

**T.C.**  
**ISTANBUL SABAHATTIN ZAIM UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND**  
**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**BEYOND LIBERAL FEMINISM:  
THE CASE OF ISLAMIC FEMINISM IN TURKEY**

**MASTER THESIS**

**Cemile Rveyda ZMEN**

**Istanbul**  
**March-2023**

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## THESIS APPROVAL

This study has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA Degree in Political Science and International Relations

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## **DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND ORIGINALITY**

This is to certify that this MA thesis titled “**Beyond Liberal Feminism: The Case of Islamic Feminism in Turkey**” is my own work and I have acted according to scientific ethics and academic rules while producing it. I have collected and used all information and data according to scientific ethics and guidelines on thesis writing of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. I have fully referenced, in both the text and bibliography, all direct and indirect quotations and all sources I have used in this work.

**Cemile Rveyda ZMEN**

Istanbul, March 2023

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**Cemile R veyda  ZMEN**

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## ABSTRACT

### BEYOND LIBERAL FEMINISM:

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Women’s rights discourses challenge patriarchy which is considered a social system associated with governance structures and practices that maintain the dominance of men and suffer women from oppression. Patriarchial states define women’s identity and rights in a hegemonic approach reinforcing oppressive frameworks through their institutions, discourses, and norms. This paper aims at analyzing the marginalization of veiled women in Trkiye as a result of Kemalist modernization and its putative emancipatory project against Islamic tradition. It studies Islamic feminism as a social and intellectual trend that poses against veiled women’s subordination. This paper identifies the *hijb* (Islamic headscarf) ban in the February 28 process as an intrusion by the intervention in women’s basic rights and bodily practices. The paper also evaluates the notion of ‘multiple modernities’ as a conceptual framework for understanding contemporary veiled women’s public articulations as an alternative to *laicit* (official secularism) and traditionalist accounts of womanhood in Trkiye. In addition to the secondary analysis of the existing literature, the research is anchored in a set of qualitative methods. Through the carrying out and analysis of a semi-structured interview with Ayla Kerimođlu who is the founding president of HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation, a conservative women-led civil society organization, I aim to contribute to the existing literature on Muslim feminists’ positions in Trkiye.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Islamic Feminism, Multiple Modernities, Paternalism, Civil Society Organizations

## ÖZET

### LİBERAL FEMİNİZMİN ÖTESİNDE: TÜRKİYE’DE İSLAMİ FEMİNİZM ÖRNEĞİ

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Kadın hakları söylemi, erkeklerin egemenliğini ve kadınların baskısını sürdüren yönetim yapıları ve uygulamaları ile ilişkili bir sosyal sistem olarak kabul edilen ataerkilliğe meydan okur. Ataerkil devletler, kurumları, söylemleri ve kuralları aracılığıyla kadın kimliğini ve haklarını hegemonik bir yaklaşımla tanımlar. Bu çalışma, Türkiye’deki başörtülü kadınların laiklik, modernleşme ve İslamcı gelenekçilik tarafından ötekileştirilmesini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu makale, 28 Şubat sürecindeki başörtüsü yasağını, kadınların temel haklarına ve bedensel bütünlüğüne bir müdahale olarak tanımlamaktadır. İslami feminizm ve ‘çoklu modernite’ teorileri modern başörtülü kadınların kamusal eklemlenmelerini anlamak için laikliğe ve İslamcı gelenekçiliğe alternatif bir çerçeve olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Araştırma, dindar bir kadın derneği olan HAZAR Eğitim, Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği’nin Kurucu Başkanı Ayla Kerimoğlu ile yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme gerçekleştirerek Müslüman feministlerin konumlarına ilişkin mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Feminizm, İslami Feminizm, Çoklu Moderniteler, Paternalizm, Sivil Toplum Kuruluşu

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AK-DER:</b>	Women’s Rights Organisation against Discrimination
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CEDAW:</b>	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CFM:</b>	Child and Forced Marriages
<b>EU:</b>	European Union
<b>FGM:</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>FP:</b>	Felicity Party
<b>JDP:</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>KADEM:</b>	Association for Woman and Democracy
<b>KASAD-D:</b>	Women Health Workers Association for Solidarity
<b>LGBTI+:</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons
<b>MENA:</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>RPP:</b>	Republican People’s Party
<b>TİKA:</b>	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>WP:</b>	Welfare Party

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The philosophical and theoretical debates derived from the concurrency of religion - specifically Islam- and democracy, Türkiye secured a prominent position as a beacon of democracy within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Bernard Lewis concedes that Türkiye is the ‘only Muslim Democracy’ due to ‘its contact with the West to make a deliberate choice for westernization against Islam through encouraging democratic institutions, the rise of civil society and economy growth’.<sup>1</sup> In the process of modernization, the ‘ideal Turkish women’ were deeply constructed by normative *laïcité* (official secularism) ethos of new Turkish Republic. In that regard, women had been ‘emancipated but unliberated’<sup>2</sup> by courtesy of the benevolent state through discourse, actions, and politics. This project will develop a comprehensive and alternative understanding of the Kemalist modernist narrative vis-à-vis the rights and identity of women, specifically veiled women in Türkiye, to challenge both state feminism and traditional patriarchy.

Türkiye is a crucial example of secular democracy and a Muslim population in indicating that the process of modernization and secularization is not a smooth process. By blending Islamic traditions with Western codes of modernity, ‘Muslim democracy’ project under the government Justice and Development Party (JDP), remains a ‘semi-democracy’.<sup>3</sup> Critics warn of its potential to fail in internalization of democracy into the societal level, and retaining ‘patronage relations’ and ‘dominant party’ politics<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lewis, “Why Turkey Is the only Muslim Democracy”, *Middle East Quarterly*, (March 1994): 41-49.

<sup>2</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Emancipated but unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish case”, *Feminist Studies*, V. 13 (2), (1987): 317–338.

<sup>3</sup> Murat Somer, “Moderation of Religious and Secular Politics: A Country’s ‘Centre’ and Democratization”, *Democratization*, V. 21 (2), (2014): 244-267.

<sup>4</sup> Meltem Müftüler-Baç, et al., “Turkey’s Unconsolidated Democracy: The Nexus between Democratisation and Majoritarianism in Turkey”, *Global Türkiye in Europe III:*

dated from Kemalist state structure. The democratic steps taken by the JDP in the 2000s, such as outlawing the death penalty and resolving headscarf ban, impede through anti-pluralist policies and discourses specifically about the media, minority rights, and gender issues. In that regard, this thesis analyzes the theoretical and multifaceted relationship between modernity, gender and religion, specifically in terms of veiled women who ‘bargain with patriarchy’<sup>5</sup> in Türkiye. In the mainstream political literature, the 1980 Turkish coup d’état is considered a turning point in terms of the Turkish feminist movement.<sup>6</sup> The thesis does attach three important periods to understand the agenda of women’s identity and rights: (i) the establishment of Turkish Republic through the construction of ‘privately Muslim’ and ‘publicly modern’<sup>7</sup>, (ii) the *hijāb* ban in 1980 Turkish coup d’état, (iii) the paternalistic and authoritarian gender aspects of JDP. By and large, the specific Turkish case is thought to offer a blueprint in terms of the gender issues of how the modernization process failed to inclusively institutionalize women’s rights, regardless of the structure or political stance of the government. While approaching Türkiye’s case historically from the early modern period of the country to the present day, a more nuanced treatment of this subject can be obtained.

It should be noted that in examining modernization theory, this thesis does not discuss whether or not Islam is inherently compatible with democracy but seeks to study veiled women’s experiences in terms of state feminism and traditional patriarchy.

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*Democracy, Trade, and the Kurdish Question in Turkey-EU Relations*, V. 19 (1), (2015): 4.

<sup>5</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Bargaining with Patriarchy”, *Gender and Society*, V. 2 (3), (1988): 274–90.

<sup>6</sup> See more: Yeşim Arat, “Democracy and Women in Turkey: In Defense of Liberalism”, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, V. 6 (3), (Fall 1999): 370–387.

<sup>7</sup> Fulden İbrahimhakkıoğlu, “Beyond the Modern/Religious Dichotomy: The Veil and Feminist Solidarity in Contemporary Turkey”, *Philosophical Topics*, V. 41 (2), (2013): 141-156.

Admittedly, veiled women try to escape the ‘universalist’ conceptions of gender along with the mainstream feminist agenda, Western modernity, and Islamic tradition paradigm. By displaying the negative correlation between secular/religious dichotomy and women’s empowerment, I seek to go beyond the mainstream feminist ideology and extend women’s rights theory as a multi-modernity and alternative model of feminist claims. Overall, Islamic feminism, I argue, is a much more nuanced ideology specifically in the Turkish case, as an alternative way of self-identification on behalf of veiled women. Türkiye’s experience with the *hijāb* demonstrates a discourse that heralds alternative and/or ‘multiple modernity’ identified by Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt. By using Eisenstadt’s theoretical angle, this project investigates why veiled women reject endorsing themselves to the Western codes of modernity as well as to the conservative aspect of Islamism.

Largely, even if the veiled women in Türkiye, who are concerned with women’s rights and gender issues, abstain to identify their position as ‘feminist’ and/or ‘Islamist feminist’, I aim to shed light on the varied definition of women’s rights and identity. Only in the case of constructing a theoretical outline to reconcile modernity, religion and gender, the double marginalized position of Turkish veiled women can properly be demonstrated. In the blurry lines of monolithic codes of women’s rights and identities, the ‘cross-fertilization’<sup>8</sup> of mainstream feminist ideology and Islamic feminism occurred as a new possibility vis-à-vis ‘the instrumentalization of women’s figure for the advancement of secular and Islamist politics’.<sup>9</sup> In this thesis, HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation is used as an exemplary women association to find a practical sphere within the borders of Islam and feminism to overstride on the long way for gender equality in Türkiye.

Above all, the thesis aims to conceptualize the arising questions derived from the liberal dilemma about the relationship between gender, modernity, and tradition: (i) How can the *laïcistes* imposition of the ban on *hijāb* be evaluated in the light of

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<sup>8</sup> Yeşim Arat, *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>9</sup> İbrahimhakkıoğlu, *Beyond the Modern/Religious Dichotomy: The Veil and Feminist Solidarity in Contemporary Turkey*, 143.

multiculturalist feminist critiques; and the traditionalist opposition to the Istanbul Convention be assessed considering Islamic feminist critiques? (ii) How can the notion of ‘multiple modernities’ be used as a conceptual framework in understanding contemporary veiled women’s public articulations as an alternative to *laïcistes* and traditionalist accounts of womanhood in Türkiye? (iii) How can the veiled women’s critique of hegemonic claims of *laïcistes* and traditionalist accounts of women’s public roles be understood through the case studies of HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation? Accordingly, the project designates to contribute a more nuanced terminology through the theoretical roadmap of Turkish gender history and normative inquiry in terms of veiled women.

### **1.1.Rethinking Modernity and Gender in Türkiye: Understanding The Case of HAZAR**

To construct a comprehensive framework for the reconceptualization of modernity and gender in Türkiye, firstly, the history of the Turkish Republic needs to be reexamined in the light of nexus of paternalism, *laïcité*, and Islamic tradition. Regardless of the political claims of the newly formed Turkish Republic, the progress of women’s rights has failed to accomplish, ‘based on equal respect and concern rather than uniformity and sameness’.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, I outline the paradox of patriarchal and paternalist actions, policies and discourses from the period of Turkish nation-building process to the socially conservative JDP government. By specifically examining the situation of veiled women in Türkiye, I explore the delineation of the veil and women’s bodies as sites of ideological control and competition.

In the Muslim context of nation-building, Nilüfer Göle acknowledges women function as a ‘pivotal sign/site in the making and representation of the public sphere’.<sup>11</sup> Public presence dominated by modernists and traditionalists resulted in the double burden of veiled women in Türkiye. In that regard, as a visible manifestation of their beliefs and

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<sup>10</sup> Janice Richardson, et al., “Personal Freedom through Human Rights Law? Autonomy, Identity and Integrity under the European Convention on Human Rights”, *Human Rights Law Review*, V. 10 (2), (June 2010): 391–394.

<sup>11</sup> Nilüfer Göle, “Islam in public: New visibilities and new imaginaries”, *Public Culture*, V. 14 (1), (2002): 185.

identities, the veil is ‘a source of empowerment and symbolic disruption of epistemic violence of western modernity’ rather than being a ‘passive and silent figure’.<sup>12</sup> Veiled women in Türkiye live in the middle ground between modernity and tradition to create a third way for self-identification in public life by rebelling against *laïcité* and traditional patriarchy to ‘abandon customarily defined roles and spaces’.<sup>13</sup> This thesis draws on the literature based on ‘multiple modernities’ to probe the position of veiled women who reconcile Islam and modernity, as an example of ‘modern privacy’<sup>14</sup>, rather than making concessions to their identity. The engagement of veiled women in Türkiye to alternative and/or multiple modernity paradigm, indicates how they stand firm in the reconciliation of religion and modernity. Further, I distinguish and critically evaluate monolithic modernity and universalist feminism to comprehend women’s emancipation as irreciprocal. By referring to the claims of multicultural feminism and Islamist feminism, the thesis aims to take into consideration the oversimplifying women’s interests uppropping by mainstream liberal ideology and hegemonic modernity.

Whilst civil society mostly is illustrated as a product of Enlightenment, modernity and individualist ethos, Craig Calhoun identifies it as a civil sphere/citizens organizations without the intervention of the state.<sup>15</sup> In addition, civil societies institutionally influence the decision-making process through social solidarity based on a sense of belonging.<sup>16</sup> In that regard, the structure of healthy civil society is a core value for Western democracy. Besides, the interference of formal political institutions, civil society had been considered as ‘the potential realm for the socio-political

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<sup>12</sup> Sahar Ghumkhor, “The Veil And Modernity”, *Interventions*, V. 14 (4), (2012): 493-514.

<sup>13</sup> Nilüfer Göle, “Snapshots of Islamic modernities”, *Daedalus*, V. 129 (1), (2000): 102.

<sup>14</sup> Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Craig Calhoun, “Nationalism And Civil Society: Democracy, Diversity .And Self-Determination”, *International Sociology*, V. 8 (4), (1993): 387–411.

<sup>16</sup> Masoud Kamali, “Civil Society and Islam: A Sociological Perspective”, *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie / Europäisches Archiv Für Soziologie*, V. 42 (3), (2001): 457–82.

empowerment of ordinary citizens'<sup>17</sup> and 'activity of self-organization for particular purposes of enhancing intrinsic social values'.<sup>18</sup> Through its role to contribute to women's activism, mutual and voluntary cooperation, women civil society organizations (CSOs) had become a 'plural public sphere'<sup>19</sup> and a site for 'bargaining with governmental authorities'<sup>20</sup> in the process of Türkiye's accession to the European Union. Accordingly, the thesis indicates a civil society organization, HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation, as the study case to demonstrate dynamic, complex and diverse codes of women's identification vis-à-vis Western modernity and Islamic traditions.

There exists a large literature on religion, modernity, and gender in general and in the Muslim world in specific. I consider *laïciste* and traditionalist patriarchal codes as other side of the same mirror, since both are underpinned by the same basic logic in terms of position to *hijāb* as a tool for political empowerment in Türkiye. My contribution to this disputatious context is to offer a practical theory to accommodate the diverse identification of non-Western women type -specifically veiled women- and to respond to their demand for the right to be different.

## **1.2. Approaches: A Critical Inquiry**

The research is anchored in a set of qualitative methods and a secondary analysis of the existing literature. This paper analyses primary sources, such as a semi-structured interview with HAZAR's founding president Ayla Kerimoğlu and reports of HAZAR, alongside scholarly literature. I have used the existing scholarly literature on

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<sup>17</sup> Mikiko Eto, "Reframing Civil Society from Gender Perspectives: A Model of a Multi-layered Seamless World", *Journal of Civil Society*, V. 8 (2), (2012): 101-121.

<sup>18</sup> Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 160.

<sup>19</sup> Ömer Çaha, *Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women's Movements in a Muslim Society* (Routledge, 2013)

<sup>20</sup> Simten Coşar & Funda Gençoğlu Onbaşı, "Women's Movement in Turkey at a Crossroads: From Women's Rights Advocacy to Feminism", *South European Society and Politics*, V.13 (3), (2008): 325-344.

postmodernism, multicultural feminism and Islamic feminism. At times, the primary data supplements source material contradicts the existing literature. Accordingly, this paper's examination of how Islamist women reflect their own 'alternative/multiple modernities' to reconcile religion and modernity, fills a lacuna in primary research-based academic analysis of Islamic feminism in Türkiye, through theoretical approach and case study. It also contributes to the existing literature on gender, Islam, and modernity by providing a comprehensive framework for women-led Islamic civil society organizations that enrich veiled women's solidarity, consciousness and autonomy.

For employing conceptual analysis, the thesis does pursue a rationalist inquiry and curiosity to explain the veiled women's position in Türkiye. I conducted qualitative research by means of a semi-structured interview with HAZAR's founding president, Ayla Kerimoğlu as well as a literature review to support this research methodology for thoughtful synthesis and analysis. Theoretical debates in literature over modernity and gender, fail to address the Turkish veiled women paradigm. Therefore, multicultural and Islamic feminism are analysed in the second chapter of the thesis to create a new framework to highlight women's rights vis-à-vis mainstream feminist ideology.

By referring to the key arguments of the prominent scholars in the literature, I have tracked the critiques of multiculturalist and multicultural feminist theories vis-à-vis the norms produced by liberalism. The scholars mostly scrutinize controversial issues such as (i) multicultural accommodation versus women's rights in terms of cultural relativists/ human rights universalists (ii) the forbidding visibility of *hijāb* specifically in 'modern' Europe (iii) the state intervention for cultural adjustment. I examined the relatable scholars with multicultural and gender contexts such as Will Kymlicka, Susan Moller Okin, Monica Mookherjee, Ranjoo Seodu Herr, and Kimberlé Crenshaw. The working definition of multiculturalism and its compatibility with women's rights employed in this thesis is one that has its origin in the political theory of Susan Moller Okin. In the highly multicultural world that we live in, scholars like Okin posits multiculturalism and feminism as contradictory by taking sides in favor of women's right instead of group rights. By specifically exemplifying the Muslim veiled girls in a French school and *l'affaire du foulard* (the affair of the headscarves) in France, she does support that minority cultures are structures that contain significant differences in power and interests between men and women. Okin was mostly criticized because

of her ‘ideal female identity’ position stemming from the liberal ideals of feminism to result in disregarding the efforts of vulnerable subgroups.

