, there was underlying public support for her position as a *low-profile* spouse. This identity construction was accordant with public opinion on the manner in which a wife of a political leader should behave. Among the journalists paying special attention to this issue was Jale Candan, who regularly appeared on the pages of *Akis* (Echo). *Akis* was known to be the publication of the Republican People's Party; its editor-in-chief, Metin Toker, was the son-in-law of İsmet İnönü's. In her article, Candan set boundaries for proper behavior for both a politician and his family. Here, it should not be overlooked that a politician was assumed to be male. Politicians were expected to pay a special attention to their private lives, she suggested. This is to say that they were supposed to behave in a morally upright or disciplined way. Not only politicians, but their wives as well should never forget that their lives were public. This, she continued, might require sacrifices from them, but they had to follow the rules of socially-accepted behavior.²¹⁷ In a different article, she described the role that both wives and female relatives of politicians must play to serve as good examples for the masses.²¹⁸ The article's underlying assumption was related to the measure of a woman's success in life. For Candan, the intellectual life of a successful woman did not affect her domestic duties as a housewife. If her public responsibilities adversely affected a woman's domestic responsibilities, she must abandon the former to focus entirely on the latter. "While carrying on our domestic duties", she wrote, "we can still console ourselves for being at least mothers or wives of intellectual and successful men."²¹⁹ This was in line with the hegemonic discourse related to women in those years.

²¹⁵ According to Islamic political theory, the father "...is the ruler who is entrusted by God with the keeping of this divinely ordained order" (Mardin, 1996, cited in Sirman, 2000: 168). Here, the father appears to be head of household. Duben (1985: 77) searches for an equivalent in Turkish for the English 'household' and chooses *hane*, which refers both to a building and to a social group. Although Duben (1985: 77) suggests that the terms 'family' (*aile*) and 'household' (*hane*) are used interchangeably, and 'family' sometimes may refer to conjugal kinship relations broader than the limits of an household, we may, for the sake of analysis, limit the term 'family' to the 'household'. What does family (*aile*) mean in Turkish? In Devellioğlu's **Ottoman-Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary** (1980: 25, cited in Duben, 1985: 77), *aile* is defined as "a person's wife" first, secondly "a relative," and thirdly as "the members of the household". So *father*, apart from its literal meaning, at once appears to be a husband. Thus he experiences his authority first with his wife and later on, over his children. In this sense, a woman becomes free from her father's authority by marriage, by leaving her own family, but immediately becomes dependent on her husband's authority.

²¹⁶ Mükerrerrem Sarol, **Bilinmeyen Menderes I**, Kervan Yayınları, İstanbul, 1983: 150.

²¹⁷ Jale Candan, "Kadın Gözüyle, Yanılmaya Gelmez", **Akis**, 21 Ağustos 1961a: 31.

²¹⁸ Jale Candan, "Misaller", **Akis**, 27 Ağustos 1955a: 68.

²¹⁹ Jale Candan, "Kadın ve Siyaset", **Akis**, 28 Mayıs 1955b: 55.

4. The Prevailing Discourse on Women

The Kemalist discourse of the previous decade persisted from the late 1940s until the 1960s. In this framework, women were seen as having been emancipated from the shackles of tradition and having become equal citizens to men. Women who had become teachers, doctors, deputies, engineers, and judges represented the success of the Kemalist modernization project. Nevertheless, praising women's domestic roles as mothers and housewives was still a great tendency of the popular press.

Articles that appeared in women's newspapers or magazines and on the women's pages of other publications presented a Kemalist view of the 'women's issue.' On the 32nd anniversary of the establishment of Turkish Republic, İffet Halim Oruz, editor-in-chief of *Kadın Gazetesi* (Women's Newspaper), stated: "Our womanhood gained the honor of being human and citizen in addition to the honor of motherhood through Republican reforms. In this way, Turkish mothers took their place among the women of civilized nations".²²⁰ Similarly, on the 35th anniversary of the Republic, she suggested, "the woman of the Republic is now doctor, judge, scientist, architect, engineer, politician, and deputy, but without losing her virtue as a Turkish mother".²²¹ The motto placed on the first page, next to the heading of the newspaper, is also interesting; it read: "Turkish woman! All rights were given to you by the Republican regime".

At the same time that the Republican reforms were lauded for bringing women new equality and opportunities, a kind of backlash led to attributing renewed value to women's domestic roles. In the *Kadın Gazetesi*, Leyla Kara pointed out the rise of propaganda about motherhood, especially in foreign magazines. At the same time, Kara herself suggested that reforms meant to enhance women's status in public life led to an imbalance in women's roles. Women had begun to work out of their homes because this was seen as a way to acquire public respect and equality. Housewives, according to Kara, were not seen during the reforms as as valuable as intellectual women. Women's foray into the public realm, however, came, according to Kara, at the expense of their being able to provide quality mothering. According to Kara, women as housewives and as mothers should be valued and allotted a high place in society by virtue of their importance in the domestic sphere.²²² Kara thus both describes the propaganda of motherhood and contributes to it with her article.

²²⁰ İffet Halim Oruz, "Cumhuriyetimizin 32. Yıldönümü", *Kadın Gazetesi*, Yıl: 8, Sayı: 368, 1.

²²¹ İffet Halim Oruz, "Cumhuriyetin Kadını", *Kadın Gazetesi*, Yıl:11, Sayı: 530, 1.

²²² Leyla Kara, "Analık Propagandası", *Kadın Gazetesi*, Yıl: 4, Sayı: 194, 13 Kasım 1950: 4.

Accordingly, in several magazines, it was argued that for women work was of secondary importance and could be abandoned in favor of domestic duties, which were regarded as equally respectable and constituting the primary duties of women. Motherhood supported the greater social good, which might trump an individual's work.²²³ Working mothers risked being held responsible for a dissolving family or a criminal child. In addition, it was argued that a woman could work only if her husband allowed her to do so.²²⁴

The popular dispute about work was related to growing pains surrounding the increasing numbers of women in the work force, especially in the West. On the other hand, that, women in work force had faced with the dilemma of double burden of professional and domestic work was necessitating organizational abilities of individual women as well as re-organization of social life. Hence, an article published in *Akis* defined the modern woman as a super-woman. According to the article, the "modern woman" was a "three-sided woman". She was supposed to balance the responsibilities of each of those three sides. The sides of a modern woman were the intellectual side, the emotional side and the practical side. In order to be successful in the intellectual side, the modern woman was supposed to: go to the cinema once a month, and to the theater or opera twice a year; to read at least six books a year; to improve her knowledge of modern architecture, painting, and music; to read newspapers regularly; and to learn at least one foreign language. The emotional side required that the modern woman discipline her emotions. She was never supposed to romanticize the lives of women who lived 50 years ago and be aware that reaching for happiness was possible only by being strong-minded. Lastly, on the practical side, the modern woman was supposed to keep step with the time and thus adapt to the new both in her appearance and in her house. Since the new era was an era of plastic, the article suggested, the modern woman must *be* plastic! This was meant in terms of practicality, but it seems to me more like an attempt to solve the contradiction among the various sides of the super-woman described.²²⁵ As explained by Barthes, the concept of plasticity implies the possibility of infinite transformation, the ubiquity rather than a substance.²²⁶ Women are evidently meant to bend to comply with their multiple modern role requirements, instead of unbendingly carving out new niches and roles for themselves. Thus, it seems that some social controls on women were in fact tightened with their new legal and occupational freedoms; "plasticity" may have been the patriarchal solution to restricting women in their new role definitions.

²²³ "Anneler Çalışmalı mı?", *Aile*, Cilt, 4, Sayı: 16, 1951: 57.

²²⁴ Ibid, 58.

²²⁵ "Modern Kadın", *Akis*, 20 Ekim 1956: 25-27.

²²⁶ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers (ed. and trans.), Hill and Wang, New York, 1957: 97.

The way magazines addressed women and the messages sent them at the time²²⁷ echo strikingly Friedan's "happy housewife heroine".²²⁸ In 1963, Friedan wrote her famous *The Feminine Mystique* in which she bemoaned "...experts telling women their role was to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers" and depictions of housewives as having "...no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity".²²⁹ According to her, though this barrage of messages was specific to the post-war years, it had become the "core of contemporary American culture".²³⁰

Friedan's work gained great popularity and had a deep impact, especially on feminism in the United States. However, it has not gone uncriticized. Meyerowitz criticized Friedan for focusing on the mass culture of the post-war era. According to Meyerowitz, magazine articles advocated both domestic and non-domestic ideas. She also suggested that in the sense of frequency and density of domestic messages imposed on readers, there was no clear-cut distinction between the pre-war era and the post-war era, and indeed, continuity between the two could be seen.²³¹ Another critique Meyerowitz raised was Friedan's easy association with liberal individualism and advocacy for women's public participation as a solution to mystified femininity.²³²

Nonetheless, there is no reason to deny the similarities between the domestic ideals imposed on women in Turkey and the United States of America in the post-war years. In fact, due to Cold War conditions, Turkey took sides with the U.S., which led to considerable interest in and imitation of the American lifestyle. In the case of Turkey, the "feminine mystique" was compounded by the mystification of the nationalist and the Republican ideals for women.

4.1. The DP's Stance on the Gendered Identity of Women

²²⁷ The weekly magazine *Aile* (Family) was a good example. Even the titles of the articles ("How Can A Married Woman Help Her Husband?" "Should Mothers Work?" "Do You Know How to Welcome Your Husband?" "Learn How to Control Your Husbands") reflected a message of domesticity, given explicitly or implicitly. It is worth mentioning that many of the articles published in *Aile* were translations from, mostly, American magazines of similar types (*Women, Parents' Magazine, Pageant*).

²²⁸ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1971: 33.

²²⁹ Ibid, 15.

²³⁰ Ibid, 18.

²³¹ Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958", *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 79, No: 4: 1477-1478.

²³² Ibid, 1481-1482.

As mentioned above, Candan emphasized that modern women differed from their grandmothers 50 years before, since, for her, the ‘women’s question’ had been solved by the Republic. In another article, she suggested that since women now had all legal rights and were emancipated, they should abandon an extreme “feminism” and work side-by-side with men to modernize Anatolia.²³³ Abadan also concluded that women in big cities like İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir had ‘arrived’—they were now similar to their Western sisters in sense of appearance and behavior: “...More and more women are taking their places in professional life.” She wrote, however, that outside the big cities women’s situation was more disappointing because of women wearing the black *çarşaf*. For Abadan, this was a clear example of backwardness in the rural parts of the country.²³⁴ The solution to the problem of the *çarşaf* was not a cultural transformation, which would take centuries, but an absolutist measure. Similarly, Candan described the *çarşaf* as representing a certain problematic state of mind.²³⁵ In another article written after the military intervention in May 1960, Candan noted the religious reactionary attitudes in the pre-coup years and criticized the DP for overlooking that increasing backwardness.²³⁶

Here, it is striking to note women’s changing perspectives on their own state of emancipation. As can be seen in the above examples, as western, urban, educated women started to consider themselves emancipated, they abandoned feminism. They focused their attention on women in the less-developed rural areas, whose communities still presumably needed to be modernized. In other words, as Kandiyoti suggested, “[i]n the 1950s, the discourse on tradition and modernity acquired a new dimension. Tradition was no longer used to designate Ottoman versus the West, but villagers and tribesmen versus the urban elite”.²³⁷ Henceforth, the *çarşaf* issue, which arose from the efforts of the DP administration to mobilize popular sections of the society, was regarded as a clear departure from the Kemalist modernization discourse on women. Candan retells an anecdote about the attitude of the DP on the *çarşaf* issue: When Adnan Menderes visited Kütahya (a west Anatolian city) after the 1954 elections; women wearing the “black *çarşaf*” welcomed him. They participated in the meeting with him in total silence. This, according to Candan, was the expression of their

²³³ Jale Candan, “Kadın Partisi”, *Akis*, 19 Ekim 1957: 25.

²³⁴ Nermin Abadan, “Kadın İnkılabı Ne Vaziyette”, *Akis*, 19 Haziran 1954: 24.

²³⁵ Jale Candan, “Atatürk ve Biz”, *Akis*, 3 Kasım 1956: 24.

²³⁶ Jale Candan, “Affedemeyiz”, *Akis*, 10 Haziran 1961b: 27.

²³⁷ Kandiyoti, 1995: 312.

gratitude and thankfulness to Menderes for his tolerance towards them. Menderes's tolerance of the *çarşaf* would have been inexcusable in "Atatürk's Turkey".²³⁸

However, regardless of the *çarşaf* issue, there were in fact similarities between the DP and Kemalist modernization stances relating to women.

In the first place, the DP followed the formal rules of the Kemalist discourse about women. In a public meeting in Konya, Menderes stated that democratic principles necessitated equality between men and women; thus, women's withdrawal from work life was unacceptable.²³⁹ The Woman's Newspaper (*Kadın Gazetesi*) saw his speech as guaranteeing women public status, because one of the main debates in those years was about women's work. In addition to the urban women taking their places in high-level professional life, there were also growing numbers of women participating in the work force on various levels. This was related for the most part with rapid urbanization. The urban population increased from 2.2 million to 3.9 million between 1927 and 1950. After the 1950s, Turkey was one of the countries worldwide with the highest urbanization rates.²⁴⁰ Men looking for work in the cities had to compete not only with each other but also with urban working women.²⁴¹ Therefore, a growing percentage of men disapproved of women's participation in the work force. Besides, women's participation in the work force was considered to be discouraging them to carry on their domestic duties, thus changing conventional gender relations.²⁴²

Another line of similarity between the DP and Kemalism concerned women's activism within the Women's Branch of the DP, foundations and women's organizations. At the time of the DP founding, those organizations or foundations mainly organized exhibitions or bazaars to raise money for social help. In this manner, women could find ways to cooperate with the government. The Woman's Newspaper (*Kadın Gazetesi*), for example, once invited the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes to a tea party organized to celebrate the thirteenth

²³⁸ Candan, 1961b: 27.

²³⁹ Sevim Nemlioğlu, "Başbakan ve Kadın", *Kadın Gazetesi*, 02.06.1952: 1-2.

²⁴⁰ Abadan-Unat, 1986b: 15.

²⁴¹ In 1955, 72 % of all women were economically active. In 1960, the proportion was 65, 4 %. Although there was a decline in the proportion of economically active women, there was indeed an increase in the employment of women in paid work. In 1955, 3, 8 % of all working women were working in paid work; in 1960, the proportion of them was 4, 9 %. In comparison, the proportion of women who worked as unpaid family labor, especially in rural areas, was 91, 4 %. The proportion of the women in unpaid family labor declined to 88, 1 % in 1960. This was because of the migration to the big cities. (*Türkiye'de Kadın 2001*, T.C. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara, 2001).

²⁴² Güven Bakirezer, "1960'ların *Hayat*'ında Kadın Kimliğinin Değişimi", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Sayı: 31, Cilt: 6, 1996: 41.

anniversary of the founding of the newspaper. He did not attend but sent a congratulatory message to İffet Halim Oruz, the publisher and editor in chief.²⁴³

However, at the time, none of the women's organizations was capable of creating a mass movement. This lack existed for two reasons. The first had to do with the perspective of the women's organizations; since the Republican reforms had presumably solved the 'women's question,' the only thing further for the women's organizations to do was protect the rights Republicanism had given them. Secondly, as it was in the Kemalist era (the 1930s), the women's movement was under the strict control of the state—in this case, the DP administration. For instance, the wives of all ministers and party deputies were members of the Women's Union (*Kadınlar Birliği*). The head of the organization was Nazlı Tılabar, who was also a DP deputy in the Assembly. Once, the members of the Union discussed organizing a meeting to protest the *çarşaf*. Although Menderes was not informed directly, they were warned indirectly by him not to attempt to do this. As explained by one of the eyewitnesses: “[Menderes] had antennae everywhere”.²⁴⁴

4.1.2. Construction of the Gender Role of Berin Menderes

Another aspect of the similarities between the two periods has to do with Berin Menderes's role. Berin Menderes behaved both in internal affairs and in external affairs in accordance with her role as the *low-profile* spouse. In external affairs, Berin Menderes upheld her duty as a representative of the modern Turkish woman. As mentioned before, she rarely appeared in the press; when she ever appeared, it was because of events requiring her to represent the modern Turkish woman. As Aydın Menderes explained, it was sure that Berin Menderes attended almost all welcoming ceremonies and official parties. Further, he stated that nobody could have claimed that she represented her country less than perfectly.²⁴⁵ This was harmonious with the hegemonic discourse about women as symbols of the modernization. As the Kemalists had inherited this idea from the late Ottoman era, similarly, in the multi-party system, the DP also inherited and maintained the symbolic importance of women in the modernization. Nevertheless, there was a difference, which is related with the gender role of Berin Menderes in internal affairs.

²⁴³İffet Halim Oruz, “Kadın Gazetesi Sosyal Hayatımız Üzerindeki Müspet Çalışmalarına Devam Edecektir”, *Kadın Gazetesi*, 02.04.1960: 1.

²⁴⁴ Nazlı Ilıcak, *Menderes'i Zehirlediler*, Dem Yayınları, İstanbul, 1989a: 228.

²⁴⁵ Interview, 2003: 36.

As explained above, the DP followed the formal rules of the Kemalist discourse on women. Yet, the DP broke with the Kemalists' Janus-faced approach. Although the Republican reforms were meant to lift traditional patriarchal limits on women's freedom, the Republicans had merely rephrased the old traditional gender relations in a secular and nationalist way.²⁴⁶ In other words, while the Kemalist discourse encouraged women to participate in public life, to get an education, and to become professionals, it simultaneously emphasized the importance of their domestic duties by nationalizing them.²⁴⁷ Therefore, by renouncing its role as the guardian of the reforms, the DP also gave up the state feminism and embraced femininity and domesticity as dominant in the gender role construction for women. The gender role construction of Berin Menderes as a low-profile spouse meant that her absence in politics was more than compensated for by her presence in the domestic sphere as a devoted wife and a mother. As can be seen by comparing the two photographs below, professional women were lauded as the modern face of a developed and civilized nation and the rights given to women were now taken for granted. They were expected to follow modernizing men to catch up with the modernization process. Nevertheless, competing role definitions created a double burden for women and slowed their progress. The constant debates about balancing work and family life and keeping step with modernity were expressions of this dilemma, couched in terms of maintaining social control over women through appropriation of sexual identities as Mosse explained.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Berktaş, 2003: 100.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 163.

²⁴⁸ See Introduction, 14.



Women were expected to follow modernizing men to catch up with the modernization process.



Women were lauded as the modern face of a developed and civilized nation

5. 27 May 1960 -- Military Intervention

Perhaps one of the most important events through which Berin Menderes stiffened her role as a devoted wife and mother and contributed to existing gender relations was the “baby trial”, as it was known. After the coup d’état, Adnan Menderes and all members of the government and deputies of the party were arrested and sent to Yassıada. During the Yassıada Trials, he was charged with various crimes, including violating the Constitution. The “baby trial” was the most well known trial. The court handled the baby trial first, on 31 October 1960. Surprisingly, this would be the only trial at which Menderes was acquitted. He was accused of killing his illegitimate baby just after its birth. During the baby trial sessions, the public heard about the illegitimate affairs of the former Prime Minister. Throughout the trial, Berin Menderes kept her silence, so much so that she did not even mention it in her letters to her imprisoned husband. The letters were under the strict censorship of the military court. In one of the letters, dated 8 November 1960, Adnan Menderes indirectly asked his wife whether she

was offended about anything.²⁴⁹ She replied to her husband as follows: “Is it possible for me to be offended by anything, when you are in such a bad condition? However, I am only a human being. Although I am trying to be patient and strong, at some moments I feel sad.... In spite of all misery I feel, I know that I must be strong for you and for our children”.²⁵⁰ It is apparent in her letter that Berin Menderes was having a painful experience, but it is also apparent that she does not seem to be surprised about her husband’s illegitimate relations with other women. Aydın Menderes confirmed this. He said that he had heard from his mother that she knew about those affairs in detail, beforehand. He added that, certainly, she had been unhappy and complained about the affairs to her close friends or to relatives, but in the end the family was not dissolved.²⁵¹

One of the popularized figures of the “baby trial” was of course Ayhan Aydan, a famous opera singer at the time. She had a relationship with Adnan Menderes and was the mother of the dead baby. She spoke as a witness in the trial and said that all she had wanted was to have a baby with the man she loved.²⁵² In a surprising way, she became a heroine. She escaped from social harassment and was even respected by the press. The way the press depicted her, as Saktanber suggests, was “directly related to the way in which women are socially defined.”²⁵³ After her behavior in the trial, Ayhan Aydan was not seen as a seductive woman but a miserable spouse and mother. Even Berin Menderes appreciated that she had behaved in an honorable way.²⁵⁴

5.1. Social Forgiveness and Berin Menderes as a Role Model after 17 September 1961

After Yassıada Trials, Adnan Menderes was found guilty and sentenced to death with his former ministers Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Hasan Polatkan. Fatin Rüştü Zorlu was the son-in-law of Tevfik Rüştü Aras. Hasan Polatkan was the former Minister of Finance. On 16 September 1961, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Hasan Polatkan were executed, and Adnan Menderes followed the next day. Just after the execution, on the pages of *Akis*, Metin Toker wrote: “On their day, the members of the Menderes family, the dignified mother and children, dealt with their

²⁴⁹ Nuriye Akman, **Elli Kelime Adnan Menderes’ten Berin Menderes’e Yassıada Mektupları**, Bensenol Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001: 135.

²⁵⁰ Nazlı Ilıcak, **Bitmeyen Hasret Eşi Berin Menderes’ten Yassıada’ya, Adnan Menderes’e Mektuplar**, Dem Basım-Yayın A.Ş. İstanbul, 1989b: 46.

²⁵¹ Interview, 2003: 48–52.

²⁵² Yassıada Yüksek Adalet Divanı Tutanakları, Bebek Davası, Cilt I: 15.

²⁵³ Ayşe Saktanber, “Türkiye’de Medyada Kadın: Serbest, Müsait Kdım ya da İyi Eş, Fedakâr Anne”, **1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar**, Şirin Tekeli (ed.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995: 163.

²⁵⁴ Interview, 2003: 50.

responsibilities in the best way.... Society condemned Adnan Menderes, but not his family”.²⁵⁵ Perhaps Toker’s words signify society’s forgiveness. Actually, rather than solely social forgiveness, Berin Menderes gained wide social recognition as a role model. As Aydın Menderes emphasized, they ceased to have a private life from the moment they learned that Adnan Menderes was executed;²⁵⁶ that moment delineates the last phase in the identity formation of Berin Menderes as a low-profile spouse. Like Latife Hanım, who never mentioned her marriage again after divorcing Atatürk, Berin Menderes also refrained from commenting on her own marriage. In fact, she appreciated that, by not talking about what she had experienced, Latife Hanım had preserved her dignity and allegiances.²⁵⁷ Aydın Menderes’s memories of his mother’s behavior are striking: “She did not want to talk. Of course, there was the mourning after May 27. She did not take a place in the press; she did not want to. The way of behavior that my father had once requested her to follow became the prevalent way of behavior for my mother after my father’s death”.²⁵⁸ It is certain that continuing this self-abnegating behavior after Adnan Menderes’s death made Berin Menderes a more persuasive role model. As Aydın Menderes noted above, ever since 17 September 1961, Berin Menderes was seen as a solid role model for Turkish women.

6. Conclusion

Women benefited from the opportunities gained through the Republican reforms. The Republican reforms aimed to create “the woman of the Republic,” who should be emancipated, educated, professional and active. Hence, women were encouraged to enter into public life. Yet, according to Gümüšoğlu, the ideal of “the woman of the Republic” was combined with the ideal of “the housewife of the Republic”. Gümüšoğlu reaches this conclusion by analyzing the textbooks used in primary schools between 1928 and 1998. She suggests that since it was impossible for all women to have a higher education and participate in professional life, housewives were allowed to feel valued through the interpretation of housework as a national duty.²⁵⁹ In fact, being “the housewife of the Republic” was an integral part of being “the woman of the Republic”. As mentioned earlier, this was the

²⁵⁵ Metin Toker, “Menderes Ailesi ve İstikbal”, *Akis*, 25 Eylül 1961: 9.

²⁵⁶ Muammer Yaşar, *Aydın Menderes Anlatıyor: Acılı Günler*, Tekin Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1987: 143.

²⁵⁷ Interview, 2003: 7.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 42.

²⁵⁹ Firdevs Gümüšoğlu, “Cumhuriyet Döneminin Ders Kitaplarında Cinsiyet Roller (1928-1998)”, *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998: 127.

solution through which the Kemalist modernization had superseded the traditional-religious patriarchy.²⁶⁰ However, the idealization of women's roles resulted in a dilemma caused by the disparity between "the ideal woman" and "the present woman".²⁶¹ This disparity became apparent after about 1945. Although more and more women were taking part in public life, Gümüsoğlu argues that after 1945 one may perceive the return of the "housewives".²⁶²

Berin Menderes, like her mother Evliyazade Naciye, had lived in a modern way, even before the Kemalist modernization, because they shared a cosmopolitan sociability with diverse elements in İzmir. The Kemalists sought to impose this type of modernization through political power, aiming to create a modernized middle class sociability based on nationhood. We can assume that since the Evliyazade family (and families like it) may have already felt "modern" and "civilized," they were reluctant to share ideal of a uniform, national and modern middle class sociability. While Berin Menderes's relation with Kemalism was based on patriotism and closeness to the governing elite, her gender identity construction was rooted in the elite and cosmopolitan experience of modernity. Yet, as the wife of the Prime Minister, she was suddenly supposed to present a good example to the modern Turkish woman. Although the gender role construction of Berin Menderes as a low-profile spouse was a denial of Republican norms for wives of prominent politicians, she was able to fill this role. Thus, the two-sided modernity of Berin Menderes fit contemporary social and political needs. She was on the one hand a subservient wife and a loving mother, and on the other hand a modern, elegant and intellectual woman.

Berin Menderes passed away on 22 April 1994, due to several health problems. The newspapers reported her death with few words. Among the newspapers, *Cumhuriyet* (The Republic) was most generous, reporting her death with two illustrative sentences, saying: "Berin Menderes, wife of former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and mother of Aydın Menderes,²⁶³ died last night at 23:30 hours in Ankara".²⁶⁴ According to the newspapers, the plan was to lay her to rest in the mausoleum²⁶⁵ where Adnan Menderes was buried; his body had been transported from the island İmralı, where he had been executed, and subsequently buried in the mausoleum. In the only interview conducted with her, in 1986, she had said that after her death, she would wish to be buried next to her husband, even though her status was different from that of Adnan Menderes. Even the wife of the Sultan Fatih, the Conqueror, had

²⁶⁰ See previous chapter, page 55.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 110.

²⁶² Gümüsoğlu, 1998: 127.

²⁶³ Aydın Menderes was in politics at that time.

²⁶⁴ "Berin Menderes Öldü", *Cumhuriyet*, 23 Nisan 1994.

²⁶⁵ "Berin Menderes Anıt Mezarı", *Cumhuriyet*, 24 Nisan 1994.

not been buried next to her husband.²⁶⁶ Yet, the cabinet announced a decree allowing her body to be buried next to that of Adnan Menderes.²⁶⁷

Berin Menderes was captured in the imagination of the nation as a real example of virtue and humanity.²⁶⁸ She was seen as a self-abandoning and loyal Turkish woman and as an extraordinary mother.²⁶⁹ In fact, national appreciation of Berin Menderes was related to the public traumas she had endured, both political and personal, and thus was to a degree mixed with a collective feeling of guilt. All the same, she took her place beside Mevhibe İnönü as a monument of modesty and self-esteem.

²⁶⁶ Lütfü Oflaz, “Berin Menderes Anlatıyor”, **Güneş**, 8 Eylül 1986.

²⁶⁷ “Berin Menderes Anıt Mezara Gömülüyor”, **Hürriyet**, 24 Nisan 1994.

²⁶⁸ Sarol, 1983: 150.

²⁶⁹ Fersoy, 1971: 534.

CHAPTER 4: RAHŞAN ECEVİT-STRIVE FOR MODERNIZATION

1. Reflecting a Modern Image

Husband and wife politicians Bülent Ecevit and Rahşan Ecevit both retired from politics on July 25, 2004, resigning from their positions as the president and vice-president of the Democratic Left Party (DLP, the *Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP) at the General Assembly of the DLP. On the same day, one of the most prestigious and popular newspapers in Turkey, *Milliyet*, published an interview with the Ecevit. The interview was made by Can Dündar at the DLP Building, who also took the accompanying photographs at the Lake of Eymir, in the countryside close to Ankara. In one of the photographs, Rahşan Ecevit is sitting in an armchair and Bülent Ecevit is standing next to her. Below that photograph, Can Dündar explained why they posed in this way: “When the ‘king’s armchair’ was brought, Rahşan Ecevit said: ‘Let it be a modern view; I will sit and you stand next to me’”.¹



¹ Can Dündar, “Hayallerine Kavuştular”, **Hürriyet**, 25 Temmuz 2004.

It is fascinating to note that Raḡsan Ecevit was concerned with reflecting a modern image while they posed for the last time before leaving politics.

On their retirement, Bülent Ecevit gave his last speech for the General Assembly of DLP. The speech was a summary of his political career in the Republican Peoples' Party (RPP) until 1980 and in the Democratic Left Party (DLP) after 1987. In the beginning of the speech, he thanked his wife and vice-president Raḡsan Ecevit for her efforts in the period of the foundation and organization of the DLP. At that time, he had been banned from engaging in politics after the coup d'état of 1980. The audience applauded his words vigorously. Towards the end of the speech, Bülent Ecevit invited Raḡsan Ecevit to the platform. When they were together in front of the audience, he said that Raḡsan Ecevit and he had a dream before they married: that they would live in a place far from the city. He would write poems and she would paint. Now, he said, they hoped to accomplish this fifty-year-old dream. They left the platform in a flood of applause. The audience affirmed the conjugal commitment, which Bülent Ecevit underscored in his speech.

When examining Raḡsan Ecevit's life story, modernity and the conjugal commitment appear as important areas for analysis. They strongly interconnected with each other, relating socio-psychological patterns of gender experience to socio-political patterns of gender regimes. Her life story, understood along these lines, enables us to think about strategies of empowerment in a hierarchically constituted gender regime.

2. To Be Born into the New Republic

Raḡsan Ecevit was born in İzmir in 1923, two months after the Turkish Republic was established. When she reached the age of three, her father was appointed to the directorship of the National Bank, the *İtibar-ı Milli Bankası*. Thus, the whole family moved to Ankara and started to live in a newly-established quarter of the city, *Yenişehir*. Due to her father's work, the family moved again, to İstanbul, where, she attended primary school and part of secondary school. Finally, the family returned to Ankara and resided in Yenişehir, but this time in an apartment building.² Living in an apartment in Yenişehir meant that one was a member of the upper middle class in those years in Ankara.³ This class comprised mainly

² Mehmet Çetingüleç, **Raḡsan**, Sabah Kitapları, İstanbul, 2000: 11.

³ Funda L Şenol Cantek, "**Yaban**"lar ve Yerliler, **Başkent Olma Sürecinde Ankara**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003: 112.

members of the bureaucracy who embodied the cultural preferences of the new Republic, and were supposed to be the new face of Ankara.⁴

Rahşan Ecevit's father Namık Zeki Aral had studied finance in the Faculty of Political Science (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*),⁵ and law in the Faculty of Law, in İstanbul. After he graduated from the faculty in 1912, he went to France for one year for an internship in the Ministry of Finance.⁶ In 1913, he returned to Turkey. He worked as mainly as a state officer in various positions, taught at the Faculty of Political Science from 1921 to 1923 and later from 1941 to 1944,⁷ and wrote articles in many newspapers such as *Ulus*, *Halkçı (Yeni Ulus)*, *Yenigün* and *Türkiye İktisat Gazetesi* from 1946 until 1972 when he died.⁸ His father, Halil Bey, was a migrant from Anatolia and had worked as a machinist on a ship in İstanbul for some years.⁹

Rahşan Ecevit's mother Zahide Aral's family was from Trabzon (a city in Turkey in the coast of Black Sea) but living in Heybeliada in İstanbul. Her grandfather on her mother's side was a navy officer. He had died when Zahide Aral was quite young.¹⁰

Rahşan Ecevit has two sisters and one brother. Her brother, an engineer, and one of her sisters, a librarian, lives in the United States; her other sister has a shelter for street dogs in Ankara.

2.1. Being A Woman in the New Republic

Rahşan Ecevit explained what it meant to be born into the New Republic as such: "We are all from the first group of people in Turkey who internalized and practiced the Republican values. And also we are the people who experienced the difficulties of transformation".¹¹ When I asked her what it was like to be a child or a young person in those first years of the Republic, she spoke directly from her own experience. Even the flow of dialogue during our interview was informative. First, Bülent Ecevit attempted to answer, but Rahşan Ecevit

⁴ Ibid, 154.

⁵ Mekteb-i Mülkiye was found in 1859 in İstanbul. First, it was a vocational school aiming to train skilled state officers to meet the needs of the reformed state administration. After the foundation of the Republic, by the decree of Atatürk it moved to Ankara in 1936 and became a four-year School of Political Sciences. In 1950, the school became one of the faculties of Ankara University. Having called Mülkiye since its foundation, graduates of Mülkiye put a mark on social and cultural life of Turkey as well as political administration.

⁶ Enver Yeniçeri, "Yakın Dönem Fikir Tarihimizde Namık Zeki Aral", T.C. Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Siyaset ve Sosyal Bilimler Bölümü, Unpublished Master Thesis, Ankara, 2003: 9.

⁷ Çetingüleç, 2000: 11.

⁸ Yeniçeri, 2003: 7.

⁹ Çetingüleç, 2000: 10.

¹⁰ Ibid, 10.

¹¹ Ibid, 13.

interrupted him at once and said, “As a man, of course it was easy for you!”¹² The rest of the dialogue made it clear that Raḥşan Ecevit’s story was different from that of her husband because of her gendered experience of modernity.

First, both emphasized that there was a difference between Anatolia and the big cities like İstanbul and Ankara in terms of the modernization experience. Although Ankara was in the Anatolian part of the country, what they meant by Anatolia was the rural and undeveloped regions. Raḥşan Ecevit added that in the beginning of the modernization there was still an Ottoman character in people’s lifestyles and thought. Bülent Ecevit said that in the first years, the new regime put its mark on everything in the big cities. Those cities were clear examples of Republican ideals. Yet when migrants who were not used to the lifestyle in the big cities began to come to the big cities, the cities tended to change gradually. Raḥşan Ecevit seemed to agree with this explanation, but when asked again she said, “Well, it was easier for men. It was a transition from a blinkered situation to a free society. It was a difficult experience. Maybe it was not so much apparent in Anatolia, but it was so in the big cities. I experienced those days”.¹³ Quite contrary to what Bülent Ecevit said, she stressed the psychological, social and historical processes of the gendered experience of the modernization. Moreover her words highlight the fact that during the first years of the Republic, the big cities—Ankara, in this case—were not only places where physical and symbolic (re)construction took place, but also battlefields where the values, habits and worldviews of the past met with the those of the Kemalist modernization.

Raḥşan Ecevit continued to tell about her gendered experience of the modernization by mentioning two groups of indicators: women’s styles and women’s education. The first group of indicators was about women’s styles. Although, this was a vital issue upon which Atatürk occasionally touched in speeches, it had never been subject to law. The Dress Code of 1925, while forbidding wearing traditional clothes for men, had not referred to women’s clothes, even to the veil.¹⁴ However, women’s styles were in flux, heading toward a western, modern and fashionable style. Yet, as Raḥşan Ecevit told, the transition was not always so smooth:

¹² Interview conducted with Raḥşan Ecevit and Bülent Ecevit, Ankara, 31.07.2004: 5.

¹³ Ibid, 6.

¹⁴ Zehra F. Arat, “Kemalizm ve Türk Kadını”, **75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler**, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998: 55.

“I remember that my mother used to wear her hair in a bun. It was a common hairstyle for the majority of women in those times¹⁵. In the past, nobody used to have short hair. Afterwards, it became a fashionable hairstyle for women and everybody rushed to hairdressers to have a haircut. Since my mother was very upset about her bun, by struggling very hard, she got permission from my father and had a haircut. I mean my mother had great difficulty to be able to do so. [...]”¹⁶ “Well, in the past we did not used to wear half-sleeve dresses. We had tragic events in the family in order to be able to wear those kinds of dresses. My mother used to sew our clothes. One day she sewed a half-sleeve dress for my older sister. When my older sister wore it, it was like the end of the world”.¹⁷ “[...] my father got furious. He did not allow us to wear those dresses. Some time passed and he, although unwillingly, adapted himself to the milieu and finally we were at ease”.¹⁸



Young Raḩan smiling happily in a half-sleeve dress

¹⁵ She compared having the bun to traditional and religious forms of clothing for women of the past, like covering one's head (Interview conducted with Raḩan Ecevit, Ankara, 08.01.2005: 2).

¹⁶ Interview, 2004: 6.

¹⁷ Ibid, 6.

¹⁸ Ecevit, 2005: 2.

The second group of indicators was about women's education. As Raḥşan Ecevit told me, although he resisted the changes in women's styles, her father saw his daughters' education as important. Wishing his daughters to learn English, he had sent two of them to the American College for Girls¹⁹ in İstanbul.²⁰ Moreover, he wished his wife Zahide Hanım to learn a foreign language and to be more literate. Since Zahide Hanım was the mother of four with no assistance, unfortunately she could not attain this, despite her husband's wishes. Raḥşan Ecevit said that her mother Zahide Hanım had no education but had learned to read in the Ottoman script by herself. It was difficult for her when the Latin alphabet was then adopted in 1928, but she wanted to be able to read the newspapers, so Raḥşan Ecevit explained that she had learned how to read in Latin script by herself.²¹

That Raḥşan Ecevit's father both resisted the changes in women's fashions and supported his daughters in their education and in learning a foreign language was not a contradiction. Raḥşan Ecevit explained her father's attitude in relation with both the ideas toward women of the modernizing elite of the Late Ottoman era and those of the Kemalist modernization; she said that her father was attached to both old and new. Beginning with the Late Ottoman modernization, educating women had become a vital concern for the modernizing elite. They saw educated women as key to social progress. Educated women were supposed to first—as mothers—raise the next generation properly, and then to contribute to society in other ways. Once they had education, they would be emancipated and women's emancipation would save the country. Kemalist modernizers, the heirs to westernized, progressive, elite men of the former generation, considered women's emancipation in a similar framework but at the same time understood it in a national framework as a vital element of the cultural model of the state.²²

As the modernizing men were the main actors and those who determined the discourse of modernization, women needed their consent and support to keep in step with modernization. This was a case especially for the relations between fathers and daughters.