Multiculturalist école, on the other hand, confronts the *laïcité* on the notion of national identity and offers to endorse to more inclusionary ideology in favor of cultural diversity rather than a homogenous structure. To recognize religion as a part of the culture, religious minorities such as veiled women in Europe struggle with the ‘political hysteria’<sup>21</sup> of the ‘Islamization’ of Europe and the anti-Muslim sentiment rise. Even though there is a lack of comprehensive description that undermines the process for group and minority rights, multiculturalism offers a more inclusive and pluralistic democratic political structure that liberalism fails to provide. Multiculturalist intellectuals, such as Will Kymlicka, Monica Mookherjee, Ranjoo Seodu Herr, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, engage in revising the exclusive structure of democracy and nationalist code of modernity to promote equality and social solidarity through networking within diverse communities.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, this dissertation has explored the theoretical and in-depth study of multiculturalist thoughts on religious freedom and toleration which offers very insightful theoretical angle for the pluralist framework of this thesis. In addition, this thesis attempts to fill the gap in literature regarding the theory of ‘intersectionality’ of Kimberlé Crenshaw to address the double-marginalization of Turkish veiled women. Comprehensive analyses of multicultural feminist literature highlight that feminism and culture intersect to pursue redefinition of equality vis-à-vis the norms produced by the mainstream liberal framework.

Islamic feminism, on the other hand, does pursue religion as a key parameter for ensuring women’s rights to criticize both liberal feminism and traditional patriarchy. Besides enjoining the critique of multicultural feminists towards the essentialist conjecture of mainstream feminist ideology, Islamic feminist literature mostly criticizes patriarchal practices in Muslim societies and the men’s supremacy over women developed by the *fuqahā* (Islamic jurist). Based on their understanding of causes and solutions offered to traditional and liberal patriarchy, theoretical debates

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<sup>21</sup> Emmanuel Terray, “Headscarf Hysteria”, *New Left Review*, V. 26 (March–April, 2004): 120.

<sup>22</sup> Ranjoo Seodu Herr, “Politics of Difference and Nationalism: On Iris Young’s Global Vision”, *Hypatia*, V. 23 (3), (2008): 53.

among Islamic feminists are more visible in three issues: (i) adopting gender-egalitarian hermeneutic versus gender-equality, (ii) identifying their position as ‘Islamic feminist’/ ‘believing women’<sup>23</sup>/ just ‘Muslim’ women, (iii) reinterpreting Islamic resources, specifically traditional *tafsīr* (‘explanation’ of the Qur’ān). I review pioneering works by theorists such as Amina Wadud, Asma Afsaruddin, Zainab Alwani, Margot Badran, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Asma Barlas, and Nawwal al-Saadawi. Even though the term ‘Islamic feminism’ is highly contentious in Türkiye, I include the standpoints of Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal, Şule Yüksel Şenler, Cihan Aktaş, Nazife Şişman, Yıldız Ramazanoğlu by reframing the literature available on Islam and women’s rights in Türkiye.

Accordingly, Islamic women in Türkiye who are sensitive to gender agenda, are mostly reluctant to consider themselves as ‘Islamic feminist’ and produce alternative interpretive model of the Qur’ān. The scholars in Türkiye focus on the promotion and protection of women’s rights in the juridical, legal and social spheres to referring Islamic veil and the freedom of religion. Whilst the veil considered as ‘breakdown of integration’<sup>24</sup> for Western civilization and republican doctrines of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, Islamic feminist scholars put the *hijāb* as a ‘way of being’. By integrating all the literature reviews, the thesis will address the way of life of veiled women in Türkiye and demonstrate how the new generation of pious women, set an example of multiple modernities, who reconcile their faith with the exegesis of modern life.

### **1.3. Objective and Organization of The Dissertation**

This project is divided into five chapters. Formulating and illustrating an outline of the thesis, the first chapter aims to indicate the general narrative of the project. The second part of the thesis offers a brief framework of Turkish history in the context of women’s rights. The thesis intends to contribute to the literature on the state’s role in determining women’s rights and identity, including ‘state feminism’ that emerged in the first years of the Republic to JDP’s gender policies associated with ‘*yerli ve milli*’ (homegrown

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<sup>23</sup> Asma Barlas, “*Believing women*” in *Islam: unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur’ān* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002)

<sup>24</sup> Terray, *Headscarf Hysteria*, 120.

and national) values. To highlight women's challenge in Türkiye, historical reading of Türkiye in the second chapter offers to reframe the patriarchal and paternalist policies and discourses based upon *laïcité* and traditionalist accounts of womanhood in Türkiye. The existing secondary literature has been enunciated in the third chapter through two main methodological fields, multicultural and Islamic feminism, and their opponent theories against liberal feminism. According to liberal feminist literature<sup>25</sup>, *hijāb* is a controversial subject at times incompatible with women's rights, Western civilization and republican doctrines of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. As a counternarrative, the thesis utilizes following proposition of multicultural feminism: its defensive, pluralistic and inclusive claims for group rights and offering intersectionality theory as a middle ground for disadvantaged groups. Additionally, in the third chapter, the thesis scrutinizes veiled women's multifaceted identities and rights to challenge and reject Western-style forms of modernity and Islamic traditions based on the grounds of Islamic feminism.

The fourth chapter has affirmed the historical and theoretical background of modernity, postmodernism and their conceptual connection to gender. To do this, the research identifies the exclusive and problematic foundation of Western codes of modernity towards Islamist women and offers a pluralistic and practical solution through alternative type of modernity paradigm: multiple modernity theory. In chapter five, through a theoretical outline that I follow in the fourth chapter, I have addressed the gap in the literature on the self-identification of veiled women in Türkiye who had been challenged both by traditionalists and modernists. I find what remains missing in the literature, is the studies on women-led civil society organizations, specifically religious and/or Islamic organizations, such as HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation. To gain a better grasp over the reconciliation of religion and modernity through veiled women, it is important to evaluate the case of Türkiye and HAZAR Foundation as a precedent for the new edge of a feminist movement.

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<sup>25</sup> Élisabeth Badinter, *Fausse Route*, (Paris: Odile Jacop, 2003).

## CHAPTER II

### THE STRUGGLES OF VEILED WOMEN IN PURSUIT OF SELF-IDENTITY IN MODERN TÜRKİYE

#### 2.1. Historical Background

Türkiye is an unprecedented case among Middle Eastern Muslim societies by including state-formation and nation-building processes through the secular establishment and experience of modernization - which are the cornerstones of the Turkish Republic founded in 1923. Turkish women who belong to different ideological, ethnic, and religious groups had struggled throughout modern Turkish history owing to the patriarchal and paternalistic state structure and norms/actions. Even though the thesis focuses on the post-1980 period, there is a need to underline the first years of the Republic to indicate the state's role in determining women's rights and their identity-based on 'state feminism'. Although the general opinion is that the class consciousness<sup>26</sup> of women started after the Republican period, it is seen that this movement occurred in the second half of the nineteenth-century reform during the Ottoman Empire. Women's public presence was not permissible in the political sphere because of the lack of women's representation, publications and poems of that time reflected an emerging class consciousness.<sup>27</sup> The main demands of the women's rights movement in the Ottoman Empire were limited and related to political rights, the right to education, and the abolition of restrictions on the dress code.

Alongside establishing the Turkish Republic in 1923, the main concerns of political elites, including the military and the bureaucratic ones, were the building of national

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<sup>26</sup> It is a term used by Karl Marx to define awareness and active pursuit of the working class/proletariat for their class interest. Even though this term is related to the communist political theory, women are also defined as homemakers, and men are considered as breadwinners or the center of the family. These patriarchal norms create the division of two classes: women and men.

<sup>27</sup> See for more examples: The poems and works of Mihri Sultan, Makbule Leman, and Nigar Bint-i Osman known as Nigar. While Mihri Sultan is the first woman poet to have published a divan, Makbule Leman is the first woman poet whose poems were published in the press.

identity, political structure, and modernization process.<sup>28</sup> Turkish women were also considered one of the chief groups for modernization similar to the soldiers, the bureaucrats, and the intellectuals.<sup>29</sup>

In the process of modernization and secularization of the Turkish nation, women's rights were promoted through the Turkish Civil Codes of 1926. Even though it included the abrogation of polygamy, equal treatment for rights to divorce, and education, the patriarchal structure of the society persists as the women is obligated to seek the permission of their husbands to work.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Turkish women sought their political rights despite critical obstacles laid by the government's preclusion of the first women political party which was named Women's People Party (*Kadınlar Halk Fırkası*, KHF). Nezihe Muhiddin, who intended to establish KHF, encountered the eight-month late response of the Istanbul Governor's Office to the request for the establishment of the women's political party.<sup>31</sup> Eventually, the constitution of the women's party was not approved due to 'some considerations'. Therefore, it was shaped by the name, Women's Union rather than *Fırka* (or simply Party), while the position of the union also shifted from diplomacy to the statement of, 'the union does not correlate with political aims'.<sup>32</sup> It is paradoxical that even in the republican political system based on so-called sacred principles of freedom and modernity, women are not fully allowed to engage in politics reflecting on their own agencies.

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<sup>28</sup> Ömer Çaha, *Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women's Movements in a Muslim Society* (Routledge, 2013)

<sup>29</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi 1800-2012*, (Timaş Yayınları, 2012), 51.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>31</sup> Yaprak Zihnioglu, *Kadınsız İnkılap - Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (Metis Yayınları, 2003), 119-120.

<sup>32</sup> Yunus Demir and Rahime Fulya Yüksel, "Kemalist İdeolojide Kadın İmgesi: Kadınlara Seçme Ve Seçilme Hakkının Verilmesi Bir Lütuf Mu Yoksa Kazanılmış Bir Hak Mı?", *The Journal of International Lingual, Social and Educational Sciences*, (2017): 237.

According to Arat, ‘empowering women was a vehicle to build the secular polity, although it was neither democratic nor liberal’.<sup>33</sup> Associating the period from the foundation of the Turkish Republic to the end of the one-party government of the Republican People’s Party (RPP) in the 1950s with ‘state-feminism’, women’s identity transformed to secular, active, resolute, and dominant woman in the public sphere of newly established Republic.<sup>34</sup> The term ‘state feminism’ refers to the Republican state determining the characteristics of ideal ‘citizen’ women in a modern, Western manner but also transforming the uncomplaining and dutiful members at home based on distantness to Islam-tainted Ottoman heritage.<sup>35</sup> By the travels of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk around the country to introduce ‘civilized dress’, ‘dress became a cornerstone for Türkiye’s modernity transformation’.<sup>36</sup> Atatürk instructed the ladies to reveal their faces and eyes as he walked through the villages and cities, saying, ‘Our women have minds too... Let them gaze into the world with their eyes and reveal their faces to it.’<sup>37</sup> To empower women’s rights through state feminism, the primary concern was women’s public emancipation.<sup>38</sup> Even though women won the right to vote and were elected in the 1930 local elections, four years later in the general elections, a low female representation rate in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) was noticed:

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<sup>33</sup> Yeşim Arat, “Women’s Movement of the 1980s in Turkey: Radical Outcome of Liberal Kemalism?”: *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity, and Power*, ed. Fatma Müge Göçek and Shiva Balaghi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 100–12.

<sup>34</sup> Kandiyoti, *Bargaining with patriarchy*, 113-114.

<sup>35</sup> Jenny B. White, “State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman”, *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 3 (2003): 145-148.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (New York: Overlook Press, 2000), 434.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

*Through voting rights for women based on ‘state-supported feminism’, Türkiye could set herself apart as a democratic nation during a time that triggered fascism and militarism in countries such as Germany and Italy. Therefore, the granting of this right had a symbolic meaning and was part of a democratic image, which was meant to differentiate the Turkish system from other systems at the time. The right to vote however did not lead to the further politicization of women.*<sup>39</sup>

## **2.2. The Period of Stagnation In Turkish Feminism**

Modernization and secularization processes in Türkiye manifested themselves until the 1950s with the end of the one-party ruling of the RPP. Şirin Tekeli supported that the women’s movement was restrained between 1935 and 1975 because the women’s movement was ideologically impeded by Kemalism and leftist philosophy<sup>40</sup>:

*Women are encouraged to work in charitable organizations in that period. The state’s rhetoric of ‘Turkish women has outstripped Western women thanks to Atatürk’ eventually turns women into a silent majority. An elite minority of women, who can benefit from career opportunities, constitute the ‘display window’ of modern and secular Türkiye. However, large masses of women, who do not have the privilege to carve out a career, work as unpaid family workers in the agricultural sector as a result of insuperable patriarchal traditions. Therefore, they are deprived of their rights to property, education, income, and social security.*<sup>41</sup>

Throughout the 1970s, as the feminist liberation movement was fueled globally, feminist consciousness also rose among different groups in response to the Western-

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<sup>39</sup> Zuhale Yeşilyurt Gündüz, “The Women’s Movement in Turkey: From Tanzimat towards European Union Membership”, *PERCEPTIONS: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 9, (2004): 116.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>41</sup> Şirin Tekeli, “10 Maddede Türkiye’de Kadın Hareketi”, <https://m.bianet.org/biamag/kadin/187536-10-maddede-turkiye-de-kadin-hareketi> [22.01.2022]

oriented and ethnocentric attitude of feminism in Türkiye. In the 1990s, the new understanding of feminism influenced by multiculturalism and postcolonialism criticized Western-oriented liberal feminism that had been consisted in the 1970s. It also focused on the individual preferences of women, their identity, and differences based on class, ethnic and religious characteristics. In that regard, the women's movement declared the claim of 'the personal is political' to criticize the dichotomous distinctions between the public and private, the personal and the political. Even though the interrelationship between identity and politics had been discussed in the 1960s by liberal feminists, the new women's movement, also known as the second wave of the feminist movement, developed in Türkiye in the early 1980s, ten years later than in Western nations. In this process, Kemalist feminism and newly emerging Islamic feminism were influenced as well as conflicting with each other due to the acquaintance of 'Kemalist feminists believed that Islamist women are misguided and needed help'.<sup>42</sup> Veiled women substantially oppose feminism for the conjuncture of 'state feminism', which is associated with the top-down and authoritarian secularization and modernization processes.<sup>43</sup> The feminist discourse and its development after the 1970s will be discussed in the later chapter of the thesis.

### **2.3. The Postmodern Coup: Seeking Justice for the Veiled Women**

Even after decades of modernization process, the fact that political parties were closed or blocked in the history of Türkiye has not changed. In the 1995 elections, the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi, WP*) which was founded in 1983 as an Islamist Party became one of the coalition parties in government. However, the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*) considered Welfare Party as a fundamentalist Islamist party and a threat to secular Türkiye and dissolved the government through February 28th laws in 1997.<sup>44</sup> The upcoming process brought the closure of the WP and the banning of Islamist politicians from politics, including Necmettin Erbakan. It should be

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<sup>42</sup> Arat, Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy, 28.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>44</sup> MGK (Republic of Türkiye Secretariat-General of The National Security Council) decisions were accepted in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on March 14, 1997.

remembered that this attitude can be associated with the closure of Welfare Party's two former parties: National Order Party (*Millî Nizam Partisi*) and National Salvation Party (*Millî Selâmet Partisi*). Although the deputies who were excluded from politics rejoined to the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*) in 1997 and Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi or the FP*) in 2001, the paternalist attitude of the military and their disregard for the principle of freedom that formed the basis of the republic continued through declaring themselves the protectors of the republic. One of the steps taken by the soldiers within the scope of 'fight against reactionary activities'<sup>45</sup> was that women wearing headscarves are not allowed to university campuses during the headscarf ban, public employees were barred from their profession, and women who protested were detained. It can be summarized that psychological violence of the postmodern coup on February 28, 1997, was carried out through women. In addition, the headscarf ban became effective with '*ikna odaları*' (persuasion rooms) as a tool of attrition and exclusion against headscarved women to remove their headscarves.

After the 1980 coup d'état, Türkiye politically engaged in a new sphere for 'shifting of power from the Kemalist elite to an elected one, removing bureaucratic elitist characteristics.'<sup>46</sup> In this process, there was an optimism regarding liberalism throughout the country, as in the first years of the establishment of the Justice and Development Party - the thesis will talk about later. Besides, in Türkiye, the rise of political Islam in 1980s emerged as Islamic capital and the bourgeoisie<sup>47</sup>; a new

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<sup>45</sup> Muhammed Yamaç, "Türkiye'de Cumhuriyet Döneminde Darbeler ve Din [The Coups and Religion in the Republican Period in Turkey]", *Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi - Journal of the Faculty of Theology*, V. 7 (1), (Haziran/June 2020): 504.

<sup>46</sup> Feride Acar, et. al, "Understanding Gender Equality Demands in Turkey: Foundations and Boundaries of Women's Movements": *Gender and Society, The Impact of Neoliberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession*, (I.B. Tauris, 2012): 31-102, 36.

<sup>47</sup> Deniz Durmuş, "Middle Eastern Feminisms: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Turkish and the Iranian Experience", *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, V. 10 (3), (2018): 221-237.

Islamic capital and bourgeoisie that started ‘appropriating urban space in tune with an Islamic lifestyle’.<sup>48</sup>

After 1980s, the political agenda set by women and Islamist women who belong to the middle class and were well-educated women:

*The new secular Republic provided access to education for these women, and many secular feminists used this fact against Islamist women. They argued that Islamist women gained the right to education and access to public life thanks to the nation-state and its founders, mainly to Atatürk, and hence, these women should obey the laws of the state and remove their veils if they ever wanted to be a part of this new state. This argument is highly problematic, mainly because it assumes that Turkish women owe their freedom to the founding fathers and that if there is a price for this freedom to be paid, they should do so.*<sup>49</sup>

When on one hand Turgut Özal<sup>50</sup> win the election after the military rule in 1983, on the other hand the economy and policy of Türkiye coincided with an open market economy based on abandoning state policy of regulating market system.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the stratum of small companies of religious persons in Anatolia shifted from ‘lower class’ to ‘middle class’ owing to foreign export of their goods.<sup>52</sup> During that time,

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> In the 1980s, the ideal womanhood concept based on the characteristics of ‘renunciation and self-sacrifice’ was constructed through the discourses in the 45th and 46th Government’s Programme led by Turgut Özal’s Motherland Party (ANAP). On the other hand, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was signed in 1985. In addition, Law 2827 of the 1983 Population Planning Law adopted referred to “individuals’ being able to have as many children as they want and whenever they want.”

<sup>51</sup> Kamil Yılmaz, “The Emergence and Rise of Conservative Elite in Turkey”, *Insight Turkey*, V. 11 (2), (2009): 120.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 121.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan shined within the political sphere in 1983 with the Welfare Party and supported compatibility between liberalism and Islam from the very beginning.

While Virtue Party secured 11 seats in the Parliament in 1999, Merve Kavakçı who was a veiled Istanbul deputy confronted a historical reaction by taking the oath wearing a headscarf. Then Prime Minister and Democratic Left Party (DSP)<sup>53</sup> Chairman Bülent Ecevit stated, ‘Here [the Parliament] is not a place to challenge the state. Please bring this lady into line’, and the then deputies in the General Assembly including female deputies yelled ‘Out, Out!’ to Kavakçı. Kavakçı was expelled from Parliament and her citizenship revoked. This is one of the historic paternalistic and marginalizing attitudes in the Assembly, which is considered one of the highest positions in the republican regime based on the protection of liberty and human rights.<sup>54</sup> According to Göle, Kavakçı is considered as one of the examples of the non-Western context of modernity in the public sphere as having a ‘deficiency of modernity’ for circulation of a universal code of modernity.<sup>55</sup> In the view of the secularist and paternalist state, an ideal woman had to dress and live a certain way, otherwise, she would not qualify to be modern, independent, and substantive to represent Turkish women. Eventually, the paternalistic attitude of the state intends to rescue/liberate restrained veiled women - from the lifestyle chosen for veiled women. Women have always been a topic of political

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<sup>53</sup> Democratic Left Party (DSP) was a social-democrat party founded in 1985 by Bülent Ecevit and Raĥan Ecevit. There was no significant accelerated progress in the advancement of gender equality during the five governments by DSP. The 57th Government of Turkey had formed by the coalition of the Democratic Left Party, Nationalist Movement Party, and Motherland Party (DSP-MHP-ANAP) in May 1999. The 57th Administration withdrew Articles 15 and 16 from the reservations mentioned while ratifying the CEDAW Convention. However, the statement ‘Measures to prevent the headscarf from becoming a political symbol will be implemented’ in the 57th Government Program is contentious.

<sup>54</sup> On 31 October 2013, the headscarf ban was lifted in the parliament with the attention of JDP deputies to parliamentary sessions while wearing their headscarves.

<sup>55</sup> Nilüfer Göle, *Islam and Secularity: The Future of Europe’s Public Sphere* (Duke University Press, 2015), 139.

battleground, while veiled women have been double-marginalized through the politicization of their identity and rights which are being taken away and given back. One of the prominent incidents in recent history, when the patriarchal and paternalistic attitude of the state in Türkiye is most evident is the February 28 process. Its deprecatory impact on veiled women was conveyed and carried through from generation to generation and resulted in a search for identity for veiled women.

## **2.4. The JDP Government**

Ömer Çaha emphasized that when the Justice and Development Party (JDP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) came to power in 2002, it embraced public feminist discourse.<sup>56</sup> Under the JDP rule in recent years, feminist groups have criticized considering women as only a mother, a wife, and family members, rather than as independent individuals. The patriarchal tones in Justice and Development Party discourses, norms, and actions about women's rights and identity will be discussed in detail in this part of the thesis.

### **2.4.1. On The Road To European Union's Membership**

With the Justice and Development Party coming to power in 2002, Turkish politics entered a new turn. Although JDP is presented a follow-up of the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti* or *DP*) and the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi* or *MP*) for being a center-right party in the political spectrum, JDP has mixed politics of conservatism, neoliberalism, nationalism, and pro-Western stance. By pursuing the pro-globalization and liberty policy, communication and dialogue between Türkiye and European Union (EU) have nearly been at the level of membership. *Acquis Communautaire*, which is the conditions of being a member of the European Union, and the harmonization law packages to ensure the compatibility of the policies of the member states with the European Union, are also related to the protection of human rights, specifically women's rights. Supporting openly the accession negotiations of Türkiye to the EU was a distinctive approach from the Islamic references earlier used by other Islamist actors.<sup>57</sup> This liberal political stance affected the process of the development of

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<sup>56</sup> Çaha, *Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women's Movements in a Muslim Society*.

<sup>57</sup> Jocelyne Cesari and José Casanova, *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 37.

women's rights with landmark changes. In 2001, a new civil code aimed at establishing full equality and abolished the supremacy of men in marital rights. Moreover, in 2004, parliament passed a new criminal code to prevent honor killings and marital rape, and protect the integrity of women's bodies. The legal regulations on the Turkish Civil Code and penal code of Türkiye set by the JDP to ensure women's rights persisted until 2007. During the 22 July 2007 election process, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then prime minister, referred to women's demand for a quota in parliament as anti-equality and unjust.<sup>58</sup> Later, in 2009, the comments of Erdoğan regarding the murder of Münevver Karabulut<sup>59</sup> stirred the public debate. Erdoğan said, 'The understanding of 'no matter where our child goes' is not true. If you left your daughter free, she will go to a drummer or a clarinet player' (*Çocuğumuz öyle nereye giderse gitsin olmaz. Yalnız bırakılan ya davulcuya ya zurnacıya*).<sup>60</sup> Thereafter, Erdoğan's opposition to co-ed housing in 2013 sparked another discussion. By saying 'They [co-ed housing] are all mixed up, anything can happen. As a conservative democratic party the cohabitation of female and male students in state dormitories is not something we can allow', Erdoğan suggested new regulations about mixed student accommodation.<sup>61</sup>

On the other side of the coin, in 2011, Türkiye took a critical step by being the first country who sign 'The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence', better known as the Istanbul Convention with significant backing from the Justice and Development Party and women's rights organizations. As a result, on 14 March 2012, Türkiye became the first

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<sup>58</sup> 'Kota koyalım da Ruanda mı olalım', <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/kota-koyalim-da-ruanda-mi-olalım-7401886> [13.12.2022]

<sup>59</sup> 17-year old high school student Münevver Karabulut murdered by Cem Garipoğlu on 3 March 2009. Garipoğlu was arrested 197 days after the murder and was found guilty in 2011.

<sup>60</sup> 'Başbakan ne demek istedi?', <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/basbakan-ne-demek-istedi,9U4ySR8L1kOUWJBRTIxWZQ> [13.12.2022]

<sup>61</sup> 'PM Erdoğan responds to the debate surrounding co-ed housing', <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2013/11/05/pm-erdogan-responds-to-the-debate-surrounding-coed-housing> [13.12.2022]

country to ratify the Convention to combat domestic violence and violence against women. The Istanbul Convention is a crucial cornerstone in combating domestic violence after CEDAW in 1979, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna on June 1993, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women on December 1993, and the UN 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. However, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention through late-night presidential decree on March 20, 2021. The procedure has been criticized as unconstitutional by many law experts in Türkiye in terms of the doctrine of acquired rights and the principle of parallelism in the procedure.<sup>62</sup> The government and pro-government organizations explained the withdrawal by claiming that the 6284/Domestic Violence Act is being used to 'normalize homosexuality' which is incompatible with Türkiye's social and family norms.

#### **2.4.2. The Recent Challenges of Women Rights in Türkiye**

Even though so-called women-friendly legislation had been adopted in Türkiye through the form of a new civil code, criminal code, and law on preventing violence against women<sup>63</sup>, gender inequality, femicide, and abuse persist. Being a woman can be considered one of the biggest challenges in Türkiye. There are still crucial problems such as domestic violence, femicides, and sexual harassment to require immediate solutions.

Throughout history, the paternalistic orientation of the government in Türkiye had been transforming and reforming through different political ideologies. Hence, women's identity and body had been shaped and manipulated to bear particular characteristics of 'ideal' femininity through the state's politics, actions and discourses. Currently, the general panorama of the JDP's gender policies is associated with '*yerli*

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<sup>62</sup> Bianet, "İstanbul Sözleşmesi'ni hedef alan Erdoğan'ın sözlerini tanımiyoruz" <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/kadin/253093-istanbul-sozlesmesi-ni-hedef-alan-erdogan-in-sozlerini-tanimiyoruz> [28.01.2022]

<sup>63</sup> The Council of Europe, "Details of Treaty No.210", <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatyenum=210> [28.01.2022]

*ve milli*' (homegrown and national) values<sup>64</sup> and 'family nest' and 'sacred motherhood' thoughts. This attitude rather can be deemed in the recent history of Turkish politics. To exemplify, the campaign launched for an amendment to the law of state-forced virginity tests in Türkiye through the sensation of suicides committed by schoolgirls in the 1990s. Işıl Saygın<sup>65</sup>, the then minister in charge of family and women's affairs, declared virginity exams to be 'a legitimate means of ensuring good upbringing (*terbiye*) in girls while being a female minister herself'.<sup>66</sup> By saying, 'three girls, five girls, it does not matter', she also considered the number of suicides insignificant. In this regard, the state acted as a regulatory mechanism to intervene into the lives, identities, and bodies in the name of a post-structural variant of Marxist definition, 'the social and ideological project for the constitutions of social categories and identities to legitimize the illegitimate'.<sup>67</sup>

On the other side of the coin, abortion is an important dimension of the gender context even though being a disjunctive subject between various groups including feminist women. Abortion can be legally performed until the end of the tenth week of pregnancy in Türkiye. However, the research conducted with public hospitals in Türkiye indicated how difficult it is to access abortion or even impossible in many places regardless of its legal status.<sup>68</sup> The male-governed political authority of JDP is widely criticized by women right's activists in the context of its crusade approach

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<sup>64</sup> Nil Mutluer, "The intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and religion: novelties and continuities in Turkey during the JDP era", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, V. 19 (1), (2019): 99-118.

<sup>65</sup> Işıl Saygın joined Turkish politics from the Justice Party in 1973, Nationalist Democracy Party in 1983, Motherland Party in 1987, and True Path Party in 1995.

<sup>66</sup> Ayşe Parla, "The 'Honor' of the State: Virginity Examinations in Turkey", *Feminist Studies*, V. 27 (1), (2001): 67.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>68</sup> Kadir Has Üniversitesi Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Araştırma Merkezi, "Yasal Ancak Ulaşılabilir Değil: Türkiye'deki Kamu Hastanelerinde Kürtaj Hizmetleri – 2020" <https://gender.khas.edu.tr/sites/gender.khas.edu.tr/files/docs/2020-12/2020-kurtaj-arastirmasi-raporu.pdf> [24.05.2022]

against abortion and contraceptives. The JDP government rather implements pronatalist policies to promote birth and to increase fertility and the number of children.

It is necessary to evaluate the context of abortion and state-forced virginity exams in the following way:

*Security agenda can be better understood with reference to feminist interventions to security studies and geopolitics that insert the scale of the body as a significant site where the material and discursive construction of the political takes place.*<sup>69</sup>

In addition, Turkish women experience physical and psychological assault on a daily basis, regardless of their age, ideology, or level of education. Violence is a subject in the spotlight in Türkiye, forty percent of Turkish women have suffered physical violence at the hands of their partners. 280 women were murdered in Türkiye in 2021, mostly by domestic homicide. There were also 217 suspicious deaths of women in 2021.<sup>70</sup>

However, violence is not the sole issue. There are other deeply concerning data reported by the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021. The global gender gap index in Türkiye is 15 percent, Türkiye ranked 133th out of 156 countries in 2021 (this ranking was 105th in 2006); 101st in women's educational accomplishment, 114th in political participation, 105th in health, and 140th in economic opportunity.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, COVID-19 resulted in the acceleration of gender segregation, and it probably will remain the same.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Lorraine Dowler and Joanne Sharp, "A Feminist Geopolitics?", *Space and Polity*, V. 5 (3), (2001): 165-176.

<sup>70</sup> We Will Stop Femicides Platform of Türkiye, "2021 Annual Report of We Will Stop Femicides Platform", <http://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/veriler/3005/2021-annual-report-of-we-will-stop-femicides-platform> [1.02.2022]

<sup>71</sup> World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2021", 377. <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021> [1.02.2022]

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Even though political participation is one of the basic human rights, women are still underrepresented worldwide. According to the UN Women, only 24.9% of parliamentarians globally are women.<sup>73</sup> In Türkiye, among the 582 deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the number of women deputies remained at 101, and the percentage is 17.35%. Despite the organized women’s grassroots of the Justice and Development Party, the rate of deputies from the party in the Assembly is 18.88%.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, even though women hold substantial positions in political sphere, Şebnem Cansun criticizes the traditional gender biased mentality to allocate women with the charge of the Ministry of Family and Social Services (*Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı*) in Turkish politics.<sup>75</sup>

States, as one of the key actors in women’s rights issues, are also the distinguishing agent in determining women’s identities. JDP supports pro-government and conservative women’s organizations such as the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM), the Women’s Rights Organisation against Discrimination (AK-DER), and Women Health Workers Association for Solidarity (KASAD-D). The common feature of these women’s associations is to underline the discourse of inherent qualities (*fitrat* in Turkish), and ‘gender-complementarity’ rather than ‘gender equality’. Domestic violence is also viewed as a gender-neutral phenomena affecting women, children, and men. The women’s detachment from their female identity by ‘masculinization’ and destroying the family structure are also primary concerns of these organizations.<sup>76</sup> In

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<sup>73</sup> UN Women, “Visualizing the data: Women’s representation in society”, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2020/2/infographic-visualizing-the-data-womens-representation> [28.01.2022]

<sup>74</sup> TBMM, “27. Dönem Milletvekilleri Sandalye Dağılımı” [https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz\\_sd.dagilim](https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.dagilim) [28.01.2022]

<sup>75</sup> Şebnem Cansun, “Perceptions of Women’s Political Participation in Turkey: The examples of the JDP and the RPP”, *Journal of the Human and Social Science Researches*, V. 2 (3), (2013): 15.

<sup>76</sup> Büşra Uğraş, “Aile birliğini korumak için özümüzü unutmadan yenilenmeliyiz”, <https://www.star.com.tr/pazar/aile-birligini-korumak-icin-ozumuzu-unutmadan-yenilenmeliyiz-haber-1321267/> [28.01.2022]

this regard, there is a shift for a reframing of ‘gender’ points to ‘the natural differences’.<sup>77</sup>

Besides the actions and politics of the government, discourse is a crucial point to analyze how states indicate gender identity. Language and word choices matter. To illustrate, the World Health Organization uses the term ‘reproductive health’ as a framework concept rather than ‘birth control’ or ‘family planning’ to specify women as an individual.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, gender stereotypes in Turkish culture engender unequal gender roles<sup>79</sup>, even in the political sphere. In 2014, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said, ‘Women are not equal to men, because it goes against the laws of nature’,<sup>80</sup> while emphasizing the complementary roles and responsibilities between men and women. Moreover, this ‘gender-complementary’ attitude can be seen in the discourses based on the concept of ‘ideal femininity’ relating to motherhood. The then Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that abortion is murder and no different from Uludere - an incident that refers to the death of 34 civilian Kurdish villagers in a mistaken air strike. Furthermore, Erdoğan declared himself an ‘anti-cesarean’ prime minister due to its unnatural nature.<sup>81</sup> In 2016, Erdoğan, who is known for advocating for families to have at least three children, stated: ‘A woman who says, ‘I will not be

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<sup>77</sup> Sevda Dursun, et al., “Kadın Haklarını Savunmak Feminizme Has Değildir”, <https://kadem.org.tr/kadin-haklarini-savunmak-feminizme-has-degildir/> [28.01.2022]

<sup>78</sup> United Nations Population Fund, “International Conference on Population and Development”, <https://www.unfpa.org/icpd> [28.01.2022]

<sup>79</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Patterns of patriarchy: Notes for an analysis of male dominance in Turkish society”: *Women in modern Turkish society* (London: Zed Books, 1995), 306-318.

<sup>80</sup> The Guardian, “Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: ‘women not equal to men’” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/24/Türkiyes-president-recep-tayyip-erdogan-women-not-equal-men> [28.01.2022]

<sup>81</sup> BBC, “Turkey PM Erdogan sparks row over abortion”, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18297760> [28.01.2022]

a mother because of my career' is denying her femininity'.<sup>82</sup> He claimed that childless women are insufficient, and that birth control and family planning are not appropriate for Muslim households.<sup>83</sup>

In 2019, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called the veiled women who had to quit their public sector jobs in the process of February 28th as 'my girls': 'That was the day when my girls who were wearing headscarves were not allowed in universities'.<sup>84</sup> At the end of 2021, he also said to RPP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, 'O Mr. Kemal, you first go to my veiled girls and sisters and ask for their blessings'.<sup>85</sup> According to the Foucauldian framework, these sentences should be interpreted as crucial examples of discursive apparatus.<sup>86</sup> It is interrelated with the power of knowledge which is an indication of the rise and decline of particular power foci.<sup>87</sup> In that regard, Erdoğan's paternalistic rhetoric on embracing veiled women who were victims of the February 28th measures is a demonstration of political power. While the 28 February grievances of veiled women find their position in politicians' allusions to one another, it is apparent that males who speak for veiled women are still the key actors in politics. It is also important to note that the headscarf ban prompted veiled women to favor the Justice and Development Party, where many actively participated in politics. JDP

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<sup>82</sup> The Guardian, "Turkish president says childless women are 'deficient, incomplete'" <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/06/turkish-president-erdogan-childless-women-deficient-incomplete> [28.01.2022]

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Daily Sabah, "Erdoğan: Feb. 28 one of most shameful days in Turkey's history", <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2019/03/01/erdogan-feb-28-one-of-most-shameful-days-in-Türkiyes-history> [28.01.2022]

<sup>85</sup> TRT Haber, "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Sen önce benim başörtülü bacarımdan helallik dile", <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-sen-once-benim-basortulu-bacilarimdan-helallik-dile-627043.html> [28.01.2022]

<sup>86</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972 -1977*, (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 197.

<sup>87</sup> Shane Phelan, "Foucault and Feminism", *American Journal of Political Science*, V. 34 (2), (1990): 423.

deputies have included symbolic names from February 28th, such as Leyla Şahin, Ravza Kavakçı, and Fatma Benli.<sup>88</sup>

The hegemony of the state through its actions, discourses, and policies over the female body in general and the headscarf in specific can be associated with the Foucauldian perspective. By concerning the universal human subject and ‘genderless’ body of man, he himself has not focused on gender and feminism issues. ‘Nothing in man - not even his body - is sufficiently stable to serve as a basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men’<sup>89</sup>, Foucault said to point out the impossibility of a ‘natural’ body. However, his theoretical framework based on an anti-essentialist understanding of the role of power and the theory of general discernment of the ‘state of subordination’<sup>90</sup> could develop new theories to underline the power relationship over the bodies. According to Foucault, power has penetrated in all spheres of human life through modernization. In the medieval era, he had only contributed to individual birth and death decisions, but in modernity, he has influence over the whole population throughout their lives. The terms, ‘modernization of power’, ‘docile bodies’ and ‘biopower’ can be assessed from this perspective. Foucault’s theory of biopolitics refers to the domination, control, and management of the bodies by political and economic means: ‘amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies’.<sup>91</sup> First-wave feminists used these theories to conceptualize the fetal protection laws. Nowadays, ‘there is a concurrent shift from struggles for political rights to ‘life

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<sup>88</sup> Sabah, “28 Şubat’ın mağdur kadınları AK Parti’den aday”, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/28-subatin-magdur-kadinlari-ak-partiden-aday-3007477> [28.01.2022]

<sup>89</sup> Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Penguin: London, 1991), 87-88.