¹⁹ By the suggestion of Cyrus Hamlin, who was the founder of Robert College, and with the initiative of the Women's Board of Missions of Congregational Church, the American College for Girls was founded in 1871 in İstanbul with the name "The Home School for Girls at Constantinople." In 1908, the school gained independence from the Missionary Board, and with the Second Constitutional era started to accept Muslim pupils as students. In 1971, the school was combined with Robert College under the name of the "İstanbul American Robert High School," which remains in existence today (Zafer Toprak, "Arnavutköy Amerikan Kız Koleji", **Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi**, Cilt 1, Ana Basım A.Ş., İstanbul, 1994: 316-318).

²⁰ Ibid, 4.

²¹ Ibid, 3.

²² Ayşe Durakbaşı, **Halide Edip, Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002: 117.

Modernization choices by a girl were often based on a deal between father and daughter, as illustrated by the experience of Rahşan Ecevit and her father.

From this point further, it is crucial to take a close look at the deal between father and daughter. In addition, it is important to examine the characteristics of being a man in the early Republican period with a focus on Namık Zeki Aral, Rahşan Ecevit's father, to be able to understand how it could be possible to be attached to both the old and the new.

2.2. Fathers and Daughters

2.2.1. Namık Zeki Aral: A Man of the Modernization, a Father of the Republic

As Rahşan Ecevit mentioned, her father Namık Zeki Aral was attached to both the old and the new. She offered an example to explain how unwillingly he accepted change. She told that Namık Zeki Aral could not throw the *fez*²³ away easily. He could not wear a hat at first.²⁴ The vividness of her memory about Namık Zeki's unwillingness to wear a hat, especially relative to Rahşan's young age when The Dress Code was introduced in 1925, highlights how memorable the hat issue was for the family at a time.

As mentioned above, The Dress Code of 1925 forbade wearing traditional clothes for men. In the Ottoman era, the type and color of clothes and headgear had signified the rank, origin and ethnic identity of men and underlined differences in society. However, a western type of clothing for men (hat and tie) equalized their look and their distances from both others and the state. Moreover, wearing western-type clothes implied loyalty to the new regime.²⁵

One of the most symbolic changes in men's clothing was the change in headgear. Although the choice of western type of hat or a *fez* had been the indicator of being "western" since the late Ottoman era, The Dress Code of 1925 ended this debate with an official tone. It found its expression in Atatürk's words in *Nutuk* (The Speech):

"Gentlemen, it was necessary to show that the Turkish nation is not different at all from civilized social life in sense of mentality. We accomplished this by discarding the *fez*, considered the mark of ignorance, unwariness, bigotry, and opposition to progress and

²³ "[On] 3 March 1829 dress code issued by the Sultan, which required all civil servants, with the exception of those in religion, to wear the 'modern' outfit of a frock coat with a high standup collar, one row of buttons, and an above the knee cut, white collared and starched shirts, neckties, narrow pants, an a *fez*" (Fatma Muge Goeck, **Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire**, Oxford university Press, New York, Oxford, 1996: 83).

²⁴ Interview, 2004: 7.

²⁵ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Modernizmin Cinsiyeti: Türk Modernleşmesi Araştırmalarında Eksik Boyutlar", **Türkiye'de Modernleşme ve Ulusal Kimlik**, Sibel Bozdoğan; Reşat Kasaba (eds.), Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, 1988a: 33.

civilization; and instead of the *fez*, wearing the hat regarded as headgear by the civilized world”.²⁶

The borderline between the old and the new was obvious. The preferences of the Kemalist modernization as regarded men’s fashions also gained an authoritarian tone. Later in his speech, Atatürk called those who opposed The Dress Code reactionaries and reminded listeners that some who opposed it found themselves in front of the Independence Tribunals²⁷. Therefore; the cultural preferences of the Kemalist modernization were presented as strictly bound with the idea of the secular nation-state. Sarıbay explained that non-religious protests against the centralist, secularist bureaucracy were by and large merged with religious opposition.²⁹ As explained by Kadioğlu, this merging was strongly related to the meaning of Turkish secularism and is important to the notion of the opposition in general. According to her, Turkish secularism has nothing to do with separating religion from the state affairs, but is instead synonymous with modernization, that is, nationalist modernization.³⁰ For this reason, it has always been troublesome either historically or theoretically to differentiate liberal contestation of nationalist modernization from religious fundamentalism.³¹ So in order to understand how the cultural preferences of Namık Zeki Aral departed from those of Kemalist modernization, it is crucial to show the relationship between his political thought and nationalist modernization.

As a student, Namık Zeki Aral, had had connections with the *Teşebbüs-ü Şahsi ve Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti* (Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization), founded and headed by Prince Sabahattin.³² Namık Zeki was among those who organized the *Cemiyet-i İnkılabiye* (Society for Reform) a secret society of students, in 1904. *Cemiyet-i İnkılabiye* was

²⁶ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, **Nutuk**, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1967: 894.

²⁷ Independence Tribunals (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*) were set by the adoption of High Treason Law (*Hıyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu*) in 1920. The aim was to suppress local or regional rebellion against the new regime. As a counter measure of the nationalists, the Independence Tribunals played an effective role in suppressing resistance toward nationalist, modernist regime. (Erik Jan Zürcher, **Turkey, A Modern History**, I.B.Tauris and Co Ltd Publishers, London and New York, 2001: 159).

²⁸ Atatürk, 1967: 896.

²⁹ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası*, Milli Selamet Partisi Örnekolayı, Alan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1985: 90.

³⁰ Ayşe Kadioğlu, “Laiklik ve Türkiye’de Liberalizmin Kökenleri”, **Defter**, Bahar, No: 33, 1998: 63.

³¹ Ibid, 43.

³² Prens Sabahattin (Prince Sabahattin) in Paris founded the *Teşebbüs-ü Şahsi ve Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti* (Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization) in 1902 (Tarık Zafer Tunaya, **Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler 1859-1952**, Arba Araştırma Basın Yayın, İstanbul, 1952: 142). He was the son of an Ottoman prince Mahmut Celalettin Paşa who fled to France in 1899. Prince Sabahattin was in favor of liberalism and appeared to be a rival to Ahmet Rıza among Young Turks. The split became apparent in the first “Congress of Ottoman Liberals”, organized by Prince Sabahattin in Paris in 1902. According to Zürcher, Prince Sabahattin founded first the “Society of Ottoman Liberals”, then the Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization in 1906. He and his organization attempted a *coup d’état* with the help of Ottoman garrison in Tripolitania but it failed (Zürcher, 2001: 92-93).

organized in İstanbul in order to put the constitution of 1876 into effect again. The society built up connections with the Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization and later became its branch in İstanbul. After the declaration of the second constitution in 1908, the Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization moved to İstanbul and joined the CUP. Then, in the face of the threat that ideas for private initiative and decentralization might melt into air within this union and after consulting with Prince Sabahattin, the founders of the Society for Reform founded an association to continue the inquiries of the Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization in scientific and cultural areas. The association, the *Nesl-i Cedid Kulübü* (the Club of the New Generation) was founded in 1908 in İstanbul and continued its activities under the honorary presidency of Prince Sabahattin. Namık Zeki was among the founders of the Club of the New Generation. The club's activities included both publishing original pieces and translations, and organizing panel discussions. Among the published works was Namık Zeki Aral's translation into Turkish of Edmond Demolins' "Comment a Route Crée le Type Social" as *Yollar* ('Routes'). The club kept Prince Sabahattin's doctrine alive in a period when CUP was at the top of its popularity.³³ From 1913 on, when CUP established its power as the governing party within the monarchy, due to the weak political credibility of Prince Sabahattin's liberalism, the club was engaged, for the most part, with translations from Demolins.³⁴ Overall, not much is known about further political activities of Namık Zeki Aral, besides that Rahşan Ecevit said that he did not have any political engagement or membership in any kind of group or political party.³⁵ Nurettin Ege did, however, mention him as an intellectual who appreciated and followed Prince Sabahattin's doctrine.³⁶

According to Sabahattin, all the problems which the Ottoman Empire faced resulted from the fact that it bore a communitarian character with a social base, rather than an individualistic character³⁷ founded on the principles of private initiative and decentralization.³⁸ Although he was considered largely as the pioneer of liberalism, Prince Sabahattin was inspired by conservative sources like Le Play, Paul Descamps, Edmond

³³ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908-1918*, Cilt 1, Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1984: 399-401.

³⁴ M. Şükrü Hanioglu "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Meslek-i İçtima Akımı", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt. 2, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1984: 385.

³⁵ Interview, 2005: 2.

³⁶ Nezahet Nurettin Ege, *Prens Sabahattin, Hayatı ve İlmi Müdafaaları*, Fakülteler Matbaası, İstanbul, 1977: 444.

³⁷ Hanioglu, 1984: 383.

³⁸ Sabahattin, 1910, cited in Nurettin Ege, 1977: 210.

Demolins, and theorists of biological materialism and social Darwinism;³⁹ his liberalism should be seen in his resistance to the CUP.

Rephrasing the question of whether Namık Zeki was a devoted follower of Prince Sabahattin, it seems more reasonable to consider him as an intellectual who shared Sabahattin's belief in private initiative and skepticism about centralization. In the face of the recent socialist and communist threat,⁴⁰ he seems to have translated the question of the communitarian/individualistic social order of Prince Sabahattin into the question of the socialist/individualist social order. He even went so far to suggest that liberalism was the social order demanded by the Koran.⁴¹ However, although criticizing its bureaucratic centralism, he approved of Kemalism as related to economic principles by suggesting that Atatürk's étatism was in the direction of a mixed economy, because of the measures to improve and strengthen existing private initiative for the sake of economic development.⁴² He was also critical of the anti-democratic administrations of both the single-party period under RPP rule and the DP period after the 1950s.⁴³

Because Namık Zeki was closer to the actual sources of liberalism due to his education, and he had considerable experience in practical matters due to his career in the state bureaucracy, he was more realistic than Sabahattin in discussions about liberalism and private initiative. He also suggested that it was necessary to take measures to ensure social justice, not because of socialist or communist pressures, but because liberalism could be sustainable only with these measures.

With respect to the cultural preferences of Namık Zeki, Raşan Ecevit told me that the family had a modern way of life, at least partly intentionally. She said that they ate while sitting around a dinner table. She remembered that her father, who as a boy used to eat sitting on the ground in a one-leg-bent position, tried very hard to sit in an 'appropriate' way while eating. Insofar as Namık Zeki was a state official and the family had to move quite often, Raşan Ecevit said that they had a portable dining table and a set of chairs which were quite practical but also adorned with carved daisy figures.⁴⁴

³⁹ Hanioglu, 1984: 382.

⁴⁰ Namık Zeki Aral, **Toplumumuzda Doktrin Tartışmaları**, Türkiye Ticaret Odaları, Sanayi Odaları ve Ticaret Borsaları Birliği Yayını, Ankara, 1965: 163.

⁴¹ Ibid, 80–86.

⁴² Ibid, 558.

⁴³ See Yeniçeri, 2003: 20-42.

⁴⁴ Interview, 2005: 1.

Namık Zeki was a religious person, but not, as Raḥşan Ecevit told me,⁴⁵ the type to continuously attend mosque or regularly practice the five-times-a-day prayers.⁴⁶ Even when he did not allow his daughters to wear half-sleeve dresses, it was not because of religious rules about women's clothing, but because he found them inappropriate.

To sum up, considering both his early affiliation with the doctrine of Prince Sabahattin and his oppositional position throughout the Republican era, the cultural preferences of Namık Zeki Aral appear to relate to his dissatisfaction with the wholesale and fundamental changes in society implemented by the centralist rule. Thus, because of his dissatisfaction with the change which was “gradual and revolutionary in the Kemalist mode”, it is possible to describe him as a “post-independence conservative” to evoke what Frey⁴⁷ wrote in denoting the Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*).⁴⁸ Nevertheless, as will be presented below, Namık Zeki Aral was a man of his time with respect to the need to modernize women; he was in agreement with the Kemalist modernizers about the patriarchal credentials of their social order, which had found clear expression in the Civil Code in 1926. While the Civil Code institutionalized women's rights and women's equality to men, it nevertheless ensured men's hegemony over women as head of households by equipping them with the tools to realize and maintain that dominant position.

2.2.2. A Deal between Father and Daughters

According to Kandiyoti,⁴⁹ Kemalist modernization redefined the model of an ideal man as related to the earlier ideas of a modern man. Accordingly, the modern father who had closer

⁴⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁶ His position was clearly liberal about the secularism in Turkey: “A secular state means to be a state which remains neutral towards all religions, all religious orders, all belief systems and never intervenes into one's own religion and religious feelings” (Aral, 1960, cited in Yeniçeri, 2003: 52). Moreover, he stated: “We don't mean here to replace the principle of secularism in the Constitution by an expression that ‘The state's religion is Islam’. [Rather] the principle of secularism [...] ought to be practiced in a proper way. [...] So it is necessary to leave religious matters to the Muslim community” (Aral, 1970, cited in Yeniçeri, 2003: 55).

⁴⁷ Frederick W. Frey, **The Turkish Political Elite**, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1965: 325-330.

⁴⁸ “Examined from the most general perspective, the opposition that culminated in the Progressive Republican Party can perhaps be characterized as that of the ‘Post-Independence Conservatives’. Most nationalist movements have as their paramount initial goal the acquisition or maintenance of independence for their country [...] Once independence is achieved, dissention sets in. Divergent views of the most desirable future program for the nationalist movement come to the fore and are contested. The conflicting opinions are either reconciled to some degree, dominated by a single vision, or else linger on the scene, unreconciled, to produce a disability that leads eventually to another upheaval. This stage of immediate, post independence resolution of differences has proved to be crucial for the nationalist movements of many emerging nations. In Turkey, the short and unhappy career of the Progressive Republican Party was the final phase of this stage of political development” (Frey, 1965: 327).

⁴⁹ Kandiyoti, 1988a: 34.

and intimate relationship with his children, especially with daughters, superseded the figure of the distant and authoritarian father. Therefore, men were supposed to prepare the social ground for the new women of the Republic. Atatürk's relation to his adopted daughters exemplified this idea.

Durakbaşı⁵⁰ accurately dated this pattern back to the *Meşrutiyet II* period by suggesting that role of the father in the socialization of children, especially in terms of his daughters' education, became evident among the modernist elite. Beginning with the Republican era, in conjunction with the dominant ideology of the nationalist modernization, Kemalist fathers appeared to raise exemplary daughters of the Republic. The old concern with protecting the honor of daughters—thus, the honor of families—remained and conjoined with what Mosse puts as the principle of respectability within middle class families. So there was a kind of deal between fathers and daughters in the “new families” of the Kemalist Republic: Young women could have the right to education and professional life, generally with their fathers' support; but in return, they had to be very careful in their relationships with men and suppress their sexuality until they married.

When taken a close look, the relation between Rahşan Ecevit and her father Namık Zeki Aral confirms the idea that a girl's getting an education raised concerns around sexuality and morality. Namık Zeki Aral sent his daughter Rahşan to the *American College for Girls* in İstanbul as a boarding student because although she was talented in painting, there was no school for fine arts in Ankara and the schools for fine arts in İstanbul had no boarding sections. The main reason that her father sent her to that school was to learn a second language, she says, commenting: “No, I did not have any options for any profession. I only got what my father wanted me to get: a second language”.⁵¹ As Rahşan Ecevit described, since she was a boarding student and had no relatives in İstanbul, she was not allowed to leave the school on holidays. Additionally, to attend any school event she had to get permission from her family.⁵² According to her, this was the biggest problem she had to deal with during the school years.⁵³

The aforementioned need for women to obtain men's consent and support in order to be able to keep pace with modernization was aligned with the ideology of the modernization. It was the result of not only the patriarchal aspects of the modernization, but also that of

⁵⁰ Ayşe Durakbaşı, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Modern Kadın ve Erkek Kimliklerinin Oluşumu: Kemalist Kadın Kimliği ve ‘Münevver Erkekler’”, *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998: 47.

⁵¹ Interview, 2004: 9.

⁵² Ibid, 11.

⁵³ Ibid, 12.

paternalism, symbolized by the relationship between Atatürk and his, adopted daughters. It was the general framework of the deal between fathers and daughters. In this respect, the general framework of the father-daughter relationship in general and as regarded getting consent and support of the father in particular, combined with sexual and moral constraints—unlike what Durakbaşı stated—determined the limits of the daughters’ modernization.

As will be described below, marriage, last but not least, was another patriarchal way to deal with the modernization of women’s roles.

2.3. Flirting with Modernity

2.3.1. Early Connections between Girls and Boys

Rahşan Ecevit said that her father Namık Zeki Aral was critical of friendship of girls with boys.^{54 55} In the following segment of our interview, it became clear that this was the general attitude of parents at that time. When Rahşan Ecevit was a student in a Girls’ College, Bülent Ecevit was attending Robert College, which was a school for boys.⁵⁶ Both Rahşan and Bülent Ecevit remembered that when they were in their last year in the school, in 1944, the first connections between the two schools were established. Young women and young men began to come together for the first time for concerts or plays. As seen to be consistent with the aims of the modernization, socialization in mixed groups was one of the aims of these events. Yet Rahşan and Bülent Ecevit noted that just after graduation, five or six couples who first met during those occasions got married.⁵⁷

Not surprisingly, Rahşan Ecevit first met Bülent Ecevit during a school picnic. It appears that it was impossible to get permission; she had no choice but to run away from the school in order to go to the picnic. By doing so, she had crossed the line drawn by her father between modernity and unchastity. For the educated girls of the Republic, crossing their fathers’ line between modernity and unchastity meant flirting with modernity.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 8.

⁵⁵ Actually, the school she attended before the American College for Girls was the Ankara High School for Girls. When asked whether there was a special reason for choosing that school, she explained that it was probably the only school in Ankara at that level for her to attend (Ecevit, 2005: 6).

⁵⁶ In 1839, under the reign of Mahmut the second, Cyrus Hamlin founded the Robert College with the financial aid of Mr. Robert from New York who insisted that it should be a Christian School. The first Turkish student was accepted to the school in 1881. After 1908, the number of the Muslim students in the school increased. The CUP government declared that none of the Muslim students would participate in religious ceremonies other than their own. Accordingly, the missionary activities of the school were banned. The school then aimed to give an intellectual education (Süleyman Kurt, **Bir Karaoğlu Hikayesi, Bülent Ecevit**, Birey Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2002: 17). As mentioned in footnote 3, the school was combined with the American College for Girls in 1971.

⁵⁷ Interview, 2004: 12.

2.3.2. The Decision for Marriage and Empowerment through Marriage

Rahşan and Bülent Ecevit decided to marry while they were still students, but since their families were in opposition to this, they had to wait until their graduation.⁵⁸ They finally married on 22 Augustus 1946, two years after the graduation.

Bülent Ecevit was born in 1925 in İstanbul. His father Mehmet Fahri Ecevit, son of Mustafa Şükrü Efendi, a prominent religious official, was born in İstanbul in 1896. Mehmet Fahri Ecevit had studied medicine in the Faculty of Medicine in İstanbul and attained expertise in forensic medicine. He worked as a medical doctor in various state offices and taught in the *Adliye Meslek Okulu* (Judicial Vocational School), *Ankara Polis Enstitüsü* (Ankara Police Institute), *Jandarma Subay Okulu* (School for Gendarme Officers), and in the Faculty of Law in Ankara University. He was elected deputy from RPP for the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1943. Because RPP had not presented him as a candidate for the next election, he fell out of politics and died resentful in 1951 in İstanbul.

Bülent Ecevit's mother Fatma Nazlı Ecevit was born in İstanbul in 1901. Her father Mehmet Emin Sargut was a colonel in Ottoman Army and her mother Advie Hanım's father was among the aide-de-camps of the Sultan. She took private lessons at home, then studied in the Teacher's Training School for Girls (*Darülmuallimat*). Then she studied painting in the Academy of Fine Arts for Girls (*İnas Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*⁵⁹). She participated in various exhibitions⁶⁰ and taught painting at the Ankara High School for Girls for 19 years.⁶¹ She died in 1985 in Ankara.

Fatma Nazlı Ecevit was one of the first graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts for Girls (*İnas Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*), where she had taken courses from Mihri Müşfik,⁶² who

⁵⁸ Interview, 2005: 5.

⁵⁹ "Studying art in Turkey became possible for a select few with the establishment of the first art academy for male students (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Alisi*) in 1883 and the first school of art for female students (*İnas Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*) in 1914" (Berke İnel, Burçak İnel, "Discovering the Missing Heroines: The Role of Women Painters in Early Modernist Art in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2002: 207.)

⁶⁰ Orhan Koloğlu, *Ecevit ile CHP: Bir Nefret ve Aşk Öyküsü*, Buke Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000: 14.

⁶¹ F. Suat Demirok, "Oğlunun Başarıyla Övünç Duyan Sanatçı Bir Anne", *Kadın*, Yıl. 28, Sayı: 1068.

⁶² "Born in 1886 into a prominent and well-educated family, Mihri Hanım in her early years attended the classes of the court artist Fausto Zonaro. As a teenager, she went away to Rome and later studied art in Paris. When she returned to İstanbul in 1983, she began to work as an art teacher at the first School of Teachers for Women; the next year, she began to teach at the newly-established School of Art for Women. She is considered to have made the first mask of a friend, a prominent Turkish poet, Tevfik Fikret. She also painted a portrait of the Italian poet Gabriel d'Annunzio, another friend, as well as a portrait of the pope in the Vatican. Upon leaving Turkey after the First World War, she had prolific career as a painter and teacher in France and the United States. Mihri Hanım's style can be characterized as a mixture of realism and impressionism" (İnel and İnel, 2002: 207).

was among the pioneers of the Ottoman woman painters. The work of Nazlı Ecevit “ranged from portraiture and landscapes to still lifes and was influenced by impressionism and realism”.⁶³ The Eczacıbaşı Virtual Museum⁶⁴ exhibited one of her works, “Portrait of Keriman” (1922) among the “50 Masterpieces of Turkish Painting” from the Constitutional Monarchy Era (1876) to the Turkish Republic Era (1923).⁶⁵

That Fatma Nazlı Ecevit had been able to study fine arts in the Academy, according to Bülent Ecevit, signified the success of modernization, notwithstanding that it has been combated by religious reaction from the 1950s on. However, for Rahşan Ecevit, Fatma Nazlı Ecevit could study fine arts in the Academy only because even in those times she belonged to a modern family.⁶⁶ Actually, “[w]ithout exception, all of the early female Turkish painters was members of a privileged social class. They [were from the] families which were close to the Ottoman [dynasty] and (after 1908) the monarchy”.⁶⁷ The role of male relatives should likewise not be underestimated. For instance, Fahriye Yen, married to Ali Sami Yen, the founder of the *Galatasary* Sporting Club, one of the most rooted and successful sporting clubs in Turkey, spoke about how resentful she was that despite her education in the arts her husband did not allow her to build a career in painting. Fahriye Yen’s classmate Fatma Nazlı Ecevit could do so because her husband allowed it.⁶⁸

With respect to marriage, Rahşan Ecevit described how the pair decided to marry as follows:

“[...]Bülent] proposed to me. I was so surprised, because I had not thought about marriage until then. Then I thought that, my family was so conservative and we were about to graduate, so it would probably be quite difficult for us to continue our friendship. I did not want to lose him. So I thought that it was a reasonable proposal, thus I said yes”.⁶⁹

Rahşan Ecevit said that she had met Bülent Ecevit without even dreaming about having a profession and a work life.⁷⁰ When asked what, if she had never met and married Bülent Ecevit, she would be doing now, she implied that she did not ever think about having a profession very seriously. Before her reply, Bülent Ecevit tried to answer the same question.

⁶³ İnel and İnel, 2002: 208.

⁶⁴ Eczacıbaşı Virtual Museum has been a web-based forum for plastic arts and painting since 1999. The site was designed by Haşim Nur Gürel with the initiative of Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı, the head of one of Turkey’s prominent holding companies, Eczacıbaşı Holding (<http://www.sanalmuze.org>).

⁶⁵ Haşim Gürel, “From I. Constitutional Monarchy Era (1876) to Turkish Republic Era (1923) 50 ‘Masterpieces’ of Turkish Painting”, <http://www.sanalmuze.org>, 2005.

⁶⁶ Interview, 2004: 10.

⁶⁷ İnel and İnel, 2002: 207.

⁶⁸ http://www.galatasaray.org.tr/taftarin_kosesi/ozel_dosyalar/fahriyeyen.asp.

⁶⁹ Ercan Yavuz, “Şiirdeki Suskun Kadın”, <http://arsiv.aksiyon.com.tr/arsiv/182/pages/dosyalar/dos3.html>, 2004.

⁷⁰ Interview, 2004: 9.

He said that it was too hypothetical. Raḥşan Ecevit contradicted him and said that it was not so much. Then she told why:

“After graduation I could not forget about Bülent. I was so to speak in a depression. My parents wanted to marry me off as soon as possible in order to end the depression. It took six months. In the meantime, I was complaining and crying without ever stopping. One day I heard my mother and my father talking. They were trying to choose the best among the suitors. I was miserable. I exaggerated my complaining and crying. At that time my mother found one of the letters [which Bülent sent]⁷¹, and read it. When this happened for the second time, she was left no choice but to tell my father about the situation. At the same time, Bülent’s parents were pushing him to go to the University first. He rebelled there, I was miserable here. In the end [...] Bülent’s mother came and asked my family to give me as a bride, and then things got better”.⁷²

According to Raḥşan Ecevit, after she graduated from the College, her family would marry her off anyway. Nevertheless, the problem was that:

“His [Bülent Ecevit’s] father and family wanted him to build a career. Otherwise, he was a High School graduate like me. His family wanted him to have a University degree, then to marry. [Additionally] when my family saw him, they regarded him as a child. [...] How could he sustain a living? This was the reason why they [Raḥşan Ecevit’s family] did not give consent at first.”⁷³

Yet she knew how to maneuver within the patriarchal system: “My father used to love me very much. So when he saw how sorry I was, he said okay”.⁷⁴

Raḥşan and Bülent Ecevit married in a simple ceremony; Raḥşan Ecevit did not wear a wedding dress. Two weeks later, Bülent Ecevit went to London as a translator in the Turkish Press Attaché. Raḥşan Ecevit stayed in Turkey in her own family house.⁷⁵ She was able to accompany him one year later. When asked about her first impressions of London, she said that she had first left her family’s house for the College. Since she was not allowed to go out from the school, she did not know social life very much. It was in London where she first opened her eyes to the world. So, she explained, she could not compare the two spheres.⁷⁶ In other words, she had married just after the school; she did not have any life until then; she had begun to live independently with Bülent Ecevit.⁷⁷

⁷¹ It is interesting to note the intermediary role of the mother. This can be accepted as a case for the daughters within the patriarchal organization of families in Turkey. In this sense as Vergin quotes (1991: 317), according to Olson (1984), the families in Turkey were not single-centered, but double-centered organizations. Nevertheless, understanding the double-centered formation of the families as an egalitarian (between father and mother) one would certainly be a fault. Rather each of the centers appears as separate areas of activity and hegemony, which are based on gendered roles of sexual identities (Vergin, 1991: 317).

⁷² Interview, 2004: 13.

⁷³ Ibid, 7.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 7.

⁷⁵ Çetingüleç, 2000: 28.

⁷⁶ Interview, 2004: 14.

⁷⁷ Kurt, 2002: 23.

While working in the Attaché, Bülent Ecevit took some courses in the University on fine arts, Sanskrit and Bengali.⁷⁸ In his free time, he and Rahşan Ecevit went to exhibitions, plays or concerts.⁷⁹ When asked whether she took courses in London like her husband, Rahşan Ecevit said that she did not do anything, which is worth mentioning, because, as she told, she was out of her parents' house for the first time and beginning to learn about the world. In this phase of her narration, Bülent Ecevit interrupted and said, "She was looking after me". Then she moved backward and said, "Yes, I was a housewife", as if she had just remembered it.⁸⁰ So from this point further, we will take a close look at the formation of Rahşan Ecevit's gender identity and later gender role with respect to the marriage.

2.3.2.1. Empowerment through Marriage: Bargaining With Patriarchy

As mentioned earlier, modernity and the conjugal commitment appeared as determinant and explanatory categories in Rahşan Ecevit's life story. More concretely, the latter was an empowerment strategy for the former. This evokes Kandiyoti's concept of *bargaining with patriarchy*. She argues that "[...] women strategize within a set of concrete constraints that reveal and define the blueprint of what [she terms] the *patriarchal bargain* of any given society". Moreover, those bargains have "[...] a powerful influence on the shaping of women's gendered subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts". Additionally they have an influence on "[...] both the potential for and specific forms of women's active or passive resistance in the face of their oppression".⁸¹

Although Kandiyoti suggested that "subservience" and "manipulation" could be seen under classic patriarchy, in which "[...] girls are given away in marriage at a very young age into households headed by their husband's father",⁸² a breakdown of classical patriarchy still might not invalidate the patriarchal bargain.⁸³ That is to say, the patriarchal bargain may still be a useful strategy for women in any given gender regime.

As mentioned above, women like Rahşan Ecevit were socialized to manipulate their relations with men, because bargaining with patriarchy as Kandiyoti suggested does not "[...]

⁷⁸ Interview, 2004: 15.

⁷⁹ Kayhan Sağlamer, *Ecevit Olayı, Bir Başbakanın Doğuşu*, Cilt II, Belge Yayınları, İstanbul, 1974: 126-127.

⁸⁰ Interview, 2004: 15.

⁸¹ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy", *Gender and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1988b: 274-290.

⁸² Ibid, 278.

⁸³ Ibid, 286.

merely inform women's rational choices but also shapes the more unconscious aspects of their gendered subjectivity".⁸⁴

Rahşan Ecevit had first manipulated her father in her subservient "daughter role" by crying and complaining to be able to get his consent for her marriage. This time, marriage was a source of empowerment for her, because she helped create both the conjugal commitment and her role within it.

First, physical conditions helped Rahşan Ecevit to draw a border between her marriage and the outside world. When they were in London, the pair could establish a life of their own. Even later, when Bülent Ecevit became prime minister, she did not want to move to the prime minister's residence.⁸⁵ What is more important about their conjugal commitment, however, was that they always displayed an egalitarian unity, which, as will be mentioned later, led to both broad criticism and broad admiration. In fact, this was the outcome of a bargain within the marriage. In other words, it was the outcome of Rahşan Ecevit's attempt to strategize her role in the marriage. Throughout our interview, Bülent Ecevit revealed that he had an egalitarian perspective, yet was blind to, perhaps unconscious of differences. For example, he said that before they got married they did not have precise professional goals, because both had varying interests.⁸⁶ Later, after Rahşan Ecevit told about their experiences in London, he said: "It is definite that London was an educational experience for both of us", and went on to describe his ideas about North European countries.⁸⁷ Rahşan Ecevit hardly opposed him. At the same time, Rahşan Ecevit remembered and accepted her own role as a homemaker only when Bülent Ecevit reminded her that she looked after him in London. This revealed Rahşan Ecevit's gender identity formation: She internalized and kept practicing the traditional role of a wife. This role, as the second part of the egalitarian relation, gave her room for autonomy and empowerment.

The marriage was a source of empowerment through the conjugal commitment, whereas Rahşan Ecevit's political activities, which were inseparable from her identity formation and also linked with the conjugal commitment, became another source for empowerment.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 285.

⁸⁵ Sağlamer, 1974: 330.

⁸⁶ Interview, 2004: 9.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 14.

3. Empowerment through Political Activity

3.1. Bülent Ecevit's Participation in Politics and its Scope

While Raḡsan and Bülent Ecevit were in London, Bülent Ecevit began to be interested in politics because of his connections with the British press and politicians. Since he was ill at ease over the political situation in Turkey, after the elections of 1950 he decided to return there. He started to write a column in the newspaper *Ulus*, which was known as the newspaper of the RPP. In the beginning, *Ulus* asked him to write only about the fine arts.⁸⁸

In 1951, Bülent Ecevit started his compulsory military service as a reserve officer in Ankara. Raḡsan Ecevit also started to work as a translator in order to contribute to the family budget, which she described in our interview.⁸⁹

After completing military service, Bülent Ecevit continued to write in *Ulus* until the DP government confiscated all property of the RPP, including the press offices of *Ulus*. This fed his motivation to take part in politics, so he became a member of the RPP⁹⁰ and started to write political articles in the newspapers that succeeded *Ulus*, such as *Halkçı* (Populist) and *Yeni Ulus*⁹¹

In 1954, Bülent Ecevit visited the United States for three months to work as a guest journalist in the local newspaper of the town Winston-Salem. When he returned to Turkey in the beginning of 1955, he worked as the editor of the newspaper *Yeni Ulus*. In 1957, he received a Rockefeller grant and again went to the United States, this time along with Raḡsan Ecevit. He took courses in social psychology and the Middle East at Harvard University.⁹² He could have stayed for a longer period, but he decided to return when it became definite that an election was going to be held in 1957.⁹³

Elections were due in 1958, but a deterioration in the situation led Menderes to announce an election in 1957. Although the 1954 election was a clear success for the DP government, the support for DP decreased in the ensuing years. This was because of the decline in general living standards and, in particular, unsatisfied expectations of villagers. On the other hand, increasing inflation and the authoritarian policies of Menderes were alienating intellectuals, members of the bureaucracy and the armed forces from the DP government. The results of the election showed that although the DP still had some support and the majority of

⁸⁸ Ibid, 2–3.

⁸⁹ Interview, 2005: 5-6.

⁹⁰ Meral Aslankaya, Siyasetin **Şairi Karaoġlan**, <http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr/dosya/ecevit/>, 2004.

⁹¹ Interview, 2004: 3.

⁹² Aslankaya, 2004.

⁹³ Interview, 2004: 11.

the seats in the Assembly (with 47.3 per cent of the vote, it had 424 seats), it had lost its absolute majority in the country. Conversely, the elections were a success for the RPP, at least in the sense of an increase in their percentage of the vote; the RPP had 40.6 of the votes and increased its seats from 31 to 178.⁹⁴ Bülent Ecevit was among those who had a seat in the Assembly as a RPP deputy.

Towards mid-1960, the decline in support for the DP government and its authoritarian policies took the shape of a vicious circle. On 27 May 1960, the military took over the control of the country. Immediately after, the coup turned into a revolution on behalf of intellectuals, members of the bureaucracy and the military. The military formed a commission composed of professors—the National Unity Committee (NUC) (*Milli Birlik Komitesi*)—to prepare a new constitution to shape the post-coup period. The new constitution was accepted on 9 July 1961 by a referendum and the parliamentary elections were held on 15 October 1961. The new constitution guaranteed civil rights, gave full autonomy to universities and the media, and opened a space for different political ideas. So, it made a revolutionary impact on the Turkish political and social life of the post-coup period.⁹⁵

Throughout the period of transition and unstable coalitions from 1961 to 1965, Bülent Ecevit was the minister of Labor and Social Security. During this time, he initiated laws broadening social security and social rights, guaranteeing collective agreement and rights to strike, and ensuring freedom for trade unions.⁹⁶ In this, he embodied the changes in the RPP from the election campaign of 1957 on. In the elections of 1957, the RPP had a new message, including: more freedom for trade unions, autonomy for universities, more rights for members of the bureaucracy, and promises to abolish anti-democratic codes and authoritarian and centralist laws.⁹⁷ The RPP's maneuver for more freedom in political and social life against DP's policies presaged the ideological direction of the RPP after 1961. Another significant factor for the RPP's ideological direction was the Workers Party of Turkey (WPT, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TİP) founded by some unionists in February 1961. The WPT, although it did not hold remarkable power in the Assembly, attracted intellectuals and students and led a revival in favor of the left.

⁹⁴ Zürcher, 2001: 240-243.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 254–259.

⁹⁶ Çetingüleç, 2000: 55.

⁹⁷ Ayşe Güneş Ayata, **CHP: Örgüt ve İdeoloji**, Belkıs Tarhan, Nüvit Tarhan (çev.), Gündoğan Yayınları, Ankara, 1992: 78.

It is significant to note that revival of the left in the world and political and theoretical criticism of modernization found counterparts in the highly differentiated social structure of Turkey and had deep impact in Turkish political and intellectual thought in those years.⁹⁸

Faced with the threat of losing its popular support, and thus its leading role in modernization, the RPP had to redefine its Kemalist principles and to reposition itself through consideration of recent turns of events. Bülent Ecevit did this by innovating on the concept “left of center” (*ortanın solu*). The first signs of the RPP’s shift were given indirectly in 1963 in the report of the 18th General Assembly of RPP,⁹⁹ but it found direct expression in 1965 in the speech of the president of the party. İsmet İnönü announced that the RPP was on the left of center in the Turkish political spectrum. The slogan “left of center” heralded the RPP’s choices for the 1965 elections, but did not attract much popular attention, except among those who attended instead the Justice Party’s (JP) counter slogan, “left of center is the road to Moscow” (*ortanın solu Moskova yolu*).¹⁰⁰ Similarly, before the General Assembly in 1966, RPP was divided into two rival groups: those opposed to the idea of “left of center”, and those who favored it. Opponents claimed that the “left of center” movement would make the party socialist. In spite of this opposition, İnönü supported the idea.¹⁰¹ Just before the Assembly, Bülent Ecevit published a book titled “*Ortanın Solu*” (‘left of center’) and theorized a new path for the RPP to take. In the Assembly, Bülent Ecevit was elected as secretary-general, which would allow him to settle principles of “left of center” in the near future.

“Left of center”, while being considered a barrier against the radical left and right, was also supposed to reconcile Kemalist principles with popular sentiment; in this sense, it pointed to a differentiation from Kemalist populism as such. The differentiation meant, first: recognizing different social classes but not class struggle, against the Kemalist idealization of a solidarist-corporatist society;¹⁰² and second, moving toward the populace, against the idea in Kemalism of a dualism between the intellectuals and the people.¹⁰³

Populism defines social and political life based on the dichotomy between popular sectors and hegemonic sectors,¹⁰⁴ as did Bülent Ecevit in the idea “left of center”: those who saw themselves as privileged or who had privileges were outside of the group called “the

⁹⁸ M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, “Bağımlılık Kuramı, Dünya Sistemi Teorisi ve Osmanlı/Türkiye Çalışmaları”, **Toplum ve Bilim**, Sayı. 91, 2002: 81.