<sup>90</sup> Monique Deveaux, “Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault”, *Feminist Studies*, V. 20 (2), (1994): 231.

<sup>91</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, Vintage Books, 1977), 217.

rights' – that is, a right to one's body, health, and the fulfillment of basic needs'.<sup>92</sup> These Foucaultian ideas are crucial in understanding the Turkish regime's concerns about the gender issue. In the 1997 Turkish military memorandum, Turkish veiled women had been deprived of basic needs and liberties: freedom of religion, and conscience. It also proceeds for 31 years until the repeal of the law that prohibited the wearing *hijāb* in the public sphere. However, Turkish veiled women also encounter the problem of double marginalization through the *laïcité* and Islamist groups' standardizing of ideal women as well as the state's paternalistic and patriarchal policies and discourses.



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<sup>92</sup> Deveaux, *Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault*, 229.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CLAIM OF MULTICULTURAL AND ISLAMIC FEMINISM

*Feminism is the women's struggle against the norms and values and sexist policies of the male-dominated world by creating solidarity among themselves.*<sup>93</sup>

This chapter will theoretically examine multicultural and Islamic feminism that have emerged as third-wave feminism. First of all, from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, women began to defend their right to equality and freedom in the political sphere. The discourse of political empowerment of women was observed in America and Europe in the paradigm of first-wave feminism, which was developed in the context of industrial society and liberal thought.<sup>94</sup> Women have started a struggle to obtain fundamental rights such as the right to education, equal access to employment, the right to vote and to stand for election - specifically in the suffragette movement in Great Britain and Ireland. Above all, in 1405 Parisian scientist Christine de Pisan argued in *The Book of the City of Ladies* that women struggled against patriarchy in France, and in 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft argued that women were disadvantaged by men because they could not access educational opportunities in Britain. These egalitarian discourses, which were made centuries before the first-wave feminism, are called 'zero-wave feminism' in the scholarly literature.<sup>95</sup>

The 'personal is political' notion was the cornerstone of second-wave feminism, which emerged in the 1960s and persisted into the 1980s. In discussing the roles of women in society, many sub-topics such as family, domestic labor, sexual rights, and reproductive rights were examined. By touching upon domestic violence, sexual harassment, marital rape, and abortion, it was emphasized that patriarchy was not exist only in the institutional context but also deeply entrenched in the society. Owing to

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<sup>93</sup> Andree Michel, *Le féminisme*, trans. Şirin Tekeli (İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 6-7.

<sup>94</sup> Serdar Örnek, "ABD'de Kadın Haklarının Gelişimi", *Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, V. 29, (2015): 105-129.

<sup>95</sup> Aylin Görgün Baran, "Feminizmin Gelişim Serüveni: Dalga Yerine Kuşak Diyelim mi?" <https://kockam.ku.edu.tr/feminizmin-gelisim-seruveni-dalga-yerine-kusak-diyelim-mi-aylin-gorgun-baran/> [28.02.2022]

second-wave feminism, these problems started to be considered as not all-embraced and universal from the point of view of different women groups. For instance, black women mostly spend their daily life in the workplace rather than at home because of their low income in the household. Therefore, they struggled with discrimination at workplace and continued their search for rights by opposing the generalization of the ‘western white women’ problems.

The ‘third-wave feminist movement’, which was shaped under the influence of the post-structuralist and post-modernist debates, is used to describe the period after the 1990s. However, its title is controversial in the scholarly literature. During that time, the universalist female perspective was destroyed in favor of diverse and anti-hegemonic modes of being when it comes to sexuality and individuality. By ‘the new caste system placing nonwhite, non-heterosexual people on top’<sup>96</sup>, the ‘intersectionality’ as conceptualized by Kimberlé Crenshaw addresses the social and double-marginalization caused by sexism and racism, which are based on oppression groups such as race, gender, and class.<sup>97</sup> The notion that gender is performative,<sup>98</sup> trans rights, and LGBTI+ (lesbian–gay–bisexual–transsexual–intersex) rights became one of the main themes of the third wave.

It is argued that the ‘fourth wave movement’ had been identified as a ‘hashtag activism’ to develop a feminist discourse and agenda on the internet.<sup>99</sup> This wave is based on body-affirming comprehensive justice, which includes disabilities and plus-size bodies that are mostly ignored groups by previous feminist movements and demand their rights in the digital environment. As having a correlation with digital activism, the pursuit of

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<sup>96</sup> Jane Coaston, “The intersectionality wars” <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination> [30.01.2022]

<sup>97</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”, *Stanford Law Review*, V. 43 (6), (1991): 1241–99.

<sup>98</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 93.

<sup>99</sup> Ealasaid Munro, “Feminism: A Fourth Wave?” *Political Insight*, V. 4 (2), (2013): 22–25.

rights under the hashtag #MeToo, where thousands of women have tweeted to expose their abusers, is one of the indicators of this trend.<sup>100</sup>

### 3.1. Multicultural Feminism

Before the analysis of multicultural feminism, the concept of multiculturalism must be understood. In Western concept, the theory goes as far back as Ancient Greece in the context of moral monism that excludes the importance of culture and imposes a certain vision on the good life and human nature. Moral monism refers to the ideology that there is only one highest value and the others can be judged. Later, Plato highlighted Greek monism to explain the existence of various species with different practices based on the same human nature which are ordered in a certain hierarchy and are all related to the Idea of Good.<sup>101</sup> Classical liberals such as Locke, Montesquieu, and Tocqueville identified liberalism with civilization and consider liberalism as the only ideology that could spread Christianity's characteristics such as human dignity, freedom, and equality that are the cornerstones of modernism.<sup>102</sup> Islam had been identified as 'unmodern' because of its so-called dogmatic and irrational characteristics.<sup>103</sup> Monists ignored other cultures when describing nature and human being.<sup>104</sup> Later, modern liberal philosophers such as Will Kymlicka appreciated the importance of culture by criticizing liberalism and producing theories to transform it. Will Kymlicka defines multiculturalism as an indispensable element of human rights reform that allows various ethnic and racial communities to live together within the framework of respect.<sup>105</sup> He supported the alliance of feminism and multiculturalism

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<sup>100</sup> Associated Press, "Williams says 'Venom' fits in Me Too era" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCSPMI6syk0> [02.02.2019]

<sup>101</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, "Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory", *Ethnicities*, V. 1 (1), (2001): 19.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>105</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multiculturalism: Success, Failure, and the Future* (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012), 302-303.

because they are in a battle against ‘the inadequacy of the traditional liberal conception of individual rights.’<sup>106</sup>

In the light of all the theoretical frameworks, multiculturalism and multicultural feminism celebrate cultural interaction. Monica Mookherjee theorizes the ‘feminist form of multicultural justice’ to underline the necessity of interpretation of needs, capacities, and autonomy of women in culturally variable ways as well as having fundamental intersecting and identical rights.<sup>107</sup> The multicultural approach confronts the *laïcité* on the notion of national identity. While *laïcité* foregrounds the entity of nation-states, multiculturalists endorse more of an inclusionary ideology in favor of cultural diversity rather than a homogenous structure. Feminism and culture intersect to pursue redefinition vis-à-vis the norms produced by secular feminism. Multicultural feminism examines the liberal approach in terms of equality that ignores the differences between women of different cultures and does not pursue standardized ‘women’ classification. It enlightens the existence of different types of women, life experiences, and struggles in terms of sub-categories such as ethnicity, language, class, and religion in response to liberal feminism as described by a generalized perception of womanhood. Instead of a universalist female identity, a woman is now perceived as a whole, by her other identifications.<sup>108</sup>

The discussion about the relationship between feminism and multiculturalism is generally considered negatively in terms of the debates between cultural relativists against human rights universalists.<sup>109</sup> A harsh critique of multiculturalism is posed by a renowned liberal feminist theorist Susan Moller Okin in her article titled, ‘Is

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<sup>106</sup> Will Kymlicka, “Liberal complacencies”: *Is multiculturalism bad for women?*, ed. Susan Moller Okin et al. (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999), 34.

<sup>107</sup> Monica Mookherjee, *Women’s Rights as Multicultural Claims: Reconfiguring Gender and Diversity in Political Philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 58.

<sup>108</sup> Nezahat Altuntaş, *Feminen İslam, Küresel Çağda Alternatif Bir Kadın Kimliği İnşası* (Ankara: Orion Kitapevi, 2012), 87.

<sup>109</sup> Susan Moller Okin, et. al, *Is multiculturalism bad for women?* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999), 13-17.

Multiculturalism Bad for Women?'. She posits multiculturalism and feminism as contradictory in terms of the clash of interests. According to Okin, minority cultures are structures that contain significant differences in power and interests between men and women.<sup>110</sup> She has referred to the problem of internal minorities as 'multiculturalism versus feminism' or 'multicultural accommodation versus women's rights.'<sup>111</sup> Therefore, there is a need to pay attention to nonvisible inequality between gender in certain groups. She exemplifies Muslim girls wearing headscarves, and female clitoridectomy in communities living within France and the United States.<sup>112</sup> Okin reveals that although the creation of group rights for the continuity of some minority cultures benefits men, it will not benefit women in this culture. Instead of group rights, she takes sides in favor of women's rights and considers the category of women in the definition of feminism solely on the basis of individuals.

Okin's prejudiced attitude has been criticized for being an Orientalist idea that women who are members of minority cultures should be saved.<sup>113</sup> To assume that women belonging to minority groups are committed to their own culture is a biased perception of 'ideal female identity' stemming from the liberal ideals of feminism. In fact, it results in disregarding the efforts of vulnerable subgroups within minority groups vis-à-vis the patriarchal positions of these groups. Okin has been influenced by the approach of 'personal is political' by having dichotomous discourse of the liberal 'Us' versus the illiberal 'Others'. Al- Hibri explained these clashes as:

*One in which feminists and human rights advocates are attempting to save the women of minority cultures from internal oppression. [...] By persisting*

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<sup>110</sup> Susan Moller Okin, "Feminism and Multiculturalism: Some Tensions", *Ethics*, V. 108 (4) (1998): 664.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Okin, *Is multiculturalism bad for women?*, 9-10, 18.

<sup>113</sup> Lawrence Blum, et al. "Book Review", *Ethics*, V. 111 (3), (2001): 622–25.

*in advocating secular feminist arguments that are intolerant of important religious values, secular feminists run the risk of turning patriarchal.*<sup>114</sup>

The cultural context of women's rights is also interrelated with Islamophobia in Europe. In 2015, a major change happened in Europe caused by the largest migrant crisis after the Second World War, accompanied by the already established fear of jihadi terror. Thereafter, debates had been employed regarding Europe's culture that is allegedly threatened by the 'Islamization' of Europe.<sup>115</sup> In Europe where the far-right movement and anti-Muslim sentiment arise, Muslim women confront double-marginalization because of being biological 'producers' and symbolic bearers of cultural and collective identities.<sup>116</sup> Particularly, French secular tradition, *la laïcité*, sustains the French controversy of the headscarf, the so-called *affaire du foulard* that aims to perform a political replacement whereby religion.<sup>117</sup> The Durkheimian notion of French *laïcité* depends on the neutrality of political power vis-à-vis religion and ensuring the cohesion of the citizens as 'social bodies'.<sup>118</sup> In this context, according to feminist French philosopher Elisabeth Badinter, the full veil is problematic because the visibility of the face is the *sine qua non* for Western civilization and republican doctrines of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.<sup>119</sup> The real dilemma regards whether the veil is

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<sup>114</sup> Azizah Y. Al-Hibri, "Is Western patriarchal feminism good for Third World/minority women?": *Is multiculturalism bad for women?*, ed. Susan Moller Okin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 44.

<sup>115</sup> Eric Kaufmann, "Breeding for God", *Prospect*. <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/breedingforgod> [01.04.2022]

<sup>116</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis, "Nationalist projects and gender relations", *Narodna umjetnost: Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research*, V. 40, (2003): 9-35.

<sup>117</sup> Luca Mavelli, *Europe's Encounter with Islam. The secular and the postsecular* (London, Routledge, 2012), 63.

<sup>118</sup> Bernard Stasi, "Rapport Stasi: Commission de Reflexion sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité dans la Republique" <https://www.vie-publique.fr/rapports> [02.04.2022]

<sup>119</sup> Nilüfer Göle and Julie Billaud, "Islamic Difference and the Return of Feminist Universalism": *European Multiculturalisms: Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Challenges*, ed. A. Triandafyllidou, et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 116-41.

an ‘ostensible religious symbol’<sup>120</sup> or a ‘breakdown of integration’<sup>121</sup> or ‘a way of being’.

*If the wearer assumes the veil as an obligation of her faith, if her conscience impels her to wear it as an act of piety, the veil becomes for that reason a part of herself. For her, it is not a sign intended to communicate something, but part of orientation, of a way of being.*<sup>122</sup>

The modern individual in secular societies exist but impoverished for his/her inability to engage with Muslim community as an opportunity for pluralism and negotiation of life.<sup>123</sup> Thereby, the Stasi Report in 2003 and the headscarf ban in public schools in 2004 are a form of ‘political hysteria’ implying an act of displacement and a fictional problem.<sup>124</sup>

Regardless of the theoretical debates, culture became visible as an indicative factor in the political and legal context, and the agenda-setter for political actors such as states and international organizations. Firstly, cultural accommodation formed as a cultural defense in American law that is seen in two main cases. In 1984, the court dismissed the charges in the case of kidnapping and rape case of a Hmong woman by Hmong men who performed the so-called ‘traditional Hmong practice of matrimony’ a marriage through capture.<sup>125</sup> Secondly, a Chinese immigrant who killed his wife had much-reduced punishment because in ‘Chinese culture violent retaliation is an

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<sup>120</sup> Stasi, Rapport Stasi: Commission de Reflexion sur l’Application du Principe de Laïcité dans la Republique.

<sup>121</sup> Terray, Headscarf Hysteria, 120.

<sup>122</sup> Talal Asad, “Trying to Understand French Secularism”: *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, ed. Hent de Vries, et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 503.

<sup>123</sup> Mavelli, Europe’s Encounter with Islam. The secular and the postsecular, 84-86.

<sup>124</sup> Terray, Headscarf Hysteria, 118.

<sup>125</sup> Record of Court Proceedings, People v. Moua, No. 315972-0 (Fresno County Super. Ct. Feb. 7, 1985).

acceptable response to a wife's adultery'.<sup>126</sup> Okin exemplifies these two cases in cultural defense for reciprocalness of cultural accommodation and women's rights from an egalitarian perspective.<sup>127</sup>

In the same vein, there are theories that draw attention to the intersections of feminism and group rights as well as criticisms in the literature about political actors, such as state and international organizations.<sup>128</sup> Multiculturalism underlines the lack of UN settings to cover the issue of communal identities, defenses and dismissals of group rights for the protection of women's rights.<sup>129</sup> At this juncture, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is a precedent to fail to highlight particular racial discrimination against women. According to Silvia Gagliardi, the UN system's view of minorities, in accordance with the UN Declaration on Minorities, 'includes only those belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, but not persons with disabilities or vulnerable women'.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, the lack of a comprehensive and universal description of indigenous peoples undermines the process for the group and minority rights.

In the political framework, multiculturalism considers patriarchy as one of the most crucial problems in both liberal and non-liberal governments, and it promotes feminist global citizenship and transnational democratic governance for women's diverse

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<sup>126</sup> Sarah Song, *Justice, Gender, and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>128</sup> Liberalism considers international organizations and non-governmental organizations as important political actors contrary to the state-centrism of realism. International organizations play roles in international cooperation, shaping state preferences and policies.

<sup>129</sup> Silvia Gagliardi, "The Human Rights of Minority and Indigenous Women": *International Human Rights of Women*, ed. N. Reilly, et al. (Springer, 2019): 10.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

interests.<sup>131</sup> Ranjoo Seodu Herr, a multicultural feminist, favors polycentric nationalism, internal democracy, and equal respect in order to prevent interfering with non-liberal indigenous communities.<sup>132</sup> Because of its exclusive and essentialist aspect from the standpoint of ‘outsiders’, nationalism must be de-essentialized. As a result, she proposes ‘democratic cultural pluralism’ as a means of promoting equality across diverse social/affinity groups through networking. Furthermore, Iris Marion Young opposes to nationalism because of its strong ties with sovereignty and domination.<sup>133</sup> She addresses cultural variables to constructing the notion of ‘justice’ within the states. According to Young, most of political realm lacks self-development and self-determination due to two characteristics of ‘structural injustice’: oppression and domination. Oppression is considered as ‘the institutional constraint on self-development’ and domination as ‘the institutional constraint on self-determination’.<sup>134</sup> In this regard, scholars such as Young harshly criticize the justification of America’s intervention in Afghanistan by rescuing Afghan women from the Taliban. She mentions that this is, actually a matter of masculinity, emphasizing that the ‘good’ man is the protector and the ‘bad’ man the attacker.<sup>135</sup> She compares it to the stereotype that ‘the good woman is protected in exchange for her allegiance and subordination, while the bad woman rejects it and runs her own life’.<sup>136</sup> Similar to how states protect their citizens while encouraging them to abandon deliberation in favor of obeying the rules. She claims that 9/11 is one example of how democratic nation-states shift to authoritarian policies by adopting the role of a defender over their citizens. Thus, according to Young, possible solution to promote equality between various social/affinity groups is ‘democratic cultural pluralism’. Self-determination and self-

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<sup>131</sup> Iris Marion Young, “Feminist Reactions to the Contemporary Security Regime.” *Hypatia*, V. 18 (1), (2003): 223–31.

<sup>132</sup> Herr, *Politics of Difference and Nationalism: On Iris Young’s Global Vision*, 53.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 54

<sup>134</sup> Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 33.

<sup>135</sup> Herr, *Politics of difference and nationalism: On Iris young’s global vision*.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

interest can be promoted by means of group autonomy and empowerment through networking. Disadvantaged social groups need to lead their fate with self-determination and promote their self-interest.<sup>137</sup> Accordingly, she advocates for polycentric nationalism in order to attain fair treatment, global justice, and equal respect.<sup>138</sup>

By the same token, Kymlicka as a modern defender of cultural minorities considers these groups as a unit based on three characteristics: culture, history, and language.<sup>139</sup> In some circumstances, the dominant cultures' own patriarchal standards have provided support for patriarchal behaviors in minority cultures, a phenomenon known as the *congruence effect*, according to Kymlicka. Historically, the state enforced mainstream gender prejudices on minority societies, such as the 1887 Dawes Act, which undermined Native American women's responsibilities in agricultural work by making Native American males heads of families, landowners, and farmers.<sup>140</sup> The genuine contradiction is where group rights should be considered as a 'panacea or shortcut' for promoting subaltern agency<sup>141</sup> or eliminated on behalf of universal gender equality norms.