⁹⁹ Orhan Koloğlu, **Kim Bu Ecevit**, Boyut Kitapları, İstanbul, 2001: 72.

¹⁰⁰ Zürcher, 2001: 265.

¹⁰¹ Koloğlu, 2001: 292.

¹⁰² Necmi Erdoğan, “Demokratik Soldan Devrimci Yol’a: 1970’lerde Sol Popülizm Üzerine Notlar”, **Toplum ve Bilim**, No. 78, 1998: 27, Ayata, 1992: 83.

¹⁰³ Bülent Ecevit, **Ortanın Solu**, Tekin Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1973: 102.

¹⁰⁴ Erdoğan, 1998: 25.

people”.¹⁰⁵ This kind of populism necessitates a direct and close relationship between a leader and the people.¹⁰⁶ In other words, the populist leader must reflect the people, not the privileged, in lifestyle, attire and behavior if he wanted to speak on behalf of the people.¹⁰⁷ Bülent Ecevit was the most explicit example of the notion of a popular leader. He was even called—at the time, and later in political literature—as “populist Ecevit” (*Halkçı Ecevit*). Bülent Ecevit always regarded his wife as more than a mere assistant; Rahşan Ecevit was at the very core of the populist expression of “left of center” in political and symbolic senses.

3.2. Rahşan Ecevit’s Early Attempts in Politics

3.2.1. “Promotion Bureau” (*Tanıtım Bürosu*)

Rahşan Ecevit’s first attempts in politics started with promotions, which is one of the innovations remembered with her name. Promotion became an issue when Bülent Ecevit was elected as the secretary-general in the RPP. It was Rahşan Ecevit’s solution to the financial crisis of the party:

“When it was transferred to Bülent, it was seen that the RPP had no money [...] When I learned that it was crucial, I went into that promotion activity [...] In those days, people used to come to the party building and have their photos taken together with Ecevit. It was hard and expensive for the party to reproduce copies and distribute them to those people. In addition, some people used to come, take a shot and leave. All those photos used to be called ‘Ecevit pictures’. Then I decided to make things easier, I was the first I think. I made them printed like a post card [...] then began to sell them”.¹⁰⁸

However, she had to persuade Bülent Ecevit, who, at first taught that it was shameful for the wife of the secretary-general to sell some pictures. However, since RPP did not have any financial resources, Bülent Ecevit decided to consider her promotional activities seriously. After “Ecevit pictures”, their promotions continued with souvenirs, which were sold in the meetings. Bülent Ecevit said that before the meetings they used to place a couple of tables around the meeting area. During his speech, Bülent Ecevit would mention the party’s financial problems and then direct people’s attention to the tables where Rahşan Ecevit and some party members waited to sell “Ecevit pictures” and souvenirs.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Ecevit, 1973: 9.

¹⁰⁶ Ayata, 1992: 88.

¹⁰⁷ Erdoğan, 1998: 25.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, 2004: 15.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 16.

According to Birgit¹¹⁰ Raḥşan Ecevit's attempts both brought the RPP some money and were greeted with enthusiasm because until then no political leader had been seen side-by-side with his wife at meetings. The Ecevits were opposed to the idea that wives had to stay home and cook.

On the other hand, leading members of the party were unhappy with the situation. According to them, women should stay in the background. "The biggest reaction came not from the voters, but from the inside, from the bigwigs," said the Ecevits.¹¹¹ What Raḥşan Ecevit did was completely different from the conventional activities of politicians' wives. Whatever the party they affiliated with, the wives used to organize balls or tea parties to raise money. If they raised money, most of it was spent on event expenses anyway, Raḥşan Ecevit explained. Even the Women's Branch of the RPP reacted against Raḥşan Ecevit. What Raḥşan Ecevit did was in opposition to their conventional style, but Raḥşan Ecevit did not pay them any heed. In the following years, she would change the structure of the Women's Branch and ensconce her own approach within it.¹¹²

3.2.2. Volunteers for People (*Halk Gönüllüleri*)

During the promotion activities, Raḥşan Ecevit was in touch with the people that later enabled her to form an organization called Volunteers for People (*Halk Gönüllüleri*). She was walking around a poor neighborhood in Ankara and trying to gather those she called the real political base: women. "Volunteers for People" was not an association or a foundation, but a group of volunteers. They, along with Raḥşan Ecevit, gathered women from the neighborhood in one of the houses, taught them reading and writing, and additionally some skills like sewing.¹¹³

Rather than being solely Raḥşan Ecevit's personal venture, "Volunteers for People" was the direct outcome of the RPP's new political aims, envisaged in the book *Left of Center*. In the book, Ecevit had offered a general direction for the party: to go towards the people. "Volunteers for People" was one of the means to come closer, as Ecevit proposed:

"With the help of the Women's Branch and the Youth Branch, the RPP should form an organization of 'Volunteers for People'. With this organization, the RPP, even when it is not in power, should start social service. Not social aid, but social service [...] RPP's 'Volunteers for People' should serve, inform and guide groups of poor people in order to allow them to improve their living conditions, to find more-productive means of livelihood, to succeed in

¹¹⁰ Cited in Atilla Akar, *Öteki DSP, Ecevitlerin Gayri Resmi Öyküsü*, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002: 60.

¹¹¹ Interview, 2004: 16.

¹¹² Ibid, 16–17.

¹¹³ Ibid, 17.

escaping from exploitative classes, and to be developed as a result of their collective effort and solidarity”¹¹⁴.

Furthermore, in the framework of “left of center”, women were attributed a special importance and became a subject matter to achieve the principles of the “left of center”. It was as follows:

“Despite the fact that they were offered equality by law, most women lack the possibilities both to improve their personalities, knowledge and intellectual capacities and to use their creative potential properly. This decreases the influence of mothers over the personal development of their own children”. Again, this situation hinders women from using their free will in elections. In order to change this situation, it is necessary to give a special importance to the education of girls and adult women. Thus, it is necessary to prepare an appropriate atmosphere and to take necessary measures in order to lead women to take part more effectively in social life, in activities of professional associations, and in social development”¹¹⁵.

The group whom Bülent Ecevit addressed was those who lived in the periphery of the big cities, the inhabitants of *Gecekondu* (built at night). They had a rural origin and had migrated to the big cities like Ankara and İstanbul from 1951 through the 1960s because of the massive mechanization in agriculture that accompanied the adjustment of the village economy to regional and national markets.¹¹⁶ It is interesting to note that in the early 1960s, the number of *gecekondu* dwellings in Ankara was 70,000 with a population of 385,000, which was equivalent to % 59.22 of the total population of the city; between 1966 and 1970 it increased to 101,073.¹¹⁷

The inhabitants of *gecekondu* dwellings were among those whom Kemalist modernization had barely reached while they were in their villages. Likewise, after migrating to the big cities they were not urbanized immediately. They always remained in the peripheries of the big cities not only in the sense of geographical settlement, but also in the sense of not being modern enough. In addition to their openness to new material benefits, they were open to new political overtures. With “volunteers for people,” Bülent Ecevit aimed to win these migrants into the party and to make the RPP into the party of the exploited, not the party of the state. Rahşan Ecevit, with her austere look—a simple skirt and sweater—made a serious contribution to Bülent Ecevit’s work to secure their “left of center” position within politics and society.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Ecevit, 1973: 101-102.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 127–128.

¹¹⁶ Kemal Karpat, **The *Gecekondu*: Rural Migration and Urbanization**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976: 56.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 59–60.

¹¹⁸ Koloğlu, 2001: 35.

3.2.3. Intervening into Political Culture-Internal Trips

When asked whether she began to be interested in politics while they were in London like Bülent Ecevit, Raḡsan Ecevit said that she did not have any interest before; when her husband entered politics, she found herself in politics. Then Bülent Ecevit added: “Then Raḡsan began to accompany to me in my trips; the aim was to help me, to meet my needs. Just then she began participating in politics; for me, in a very influential way [...]”.¹¹⁹ Raḡsan Ecevit’s purpose on those trips was to assist her husband in general. As Bülent Ecevit¹²⁰ described while he was giving his speech, Raḡsan Ecevit used to disappear to escape from the local members of the party who always invited her somewhere. Instead, she used to go to suburban areas, to *gecekondu* dwellings. With the help of her austere look, she could make contact easily with the inhabitants, especially with women, and listen to their problems. This was a precious source of information for Bülent Ecevit.

Additionally, much more than being a compliant companion, Raḡsan Ecevit intervened in the political culture of the time. Firstly, Raḡsan Ecevit’s participation was a difference in itself, because wives of political leaders would not join their husbands on their internal trips. This, as Bülent Ecevit described, was a matter of political culture:

“They were not accustomed to do so. First, wives were not willing to, and for example, let us say if you stay in a town or so, people surely would organize a dinner with drinks like *raki* or as such. Women were excluded from those dinners. So, with Raḡsan’s wish, we made a rule that I would join those dinners only if we were together and only if other members of the party also came together with their wives. After that, everybody followed us and everything has changed in those gatherings”.¹²¹

Raḡsan Ecevit agreed, saying, “The atmosphere has changed there” and added that the most important difference in her participation concerned mass meetings:

“The dinners or so was not especially the case, but the meetings; women did not used to go to meetings. Bülent used to hold my hand and address the audience: ‘Look, I brought my wife together with me; you should do so, too’. In the following trips, this time there was an audience member showing his wife to us by the hand towards the platform. They were so cute”.¹²²

It is apparent that the Ecevits were addressing a conventional concern by calling men to bring their wives to mass meetings. This was harmonious with their motto of ‘going towards the people as one of them’; otherwise, they stood to further alienate inhabitants of the small

¹¹⁹ Interview, 2004: 3.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 3–4.

¹²¹ Ibid, 4.

¹²² Ibid, 4.

towns, *gecekondu* dwellings, or villages from the RPP, which had been seen until then as the authoritarian state itself. In any case, the fact that all members of the RPP were invited to the 19th Assembly of the party along with their wives was a radical event for those years.¹²³

3.3. From “left of center” to the Democratic Left

As a respond to increasing political violence of the late 1960s, on 12 March 1971 the military gave a memorandum to the government which pointed out the necessity for a strong and credible government to end the chaos and to ensure order “in a Kemalist spirit”. Otherwise, the military forces were able to intervene into politics because of the duty which had been given to the army by the constitution.¹²⁴ The consequence was a new government for which the foundation was laid by the military. The government, headed by Nihat Erim, proclaimed martial law on 27 April in 11 provinces. The martial law regime lasted two years and included a campaign to arrest anyone who even sympathized with progressive ideas. In this time, the WPT was closed down.¹²⁵ When İnönü declared his support for the new government headed by Nihat Erim,¹²⁶ Bülent Ecevit opposed him and resigned from his position as secretary-general of the RPP.¹²⁷ Until then, Ecevit had tried to eliminate the identification of RPP with the state, so for him supporting the new government meant declaring the defeat of the “left of center” idea. In fact, because the military aimed first to eliminate the left, Ecevit had no choice but to rest on the “left of center” in order to remain politically credible.¹²⁸

Whether to give up the “left of center” was an issue also within the RPP,¹²⁹ but, at the fifth assembly of the party, the supporters of the “left of center” gained the majority. At this, İnönü resigned. On 14 May 1972, Bülent Ecevit was elected as the president of the party.¹³⁰ The next day, newspaper headlines proclaimed a switch “from the chief’s party to the people’s party”.¹³¹ In fact, what made supporters call the RPP the people’s party in 1972 was

¹²³ Koloğlu, 2001: 320.

¹²⁴ Zürcher, 2001: 271.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 272.

¹²⁶ Nihat Erim graduated from the law faculty in 1939, and then studied in Paris. He taught at Ankara University. He was elected to the Assembly in 1946. He was the minister of communication and vice premier in the cabinets of Saka and Günaltay between 1945 and 1950. He was the editor of the newspaper *Ulus* (Nation) and its successors. After the military intervention of March 1971, he resigned from the RPP to head the new government (Zürcher, 2001: 377).

¹²⁷ Ibid, 271.

¹²⁸ Koloğlu, 2001: 358.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 350.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 353.

¹³¹ Aslankaya, 2004.

Bülent Ecevit's charismatic leadership. Before the first free elections in 1973 after the March 12, he became known among the masses as *Karaoğlan* (swarthy boy).¹³² *Karaoğlan* had folkloric connotations of being one of the Anatolian people. For this reason, the periodical *Yankı* (Echo), which followed the election campaign in 1973, stated that while the RPP was known as the party of ideas in big cities, it was the party of 'the leader' in rural provinces and small cities; it was Ecevit's party.¹³³

In the elections in 1973, the RPP won the majority of votes at 33, 5 %. This, however, was not enough to form a government, so RPP created a coalition with Necmettin Erbakan¹³⁴'s National Salvation Party (NSP, *Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP*). Although Ecevit had proclaimed even before the elections that religious beliefs were not drawbacks for social and democratic development, and were rather facilitative,¹³⁵ the RPP and NSP coalition was an uneasy partnership. It dissolved after the "Cyprus Peace Operation" in 1974.

Cyprus had been an issue since 1964, when a potential military intervention of İnönü against President-Archbishop Makarios, who had attempted to limit the autonomy of the Turkish minority, met with the reaction of the United States. The colonels in the junta in Greece were urging Greek nationalists on the island toward *enosis*, the union of the island with mainland Greece. However, when the junta organized a coup against Makarios to declare *enosis*, the RPP-NSP government, headed by Ecevit, intervened and sent troops to the island on 20 July 1974 to ensure the order established by Turkey, Greece and Great Britain in 1960. In the end, the troops attained control over the island. The island was divided into a Turkish part and a Greek part, which would lead to the foundation of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" in 1983.¹³⁶

After the operation, Ecevit stiffened his reputation for leadership by bolstering national honor. He became a national hero, even being called the "new Atatürk" by the national and international press.¹³⁷ In order to convert this popular support into political support, Ecevit resigned from the government on 16 September 1974. Contrary to what he expected, however, since the other parties opposed an early election, no elections took place.¹³⁸

¹³² Koloğlu, 2001: 388.

¹³³ Kurt, 2002: 80.

¹³⁴ Necmettin Erbakan

¹³⁵ Aslankaya, 2004.

¹³⁶ Zürcher, 2001: 289–290.

¹³⁷ Sefa Yurdanur, *Dün Atatürk Bugün Ecevit*, Göl Yayınları, İstanbul, 1974: 21-31.

¹³⁸ Zürcher, 2001: 274–275.

On 28 April 1974, Ecevit institutionalized the politics of the RPP by stating in the party regulations that the RPP was a democratic left party. The term “democratic left”, which was the maturation of the phrase “left of center”, was preferred to the term “social democracy” to avoid any association with Marxism.¹³⁹ In the elections in 1977, the first elections after Ecevit’s resignation in 1974, Ecevit tested his charismatic leadership and the “democratic left” policy. In the elections, RPP got 41.4 % of all votes, enough to form a government. In January 1978, Ecevit was able to form a government of the RPP and independents; this lasted until October 1979. Generally, the political situation, which was already unstable due to increasing economic problems and political violence, remained under the yoke of weak coalitions until the military took power on 12 September 1980.¹⁴⁰

4. The Marginalization of the Kemalist Modernization Discourse Relating to Women

There is no doubt that the transition to democracy in 1945 and later freeing consequences of the coup of 27 May 1960 corroded the ideological hegemony of Kemalism in politics. Likewise, the rapid social change of the post-1960 era, the radicalization of politics, the influence of United Nations policies on women and the relative failure of the Kemalist women’s rights discourse led to a substantial marginalization of the discourse of the Kemalist modernization as related to women.

The most acute criticisms came from Muslim women, who in the post-coup period had become highly politicized. The politicization of Muslim women occurred with the general populace’s realization in the late 1960s and 1970s that Islam could play a role in criticism of modernization.¹⁴¹ In this context, the National Salvation Party, NSP (*Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP*)¹⁴² came to the fore as representing all who were dissatisfied with the modernization and thought that the breakdown within the modernization movement was a result of deviation from Islamic rule.¹⁴³ In this sense, the headscarf became a popular issue in public discussions when Muslim women defended the right to cover their heads. The first public opposition appeared in 1968 when a student with a headscarf in the Department of Theology at Ankara

¹³⁹ Koloğlu, 2001: 465.

¹⁴⁰ Zürcher, 2001: 275.

¹⁴¹ Cihan Aktaş, **Tanzimattan Günümüze Kılık kıyafet ve İktidar**, Nehir Yayınları, İstanbul, 1989: 269.

¹⁴² The NSP was established on 11 October 1972 in line with the principles of the National Order Party (NOP, *Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP*) of Necmettin Erbakan, which had been banned on 20 May 1971 under allegations that it was politicizing Islam. The Party declared its political ideology as a national vision (*Milli Görüş*), defined as a direct opposite of the vision of the liberal left (Sarıbay, 1985: 106-110).

¹⁴³ Sarıbay, 1985: 9.

University was dismissed from school. Thereafter, 50 students from her department boycotted the lectures and protested the university administration. In the same year, Şule Yüksel Şenler, who used to write in *Kadın* (Woman) before she converted to the Islamic way of life, wrote some pieces in the newspaper *Bugün* (Today) in favor of the headscarf and Muslim lifestyle which garnered a fierce response from Kemalist women's organizations. Quite interestingly, the Association for Progressive Women (AWP, *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği*, İKD)—which, as will be mentioned in the following paragraphs, was a left-oriented organization—acted together with the Kemalist associations and claimed the Muslim advocates to be reactionaries.¹⁴⁴ Once stated, this would persist as the AWP's main line on the issue of the headscarf. This division was rooted in the fact that the left had already adopted the Kemalist women's rights discourse. Nevertheless, contestation of the modernization by the left and women's participation in left-oriented organizations would deepen the division between the Kemalist women and leftists in the future.

The radical political movements of the 1960s both politicized women—along with intellectuals, students and industrial workers—and led them to conceptualize their problems within the general structure of class struggle.

The migration to big cities and dreadful economic conditions pushed women into work life to be able to contribute to family budgets. Since the 1960s, women in increasing numbers began to participate in the labor force in sectors other than agriculture, including the industrial and intermediary sectors. Between 1955 and 1975, while the proportion of women as unpaid family labor (mostly agricultural workers) decreased by 10, 4 %, from 91, 4 % to 81, 0 %, the proportion of women who had paid employment in the same period increased by 10, 3 %, from 3, 8 % to 14, 1 %.¹⁴⁵ The employment of women, while encouraging in that they could go beyond the patriarchal constraints of being housewives, at the same time brought women new problems: poor conditions at work, and inequity in the division of labor at home.¹⁴⁶

The concept of class, though not necessarily in the framework of socialism, enabled women to recognize that they had variable life experiences and potentially conflicting interests. Even the Kemalist editor of *Kadın Sesi* (Woman's Voice) indicated that economic and social conditions divided people into classes, and that members of the each class had their own conditions of life:

¹⁴⁴ Aktaş, 1989: 253.

¹⁴⁵ Source: DIE (The State's Institute of Statistics), 1955-1990 General Census.

¹⁴⁶ Selma Tükel, "Çalışan Kadının da Derdi Çok", **Hürriyet Gazetesi**, 12.02.1978, Suat F. Demirok, "İşçi Kadınlarımızın Sorunları", **Kadın Gazetesi**, Yıl. 30, Sayı. 1094, 1976: 27.

“Living conditions and concerns of wealthy women are known. Women workers spend their whole day in factories, stores or so. Peasant women spend their lives in the fields. In addition to these, there are also women of the middle class, who have to carry on that way of life which suits the duties of their husbands in the bureaucracy”.¹⁴⁷

So the left and socialism enabled public recognition of the fact that class differentiated women’s experiences from each other, led them to contextualize their problems in a historical and ideological framework, and encouraged them to undertake a political action. Along with many other organizations, it is worth mention the Association for Progressive Women (APW, *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği, İKD*), founded on 1 June 1971 by the order of the The Communist Party of Turkey (CPT, *Türkiye Komünist Partisi, TKP*).¹⁴⁸

The APW aimed to raise awareness of the problems of proletarian, peasant, and intellectual women on the pages of the newspaper *Kadınların Sesi* (Women’s Voice), and also to act in the public sphere through mass demonstrations and petition campaigns.¹⁴⁹ The APW celebrated “Women’s Day” for the first time with a mass meeting in 1976, campaigned for kindergarten in 1977, for the extension of birth leave in 1978, and for free milk for children under the age of 6 in 1979. It also organized meetings to protest high prices, unemployment and fascist pressure in 1978.¹⁵⁰ In 1980, *Kadınların Sesi* called on readers to open a public discussion about fashion, which was described as the expression of distortions in the system.¹⁵¹ In the following month, March, the APW organized a meeting both to celebrate “Women’s Day” and to protest price increases, unemployment, pressure, and terror. During the meeting, all of the demonstrators wore white headscarves, which were described as the flags of the protest.¹⁵² In opposition to highly politicized headscarf of the Islamist women, the white headscarf wore by peasant women generally in the rural regions was meant to designate the solidarity of peasant, working class and intellectual women. On 28 April 1979, the Istanbul Commander of Martial Law closed the APW and banned its activities.¹⁵³ After that, the APW resisted and campaigned against the decision until the 1980 coup. In the political radicalism and violence of the 1970s, the APW had attempted to politicize the women question in the framework of the socialist ideology and had provided its women members to

¹⁴⁷ Melahat Faik Gökmen, “Orta Sınıfın Kadını”, *Kadın Sesi*, Yıl. 9, Sayı. 441, 1966: 1, 8.

¹⁴⁸ Emel Akal Aslan, “Kadın ve Siyaset, Aykırı Bir Örnek: İKD”, *Yerli Bir Feminizme Doğru*, Aynur İlyasoğlu, Necla Akgökçe (yay. haz.), Sel Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2001: 461.

¹⁴⁹ “Kadınlarımız Neden Bilinçlenmeli ve Örgütlenmeli?”, *Kadınların Sesi*, Yıl. 4, Sayı. 45, 1979: 1.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 1-5.

¹⁵¹ “Avuçla Para Akıtıyoruz”, *Kadınların Sesi*, Yıl. 5, Sayı. 55, 1980a: 21-23.

¹⁵² “8 Mart 1980’de Beyaz Eşarp Kadınlarımızın, Pahalılığı, Zamları, İşsizliği, Baskı ve Terörü Protesto Bayrağı Oldu”, *Kadınların Sesi*, Yıl. 5, Sayı. 57, 1980b: 8-9.

¹⁵³ *Kadınların Sesi*, 1979: 5.

some extent with opportunities for empowerment.¹⁵⁴ Although it was at first criticized by the rest of the left for being “feminist”, its success in mobilizing women led some other leftist organizations to build separate women’s divisions.¹⁵⁵ The chair of the RPP’s Women’s Branch, Güler Gürpınar, opposed the APW and said that the APW aimed to erode the reliable social base on which RPP depended.¹⁵⁶

Throughout the 1970s, women also participated in leftist political activity in either legal or illegal organizations that gave them independence from traditional gender roles through the appropriation of a militant identity. Although this enabled them, for example, to live far from their families, to organize protests and meetings, to participate in guerilla warfare and revolutionary camps, it was in the end because of a “homogenization of political militancy under the sphere of the masculine”.¹⁵⁷ According to Berktaş,¹⁵⁸ left-oriented organizations of the 1970s were male-dominated, and in them a woman was seen as *bacı* (sister) which, without even considering its religious connotations, was used to describe a female friend type whose sexuality and individuality were suppressed. She also suggested that women were welcomed into left-oriented organizations as long as they behaved as if they were male.¹⁵⁹ Elsewhere, on the case of Behice Boran,¹⁶⁰ who was one of the founders and later secretary-general and chair of the WPT, Berktaş proposed that women were in *surmise of equality*. Indeed, women deputies of the post-1960 period did not consider themselves as representatives of the women of the nation, in contrast to the pre-1960 period, instead seeing themselves as representatives of the party.¹⁶¹ In this framework, although Behice Boran suffered from the patriarchal organization of social life and had to perform the tripartite duties of housewife, mother and politician alike, the ideological framework to which she belonged

¹⁵⁴ As Akal, Aslan (2001: 476-477) quoted one of the former members of the AWP as stating, “The women of the AWP appeared to be women who thought, and discussed, and were more mature. After the 12th of September, many women from the AWP could end their unhappy marriages, because we had had self-confidence.” Another one suggests, “I read a lot about feminism. If I had not taken part in the AWP, I would not have read that. If I had not been interested in the problems of women, I would not have informed myself about others”.

¹⁵⁵ Akal Aslan, 2001: 471.

¹⁵⁶ “Zaman CHP’yi Aşamamıştır”, **Umut Gazetesi**, Yıl. 2, Sayı. 44, 1978a: 8.

¹⁵⁷ Serra Ciliv, “Between Belonging and Opposition: Life Story Narratives of Women from the Generation of ‘78”, Sabancı University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Unpublished Master Thesis, 2002: 157.

¹⁵⁸ Fatmagül Berktaş, “Türk Solu’nun Kadına Bakışı: Değişen Bir Şey Var mı?”, **1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar**, Şirin Tekeli (ed.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995: 316.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 314.

¹⁶⁰ She studied sociology in the United States and taught sociology in Ankara University. She was one of the founders of the WPT in 1961. She was elected to the Assembly in 1965 as a WPT deputy. She became secretary-general and then president of the party in 1970. She, after the WPT was banned after 1971, was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment and died in exile (Zürcher, 2001: 372-373). She is the author of *Türkiye’de Toplumsal Yapı Araştırmaları* (Research of Social Structure in Turkey), 1945 and *Türkiye’de Sosyalizmin Sorunları* (Problems of Socialism in Turkey), 1970 (Fatmagül Berktaş, **Tarihin Cinsiyeti**, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003: 198).

¹⁶¹ Berktaş, 2003: 194.

prevented her from realizing the inherent gender inequalities in her life arrangement.¹⁶² This was because socialism was a totalizing and homogenizing ideology, which addressed human rights from the perspective of class, at the expense of gender.¹⁶³

In addition, the Kemalist *surmise of equality* was threatened for two reasons. First, the ‘super housewife’ legend of the 1950s was in serious decline in the West because of second wave feminist criticism of the late 1960s. Accordingly, periodicals for women in Turkey sometimes published pieces criticizing the spouse-housewife-mother conformist ideal of the 1950s. The piece below pictures in an ironic way the confusion of an ordinary woman in the United States in the face of the uncertainty caused by the decline of the ‘super housewife’ legend and the rise of feminist critics:

“A Modern Housewife says: Whenever I read a magazine or listen to a panel discussion on the radio, I say that a sociologist is speaking about my role in life. I was at ease when I was content with sitting with my husband if there was nothing nice on television, but lately I acquired new roles [...] An account recently counted 27 roles [of women] [...] For a little while, I liked being a multi-aspected woman. However, then sociologists interfered yet again. Once they got tired of listing the roles, they now began to criticize them”.¹⁶⁴

Similarly, women’s magazines in Turkey were no longer publishing the stories of exemplary Republican women—the first woman judge, operator or successful bureaucrat—or other attempts to present to the world how modern the new Turkish woman was. Instead, they were now discussing women’s rights in the light of the new social situation. For example, a professional woman and a member of the Association to Protect Women’s Rights (*Kadın Haklarını Koruma Derneği*), on the occasion of “Women’s Rights Day”¹⁶⁵ criticized the existing laws for including some articles that were incompatible with the 1961 Constitution and the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, which banned discrimination against women.¹⁶⁶ In addition, she called on women’s organizations to act against the discriminative articles.¹⁶⁷ The following year on the same occasion, a teacher declared that: “Since the Republic, there has been no increase in the proportions of the women who could enter schools or get professions through the present time”.¹⁶⁸ In 1963, İffet Halim Oruz, the editor of the Woman’s Newspaper (*Kadın Gazetesi*), explained that the UTW (Union of Turkish Women, *Türk Kadınlar Birliği*, TKB) dissolved itself when the People’s Houses (*Halkevleri*) were

¹⁶² Ibid, 202–203.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 197.

¹⁶⁴ Rollie Hochstein, “Modern Bir Ev Kadını Anlatıyor”, Selma Gün (trans.), *Kadın Sesi*, 24 Kasım 1966: 3.

¹⁶⁵ It was 5 December; the day when Turkish women were given political rights in 1934.

¹⁶⁶ Fahire Akman, “Neden Kadın Hakları Üzerinde Duruyoruz?”, *Kadın Gazetesi*, Sayı. 951, 1966: 6.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 9.

¹⁶⁸ Mesude Alangu, “İstatistiki Açından Kadın Hakları”, *Kadın Gazetesi*, Sayı. 955, 1967: 16..

found, because from then on women would work together with men for the sake of the new regime, for women were equal to men.¹⁶⁹ On the 1969 “Women’s Rights Day”, while criticizing lack of women’s participation into politics,¹⁷⁰ she confronted the “surmise of equality” as such:

“It is time to deal with it. We have something to tell 46 years later. The fact that the Union of Turkish Women, which was the only women’s organization at a time, was dissolved in the period of single-party democracy is one of the reasons for the present situation [...] We dissolved the Union at the expense of women”.¹⁷¹

Meanwhile, the UN’s declaration of an International Women’s Year in 1975 was important. As the president declared, the aim was that:

“Certain historical documents, such as the Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Charter, and the Universal Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, have proved to be valuable instruments; enabling women to live up to more elevated standards. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go to establish the desirable level for the status of women in all communities. That is why the decision of the United Nations organization to mark 1975 as the International Women’s Year is of such magnificence”.¹⁷²

This decision provoked women in Turkey to evaluate reforms in policies on women and to analyze women’s problematic position in society. The periodical *Kadın* (Woman), the successor of *Kadın Gazetesi* (the Woman’s Newspaper), undertook this evaluative discussion seriously and gave copious room to the reports and ongoing discussions. Above all, the Association of University Women (*Üniversiteli Kadınlar Derneği*) organized a congress on 5-8 December in 1975 with the participation of one thousand women from 27 different women’s organizations, including representatives from the Turkish part of Cyprus, to consider women’s position in Turkey and to discuss a plan for action.¹⁷³ In the beginning of the congress, Perihan Arıburnu pointed out the common problems of women in her speech on behalf of numerous women’s organizations as follows. First, there were economic problems since it was not possible for all women to have a job, and thus economic independence; housewives should be provided with some sort of economic protection. The second group of problems, according to her, was legal problems due to the fact that the Civil Code Turkey adopted came from the state of Switzerland, which was the last in the world with regard to the

¹⁶⁹ İffet Halim Oruz, “7. Maddenin Düşündürdükleri”, *Kadın Gazetesi*, Sayı. 765, 1963: 3.

¹⁷⁰ The percentage of women deputies in the Assembly in 1969 was 1, 1. It was 4, 6 % in 1935, 3, 8 in 1939 and 3, 7 in 1943. (Women in Statistics 1927-1992, DIE (The State’s Institute of Statistics).

¹⁷¹ İffet Halim Oruz, “Bir Açık Muhasebe”, *Kadın Gazetesi*, Sayı. 1010, 1969: 3.

¹⁷² M. Dolatshai, “The International Women’s Year Message From the President”, *Kadın Gazetesi*, Yı. 29, Sayı. 1074, 1975: 7.

¹⁷³ Hasene Ilgaz, “Dünya Kadın Yılı mı Yoksa”, *Kadın Gazetesi*, Yıl. 30, Sayı. 1084, 1976: 4-7.

level of development of women's rights there.¹⁷⁴ In addition, Arıburnu, stressing that she was talking on behalf of women's organizations, underlined that they wished to stay away from "the wave of sexuality" which exploited both Europe and the United States.¹⁷⁵ It is remarkable to see in her words the reaction of the Turkish women's movement to the themes of Western second wave feminism and their insistence on the principle of equality between men and women.

In the Congress, women's problems were considered by five different commissions: the Economy Commission, the Education Commission, the Law Commission, the Health Commission, and the Culture and Art Commission. The report of each commission was published in *Kadın Gazetesi* (the Woman's Newspaper). According to the report of the Economy Commission, the necessary measures to improve women's economic situation were to train peasant women, to provide housewives with social assurances, to promote part-time jobs for women to let them balance their domestic duties with public duties, and to make kindergartens widespread. It also advised reforms in property and inheritance laws to eliminate discrimination against women.¹⁷⁶ The report of the Education Commission underlined the need to make education widespread, to ensure attendance of girls at the elementary level, and to increase the number of women in all levels of education. It also stressed the need to raise the literacy rate among women. In addition, the Commission suggested adding a course on sexual education to the curriculum. The Commission also offered an action plan, which suggested first to research and to archive information on the activities of Anatolian Turkish women during the Independence War, second to examine the publications of UN, UNESCO, OECD, and ILO, and third to distribute the reports of the Congress to official, semi-official and voluntary organizations.¹⁷⁷ The Health Commission examined the necessary measures to be taken about women and children's health by both government offices and voluntary organizations. The attitude of the Health Commission towards the issue of motherhood was bewildering. Because of their membership in voluntary women's organizations, the members of the Commission were presumably elite women who probably worked as professionals; it is clear from their attitude that they identified themselves with male professionals. In the report, they indicated that they were proud to state that they agreed unanimously not to include matters which interested a very small proportion of

¹⁷⁴ *Kadın Gazetesi*, Yıl. 30, Sayı. 1084, 1976: 11.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 15–18.

women—such as birth leave, part-time work and vacation from work.¹⁷⁸ The Law Commission advised changes and reforms to articles of laws which were contrary to the principle of equality; first among these, article 152 of the Civil Code, which ordered that the husband serve as head of household. In general, the Commission suggested the government charge an institution with solving women's problems in cooperation with voluntary women's organizations. This Commission also deemed it necessary to raise consciousness about women's rights all around the country. The participation of women in the decision-making processes was also seen as a means to accomplish equality.¹⁷⁹ Lastly, the Culture and Art Commission pointed out in its report the need to incorporate art into school curricula and to present Turkish art worldwide. It also advised reinforcement of the artistic and cultural activities of People's Houses.¹⁸⁰

Incorporating international concerns into the Kemalist modernization discourse on women was part of an attempt to restore the discourse in the face of both increasing social and political differentiation and new diversity in approaches to women's problems. In this framework, the Kemalist discourse of equal rights was complicated by the idea of "reverse discrimination" in realizing the Kemalist ideas on women. The discrepancy between the Kemalist discourse on women and both second-wave feminism and socialist or Marxist feminism shows that there was no agreement on the concept of women other than that they formed a demographic category, and thus the Kemalist standpoint lost its hegemony.

For this reason, it seems reasonable to call the late 1960s and 1970s the period from which point on the Kemalist modernization discourse about women became highly marginalized.

5. Institutionalization of Raĥsan Ecevit's Political Activity

5.1. "Peasant Associations" (Köylü Dernekleri)

One of the reasons Bülent Ecevit preferred the concept "democratic left" was that while there was no "peasant question" in Western Europe at the time, there was in Turkey. Actually, the villages, and accordingly the peasants, were seen at the center of "democratic left development". Democratic left development was supposed to be a complete process with economic, social and political aspects. In this framework, development was intended to be not

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 19–20.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 21–22.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 22–23.

only swift but also just and free. The idea was that only development efforts which started in the villages would be just. Toward this purpose, two means were envisaged: cooperative organizations and “village cities” (*köykentler*). The cooperatives would provide villages with cheaper production conditions and easier marketing opportunities.¹⁸¹ The “village cities” were organizations of villages around administrative and coordinative centers. While institutions like hospitals, banks or post offices would be located in the center of the “village city”, the institutions for production like factories would be distributed among the peripheral villages.¹⁸² Like the cooperatives, “village cities” were meant to ensure that peasants could stay in the villages instead of migrating to big cities.¹⁸³ The cooperatives and the “village cities” were mentioned in the party program in 1976,¹⁸⁴ and in 1976 Raḡsan Ecevit founded the “Peasant Association” (*Köylü Derneđi*).

The “Peasant Association” was well-known around the country between 1976 and 1978. It had a newspaper titled *Umut* (Hope) of which owner and editor was Raḡsan Ecevit. *Umut* was published between 01.12.1976 and 15.12.1978, first semi-monthly, then weekly. It reached the aimed circulation: thirty thousand copies within the country, ten thousand copies abroad.

As the head of the “Peasant Association”, Raḡsan Ecevit traveled all around the country just like a president of a political party, opening new branches of the association, and forming organizations for cooperation between experts and peasants. She told about her activities as follows: “[...] we began to establish those peasant associations village by village. We began to establish organizations for cooperation as well. [...] moreover, [...] we brought the experts and the peasants together. It was completely free of charge. For example, an agriculturist went to a village, met needs and trained peasants”.¹⁸⁵ Raḡsan Ecevit also started to market the handiwork of peasant women on a broader commercial scale. She organized an exhibition in Ankara to market handmade carpets and rugs and sent the money back to peasants.¹⁸⁶ She went to Central and East Anatolia to open new branches of the association and to listen to the problems of the peasants there. She met with a broad spectrum of people and listened with great interest:

¹⁸¹ Kolođlu, 2001: 464.

¹⁸² Bülent Ecevit, *Umut Yılı*, Ajans Türk Matbaacılık Sanayi, Ankara, 1977: 153–159.

¹⁸³ Bülent Ecevit, *Uygulamada Demokratik Sol, CHP Genel Bařkanı ve Bařbakan Bülent Ecevit’in 5 Eylül 1979 Günü Ankara’da Toplanan CHP Küçük Kurultayını Açıř Konuřması ve 6 Eylül 1979 Günü Yayınlanan Küçük Kurultay Bildirisi*, 1979: 42.

¹⁸⁴ Kolođlu, 2001: 470.

¹⁸⁵ Interview, 2004: 17–18.

¹⁸⁶ “Raḡsan Ecevit Köyde Köylülerle”, *Umut Gazetesi*, Yıl. 2, Sayı. 48, 1978b: 1.

“This four-day trip, like the East Anatolian trip last week, was exciting and full of hope. Broad masses showed their sincere feelings of love to Raḥşan Ecevit, president of the ‘Peasant Association’ and wife of the prime minister. The amount of love was like madness. The reason was the hope which the prime minister gave to the people in addition to the fact that, for the first time, a wife of a prime minister went to the villages to investigate their problems”.¹⁸⁷

In the East Anatolian trip, when Raḥşan Ecevit arrived at the airport, a group of people met her; among them was a little girl named ‘Raḥşan’ after Raḥşan Ecevit.¹⁸⁸ Her popularity was growing; she was traveling all around the country either by herself or accompanied by Bülent Ecevit; as Kurt¹⁸⁹ quoted from *Yankı*, during the election campaign in 1977 supporters wanted to see Raḥşan Ecevit wherever the couple went. In response, she always went up to the platform and waved to the masses. Her popularity also attracted opposition. After the trip to East Anatolia, Raḥşan Ecevit was accused of charging all her expenses to the state while she stayed in Muş. On 4 December 1978, on the pages of *Umut* she stated that she had covered all expenses by herself.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, the peasant women from the villages of Muş came together in the city center and organized a press conference to condemn the accusations.¹⁹¹



¹⁸⁷ “Raḥşan Ecevit Doğu Anadolu’da”, *Umut Gazetesi*, Yıl: 2, Sayı: 47, 1978c: 8.

¹⁸⁸ *Umut Gazetesi*, 1978a: 8.

¹⁸⁹ Kurt, 2002: 92.

¹⁹⁰ “Doğu Gezimde Devlete Yük Olmadım”, *Umut Gazetesi*, Yıl: 2, Sayı: 54, 1978d: 1.

¹⁹¹ Çetingüleç, 2000: 85.

The photography above depicts the popularity around Raḡsan Ecevit. The reason why she was so popular concerned not only her political activity, but also the way she behaved and the way she looked. As mentioned earlier, her austere look was an unspoken message to the people, in this case to the peasants, that she was one of them. A quotation exemplifies this sense as follows:

“Raḡsan Ecevit went to İzmir along with Prime Minister Ecevit. While her husband was in a meeting with the industrialists and businessmen of the Aegean region, she was given information about the project ‘Youth in Social Development’. Raḡsan Ecevit went to the province Menemen, wore baggy trousers given to her by the girls there, hoed together with them and then picked tomatoes”.¹⁹²

The photograph below depicts her in baggy trousers and with a headscarf during that event.



Raḡsan Ecevit, although she was also accused of being communist due to her manner of dress,¹⁹³ had become a symbol for solidarity with people who had remained on the periphery of modernization. If she had presented herself any other way, it would have been insincere for her to advocate anti-elitist, popular politics. She told me memories of people checking her wrists and neck to see whether she wore any jewelry:

¹⁹² “Raḡsan Ecevit Üniversitesi Gençler ile Çapa Yaptı”, **Umut Gazetesi**, Yıl: 2, Sayı: 40, 1978e: 1.

¹⁹³ Interview, 2004: 19.

“In the beginning I could not understand that why they were touching me like this [showing her wrists]. I told myself that perhaps it was a kind of ritual. Well, then they were surprised to see that as a woman from the city I did not have any bracelets or necklaces. [They were checking to make sure]. Once, one of those who checked my wrists, it was a man [...] said, ‘Now I will go to my house and tell my wife that even Mrs. Ecevit has no bracelet or necklace, so why do you want me to buy a bracelet or necklace?’”¹⁹⁴

Altan mentions another anecdote, written in the voice of Raḥşan Ecevit:

“I was in the bus, returning from Kızılay. I overheard a conversation between two women who as far as I guessed from their attitudes were housewives. [...] [One of them] said, ‘My goodness, I like his wife very much. [She is] delicate and lovely, has no adornment. Some times she looks on the TV like a sparrow, and then I say, oh my dear!’”¹⁹⁵

The use of symbols in the piece to explain her modesty, such as traveling by bus, being delicate, and having no adornment, and the implications of tenderness such as considering her to look like a sparrow and the “Oh my dear!” are fascinating. Hence, whether Raḥşan Ecevit indeed told this story or whether this ever happened does not make any difference, because the fact that such an anecdote was mentioned in a book at that time shows the social affirmation for the way Raḥşan Ecevit looked and behaved.

According to Bülent Ecevit, the way Raḥşan Ecevit looked and behaved contributed to democratic left culture.¹⁹⁶ The democratic left was based on what Ecevit called the “people’s sector”, meaning that of workers and peasants.¹⁹⁷ Accordingly, although advertisements and television caused “the people’s sector” to consume goods which they did not need, their saving money was crucial for accomplishing democratic left development.¹⁹⁸ For this reason, as Bülent Ecevit explained during an interview in 1975, persons of high rank—members of the government and deputies—were to be good examples for the people. Then they would encourage the others to save more. Only after that could the country’s total saving volume grow and investment rate accelerate. Later on, during the same interview, Bülent Ecevit said that he was aware that some people criticized him and Raḥşan Ecevit because of their manner of dress. However, in addition to the fact that it was aligned with their own taste, they believed that they had no right to encourage consumption.¹⁹⁹ As mentioned in the program of the government formed by Bülent Ecevit in 1977, it was the duty of the new government to

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 18–19.

¹⁹⁵ Semih Altan, *C.I.A.’nin Namlusunda Üçüncü Adam*, Birlik Yayınları, İstanbul, 1974: 120.

¹⁹⁶ Interview, 2004: 20.

¹⁹⁷ Bülent Ecevit, *Ecevit’in Açıklamaları*, Ajans Türk Matbaası, İstanbul, 1976: 100-101.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 85–86.

¹⁹⁹ Koloğlu, 2001: 453.

ensure the consumption of goods which were necessary for a healthy and pleasant life and similarly to weaken factors which bolstered conspicuous consumption.²⁰⁰

Rahşan Ecevit summed up her point of view about village life and the centrality of villages for democratic left development in the play she wrote titled “Love in Pülümür” (*Pülümür’de Aşk*). Pülümür was the name of a village which affected both her and Bülent Ecevit when they went there. He wrote a poem afterward titled “An Old Woman of Pülümür, Who Has No Age” (*Pülümür’ün Yaşsız Kadını*). Rahşan Ecevit’s play was published in 2002. The story takes place in a police station. The characters are: Faruk, who sabotages some Americans’ car; a policeman; a ranking police officer; a porter, who stopped by the police station to get warm a bit; Faruk’s family; Faruk’s uncle, who is a deputy in the Assembly; and Faruk’s girlfriend Gülay and her father Saffet. In the first scenes, the porter talks about his village to Faruk. Then his family comes, but none of the family members understands why he committed his offense. The reader sees that as an upper-middle class family, in order to save the family esteem, Faruk’s family wants to get him from there as soon as possible, but of course, they cannot. With Faruk’s father calling him and young people like him “communists” for attempting to cause a crisis in the country, Gülay’s father, who is a teacher, defends him and his “communist” friends. According to him, although some who had evil interests abused their good intentions, the only thing they wanted was to revive Atatürk’s Turkey as a strong and independent country.²⁰¹ Faruk’s father does not agree and leaves to find Faruk’s uncle and so to be able to free him from the police office. After a while, he comes back and says that he could not find him but left a message for him to call. Meanwhile, Faruk, Gülay, her father Saffet, and the porter Mustafa start talking about Mustafa’s village. Faruk and Gülay listen to them but find it hard to understand the situation in the villages. Saffet explains the village situation as due to the peasants’ having lacked the intellectuals who would guide them. He accuses the elites, who did not try to get close to the common people.²⁰² Here, the play’s author speaks directly through the character Saffet. In the following parts, a hidden truth is revealed: Faruk’s father had a relationship with a peasant girl, but as the son of the landowner, it was impossible to marry a peasant girl, so his parents got the illegitimate child and took the girl away. Thus, Faruk learns that he was the son of that peasant girl and he wants to leave for the village where he belongs. The police officer does not want to let him go and asks whether he did really burn the car. Faruk says that since he

²⁰⁰ “CHP Parti Programı”, *Umut Gazetesi*, Yıl: 1, Sayı: 15, 1977: 5.

²⁰¹ Rahşan Ecevit, *Pülümür’de Aşk, 1960’lar Türkiye’si’nden Bir Kesit*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2002: 27-31.

²⁰² *Ibid*, 48.

really wanted to burn it, he told a lie, but he now understood that even if he did such a thing, he would not change anything in the village. Saffet supports his words and Faruk leaves.²⁰³ In the end, the play appears to be both Raḥşan Ecevit's interpretation of the previous two decades and an expression of the impression the "Peasant Association" had made on her. Moreover, it tells the women of the cities that women in Turkey had more responsibilities than simply domestic duties like homemaking or mothering. Just as in the Independence War, women needed to work for those who lacked better conditions of life.²⁰⁴

5.2. The Democratic Left Party

On 12 September 1980, the armed forces took control of the country because "the state organs had stopped functioning". The military dissolved the Assembly, deposed the government, and subsequently banned all political activity around either political parties or any other organizations. All political leaders were arrested²⁰⁵ and afterwards banned from engaging in politics for the following ten years.²⁰⁶ Bülent Ecevit had resigned from the presidency of the RPP on 30 September 1980,²⁰⁷ but he was still among those who were banned from politics. He founded the periodical *Arayış* (The Search) on 21 February on 1981 in order to express himself as a journalist instead.²⁰⁸ However, because of articles with titles like "The Torture" and "Intellectual Struggle against the Coup D' État", the periodical was banned on 7 April 1981.²⁰⁹ Regardless of the ban, even before 1983 when the ban on political activity loosened, he continued to express himself in interviews and statements printed in the foreign press.²¹⁰ Because of such attempts, he was arrested and imprisoned three times, first between 3 December 1981 and 1 February 1982, second between 10 April 1982 and 3 June 1982, and third between 20 August 1982 and 15 October 1982.²¹¹

In 1983, after the adoption of the new government, the military allowed political parties to be formed and an election was held. *Anavatan Partisi* (ANAP, The Motherland Party, MP) of Turgut Özal won the elections. Since the MP was guaranteed the absolute majority in the Assembly, it formed a new government headed by Özal, the man behind the

²⁰³ Ibid, 69–72.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 59.

²⁰⁵ Zürcher, 2001: 293–294.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 296.

²⁰⁷ Koloğlu, 2001: 583.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 587.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 133.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 135–136.

²¹¹ Çetingüleç, 2001: 108, 124–125, 238.

economic program of the Demirel government in 1979.²¹² In this manner, the new regime clearly rejected the political approach of the RPP of the pre-coup period.²¹³

At this time, Bülent Ecevit wished to continue democratic left politics, but since he was banned from politics, Raĥsan Ecevit undertook the task of forming a new political party. The social base of the new party was clear to them: the popular sector, but they needed a new cadre for the new organization, namely, the people who had not engaged with politics before.²¹⁴ This would be possible because of Raĥsan Ecevit's activities both in "Volunteers for People" and "Peasant Association". The constituents of the new party comprised: migrants, Sunni Muslims, middle-aged and elderly people, people of average or low-income levels, retired civil servants, small-scale tradesmen, groups with low levels of education and cultivation, unemployed groups, poor and suburban people, people from western parts of the country, sincere patriots, secular and non-politicized Muslims, petty commodity producers, and housewives.²¹⁵

Raĥsan Ecevit founded the Democratic Left Party (DLP, Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP) on 14 November 1985. In those days, Bülent Ecevit compared democratic left politics with a relay and declared that after 12 September 1980, it was Raĥsan Ecevit's turn.²¹⁶ When he was allowed to engage in politics again in 1987, he took over the presidency of DLP from Raĥsan Ecevit. In his speech at the ceremony of the turnover, Bülent Ecevit stated that Raĥsan Ecevit had not filled his shoes, but rather she had done something which he could not do by himself. That was the organization of the party.²¹⁷ Actually, she was quite happy to turn over the presidency of the party to her husband because it had gone was beyond her specialties.²¹⁸ Later, Raĥsan Ecevit described the division of labor within the DLP: "The organization is my duty and the spiritual part, meaning the idea side, is his".²¹⁹ As she explained, this division of duties had occurred naturally.²²⁰ This revealed the limits of empowerment of women with gender roles based on an egalitarian conjugal commitment. These roles were based on gender identity formation from the liberal equal rights principle, which separates the public sphere of

²¹² Zürcher, 2001: 296-297.

²¹³ Koloĝlu, 2001: 577-578.

²¹⁴ Interview, 2004: 18.

²¹⁵ Akar, 2002: 237-238.

²¹⁶ Koloĝlu, 2000: 160.

²¹⁷ Kurt, 2002: 138.

²¹⁸ Interview, 2005: 10.

²¹⁹ **Raĥsan Ecevit ve Siyaset**, DSP Genel Merkezi, Ankara, 2001: 43.

²²⁰ Interview, 2005: 10.

men from the privacy-originated spheres²²¹ of women, and in which men are identified with reason and women are responsible for reproduction.²²²

Because of the fact that the DLP rested on the popular charismatic leadership and the organizing skills of the Ecevit, it was compared since its inception to the populist Peronist movement. Prof. Tezel was first to announce this similarity. In this framework, Peronism meant creating a couple-leader cult in order to influence people who were presumed not to be politically sophisticated. On 31 March 1985, Raĥsan Ecevit made a statement against this comparison, saying that despite some valuable contributions to social development, the Peronist movement in Argentina had no relation to democracy, so there was no compatibility between Peronism and the DLP. Additionally, she underlined that there was no similarity between their way of life and that of the Perons.²²³ However, throughout the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, claims that the couple did control the party in an anti-democratic way would stick to Raĥsan Ecevit akin to Perons.

6. Conclusion

Critics have devalued or overvalued Raĥsan Ecevit's role in politics, and even those who denied her role have disagreed with each other. These sometimes called Raĥsan Ecevit sometimes a faade,²²⁴ sometimes a terrifying sister-in-law.²²⁵ The former critics suggested that all of what happened in the DLP had taken shape first in Blent Ecevit's mind, so either in her organization activity or in elsewhere; Raĥsan Ecevit was only his front.²²⁶ Most, however, suggested that although she looked like a woman who serves tea, she was in fact the person who had the biggest impact on Blent Ecevit.²²⁷ Since all the organization and

²²¹ Contrary to theoreticians of the public sphere and private sphere, here I avoid identifying women with the private sphere for two reasons. First, such a categorization prevents us from comprehending the public character of private-based relations. Second, it by definition excludes women from the public sphere as beings deprived of any political action, as if women politicians were "guests" in men's sphere. The concept of the privacy-originated sphere refers to the processes within any gender regime which transforms "females" into "women."

²²² Susan Moller-Okin, "Gender, the Public and the Private", **Political Theory Today**, David Held (ed.), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993: 68-69, Iris Marion Young, "Impartiality and Civil Public: Some Implications of Feminist Critiques of Moral and Political Theory", **Feminism as Critique**, Seyla Benhabib; Drucilla Cornell (eds.), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1987: 73.

²²³ Kurt, 2002: 126-127.

²²⁴ Engin nsal, **Ecevit'ten Ecevit'e- 1977-1987 Yılları Arasında Sosyal Demokratların kşn Belgeleyen Anılar**, İnkılap Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1995: 230.

²²⁵ Koloĝlu, 2001: 763.

²²⁶ nsal, 1995: 230.

²²⁷ Akar, 2002: 257.

administration of the DLP depended on Raḡsan Ecevit, thus she could be seen as a terrifying sister-in-law, which was an analogy to describe her role in politics as only the result of the marriage and her activities as an undesirable intervention into men's business. During Bülent Ecevit's illness when he was the prime minister in 2002, these critics went so far as to advise her not to intervene in politics but to take care of her husband instead, at which point Mağden²²⁸ labeled their criticism as misogynic. The misogynist approach sometimes took the form of the barb that since the Ecevits had no children, she directed her mothering instincts to Bülent Ecevit and politics for fulfillment and empowerment. The reason for their childlessness was one of the questions most frequently asked of the couple. Raḡsan Ecevit always answered with comments on material conditions of life which could prevent a couple from having a child.

Those who confirmed the importance of her social and political role emphasized her simple, unadorned look and her sensitivity about keeping her private life out of sights. As Sağlamer suggested,²²⁹ that the only jewelry she had was her wedding ring, stiffening her simple image, far from that of a conventional first lady. Most all information about Raḡsan Ecevit's role in Turkish society seems to refer at least cursorily to the conjugal commitment, which was the general framework for Raḡsan Ecevit's political activity.

With respect to the similarity between the Ecevits and the Perons, Laçiner suggested that there was no similarity except that both were married pairs, because while Eva Peron was a kind of woman who influenced the masses deeply, Raḡsan Ecevit was like a pale portrait behind her husband.²³⁰ In fact, there were similarities between the two in terms of techniques to mobilize the popular classes, but the similarity of conjugal couple leadership, contrary to what Laçiner suggested, was actually a powerful similarity. Politically or ideologically, Raḡsan Ecevit was the "leader" of women, just like Eva Peron had been.²³¹ Moreover, the image of the Perons as a couple, which both suggested the natural complementarity of gender while employing the discourse of the differences between them²³² bears a great resemblance to the image of the Ecevits as a conjugal couple.

On 5 November 2006, Bülent Ecevit passed away after a six-month coma due to apoplexy. Not only top political figures, but also one hundred thousand people all around the

²²⁸ Perihan Mağden, "Raḡsan Hanım'a Aşına Olmak", **Radikal**, 11.08.2002: 1-2.

²²⁹ Kayhan Sağlamer, **Ecevit Olayı, Bir Başbakanın Doğuşu**, Cilt II, Belge Yayınları, İstanbul, 1974: 370-371.

²³⁰ Akar, 2002: 256.

²³¹ Marta Raquel Zabaleta, *Feminine Stereotypes and Roles in Theory and Practice in Argentina Before and After the First Lady Eva Peron*, The Edwen Melen Pres Ltd., Lampeter, 2000: 183.

²³² Ibid, 257.

country participated to his funeral. The people showed a deep grief towards his death; as commentators argued, the popular classes once Ecevit had motivated expressed their respect for him after his death. In the funeral, throughout the way from the hospital to the cemetery Raḥşan Ecevit walked behind the hearse for about 8 kilometers that that met with a great admiration by people and seen as a mark of her loyalty and love to his deceased husband.²³³ Right after Bülent Ecevit's death, Raḥşan Ecevit made an interview and said that the meetings she made with the political party leaders during Bülent Ecevit's stay in the hospital was aimed at shaping a strong opposition against the exiting government. As she stated, she had done this because before he had apoplexy Bülent Ecevit had mentioned of necessity of such an attempt. As Raḥşan Ecevit put it, she had considered what he had told as a duty. Yet, from that moment on it was the duty of the politicians and the people to create a political alternative. As inferred from her own words, she believed that after her husband's death, her role in politics had ended.²³⁴

Raḥşan Ecevit's gender role and gender identity were compatible with each other and together determined the framework in which she constituted and strategized her gender identity. Bargaining within the egalitarian unit of the conjugal commitment enabled her to mould the conventional housewife role into one with space for autonomy, which also made her empowerment through politics possible and framed her gender identity/role construction.

From this point further, as Kandiyoti envisaged, any case of a patriarchal bargain can be expected to contribute to the nature of a gender ideology or gender regime. However, it is crucial to draw a social, historical, cultural and ideological line in order to picture the potential power and limits of this impact.

The patriarchal bargain requires women to strategize within and through a set of constraints. Thus, although any form of resistance can be seen within the gender regime, the strategies of patriarchal bargaining appear to have potential to change its composition. At the same time, however, localized strategies of women may render the gender regime durable and prevent systematic resistance. As Berktaş noticed, the "surmise of equality" in the case of Behice Boran, the "homogenization of political militancy under the sphere of the masculine" in the case of the women of the left, and "reverse discrimination" accompanied by the "surmise of equality" in the case of Kemalist women, which all rendered the gender regime durable.

²³³ "Ankara'da Sevgi ve Gözyaşı Seli", **Milliyet**, 12 Kasım 2006; "Son Yolculuğunda da Hiç Yanından Ayrılmadı", **Hürriyet**, 11 Kasım 2006.

²³⁴ Fikret Bila, "Son Görevimi Yaptım", **Milliyet**, 7 Kasım 2006.

So, in general, agreement on the principle of women's equality to men, which had an ideological basis in modernization, prevented Turkish women in the 1960s and 1970s from comprehending, conceptualizing and analyzing different forms of oppression. For example, Rahşan Ecevit would state that she was not pleased with feminism, because while she considered women as human, feminism went too far in favor of women, but at the expense of equality between men and women.²³⁵ Instead, for her, the new regime of 1923 meant the most important guarantee for women.²³⁶ Yet, at a time, it was highly marginalized.

To comprehend, conceptualize and analyze different forms of women's oppression and to fight against them was possible in the West in the 1970s because theoretical academic discourse and the practice of radical politics could merge.²³⁷ Turkish women of the 1980s were faced with a related issue: the synthesis of their experience with radical political action and the reality of the marginalization of the hegemonic discourse of the Turkish modernization.

²³⁵ Çetingüleç, 2000: 264.

²³⁶ www.dsp.org.tr/konusmalar, 2004.

²³⁷ R.W. Connel, **Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve İktidar, Toplum Kişi ve Cinsel Politika**, Cem Soydemir (trans.), Ayrıntı Yayınları İstanbul, 1998: 59.

CHAPTER 5: SEMRA ÖZAL: A POMPOM OF TEMERITY ON TOP OF A TRADITIONAL SKULLCAP

“‘It’s a hard job and they’ve all done it differently’, Nancy said of her predecessors. Therefore, she concluded, ‘I’ll be me’”.²

“‘There are those who think first ladies should be kept in attics, only to say our lines, pour our tea, and then be put away again’. Nancy Reagan was not that kind of woman”.³

“As the wife of the Prime Minister, I could not be like a briefcase accompanying him”.⁴

“I said, ‘It’s me! Whether you like it or not, I could not be closed into a kind of palace made of glass’”.⁵

Semra Özal and Nancy Reagan were not only contemporaneous first ladies of two different countries; they also shared similar concerns in the post-1980s milieu, which took shape largely through policies of their own husbands. Additionally, both made room for her own personal gender identity construction while representing a gender role as first lady. All in all, the success of both can be summarized as the ability to speak using the first person pronoun “I”.

1. Born into a Middle-Class Family

Semra Yeyinmen (later Özal) was born in 1934 in İstanbul. She described her family as follows: “Our house was in the middle of a very spacious garden, a mansion let’s say [...] My mother had studied in Notre Dame de Sion High School. She knew French and Ottoman script. She used to read novels in French; she used to write letters in French. She also knew Greek. She had learned it from her friends at school [...] She often used to go to the cinema, read novels, and follow magazines, therefore she was a very modern-minded woman. However, she covered her head, but very elegantly. It was like a bun or turban but very elegant [...] she always wore that turban until the end. In addition, she was always very elegant in her attire [...] My father was a very good person, may God have mercy on him. In our house, nobody raised his or her voice. It was place of love, sympathy and unity”.⁶ Her

¹ Cemal Süreyya, **99 Yüz, İzdüşümler/Söz Senaryosu**, Kaynak Yayınlar, İstanbul, 1992: 158.

² Gil Troy, **Affairs of State, The Rise and Rejection of the Presidential Couple since World War II**, The Free Press, New York, 1997: 284.

³ Troy, 1997: 305.

⁴ Interview conducted with Semra Özal on 20 January 2006: 12.

⁵ Ibid, 12.

⁶ Ibid, 1-2.

parents had been born in İstanbul. As she described, her maternal grandfather, who had graduated from the *Mülkiye*, was governor of Yozgat when he died. His father, her great-grandfather, was *müstantik*⁷ in the Ottoman palace. He was originally from Egypt and had been appointed to the Palace on recommendation. Her paternal grandfather was also affiliated with the Palace. He had been a *tablekarbaşı*⁸, she claimed.⁹

In a published interview, Semra Özal said that her father was a technician and her mother was a housewife.¹⁰

What she told about her family, despite insistent probing, was limited in terms of both their origins and the details of their life. Further information about her family is available in secondary sources, but this often contradicts what she said herself. For instance, Emin Çölaşan, was at odds with the Özals because the book he wrote, argued that Semra Özal's father, Ali Rıza Bey, was an ordinary technical man at the seaport. As for her mother Azize hanım was only, Çölaşan argued, a housewife who had had no formal education but only later in life had learned to read and write.¹¹

In his book dated 1993, Erbil Tuşalp quoted Semra Özal about their Palace affiliation and argued that she was born and grew up in the annex of the mansion which belonged to Karamürsel family. As he claimed, her father took care of the garden and her mother did housework in the mansion.¹²

In a recent collection of life histories of the wives of the presidents of the Republic, Atıkoğlu confirmed the information that Semra Özal with her family lived in the annex of the Karamürsel mansion. Yet, she argued that the father of Semra Özal was not a gardener or a steward in the mansion, rather, since the mother of Semra Özal was a long distance relative of the Karamürsel family, she was holding a part of the property, thus they were living on that part of the estate.¹³

Although the present information on her family does not allow us to analyze her family life, it might still be possible to argue that Semra Özal was born into a middle-class family. That her father was a technical man, though residing in İstanbul and having

⁷ *Müstantik* is an Arabic-origin word which refers to the officer of law who makes the first investigation of a case before it goes to court.

⁸ *Tablakar* is described as a servant who distributes food on trays in the Palace. Therefore, *tablakarbaşı* must be the chief of those servants. "Delights of Imperial Cuisine", **Turkish Daily News**, Turkish Probe issue 411, December 2000.

⁹ Interview, 2-3.

¹⁰ Ahmet Kahraman, **Hanedan'ın Önlenemeyen Çıkışı ve Saltanatı**, Boyut Yayınları, İstanbul, 1989: 76.

¹¹ Emin Çölaşan, **Turgut Nereden Koşuyor?** Tekin Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1989: 15-16.

¹² Erbil Tuşalp, **Plastik Papatya Kokusu**, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 1993: 27-28.

¹³ Ayça Atıkoğlu, **Cumhurbaşkanı Eşleri**, İnkılâp Yayınları, İstanbul, 2006: 192.

connections with the Imperial elite might have allowed them to share a middle class life style, even through a kind of mimicry. Additionally, Semra Özal's description of her mother's wearing a turban like a bun brings to mind the mother of Raḥşan Ecevit, who wore a similar bun. However, she, in the same years, had struggled with her husband and succeeded to gain permission to get a haircut instead of wearing that bun or turban.¹⁴

All in all, the contradictions between the first-hand account and the secondary sources and the general secrecy about the origins and life of her family necessitate a further attempt to approach the oral account of Semra Özal.

1.1. Mythical Genealogy¹⁵

Çölaşan complains that because of the secrecy surrounding the family of Semra Özal it took him ten days to find out what her father's job was.¹⁶ He also claims that Semra Özal was very careful not to speak about her family; moreover, no journalists had courage to ask about it.¹⁷

If we have to agree that secrecy predominates in the oral account of Semra Özal, then we should ask of what use her account is.

Portelli states: "Memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings". Thus, memory reveals the narrator's effort to make sense of the past,¹⁸ hence "the speaker's subjectivity".¹⁹ For this reason, as Portelli asserted, oral accounts are important not because of their adherence to facts, but their departure from facts.²⁰ Therefore, when it comes to the oral account of Semra Özal, more than keeping secrets, she appears to have distorted her past in a way which reveals her subjectivity.

This distortion comes into play with the aim of creating a mythical genealogy. *Myth* is explained by Barthes as a second-order semiological system. Here, a first-order semiological system is the language through which the signifier expresses the signified, then the result is a sign with full of meaning. However, myth requires the second-order semiological system in which a sign full of meaning becomes the signifier of a signified. The result is a doubly-

¹⁴ See previous chapter, 4.

¹⁵ The concept is used by Gagnon to explain analysis of oral accounts by professionals. Nicole Gagnon, "On the Analysis of Life Accounts", **Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences**, Daniel Bertaux (ed.), Sage Publications, California, 1981: 54.

¹⁶ Çölaşan, 1989: 8.

¹⁷ Ibid, 16.

¹⁸ Portelli, 1998: 52.

¹⁹ Ibid, 50.

²⁰ Ibid, 51.

articulated sign, i.e. a myth.²¹ With respect to the oral account of Semra Özal, the family's affiliation with the Palace, her growing up in a spacious mansion, and their having relatives who graduated from the *Mülkiye* become signifiers in a second-order semiological system. The elements of the account, already full of meaning—for example, the first two imply an obvious elitism, while the last one and the second one imply the modernizing lifestyles of both traditional and newly emerging bureaucratic classes—make it possible to create a mythical genealogy.

Similar to what Portelli argued, Barthes states: “*Myth hides nothing*. Its function is to distort, not to make disappear”.²² Therefore, distortion in the mythical genealogy of Semra Özal leaves her account still useful for analysis.

1.2. An Ambitious Young Girl

In contrast to what she says about her family, Semra Özal says much more about her youth. Nevertheless, what she has said about her youth is primarily about activities she engaged in as a volunteer. Her narration follows a trail of activities from her early youth until the foundation she founded in 1986, so that her account takes on the epic form of a narration revolving around a meaningful center.

According to Semra Özal, she had been interested in social activities since she was very young. When she was in secondary school, she was involved in the Association of İstanbul Town Fellows (*İstanbul Hemşehriler Derneği*), which had been founded by Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, the governor and mayor of the city between 1949 and 1957. Among the activities of the association were excursions to touristy places and the betterment of the city. Because at the time she was very young, she said, the rest of the members were reluctant to accept her until Gökay met with her; he saw something in her eyes. Then she had started swimming at the İstanbul Swimming Club (*İstanbul Yüzme İhtisas Klübü*). She was among the founders of the club. Since she was very active and dynamic, she asserted, she did not see these activities as enough, so she began to work in the Benevolence Association²³ as a volunteer. She was so diligent that the Association awarded her medals.²⁴

²¹ Roland Barthes, **Mythologies**, Annette Lavers (ed. and trans.), Hill and Wang, New York, 1957: 112-117.

²² Ibid, 121.

²³ See, Mevhibe İnönü, 39.

²⁴ Interview, 1-2.

In another interview, she related that compared with the life of the new generation, her youth was not enjoyable. She mentioned sport activities and school tea parties that she participated in, but that was all. Since she immediately began to work after graduating from school, her youth was brief.²⁵

Semra Özal graduated from the Nişantaşı High School for Girls (*Nişantaşı Kız Lisesi*) in 1953. In the same year, she went to Ankara to visit her uncle. Her uncle, Mükerrer Berk, was a flautist. He was among those who worked for progress of the Western classical music, hence, he had good relations with İsmet İnönü.²⁶ The wife of her uncle was working in the Electricity Research Institute (ERI, *Elektrik İşleri Etüt İdaresi*). When Semra Özal was there, an employee was on maternity leave, and she was asked to replace her, at least for few weeks. Thus, she started to work in the ERI, where she would meet her future husband, Turgut Özal.²⁷

With respect to education, she said that she wished she could have a university degree. However, since she got married at a very young age, she could not. Similarly, her older sister had worked as a seamstress for a while until she married. Only her younger brother had continued his education and graduated from the Robert College of İstanbul (*Robert Koleji*) as an engineer. He received a Fulbright scholarship and studied in the United States, where afterwards he would reside and establish his own business.²⁸

Since having a university education had been an unrealized wish for Semra Özal, she explained, she followed courses in the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University in Eskişehir (*Anadolu Üniversitesi Açık Öğretim Fakültesi*) while Turgut Özal was Prime Minister, and received her university diploma from the Department of Economics. This was satisfying, she said. However, as she related, she never publicized the diploma in accordance with Turgut Özal's wishes; he thought that she did not need a piece of paper to be respected.²⁹

2. Marriage

²⁵ Semra Karaibrahimgil, "Semra Özal ile Çok Çok Özel", *Elele*, Ağustos 1986: 12.

²⁶ Atıkoğlu, 2006: 192.

²⁷ Interview, 4.

²⁸ Ibid, 3.

²⁹ Ibid, 4.

Once begun, Semra Özal continued to work in the ERI for the next eight months. At that moment, she took an exam in order to move on to work in İstanbul and passed it, but when Turgut Özal proposed marriage, she stayed.³⁰

Her job in the ERI was to collect the statistical electricity data of Turkey. Turgut Özal was an engineer in the same institute. Although she had refused his advances in the beginning, Turgut Özal was constantly inviting her out. As Semra Özal stated, her family was not against flirting; on the contrary, they did not wish to marry off her in a traditional way. Nevertheless, at first, her family did not welcome Turgut Özal as a groom. The reason was that while Semra Özal was born and grown raised in İstanbul, Turgut Özal was from the East, thus it was thought that it would be hard for both the couple and the families to get along. As she related, when they started to know the groom better, they changed their minds.³¹

As soon as they married, Semra Özal quit her job. As she explained, her husband was a jealous man and did not want her to continue to work, which she did not dispute. That soon she would have a baby was another reason for her not to attempt to continue working. More importantly, she asserted, she had continued the social work and voluntary activities she had been engaged with in İstanbul in Ankara as well. They were time-consuming enough. Therefore, she did not feel bored or useless because of her not working.³² She continued to work for the Benevolence Association in Ankara. Additionally, she worked as a volunteer in the founding of the first cancer hospital, Ahmet Andıçen Oncology Hospital (*Ahmet Andıçen Onkoloji Hastanesi*) in 1962. The Association of Rheumatism (*Romatizmalılar Derneği*), the Sanatorium, the Keçiören Orphanage (*Keçiören Çocuk Yuvası*) and the Children's Branch of the Turkish-American Association (*Türk Amerikan Derneği Çocuk Sevenler Derneği*) were among the associations or institutions where she worked as a volunteer in those years. This gives a general framework for her depiction of her life in Ankara after marriage.³³

2.1. Turgut Özal

Turgut Özal was born in 1927 in Malatya. His family from his father's side was from Malatya. His father, Mehmet Sıddık Bey, was the only child among his sisters and brothers who survived, and his parents had also died when he was very young. His aunt had taken care

³⁰ Ibid, 2.

³¹ Ibid, 4.

³² Ibid, 4-5.

³³ Ibid, 2-3.

of him. Mehmet Sıddık Bey had attended a religious school (*medrese*) and become familiar with the Arabic, Persian and Ottoman languages. Turgut Özal's mother Hafize Hanım had attended a local primary school. Having graduated after six years, she had started to work as an assistant teacher, at a very young age. Turgut Özal had two brothers, Korkut and Yusuf. As Korkut Özal remembered, his parents used to ask them arithmetic problems in a kind of a game for the children. Afterwards, due to Mehmet Sıddık Bey's work, (he had been appointed the manager of the *Ziraat Bank*, the Bank for Agriculture), the family migrated to Söğüt, Bursa, where children started school. In 1937, when Turgut Özal was ten years old, the family moved again to Silifke, Mersin, where he finished primary school. Later, they went to Mardin, where Turgut Özal graduated from secondary school in 1943. Since there was no high school in Mardin, Mehmet Sıddık Bey asked for an appointment to Kayseri, where Korkut Özal and Turgut Özal graduated from high school, in 1945 and 1946, respectively.³⁴ In 1946, Turgut Özal started university education in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the İstanbul Technical University (ITU, *İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi*). Two years later, his brother Korkut Özal followed him.³⁵

Hasan Celal Güzel, their friend from Malatya, who afterwards would engage in politics both as a deputy and a minister in the ANAP (*Anavatan Partisi*, the Motherland Party) government of Özal, remembers Hafize Hanım as a very active woman, while Mehmet Sıddık Bey was rather reclusive. Despite his shyness, Sıddık Bey was still, he argues, among the intellectuals of Malatya at the time. Güzel also notes the influence of Hafize Hanım over the children.³⁶

With respect to the political affiliation of the family, Korkut Özal asserts that they were aligned politically with the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*) of Adnan Menderes. The family had never been happy with the administration of the Republican People's Party (RPP, *Cuhmuriyet Halk Partisi*); actually, they supported the DP rather than the National Leader administration of İsmet İnönü (*Milli Şef*)³⁷

Their sympathy to the DP influenced their political orientation during the university years. Korkut Özal asserts that they were on the conservative side.³⁸ At the time, the DP was contesting the RPP administration on liberal premises; it was based on the interpretation of

³⁴ M. Ali Birand, Soner Yalçın, *The Özal, Bir Davanın Öyküsü*, Doğan Kitapçılık, İstanbul, 2001: 18.

³⁵ Ibid, 23.

³⁶ Ibid, 18.

³⁷ Ibid, 18.

³⁸ Ibid, 19.

national concern through a liberal understanding of religion.³⁹ Thus, religious concerns permeated DP's liberalism. Moreover, historically, since the incident of İzmir Conspiracy in 1926 and throughout the multi-party experiments, liberalism contesting the RPP had become associated with conservatism.⁴⁰ Therefore, the political positioning of both Turgut Özal and Korkut Özal was the product of a historical coalescence of liberalism and conservatism.

Korkut Özal has described the student actions and protests they were involved in. They participated in protests against communism, and he mentions the *Tan* incident in December 1945,⁴¹ but he does not disclose whether they were involved in this specific incident. He also mentions their supporting nationalist protests around the Cyprus issue. He mentions the meeting they organized during the funeral of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak⁴² on 12

³⁹ Ahmet İnsel, "Türkiye'de Liberalizm Kavramının Soyçizgisi", **Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Liberalizm**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005: 74.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 68.

⁴¹ The *Tan* Incident, as it was recalled, was a protest staged by a huge crowd of university students who destroyed the printing presses of the communist newspaper *Tan* (Dawn) and the weekly *Görüşler* (Views), as well as the newspapers *La Turquie* and *Yeni Dünya* (New World). Several publishing houses selling leftist books were also destroyed. After the Second World War, the ban on the free press had begun to be lifted and publication of the formerly-banned newspapers was allowed in 1944. The opposition outside the party (Republican People's Party) was centered around the socialist *Tan* and liberal *Vatan* (homeland). The newspapers also voiced opposition within the party. At one point, the harsh political opposition turned to be a polemic between the newspapers and journalists. Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel's *Tan* and Ahmet Emin Yalman's *Vatan* were on one side and the official newspaper of the one-party regime, *Ulus*, and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's *Tanin*, were on the other side. The antagonism against the opposition was increased when Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel started publishing the political magazine *Görüşler* (Views). Oppositional figures within the RPP, Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes, who together with Refik Koraltan and Fuat Köprülü would soon found the Democratic Party, had promised articles for the magazine. At the time, the fact that Turkish-Soviet relations were deteriorating due to the Soviets' demands for revision of the Montreaux Convention, had probably increased the reaction against the pro-Soviet publications of Sertels. Eventually, on 4 December 1945, a huge crowd of university students (having been manipulated by the government, as historians and eyewitnesses agree) carrying anti-communist posters attacked the *Tan* offices first and continued with the rest. Although the incident took place very close to police headquarters, neither the governor nor the police did anything to stop it. According to Sabiha and Zekeriya Sertel, the government had aimed at both dividing the opposition and securing American support through an anti-Soviet attitude. (Kemal Karpat, **Turkey's Politics, The Transition to a Multi Party System**, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1959: 148-151; Osman Akandere, **Milli Şef Dönemi, Çok Partili Hayata Geçişte Rol Oynayan İç ve Dış Tesirler, 1938-1945**, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1998: 384-392; Zekeriya Sertel, **Hatırladıklarım, 1905-1950**, Yayıncılık Matbaası, İstanbul, 1968: 258, 268-270; Sabiha Sertel, **Roman Gibi, 1919-1950**, Ant Yayınları, 1966: 336-344).