Multicultural feminism has been an alternative model entrenched in the third wave of the feminist movement to construct ideological grounds for the right of cultural minorities. Owing to understanding of women's rights as 'personal is political', the cultural differences had been taken into consideration far from the fixed character of women's rights that is visible in the second wave of feminism. Regardless of the scholarly literature on the compatibility between multiculturalism and feminism, multiculturalism can be offered as a middle way between cultural preservation tackled by multiculturalists and individual equality attended by liberal theorists.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Herr, *Politics of difference and nationalism: On Iris young's global vision*.

<sup>139</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, community and culture* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1989), 137.

<sup>140</sup> Song, *Justice, Gender and the Politics of Multiculturalism*.

<sup>141</sup> Gagliardi, *The Human Rights of Minority and Indigenous Women*, 17.

### 3.2. Islamic Feminism

Another crucial theoretical framework that criticizes liberal feminism is Islamic feminism which started in the 1990s based on ‘gender-just hermeneutic Qur’ān exegesis’.<sup>142</sup> Susanne Schröter describes this movement as:

*The disappointments with secular authoritarianism and the consequences of Islamic revivalism inspired women intellectuals in the 1980s to embark on a third way between Islamic orthodoxy and secular emancipation. In academic terms, this middle path has come to be known as Islamic feminism.*<sup>143</sup>

The Western feminist approach is widely criticized by Islamic feminist scholars for its inconspicuous suppression of veiled women’s identities and interests by presuming standardized ‘modern’ women. Therefore, Islamic feminists enjoin multicultural feminists in their critique of the essentialist conjecture of liberal feminism. In the literature of Islamic feminism, there is a classification of patriarchal practices’ causation: (i) ‘constructed’ factors caused by socio-cultural structure, (ii) ‘practical’ aspects such as education and colonialism. Firstly, within the constructionist framework, Ziba Mir-Hosseini asserts that the discourse about men’s supremacy over women is developed by the ‘*fuqahā* (Islamic jurist) themselves, reflecting the state of knowledge of the time or cultural fabric of society’.<sup>144</sup> Veiled women face a double burden in which they also struggle with the patriarchal traditions in their society justified by ‘Qur’ān and hadith’ for this patriarchy.

Secondly, Margot Badran is another scholar who identifies as an Islamic feminist and addresses this problem. She defines Islamic feminism as ‘a feminist discourse and practices articulated within an Islamic paradigm’<sup>145</sup> and the movement as an influential

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<sup>142</sup> Cesari and Casanova, *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, 119.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>144</sup> Ziba Mir-Hosseini, “The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought: Strategies for Reform”, *Hawwa: Journal of Women in the Middle East and the Islamic World*, V. 1 (1), (2003): 22.

<sup>145</sup> Margot Badran, “Islamic Feminism: What’s in a Name?”, *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, V. 569, (17 - 23 January, 2002)

and global discourse strong enough to cause a redefinition of feminism.<sup>146</sup> She emphasizes that the reason for veiled women's disadvantage is due to patriarchal institutions that are prevalent in these societies, not Islam. By referring 'feminism needed a new edge, and Islamic feminism provided it', Badran describes reforming Islam as returning to the essence of Islam rather than converting it.<sup>147</sup> In this regard, Islamic feminism originated in the Middle East but is not 'borrowed' from the West and affirms the equality of women and men as human beings across both the private and public spheres by offering new tools and perspective.<sup>148</sup>

To indicate the 'practical' patriarchal practices, what Egyptian politician Qasim Amin specified a century ago is still relevant. Amin pinpointed colonialism and the lack of education in Muslim societies that needs to be solved for women to become equal and full partners to their 'modern' husbands. According to Amin, women should be allowed to leave their homes by wearing a veil that reveals their faces and hands.<sup>149</sup> As distinguished from lack of education in Muslim societies, Miriam Cooke tackles colonialism and finds similarities between the struggles of black women and Muslim women in terms of eliminating the physical representation of power. She points out that veiled women are outside of collective memory and are separated from public and private life.<sup>150</sup> Similarly, Fatima Mernissi points to colonialism as the reason Muslim governments were driven to identify themselves through it. She evaluates Muslim states' problems as elimination or alienation of women's perspective and denies the

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (Oxford England: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 324-325.

<sup>148</sup> Margot Badran, "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond", *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, V. 1 (1), (2005): 13.

<sup>149</sup> Barbara Freyer Stowasser, "Liberated Equal or Protected Dependent? Contemporary Religious Paradigms on Women's Status in Islam", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, V. 9 (3), (1987): 260-83.

<sup>150</sup> Miriam Cooke, "Women, Religion, and the Postcolonial Arab World", *Cultural Critique*, V. 45, (2000): 150-84.

validity of some narratives transmitted from Prophet Muhammad.<sup>151</sup> In terms of distinguished Islamic feminist scholars, the realm of patriarchal practices in Muslim countries is human-made beyond the Qur'ān itself.

Besides, some Islamic feminist scholars accentuate that patriarchal practices can be resolved by reinterpreting Islamic resources. Veiled women scholars, such as Zainab Alwani particularly emphasizes the difference between 'Man's readings' and 'Woman's readings'.<sup>152</sup> Amina Wadud perceives the discussion from a different point of angle and supports that textual analysis is insufficient. She develops a new concept of 'Muslim feminists' to advocate a reinterpretation of Islam instead of supporting equality between men and women. Wadud supported that the human language cannot adequately describe the will of God. Therefore, the Qur'ān is not the sole definitive source of knowledge regarding Islam. She emphasizes that there is no consensus about the Qur'ān as the literal word of Allah and that 'we cannot take it all or we must take nothing'.<sup>153</sup> She goes on saying that the Qur'ān must be understood as a historical text subject to interpretation. By criticizing traditional *tafsīr* ('explanation', 'exegesis' of the Qur'ān) for excluding women and their perspectives, she proposes an alternative interpretation model of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān itself through female experiences, visions, and understanding.<sup>154</sup> She suggested 'hermeneutics of *tawhīd* (belief in the unity of God)', time and place-bound interpretations because of 'Qur'ānic ethos of

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<sup>151</sup> Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (New York: Basic Books, 1992)

<sup>152</sup> Zainab Alwani, "Muslim Women as Religious Scholars: A Historical Survey": *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians*, ed. Ednan Aslan, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition 2013), 8.

<sup>153</sup> Amina Wadud, "Can One Critique Cancel All Previous Efforts?", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, V. 32 (2), (2016): 130-134.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

equity and justice in changing sociopolitical circumstances'.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, modern Muslims should reformulate Islamic law according to the needs of their times.

A grassroots activism and political will have to be aligned,<sup>156</sup> because God's will is the realization of social justice, including gender equality, and the end of oppression, sexism, racism, and heterosexism.<sup>157</sup> Wadud believes that extending the awareness of women leads to a better comprehension of God. Therefore, Wadud identifies her studies as 'the utopian lens' for the fulfillment of trust as *raison d'être* for human nature, and women's rights development as the understanding of God.<sup>158</sup> The acquirable discernment of reading the Qur'ān is far from the hermeneutic principle. According to Islamic feminists, justice and equality should be the cornerstone of reading the Qur'ān.<sup>159</sup>

Asma Barlas, on the other hand, prefers describing herself as a 'believing woman' rather than an Islamic feminist.<sup>160</sup> She specifically responds to the scholars 'who call the Qur'ān patriarchal on the basis of less than a dozen lines in a text of some eighty thousand words'.<sup>161</sup> She regards their attitude as reluctant and oblivious, and those scholars' insistence is basically an attempt at the secularization of the Qur'ān by neglecting its sacredness.<sup>162</sup> Also, she claims that the Qur'ān leaves the verse open for

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<sup>155</sup> Asma Afsaruddin, "4 Islam, gender and feminist hermeneutics": *Contemporary Issues in Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 86-114.

<sup>156</sup> Wadud, *Can One Critique Cancel All Previous Efforts?*, 130-134.

<sup>157</sup> Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 204.

<sup>158</sup> Amina Wadud, "Towards a Qur'ānic Hermeneutics of Social Justice: Race, Class and Gender", *Journal of Law and Religion*, V. 12 (1), (1995): 37-50.

<sup>159</sup> Allison Weir, "Islamic Feminisms and Freedom", *Philosophical Topics*, V. 41 (2), (2013): 97-119.

<sup>160</sup> Barlas, "Believing women" in Islam: unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'ān.

<sup>161</sup> Asma Barlas, "Secular and Feminist Critiques of the Qur'an: Anti-Hermeneutics as Liberation?", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, V. 32 (2), (2016): 111-121.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

different generations to interpret<sup>163</sup>, and she offers a hermeneutic, thematic, and structural coherence to read and understand. Similarly, Asma Afsaruddin seeks a gender-egalitarian hermeneutic and supports that Islamic feminism has the potential to be more radical than secular feminism in dissolving the distinctions between public and private realms.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, Zainab Alwani questions who possesses the authority to interpret the Qur'ān and the limits of Qur'ānic interpretation, and whether a 'woman's reading' can be achieved differently from a 'man's reading'.<sup>165</sup>

The crucial point in the literature of Islamic feminism is the relationship between women and men. According to Nawwal al-Saadawi, the tendencies that are thought to be specific to women or men, which can be called *fitra*, do not originate from a determined female or male nature; but are determined by environmental factors.<sup>166</sup> Humans are born masculine or feminine but are their gender roles and identities that make them women and men are socially created. Afsaruddin mentions how Qur'ān portrays the parity between men and women as partners by 33:35:<sup>167</sup>

*Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women (...) and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.*

She also underlines another critical verse in 9:71 to emphasize the equal and complementary moral agency for men and women as partners:

*The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah*

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<sup>163</sup> Asma Barlas, et al. "The Qur'ān and Hermeneutics: Reading the Qur'ān's Opposition to Patriarchy", *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies*, V. 3 (2), (2001): 15–38.

<sup>164</sup> Afsaruddin, 4 Islam, gender and feminist hermeneutics.

<sup>165</sup> Alwani, Muslim Women as Religious Scholars: A Historical Survey.

<sup>166</sup> Neval el-Saadawi, *Havvanın Örtülü Yüzü* (Anahtar Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1991), 102-103.

<sup>167</sup> Afsaruddin, 4 Islam, gender and feminist hermeneutics.

*and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.*<sup>168</sup>

Türkiye has had dialogical encounters with the Muslim world while also witnessing its indigenous Islamic women's movement experience a paradigm shift through seeking their identity after the 1980s. It is known that in this paradigm shift, Islamic feminism had been visibly related to Islamism. Nilüfer Göle specifically cites the Islamic revolution in Iran (1979), the Welfare Party's rise to power in Türkiye (1996), and the suppression of Islamist movements in Egypt and Tunisia as examples of the existence of Islamism in political environments to fuel women's right movements.<sup>169</sup> The modernist acceptance of the female identity as 'essential' results in understanding the headscarf as a symbol of reactionism, a minacious factor versus the foundations of the modern Republic.<sup>170</sup> Veiled women in Türkiye have suffered from patriarchy from both Islamic and secular versions, Islamophobia, Western imperialism, and secularist assumptions. Fulden İbrahimhakkıoğlu specifies that 'Islamic feminism in Türkiye has defined the right to veil in terms of human rights and individual liberties'.<sup>171</sup> In the process of reforming the Turkish Republic to function beyond a political system from the Ottoman Empire, Turkish identity was constructed as 'privately Muslim' and 'publicly modern'.<sup>172</sup> The traditional definition of motherhood and housewives was reworked to serve the purpose of the 'nationalist project of modernization'.<sup>173</sup> New

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<sup>168</sup> At-Tawbah 9:71.

<sup>169</sup> Nilüfer Göle, "The public visibility of Islam and European politics of resentment: The minarets-mosques debate", *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, V. 37 (4), (2011).

<sup>170</sup> Aynur İlyasoğlu, *Örtülü Kimlik: İslamcı Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşum Öğeleri* (İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 1994), 29-30.

<sup>171</sup> İbrahimhakkıoğlu, *Beyond the Modern/Religious Dichotomy: The Veil and Feminist Solidarity in Contemporary Turkey*.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

Turkish women were described as ‘modern and/ but chaste’ and ‘the de-veiling of women did not disburden them from the requirement of chastity’.<sup>174</sup>

To demonstrate the distinct characteristics of feminism in Türkiye, there is a need to make a differentiation between Islamic and Islamist feminists. For instance, based upon their self-identification, Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal and Konca Kuriş are Islamic feminists, whereas women in Milli Görüş movements are Islamic female activists. Prevailing perception among Islamic activists had tied to the struggle for freedom of religion but rather gender justice. Şule Yüksel Şenler, as an Islamic activist, considered the emancipation of women by veiling as the empowerment of society.<sup>175</sup> Veiling is also the way of independence of women against ‘the perils of Westernisation, atheism, and feminism’ that ‘throw them into the streets naked and alienated them from their society’.<sup>176</sup> Veiled women are the agent of Islamisation, gender identity, and Turkish national modernity.<sup>177</sup> On the other hand, in her book, *Kadın Karşıtı Söylemin İslam Geleneğindeki İzdüşümleri*, Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal used the historicist framework related to gender lens in the Qur’ān as ‘the author of the first systematic feminist theological text’<sup>178</sup> in Türkiye. She underlines that the patriarchal values, norms, and practices are the outcome of historically widespread patriarchal social and cultural systems.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Ayşe Parla, “The ‘Honor’ of the State: Virginty Examinations in Turkey”, *Feminist Studies*, V. 27 (1), (2001): 66-75.

<sup>175</sup> Şule Yüksel Şenler, “Örtü Kadına Şahsiyet Kazandırır”, *Seher Vakti*, November 18, 1970, <https://katalog.idp.org.tr/yazilar/39183/ortu-kadina-sahsiyet-kazandirir> [20 May 2022]

<sup>176</sup> Ravza Altuntaş-Çakır, “The Hıjāb between Competing Masculinities in Contemporary Turkey”: *Beyond Modernity: Critical Perspectives on Islam, Tradition and Power*, ed. M. Moussa (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, forthcoming).

<sup>177</sup> Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 117.

<sup>178</sup> Philip Dorroll, *Islamic Theology in the Turkish Republic* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 12.

<sup>179</sup> Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal, *Kadın Karşıtı Söylemin İslam Geleneğindeki İzdüşümleri* (OTTO, 2021)

In Türkiye, after 1980s, the political sphere developed by constructing a relationship between civil society and women groups, especially indigenous ones which are Islamic and Kurdish women's movements.<sup>180</sup> The emphasis on women in the media, books, research, and art sphere is visible, women organize and connect with civil society through pressure from the EU.<sup>181</sup> In addition to all these, women, who are a 'civil society front', have shaped their own identities in line with their own choices vis-à-vis the female identity stipulated by the state. Among the women who continue their struggle in the public and private sphere,<sup>182</sup> Kurdish women endeavored to have wider rights in protection against bride price, honor killings, and marriage at a young age. Islamist women have struggled with polygamy and opening mosques equally to women, together with the headscarf ban. While veiled women criticized feminism's understanding of secularism, Kurdish women challenged the Turkishness of feminism.<sup>183</sup> Campaigns such as 'Come on, Girls to School (*Haydi Kızlar Okula*)' and 'Daddy, Send Me to School (*Baba Beni Okula Gönder*)', which were mobilized in the 2000s, were initiated by the state and aimed to eliminate the disadvantaged position of Kurdish women in educational opportunity. It is debatable whether such campaigns targeted or are inclusive of headscarved women.

Regardless, veiled women played a transformative role in society owing to their visibility in society as the Kemalist women did in the first years of the Republic. At this point, the position of women has been instrumentalized and had a pragmatic nature.<sup>184</sup>

Göle described veiled women's position in the modern society as:

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<sup>180</sup> Ömer Çaha, *Sivil Toplum, Aydınlar ve Demokrasi* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1999), 219.

<sup>181</sup> Cesari and Casanova, *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, 37.

<sup>182</sup> Nezahat Altuntaş and Hatice Çakmak Karaçay, "Kesişen Mikro Farklılıklar: Feminizm ve Dayanışma", *Sosyoloji Araştırmalar Dergisi*, V. 12 (2), (2009): 35-50.

<sup>183</sup> Aksu Bora and Asena Günel, *90'larda Türkiye'de Feminizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2021)

<sup>184</sup> Altuntaş, *Feminen İslam, Küresel Çağda Alternatif Bir Kadın Kimliği İnşası*, 69-70.

*They are trying to open the door to a new human, time, and civilization by reminding mysticism instead of the actuality that captivates modern people, protecting privacy against exhibitionism, giving priority to the soul over the individual defined by desires and passions, multiplying worldliness with transcendence, making the heart speak instead of the mind.*<sup>185</sup>

It may be thought that the main concern of veiled women in Türkiye who struggle to enter public life can establish a more comfortable bond with feminism. Third-wave feminist trends, particularly postmodern feminism, which primarily advocates the women's empowerment rather than sexuality, resonates with the Islamic women's struggle.<sup>186</sup> However, most of the Muslim conservative women studies about gender in Türkiye are reluctant to define themselves as 'feminists'. Nazife Şişman and Yıldız Ramazanoğlu can be given as examples. There is a tendency for Islamist women in Türkiye to see feminism as a Western-oriented approach. They argue that the women's rights problems experienced are not due to Islam but to structural traditions. At this point, these conservative women homologize with the 'Islamist feminists' around the world. The difference is that conservative women in Türkiye are prudent about adapting the Qur'ân or Sunnah to today's conditions. The belief is that the Qur'ân is a resource that transcends time, adapts to all conditions, and is even barred from being modified or adapted based on the circumstances.

Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal is the Turkish pioneer of Islamic feminism, identifying as both a Muslim and a feminist. She contends that the existing patriarchal system in prevailing hadiths subordinates women to males, by objecting to the male-centric structure of Islam and offering re-readings of hadiths.<sup>187</sup> To define herself as a 'faithful feminist', Konca Kuriş<sup>188</sup> considered the Qur'ân as the only resource for Islam and disregarded

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<sup>185</sup> Nilüfer Göle, *Melez Desenler, İslam ve Modernlik Üzerine* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2011), 13.

<sup>186</sup> Çaha, *Sivil Toplum Aydınlar ve Demokrasi*, 223.

<sup>187</sup> Şefkatli Tuksal, *Kadın Karşıtı Söylemin İslam Geleneğindeki İzdüşümleri*.

<sup>188</sup> Kuriş was kidnapped on 16 January 1998 by the Kurdish Hezbollah and was killed after being questioned under torture.

religious sects (*tarikât in Turkish*) by the recognition of a ‘rationalist’ attitude. Arguing that worship should be done in Turkish, women can pray during menstruation, there is no command for chador in the Qur’ân, and Friday-Funeral prayers can be performed in a mixed manner between men and women.