⁴² Marshal Fevzi Çakmak was one of the famous army commanders of the Ottoman Empire and later one of the heroes of the Independence War. He remained Chief of Staff throughout Atatürk's lifetime. After retiring under İsmet İnönü, he entered politics first in the Democrat Party. The Democrats hoped to benefit from the respectable and honorable personality of the Marshal. At the time, Fevzi Çakmak was the only living Marshal of Turkey. Besides, he was known for his pious character. After the elections in 1946, the Marshal was the DP's candidate for President of the Republic. He was thought to counter-balance İsmet İnönü, who was the candidate of the RPP. While Marshal Fevzi Çakmak received fifty-nine votes, İsmet İnönü received 388 votes and became President. Afterwards, due to conflict within the DP, the Marshal resigned from the party and founded *Millî Partisi* (National Party) on 20 July 1948. The National Party was a pro-clerical party and defended religious freedom not only as an historical and social necessity but also as a means of preserving the moral standards of society. Soon, the party started to gain the support of the religious groups in party politics against the secular politics of the RPP. When the Marshal died on 10 April 1950, the government decided to hold a state funeral since he was a significant figure in Turkish history. However, thousands of people led by chanting imams dominated the funeral and opposed the official plans. Some of them, out of respect for the memory of the

April 1950 as the most important meeting they were involved in. He proudly asserts that during those days İstanbul experienced great unrest, which they had caused.⁴³ Indeed, the funeral of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak was regarded as a display of antagonism against the “modernism” and “secularism” of the RPP administration. That was one of the first and most important religious reactions in the early decades of the Republic.

Moreover, they were also affiliated with religious groups in the University. In a small mosque in the university, they had met Abdurrahman Şeref Hodja, who was organizing religious chats in his house. He led them to meet Abdülaziz Efendi (Bekkiye), who at the time was the sheik of the Nakşibendi dervish order.⁴⁴ They became regular attendants at the dervish order and as Korkut Özal describes, continued their relationships with the dervish order throughout later years.⁴⁵

Later on, Korkut Özal would take a more religious position in his private life as well as in politics. In 1977, he entered politics as a deputy of the religious National Salvation Party (NSP, *Milli Selamet Partisi*). In the meantime, in 1957, he had been to the United States, where according to general rumor, he had contacts with Mormons that had inclined him to live a more religious life. When he was back to Turkey, he induced both his wife and his mother Hafize Hanım to cover their heads.⁴⁶ Until then, neither his wife nor his mother had ever worn the headscarf. On the contrary, they were known for their modern fashions. Early in the 1930s in Malatya, Hafize Hanım wore half-sleeve dresses and hats.⁴⁷

Marshal, insisted that the radio stop broadcasting and the cinemas and theaters in İstanbul close. During the funeral, the call for prayer (*ezan*) was broadcast in Arabic, daring at the time, when the rigid secularist policies of the RPP had meant replacing the Arabic *ezan* with one in Turkish. The crowd at the funeral was estimated at about 150,000. (Karpas, 1959: 160, 169-170, 219-220, 278, 282-285).

⁴³ Birand, 2001: 21.

⁴⁴ The Nakşibendis had come to Anatolia with the armies of Timur in the beginning of the 15th century. Molla İlahî established the first Nakşibendi *tekke* (lodge) in his hometown Simav, continuing in İstanbul. Thereafter, the Nakşibendi Order acquired and maintained a significant role in Turkish religious life. The Halidi branch of the Nakşibendis was established largely in Eastern Anatolia. This branch proved to have a political role when Sheikh Ahmed of Süleymaniye, a Nakşibendi, led the first movement against the Tanzimat reforms in 1859. The most important leader of the Halidi branch in 19th century was Ziyaeddin Gümüşhanevi. Abdülaziz Bekkiye was the sheikh in the Gümüşhanevi Branch until his death in 1952. Later Mehmet Zahit Kotku succeeded him. The persons gathered around him would become key political figures in Turkish politics after the 1970s and 1980s. Necmettin Erbakan, the founder of the *Milli Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party), and Korkut Özal were among them. Prof Dr. Esat Coşan, who was a professor at the Faculty of Theology, became the sheikh. After his death in 2001, Muharrem Nurettin Coşan succeeded him as the sheikh. Throughout their history, Nakşibendis acted for the interests of Muslims. Moreover, they provided the people gathered around *tekkes* (lodges) with the opportunities of fraternity organizations. All the same, as Mardin argued, the order lent individuals “cultural constants” in order to cope with the “boundary conditions” of modernity. (Şerif Mardin, “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History”, **Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State**, Richard Tapper (ed. by), St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1991: 121-142).

⁴⁵ Birand, 2001: 22-23.

⁴⁶ Çölaşan, 1989: 25-27; Interview, 5.

⁴⁷ Çölaşan, 1989: 13.

Semra Özal never got on well with her mother-in-law Hafize Hanım. As she explained, the reason was the difference in their ways of life and worldviews. Moreover, the main reason for Hafize Hanım not to embrace her daughter-in-law, according to Semra Özal, was somewhat psychological. Earlier, in 1952, Hafize Hanım had married her son Turgut to a girl she knew well, Ayhan Hanım. The couple, however, had soon broken up.⁴⁸ Afterwards, the ex-bride would migrate to İstanbul with her family and start working there as pharmacist.⁴⁹ This had been so disappointing for Hafize Hanım that after she died, among her belongings was a wedding photo of Turgut Özal and Ayhan Hanım which she had kept by her throughout the years.⁵⁰

2.2. Rise of the Engineers

While Turgut Özal was in the ERI, he was working in coordination with Süleyman Demirel, who would enter into politics in 1962 with the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*), the successor of the DP, and would then be Prime Minister of Turkey in 1965, 1969, 1975, 1977, 1979, and 1991, and President of the Republic between 1993 and 2000. At the time, Süleyman Demirel was the head of the Dam Administration (*Barajlar Dairesi*); he became manager of the State Water Administration (*Devlet Su İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü*) in 1955. In the years of DP governance, Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel had tried to convince Prime Minister Menderes to administer central planning for development. Due to his dislike of the centralist administration of the RPP, Menderes was initially unwilling to accept ideas of such a plan. However, they managed to convince him of the value of central planning and run several projects together. After the military intervention in 1960, Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel continued to run projects in the State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*).⁵¹

Engineering practices and engineers as social actors acquired a leading positions in Turkey in the 1960s. According to Köse and Öncü⁵², this was due to idea of central planning, which posed industrialization as a requisite of social development. In other words, central planning was about the rational mobilization of national resources for given ends; hence development became no more a social issue, but a technical issue. In general, the proliferation

⁴⁸ Interview, 5.

⁴⁹ Birand, 2001: 26-27.

⁵⁰ Müge Anlı, **Zeynep Özal, Bir Kadın Birkaç Hayat**, Grinet, İstanbul, 2004: see appendices.

⁵¹ Birand, 2001: 23-24.

⁵² Ahmet Haşim Köse and Ahmet Öncü, "A Class Analysis of the Professional and Political Ideologies of Engineers in Turkey", **The Ravages of Neo-liberalism: Economy, Society, and Gender in Turkey**, Neşecan Balka and Sungur Savran (eds.), Nova Science Publishers, New York, 2002: 145.

of engineering and pragmatist ideology led to the separation of modernization as a total project from capitalist development that reached its peak after 1980.⁵³ As Göle argued, contrary to the political polarization of the preceding years, in the post-1980s, engineering, hence pragmatism, made its mark on political culture.⁵⁴ Thus, after 1980, engineers came to the forefront as social actors representing a new dynamic of modernization, the rationalized modernization.⁵⁵

2.3. Experiencing the American Dream

Turgut Özal was the undersecretary of the State Planning Organization from 1960 until 1971. After the military ultimatum on 12 March 1971, he was deposed and went to the United States to work for the World Bank. His family accompanied him. They lived in the United States for two-and-a-half years. Semra Özal described the life there as different but not appealing. She told that since they had been to the United States in 1963 and had previously traveled in Europe, nothing had surprised her in America. Life was not appealing to her because of her lack of intimate relationships with neighbors and friends. Yet, she could again compensate for those deficiencies with social work. She had worked as an auditor in the American-Turkish Association, under the ambassadress Emine Esenbel. She proudly told how much her reports had been appreciated by the ambassadress. Additionally, she was involved in the Women's Club of the World Bank. The club offered social hobbies to the wives of World Bank employees, including sewing, handiwork, music, and tourism. Semra Özal was chosen as chief of the sewing group. It was for the first time in the history of the club that a Turkish woman was chief of one of the groups. Therefore, as she described, it was a matter of honor.⁵⁶

According to their oldest son Ahmet, what was surprising in the United States was stores where you could find, for example, thirty kinds of yogurt at once. While finding a light bulb was one of the hardest shopping experiences in Turkey, the wealth in America amazed them. It, according to Ahmet Özal, made a serious impact on his father Turgut Özal in setting a vision for his future political career.⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, in the administration of Turgut

⁵³ Köse and Öncü, 145-147.

⁵⁴ Nilüfer Göle, *Mühendisler ve İdeoloji, Öncü Devrimcilerden Yenilikçi Seçkinlere*, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998: 14.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 179.

⁵⁶ Interview, 5-6.

⁵⁷ Birand, 2001: 44.

Özal, slogans of the post-1980s would consistently refer to Nescafé, Marlboro or products of other foreign companies, of which import was not allowed before the 1980s, as symbols of development. It was common in the post-1980s to use freedom of choice in consumption to represent pluralism and democracy.

2.4. NSP Candidacy

Turgut Özal returned to Turkey with his family at the proposition of Sakıp Sabancı⁵⁸ in 1974 and started to work for the Sabancı Group. Later he resigned to establish his own business. In the meantime, he was chair of the Union of Industrialists of Metallic Commodities (*Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası*).

Özal's first political engagement occurred in those days. He was already in contact with the religious, right wing National Salvation Party (NSP, *Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP*) and the anti-communist, Pan-Turkist National Action Party (NAP, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP*) on an informal level. In 1977, the NSP named Turgut Özal as a candidate for the upcoming elections. His brother Korkut Özal was a candidate as well. Eventually, Turgut Özal was not elected as a NSP deputy, but the way Semra Özal relates this story represents affirmation of her identity construction. According to her, Korkut Özal and Turgut Özal's friends in the party had forced him to become a candidate; thus, he had no choice but to go into the elections. Nevertheless, as soon as Semra Özal heard about the candidacy, she told him that if he were elected NSP deputy, she would divorce him. If she stayed with him, she would lose her self-respect; otherwise, her modern outlook would give harm to his political career, she explained. Subsequently, they agreed that she would leave for America with the children until the end of the elections. As a wife, she seems to have learned how to make use of her role. When asked what would happen if he was elected, she said they would divorce. Then she added with laughter, "I am so crazy, you see!"⁵⁹

3. Military Intervention-12 September 1980

⁵⁸ Sakıp Sabancı (1933-2004), born in a village in Kayseri, had started his career as a low-ranked employee in a bank. In 1967, he and his brothers founded the Sabancı Holding. In 1981, the Sabancı Holding created Ak International Bank, the first bank abroad established by Turkish capital alone. In the 1990s, Sabancı Holding generated several partnerships with foreign companies. In early 2000s, Sabancı Holding was the first among leading business actors in Turkey (<http://www.sakipsabanci.gen.tr/>).

⁵⁹ Interview, 14.

The military intervention on 12 September 1980 signaled a turning-point in the history of Turkey. It was an attempt to break all ties with earlier decades, leading to irreversible changes in politics, economy, society, and culture. As the Prime Minister after 1982, Turgut Özal put his own mark on this milieu.

On 12 September 1980, armed forces headed by General Kenan Evren took political power. The army declaration aired on the radio announced the aim of the army as to end terror and to reestablish order. Accordingly, the parliament was dissolved, the government was deposed, and political parties and all associations except the Turkish Aeronautical Association, Board for Protection of Children and the Turkish Red Crescent, along with the radical trade unions DISK (Confederation of Revolutionist Trade Unions, *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*) and MİSK (Confederation of Nationalist Trade Unions, *Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*) were suspended.⁶⁰ Additionally, an extensive arrest campaign started in 1981; the number of people who were arrested reached 122,600.⁶¹

On 21 September 1980, the armed forces appointed a new government under retired admiral Bülent Ulusu. Subsequently, on 7 November 1982, the new constitution was subjected to referendum. With the efforts of General Kenan Evren, it was accepted by a % 91, 4 of votes.⁶² By the referendum, Kenan Evren was automatically elected President of the Republic. The new constitution was far-removed from the previous one in terms of liberties. It privileged the state over society by limiting individual and collective liberties and freedom of the press. Additionally, the constitution gave politics very limited space. Hence, associations, foundations and trade unions were banned from engaging with politics. Political parties, which were supposed to have no connection with former politics or politicians, were put under restrictions from establishing separate branches for women or youth. Civil servants and students were not allowed to engage in politics.⁶³

Another decisive function of the military intervention had to do with the regulation of the economy for integration with world capital. The military had seized power with the mantra *the strong state and the free market*. Reforms for freeing market conditions had been introduced in the days preceding the coup in 1979. The 24 January Decisions, as they were called, had brought forth an agenda for the reorganization of the economical system according to the needs of global capitalism. At the time, Turgut Özal was the vice-undersecretary of the

⁶⁰ Bülent Tanör, “Siyasal Tarih (1980–1995)”, *Türkiye Tarihi 5, Bugünkü Türkiye 1980-2003*, CemYayınevi, İstanbul, 2005: 34; Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey, A Modern History*, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London, 2001: 292.

⁶¹ Zürcher, 2001: 294.

⁶² Ibid, 296.

⁶³ Tanör, 1985: 50-52.

State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*) and the undersecretary of the Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel. Thus, as the bureaucrat who possessed ultimate authority in economic affairs, he was a member of the team who prepared the resolution. However, at the time of the coup, the 24 January Decisions of the Demirel government had not been implemented due to resistance from the trade unions. The coup d'état made their implementation possible. After the military intervention, Turgut Özal became the main executor of the 24 January Decisions.⁶⁴

In the period of normalization after the military intervention, a new Law of Political Parties was created. The new law put a ten-year ban on political activities for former politicians. It allowed the formation of brand-new parties for the elections due 6 November 1983. Three such parties were allowed to take part in the elections. The first was retired general Turgut Sunalp's Party of National Democracy (*Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi*). The second was the Populist Party (*Halkçı Parti*) of Necdet Calp. The third was the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*) of Turgut Özal. Despite evident support of Kenan Evren with the Party of National Democracy, the Motherland Party won the elections with a high percentage of votes: over 45 percent. Here, it is worth mentioning that Western business circles made General Evren know their support for Turgut Özal⁶⁵. The Motherland Party was founded by Turgut Özal, Veysel Atasoy, Mesut Yılmaz, Halil Şıvgın, Mehmet Altınsoy, and Mustafa Taşar in May 1983. From the very beginning, the party advocated a free market economy, freedom for entrepreneurship, and the lessening of bureaucracy, and campaigned to improve the economy and decrease inflation and unemployment rates to ensure fast development. The founders' claim of having united different political ideologies under the umbrella of the Motherland Party promised public order and social peace.⁶⁶ After the elections, Turgut Özal created the new government as the Prime Minister. Including him, there were nine other engineers in the government, which became known as the "cabinet of engineers".⁶⁷

The new economic integration program initiated by the new cabinet was based on a triple alliance of domestic capitalist groups, the state, and international actors of globalization. The military intervention provided the state with a free hand to suppress social opposition and to legitimize the demands of the capitalist sector for globalization. Thus, the stand-by

⁶⁴ Tanıl Bora, "Turgut Özal", **Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Liberalizm**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005: 596.

⁶⁵ Birand, 2001: 180; Çölaşan, 1989: 182–183.

⁶⁶ Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "1980 Sonrası Türk Siyasal Hayatına Bir Bakış", **Türkiye'de Siyaset: Süreklilik ve Değişim**, Ali Yaşar Sarıbay; Ersin Kalaycıoğlu (eds.), İstanbul, 488.

⁶⁷ Zürcher, 2001: 296-297.

agreement with the IMF and agreements with the World Bank for structural adjustments could be implemented easily.⁶⁸

In the post-1980s, capitalist groups began to define their interests as the interests of society, which caused a significant change in class relations and intensified the contradiction between the working-class and the capitalists.⁶⁹ This redefinition also intensified the contradiction within the middle class, which was supposed to compete for upward mobility.

3.1. Özalizm

The term Özalizm has been used as a pejorative or simply as a label for the changes in the post-1980s. Just as Reagan and Thatcher were leaders of the new right of the 1980s in the USA and Britain, Özal was the leader of the new right in Turkey. Thus, it would not be wrong to refer to the new right or neo-liberalism with the name of its leader: Özalizm.⁷⁰

The new right emerged as an articulation of traditional right-wing politics. Its novelty rests on its combination of neo-conservatism with neo-liberalism, in which neo-liberalism functions to adjust the welfare state according to the needs of global capitalism, and neo-conservatism frames the old concerns of conservatism in a perspective of change and transformation.⁷¹

In the Turkish case, the specificity of the new right lies in the historical coalescence of liberalism and conservatism in Turkey. From a general theoretical framework, liberalism contests the centralist and homogenizing tendencies of the state and advocates partial and evolutionary transformations instead of revolutionary changes. The liberal option finds its expression in Turkey in opposition to the modernization directed by the state. The aforementioned historical coalescence of liberalism with conservatism is embodied in this line of criticism.⁷² In the specific milieu of the 1980s in Turkey, what made neo-liberalism credible was its success in recouping its reactionary discourse in the terms of social development. Additionally, as Özkazanç stated, the general erosion of modernity in a

⁶⁸ Fuat Ercan, "The Contradictory Continuity of the Turkish Capital Accumulation Process: A Critical Perspective on the Internationalization of the Turkish Economy", **The Ravages of Neo-liberalism: Economy, Society, and Gender in Turkey**, Neşecan Balka and Sungur Savran (eds.), Nova Science Publishers, New York, 2002: 25.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 26.

⁷⁰ Bora, 2005: 589, 600.

⁷¹ Ibid, 600.

⁷² See, page 7.

postmodern age has contributed to the intensification of neo-liberalism.⁷³ Nevertheless, this process has not coincided with political liberation. The democratic premises of the new right are limited by its conservatism; moreover, in Turkey, reinterpretation of the authoritarian state tradition in the post-1980s period has not left enough room for democratization.⁷⁴ Further, conservatism has functioned to compensate for any potential disruptions to the predominant status of economics over society and politics.⁷⁵ In this framework, the claim of Özal's Motherland Party to have combined separate ideological currents within right-wing politics ensured a conservative common ground within the new rising right for traditionally-conservative political groups.

However, regarding conservative concerns, the pluralism of the post-1980s period might seem contradictory. Yet such pluralism was more related with the proliferation of both images and commodities in circulation. The withdrawal of the state as a homogenizing entity led to proliferation of voicing of individual differences, which was lauded and expounded as an expression of pluralism. Subsequently, according to Özkazanç, due to the decentralization of the society, two types of citizen have emerged: the entrepreneur citizen and the religious citizen. Corrosion in the meaning of citizenship through the economic policies of neo-liberalism had created the entrepreneur citizen.⁷⁶ Özalizm praised the entrepreneur who was no longer content with what he already had, but he was yearning for what the world of capitalism offered. He was *homo-jumpus* who jumps over the age.⁷⁷ On the other hand, having encountered the new proliferation of individual differences, defensive stance against cultural corrosion led to the emergence of the religious citizen.⁷⁸ From that point further, it becomes necessary to put to rest the idea that civil society was truly established in Turkey in the 1980s. No doubt that the relationship between the state and society has changed; however, the political potential of the new civil society was limited. According to Göle, the formation of civil society along neo-liberal lines seemed to reduce civil society into a market economy, pressing citizens into economic enterprises by emptying it of its political content.⁷⁹ Bearing in mind the constitutional restrictions, then, the period heralded dissolution of the public sphere rather than a blossoming of civil society. While economic neo-liberalism had envisaged

⁷³ Alev Özkazanç, "Türkiye'nin Neo-Liberal Dönüşümü ve Liberal Düşünce", **Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Liberalizm**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005: 634.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 637.

⁷⁵ Bora, 2005: 600.

⁷⁶ Alev Özkazanç, "Türkiye'de Siyasi İktidar Tarzı'nın Dönüşümü", **Mürekkkep**, No: 10-11, 1998: 39-41.

⁷⁷ Ercüment Konukman, **Çağ Atlayan Türkiye**, 1991, Ankara cited in Kutlay Doğan, **Turgut Özal Belgeseli**, Türk Haberler Ajansı, Ankara 1994: 309.

⁷⁸ Özkazanç, 1998: 39-41.

⁷⁹ Göle, 1998: 28-29.

autonomy from the sphere of the state, neo-conservatism had envisaged a group of communities closed to external influences. The two streams meant that the group of communities remained estranged from politics.⁸⁰

With respect to the cultural politics of Özalizm, Özal personified decentralization by speaking of being private in opposition to being civic.⁸¹ Göle supports this idea by asserting that Özal removed official elements from modernity and transformed it into a matter of social or cultural discovery. He neither exhibited the refined manners of the modernizing elites, nor assumed the distant formal attitude of the former political leaders. Instead, he embodied an *allaturca* manner in terms of being as he was.⁸² This private image found its social counterpart in *ortadirek*⁸³, i.e. the middle classes as defined by Özal. He happened to represent the aspirations, values and modernity of the middle classes. As will be explained below, the same was true for Semra Özal. In general, Turgut Özal on the one hand destabilized the manners of the modernization and on the other hand established partial, even eclectic connections between modern and traditional, as well as between elitist and populist manners.⁸⁴ Özal was both sympathetic and antithetic to the middle classes,⁸⁵ but the notion of *homo-jumpus* was their hope for overcoming class deficiencies.

Özal's attitude towards music is an example of his undermining the foundations of the Republican modernization. In the first decades of the Republic, music had been both a means for modernization and a symbol of the degree of modernization. Turgut Özal subverted the official, modern, civilized musical ideals. He led the founding of folk, Ottoman high art and Sufi music bands within the Ministry of Culture. He became the first president who attended the Sufi ceremonies in Konya known as *Şeb-i Aruz*.⁸⁶

The most important example of the decentralization of musical manners was the rising popularity of the *Arabesque* style in the 1980s. As Marcoff clearly shows, this was a popular confrontation with the refined musical forms of the nation-state modernization drive. *Arabesque* embraced newly urbanized, migrant populations of the big cities and gave an authentic way of expression to their feelings of being deprived of homeland or love. Although criticized and undervalued by intellectuals, eventually it became popular enough to diffuse

⁸⁰ Nebilay Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum Kavramı: Sağ ve Sol Sivil Toplumculuk", **Mürekkkep**, No: 13, 1999: 109-124.

⁸¹ Bora, 2005: 590.

⁸² Göle, cited in Doğan, 1994: 305-306.

⁸³ *Ortadirek* literally means central pole of a tent.

⁸⁴ Bora, 2005: 590.

⁸⁵ Haluk Şahin, **Nokta**, 21 July 1985, cited in Erbil Tuşalp, **Plastik Papatya Kokusu**, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 1993: 36.

⁸⁶ Doğan, 1994: 346.

into the society at large.⁸⁷ Additionally, as a combination of Arabic and Western musical forms, *arabesque* music exemplified the eclecticism of Turkish popular culture. The Özal family did not hesitate to reveal their liking for *arabesque*. They were known to attend concerts or *gazino* (nightclubs where the star of the day gives his or her performance) events. Moreover, since 1985 the private television channel Star, which had been owned by the son of Turgut Özal, had broadcast *arabesque* performances, which were not allowed on the state-run TRT.⁸⁸ The cultural relief society experienced was related to the motto of the 1980s—to represent oneself and nothing else⁸⁹—personified by both Turgut and Semra Özal.

4. Semra Özal: Remaking Herself into the First Lady

In Turkey, even though first ladyship conveyed a social role, Semra Özal became the first to use the term “*first lady*”⁹⁰ (articulated in English). Her usage of the term was meant to differentiate herself from other wives of political leaders. Just like her husband, she claimed to subvert taken-for-granted features of the first ladyship. Throughout the 1980s, popular media would acknowledge this claim and emphasize her difference from the rest.

According to Vergin, the distinctiveness of Semra Özal as a first lady was that she was a crystallized symbol of what is modern in Turkey. Semra Özal was always smoking cigarettes, having her hair colored, following fashions, and traveling, and at the same time, she went on the pilgrimage. In this manner, she was an average bourgeois woman. Further, Vergin asserts, “possibly our mothers would like to be just like her”.⁹¹ What she meant to say was probably that Semra Özal exemplified a kind of reconciliation for women who were struggling with the contradictions between the high ideals of the Republican modernization and the values of either domestic or professional middle class life style for women.

What other contemporaneous commentators asserted about the first ladyship of Semra Özal was that compared with the rest, she did not play an inactive role⁹². Recalling Mevhibe İnönü and Raḥşan Ecevit, this argument was not accurate, though, but what commentators were unconsciously doing was simply repeating the self-definitions of Semra Özal.

⁸⁷ Irene Marcoff, “Popular Culture, State Ideology and National Identity in Turkey: The Arabesque Polemic”, *Cultural Transitions in the Middle East*, Şerif Mardin (ed.), E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1994: 225-226, 228-229.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 234.

⁸⁹ Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak, 1980’lerin Kültürel İklimi*, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 1992: 114.

⁹⁰ She used the term “first lady” without giving a specific reference to the exact period. Whether she meant the period when she was the wife of the PM or the period when she was the wife of the President of the Republic is not clear. However, for this reason, I assume that she used the term to refer to both periods.

⁹¹ *Nokta*, 1988: 39.

⁹² Ibid, 39.

Overall, the idea that she subverted taken-for-granted features of the first ladyship and put forth an active image of a first lady offered many representational possibilities in the media. Semra Özal was said at times to represent secularism and modernity or capital-intensive bourgeoisie values. Nevertheless, as Semra Özal personally stressed, her claim was to represent herself and nothing else. Even in the early days of her husband's power, she proclaimed this.

4.1. The Semra Özal Phenomenon

In an interview published in the popular weekly *Nokta* (Point), the interviewer asked her about the “Semra Özal phenomenon”. She answered as follows: “First of all, I would like to say that I am not happy with being compared with anybody else. I do not know if Semra Özal is a phenomenon as you said; well, it means that I am the only one of a kind”⁹³.

In the course of the establishment of the Semra Özal phenomenon, the popular media played an important part. Semra Özal had in fact encouraged the media in this. Close relationships she created with celebrities, for example, were valuable sources for the media.

The first incident in this course was that Semra Özal modeled fashionable leather garments for a popular magazine in 1984. For her, this had been exaggerated and misinterpreted. She claimed that the only thing she did was to show the journalists some of the leather garments which had been given as presents to her by a fashion designer friend. The journalists had taken few photos of her in her own house and published them in the magazine. That was all. According to her, the incident had been used to devalue her husband's political career.⁹⁴ In fact, the styles of wives of political leaders have always been a focus of attention. Social and ideological connotations associated with the styles of Mevhibe İnönü are a good example of this historical concern. Her photographs in stylish dresses are still exhibited to the public in the *Pembe Köşk*. However, in the case of Semra Özal, what led to criticism was the fact that by doing this, Semra Özal had subverted the requirement that the first lady be a role model. In other words, she had acted as herself in the photos rather than acting in a civic mode. She had already argued that she performed the role of first lady only during official ceremonies.⁹⁵

⁹³ Gülay Göktürk, “Semra Özal’la Dobra Dobra”, *Nokta*, No: 43, 1988: 37.

⁹⁴ Interview, 14.

⁹⁵ Karaibrahimgil, 1986: 13.

Regarding how the first ladyship changed her life, she stated that it did not change anything at all: “I continued my life in the way it was. However, I was criticized a lot. In the beginning, I was regarded as strange. [But] I have continued in the way I believed [...]. I said, ‘It’s me!’ Whether you like it or not, I could not be closed into a kind of a palace made of glass”.⁹⁶ When asked whether Turgut Özal had an impact on her to behave in one way or another, she stated that he never intervened. As she put it, this was for the reason that he already knew that she would not take his intervention seriously; besides, she was not doing anything wrong. Therefore, there was no need for him to intervene.⁹⁷

Another aspect of the Semra Özal phenomenon was that despite the religious affiliation of Turgut Özal, Semra Özal played a modern, secular and western role. She acknowledged this by saying that if the Prime Minister were his brother Korkut Özal, hence if the first lady were his covered wife, the social and political atmosphere would be quite different.⁹⁸ However, she argued against the notion that she had secularized Turgut Özal. As she put it, he was already secular and modern; otherwise, it would not be possible for him and his party to form a coalition of pre-coup ideological currents.⁹⁹ Yet, what the Motherland party succeeded in was reviving the right with a developmental perspective. Hence, as mentioned before, the result was a conservative political common ground. In this respect, although Semra Özal represented a rather secular and modern role, her later activities would contribute to the neo-conservatism of the Motherland Party, as will be explained.

4.2. Official Missions and Public Appearances

Semra Özal performed her official missions at the minimum level required. As she affirmed, she fulfilled official responsibilities as much as she had to, not more. For her, those were merely duties, the limits of which were well-defined.¹⁰⁰ Hence, her public appearances, which frequent and many, replaced the limited official appearances.

A controversial public appearance was the pilgrimage in 1988. Turgut Özal and Semra Özal, in the company of three cabinet members, six governors, and Korkut Özal and his wife, went to Mecca in 1988. As soon as they began to perform the pilgrimage, the newspapers in Turkey started to report the pilgrimage like a photo romance. They appeared in the press as

⁹⁶ Interview, 12-13.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 13.

⁹⁸ Göktürk, 1988: 39.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 39.

¹⁰⁰ Interview, 14.

they were praying in *ihram*¹⁰¹. For the first time, Semra Özal appeared in the media without makeup and with a headscarf.¹⁰² Although the pilgrimage seemed quite political, Semra Özal said that her reason was personal. Although she had never announced it before, she said, she was so religious that she had prayed five times a day for many years and read the Koran daily. This was supposed to be between her and Allah, so it should not be practiced like a show, she said. Yet it was expected that as a pilgrim she would cover her head when she returned from Mecca. However, for her, personal religiosity was beyond any prescriptions; it was in the heart and in the mind. Goodwill and helping people were the foremost requirements of being pious. Thus, it was none of other people's business whether she expressed her pilgrimage experience through a headscarf. She said that since she did not cover her head she was seen as a postergirl for secularism. The army, indeed, perceived her as a guarantor for secularism. As soon as they returned from Mecca, she headed for the southern coast for vacation. There, journalists photographed her not only with a bare head, but in decollate dresses. She claimed that this was a type of avant-gardeism.¹⁰³

Compared with his predecessors, Turgut Özal was the most controversial Prime Minister regarding the issue of secularism. His controversial attitude rested in his claim of subverting the state's traditions. He was the first Prime Minister who went to Mecca; he participated in Friday prayers in a mosque and paid visits to the tombs of the Nakşibendi dervish order. Further, when he was the President, he hosted fast-breaking dinners in the Presidential residence. He asserted that his perception of secularism was that religion was for individuals, not for the state, and he added that he was a pious person.¹⁰⁴

Another type of Semra Özal's public appearances which likewise proved controversial concerned was entertainment. The way she liked to enjoy entertainment was criticized for not being in line with her official responsibilities. Listening to popular singers in nightclubs; drinking, smoking, and singing together with the singer were regarded by many as inappropriate. Yet, according to her, those critics were unfair. It was just a matter of time until other politicians and their wives would begin to do the same thing. "Since we live in a modern country", she said, "we should just behave normally, like other people".¹⁰⁵ One of her favorite singers was Bülent Ersoy, the first transsexual of Turkey. Ersoy was invited to the birthday

¹⁰¹ The white cotton dress is worn by Muslim pilgrims to Mecca. For men, it comprises two scarves; one scarf folded around the waist, and the other thrown over the neck and shoulders, leaving the right arm free; the head is uncovered. For women, it is an ample cloak, covering the whole person, including the head.

¹⁰² Kahraman, 1989: 66.

¹⁰³ Interview, 18–19.

¹⁰⁴ Doğan, 1994: 334, 385.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, 20.

party of Turgut Özal organized by Semra Özal's Foundation, and there sang songs for the Özals.¹⁰⁶ Bülent Ersoy had long struggled to get legal recognition for sex-change operations through the courts. For that reason, for long time she was not allowed to perform onstage. Eventually, in 1988, the Özals intervened in the courts to help her to obtain legal recognition, and the ensuing right to perform onstage. It might seem contradictory for a conservative PM and an antifeminist first lady to take a stance in favor of a transsexual; however, Kandiyoti states that popular recognition of Bülent Ersoy was related to the "elimination of ambiguity in matters of gender",¹⁰⁷ rather than the subversion of the gender structure through recognition of different sexual identities.

Growing criticism of Özal's self-defining way of behavior threatened to dethrone her as a positive role model. The remedy came from social work. In 1986, she founded The Foundation of Elevation and Representation of Turkish Women (*Türk Kadını Güçlendirme ve Tanıtma Vakfı*), which will be mentioned below in more detail. The Foundation was a platform not only for self-identity construction, but also for the rehabilitation of the first lady as role model. Similarly, almost contemporaneously, Nancy Reagan in the United States had initiated the drug abuse campaign that aimed at rehabilitating the image of the American First Lady.

Troy depicts the drug abuse campaign as the most successful first lady project ever. By 1986, Nancy Reagan had traveled one hundred thousand miles, made forty-nine speeches, given 1,254 media interviews and mobilized five million people. In 1985, Nancy Reagan convened the campaign worldwide to gather first ladies of the world leaders. The first "First Ladies Summit" was held with participation of the wives of seventeen heads of the state. She held another summit in the same year with thirty first ladies during the United Nations' Fortieth Anniversary.¹⁰⁸ Among the first ladies who participated in the Summit was Semra Özal. As she related, she participated in the campaign for about two years. She also said that the report she submitted during the meetings met with approval.¹⁰⁹

Another function of the drug abuse campaign was that the Reagan administration could champion morality without expanding state expenses. The campaign propagandized the importance of individual responsibility of parents to protect their children.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ "Başbakan Özal 62 Yaşında", *Türk Kadını*, 1 November 1988: 14.

¹⁰⁷ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Pink Card Blues", *Fragments of Culture, The Everyday of Modern Turkey*, Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber (eds.), I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2002: 279; 291, footnote 12.

¹⁰⁸ Troy, 1997: 291-292.

¹⁰⁹ Interview, 23.

¹¹⁰ Troy, 1997: 290.

In this respect, the drug abuse campaign exhibited a lively example of the neo-conservative perspective about women. Although the Reagan administration was clearly anti-feminist in terms of denouncing abortion and equal rights for women and homosexuals,¹¹¹ at the same time, Nancy Reagan's "unrecognized feminism", in other words, active presence could soften to some extent the rigid anti-feminism of the time.¹¹² In opposition to the "anti" attitude of the Reagan administration, the drug abuse campaign was a pro-family and pro-morality campaign from which neo-conservatism and Nancy Reagan both benefited.

In comparison with the drug abuse campaign, the Foundation of Semra Özal was distinctive for functioning to counterbalance the rising feminist movement, which had reached its peak in the West in the 1970s. The post-1980s period witnessed the emergence of the second wave of feminism in Turkey. The first wave was about demands and activities of the intellectual Ottoman women of the high classes toward improving women's status in the family and in social life in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. In comparison with the first wave, the second wave of feminism could mobilize women of different classes and groups of people. Additionally, as will be explained in more detail below, the second wave feminism of the 1980s dared to name and question patriarchy as responsible for women's oppression. The women mobilized around women's problems in the 1980s were far from being a homogeneous group; they were from different class origins and social groups. However, the politicization of women around women's problems set its mark on the political, social and cultural atmosphere of the post-1980s period. In the long term, the dynamism of the post-1980s period has played a significant role in the transformation of gender role expectations in Turkey. While counterbalancing the feminist movement, Semra Özal had contributed to the politicization of women's problems at the time. Her contribution was rather conservative and in its form had resembled the concerns of state feminism. Before explaining the Foundation, it is worthwhile to give the context of the politicization of women.

5. Politicization of Women over Women's Problems

Beginning with the 1970s, the Kemalist discourse about women became marginalized. The emancipated women of Kemalism started to question the socially-contradictory roles asked of women, and slowly became disenchanted with the *surmise of equality*. Additionally,

¹¹¹ Lynne Segal, "The Heat in the Kitchen", **The Politics of Thatcherism**, Stuart Hall; Martin Jacques (eds.), Lawrence and Wishard, London, 1983: 213.

¹¹² Troy, 1997:282.

more and more women became mobilized either through leftist ideologies or through religious ideologies that revealed discrepancies in the demands made of women.

In the post-1980s period, because the military intervention in 1980 had cleared all main political currents, women could create a new place for their demands. International actions for women contributed to women's politicization. Another player in the rising interest in women's issues was the state, which often responded defensively both to women's politicization and to international processes. The popular media also played a part by voicing different actions or demands articulated by women.

5.1. UN Initiative and Need for Amendment of the Turkish Civil Code

The growth in international feminist activism was nourished by the UN, which created national and international forums for feminist organizing.¹¹³ Early in the previous decade, the UN declaration of the "Women's Decade" had helped raise global awareness of women's problems and put some pressure on national governments to bring existing legislation in line with international principles. It had also contributed to creating an agenda about women on a national level.¹¹⁴

The peak of international awareness about women was attained by adoption of the Conventions on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW in 1979 by the UN. The CEDAW, comprising 30 articles, defined what constituted discrimination against women, promoted equal rights for women and men in all arenas of life and set up an agenda for national action to eliminate discrimination.

Turkey ratified the CEDAW in June 1985¹¹⁵, but with reservations. In the case of articles that conflicted with national legislation, the CEDAW allowed national governments to voice reservations on one or more articles, but under the expectation that national governments would eliminate discriminatory laws and adjust their legislations to align with the CEDAW. However, like other UN conventions, implementation of the CEDAW was free

¹¹³ Najma Chowdhury [*et.al*], "Redefining Politics: Patterns of Women's Political Engagement from a Global Perspective", **Women and Politics Worldwide**, Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury (eds.), Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994: 9.