In addition to all these, there has been a transition from the times when veiled women are referred to by nicknames such as ‘ninja’ and ‘cork head’ through the media to the ‘veiling fashion’ not only in the political paradigm but also in the social context.<sup>189</sup> Alongside political turmoil in Türkiye and the fact that women are always a medium in the political and social sphere, the ‘headscarf’ problem in particular for Muslim women has shaped the Islamist feminism movement in Türkiye. Veiled women continued their struggle to exist with their own identities in the public and private spheres to demonstrate the ‘new modern’ by wearing headscarves and taking place in working life as ‘mothers’. The ‘new modern’ in which headscarved women are involved, ‘modern privacy’ as Göle puts it, and the process that Eisenstadt examines with the ‘multiple modernity’ theory will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

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<sup>189</sup> Cihan Aktaş, *Bir Hayat Tarzı Eleştirisi: İslamcılık* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2007), 35.

## CHAPTER IV

### MODERNITY AND RELIGION

#### 4.1. A Single Modernity: Modernity As An Ideal Type Against Religion

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the first to use the term ‘modernity’<sup>190</sup> which summarizes two features by examining the concept of modernism with moral, political, and cultural themes: moral pathology and a statement of human possibility. In addition, he associates the concept of modernity with ‘dividedness, alienation, and inner deadness’.<sup>191</sup> The protagonist of Rousseau's book *Heloise* desperately searches for something to hold on to. Even though the main character of the book is trying to hold on to life, everything disappears in an instant with the meaninglessness of the life she is living.<sup>192</sup> According to Marshall Berman, this tense and turbulent atmosphere in which the self-changes occur, is the atmosphere in which modernity is born.<sup>193</sup>

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Karl Marx (1818-1883), and Max Weber (1864-1920) were among the most important pioneers of modernization theory. Karl Marx who is a German philosopher, political economist, and founder of scientific socialism, portrayed modernity as a cage and consequence of capitalism. He argued that experience forms the essence of religious life rather than dogma, and capitalism tends to eliminate this experience for individuals.<sup>194</sup> To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said,

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<sup>190</sup> Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 30.

<sup>191</sup> Joseph Featherstone, “Rousseau and Modernity”, *Daedalus*, V. 107 (3), (1978): 169-170.

<sup>192</sup> Jean - Jacques Rousseau, *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, trans. A. Kadir Paksoy (Doruk Yayınları, 2021), 231-36, 255-36.

<sup>193</sup> Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity*, 31.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

*All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men, at last, are forced to face with sober senses the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men.*<sup>195</sup>

Marx describes this as ‘scary’ at times, because there is no factor left to restrain the modern man because of his desire to achieve his interests.<sup>196</sup> Capitalism gave birth to the first modern societies.<sup>197</sup> He bases the modernization process on the economy and class struggle. The prevailing ideas of a certain period reflect the interests of the capitalist class who own most of society’s wealth and means of production.<sup>198</sup>

*The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself. But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians.*<sup>199</sup>

On the other hand, reflections of the same basis in literature are seen in Walter Benjamin. Like Marx, Benjamin argues that the most basic experience of modern life associated with capitalism is the destruction of holiness. According to Benjamin,

*The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every activity hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has transformed the doctor, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-laborers.*<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity*, 89.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>197</sup> Risto Heiskala, “Marx, the Modern World, and the Problem of Social Regulation”, *Acta Sociologica*, V. 29 (4), (1986): 312.

<sup>198</sup> Ruth A. Wallace and Alison Wolf, *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Continuing the Classical Tradition* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 81-82.

<sup>199</sup> Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Penguin Classics, 2015.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

Along the lines of Marx and Benjamin, Daniel Bell indicated that modernism, which is ‘seductive’ to capitalism, ‘disrupts the unity of culture’<sup>201</sup> and pushes modern people to abandon their moral, political, and economic responsibilities.<sup>202</sup> Hannah Arendt supported that modern life is associated with the ‘glorification of labor’ and higher and more meaningful activities are left with no room.<sup>203</sup> In the twentieth century, the ‘obsession with material needs’, which was felt as a result of deprivation and poverty, was dominated by lower ideals in politics. Governments are thus judged largely on how capable they serve citizen’s material interests.<sup>204</sup>

As such, Weber talks about the ‘purification of the world from magic (*Entzauberung der Welt*)’ and describes the inner depression fueled by modernism as an ‘iron cage’.<sup>205</sup> In Weber’s words, humanity will be trapped in the ‘iron cage’ of bureaucracy and rational-legal authority.<sup>206</sup> He underlines that modernity causes the ‘disenchantment’ of the world based on two characteristics: elimination of magic and increase of power and scale of formal means – ends rationalities, science, bureaucracies, and policy-making.<sup>207</sup> In this regard, according to Max Weber, modernity is grounded on ‘rationalization’ and the bureaucratization of the administrative structure.<sup>208</sup> Modern society bases its system of controlling and regulating its own people and institutions

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<sup>201</sup> Daniel Bell, *The cultural contradictions of capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 19.

<sup>202</sup> Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity*, 171.

<sup>203</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 34.

<sup>204</sup> Mihaela Czobor-Lupp, “Hannah Arendt on the Power of Creative Making in a World of Plural Cultures”, *The European Legacy*, V. 13, (2008): 445-461.

<sup>205</sup> Richard Jenkins, “Disenchantment, Enchantment and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at the Millennium”, *Max Weber Studies*, V. 1 (1), (2000): 12.

<sup>206</sup> Jonathan H. Turner, et al., *The Emergence of Sociological Theory*, trans. Ümit Tatlıcan (Bursa: Sentez Kitap, 2013), 242.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> Lawrence E. Cahoon, *The Dilemma of Modernity: Philosophy, Culture, and Anti-Culture* (State University of New York Press, 1987), 21.

on reason, and not on so-called irrational systems of thought, such as religion or tradition.<sup>209</sup>

In the discussion of Weber about ideal types of authority came into existence of his assumption of prevailing Western hierarchy on development and modernity concepts. According to Weber, bureaucratic authority is conceivable in the modern age based on abstract rules, impersonal and rational characteristics. On the other hand, traditional (patrimonial, arbitrary, rule-based) and charismatic (revolutionary, duty-bound followers, not subjected to rules) authorities belong to the past and are accused of being irrational.<sup>210</sup> However, Weber unconsciously failed to scrutinize the example of colonial India. As a charismatic leader, Mahatma Gandhi is considered as ‘one of the most conspicuous modernizers of Indian politics’ owing to his ability of religious asceticism and sense of commensurate modern life<sup>211</sup> as well as contributing to modernization process of India with self-representation.<sup>212</sup>

In this regard, Mohammed Moussa positioned beyond the clichés reiterations by Orientalist and neo-Orientalist writings and highlighted the paradox of ‘presence’ (patriarchy, despotism, religion) and ‘absence’ (equality, democracy, secularisation).<sup>213</sup> Notwithstanding the sharp division between modernity and tradition and their so-called hallmarks, Moussa refers:

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<sup>209</sup> Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, trans. Zeynep Gürata (Ankara: Ayraç Yayınevi, 1999), 13-16.

<sup>210</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* vol. 2, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1978), 217–45.

<sup>211</sup> Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph, *Gandhi: The Traditional Roots of Charisma* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), vii–viii, 3–5, 39–46.

<sup>212</sup> Lloyd I. Rudolph, “The Modernity of Tradition: The Democratic Incarnation of Caste in India”, *The American Political Science Review*, V. 59 (4), (1965): 981–82, 984–87.

<sup>213</sup> Mohammed Moussa, *Beyond Modernity: Critical Perspectives on Islam, Tradition and Power* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, forthcoming).

*Distinguishing tradition from modernity paradoxically gives rise to a set of characteristics that act as an ideal type to be applied to the processes of modernity and found to exist. Historical continuity or repetitiveness ensure the past finds a place in the present as a result of a variety of acts and institutions.*<sup>214</sup>

Besides the definitions of modernity and tradition, scholars examined the modernization process in distinct societies. Jürgen Habermas asserts that enlightenment modernity characterizes a momentous transition from the static old to the progressive new.<sup>215</sup> Modernity detaches the civilized West from its medieval past and ‘more primitive’ contemporaneous societies.<sup>216</sup> Karl Marx considered modernization process as a ‘transition’ from a ‘declining tradition’ to ‘rising modernity’.<sup>217</sup> In the scholarly literature, the modernization process is disputatious study area just as the characteristics of the modernity.

In this framework, religious, racial, and other subaltern<sup>218</sup> identities of citizens had to be studied. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, the concepts of integration and social solidarity came into prominence.<sup>219</sup> According to Weber, if individuals meet by acting with a sense of ‘belonging’, this is called ‘congregation (*topluluk- Gemeinschaft*)’. If there are ‘interests’ in the relations of individuals, this social formation is called

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures* (MIT Press, 1990), 31.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Reinhard Bendix, “Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, V. 9 (3), (1967): 307–14.

<sup>218</sup> It is identified by Antonio Gramsci in the book *Subaltern Social Groups* as lower classes, the Other, and the social, political, and geographical exclusion of certain groups from the hierarchy of power. (See: Antonio Gramsci, *Subaltern Social Groups: A Critical Edition of Prison Notebook 25*, Columbia University Press)

<sup>219</sup> Wallace and Wolf, *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Continuing the Classical Tradition*.

‘community (*toplum- Gesellschaft*)’.<sup>220</sup> Emile Durkheim emphasizes the importance of cooperation with ‘mechanical’ and ‘organic solidarity’ in the world order where capitalism is the dominant power.<sup>221</sup> Industrial societies have ‘organic solidarity’ based on people’s interdependence and modernization whereas pre-industrial societies have ‘mechanical’ ones. In addition, ‘organic solidarity’ is dissimilar from mechanical solidarity in terms of people seeking ‘their own kind’ to build community. It culminates in the replacement of homogeneity by heterogeneity, similarity by difference, collectivism with individualism, common property by private property, and communal responsibility by individual rights.<sup>222</sup>

At this juncture, postmodernism, as it appeared in the 1970s, disaffirmed the essentialism of citizen’s identity and laid emphasis on the discourse to struct norms and values in the political and cultural areas. Postmodernism, building upon the work of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, challenged ‘absolute truth’ which is an ‘illusion’ supported by modernism and traditionalism to promote an advantage of certain groups over other groups.<sup>223</sup> Postmodernism originated from the distinct dimension of oppression towards pluralism such as cultural, religious, and sexual oriented identity. The discovery of the plurality of cultures had to be understood as an opportunity rather than a ‘harmless experience’:

*When we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and consequently at the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with the destruction of our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others, that*

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<sup>220</sup> Max Weber, *Soziologische Grundbegriffe*, trans. Medeni Beyaztaş (İstanbul: Bakış Yayınları, 2002), 79.

<sup>221</sup> Martin Slattery, *Key Ideas in Sociology*, trans. Ümit Tatlıcan (Bursa: Sentez Yayıncılık, 2007), 114.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Sunday Israel Akinde, “Postmodernism and Industry”, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, V. 6, (7), (July 2016): 55.

*we ourselves are an 'other' among others.*<sup>224</sup>

#### **4.2. Multiple Modernities: Redefinition of 'The Role of Religion and Modernity'**

The developments after World War II refuted the hegemonic premises of the Western program of modernity by giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological structures that were influenced by cultural and historical experiences.<sup>225</sup> According to Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, the multiple modernities' concept refers to: (i) assuming a better understanding of the contemporary world and modernity by reconstitution of theory within various nation-states, cultural and ideological groups, (ii) acknowledging the existence of non-Western and reflexivity patterns of modernity influenced by globalization.<sup>226</sup> Marx, Durkheim, and Weber assumed European modernity to prevail throughout the world. However, after World War II, structural differentiation of Western modernity developed in the sphere of family life, education, mass communication, and so on.<sup>227</sup> The fixed and local modernity theory gives rise to the trans-local and evolving one through the independent involvement of society in the social and political context.

The term of modernity and its so-called basic narratives and principles had been restructured leading to its crystallization and 'disenchantment' of the world.<sup>228</sup> The interpretation of the modernity concept pronounced the anti-Western themes within different nation-states among communists, fascist, and fundamentalist groups. The breaking down of the conventional legitimation of political systems by offering up numerous options for a new order through rebellions and uprisings marks a watershed moment.<sup>229</sup> The main components of these protests which are equality, freedom, and

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<sup>224</sup> Donald A. Ritchie, "Walter Lippmann and the American Century", *The Oral History Review*, V. 9 (1), (1981): 180-85, 212-16.

<sup>225</sup> Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities", *Daedalus*, V. 129 (1), (2000): 1-2.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

justice became the core characteristics of modern projects. Even though the identification of Soviet types of modernity as ‘alternative’ and ‘distinct’, there were different conceptions of states as in the strong homogenizing ‘laïcisation’ of France and strong aristocratic semifeudal authority in Britain.<sup>230</sup> In this framework, fascist and nationalistic ideologies aimed to restructure the characteristics of modern collectivities.<sup>231</sup> In this regard, the basic core of nation-states interrelated with the tendency to such ideologies of violence, terror, and war had been questioned as ‘traumas’ of modernity.<sup>232</sup> Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt underlines that these states are based on collective identity and exemplifies the Holocaust and French Revolution as an indicator of the destructive aspect of modernity by means of exclusive citizenship components.<sup>233</sup>

Eisenstadt argued that the first radical crystallization of different types of modernity took place in America rather than in Muslim societies.<sup>234</sup> The discussion over the different institutional patterns of America compared with Britain and France resulted in the transformation of European hypotheses. By the effect of globalization and cultural interaction, the movements occurred vis-à-vis modern nation-states. Eisenstadt categorizes these movements into three groups: movements in Western countries, fundamentalist movements, and ethnic movements. Firstly, in the 1970s, the women and ecological movements of the anti-Vietnam War developed in Western countries based on post-modern and multicultural tendencies. Secondly, antimodern and anti-Western fundamentalist movements are rooted in religious communities such as Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and Protestant Christians. Thirdly, ethnic movements emerged in the Balkans, Africa, former republics of the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.<sup>235</sup> All these movements resulted in redefining the discourse of modernity

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 17.

in their own themes in relation to de-Westernization impoverishing the monopoly of the West on modernity.<sup>236</sup> As a consequence of globalization, the local and fixed modernity framework went beyond wider and changing doctrine. In this context, the multiple modernity concept was developed by Eisenstadt for a better understanding of several nations and cultures on a micro and macro level including fascist and fundamentalist movements.

Instead of speaking of multiple modernities, some scholars such as Peter Van der Veer offered a framework to remark the ‘multiplicity of histories’ through ‘the sense of the uniqueness and power of European modernity together with a sense of the complexity and variation of its clash with historical processes in many parts of the world’.<sup>237</sup> By considering the past as a ‘construction’ and plural interpretations of event,<sup>238</sup> Charles Taylor suggested the usage term of ‘alternative modernities’ rather than simply speaking of ‘modernity’.<sup>239</sup> In this regard, the ‘modernity’ and ‘multiple modernity’ concept should be scrutinized on grounds of ethnicity and religion for theoretical underpinnings.

Religion has always been a debatable subject to interpret the dynamics of specific alterations in the international system. Edward Shils observed the marginalization of ‘religious’ intellectuals in 1960s by shifting the notion of sacred and religious concern to technological, organizational and political skills of liberals and technocrats.<sup>240</sup> In the literature, some scholars such as Danish theologian and writer Søren Kierkegaard

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>237</sup> Peter Van der Veer, “The Global History of “Modernity””, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, V. 41 (3), (1998): 285–94.

<sup>238</sup> Gurinder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave, 2007), 4.

<sup>239</sup> Charles Taylor, “Nationalism and Modernity”: *In The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 233.

<sup>240</sup> Edward Shils, “The Intellectuals and the Powers: Some Perspectives for Comparative Analysis”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, V. 1 (1), (1958): 5–22.

perceived religion as believing in something that offends the minds.<sup>241</sup> Moreover, Jürgen Habermas who took into account the religion and modernity relationship within his work, *Religion and Rationality*, underlines that having an improved living standard eliminated the dependence of individuals on supernatural forces and the need for religious support unlike in agrarian basis of lives.<sup>242</sup> By recognizing religion as a way of promoting intact values, ‘the solution to the problems surrounding radical fundamentalism and radical secularism is to propose a dialogue involving the inclusion of foreign minority cultures into civil society.’<sup>243</sup>

Samuel Huntington’s notion of ‘West versus the Rest’<sup>244</sup> considered the Muslim world as a ‘monolithic bloc’. However, culture and religious traditions are far from the monotype and uniformed belief and practice.<sup>245</sup> Cultural creativity and political autonomy has been considered as core ingredients of the modern society. The so-called impediment of ‘Islamic modernity’, which is the idea of primordial tradition, needs to be understood as a dynamic factor in providing social cohesiveness in communities.<sup>246</sup> I suggest underlining the role of religion as a driving force in the modernization process through constructive dialogue between two dimensions.

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<sup>241</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Begrebet Angest*, trans. Walter Lowrie, (London: Oxford University Press, 1944)

<sup>242</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 104.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>244</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”, *Foreign Affairs*, V. 72 (3), (1993): 22–49.

<sup>245</sup> Dale F. Eickelman, “Islam and the Languages of Modernity”, *Daedalus*, V. 129 (1), (2000): 122.

<sup>246</sup> Armando Salvatore, “Tradition and Modernity within Islamic Civilisation and the West”: *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud, et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 5.

In the international politics discipline, the first defining moment for religion to be back into the global public sphere was Iranian Revolution in 1978–9.<sup>247</sup> Bryan S. Turner exemplifies the description of Michel Foucault about this revolution as new ‘political spirituality’.<sup>248</sup> Especially after the 1980s, Muslim society witnessed a new era to blend modern characteristics within the world. Muslim actors started to use cinema, literature, media, and economy as a tool in the modernization process. At this juncture, Eisenstadt takes into consideration ‘autonomous participation and access of the society’ as an impulse of a nascent global movement.<sup>249</sup> Dale Eickelman defines the transition process of Muslim societies in as ‘Mecca or mechanization’<sup>250</sup> by example of ‘militantly secularizing reformers’, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Pahlavi Shahs of Iran.<sup>251</sup> Besides the well-known Iranian Revolution in 1979, religious sentiment redounded the revolutions in Latin America to be contrary cases to the traditional characteristics of modernization process.<sup>252</sup> Catholics in Peru and Evangelicals in Guatemala provided the numerous networks of organizational capacities and religious change as clergy groups.<sup>253</sup>

Apropos of the religion’s function in modern civilizations linked with the public and private spheres. According to historian Dominique Colas, the growth of the early modern public sphere in Europe was predicated on religious discourse through blasphemy laws, religious holidays, and public prayers.<sup>254</sup> Discursive, participative and performative religious public space promoted the mass education, proliferation of

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<sup>247</sup> Turner, *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State*, 104.

<sup>248</sup> Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution. Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005)

<sup>249</sup> Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*, 1-2.

<sup>250</sup> Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Macmillan Pub Co, 1969), 405.

<sup>251</sup> Eickelman, *Islam and the Languages of Modernity*, 119.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

media, civil society, and means of communications of religious intellectuals.<sup>255</sup> In this regard, religion needs to be scrutinized in its role in providing ‘social integration’ and ‘cohesion’, ‘stabilising the lifeworld’ and contributing actively to modernization process ‘as a culture’ in terms of neofunctionalist view emphasized.<sup>256</sup>

In the Islamic framework, Max Weber supported that the Islamic societies had more unity than the Western societies in Middle Age, and experienced ‘political unity’ – *Kulturreligion* in Weberian view.<sup>257</sup> He observed it in India under the influence of Islam through the Great Mogul Akbar.<sup>258</sup> According to Weber, even though there was great influence of Islam in the political sphere, he tackled the lack of instinctive discipline of Calvinism to establish an organized Islamic ecclesial organization. He also highlighted the obstacle of Caesaropapist for Islamic access to modern lifestyle by preventing industrialization.<sup>259</sup> Beyond the discussion of Bernard Lewis about ‘What went wrong in the Middle East’<sup>260</sup>, Eickelman evaluates the alternative methods to resist to the modernization and the enlightenment beside ‘green menace’ of ‘Jihad’ in ‘a globalized McWorld’.<sup>261</sup>

In Türkiye’s framework, the multiple modernity theory of Eisenstadt coincides with Ömer Çaha’s emphasis on civil society which is crucial for both the Islamist and veiled women movements. The power of society’s participation in politics had been extenuated but rather than the *sine qua non* or even significant.<sup>262</sup> Considering this,

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 130-132.

<sup>256</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 87-125.

<sup>257</sup> Bryan S. Turner, “Max Weber and the Sociology of Religion”, *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, V. 70, 276 (2), (2016): 142.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>260</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (Orion Pub Co, 2002)

<sup>261</sup> Eickelman, *Islam and the Languages of Modernity*, 122.

<sup>262</sup> Çaha, *Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women’s Movements in a Muslim Society*.

one of the momentous instances in Türkiye is the covered Muslim woman deputy from Istanbul: Merve Kavakçı. On May 2, 1999, Kavakçı who is a representative from the pro-Islamic Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*)<sup>263</sup> intended to take the oath. Even her presence in Parliament induced an extant public dispute. The veil dawned on as a threat to secular and modern Türkiye.<sup>264</sup> This can be observed in *Sabah*'s headline, one of the best-selling newspapers in Türkiye: 'Protests in Tehran and Palestine revealed the forces governing Kavakçı'.<sup>265</sup> Living and studying in the United States, and being educated and divorced at the same time is settled vis-à-vis well-accepted codes of Turkish conservative womanhood. Göle considers this example as the non-Western context of modernity.<sup>266</sup> Here the modernization process was not only a demolishing of the primordial tie of Türkiye from tradition but also a reconstruction of gender in the Kemalist project. In this regard, the example of Merve Kavakçı reveals the dilemma of abstract women's identity referred to by Islamism and *laïcité*.

In the context of secularism and democracy, Cesari emphasizes that there is a 'Western form of secularism' based on two characteristics: 'protection of all religions by law' and 'equidistance of the state vis-a-vis all religions'.<sup>267</sup> In Türkiye's situation, even though the religion of Islam restricts private spheres, Cesari underlines that it is not enough to define Türkiye as a secular state because there is no ground for equal treatment vis-à-vis all religions. The debate is about the possibility to have a 'one size

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<sup>263</sup> Pro-Islamic Virtue Party dominated Turkish politics in the 1990s and banned in 2001 to accuse of being 'soft on religious fundamentalism' in Türkiye. Founders of Virtue Party were also active members of Welfare Party.

<sup>264</sup> Governments in Türkiye have been agents and reproducers to assert traditional narratives of womanhood, regardless of which political party is established. Regarding Merve Kavakçı's case, the statements of the founder of the Democratic Left Party Bülent Ecevit 'Bring this lady into lines!' and Democratic Party Chairman Süleyman Demirel 'Agent, Provocateur' should be cited.

<sup>265</sup> Sabah Newspaper, "Merve'yi konuştular", 9 May 1999. <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1999/05/09/p01.html> [09.08.2022]

<sup>266</sup> Göle, *Snapshots of Islamic Modernities*, 91–117.

<sup>267</sup> Cesari and Casanova, *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, 4.

fits all' model of secularity.<sup>268</sup> Muslims put their 'non-liberal' agency in bringing their public religious claims and actions such as halal food, prayer rooms in public administration, and Islamic marriage.<sup>269</sup> In Türkiye, 'universalist modernisation' had been constructed 'which is goal-oriented according to a preconceived framework, moving along a certain direction and according to a relatively fixed model of functional integration and development, in which one type of society is conceived as being replaced by another.'<sup>270</sup> According to Altuntaş-Çakır, Kemalist modernisation constructed a public sphere on the ideological grounds of the duality of the traditional and the modern in order to replace the former with the latter as women's bodies and the *hijāb* (headscarf) are the most agonizing cases in this dichotomy.<sup>271</sup> By disposing of Islamic traditions as the principal adversary position linked with '*irtica*' (reactionism), Kemalist modernity invented its own tradition through the project of modernization. This type of modernization process and the gendering of politics proposed the appearance of the black *çarşaf* (chador) and later headscarf as reactionary, uncivilised, and a threat to modernity.<sup>272</sup>

Islamism, on the other hand, was increasingly visible in political realms in the 1980s, as Göle emphasizes, and may be seen of a critical entrance of Muslim agency into contemporary spheres of social life by reexamining the idea of modernity. In this regard, she underlines that Islamists in Türkiye had started to win elections, write best-selling books, affirm public visibilities, and invent a new Muslim lifestyle. Even though the compatibility between Islam and modernity is debatable, this process results in the redefinition of the veiled women who intend to be both Muslim and

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>269</sup> Göle and Billaud, *Islamic Difference and the Return of Feminist Universalism*.

<sup>270</sup> Rajni Kothari, "Tradition and Modernity Revisited", *Government and Opposition*, V. 3 (3), (Summer 1968): 276.

<sup>271</sup> Altuntaş-Çakır, *The Hijāb between Competing Masculinities in Contemporary Turkey*, 1-7.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

contemporary by referring to an alternative model for Western feminism that prioritizes personality over femininity.<sup>273</sup>

Besides religion, the second and last structure of modernity disputes is ethnicity. In the liberal states, the modernity theory is mainly associated with the culture of minority and majority groups. Minority rights appeared as ‘benign neglect’ in the liberal tradition.<sup>274</sup> Divisive issues between minorities and majorities are mainly about language rights, self-governance, political participation, and educational program by expecting institutional embodiment from minorities in legal spheres such as schools, government, and media.<sup>275</sup> In this regard, Rawls underlines that ‘even though a well-ordered society is divided and pluralistic, public agreement on questions of political and social justice supports ties of civic friendship and secures the bonds of association’.<sup>276</sup>

Even though the discrepancy of state and ethnicity in a liberal society,<sup>277</sup> Kymlicka emphasize the neutrality of liberal states to maintain respect for the ethnocultural identities of their citizens.<sup>278</sup> Intellectual nihilism in the post-modern theories of social sciences is modulated by optimists who maintain a ‘salvation chance’ from an ‘iron cage’. This cage could be softer into a ‘rubber cage’ through material progress and selective institutional reforms.<sup>279</sup> The systematic and formal rejection of the Enlightenment ideology of modernity in India is a crucial instance.<sup>280</sup> Contrary to

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<sup>273</sup> Göle, *Snapshots of Islamic Modernities*.

<sup>274</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 50-76.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>276</sup> John Rawls, “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory”, *Journal of Philosophy*, V. 77 (9), (1980): 515-72.

<sup>277</sup> Michael Walzer, *What It Means to be an American* (New York: Marsilio, 1992), 100-101.

<sup>278</sup> Will Kymlicka and Magda Opalski, *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 31.

<sup>279</sup> Singh, *A Life-World of Disenchantment: Modernity, Ethnicity and Pluralism*, 157.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

Toennies's theory about how modernization neutralizes ethnic diversities by social evolution from *Gemeinschaft* (community, *topluluk* in Turkish) to *Gesellschaft* (society, *toplum* in Turkish)<sup>281</sup>, scholars now consider the crystallization of ethnic consciousness rather than de-ethnicization. Ethnicity awareness persists in spite of the modernization process by having a common and determinative life and purposes for the group members.<sup>282</sup> Neo-Marxism tackles that ethnicity does not take into consideration as it deserves in capitalism and socialism.

Accordingly, concerning ethnic consciousness, the bourgeoisie may pursue a policy of dividing the working class along ethnic lines.<sup>283</sup> Modernists such as Gellner supported that the 'culture of modern nationalism' supplants the 'culture of ethnicity'.<sup>284</sup> Modern society is distinguished by technological advancement, the presence of formal institutions, civil culture, and mobility.<sup>285</sup> In this framework, the modernity and ethnicity concepts have mutual interaction in three schemes: cultural, organizational, and political. Firstly, it underlines the ethnic diversities in a cultural manner. Even though the modern code of food, dress, and architecture, the ethnic trends and patterns have lately become popular and overshadowed modern culture. Secondly, informal and formal ethnic organizations provided ethnic mobilization and consciousness. And lastly, in the political sphere, modernity led politicization of ethnicity like in the example of the Indian ethnic uprisings. The demand for the ethno-linguistic reorganization of the Indian state occurred in the modernization process. Some scholars emphasize that this kind of ethnic movement along with democracy, secularism, and human rights could be understood as the 'human face' of modernity.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Werner J. Cahnman, "Toennies and Social Change", *Social Forces*, V. 47 (2), (1968): 136.

<sup>282</sup> S. L. Sharma, "The Saliency of Ethnicity in Modernization: Evidence from India", *Sociological Bulletin*, V. 39 (1/2), (1990): 33.

<sup>283</sup> Edna Bonacich, "Class Approaches To Ethnicity and Race", *Insurgent Sociologist*, V. 10 (2), (October 1980): 9–23.

<sup>284</sup> Sharma, The Saliency of Ethnicity in Modernization: Evidence from India, 39.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

### 4.3. Gender, Modernity, and Religion

Advancing a broader theory and systematic thinking on modernity, gender, and religion, the root of modernity needs to be highlighted. As a modernisation force, a new intellectual and philosophical movement occurred, largely based in Europe from the mid-late 1600s to late 1700s. ‘The Age of Reason’ or simply ‘Enlightenment’ had oriented as the supposed origin of modernity by the ‘progressive ideals such as religious toleration, hostility to superstition and a reverence for knowledge’.<sup>287</sup> Modern democracy rooted in the theories of Enlightenment thinkers, notably John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith and David Hume, based on reason, individualism, skepticism, and science to progress. The main principles of Enlightenment, such as liberty, freedom, limited government and separation of church and states, conducted the establishment of modern societies by transition from community to society, religion to freedom of thought, common property to individual ownership. Classical sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies contends that rational ‘*Gesellschaft*’ society eventually dominates the older traditional ‘*Gemeinschaft*’ world as a form of progress for a better society.<sup>288</sup>

As the Enlightenment thinkers, the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke should be tackled to put a timeline about how literature about the subject is rethought and contextualized. In Rousseau’s descriptions, there are two main characteristics of women’s identity: mother and wife.<sup>289</sup> Therefore, the woman’s biggest purpose in their life is to marry a man and have children. Women, according to Rousseau, are less sensible than males and must rely on men for their well-being. He assumed women’s

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<sup>287</sup> S. J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and religion: The myths of modernity* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2018), 3.

<sup>288</sup> Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, trans. Charles P. Loomis (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1957)

<sup>289</sup> Hatice Karakuş Öztürk, “Mary Wollstonecraft’ın Kadın Haklarının Gerekçelendirilmesi Kitabında Rousseau Eleştirisi”, *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Kırşehir Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, V. 18 (2): 474.

aspirations for the right to education as men would diminish the superior features of women.<sup>290</sup> According to Rousseau,

*Once it is demonstrated that man and woman are not, and should not be constituted the same, either in character or in temperament, it follows that they should not have the same education. In following the directions of nature they must act together but they should not do the same things; their duties have a common end, but the duties themselves are different and consequently also the tastes that direct them. After having tried to form the natural man, let us also see, in order not to leave our work incomplete, how the woman is to be formed who suits this man.*<sup>291</sup>

On the other hand, Locke argued that boys and girls should not have the same physical and mental education by declaring ‘the difference of sex requires different treatment’.<sup>292</sup> Echoing Aristoteles who considers men as political animals and women as shaped by nature for the necessities of household chores, the Enlightenment thinkers manifested gender hierarchies.<sup>293</sup> This approach is witheringly similar to the literature of Islamic scholars, which is perceived as so-called non-modernity.

After the Enlightenment, the rise of modernity occurred in distinct sphere such as using modern technologies through mass media. The modernization and globalization process, particularly French women who experienced the French Revolution, culminated with women’s apparency in schools, workplaces, and art. Notwithstanding, as was mentioned earlier, class consciousness and women’s rights movements accelerated after the 1970s. Women had been marginalized on behalf of equal pay for

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<sup>290</sup> Mehmet Kolay, “Kant ve Rousseau’nun İnsan Doğası ve Eğitim Anlayışları” (Dissertation. Dumlupınar University, Social Science Institute, 2015), 35.

<sup>291</sup> Jone Johnson Lewis, "Rousseau's Take on Women and Education" *ThoughtCo*, Jul. 31, 2021. [thoughtco.com/rousseau-on-women-and-education-3528799](https://www.thoughtco.com/rousseau-on-women-and-education-3528799) [09.08.2022]

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 63.

equal work, unionization, and representation in top management<sup>294</sup> at the workplace as well as their subaltern identity. In this context, women's groups carry out protests along with the different groups of 'other' who receive fewer opportunities for representation in the political sphere such as gays, black people, and ethnic minorities. At this point, it is useful to focus on studying different feminist discourses in order to understand how postmodern feminism adds to the literature. While liberal feminism emphasizes the equality of men and women and the sexual freedom of women, Marxist theory vis-à-vis modernity concept intersects with gender on the ground of socialist and Marxist feminism. Marxist feminists have also worked on women and household labor relations and objected to the trivialization of women's domestic work. As radical feminists criticized male hegemony over the female body, socialist feminism had been criticized for problematic presupposing social relations regarding child-rearing as 'women's responsibilities'. Socialist feminists stood against the exploitation of women's labor by the capitalist system and highlight the need for women's revolution by rejecting domestic responsibilities and child-rearing.

However, in the emerging third wave of feminism, postmodern feminism has touched upon the issues of culture and sub-identity, which are not often seen in all these feminist movements, and criticizes the standardization of femininity and women's problems. Its major departure from the distinct feminist thoughts is that gender is socially constructed through language.<sup>295</sup> As postmodernism criticizes modernism to consider an individual's life and identity as standard or ideal, the postmodern feminist approach has also criticized feminist approaches for ignoring particular women groups hence whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality.<sup>296</sup> The postmodern philosophy and feminist theory offer a deconstruction of the Enlightenment beliefs by reconstitution

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<sup>294</sup> Dürkiye Kozlu, "Modernizm Sonrası Postmodern Hareket İçinde Kadının Yeri", *Art-e Sanat Dergisi*, V. 2 (2009): 1-15.

<sup>295</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

<sup>296</sup> Ülker Yükselbaba, "Feminist Perspektiften Hukuk", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Mecmuası*, V. 74 (1), (2016): 135.

of gender, self, and culture.<sup>297</sup> According to Fatmagül Berktaş, postmodernist epistemology values heterogeneity and represents a strong challenge to the monistic notions of ‘man’ and ‘woman’.<sup>298</sup> In this regard, postmodern feminism argues that a pluralistic understanding of social identity should be adopted rather than a particular categorization of identities, values, and rights. Consequently, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientations, and ethnicity are crucial to understanding and solving women’s problems in political, social, economic, and cultural contexts. The idea of a universal or ideal woman’s identity, rights, and challenges disclaimed the rights of third-world/black/lesbian/Muslim women which taken into consideration in postmodern feminism.<sup>299</sup> Feminist futures can lie in the path of postmodern philosophy.

*With identity thus re-conceptualized, it may be easier to understand the need for, and to summon the courage to challenge, groups that are after all, in one sense, ‘home’ to us, in the name of the parts of us that are not made at home. This takes a great deal of energy, and arouses intense anxiety. The most one could expect is that we will dare to speak against internal exclusions and marginalizations, that we might call attention to how the identity of ‘the group’ has been centered on the intersectional identities of a few.<sup>300</sup>*

In this regard, the ‘intersectionality’ theory could be a framework for a solution to find the middle ground in the women’s rights movement. The context was coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw who refers to white feminism’s need to include the experiences of disadvantaged women groups such as women of color, and immigrant women for

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<sup>297</sup> Jane Flax, “Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory”, *Signs*, V. 12 (4), (1987): 621–43.

<sup>298</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2022), 69.

<sup>299</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, trans. Tuncay Birkan (Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, Ankara, 2004), 86-87.

<sup>300</sup> Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*.

the social and political egalitarian context.<sup>301</sup> This analytical framework focuses on the identification of multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage including sex, race, class, religion, and physical appearance.<sup>302</sup> Iris Marion Young also suggests that ‘differences must be acknowledged in order to find unifying social justice issues that create coalitions that aid in changing society for the better’.<sup>303</sup> The term contributes to evaluating how different domination forms such as racism, sexism, and ageism can be compounded, at the same time has become known as the ‘coloniality of power’.<sup>304</sup> It assumes a new way of interpreting daily life where disadvantaged groups address specific concerns. The different scholars adjusted their theory with intersectionality both on the ground of narrative account<sup>305</sup> and political embodiment.<sup>306</sup>

In the framework of pluralism and gender narrative, intersectionality theory has three dimensions: structural intersectionality, political intersectionality, and representational intersectionality. Firstly, structural intersectionality signifies how minority women groups have different challenges and life experiences than white women due to ethnicity and gender. Secondly, political intersectionality considers gender-imbalanced political representation and racist policies towards specific groups of women. The last dimension Crenshaw tackled is representational intersectionality

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<sup>301</sup> International Women’s Development Agency, “What Does Intersectional Feminism Actually Mean?”, <https://iwda.org.au/what-does-intersectional-feminism-actually-mean/> [17.05.2022]

<sup>302</sup> Abigail Tucker, “How Much is Being Attractive Worth?”, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-much-is-being-attractive-worth-80414787/> [22.07.2022]

<sup>303</sup> Anna Carastathis, et al. *Intersectionality: Origins, Contestations, Horizons* (University of Nebraska Press, 2016)

<sup>304</sup> Anibal Quijano, et al., “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America”, *Nepantla*, V. 1 (3), (2000): 533–580.