¹¹⁴ See Raĥan Ecevit Chapter, pages 30–32.

¹¹⁵ The Convention put into effect on 14 October 1985.

from any monitoring or consequences for non-compliance, except for public embarrassment of governments in the international community.¹¹⁶

Turkey's reservations concerned articles 15 and 16,¹¹⁷ which contradicted with some of the articles of the Turkish Civil Code. Despite granting equal rights to women and men before the law, the Civil Code lacked codification of women's legal capacity and legal equality in number of areas. While articles 15 and 16 proclaimed full equality between men and women in all areas of life, the Turkish Civil Code did not, due to its own article identifying the husband as the head of household, along with some other complementary articles that bore a patriarchal character.¹¹⁸

On 8 March 1986, a group of women including university professors and artists delivered a 3500-signature petition to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. They demanded immediate implementation of the CEDAW. Since its ratification came about just before UN

¹¹⁶ Günseli Berik, "State Policy in the 1980s and the Future of Women's Rights in Turkey", **New Perspectives on Turkey**, Fall 1990: 82.

¹¹⁷ **Article 15**

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.
2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.
3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect, which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women, shall be deemed null and void.
4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

Article 16

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:
 - (a) The same right to enter into marriage;
 - (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
 - (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
 - (d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
 - (e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;
 - (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
 - (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;
 - (h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory. (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>)

¹¹⁸ "According to the Turkish Civil Code, the husband was identified as 'the head of the union'. Accordingly, the choice of domicile was belonged to the husband, who was also designated as responsible for the economic support of the family, and in the event of a disagreement between spouses, he had the greater say over the children. Married women had to assume their husbands' family name and could engage in paid work only with their husbands' consent. In November 1990, the Constitutional Court ruled the latter article unconstitutional" (Berik, 1990: 88).

“World Conference on Women” in Nairobi in July 1985, they argued, the government had only ratified the Convention for cosmetic reasons and was reluctant to implement it.¹¹⁹

Earlier, the amendment of the Civil Code had already been part of these women’s agenda. In 1975, the Association of Women of the University (*Üniversiteli Kadınlar Derneği*) had organized a congress where women denounced discriminative articles in the Civil Code and urged its amendment. After the congress, the government began work on an amendment that the legal commission of the Turkish National Assembly completed in the early 1980s and sent on to the Ministry of Justice.¹²⁰ Tekeli writes that in 1985 the commission published the amendment as a booklet and sent it to universities and the bar of lawyers to start a public discussion on its ratification.¹²¹

The countries that have ratified the Convention are committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. Berik has analyzed the report of Turkey that was submitted to the UN in January 1990. She points out the state’s declaration about the amendment of the Civil Code, which states that work on the amendment was underway. According to Berik, the statement reveals the state’s reluctance to implement the amendment, stating “in 1990 that it was underway despite the mass debate on the amendment since the 1980s”.¹²² Berik also points out a general defensive stance on the part of the state regarding women’s status in Turkey.¹²³

In the same article, Tekeli argued that although they would be useful, even those amendments in the discriminatory articles would be a far cry from totally ending subordination of women in Turkish society; instead, they would rather disguise the existing subordination, just as the Civil Code did in 1926. What was needed was to transform the patriarchal organization of the society. Unless women were provided with non-domestic roles and allowed to participate in the work force on an equal basis, any amendments to laws would not bring about a spontaneous liberation for women, according to Tekeli.¹²⁴

Despite the fact that debate on the amendment continued for decades beyond the 1980s, the amendment Tekeli regarded as impotent was eventually adopted in 2001.

¹¹⁹ “Kadınlar Dilekçesine İmza”, **Elele**, April 1986.

¹²⁰ Berik, 1990: 89.

¹²¹ Şirin Tekeli, “Kadınların İsteği ‘Özgürleşme’ mi, ‘Eşitlik’ mi? Medeni Kanun Tartışmalarının Düşündürdükleri”, **İktisat Dergisi**, No: 246, 1985: 46.

¹²² Berik, 1990: 88.

¹²³ Ibid, 83.

¹²⁴ Tekeli, 1985: 47-49.

5.2. Feminist Uprising

As seen both with the petition campaign and in Tekeli's approach, the debate over the amendment of the Civil Code was important for political mobilization of women. In this way, women started to think more about their subordinate position in society. In addition, international actions on the issue of women's status provided them with legitimate grounds to raise their voices.¹²⁵ Subsequently, when they began to take direct political action, the public started to hear about women who called themselves feminists.¹²⁶ So, who were the women who were calling themselves feminists? How could feminism emerge out of highly-depoliticized conditions of the post-1980s period? If such roots existed, where were the roots of that feminist uprising before 1980s?

It seems no doubt paradoxical to speak about the rise of a political movement under the repressive regime of the military intervention. However, the paradox seems less tricky when we look at where all those feminist women came from. The post-1980s period feminists were formerly part of the leftist politics of 1960s and 1970s. They, as distinct from their educated, modern and Kemalist mothers, had been politicized through leftist politics.¹²⁷ Although they varied in their policy arguments, all radical left political organizations had agreed that only socialism could end women's subordinate position.¹²⁸ Additionally, specific forms of oppression and subordination resulting from being female had been regarded as feudal residues which were also supposed to disappear after a socialist revolution.¹²⁹ Although the left-oriented publishing company *Payel* had started to publish the books of feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and Shulamith Firestone towards the end of the 1970s, since the non-feminist left ideology was so powerful, they only entered the spotlight in the 1980s.¹³⁰ "Therefore, one must not be surprised that the coup which brought down the pre-1980 political structures made it possible, however paradoxically, to lift the obstacles which kept women from being heard".¹³¹

According to Arat, the women's movement of the 1980s was an unintended but inevitable product of Kemalism. Feminism could emerge in a context in which women

¹²⁵ Tekeli, 1989: 39.

¹²⁶ Nükhet Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A Short History", **New Perspectives on Turkey**, Fall 1989: 16.

¹²⁷ Şirin Tekeli, "Women in Changing Political Associations of the 1980s", **Turkish State, Turkish Society**, Andrew Finkel and Nükhet Sirman (eds.), Routledge, London and New York, 1990: 276.

¹²⁸ Şirin Tekeli, "80'lerde Türkiye'de Kadınların Kurtuluşu Hareketinin Gelişmesi", **Birikim**, Temmuz 1989: 36.

¹²⁹ Fatmagül Berktaş, "Türkiye Solu'nun Kadına Bakışı: Değişen Bir Şey Var mı?", **1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar**, Şirin Tekeli (ed.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995: 313.

¹³⁰ Tekeli, 1989: 36, footnote 5.

¹³¹ Tekeli, 1990: 276.

benefited from the opportunity space created for them by the Kemalist reforms. However, the women's movement was radical enough to argue that speaking about women's subordination within a Kemalist framework would not end it.¹³² Indeed, Arat highlights the anti-egalitarian character of the women's movement in the 1980s. The women's movement of the 1980s was diverse in both form and content. Feminist were on one side and Islamist women were on the other, while the state was taking its part to counter-balance the feminist uprising.

5.2.1. Feminist Groups and Campaigns

The first feminist contact with society came through publishing. *YAZKO*, the writers and translators' cooperative in İstanbul, initiated a series of publications for women. Thereafter, a symposium was organized in 1982 in İstanbul. Among the participants was the French feminist Gisèle Halimi. The symposium was remarkable for the reason that it was the first public meeting after declaration of the martial law. It was remarkable also for raising public interest in feminism. After the symposium ended, women continued to gather in small, informal groups, mainly in the form of traditional tea parties, which were popular among women at the time. The reason for this form was not to attract the attention of the martial regime. Nevertheless, even when those who attended so-called tea parties became known to the regime, they were overlooked. This was probably for the same reason as in the West: feminism did not attract attention because it was not taken seriously.¹³³

After a year, women started to write a page in *Somut* (Concrete), a weekly magazine published by *YAZKO*. This feminist page enabled women to write about topics such as abortion, the Women's day, sexual harassment, etc., regardless of the writers' being famous or having positions.¹³⁴ This page attracted more attention than the rest of the magazine but lasted only half a year. Then women sought for a more autonomous form of organization and founded the Women's Circle (*Kadın Çevresi*) in 1983. The Circle was a "publishing venture as well as service and consultancy company whose aim was to 'evaluate' the work of women, paid or unpaid, outside and within home".¹³⁵ The first activity of those women as well as the first political feminist action of the period was the afore-mentioned petition campaign for the implementation of the CEDAW in 1986. The campaign, which was staged mainly by feminist

¹³² ???

¹³³ Mitchell, 1977, cited in Tekeli, Ibid, 278.

¹³⁴ Tekeli, 1990: 278–279.

¹³⁵ Tekeli, Ibid, 280.

women from Ankara, mostly academics and students, legitimized feminism as a political force. An ad hoc committee presented the petition to the Assembly on 8 March 1986. The same day, the Federation of Women's Associations of Turkey (*Türkiye Kadın Dernekleri Federasyonu*), representing Kemalist women organizations made a declaration celebrating International Woman's Day. This was remarkable in the history of Kemalist women's organizations because until then they had celebrated 5 December, the day women were granted political rights in 1934, as Woman's Day.¹³⁶ One year later, the Women's Circle started a campaign against domestic violence and launched a march in İstanbul. In May 1987, almost three thousand women took the streets for the first time for "their demands specific to their conditions of existence as women in Turkish Society" rather than for their nation, their class, or their husbands or children.¹³⁷

The campaign and the march were organized as actions against the decision of a provincial judge. The judge had denied a battered wife divorce from her husband by claiming that according to social values of his province, "it was man's right to beat his wife, exemplified by the maxim: 'men should never leave a woman's womb empty of child, nor her back without a stick'".¹³⁸ According to feminists, by claiming the maxim as the basis of his decision, the judge had insulted womanhood and justified wife-beating.¹³⁹ Therefore, during the march women directed their criticism against society and social values which subordinated women. They carried posters on which such slogans were written as: "We do not want heaven that battering stemmed from". This slogan was the response to another maxim that claimed: "Battering stems from heaven". Another slogan was: "Enough! It is women's undertaking". The latter conjures up the famous DP slogan: "Enough, it is the nation's undertaking", popularized as an expression of the democratic premise in the multi-party period.

At the time, the feminists started to search for ways to voice their demands in more formal structures. Upon the petition campaign, a group of feminists with the aim of pushing the government to implement the CEDAW founded a separate organization, the Association of Women against Discrimination (*Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Derneği*). On 8 March 1987, the Women's Circle started to publish a magazine titled *Feminist* (Feminist), which took a radical feminist stance. Afterwards, socialist feminist women separated off and started a magazine

¹³⁶ Tekeli, Ibid, 281.

¹³⁷ Sirman, 1989: 1.

¹³⁸ Tekeli, 1990: 285; Handan, "Bir Direniş", **Feminist**, Mayıs 1987: 2; Banu Pakar, "Kadın Örgütlenmesinde Bir Dönüm Noktası: Dayığa Karşı Kampanya", **Kaktüs**, Mayıs 1988: 25.

¹³⁹ **Feminist**, Ibid, 2.

titled *Kaktüs* (Cactus) in 1988. However, along with the feminists from Ankara, all different groups continued to gather and launch campaigns together. The campaign against domestic violence was among these cooperative efforts. Encouraged by the march, they organized a festival against battering on 4 October 1987. They invited intellectuals, writers and artists, some of whom led discussions and readings or performed short plays. Interestingly, Islamist women who demanded the right to wear headscarves in the universities were represented, as well. Among the aims of the festival were to raise money for the establishment of a shelter for battered women and for the publication of a book about battering. With this aim, women set up stands to sell books or handmade artifacts. As explained by Şirin Tekeli during the inaugural speech, among the aims of the festival the most important was to surmount differences to create a common women's culture in order first to resist oppression and then to create a non-sexist world.¹⁴⁰ The feminists had even composed a song for the festival that was sung all together by the participants:

Women Do Exist

We have been asked

To keep quiet

Sit peacefully

Submit and

To watch life

Until now

Women do exist

Women are everywhere

We were silent and we waited

We watched life

Finally, we said: Enough!

Until we won't keep silent any more

Women do exist

¹⁴⁰ Şirin Tekeli, *Kadınlar için Yazılar (1977–1987)*, Alan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1988: 420.

Women are everywhere¹⁴¹

The book *Bağır Herkes Duysun!* (Shout and Be Heard!) was published on 3 March 1988.¹⁴² It contained testimonies of battered women and arguments claiming that the state endorsed wife-beating. The testimonies demonstrated that violence against women was not confined to specific sections of the women but rather was a problem of all women regardless of class, education or occupational background.¹⁴³

The feminists from Ankara contributed greatly to women's activism. They were actually two groups of women. One group organized a women's festival on 8 March 1988 in Ankara. The other group participated in the festival by campaigning against pornography and women's representation in the press. The second group, inspired by the campaign against battering, launched a protest march against "Mother's Day" on 10 May 1987. They also participated in the environmentalist campaign to protest the plan of the municipality of Ankara to convert Güven Park into a multi-story car park. There they set up stands, sold cakes, and raised money, which was then donated to the campaign against battering. Thereafter, they organized a panel in Ankara to discuss the campaign. The panel was so successful that they sought a permanent place to continue women's meetings and opened a club.¹⁴⁴

Although feminist approaches to women's oppression and subordination were diverse, the feminists at the time agreed that encouraging women to enter public life would mean insisting on egalitarian policies for women.¹⁴⁵ Inspired by the feminism of the West, they insisted on the political nature of the personal.¹⁴⁶ This common ground enabled socialist and

¹⁴¹ **Kadınlar Vardır**

Susmamız oturmamız Hep boyun eğmemiz
Hayatı seyretmemiz
İstendi bugüne dek

Kadınlar vardır
Kadınlar her yerde

Suskunduk ve bekledik
Yaşamı seyrettik
Sonunda yeter dedik
Bir daha susmayana dek

Kadınlar vardır
Kadınlar her yerde
Sennur Sezer, "Dayak Mayak...Şenlik Menlik...", **Elele**, Kasım 1987: 102-103.

¹⁴² Kaktüs, Ocak 1989: 74.

¹⁴³ Sirman, 1989: 19.

¹⁴⁴ "Ankara'da Feministler Ne Yapıyorlar?", **Kaktüs**, Mayıs 1988: 51.

¹⁴⁵ Sosyalist Feminist Kaktüs, "Biz Sosyalist Feministiz", **Kaktüs**, Mayıs 1988: 11.

¹⁴⁶ Sirman, 1989: 20.

radical feminist women to voice common demands and to launch campaigns collectively. By the late 1980s, the names of the organizations behind the campaigns, protests or petitions were almost the same: the Association of Women against Discrimination, the Feminists, the Women's Circle, the Women's House for Culture, the Association of Protection of Women's Rights, the Commission on Women of the Human Rights Association, the Socialist Feminist *Kaktüs*, and independents.

One of the campaigns held collaboratively involved protests against virginity tests¹⁴⁷ practiced in one of the offices of the Ministry of National Defense, as reported by the magazine *2000'e Doğru* (Towards 2000) on 25 December 1988. Feminist organizations sent telegrams to the Ministry of National Defense and published declarations in the press arguing that the virginity test was the most offensive form of control over and oppression of a woman's body.¹⁴⁸

The same momentum continued and took the form of a campaign on 2 November 1989. This time, an İstanbul group, inspired by the Ankara group drew the general framework of a campaign against sexual harassment and gave it a name: "Our bodies belong to us, Say no to sexual harassment," or, briefly, "the Purple Needle" campaign. Accordingly, a group of women introduced the campaign in ferries in İstanbul by selling needles with a purple ribbon, which were supposed to be used by women against men in case of sexual harassment. Afterwards, those women set up a stand in the *Tüyap* book fair representing clippings, cartoons and posters with slogans on them about sexual harassment. The purple needle sale continued in the fair. A few weeks later, they set up the same stand in the streets of one of the popular districts of İstanbul. Thereafter, they organized three meetings to discuss sexual harassment and share testimonies.¹⁴⁹

The campaign continued in 1990 with protests against the ratification of article 438 of the Criminal Code by the constitutional court. The article in question set a reduction in penalty in the case of rape of a prostitute. Upon the ratification, both feminists and prostitutes

¹⁴⁷ The virginity test or hymen test is a gynecological consultation peculiar to Turkey. Although it is supposed to be carried out by forensic doctors in case of sexual assaults, it has been generally practiced for social reasons since the hymen is considered to be the indicator of a girl's honor. In 1999, the Ministry of Justice permitted the practice of hymen testing beyond cases of sexual assault. Until 2002, according to that law, high schools could send students, i.e. girls, who might have had sexual experience before marriage, to hymen testing. In 2002, that legislation was abrogated (Tomris Türmen, "Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Sağlığı", UN Platform for Action, 1995,

http://www.huksam.hacettepe.edu.tr/ilgiliyayinlar/pdf/toplumsal_cinsiyet_ve_kadin.pdf).

¹⁴⁸ "Bekaret Kontrolü", *Kaktüs*, Ocak 1989: 75-75.

¹⁴⁹ "Kadınlar! Cinsel Tacize Karşı Dayanışmaya", *Kaktüs*, Aralık 1989: 14-15.

voiced their protests and made a declaration arguing that this meant the classification of women as chaste and unchaste by men and led to legitimizing rape in some cases.¹⁵⁰

The “First Woman’s Congress” in İstanbul in 1989 brought together women from various organizations except the Kemalist women’s organizations, which did not give much credence to the congress. Sometimes clashes between socialist and feminist women took place,¹⁵¹ but, according to novelist Erendiz Atasü, the most important conclusion of the congress was that unless the democratization process in Turkey interfaced with feminism, it would be an incomplete democratization.¹⁵² Ecevit acknowledges the democratic effects of the women’s movements such that in a depoliticized milieu, feminism could emerge as the main democratic opposition movement.¹⁵³ Arat highlights the role of the women’s movement in the process of re-democratization of Turkey in the 1980s. According to her, while participating in politics through grass roots organizations, women had extended the political scope of civil society.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, according to a research on women’s organizations, dated 2001, all retrospectively agreed that the women’s movement played a positive role in changing and developing civil society in the 1980s. According to respondents who were executives of the woman’s organizations, the women’s movement had allowed women to gain consciousness, to voice their demands and to generate solidarity among themselves as women.¹⁵⁵

By the 1990s, the women’s movement had started to become a more academic endeavor. Ecevit propounded this tendency, however, contrary to what she anticipated,¹⁵⁶ the movement started to lose much of its political dynamism. The women’s movement took hold in the universities, state offices and traditional women’s organizations in a process of institutionalization. In 1990, with the initiative of three professors, İstanbul University established the Women’s Issues Center for Research and Implementation (*Kadın Sorunları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi*) and started a master’s degree program on the same subject.¹⁵⁷ In few years, other universities followed. Also in 1990, with the initiative of women who were active in the feminist movement, a library was established in İstanbul with the aim of

¹⁵⁰ Kaktüs, “438’e Hayır”, **Kaktüs**, Şubat 1990: 6-7.

¹⁵¹ S. Nazik Işık, “1. Kadın Kurultayı’nın Ardından”, **Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi**, Vol. 13, No. 109, 1989: 56.

¹⁵² Erendiz Atasü, “1. Kadın Kurultayı’nın Düşündükleri ve Demokrasi ve Feminizm”, *Ibid*, 58.

¹⁵³ Yıldız Ecevit, “Türkiye’de Kadın Hareketi: Sürekli ve Devingen Bir Toplumsal Hareket”, **Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi**, Vol. 15, No. 129, 1991: 15.

¹⁵⁴ Yeşim Arat, “Towards a Democratic Society: The Women’s Movement in Turkey”, **Women’s Studies International Forum**, Vol. 17, No. 2-3, 1994: 248.

¹⁵⁵ Pınar Melis Yelsalı, **Sociological Analysis of Politics of Women’s Organizations in Turkey**, Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University, unpublished Master’s thesis, 2002: 92.

¹⁵⁶ Ecevit, 1991: 17.

¹⁵⁷ Birsen Altınar, “Kadın Sorunları Akademik Ellerde”, **Elele**, Şubat 1990: 90.

searching for and collecting material written by women. The library has played an important role in collecting women's journals from throughout history and providing researchers with the opportunity to bridge the gap between the contemporary women's movement and the Ottoman women's movement.

5.3. Popular Media

The post-1980s period witnessed a proliferation of printed media that might seem in contradiction with the tight state control on the press. However, the press was able to discover non-political areas of life as source materials.¹⁵⁸ In this way, previously private and off-limit areas of life, for example, sexuality or relationships could become objects of public interest. This was compounded by the individualist bent of the time: talking about private issues was seen a kind of manifestation of individualism.¹⁵⁹

Tekeli, who was among the leaders of the feminism of the post-1980s period, acknowledges the popularization of sexuality as a subject of the media with both praise and criticism. She notes that, for example, the magazine *Kadınca* (Womanly) pioneered the notion of a woman's right to pleasure in sexual relationships. Yet the magazine lacked a critical approach to sexuality that lessened its influence for feminist empowerment.¹⁶⁰

Popular women's magazines of the time, among which *Kadınca* and *Elele* (Hand in hand) were the most popular, advocated and popularized an egalitarian perspective. In this sense, the publication of the book titled *Kadının Adı Yok* (Woman Has No Name) by Duygu Asena, the editor of *Kadınca*, should be accepted as a milestone. The novel tells the story of a middle-class woman who searches for a way to support herself as a woman and to live her own life. The book made 26 editions and sold more than 60,000 copies before being officially censored based on naughtiness law. Later, a famous director shot it into a film.¹⁶¹

Women's magazines, however, these magazines continued to discuss the woman described in the novel and her quandaries. For instance, in 1983, *Elele* reported that according to scientific research there was no link between mothers working outside the home and the misbehavior of children.¹⁶² In 1988, the same magazine questioned marriage. Celebrities like artists or writers who were critical about or completely against marriage were asked for their

¹⁵⁸ Gürbilek: 53.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 18.

¹⁶⁰ Şirin Tekeli, "Feminizm Nedir, Ne Değildir?", *Kadınca*, Nisan 1984: 81.

¹⁶¹ Sirman, 1989: 18; Tekeli, 1990: 282.

¹⁶² *Elele*, 1983: 33.

opinions. A psychologist who represented a specialist's point of view said that the traditional form of marriage was far from able to meet modern standards.¹⁶³ In another article in the same magazine, it was reported that the divorce rate was higher than before; divorce, however, was regarded as "normal". The main problem related to divorce, the magazine stressed, was that after divorce women found themselves in a disadvantageous situation. Therefore, women were to be encouraged to have a profession and to participate in the work force.¹⁶⁴ Thus, in general terms, the perspective the popular women's magazines advocated was meant as a clear challenge to the "super woman" ideal, the perfect feminine combination of devoted wife, compassionate mother and successful professional that had dominated the women's magazines for some decades before the 1980s.

The same magazine also presented new role models for men and women. In one of the issues, Asım Ekren, the son-in-law of Semra Özal, was presented as an example of the prototype of the new man who shared in housework and took care of children. He modeled with his newborn baby and said that marriage meant sharing everything. The magazine demonstrated him as a modern father.¹⁶⁵ The popular women's magazines presented new role models for women, as well. *Elele* stated in the article titled "Welcome New Woman" that the new woman was a product of feminism. As the magazine described, the new woman, in contrast to the old kind of woman who would busy herself with housework for many years, was a woman who could open a space for herself within the world of men. She was no more the wife of the husband, the daughter of the father, but an individual on her own. However, according to the article, men were still traditional-minded since they were scared, so they left the new woman alone.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, the article presented a popular equality symbol for women. In one of the photographs used for the article, two young women were depicted smoking in public. No doubt, this was seen as a challenge in the sense of a violation of social norms by penetrating men's space through a male behavior. The most popular smoking woman at the time was Semra Özal. She never hesitated to smoke in public, thus many photographs of her smoking were published in the media. The photo below is one of these.

¹⁶³ Aylin Ünek, "Evlilik Ayağa Kalk", *Elele*, Kasım 1988: 17-22.

¹⁶⁴ Aylin Ünek, "Ve Boşanmalar Çoğalıyor...", *Elele*, Aralık 1988: 22.

¹⁶⁵ Oya Kayar, "Şimdiki Babalar Harika...", *Elele*, Temmuz 1986: 18.

¹⁶⁶ Suna Dirikan, "Hoşgeldin Yeni Kadın", *Elele*, Aralık 1990: 48-49.



The contemporaneous women's magazines showed great interest in the feminist movement and reported on feminist activities and the campaigns. The Campaign against Domestic Violence was among the most popular subjects in those magazines. Personal testimonies were presented and women were given advice about what to do in the case of battering.¹⁶⁷ The magazines also paid special attention to shelters for battered women; they informed their readers about shelters and regularly reported on the founding of shelters.¹⁶⁸

In sum, by both presenting new role models for women and reporting on the feminist movement, the popular media took an active part in the popularization of feminism in society.

¹⁶⁷ Erzen Pakel Onur, "Atar mısın, Atmaz mısın? Dayak", **Elele**, Mayıs 1987: 36–40.

¹⁶⁸ Sennur Sezer, "Kadın Hakları ve Sığınak", **Elele**, Temmuz 1987: 80–81; Gülden Özdençanlı, "Artık Sığınma Evlerimiz Var", **Elele**, Haziran 1991: 24–26; Ayşe Sazak, "Başkent Sığınma Evi", **Elele**, Eylül 1991: 84–85.

5.4. Islamist Women's Movement

As explained earlier¹⁶⁹, Islamist women were highly politicized throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In the general context attacking the Kemalist concept of secular modernization, they had defended their right to wear headscarves in public places. Following the same line of criticism, the Islamist women put their mark on Islamic revivalism in the post-1980 years. The Islamic revivalism was inspired by the revolution in Iran in 1979 and also benefited from the conservative political milieu of the post-1980s period in Turkey. Guaranteed extensive financial support from the state, Islamic groups could emerge as independent groups contesting modernization.¹⁷⁰ As a result, in addition to a large number of Islamic periodicals addressing general readers, journals for Muslim women proliferated as well. Firstly, a few Muslim women started to write articles in the pages of the Islamist newspaper *Zaman* (Time). Those articles, benefiting from the concepts and theories of Western feminism, were focused on the question of Islamic woman's identity, leading to a big controversy between the Islamist women and the feminists.¹⁷¹ In their own articles, both the radical feminist journal *Feminist* and the socialist feminist journal *Kaktüs* referred to Islamist women as Islamic feminists or feminists with headscarves. In turn, Islamist women submitted an essay to the journal *Kaktüs* opposing such an appellation. In the essay, they acknowledged that in course of questioning their own identity it was normal to intersect with feminism, however since they believed that not Islam but traditions had oppressed women, Muslim women, despite questioning, would stick to their religion. Thus, sharing some feminist demands would mean the denial of their own religious identity.¹⁷² In the same issue of *Kaktüs* in which the Islamist women's essay ran, Sedef Öztürk, author of the article about Islamist women, responded by arguing that feminists were against not only tradition but also religion itself, which was considered to have contributed to the oppression of women.¹⁷³ Subsequently, the Islamist women continued to separate themselves from the feminists, either through the speeches of their leaders or through articles appearing in Islamist women's journals. One of their most controversial figures at one time, Emine Şenlikoğlu, editor of the journal *Mektup* (Letter), had answered the question of whether she was an Islamic feminist as follows: "May Allah protect [me from becoming

¹⁶⁹ See previous chapter, p.26.

¹⁷⁰ Songül Sallan, "İslamcı Dergilerde Toplumsal Kadın Kimlikleri", *Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi*, Vol. 17, No. 153, 1993: 26.

¹⁷¹ Sirman, 1989: 24.

¹⁷² Ankara'lı Bir Grup Müslüman Kadın, "Kadınlara Rağmen Kadınlar İçin Tavrına Bir Eleştirisi", *Kaktüs*, Kasım 1988: 25-27.

¹⁷³ Sedef Öztürk, "Eleştiriyi Bir Yanıt", *Ibid*: 29.

feminist]”.¹⁷⁴ A clear expression of the reaction of the Islamist women to the feminists was the book *Müslüman Kadının Adı Var* (Muslim Woman has a Name), written by Şerife Katırcı in 1989. The book was the response of the Islamist women to the feminist novel *Kadının Adı Yok* (Woman has No Name), which had become a popular symbol of feminism. In the novel, Katırcı told a story about a pious and militant young Muslim woman. In the end of the novel, there was an annexed five-page manifesto, which lent its title to the book: *Müslüman Kadının Adı Var*. According to Katırcı, since Allah created women and men as different, women could not ever attempt to compete with men for equality. Rather than equality, there was a complementary relationship between men and women. Therefore, what feminists tried to do was no more than a useless and foolish game.¹⁷⁵ Kantarcı, in arguing that woman has no name, had described a consumed woman in a worldly life. However, as Katırcı claimed, woman in Islam had an eternal value determined by Allah.¹⁷⁶

Among the Islamist women’s journals, two—*Kadın ve Aile* (Woman and Family) (1985) and *Mektup* (Letter) (1982)—were the most popular. Financially supported by the Nakşibendi order, *Kadın ve Aile* reached a circulation of around 60,000, and *Mektup* reached 30,000, in 1987.¹⁷⁷ While *Kadın ve Aile* espoused a rather traditional Islamic attitude, *Mektup* took a radical stance. Both had a special interest in the headscarf dispute, and in addition to a clear opposition to feminism, articles promoting the true identity for Muslim women, i.e., Islamic social order, were among the subjects of these journals. The headscarf dispute had been the most prominent theme for mobilization of Islamist women since the 1960s. *Kadın ve Aile* ran protest articles on juridical decisions forbidding university students to cover their heads and actively supported pro-headscarf campaigns and demonstrations. In 1987, the journal allotted a special section to protests by university students all over the country, reported testimonies of students with headscarves, and voiced their demands to continue their university education while wearing headscarves. The journal called the headscarf protest “the noblest women’s movement in the history of the Republic”.¹⁷⁸ In 1987, *Kadın ve Aile* organized a reception meeting about the headscarf. Hafize Özal, mother of Turgut Özal, the PM at the time, was among the guests and made a speech in favor of the headscarf that was a revelation of her financial and political support for the Islamic *Kadın ve Aile*. At the occasion, a few women from *Mektup* interviewed Hafize Özal but met with her reaction against their

¹⁷⁴ Sunahan Develioğlu, “Emr-i Bilma ‘Ruflar Kervanından İki Kara Ses”, *Elele*, Ocak 1988: 23.

¹⁷⁵ Şerife Katırcı, *Müslüman Kadının Adı Var*, Seha Neşriyat, İstanbul, 1989: 185.

¹⁷⁶ Katırcı, 1989: 190.

¹⁷⁷ Sallan, 1993: 26.

¹⁷⁸ Kadın ve Aile, “En Soylu Kadın Hareketi”, *Mektup*, Haziran 1987: 12-16.

çarşafs. Afterwards, *Mektup* criticized Hafize Özal for not being Islamist enough.¹⁷⁹ In fact, from the very beginning, *Mektup* assumed a radical attitude towards the headscarf dispute. As the journal's editors argued, as long as universities were mixed, female students could not avoid committing sins, even with headscarves. So, rather than insisting on having education in modern universities, what was advised for girls, as the true Islamic mode, was to train themselves at home or to attend informal courses established in almost every neighborhood to teach the reading of the Koran.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, they were in favor of the *çarşaf* preferably black and loose, which covers the woman's body from head to toe.

With respect to women's position in society and in Islam, *Kadın ve Aile* and *Mektup* took similar stances by arguing that since Allah created women and men according to their nature (*fitrat*), their relationship was to be based on complementary social roles rather than equality.¹⁸¹ For example, Şenlikoğlu warned Muslim women not to pay attention to the "fanfare for equality", but rather to keep believing in the divine order.¹⁸² Similarly, *Kadın ve Aile* argued that what the Western women's liberation movement had accomplished was not equality between men and women, but women's alienation from their own womanly nature, whereas Islam was the only ideology to protect women's rights.¹⁸³ Islamist women went so far as to claim that through Kemalist reforms, they were not granted any rights, but on the contrary, they had lost their right to cover their heads and to marry in a religious ceremony.¹⁸⁴

Because of the principle of creation according to nature, women's roles in the family and in the society were described based on an absolute sexual division of labor and a strict sexual segregation. Women were praised as Muslim mothers and housewives; they were supposed to give birth to contribute to the Islamic community (*ümmet*), train their children as true Muslims, and meet the needs of their husbands.¹⁸⁵ Hence, women were discouraged from public participation. The headscarf, they claimed, would guarantee continuity of sexual segregation in public.¹⁸⁶ Perhaps dissatisfied with the current lack of segregation, however, *Kadın ve Aile* campaigned in 1987 for sexual segregation in public transportation.¹⁸⁷ The

¹⁷⁹ Azize Yıldız, "İslamcı Hafize Özal", *Mektup*, Aralık 1987: 32.

¹⁸⁰ K. Yeşil, "Başörtüsünde Yeni Boyutlar", *Mektup*, Kasım 1986: 21.

¹⁸¹ Sirman, 1989: 24; "Kadın Erkek Eşitliği ve Vazife Tanzimi", *Mektup*, Aralık 1986: 36.

¹⁸² Emine Şenlikoğlu, "Bıktık Şu Eşitlik Hikayelerinden", *Mektup*, Mart 1985: 2.

¹⁸³ Aişe Aslı Sancar, "Batı'da ve İslam'da Kadın Özgürlüğü", *Kadın ve Aile*, Aralık 1985: 7.

¹⁸⁴ Ayşegül Aktürk Arpacı, "Biz Hak Kazanmadık, Haklarımızı Kaybettik", *Mektup*, Ocak 1990: 22.

¹⁸⁵ *Mektup*, Aralık 1986: 37.

¹⁸⁶ Serpil Üşür, "Kadın ve İslam İdeolojisi", *Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi*, Vol. 13, No. 114, 1989: 38.

¹⁸⁷ "Kampanya: Kadınlara Özel Otobüs", *Kadın ve Aile*, Ekim 1987: 29.

conservative Konya municipality found the idea appealing and even practiced it for a short period.¹⁸⁸

The only exception to sexual segregation was the responsibility of Muslim women to deliver Islamic messages to those who either departed from or misunderstood Islam, to win them back to Islam. To achieve this, Islamist women, including those who were writing in the pages of journals, attending demonstrations or giving lectures, could enjoy a kind of public mobilization. However, in the end their public presence was legitimate because it involved a religious service like praying five times a day or fasting.¹⁸⁹ Despite a lack of empirical data, Sancar has made a typology of the Islamist women. As she states, these women were from traditional middle-class artisan or merchant families that had migrated to the big cities a few decades ago. Sancar points to their families' conservatism and the importance of religion in their familial milieu. Accordingly, she argues that in spite of the fact that a girl from such a family could access higher education, the social values of her family would not allow her to enjoy broader social participation. Therefore, religious activism made for legitimate grounds to take part in social life. As Sancar states, this was the dynamic core of the Islamist woman identity.¹⁹⁰ Arat agrees with Sancar and hopes that mobilization of the Islamist women might lead to self-consciousness and hence liberation of these women, who otherwise would do whatever their conservative families imposed on them.¹⁹¹ In a similar fashion, Acar states that mobilization through Islam was a solution for these women to overcome conflicting role expectations. Because the Kemalist goals for women conflicted with the traditional socialization within such families, relatively-educated women from these families might see Islamism as an alternative solution to their identity question.¹⁹² Nevertheless, as Acar reminds us psychological inclination, location, schooling, and personality can be important or greater than background factors in determining individual adherence to a political movement. From the very beginning, the headscarf in the universities has been the most concrete symbol of Islamic revivalism, hence universities the most prominent sites of controversy. Political fanning of the headscarf debate came circumstantially as well, through the personal attitudes of top politicians and conservative policies of the government.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Ecevit, 1991: 20.

¹⁸⁹ Üşür, 1989: 38.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 40.

¹⁹¹ Yeşim Arat, "Feminizm ve İslam: Kadın ve Aile Dergisinin Düşündürdükleri", **1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar**, Şirin Tekeli (ed.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995: 113.

¹⁹² Feride Acar, "Türkiye'de İslamcı Hareket ve Kadın: Kadın dergileri ve Bir Grup Üniversite Öğrencisi Üzerine Bir İnceleme", **1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar**, Şirin Tekeli (ed.), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995: 94–97.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 98.

5.5. Official Intervention

On the eve of the elections in 1983, Turgut Özal explained the perspective of the Motherland Party on women's issues. As he put it, because the party program was not discriminative against women, there was no article considering women as a separate group. It is remarkable to see that even birth control, one of the most popular issues of Semra Özal's Foundation, had no place on the program. According to Turgut Özal, thanks to Kemalist reforms, Turkish women were already ahead of women in many other countries of the world.¹⁹⁴ It seems likely that at that point the neo-conservative premises of Özalizm were yet to be combined with further defensive attacks of the state against feminism. Although in 1983 Özal highlighted Kemalist discourse related to women in its most classical, and maybe its most "sympathetic," form, further policies of the government would give concrete examples of anti-feminist conservatism.

In 1985, Türkan Arıkan, a woman deputy in the Assembly from the Motherland Party, presented a good illustration of the party's combination of conservatism with a formalist interpretation of Kemalism. Arıkan at the time was head of the Committee for Celebration of Women's Rights in the Assembly. On the 50th Anniversary of the granting of political rights to women, she, being the head of the Committee, had coordinated the celebrations. In 1985, during an interview, she explained her perspective on popular subjects like women and feminism. According to her, until the establishment of the Republic, when women took their place in the front, Turkish women had made their existence felt while staying in the background. As Arıkan put it, the only reason for Turkish women to stay in the background was their respect for their men. Moreover, according to her, a man was and ought to be the head of household; hence, even an orchestra needed a conductor. She described the Turkish woman as being self-sacrificing, compassionate and, most importantly, a woman who never desired to take the first place. After all, Arıkan did not hesitate to state that she was neither feminist nor believed in feminism.¹⁹⁵

In 1988, İmren Aykut, the Minister of Labor and Social Security in the Motherland Party government, who was the focus of pride for being the first elected woman minister in the history of the Republic, informed the public about the measures aimed to provide housewives with professional skills to participate in the work force. As the first step, the ministry established a women's branch in the Institution of Work where women could apply

¹⁹⁴ Durul Salman, "Partiler ve Kadınlara İlişkin Görüşleri", **Kadınca**, Ekim 1983: 45.

¹⁹⁵ "Kadınlarımız Giyimde İfrattan Kaçınmalı", **Elele**, Ocak 1985: 30–31.

for jobs. Additionally, Aykut explained that they were planning to channel housewives into labor-intensive areas of tourism, as service-providers or cooks. Moreover, offering courses in skills like sewing, weaving or handcraft was among the measures. Another area of employment for housewives, Aykut stated, could be house-cleaning.¹⁹⁶ It is remarkable to see that all areas of work determined for housewives were extensions of their traditional domestic skills that would also prevent them from full participation in the labor force. Low social status associated to those areas of work also contradicts some of the stated goals of the measure package. As a complementary measure put into practice in 1990, the People's Bank started to provide women who engaged in income-generating activities in the home with extended credits. This was part of the emphasis on enabling women's labor participation while avoiding any controversy over their ability to fulfill domestic duties.¹⁹⁷

Issues of women's work had long waited for time in the limelight. Although equal participation in the work force in governmental services was implemented long ago, women in other sectors were in need of the setting of equal conditions of work; for example, social security coverage to the unpaid agricultural women workforce, maternity leaves, and kindergartens. In the late 1979s, women, especially on the left, raised demands for equal conditions in work; however, those legal changes and problems in practice were not yet addressed in the 1980s.

Outside Turkey, the 1970s women's liberation movement in the West resulted in progressive legal changes: in the United Kingdom, the Equal Pay Act of 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, the Employment Protection Act of 1975, and the Social Security Pension Act of 1975.¹⁹⁸ Yet the economic recession of the post-1980s period undermined the limited progress of women around the world. Anti-recession measures reduced job opportunities as well as the affordability of work for women. Women in the work force started to suffer more from their double burden because of the cuts in public services. According to Gardiner, the neo-conservative Thatcher administration worsened the situation. Hence, the new right reminded women their place at home and encouraged a "back-to-the-home" perspective through legislation, for example, tax allowances.¹⁹⁹ In general, Thatcherism aimed "to protect and improve 'the stability and quality of family life'", and stressed "the centrality of women's place in the home". For Margaret Thatcher, family values

¹⁹⁶ Selma Tükel, "Çalışan Ev Kadını Işıldar", *Elele*, Eylül 1988: 18–19.

¹⁹⁷ Berik, 1990: 94.

¹⁹⁸ Jean Gardiner, "Women, Recession and the Tories", *The Politics of Thatcherism*, Stuart Hall; Martin Jacques (eds.), Lawrence and Wishard, London, 1983: 190.

¹⁹⁹ Gardiner, 1983: 192.

were essentially women's values: women were supposed to bear children and run the home. Her stance on women, although this may seem contradictory, rested on an individualistic perspective. It assumed the home to be a place for caring for those who needed caring. Setting women to do the caring was a means for cutting down the welfare state expenses.²⁰⁰ The result was fewer women trained for new skills to be able to enter into the areas of work that were traditionally considered men's jobs.²⁰¹

As was seen both in the West and in Turkey, the new right sought to lessen public expenses through women's traditional domestic caring responsibility, channeling women into areas of the work force that require less skill training.

In late 1989 and 1990, the state took official intervention by situating itself against the feminist movement. Its first significant step was the establishment of a Directorate of Women's Status and Problems and a Family Research Institute.

5.5.1. The Directorate of Women's Status and Problems (Kadın Sorunları ve Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü)

The Directorate was established by a legal decree in 1990 by special initiative of the minister of Labor and Social Security, İmren Aykut. Mutual relations with the UN, beginning with the declaration of the Women's Decade, had obliged nation-states to set national mechanisms in order to coordinate relations between women's groups and the state. Additionally, those mechanisms were supposed to mediate between the state and the UN and operate as an information center at the national level.²⁰² Thus, the stated goals of the Directorate included: "[...] to improve the status of Turkish women by increasing their educational attainment and economic participation in order to ensure their economic independence, by safeguarding their social and legal rights, and by promoting their equality in the social, economic, and cultural arenas of life".²⁰³ Additionally, the Directorate would be responsible for:

"collecting data [...], research on women's status and problems; acting as an advocacy center for improving women's status; broadening the exercise of legal rights by women; developing programs and policies regarding women; ensuring Turkey's international representation; and coordinating, directing, and supporting the activities of various

²⁰⁰ Segal, 1983: 208–209.

²⁰¹ Gardiner, 1983: 192–196.

²⁰² Berik, 1990: 90; Ayşe Sazak, "Kadının Statüsü Bilmecesi", **Elele**, Eylül 1990: 22; Eser Köker, "II. Milli Türk Ailesi Kuşatması", **Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi**, Vol. 13, No. 127, 1991: 25.

²⁰³ Berik, 1990: 90.

governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for addressing issues and problems concerning women”.²⁰⁴

Among the responsibilities, the goal of “coordinating, directing and supporting the activities of non-governmental organizations” met with distrust by women’s organizations and university professors. According to them, it meant controlling previously-autonomous women’s activism in accordance with the “national vision” articulated in the report of the State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*) in 1989. The report had been couched in radical nationalist and Islamist terms, focusing on family with great emphasis on a woman’s being charged with the well-being of the Turkish family.²⁰⁵ As Prof. Dr. Mustafa Erkal, who had prepared the report, explained, it was natural to speak of the Turkish Muslim family in a country of which more than 98 % of the population was Muslim. The Turkish Muslim family was based on a model in which the man was head of the household, and the woman was responsible for domestic duties. However, according to the report, this family model was threatened by detrimental movements originating in the West. The movements were disruptive for relations between husband and wife, and hence for the family. Therefore, either through television broadcasting, publications, or other means, the national family model had to be promoted.²⁰⁶

The Report, as noted by Berik, was “the first major attempt at the level of the state to counter the effects of the feminist movement by replacing the discourse on women with that of the family”.²⁰⁷ All the same, this attempt at the level of the state represents the historical extension of ideological involvement of the politics dated back to the Unionist idea of creating a “national family”. In the milieu of the Ottoman state as a declining political power, when social and ideological forces were directed toward a Western model of modernization, any political intervention to reform family relations would be represented at least as progressive. However, it should not be surprising that the same attempt would be dismissed as conservative when there existed a strong feminist movement. Moreover, such a conservative attempt at the level of the state was in fact concordant with the conservative policies of the 1980s in the West.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 90.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 91.

²⁰⁶ Köker, 1991: 25.

²⁰⁷ Berik, 1990: 92.

5.5.2. The Family Research Institute (Aile Araştırma Kurumu)

The official perspective which was expressed both in the family report and in the goals of the Directorate found clear expression in the creation of the Family Research Institute in late 1989. The goal of the Institute was “to engage in research and to develop and implement projects in order to preserve and strengthen the unity of the Turkish family and to improve its well-being and to develop a national policy regarding the family”.²⁰⁸ As Berik argued, the Directorate and the Institute might have seemed as conflicting with each other in terms of their goals; however, in fact they shared common ground in referring to the “national vision” (*Milli Görüş*).²⁰⁹

In accordance with its stated goals, the Institute organized a consultation conference on the family in December 1990. As stated in the Gazette, the goal of the conference was to articulate national sensitivity about disruptive factors affecting the Turkish family.²¹⁰ Participants were for the most part in favor of elevating the traditional family. One exception was Prof. Dr. Necla Arat, who at the time was the head of the Research Center on Women at İstanbul University. She participated in projects of the Committee for Socio-Cultural Change and Development, one of seven different committees. When the committee stated its final report, Arat stated reservations on a pair of articles. The first of her reservations was over television programming in line with the perspective determined by the conference.²¹¹ Nevertheless, soon TV programs representing educated and working women as detrimental to the harmony and happiness of the family and the society would be broadcasted anyway.²¹² Another article she stated reservation over concerned providing women with income-generating activities at home; this, according to her, would help confine women to the home. In addition, she expressed her general dissatisfaction with the work and final report of the committee during the debates on national and moral values. She asked what those values meant, but other on the committee reproached her by saying that every Muslim and every Turk knew what national and moral values were; further, being against those values was

²⁰⁸ Gazette, cited in Ibid, 93.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 94.

²¹⁰ Köker, 1991: 26.

²¹¹ Birsan Altınar, “1. Aile Şurası’nın Ardından”, *Elele*, Şubat 1991: 23.

²¹² Berik, 1990: 94.

incomprehensible. In the end, against her wish, the Committee made a proposal that assessment of the policy of the Institute should occur at state level.²¹³

Correspondingly, The Institute announced the “Week for Family” between 13 and 19 May of 1990. The slogan of the week was: “We are happy and strong because it is the Turkish Family,” a mantra that was spread in the media. The campaign circulated a poster representing an idealized, strong and happy Turkish family. Because of the fact that it seemed so artificial, it was ridiculous to many at first sight. The family depicted was an extended family comprising a supposed grandmother, grandfather, mother, father, aunt, uncle, and several children, who seemed to meet each other for the first time for the photo shooting. However, the fact that the model was an extended family highlighted a traditional family structure in which elders and children needed caring within the family, specifically by women. This attempt of the state to pass its social functions on to the family was concordant with the ideology of the new right.



We are happy and strong, because it is a Turkish family.²¹⁴

²¹³ Altınar, 1991: 23–24.

²¹⁴ Kadınca, Ağustos 1990: 141.

A group of feminists protested the attempts of the Family Research Institute in a very extraordinary way. They had previously participated in the campaigns against battering and the purple needle project. In 1991, thirty of them, in agreement with their husbands, went to court to divorce. They explained that despite the fact that they had happy marriages, they wished to protest the patriarchal state in this way. They said that from then on, they would continue their relationships without an official marriage bond. In the end, with one exception, which would later go on to appellate court, they succeeded in their protest at least in terms of demonstrating a feminist intervention into policies of the state that aimed to shape private lives through official ideology.²¹⁵

As mentioned above as related to Semra Özal's first ladyship, the Foundation of Elevation and Representation of Turkish Women was an attempt at the official level to counter the hegemony of feminism on women's issues. Taken as a counter-attack, the Foundation could have been considered along with the Directorate and the Institute; however, it has also become a main part of Semra Özal's self-identity construction. This personal function of the Foundation for Özal seems separate from its political function, but the two were in fact interrelated. They together displayed the changing patterns of the gender regime both at a personal and at social level.

6. Semra Özal and “Türk Kadını Güçlendirme ve Tanıtma Vakfı” (The Foundation of Elevation and Representation of Turkish Women, 1986)

The foundation of Elevation and Representation of Turkish Women was established on 11 April 1986. Constitutional restrictions of the post-1980s period had forbidden political parties from establishing separate women's branches. This made it hard for political parties to attract women's participation and thus women's votes. The lack of a mechanism to mobilize women for party politics was especially important for the ruling party. Thus, the creation of the Foundation might have been considered as a solution to the situation.²¹⁶ Çölaşan argued that Semra Özal first had thought of utilizing the Union of Turkish Women (UTW, *Türk Kadınlar Birliği*) for this purpose. Since she could not replace the existing cadre within the Union, she decided instead to establish the Foundation.²¹⁷ Manipulation of the UTW by

²¹⁵ Nuray Yavuzer, “Onlar Şimdi Flört Ediyorlar”, *Elele*, Şubat 1991: 82-84.

²¹⁶ At the time, the social democrat parties also sought ways to circumvent the prohibitions on establishing women's branches of the parties. Their solution was to establish commissions, mostly of women, organized at the neighborhood level (Tekeli, 1990: 283).

²¹⁷ Çölaşan, 1989: 211-212.

political powers had occurred since its early days, so Özal's idea is not surprising. Nonetheless, Semra Özal explained why she established the Foundation as follows:

“When we married, at a time there was no dam, hence no electricity in the country. We were traveling all around the country to see where to set a dam. Camps were set for drilling. We stayed at those places for a long time. There I saw how much women were oppressed and in what bad conditions they lived. I told myself that I should do something for the betterment of their situation; I should do something for children for a better upbringing. Then I established my own foundation”.²¹⁸

The patronizing tone of the speech resembles that of the elite Kemalist women who considered themselves already emancipated, modernized, and aspired to raise less-fortunate women to similar social and educational level. This tone, combined with Semra Özal's early engagement with associations and foundations, puts her in line with the classical model of a modernist Turkish woman in terms of her social participation. She herself represented her position as in line with that of Mevhibe İnönü, who according to Özal, was the only modern example among previous first ladies.²¹⁹ Özal expressed this idea in a way to highlight her difference from rest of the wives of the political leaders as follows: “Yes, I am wife of a Prime Minister. I am well aware of my responsibilities as associated with this position. However, I am not the kind of woman who would disappear outside official ceremonies. As a Turkish woman, and as a Turkish mother, I have duties”.²²⁰

Moreover, the Foundation provided Semra Özal a space to socialize with members of high society. The Foundation had been established with the aim of ensuring a high quantity of donations, so membership was restricted to well-off entrepreneurs and members of high society. The social roots of high society in Turkey, İlhan argued, rested on entrepreneurship and quick enrichment, hence their lifestyle was a matter of imitation of Western trends—American trends, in the case of the 1980s—which resulted in an ill-mannered social attitude.²²¹ In fact, the fact that the depoliticization policies of the post-1980s period, as Özkazanç stated, had set ahead the figure of the entrepreneur citizen with the aim of making it fast (*köşeyi dönmek*) deepened the differentiation within the middle classes between the entrepreneurs and the bureaucratic and military elite by privileging the former. Therefore, the latter elements of the middle class and those who shared a similar position with them, *ortadirek* as they were once called, would sometimes express their dissatisfaction with their own mobility as denigration of the lifestyle of the upper-middle class. Therefore, drawing on

²¹⁸ Interview, 7.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 12.

²²⁰ Şemsi Kuseyri, “Türk Kadını Güçlendirme ve Tanıtma Vakfı Başkanı Semra Özal ile Sohbet”, **Puan**, 1990: 11.

²²¹ Attila İlhan, “Bizim Sosyete Suni ve Eğretidir”, **Elele**, Mayıs 1987: 27.

the emblem of the Foundation, a daisy, the members and activists of the Foundation were called daisies in a denigrating way. In addition, the notion that some daisies had been establishing a manipulative circle around Semra Özal with the aim of profiting from their closeness to the wife of the Prime Minister was another line of criticism against them.

Semra Özal was of course the target of many critiques. Although she had integrated elements of the Kemalist discourse on women into her gender identity and gender role, its expression, nevertheless, was not that of moderate but of *mondain*. However, the activities of the Foundation were meant to sustain the traditional gender regime and to reinvest in women's traditional roles according to neo-liberal principles.

6.1. Activities of the Foundation

The Foundation had two main activities: health care services for women and children, including birth control; and mass civil weddings. In addition, less consistently, the Foundation was involved with activities like reading and writing courses for illiterate women, skill courses like sewing or weaving, and trainings for poultry rising. Eastern and southeastern Turkey were the first priority for the activities, later western Turkey, especially the *gecekondur* areas of İstanbul, became a focus of interest. The Foundation started to open local branches in towns and cities; small, local health centers (*sağlık ocağı*) accompanied each branch. The most innovative attempt of the Foundation was to employ mobile health care units that were put into service first in İstanbul, then in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. The target population served was women and children. Birth control was an important element of the health care services, since abortion, which was illegal until 1983, was seen as a birth control method to terminate unwanted pregnancies, and women suffered serious health problems from illegal and unskilled abortions. Additionally, because of superstitions about birth control methods, men as well as women were reluctant to practice them. Thus, the roving health care clinics included informative activities as well.²²²

In 1988, the Foundation had established 58 branches with 58 local health care centers (*sağlık ocağı*), 40 caravans, and 7 buses.²²³

In 1978, women from various disciplines and professions convened for a seminar for policy formulation following the seminar on the topic "Women in Turkish Society",

²²² Interview, 8.

²²³ "Önce Sağlık Eğitim", *Türk Kadını*, Mayıs 1988: 10.

organized by the Turkish Social Science Association. Among the issues cited in the final report were health problems of women. According to the report, at the time women were especially suffering from sex-related problems such as gynecological pathologies, maternal mortality and abortion. It was indicated that the maternal mortality rate was quite high compared with developed countries (180.6 in 100,000 live births). In addition, 72% of women with over four children had gynecological pathologies. Also, only 36% of all families used any method of birth control.²²⁴ As the report presents, in the beginning of 1980, improving health conditions for women and children was a question that must inevitably be considered by any of the following governments. Nevertheless, The Motherland Party of Özal would tend to abandon the social, protective role of the state in favor of setting up neo-liberal policies. Thus, the Foundation, which undertook social functions on behalf of the state by mobilizing high donations from the upper class, appeared to represent a model for self-governing of which examples can be seen in developed capitalist systems after the 1980s, for example in the United States. The idea of self-governance was based on less governmental spending but more widespread civil society activity.²²⁵

In addition to those activities, in the same year, the Foundation also started a literacy campaign; accordingly, a part of every local branch was converted into a classroom.²²⁶ In September 1988, the Foundation, in collaboration with the governorship of Ankara and the Municipality, started a campaign for “voluntary motherhood”. The idea was daily visits to orphanages by women to take care of the children.²²⁷ Providing scholarships to successful students lacking financial resources to continue their education was another activity of the Foundation. Although the number of the scholarships given in the two-year period until 1988 was 1500, it was not on a regular basis. As Semra Özal stated, the Foundation continued to give scholarships, especially to girls, and in some cases to boys as well.²²⁸ Fundraising through sales of women’s handicrafts was also among the main activities of the Foundation.

Another highly important activity of the Foundation was the mass civil weddings. At the time, many rural women and men in Turkey were married only by a religious marriage act which was both invalid and illegal under Turkish law. Therefore, whenever Semra Özal visited a town or a city to open a new branch of the Foundation, she performed a wedding

²²⁴ Deniz Kandiyoti, **Major Issues on the Status of Women in Turkey: Approaches and Priorities**, Turkish Social Science Historical Association, Ankara, 1980: 47–50.

²²⁵ Ralf Dahrendorf, “Changing Social Values Under Mrs Thatcher”, **Thatcherism**, Robert Skidelski (ed.), Chatto and Windus, London, 1988: 199.

²²⁶ “Önce Sağlık Eğitim”, **Türk Kadını**, Mayıs 1988: 10.

²²⁷ “Yayın Kurulu Başkanı ve Başyazarımız Semra Özal Anne, Anneanne, Babaanne ve Şimdi de Gönüllü Anne”, **Türk Kadını**, Eylül 1988: 1.

²²⁸ Interview, 10.

ceremony for masses of women and men who had lived for years as couples with many children. With time, this became almost a daily routine for her, thus her presence was associated with mass weddings so much so that when the municipal building in Ankara where wedding ceremonies take place was renovated, the mayor invited Semra Özal for the inauguration.²²⁹ As Semra Özal estimated at the time, the mass ceremonies had married over 30.000 couples and thus provided their children with official identity cards.²³⁰ As Semra Özal stated, the weddings were important not only because an official wedding is a guarantee for a woman's future, but also because it is a matter of honor for women. She often supported this claim with an anecdote:

"It was in Mardin, if I am not wrong; we were again searching for unmarried couples and registering them with the help of the local officer. In one of these occasions, they brought there a very aged woman, helping her to walk by holding her arms. I said: 'I think you are sitting in the wrong chair, because we are performing weddings here'. 'Okay', she said, 'Okay that is why I am here'. I asked her: 'Of what use is it for you at this age?' She answered: 'Look, I was ashamed throughout my life. Marry me, so I can die with honor'. It was unforgettable for me. I told to myself that those women do not protest, they accept the situation as the way it is, but they never forget; in fact the wedding is the honor of women".²³¹

Despite the fact that the Foundation has "women" in its name, as Tekeli stated, the activities of the Foundation were "[...] directed at the protection of the family rather than of women *per se* [...]".²³² That women were defined within the family as wives or mothers resembles the perspective articulated by the Family Research Institute. Additionally, Sirman argues:

"[i]n its condemnation of the religious ceremony for providing women with a false sense of security, and its insistence on the role of women as mothers and as career women, the project of the Foundation seems to be fairly in line with tenets of the state feminism propounded by Kemalists".²³³

Ignoring the Kemalist emphasis on career women for now, a large similarity can be noted between the Foundation's stance and the state feminism. This, as Sirman underlined, is the insistence on women's roles as mothers and wives as well as insistence on legal rights.

During the interview, Semra Özal stated that in 1990 the United Nations awarded her a medal for her efforts on the health issue. Then she stated that upon receiving this medal, the Law Faculty of a university in the United States (NOVA, Probably Villanova University) gave her an honorary doctorate for her activity around civil marriages. These were

²²⁹ "Ankara'ya Böyle Bir Evlendirme Sarayı Yakıştır", *Türk Kadını*, Eylül 1988: 8.

²³⁰ Interview, 8.

²³¹ Ibid, 8-9.

²³² Tekeli, 1990: 283.

²³³ Sirman, 1989: 23.

encouraging, she said, but more importantly, they signaled the attainment of the goals of the Foundation.²³⁴

As pointed out in its name, the goals of the Foundation were double: elevation of Turkish women, and representation of Turkish Women. Semra Özal had explained the need for representation as follows: “Abroad, people think of us as veiled women, lacking any social rights. We want to present the modern Turkish woman of today”.²³⁵ Therefore, the Foundation gave importance to activities abroad. In 1988, the bi-monthly periodical of the Foundation, *Türk Kadını* (The Turkish Woman), reported inauguration of branches in West Germany and in the United States.²³⁶ The Newspaper also reported an initiative for inauguration of new branches in Japan,²³⁷ Italy,²³⁸ and Switzerland.²³⁹ With the aim of representing the modern Turkish woman, Semra Özal visited many foreign countries to make speeches. She visited China in April 1988 as the guest of the China International Association for Understanding.²⁴⁰ In July 1988, she went to Germany and participated in the seminar “Turkish Woman: Between Modern Life and Traditions” organized by the Turkish-German Health Foundation.²⁴¹ In September 1988, she visited Japan where she participated in a TV program and gave a speech at the Turkish Embassy on the subject of Turkish women and the activities of the Foundation.²⁴² Semra Özal attempted to represent both modern Turkish women and authentic Turkish culture. She organized exhibitions in many foreign countries of Turkish handicrafts, traditional fountain works, or the Ottoman Sultans. She attended an exhibition of Turkish handicraft and needlework in the United States which was combined with a concert by a popular singer from Turkey.²⁴³ She also initiated an exhibition of traditional Turkish fountains at the Louvre.²⁴⁴ The most controversial of these exhibitions was the Exhibition of Suleiman the Magnificent which was shown in, among others: Britain, the United States, and Germany. The Exhibition of Suleiman the Magnificent fueled a controversy over the official role of Semra Özal as the wife of the Prime Minister. Actually, Semra Özal had institutionalized her responsibility to represent Turkey to the outside world. Her aim to represent modern Turkish women abroad was compatible with the state feminism.

²³⁴ Interview, 9.

²³⁵ Karaibrahimgil, 1986 August: 15.

²³⁶ “Önce Sağlık Eğitim”, *Türk Kadını*, Mayıs 1988: 10.

²³⁷ “Muhteşem Süleyman Sergisinin Son Menzili: Japonya”, *Türk Kadını*, Eylül 1988: 8.

²³⁸ “Özallar İtalya’da”, *Türk Kadını*, Eylül 1988: 3.

²³⁹ *Türk Kadını*, Kasım 1988: 6.

²⁴⁰ “Önce Sağlık Eğitim”, *Türk Kadını*, May 1988: 10.

²⁴¹ “F.Almanyadaki Türk Kadınının Sorunu Lisan”, *Türk Kadını*, Temmuz 1988: 12.

²⁴² “Muhteşem Süleyman Sergisinin Son Menzili: Japonya”, *Türk Kadını*, Eylül 1988: 8.

²⁴³ “Kültür Tanıtması ve Türk Kadını”, *Türk Kadını*, Mayıs 1988: 14.

²⁴⁴ Interview, 9.

Nevertheless, Semra Özal's status as a role model became the subject of debates in the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1989. A deputy from the Social Democrat Populist Party (SDPP, *Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*, SHP), Güneş Gürseler, questioned the Motherland Party on whether Semra Özal had received any official travel subsidies for her trip to Britain. The rationale of the questioning was to condemn Semra Özal for making use of official means for political purposes. Moreover, as Gürseler mentioned in a speech after the session, the main controversy was over her attitude as a role model. After speaking of the previous wives of former Prime Ministers, Gürseler argued that this was the first time in history that a wife of a prime minister was so uninhibited. He claimed that her role violated tradition and etiquette. SDPP deputies supported his argument with applause. Gürseler continued:

“The Turkish Republic is a young republic, but it is a republic the traditions and tenets of which are strong. The wives of former prime ministers have engaged with social and cultural activities in the framework of current traditions and manners; however, they have never contradicted the society”.

Touching on their claim of being private as opposed to being civic, Gürseler condemned the Özal family for diffusing a vulgar, *arabesque* culture into society. Moreover, Semra Özal was interfering in politics, he argued. Thus, according to him, her general attitude was incompatible with her position.²⁴⁵

What made Semra Özal a potential role model was the fact that she did not wear a headscarf, which made her secular, hence modern.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the messages she gave, especially through the newspaper *Turkish Woman*, were very conservative.

6.2. The Newspaper: Turkish Woman (Türk Kadını)

The newspaper *Turkish Woman* was a bi-monthly periodical reporting the activities of the Foundation. It was published for almost two years, between 1988 and 1989, but due to financial problems, its publication faltered. Semra Özal was the editor.

The newspaper's taking a modern, secular and Kemalist stance is worth mentioning. As she stated, this stance was the way for the government to remain consistent with the official ideology.²⁴⁷ Moreover, such a Kemalist stance provided the Foundation with grounds for legitimacy. Indeed, the newspaper emphasized commonalities between the Foundation and

²⁴⁵ TBMM Tunanak Dergisi, C.23, Dönem: 18, Yasama Yılı: 2, Birleşim: 62, 22.02.1989: 314-315.

²⁴⁶ Ülkü Orbay, “Hanımefendiği Nasıl Bilirsiniz?”, *Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi*, Vol. 15, No. 129, 1991: 23.

²⁴⁷ Interview, 19.

other Kemalist women's organizations. For example, in October 1988, an interview with Sevinç Karol, the head of the Federation of Women's Associations (*Kadın Dernekleri Federasyonu*) was published in the newspaper. Karol explained their goals as being to bring women to the level of men in terms of laws and practical matters. However, she needed to emphasize that they were never feminist. Another goal of the Federation, she argued, was to modernize women in terms of physical appearance, thus they were strongly against the headscarf.²⁴⁸ Another example of the newspaper's support for the Kemalist stance was the panel organized by the Atatürk Research Center (*Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi*) on the 54th Anniversary of granting political rights to women. Semra Özal and, among others, Emel Doğramacı, a well-known defender of the state feminism, were among the participants. During Doğramacı's speech, she emphasized that Atatürk laid the foundation for equality between men and women; however, the equality had yet to be put into practice. Accordingly, she demanded equal participation for women in entering official positions such as governorships.²⁴⁹ Semra Özal's efforts to emphasize a Kemalist stance went so far that, in February 1989, to display cosmetic affiliation with Kemalism, she participated in the inauguration of the fountain in İzmir named after Zübeyde Hanım (mother of Atatürk). There she vowed to build Zübeyde Hanım fountains in every city.²⁵⁰

However, the Kemalist stance, which the newspaper reflected, was limited with respect to representation of women's roles in society. Although the emphasis on motherhood was very powerful, in this case it was not placed in the context of nationalism. Rather, a Gökâlpian mixture of modernity and traditions prevailed. In May 1988, the Foundation organized a symposium on "Women in Modern Turkish Society". Rüveyda Akbay, the head of the educational branch of the Foundation, made a speech explaining its goals: to provide Turkish women with skill courses and opportunities for additional income, and to represent both the current social and cultural attainment of Turkish women and the social and cultural life and traditions of Turkish Family. According to her, happier and powerful women would contribute to the power of men.²⁵¹ Despite its resembling the state feminism, the idea was in fact endorsement of the predominance of family—the backbone of which was women. Thus, women were *not* supposed to be super women who combined professional work with domestic duties. Yıldırım Aktuna—at the time, president of the Turkish Grand National Assembly—asserted in an interview conducted by Semra Özal that women's participation in

²⁴⁸ "Türk Kadını Layık Olduğu Düzeye Erişecek", *Türk Kadını*, Aralık 1988: 5.

²⁴⁹ "Modern Türk Toplumunda Kadının Yeri", *Türk Kadını*, Mayıs 1988: 8.

²⁵⁰ "Zübeyde Hanım Çeşmesi", *Türk Kadını*, Şubat 1988: 3.

²⁵¹ "Bugünleri Anadolu Kadınına Borçluyuz", *Türk Kadını*, Ekim 1988: 5

politics was insufficient, but he personally would not like his wife to engage with politics, because the place for Turkish women was at home as mothers and wives.²⁵² As reported by the newspaper, Prime Minister Turgut Özal agreed that women were the backbone of the family unit, which was the main element in the development of Turkey.²⁵³ Of course, the main line of debate in the newspaper ran against feminism. In an editorial article in September 1988, after emphasizing the central role of solidarity within the Turkish family, Semra Özal condemned feminism as being a fleeting notion.²⁵⁴ The main argument against feminism was about the battering issue. Semra Özal challenged the feminist anti-battering campaigns on two levels: Firstly, through denial of battering and secondly, through contesting shelters for battered women. An example of denial was voiced by the governor of Ankara during an interview published in the newspaper in May 1988. On the question of whether he had considered founding a shelter for battered women in Ankara, the governor asserted in mock surprise that he had never heard of a case there of wife battering.²⁵⁵ In the same line of reasoning, Semra Özal claimed that since women are traditionally respected within the family in Turkey, wife battering was not a matter of course, but of exception. Still, she stated, in the case of such an exception, the wife's family would interfere. Thus, there was no need in Turkey for such shelters.²⁵⁶ She also endorsed the battered woman's staying in her home.²⁵⁷ Semra Özal actually would put her theory into practice. Zeynep Özal, the daughter of Semra Özal, told in her memoir that her (second) husband was beating her. Her mother Semra Özal knew about it and was able to intervene in the situation when Zeynep called her mother for help. Accordingly, Semra Özal sent two bodyguards to protect her daughter.²⁵⁸

The newspaper also supported the Özals' idea of individualism. In August 1988, Semra Özal did an interview with her husband, Prime Minister Turgut Özal. They talked about diverse issues ranging from politics to personal features of the PM. In the end of the interview, Semra Özal asked him whether he had a special song. His answer was yes. Upon the question why it was so special to him, he answered as follows: "Because we sang that song together, hand in hand".²⁵⁹ She had suddenly become his wife, rather than the editor of the newspaper. Perhaps this was an expression of gratitude for her having been a good wife to him. All else aside, with her Foundation, Semra Özal had promoted the Motherland Party as if

²⁵² "Kadın Parleментoda Yeterince Temsil Edilmiyor", **Türk Kadını**, Mayıs 1988: 14.

²⁵³ "Başbakan Özal 62 Yaşında", **Türk Kadını**, 1 Kasım 1988: 14.

²⁵⁴ Semra Özal, "Kadın Erkek Eşitliği", **Türk Kadını**, Eylül, 1988: 1.

²⁵⁵ "Ankara Valisi Saffet Arıkan Bedük: 'Dayak Yiyen Kadın Bana Gelsin'", **Türk Kadını**, Mayıs 1988: 1.

²⁵⁶ "F.Almanyadaki Türk Kadınının Sorunu Lisan", **Türk Kadını**, Temmuz 1988: 12.

²⁵⁷ Nalan Kayhan, "Son Söz Erkeğindir", **Elele**, Temmuz 1988: 45.

²⁵⁸ Anlı, 237.

²⁵⁹ "Başbakan Özal: Bana Göre Halka Hizmet Hakka Hizmettir", **Türk Kadını**, Ağustos 1988: 14.

she held a Ministry of Women's Affairs.²⁶⁰ Turgut Özal would yet demand more from her in the coming years.



7. Turgut Özal as the President of the Republic

On 31 October 1989, the Turkish Grand National Assembly elected Turgut Özal president of the Turkish Republic. Due to continuous de facto interventions of Turgut Özal in politics, this was little more than a superficial change. Already, Turgut Özal had been criticized during his government because of his administration. When he was the prime minister, he had resorted to decrees using the force of law instead of regular legislative routes in the Assembly. For example, the Family Research Institute had been founded by a decree by the force of law. Such exercises were considered attempts by the prime minister to bypass the Assembly and exercise unilateral power. The same was true for his administration as the president. The

²⁶⁰ Sirman, 1989: 23.

Turkish political system rests on the separation of the execution of government, embodied in the prime minister, from the executive function of the president. The latter appears to have a rather symbolic role for execution. Thus, this role requires the president to be exempt from any political engagement. Therefore, the presidency of Turgut Özal was in contradiction with the constitutional system not only because of his recent political engagement but also because of his political interventions while holding the prime ministership.²⁶¹ Even before the appointment, he did not hesitate to point out his successor as the new prime minister. Furthermore, he would continue to use his power on the internal organization of the Motherland Party through his wife Semra Özal.

7.1. Political Involvement of Semra Özal

At the time, Turgut Özal, the president of the Turkish Republic, was de facto prime minister. The official prime minister, the head of the Motherland Party Yıldırım Akbulut, was little more than an ineffective pawn. In 1991, the Motherland Party went into a general congress to elect a new leader of the Party. Turgut Özal was reluctant to deliver power fully to a new leader, i.e., he did not want an independent prime minister. To this aim, he employed Semra Özal to lobby for their own candidate. Because of the high number of deputies, the İstanbul organization was to a large extent influential on the rest of the party organization. Thus, Semra Özal took over the presidency of the İstanbul organization and started lobbying for candidate Mesut Yılmaz, who won the presidency of the Party and in the next election became the new prime minister. Due to Yılmaz's independent stance, however, Turgut Özal would soon disown him politically.²⁶²

The presidency of Semra Özal led to controversy not only within the Party but also in the public in general. It was argued that her presidency was improper because although Semra Özal was suitable for such a position as a person, she was the wife of the President of the Turkish Republic.²⁶³ However, her influence in politics reached such an extent that discussion began over whether she could become prime minister.²⁶⁴

In fact, as the head of the İstanbul organization of the Motherland Party, Semra Özal was only the shadow of Turgut Özal. Such a co-presidency was based on both the political

²⁶¹ Cem Eroğul, "1989 Cumhurbaşkanlığı Seçimiyle Başlayan Yeni Siyasal Düzen", **Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi**, Vol. 13, No. 114, 1989: 8–9.

²⁶² Birand, 2001: 481–489.

²⁶³ Orbay, 1991: 23.

²⁶⁴ Ayşe Sazak, "Prof. Dr. Nur Vergin: Semra Özal Asla Başbakan Olmamalı", **Elele**, Aralık 1990: 34.

influence of Turgut Özal and lobbying abilities of Semra Özal. Even though she personally was not happy about engaging in politics, in her own words, Turgut Özal forced her to do it. Although she had given it great effort, she stated, she had never liked politics. She asserted that if she had liked it, she would have engaged in it even before becoming the wife of a political leader. On the contrary, she stated, she was more content engaging with social issues.²⁶⁵ This explanation is yet another self-proclamation: her attempt to create space for her own identity construction.

8. Conclusion

On 17 April 1993, Turgut Özal passed away. It was reported that he had had a heart attack while exercising. However, later Semra Özal claimed that he might have died through assassination. As she claimed, the lemonade he drank the night before had caused him to die. Since then, suspicions over his death could not be proved. Yet, Semra Özal has insisted on the suspicious scenario.

After some years of mourning, Semra Özal started to appear again in public, and thus in the press. Although her maintaining close relations with popular singers and attending nightclubs was largely criticized, she explained that she simply continued being herself. She moved to İstanbul, where she asserted that she felt at home. Semra Özal also moved the headquarters of the Foundation to İstanbul. The Foundation continued operating in İstanbul, though it seemed to have lost most of its popularity, and its activities decreased. On the other hand, Semra Özal started to give speeches at universities and other venues where she spoke about the previous activities of the Foundation and answered questions on controversial issues of the former Özal administration. As she explained, that was a part of the current activities of the Foundation.²⁶⁶

In fact, by giving speeches, Semra Özal seems rather to consolidate her gender identity and gender role construction. The processes of gender identity and gender role construction were based on three mechanisms: setting a mythical genealogy, organizing her social activities into an epic narrative, and self-definition, which provided her with the opportunity to create her own autonomous space. However, the limits of that autonomous space were well-defined in terms of manipulating equality rather than challenging gendered

²⁶⁵ Interview, 15–16.

²⁶⁶ Interview, 10.

identities. For Semra Özal, the existence of limits was not a matter of question; on the contrary, she presented her ability to create space of her own as being modern. For this reason, she was regarded as the modern side of the conservative Turgut Özal. Similar to Nancy Reagan's anti-feminism, the anti-feminist stance Semra Özal adopted was exactly the source of her personal emancipation. In other words, conservative, pro-family ideologies of the state both as a requisite of the neo-liberalism and as a counter to rising feminist demands had provided Semra Özal with the opportunity to establish the Foundation of Elevation and Representation of the Turkish Women, through which she had enjoyed a sense of self-realization. Recalling the term "patriarchal bargain," articulated by Kandiyoti,²⁶⁷ the conjugal unity of the conservative Turgut Özal and modern, secular Semra Özal had offered Semra Özal the opportunity to make use of the patriarchy instead of challenging it—though channels to attempt the latter had been opened up by the feminists of the time.

In the post-1980s period, Turkey was attempting to adjust itself to the world capitalist system, which changed patterns of life, meaning of modernity, mentalities, and consumption habits. As Barthes reminds us, myth plays an integral role in bourgeoisie ideology;²⁶⁸ thus, when Turkish society underwent a bourgeoisie transformation, both social imagination and meaning were highly mythified. In due course, Semra Özal succeeded in making herself into a bourgeois model for middle class women. The distortion through mythification of her genealogy once had revealed her desire for the modern lifestyle of the upper-middle classes. Indeed, she grew to embody this bourgeois myth.

Nevertheless, Semra Özal did not want to be named. In other words, she consistently emphasized that the Özals lived in a normal society; therefore, they should live as normal people. She represented nothing but herself. Semra Özal, in accordance with what Barthes states about myth, transformed reality into an image of the world, history into nature.²⁶⁹

Political ideologies of the post-1980s period were not exempt from mythification; this included the feminist movement. Although having retreated into research centers and universities, the legacy of the feminist movement survived in collective memory through its popular mythical figures. One of them was the author of the famous "The Woman has no Name" (*Kadının Adı Yok*), Duygu Asena, who continued to work as a journalist and contribute to feminist literature during the 1990s and 2000s. She was treated as an icon of feminism and the feminists. After she died from a brain tumor in July 2006, she was widely

²⁶⁷ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy", *Gender and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1988: *passim*.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Barthes, 1957: 141.

lauded as a pioneer of feminism in Turkey. A cartoon published in the following days in a popular weekly clearly presents her as seen in the public imagination: the mythic figure of Duygu Asena. The cartoon depicts the interior of an ordinary family house with illustrative commonplace details such as a painting on the wall, a plant in the corner, a view of neighboring apartment buildings in the city. Its depiction of a man hiding a wooden stick behind his back and a beaten woman covered with cuts and bruises tells only how domestic violence is still common to Turkish families. Because feminist Duygu Asena died, the man in the cartoon believes that no one is left to protect women, and seems to be reveling in his reclaimed right to beat his wife. Thereby, the cartoon implicitly reveals the heritage of the 1980s.



CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

The present study dealt with the stories of the wives of four Turkish political leaders in order to analyze changes in gender role and gender identity and tensions between the two in the history of Turkish modernization with the aim of reaching an understanding of the gender regimes which Kemalist modernization produced and reproduced and the influence of the gender regime on the process of modernization. Throughout this work, it was noted that because Kemalist modernization envisaged a nation-state that was modernized according to a Western model, nationalism was always inherent to the modernization process. One of the most distinctive combinations of modernization and nationalism was the constitution of a gender system by the Kemalist modernization. In the beginning of the Turkish modernization process, the modernization's success was evaluated by the success of the Republic's women. However, the present work neither attempted to use women as symbols of modernization nor to measure the level of modernization achieved by them. Instead, the aim of this work was to analyze women's relationship to modernization while questioning current taken-for-granted approaches to modernization.

The Young Turk ideology and subsequently the Kemalist ideology were extensively influenced by the sociological thinking of the 19th century and drew from organic theories about the family and its significance for the well-being of the society and nation-state. Toprak describes the Young Turk movement as championing the idea of the "New Family" (*Yeni Aile*) or "National Family" (*Milli Aile*), a nuclear family composed of mother, father and children. The "New Family" or "National Family" was based on an egalitarian partnership of wife and husband that was clearly a departure from the traditional patriarchal Ottoman family. In its new form, according to Young Turks or the Unionists, the family was both an organic cell of society and the backbone of the nation-state. The Family Law of 1917 and quasi-mandatory pro-marriage policies of the CUP were manifestations of this ideology.¹

As Toprak writes, this new principle of egalitarianism within the family meant that women's place within both family and society was of great interest. The idealized "New Family" required that the social status of women in general be elevated. The need to elevate women's social status was also related to liberating influences from the West that were forcing the traditional Ottoman lifestyle to change. In fact, beginning in the Tanzimat era,

¹ Zafer Toprak, "II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Devlet, Aile ve Feminizm", **Sosyo-Kültürel Değişme Sürecinde Türk Ailesi**, C.I, T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırma Kurumu Yayını, Ankara, 1992, *passim*.

Western influence had started to penetrate Ottoman society and coexist ambivalently with traditional lifestyles. The consequences of Western influence were described by Ahmet Mithat as *mülemma*, meaning heterogeneousness and disorganization. It would not be wrong to suppose that the Unionists' reconciling the Western model with the needs and requirements of their sought-for new society was an attempt to solve ambiguities related to *mülemma*. It would also make sense to suggest that the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the Kemalist modernization of the one-party period were nationalist solutions to *mülemma*. The amendment of the Civil Code in 1926 and accompanying reforms related to women's status marked the attainment of the Unionist "Social Revolution" (*içtimai inkılap*). Similar to the Unionist ideal "New Woman" and "New Man," who were supposed to be the building blocks of the egalitarian "New Family", the Republican regime created its own ideal "New Woman of the Republic" who was supposed to be an enlightened fellow and friend to the "Man of the Republic". The Republican "New Woman," the result of the perceived urgent need to integrate women into the country's social life, was presented as the ideal for which women should strive. Throughout the late Ottoman era and the early years of the Republic, the term "the women question" became a popular expression of the need to elevate women's status. Like approaches to "the women question" in the Third World, the Kemalist modernization in Turkey required that women reflect a modern look and behave as guardians of national solidarity. Compared with previous modernization efforts, Kemalism was radical: Kemalist modernization was based on a complete secularization policy that severed ties with the Ottoman past and the traditional-religious patriarchy. Instead of a religious moral order, the Kemalist modernization promoted sexual control of women through middle-class morality and charged women with the responsibility of being modern yet modest. Before examining the consequences of the double referents of gender identity construction for women which constitute the main concern of this work, we will look closer at the Kemalist envisaged society.

Like the Unionist modernizers, Kemalism made the family a domain of state intervention. While secular laws and reforms were transforming the family, on the other hand, symbolic meanings related to cultural societal formations were also in flux, which contributed to the general feeling of breaking with the past. Among the most symbolic Kemalist moves was the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922 and of the Caliphate in 1924. Until then, the Palace, the house of the ruler, was the house of the largest family in the Empire. The Sultan enjoyed power as the patriarch of both his household and his entire dynasty. As Sirman pointed out, societal forms of family were modeled according to the Sultan's dynastic example; thus, the

empire comprised many big houses of the large families.² The Kemalist modernization broke with the religious and dynastic attributes of the patriarch, but did not discount the centrality of family for the sake of social solidarity. In other words, Kemalism attributed a modern function to family and replaced the traditional, dynastic family model with a national model. According to that model, while the man as the head of household was responsible for protection of the family, the woman was responsible for reproduction and for the well-being of the family—which, as Chatterjee argues, signified little more than replacement of traditional paternalism with the paternalism of the modern nation-state.³ The latter gave a central importance to women within the family and linked their reproductive responsibilities to the aim of establishing a modern and independent nation-state. The paternalist framework of national responsibilities for women did lay the foundations for their emancipation from the social and political constraints of the traditional order. Kandiyoti refers to the paternalism of the Kemalist modernization as “paternalist benevolence” that while letting endorsement of women’s visibility as the symbols of the modern regime, had a decisive influence on socialization of women for example as professionals.⁴ Despite its emphasis on breaking with the past, the Kemalist modernization employed paternalist symbolism associated with the idea that the ruler was the patriarch. As symbolized by the name Atatürk, given to him in 1934, Mustafa Kemal became the Father of Turks. He himself promoted this symbolism by marrying the well-educated, Western-looking Latife Uşşakî that meant to serve as a public, national example of the new egalitarian family. After a tempestuous marriage and divorce with Latife Uşşakî, Mustafa Kemal’s relations with his adopted daughters would provide him more opportunities for public display of the ideal modern household and exemplary women of the Republic. One of the adopted daughters was the first female combat pilot of Turkey, Sabiha Gökçen, who had an active part in the suppression of Kurdish rebellion in 1937. Another one was a historian, Afet İnan, among the founders of the Turkish Historical Society, an official institution founded in 1931 on the initiative of Mustafa Kemal to study the history of Turkey and the Turks. Simultaneously, beginning with the first Republican ball in 1927, the Pembe Köşk, domicile of the İnönü family, began to represent the House of the Republic, and as wife of the prime minister, Mevhibe İnönü became an exemplary woman of the Republic. Thereby, women were included in the nation, especially in the era of the early

² Nükhet Sirman, “Kadınların Milliyeti”, **Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Milliyetçilik**, İletişim Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2002: 235.

³ Zafer Yörük, “Politik Psişe Olarak Türk Kimliği”, **Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Milliyetçilik**, İletişim Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2002: 323.

⁴ Deniz Kandiyoti, “End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey”, **Women, Islam and the State**, Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.by), Macmillan, London, 1991: 41.

Republic, either as daughters or as mothers of the new families, with the nation itself seen as a large macrocosmic family.

Here it is possible to argue that nation and family were seen as identical. Previously, journalists had debated the idea that the nation was based on home in popular magazines. This notion could serve to level social disparities in a newly-established nation-state. The understanding of nation and family or home as identical has been an oft-utilized analogy in the literature of nationalism, Sirman has argued. As she stated, this analogy rests on the presumption that both nation and family are natural forms of living together. Thus, the argument naturalizes existing power relations within the nation as well as within the family.⁵ For this reason, understanding the “new family” of the Republic requires a close look at inter-familial hierarchies. I already argued that the Kemalist modernization established a paternalist gender system, hence a patriarchal family structure in which the man was the head of the household. However, acknowledging the patriarchal features of the family of the new Republic is only half of understanding its power-related organization and functions. Now we must examine the cultural features of the “new family.”

When it was first articulated, the new family was part of a sociologically-inspired push to westernize traditional Ottoman society. Later it found its systematic and synthesized expression as part of the political agenda of the Unionists. The Unionists were the products of the administrative reforms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the Ottoman Empire, and members of the nascent middle class. They had internalized the middle class *Weltanschauung* and were trying to sustain middle class solidarity as a means of empowerment in the ever-changing social and political milieu of a declining Empire. Beginning in 1908 and continuing throughout the war years, the Unionists were concerned with creating a national bourgeoisie that could compete with the existing non-Muslim bourgeoisie. Afterward, with the ideas of a uniform nation and a centralized state, the Kemalist modernization undertook to create a modernized middle class sociability based on nationhood. Inserting western life style into cultural mindset of society and implementing political reforms were components of the push to create a middle class or bourgeoisie society. Thus, as the foundation of the new regime, the family was both the place where middle class values and manners were consolidated and the center from which those values and manners were to be suffused into the whole nation.

⁵ Sirman, 2002, 232.

Mosse notes the link between the success of the nuclear family and the rise of nationalism in 18th century Europe.⁶ According to him, the decisive element of this association is the principle of respectability which historically accompanied the rise of bourgeoisie society, allowed the middle classes to differentiate themselves from the “lazy” lower classes and the “profligate” aristocracy. Thus, not necessarily economic activity, but the principle of respectability came to characterize the lifestyle of the middle classes.⁷ According to Mosse, the manners and values of the middle classes included frugality, devotion to duty and restraint of passion. Those values coincided with the nationalist ideal of social order in which everyone was assigned a specific place and role and any confusion of social roles threatened a loss of control.⁸ Here Mosse acknowledges that, beginning with the 19th century, sociological concerns abounded in Western nationalism. These concerns, then, are not only endemic to nationalisms in the Third World or non-Western societies. Moreover, the centrality of sociological concerns in nationalism might explain how and why the combination of modernization and nationalism was appealing for the modernizing elite of non-Western societies. In any case, nationalism assigns a proper place for everyone within society, and thus, according to Mosse, assures control of sexuality and gender order. As he has argued, women have always exemplified virtue. As fathers of the nation-family, men are classed with his disciplinary function, which is “central to the maintenance of hierarchy and order in the family and thus respectability.”⁹ The nuclear family appears to be the place where respectability of the middle class and general social order is ensured. In view of that, I argue that in Turkish modernization, father of the “new family” ensures the respectability of the middle class household—in other words, the family honor—while the paternalism of modernization functions to maintain sexual control within society.

Unlike the European example, sexual control in Turkish nationalism requires achieving a balance between the poles of super-Westernization (*allafranga*) and tradition (*allaturca*) that had defined the spectrum of acceptable behavior for women and men since the *Tanzimat* era. Women were not to neglect their natural duties in the name of Westernization; otherwise, they were accused of unchastity. As the theories of nationalism in the Third World have shown, women were expected both to resemble Western women and to be guardians of national culture. Thus, they were supposed to be both modern and traditional.

⁶ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality, Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1984: 18.

⁷ Ibid, 4-5.

⁸ Ibid, 16-17.

⁹ Ibid, 19.

In this framework, the role of fathers in the socialization of children, and, especially, of daughters began to change during the *Meşrutiyet II*. During the Republican years, fathers were expected to prepare a social ground for the socialization of their daughters, who—as either professionals or enlightened mothers—would become women of the Republic. In return for their fathers’ support, daughters must follow strict sexual controls, necessitating careful attention to any kind of contact with men and suppression of sexuality until marriage. Hence, becoming and being modern for women was a matter of keeping balance between being unchaste and emancipated; thus, it required adaptive strategies.

It was argued in this work that the politics of modernity constitutes a gender regime. In other words, the state, ideologies and political actors all contribute to the formation of gendered identities as well as of gender systems. Considering the discussion above, Hence, becoming and being modern for women was a matter of keeping balance between being unchaste and emancipated; thus, it required adaptive strategies.

However, such a conviction requires further examination of modernization. Here, we may refer to Bozdoğan and Kasaba’s critical definition of modernization. They argued that we should draw a distinction between “modernity as a potentially liberating historical condition” and modernity as instrument of a political project of domination.¹⁰ Since the main question of this work is the tension between gender role and gender identity, only such an understanding of modernization allows us to comprehend ascribed roles, changing identities, and tensions between the two *vis-à-vis* prevailing gender regimes of the Turkish modernization.

Common to the women whose life histories were analyzed in this work was that all performed a duty of sorts. Despite ceremonial responsibilities, theirs were not official but historical duties, rooted in gender role expectations from the years of the constitution and institutionalization of the Kemalist modernization. Hence, they experienced modernization as both political and personal. From this point further, gathering their life histories meant dealing with a prevailing gender regime and subjective experience of femininity in a diachronic sequence. That the Kemalist modernization produced and reproduced gendered identities is another point of departure for examining the subjective experience of femininity as related to modernization. Furthermore, considering changes in gender identity experience and gender role construction helps to measure the success of the Kemalist gender regime.

The life history of Mevhibe İnönü allowed us to examine the direct intervention of modernization, as a state ideology, into the private experience of a woman who grew up in a

¹⁰ Sibel Bozdoğan, Reşat Kasaba, “Introduction”, **Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey**, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1997: 6.

traditional Ottoman social environment. Here we found evidence for the transformation of women's identity vis-à-vis social and political transformations. In the context of this new gender regime, Mevhibe İnönü was supposed to be a role model, though she herself lacked a role model. Her marriage provided her with support for her public role. As long as her husband, İsmet İnönü, the prime minister and later president of the Republic, backed her, she played the part of the modern woman in public. Giving up the *çarşaf* and appearing in modern fashions, accompanying her husband during official trips and ceremonies, attending classical music concerts or horse racing, and taking part in other social activities were radical elements of performing a specific gender role. Beyond pretending to be modern in public, Mevhibe İnönü definitely embraced the benefits of modernization. Because of her social environment and social class, she was fully aware that she was different from, for example, Latife Uşşakî and Leman Karaosmanoğlu, who could pursue higher education and maintained contact with the West or Westernized sections of society. Still, Mevhibe İnönü always enjoyed the company of such women and viewed them with deep admiration. Mevhibe Hanım regretted not having a better education, but she would eventually learn French and practice it with foreign guests she hosted. Furthermore, Mevhibe Hanım dared to get a driving license and to appear in the streets of Ankara while driving her own car. It was a proud accomplishment for her, like getting her nursing certificate. Although it was part of her gender role performance to boost national solidarity among women in the years of the Second World War, afterward, when İsmet İnönü was retired she would continue doing her husband's diabetic injections instead of having the state doctor do them. Notwithstanding, the domestic organization of the *Pembe Köşk* and interfamilial relations of the household were in accordance with Western manners, yet the gender role performance of Mevhibe İnönü was not always well-matched with her gender identity. Inside the walls of the *Pembe Köşk*, Mevhibe Hanım could undress her public First Ladyship and continue, for example, her religious practices. Her preference of *allaturca* music at home despite listening to Western classical music at weekly concerts, as well as her careful attention not to wear short sleeve dresses in her daily life despite attending balls in fashionable decollate dresses can be viewed as expressions of personal resistance. Although Mevhibe İnönü lived in the grip of the Turkish modernization, she could reconcile it with elements of traditional culture that were praised as expressions of modesty and plainness.

As explained before, the gender role performance by Mevhibe İnönü was consistent with the contemporaneous debates about genuine gender role for women. At the time, women were encouraged to have higher education and get a profession. The popular press represented professional and successful women as role models. Women were encouraged to take part in

the public life of the country. Likewise, Mevhibe İnönü performed as an enlightened, enterprising woman. Yet, at the same time, these women were suspected for becoming masculinized and for abandoning their womanly duties. In response, motherhood and domestic responsibilities were glorified in the framework of nationalism and women were portrayed as the reproducers of the nation. The nation's structure was seen as based on that of the home, within which women were the reproducers. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by a popular magazine, the imagined woman within that home, "the woman of the reform (*inkılap kadını*)", was not expected to do more than embroider cushion patterns for her veteran father. In other words, all in all, paternalism and protectionism, but also the radicalism of the Kemalist modernization, would lead to a discord between the gender identity and the gender role asked of women. In view of that, Mevhibe İnönü's effort to reconcile her experience of the late and insufficient modernization with the requirements of being an exemplary woman of the Kemalist modernization was an achievement for women of the time. Her adjustment to the modernization defined the general framework of the Kemalist gender regime of the one-party period and decreased the hardships of gender identity construction. Since any autonomous political initiative by women was eliminated in that period, and while the modern manners of high-class women were denigrated as super-Westernization and lower-class women were regarded as ignorant and not yet modern, Mevhibe İnönü constituted a good example of a modern middle-class woman. The national-Western character she created, which was a mixture of self-identity construction and identity construction as a role model, was her attainment of this ideal. Furthermore, the fact that the manner and degree of her modernization were determined and legitimized through the official ideology highlighted the paternalism of the Kemalist gender regime. In return, women were allowed to use the *opportunity space* that the Kemalist modernization provided. In other words, it is possible to conclude that, in the one-party period, the Kemalist modernization could maintain political hegemony over the gender regime not only because of its authoritarian character, but also because of its reception by women who saw the Kemalist modernization as potentially liberating.

The life history of Berin Menderes provided us with an example of women who benefited from educational opportunities and a Western lifestyle prior to the Republican modernization. Due to familial bonds with prominent political figures, who had become part of both the pre- and the post-Republican political rivalry either by supporting or contesting the Kemalism, Berin Hanım experienced traumas during the political shift to Kemalism. Like those rooted in a cosmopolitan modernity, she had been reluctant to join in the ideal of a

uniform, national and modern middle-class sociability. What had marked Berin Menderes' formalistic participation in the modern middle-class sociability of the nation-state was her donating her piano to the People's Houses before moving to Ankara, when Adnan Menderes became a Republican Party deputy. Nonetheless, even during the Menderes administration, the modern qualities of Berin Hanım would more or less stay out of sight when compared to those of Mevhibe İnönü. Instead, her being less visible became the general framework of her gender role performance. Throughout the 1950s, she performed as a *low-profile spouse*, as Adnan Menderes wished. This was because of a shift in the politics of modernization. Adnan Menderes wished to be associated neither with the Kemalist elite nor with what the Kemalist elite represented as modern. The Democratic Party represented a manifestation of the dissatisfaction of groups which had been suppressed during the authoritarian one-party administration. Thus, not only at the symbolic level, but also through the relaxation of policies regarding secularization and modernization, the DP contested the Kemalist modernization and championed an anti-elitist alternative. With respect to the gender regime, there were some similarities between the DP and the Kemalist stance. In the first place, the DP followed the formal rules of the Kemalist discourse about women. For example, despite her low-profile role, Berin Menderes took part in official ceremonies, so that no one could deny that she represented her country perfectly. Another line of similarity was the two regimes' strict control of potential political activism of women. While Adnan Menderes maintained good relations with the tame women's organizations, he at the same time kept tight control of women's autonomous political activism. Despite these similarities, the DP broke the janus-faced approach of the Kemalist discourse about women. Certainly, the Republican reforms were intended as a way for women to break with the constraints of the traditional patriarchy; however, the Republican reforms had created a different type of patriarchy based on articulation of traditional gender relations through secular and nationalist principles. Therefore, the DP not only gave up being the guardians of reforms, it also abandoned the state feminism and prioritized those of women's social roles and responsibilities that were extensions of their feminine nature. On the other hand, Kemalism persisted in its claim for hegemony over women's modernization, and laid the foundation for women to gain opportunities for social and political participation. What burst in the 1950s was the revelation of the difference between ascribed gender roles and the actual lived-through experiences of the modernization, i.e. the divide between the two gender role expectations of the Kemalist modernization—"the housewife of the Republic" and "the (professional) woman of the Republic". As DP's political maneuver to mobilize masses

proved, the ideal of the modern middle-class family was also far from being widely permeated into peasant and rural sections of the society. Additionally, although the modernized elite of the Republic was the product of the modernism, it also became apparent that the Kemalist modernization lacked cogency in general terms.

The life history of Raḥşan Ecevit brought us from the oft-cited perfect images of the new women, parading in shorts in national holidays or dancing in decollate evening dresses in balls, to the uneasiness of the gendered experience of modernization in a middle-class family in the early years of the Republic. As emerged in her life history, modernization permeated the social life of big cities, so that the big cities, Ankara in this case became the battlefields where the manners of the past encountered the new lifestyle. In this respect, the way and degree of the modernization of the women was bound to the consent and support of the husband/father. As explained above with regards to maintaining respectability within the middle-class family, Republican fathers would support their daughters in pursuing education as long as they refrained from any premarital contact with men. Therefore, the modernization choices of a girl were based on a deal between father and daughter. In the case of Raḥşan Ecevit, although her father belonged to the bureaucratic elite of the Republic and modern manners—for example, dining around a table—had permeated the domestic organization of their family life, their level of adjustment to the cultural model of the Kemalist modernization was limited. This was because of the political preferences of her father, Namık Zeki, who was politically liberal and socially conservative. Thus, not only did the rural peasant population differ from the already-Westernized cosmopolitan classes, but also sections of the middle class of the big cities diverged in degree of hesitancy or avidity in signing onto the cultural ideal of the Kemalist modernization.

Anyway, in the framework of a patriarchal middle-class family, marriage might seem to be the ultimate way for a girl to gain a bit of autonomy. Since, in the “new family” of the Republic, a girl no longer entered through marriage into the household headed by the father of her husband, she could benefit from her newfound autonomy as the head female of a new middle-class family unit. In the case of Raḥşan Ecevit, we saw during the interview session that despite Bülent Ecevit’s emphasis on egalitarianism in the conjugal marriage, Raḥşan Ecevit was occasionally reminded of being a housewife. Therefore, Raḥşan Ecevit’s effort to strategize within her traditional housewife role in order to become a fellow to her husband had given her room for empowerment as well as autonomy within marriage. If I generalize the functioning of Kandiyoti’s *patriarchal bargain* to refer not only to classical patriarchy but also to different forms of male domination, Raḥşan Ecevit’s strategizing her role can well be

understood as bargaining with patriarchy. On the other hand, the gender identity construction of Rahşan Ecevit was well matched with her gender role construction. Acting as a fellow to her husband in political matters and assisting him during political activities gave her the opportunity for empowerment through politics.

Throughout the years, side by side with her husband, she would act sometimes as a shield or a co-president; whatever her role was, however, it disturbed either their political supporters or their opponents. By taking part actively in party politics, Rahşan Ecevit had broken the traditional formalistic attitude of the wife of a political leader; she went beyond the conventional activities of a wife of a political leader. Participating in public meetings all around the country, organizing promotional activities, working in side organizations of the party and engaging in publishing were all serious contributions to the role construction of a wife of a political leader.

Gender role performance by Rahşan Ecevit was a requirement of the transformation both in political structure and in gender regime. Policy arguments by Bülent Ecevit, first “left of center” and then “democratic left,” were an attempt to reconcile Kemalist principles with popular sentiment. At the time, the Kemalist modernization was highly contested by both leftist and Islamic ideologies. Ecevit was concerned with instating an anti-elitist, left-affiliated but still-Kemalist ideology, which would be rooted in peasants, workers, and social groups that had previously supported the Republican People’s Party.

Likewise, throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the Kemalist gender regime became highly marginalized. As part of the Kemalist modernization, the Kemalist gender regime was under attack by both Islamist women and leftist women. Islamist women’s demanding to wear headscarves formed an acute challenge to the basic credentials of the Kemalist modernization. At the same time, leftist women had started to conceptualize women’s problems in the framework of class struggle. Additionally, with the influence of the UN’s initiative for women’s rights, women in Turkey had turned their attention to discriminatory articles in existing laws, which led to efforts to restore the Kemalist women’s rights discourse with the inclusion of the “reverse discrimination” perspective. Because women’s concerns and interests were wide-ranging and complex, the uniform Kemalist gender regime was no longer appealing for women.

Rahşan Ecevit was one of the women whom the Kemalist modernization meant to create. The opportunities that the new regime created for women had given her the possibility for empowerment within the paternalism of the prevailing gender regime. Yet certain characteristics of her gender role performance, e.g., her unadorned and austere look, active

participation in politics, and refusing to move to the Prime Minister's residence made it difficult to represent her as a Kemalist role model. Despite the fact that she did not wear a headscarf and had a modern outlook, she lacked the fancy persona of the symbolic Kemalist woman who was meant to compete with the Western woman through her beauty as well as through her virtue and diligence. Instead, in the general political context of the time, her gender role performance was more appealing for the popular classes, meaning the peasants and workers. She behaved as the representative of the women of those sections of the society and organized many inventive activities with them. Though Raĥsan Ecevit would never call herself a feminist, she was always concerned with reflecting a modern image; actually, for her, modernization was identical to liberation.

The life history of Semra  zal showed us an eclectic construction of gender identity, and an eclectic performance of gender role. Despite the fact that she was born into a middle-class family in İstanbul, her assumed familial affiliations with the Palace and with the bureaucratic elite had resulted in a mythical genealogy. As we might expect on the one hand cosmopolitan modernism of the high classes of the big cities and on the other hand reformist modernism of the bureaucratic elite has produced specific experiences of modernization, hence specific expressions related to modernization. However, for Semra  zal who was born in 1934 in İstanbul, direct influence either of this does not seem probable. Instead, she must have shared both in terms of mimicking that her living in an annex of a mansion in İstanbul and socializing in Ankara during her stay in her uncle's house seem sources of such sociability. Semra  zal's epic narration of her social activities was part of her gender identity and gender role construction. Her relating that she quit her job after marriage but continued social activities as a volunteer supports such narration, highlighting her modernity. Another mechanism for her gender identity and gender role construction was self-definition or self-proclamation that enabled her to perform an eclectic gender identity without being considered completely inconsistent with respect to the prevailing gender regime.

Semra  zal identified herself as First Lady, though not she but the wife of the President of the Republic was actually the First Lady at the time. Semra  zal Performed as First Lady only during official ceremonies. Since Semra  zal's frequent public appearances—for instance, the pilgrimage or nightclub entertainments—were quite unusual, she subverted taken-for-granted features of the First Ladyship. Additionally, she continued her social work by founding the Foundation for Elevation and Representation of Turkish Women, which operated as the women's branch of the Motherland Party of  zal during the restricted political conditions of the 1980s. Although what Turgut  zal described about the

gender perspective of the party in 1983 was in fact a recitation of the Kemalist women's rights perspective, later on the rising mobilization of women in both feminist and Islamist groups would lead him to take a more defensive stance. Combined with neo-liberal, anti-feminist, and pro-family policies, the conservative *national vision* perspective permeated into the general framework of gender-related policy arguments. The *national vision* in this context referred not to nationhood or nationality, as one would have expected during the one-party regime, but to a conservative combination of ethnic and religious identities; i.e. being Turk and Muslim. In view of that, the Foundation reinvested in women's traditional roles according to neo-liberal principles and provided women with health care services and mass civil weddings. The Foundation was also so concerned with representing the modern Turkish woman that its attempts were highly formalistic or even cosmetic: showing off, for instance, that Turkish women were not veiled. Actually, at the time, due to her modern look and behavior, Semra Özal had become a secular poster girl for the Özal administration. Moreover, the Foundation's insistence on legal rights and its secular stance against headscarf accorded with the tenets of the Kemalist state feminism. However, such a similarity with Kemalist stance was limited because of the fact that, for example, the Foundation's representation of women in society as mothers in its publication *Turkish Woman* was not in the context of nationalism but of the national vision.

As mentioned above, the Özal administration took a defensive stance against the rising political mobilization of women, which points to women's demanding to have their share in the formation of the gender regime. The two main political actors of the issue at that time were feminists and Islamist women. The former group, while resting to some extent on the necessity of the amendment of the Civil Code and of codifications according to UN regulations, advocated an anti-egalitarian perspective. The most important activities of the feminists were about private matters like domestic violence, sexual harassment and virginity tests; this meant that an autonomous political voice of women was related to the personal experience of femininity. Additionally, the popular media supported the feminist movement by reporting feminist activities and campaigns. The popular media actually ended up advocating for and popularizing an egalitarian perspective. The other important group was the Islamist women, who brought modernization to the center of the debate on women. They opened up a debate on the Islamic woman's identity and attacked Kemalist modernization with the argument that through Kemalist reforms they were not granted with any rights, on the contrary, they had lost their right to cover their heads and to marry by a religious act. In view

of these two major groups, we may mention again the continuation of marginalization and loss of hegemony both for Kemalist modernization and for its gender regime.

Özalizm, denoting the new right or neo-liberal policies of the Özal administration, gave the 1980s its character in Turkey. As in the DP administration in 1950s, during the Özal administration, modernization was understood as a matter of industrialization or development. Since Özal was an engineer himself, the pragmatism of engineering contributed to an understanding of modernization as a technical matter. Additionally, decentralist policies marked the withdrawal of the state as a homogenizing entity. Not only through his administration, but also personally, Özal removed official elements from modernization and transformed it into a matter of social and cultural discovery. Together with his wife Semra Özal, he worked on a personification of modernity. The couple established multifold and eclectic connections between modern and traditional and between elitist and populist cultural elements. In this respect, Semra Özal could make herself a bourgeoisie model for middle-class women. However, since her gender role was *mondain* but not moderate, such a gender identity construction contradicted the notion of the moderate modern woman of the middle classes. As explained before, according to the notion of respectability, women were asked to be at the same time virtuous, diligent and devoted (in contrast to the excessive modernity of the women of the upper classes) and educated and publicly visible (in contrast to the traditional, yet-to-be-modern women of the lower classes). Although Semra Özal claimed to represent herself and nothing else, she was in fact successful at making herself a model of an average bourgeois woman. Her success was because of her eclectic construction of her gender identity, for which she treated history of the modernization as an antique shop. As mentioned before, modernization appears both as a potentially-liberating historical process and a way of political domination. In addition to these two sides, modernization has one other aspect, which has to do with an understanding of modernity as an ongoing invention. In the scope of this work, gathering life histories of the wives of political leaders was intended to shed light on subjective experience, i.e., the ongoing invention at the personal level of what is perceived to be modern, in the broader context of the gender regimes.

Regarding the gender regime of the 1980s, I argue that in the post-1980 period, after its marginalization in the previous decade, the Kemalist gender regime was no longer seen as potentially liberating, although it provided women with a legal framework. The same was true for the Kemalist modernization as a way of political domination; in the 1980s, it lost most of its hegemony and became just another political current. The situation would change in the 1990s and 2000s; first as a reaction to Islamic revivalism, and then in response to

international developments, Kemalism would again gain considerable political impetus. Since the Kemalist gender regime was highly marginalized, the perception of it became to some extent limited to the question of women's headscarves. Considering the present political situation at the time of writing this work, the debates around electing the new president of the Republic seem to hang on the issue of the headscarf of the wife of the present Prime Minister and potential President of the Republic, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The whole debate is based on the accuracy of the persistent claim that the Kemalist modernization broke with the traditional and religious gender order. It is also related to the fact that as a result of the marginalization of Kemalism, the Kemalist gender regime has lost much of its power to create a Kemalist woman's identity beyond the recitation of the importance of education and a modern outlook. Instead, it has become part of a second-order semiological system: a myth, as Barthes defined it. In the second-order semiological system, a sign which is created in language becomes the signifier of a signified. The Kemalist woman's identity does address the modernity of women with historical and political meaning, but when the sign which is articulated in the first-order semiological system becomes the signifier of the signified in the second-order semiological system, there occurs the myth.

I have shown that modernization in Turkey, contrary to what Lerner proposed, cannot be understood as a smooth passing of a traditional society to a modern society. Thus, the success of the Kemalist modernization may be assessed by documenting resistance to it and contestation of it. Additionally, subjective experiences of the Kemalist modernization result not in performance of uniform manners of modernity but in personal articulations of tradition and modernity. As I have also shown with respect to gender identities, women's adjustment to modernization required paternal support, adaptive strategies or a patriarchal bargain.

As manifested in the life histories of the wives of the political leaders, the stance on modernization was linked to the performance of modernization. While Mevhibe İnönü's assessment of modernization was balanced with "modesty", Berin Menderes' retreat from modernization was meant to suppress manners of a Westernized lifestyle. While Rahşan Ecevit's striving for modernization was managed through a patriarchal bargain, Semra Özal's mimicking of modernization resulted in an eclectic combination. Notwithstanding, all performed a particular gender role according to a particular political agenda aimed at modernizing society in its own way. Yet, at the same time, what they had internalized and performed were the prevailing expectations of their time regarding gender. As I have shown, they performed through the dialectical relationship between gender identity and gender role that marked their contribution to a prevailing gender regime.

It is the subjective experience of gender identities, when articulated by women in a political language, that allow for a feminist critique to blossom. Thus, for the second wave of feminism in Turkey in the 1980s to occur, what happened was an articulation of the crisis of the Kemalist gender regime by women. Finally, at present, beyond the ongoing debate over the headscarf, there seems to be little consensus in Turkey about what it means for women to be modern. The Kemalist gender regime and local ethnic, religious and cultural currents and lifestyles share influence on modern women with international political and cultural currents in the continuing politics of modernity. Proliferating academic attempts at understanding the social and cultural as well as historical heritage of modernization as a historical condition are likely to lead to discovery of more layers of meaning for women inherent in modernity. These efforts can also be expected to give continuing voice to the feminine experience of modernization.

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STATEMENTS

1. Beginning with Latife Hanım, the wife of Mustafa Kemal, the wives of political leaders have constantly been symbols for the direction and degree of modernization, as well as gender role models who contributed to the gender regime of which an inseparable part is lived through experience related to gender identity.
2. With respect to Kemalist model of nationalist modernization, modernization is to be conceptualized both as “an instrument of a political project of domination” and as “a potentially liberating historical condition”.
3. Kemalist modernizers inevitably contained the implicit attempt to limit women’s experience of modernization, with the aim of creating the ideal woman of the Republic, who was supposed to be negation of both excessive Western model and ignorant traditional model. Thus, in order to analyze modernity and modernization without reproducing neither binary oppositions as modern and tradition nor the state-centered perspectives related to gender, private and interpersonal experiences of modernization should be taken into account.
4. Kemalism attributed a modern function to family both as the place where middle class values and manners were consolidated and the center from which those values and manners were to be suffused into the whole nation that signified replacement of traditional patriarchal family model of the Empire with the middle class paternal family model of the modern nation state.
5. In one-party period, the Kemalist modernization maintained a political hegemony over the gender regime not only because of its authoritarian character, but also because of its reception by women who saw the Kemalist modernization as potentially liberating. Likewise, Mevhibe İnönü who exemplified a modern middle-class woman through a national western-character reconciled her experience of the late and insufficient modernization with the requirements of being an exemplary woman of the Republic.

6. In the multi-part period, low-profile of Berin Menderes was in accordance with the Democratic Party's stance on gender regime that the Party discarded the state feminism and prioritized those of women's domestic and maternal social roles and responsibilities that were extension of their feminine nature.
7. Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the Kemalist gender regime became highly marginalized, thus, Raĥsan Ecevit, for whom modernization meant liberation through a paternal and a patriarchal deal, had to leave elitism in Kemalist modernization and empathize with the popular classes in order to maintain her gender role/identity. Her austere and unadorned look was the expression of her wish to make herself a model of the women of the popular classes.
8. In 1980s, when Kemalist modernization was regarded as another political current, Semra Özal clung to Kemalist gender regime only either as a legal framework or a matter of a cosmetic representation. Instead, she made herself a *mondain* bourgeoisie model for middle class women that contradicted the notion of the moderate woman of the middle classes.
9. As a result of marginalization of the Kemalist gender regime throughout the historical period, it has lost much of its power to create a Kemalist women's identity beyond the recitation of the importance of education and modern outlook. What Kemalist women's identity has become today is more like imagery or as Roland Barthes defined a second order semiological system: a myth.
10. Life history approach in particular and related areas in general has come out of a need to discover the voices of those who were invisible in the history. For that reason, researching on high echelon people and groups has inevitably remained out of interest. Because of the special interest on elites of the present work, throughout my research I figured out that not only rich demographic value, but also the narrative they provide with us, makes research on high echelon people valuable for sociology and history.
11. In the years I spent in the Netherlands, Leiden was a protected pocket for me to leave the uproar behind me and to focus on my work in a friendly and academic of high quality atmosphere. I found something motivating in the air in Leiden, amongst which was the climate the most motivating to stay indoor and work.

12. After submitting my manuscript to my supervisor and before the doctoral defence ceremony, a surprise came into my world: a baby, that made me think of an old cliché: the similarity between bringing a baby and a book to life. Having experienced the both, my humble conclusion is that the cliché is right, because both demand your love, care and hope as well as long and sleepless hours of work, patience and devotion, and eventually you wish both of them to be loved and cared by others and expect them to find their own way in life.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Pınar Melis Yelsalı Parmaksız was born on 20 February 1977 in Ankara, Turkey. She graduated from Çubuk High School in 1994. She completed her undergraduate education in International Relations at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Ankara University in 1999. In the same year, she started her master education in Sociology at METU (Middle East Technical University). In 2002 she received her Master of Science degree with the thesis titled “Politics of Women’s Organizations in Turkey and Civil Society”. Between the years 2000 and 2002, she worked as a project assistant in the same department. In 2002, Yelsalı Parmaksız started her PhD in Turkish Studies in Leiden University, the Netherlands. She received a PhD grant given by the Board of Higher Education (Yüksek Öğrenim Kurumu, YÖK) in Turkey. Her PhD thesis titled “Gender and Modernization: Life Histories of the Wives of Turkish Political Leaders”. In 2007, Yelsalı Parmaksız started to work in the Department of Public Administration and Political Science at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Ankara University.