<sup>305</sup> See: Alice Ludvig, Marjo Buitelaar and Baukje Prins.

<sup>306</sup> See: Nira Yuval-Davis, Mieke Verlooand and Anna Bredström.

concentrates on the cultural construction of women of color.<sup>307</sup> As gender cannot be seen apart from the culture,

*Racial-ethnic, international feminist, and deconstructionist micropolitical and performative accounts of gender persuasively document the centrality of cultural and political meanings in constructions of gender as well as problems in generalizing, universalizing, and seeing gender as a single identity.*<sup>308</sup>

In the ‘capitalist/patriarchal western-centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system’<sup>309</sup>, the intersectionality concept is laid down in the world Franz Fanon describes:<sup>310</sup>

*Continuous conflicts exist between what the Hegelian dialectic characterises as the ‘I’ and the ‘Other’. The ‘I’s in the imperialist/capitalist/patriarchal global system are Western, heterosexual, masculine, metropolitan elites and/or Westernised, heterosexual, masculine elites in the peripheries of the world-system. Internal colonialism exists as much in the centre as in the periphery.*<sup>311</sup>

Beyond the juncture of gender and culture, religion beforehand took into consideration as a disincentive factor in terms of women issue. Specifically, within the context of Islam, democracy and modernity promotion is used as a tool to ensure women’s right

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<sup>307</sup> Crenshaw, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.

<sup>308</sup> Nancy J. Chodorow, “Gender as a Personal and Cultural Construction”, *Signs*, V. 20 (3), (1995): 516.

<sup>309</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel, “Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality”, *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, V. 1 (1).

<sup>310</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel, et al., “‘Racism’, intersectionality and migration studies: framing some theoretical reflections”, *Identities*, V. 22 (6), (2015): 635-652.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

in the Muslim society to ‘save’ veiled women from so-called ‘backwardness’ and ‘oppression’.<sup>312</sup> Whilst modernity is the process ‘endogenous’ to the Western tradition, the real question is that whether or not Islam is a religion to challenge the Western code of modernity and democracy. The truth is, even though the foresights of the Enlightenment thinkers, the process of transition beyond the Islamic countries to the democratic political system had not been smooth. The development process to ‘better’ society had been distressingness, not just in the Muslim societies, but also in the Catholic countries where authoritarian systems existed in the 1960s. ‘Gender issues’ such as the abortion right, the right to divorce, and sale of contraceptives had been divisive religiopolitical topic in the Catholic societies because of the Church’s voice. Despite the consistent resistance of Catholic Church, divorce was first introduced in Spain in 1981, in Brazil in 1977, in Italy in 1970 with the effect of legal trend within the world with regards to gender equality.<sup>313</sup> Yet, most Latin American countries still have abortion ban and/or restrictive laws to allow only in the case of save the mother’s life.<sup>314</sup> According to the surveys, Catholics and Protestants mostly maintain the ‘traditionalist/fundamentalist’ position vis-à-vis abortion.<sup>315</sup> While abortion to be legalized was demanded by the women as a constitutional right in most of the European countries, surprisingly the majorities of Latin American population supported the abortion ban because their view about it is morally wrong.<sup>316</sup> However, ‘faithful dissent’ population of Latin American countries disapprove the Church’s discourses and actions on the other ‘gender’ topics such as divorce, contraception,

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<sup>312</sup> After the George Bush declared the ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan, Laura Bush stated: ‘the fight against terrorism is also the fight for the rights and dignity of women’. (See more: Kim Berry, “The Symbolic Use Of Afghan Women In The War On Terror”, *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, V. 27 (2), (2003): 137–60.)

<sup>313</sup> Cesari and Casanova, *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, 53-54.

<sup>314</sup> Mala Htun, *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce and the Family under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>316</sup> Cesari and Casanova, *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, 56.

same-sex marriage.<sup>317</sup> Albeit the shift to more egalitarian discourse of church after the 1960s and unforeseeable election of Papa Francis in 2013, the division between church and secular morality on gender issue had grown.<sup>318</sup> Considered from this point of view, all religious traditions could tend to create ‘patriarchal reaction against global threat of gender equality and feminism’<sup>319</sup> or simply social transformation. Nevertheless, while the Islamic feminism oriented the re-understanding of the religious doctrine, misperceived movement of Catholic feminists pursue to reform the issue of human sexuality such as abortion, contraception and homosexuality by assuming misguidance of church teachings.<sup>320</sup> By taking into account the women’s rights history of Latin American countries and Catholic feminist’s efforts, women’s struggle against patriarchal norms throughout the history is not incidental to Islamic doctrines.

Second dilemma is that if the sum of removing all religion from the equation of women issue, the women’s challenge could not be solved. Marxist well-known perspective, which considers religion as ‘the opium of the people’<sup>321</sup>, overlooks the position of modernity in terms of non-Western women. Specifically, the veiled women as the victims of modernity had been in political struggles for recognition of their identity in the hierarchical system of modernity. Modernity needs to perceive as a bulwark for veiled women who choose their ways of being-in-the-world. To provide a thorough critique, ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’ is both used to justify women’s disempowerment and subordination by male nationalist elites. While France is an outstanding epitomist of Western modernity, the veil ban in the country shoring up the *laïcité* resulted in the spillover effect that starts from the political to sociological and even economic struggle

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>320</sup> Patricia Madigan, “Women Negotiating Modernity: A Gender Perspective on Fundamentalisms in Catholicism and Islam”, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, V. 20 (1), (2009): 1-20.

<sup>321</sup> Karl Marx, “A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction”: *Marx: Early Political Writings*, ed. Joseph J. O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57–70.

of Muslim women in the Europe. Through putting women to the position of ‘rendered objects in the name of modernity’<sup>322</sup>, the modernity echoes the implication of accused religious dichotomy to create the otherness. To draw attention to the patriarchal roots of the Western modernity, Türkiye is a descriptive case as a modern country which has mostly Muslim population.

To outline better framework, the thesis notes that even though their diverse structure, Kemalist modernity paradigm is compatible with French *laïcité*. The militaristic, top-down, authoritarian structure of Kemalist modernity is distinct from French *laïcité* which developed through civil and social processes.<sup>323</sup> However, besides the state’s passiveness towards religion based on ‘passive secularism’ in the U.S. and Anglo-Saxon countries, the image of secular state and *laïcité* emerged in France and Türkiye as ‘assertive secularism’ to ‘exclude religion in the public sphere’.<sup>324</sup> New *laik* Republic of Türkiye demonstrated the combination of secularism and Kemalist ideology to aim the emancipation of religious dogma and de-Islamization of Türkiye for progressive sphere.<sup>325</sup> In that regard, Nilüfer Göle does remark the women’s role, specifically through the prohibition of niqab (*çarşaf*) in 1925 as an attempt for ‘civilization conversion’,<sup>326</sup> Kemalist modernization and western style of life. Broadly, state-centric, anti-religious and authoritarian Kemalist modernity aims to ‘ensure the Islamic movements infringement on political sphere’, and intervenes with ‘emergence of any civil initiative’<sup>327</sup> as the identity and rights of Islamist women. Accordingly, in the next chapter, the thesis will throw light over the empowerment of veiled women in

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<sup>322</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Identity and its discontents: women and the nation”: *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York : Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>323</sup> Nevzet Çelik, “From Secularism to Laïcité and Analyzing Turkish Authoritarian Laiklik”, *Insight Turkey*, V. 20 (1), (2018): 201.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>326</sup> Göle, *Islam in public: New visibilities and new imaginaries*, 183.

<sup>327</sup> Çelik, *From Secularism to Laïcité and Analyzing Turkish Authoritarian Laiklik*, 204.

pluralistic public sphere and civil society to subjugate Kemalist modernist and restrictive traditionalist ethos.



## CHAPTER V

### GENDER AND MULTIPLE MODERNITIES IN TÜRKİYE: THE CASE OF HAZAR

As ‘first modern Muslim country’, Türkiye provides an important non-western country case to examine the opposing assumptions proposed by three prominent modernity concepts: the ‘classical modernization theory’, the ‘neo-modernization theory’ and the ‘multiple modernities paradigm’.<sup>328</sup> The combining Islamic principles with capitalism and liberal democracy<sup>329</sup> open the way for new Turkish understanding of modernity derived from ‘multiple modernities paradigm’. Whilst Kemalist modernity and state feminism had used the veiled women as a means of representing idealized female image, veiled women embody this alternative modernity settings through their way of life. Türkiye’s nationalist discourse utilized the position of women in the Republican period through instrumentalization by obtaining ‘endowed’ women’s rights.<sup>330</sup> After the women’s movement lost its force, Kemalism encouraged women to individualize and reclaim their independence and dignity.<sup>331</sup> In this regard, how the veiled women’s quest for recognition of ‘right to be modern and pious at the same time’ reflected upon the Western type of modernity and traditionally defined Islamic identity? For proposing a better sociological conceptualization, it is important to critically apply the ‘multiple modernity theory’ in the gender phenomena by tracing the status of veiled women in Türkiye.

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<sup>328</sup> Oğuzhan Göksel, “In Search of a Non-Eurocentric Understanding of Modernization: Turkey as a Case of ‘Multiple Modernities’”, *Mediterranean Politics*, V. 21 (2), (2016): 246-267.

<sup>329</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989).

<sup>330</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Ataerkil Örüntüler: Türk Toplumunda Erkek Egemenliğinin Çözümlemesine Yönelik Notlar”: *1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (İletişim Yayınları. İstanbul, 2015), 367–383.

<sup>331</sup> Yeşim Arat, “1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadın Hareketi: Liberal Kemalizmin Radikal Uzantısı”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, V. 53, (Bahar, 1991): 7-19.

According to Yeşim Arat, an educated, able to speak Western languages, and economically powerful women group was constructed owing to the opportunities of the Kemalist state.<sup>332</sup> It should be marginalizing women to be able to opt out of these criteria. While feminism aims to eliminate the ‘gender hierarchies’<sup>333</sup> in society, the crucial and unnoticeable point is which particular women groups had been marginalized more than the others. Therefore, Kimberlé Crenshaw’s intersectionality framework is needed to apply for conceptualization of the status of veiled women in Türkiye. Even though women groups such as *seculars* had been struggling in different historical times in Türkiye, veiled women are the specific group in a particularly disadvantaged position owing to the Kemalist and JDP governments.

Veiled women in Türkiye had hampered by means of both sexism and *laïcité* at the beginning of the Republic. In this framework, *laïcité* should be considered as a roadblock to veiled women’s identity and rights. While veiled women in Türkiye pursue to maintain life within the boundaries of the Islamic values and norms based on the Qur’ân and Sunnah, there are also certain and decisive rules of ‘femininity’ dictated by the modernization process from the early time of Turkish Republic. If postmodern feminism, which opposes the idealization of middle-class, white, heterosexual women, is considered in the context of Türkiye, it is necessary to criticize the Republican woman identity as secular, nationalist, and statist. At this point it should be noted:

*The divisions between public and private, masculine and feminine, modern and antimodern were not as fixed as they may have appeared. Or rather, they were unmade and remade in new ways.*<sup>334</sup>

In the search for a reason to stem of modernity dilemma, a theoretical perspective does acknowledge the process of subjugation. Rita Felski’s book, *The Gender of Modernity*,

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Serpil Çakır, “Feminizm: Ataerkil İktidarın Eleştirisi”: *19. Yüzyıldan 20. Yüzyıla Modern Siyasal İdeolojiler*, ed. H. Birsen Örs (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016), 415.

<sup>334</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 19.

does offer to scrutinize two sides of a single coin in modern societies: ‘masculine’ rationalization and ‘feminine’ pleasure.<sup>335</sup> In a society based on the logic of profit, the aim of endless fun and seductive commodities are core and reconciled means.<sup>336</sup> In this regard, the scholarly literature alludes to solve modernity dilemma vis-à-vis women emancipation by reformatting the old concepts of democracy. As far as Anne Phillips is concerned, liberal democracy is based on a ‘reasonable level’ of representation and the governance of the people.<sup>337</sup> She underlines that the lack of liberalism based on modernism results in civic activities at the service of special interests or desires and destroys the public importance of politics.<sup>338</sup> The solution is to re-establish politics as a means to make the citizens emancipated rather than to spread modern democracy into the corners of our daily lives.<sup>339</sup> The policy-making resources such as capital and education are disproportionately in favor of some groups, particularly *white rich men* in patriarchal societies.

In the modern world, Phillips asserts, it is necessary to structuralize democracy by including all genders and cultures in it. Related to considering women’s representation in modern and liberal societies, there is need for mechanism that allows women to formulate their own policies and interests.<sup>340</sup> The essence of the matter, it is debatable in the literature, whether this mechanism should include only women or men properly represent women’s interest in the decision-making process. Specifically in the Turkish context, during the period of February 28, veiled women criticized Muslim men for leaving them alone in the public and political sphere for male’s interest in conjunction

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<sup>335</sup> Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*.

<sup>336</sup> Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002)

<sup>337</sup> Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

with Kemalist political paradigm and capitalist system.<sup>341</sup> To support ‘sisterhood is global’, Robin Morgan underlines that ‘Feminism is for all women and girls, not a privileged few or one ethnicity, religion, age, sexual preference, ability, region or hemisphere’.<sup>342</sup> On the other side of the coin, Phillips does take into consideration the distinct women’s group to fail for standing in the same position on especially disarmament, abortion, and ecology. Then she asked: ‘Which of these should be stood for by our representatives?’<sup>343</sup>

To illustrate, amidst the modernization and democratization process of Türkiye, women had been ‘emancipated but unliberated’<sup>344</sup> by courtesy of the benevolent state. Granting the right to vote and divorce fail in providing the women’s emancipation due to the lack of transforming ‘traditional values and attitudes in Turkish society’.<sup>345</sup> Lately in Türkiye, even though Islamist women might be effective in the particular party grassroots and women-only sections, the glass ceiling<sup>346</sup> and exclusionary characteristics of modernity resulted in women disempowerment for authority. Secular norms of emancipation derived from Western modernity hierarchy construct the gender subordination for women, especially for veiled and minority women. As veiled women confront the prejudice of ‘reactionism’ to pursue a modern life for *laïciste*, they also encounter ‘neighbourhood pressure’ (*mahalle baskısı* in Turkish) forces to customarily wear *hijāb* by traditionalists. By creating a third-way for self-

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<sup>341</sup> Nalan Ova, “Karşı Hegemonik Bir Söylem Olarak Dindar Müslüman Kadın Söylemi: Çatışma ve Kırılmalar”, *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, V. 1 (30), (2018): 201-235.

<sup>342</sup> Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970)

<sup>343</sup> Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*.

<sup>344</sup> Kandiyoti, *Emancipated but unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish case*, 317–338.

<sup>345</sup> Çaha, *Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women’s Movements in a Muslim Society*.

<sup>346</sup> It is a term coined by Marilyn Loden in 1978 to refer to the social barriers preventing women from management positions within institutions.

identification, veiled women in Türkiye reconcile ‘religious and liberal language’.<sup>347</sup> Regardless the ubiquitous claim that veiled women do not in conceit with modernist’s narrative, they appear in the blurry lines between tradition and modernity to provide alternative discourse of modernity.

Comparative analysis of modernization and authoritarianism by Nader Hashemi, simply affirms the emerging of modernization mostly occurred as ‘a direct result of the colonial encounter with Europe’.<sup>348</sup> For illustrating ‘forced top-down’ political changes on society, Hashemi does parallelize between veil ban ordered by Reza Pahlavi in Iran in 1935 and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s ‘harsh secularization and Westernization of Turkish society’.<sup>349</sup> And lately, as the same authoritarian rigor, the state-imposed dress code of Ayatollah Khomeini has restricted Iranian women.<sup>350</sup> Accordingly, in the manner of women’s bodies and identities as the competition ground, the period of February 28 and the government of JDP need to be highlighted in this perspective based on structural change introduced by discourses and actions. Therefore, the solidarity and consciousness of veiled women needs to be encouraged within civil society which is absent throughout the women’s decades-long struggle in Türkiye.

To eliminate the discriminatory discourses and actions in particular women’s identity, theoretical and practical reconceptualization of women’s rights needs to emerge bottom-up, from within diverse civil society. By underlining the silence period of women’s movement in Türkiye from 1935 to 1980, Ömer Çaha exemplifies women’s demonstration led by specifically Islamic women and Kurdish women encouraged

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<sup>347</sup> Nora Fisher-Onar and Meltem Müftüler Baç, “The adultery and headscarf debates in Turkey: Fusing “EU-niversal” and “alternative” modernities?”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, V. 34 (5), (2011, September): 381.

<sup>348</sup> Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 45.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

through civil society organizations in the mid-1980s.<sup>351</sup> To do this, private sphere incorporated in the public domain by demanding positive discrimination in the fields of workplace, pregnancy, maternity to draw attention of ‘the personal is political’.<sup>352</sup> In that regard, civil society have contributed to the women’s rights to be ground for equal, diverse, autonomous and pluralistic public sphere.

Taking into account all of these, studying to create literature about women-led civil society organization in Türkiye is believed to best serve the aims and construction of the thesis to manifest pious female activism vis-à-vis both Western modernity and the monolithic Islam based understanding based on invented traditions. Exemplifying pivotal role in constructing ‘multiple modernity’ in civil society initiatives, the thesis presents HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation – will be mentioned it as *HAZAR Foundation* later – as an exemplary case. Focusing on HAZAR Foundation’s discourses and practices, the thesis aims to open doors for wider theoretical paradigm of veiled women’s position. Factors that led to choosing HAZAR Foundation as a case study are: (i) considering civil society, specifically women-led organization, as peculiar agents for developing more-inclusive and impartial debate on social, cultural, economic and political phenomena; (ii) identifying and filling the gap in the literature to include veiled women’s perspectives at the crossroads of modernity and tradition; (iii) analyzing the HAZAR Foundation as obscure example for transcending ‘modern privacy’ à la Göle indicate, and non-Western context of modernity in the public sphere. HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation’s discourses and activities will now be examined in the thesis within the scope of multiple modernity theory.

### **5.1. HAZAR in Türkiye: A Case of Multiple Modernities**

HAZAR Education, Culture, and Solidarity Foundation was founded in November 1993 by a group of women led by Ayla Kerimoğlu. The centre of the organization is located in Istanbul, Türkiye. HAZAR Foundation’s mission is to ‘identify the existing conditions and challenges of women and adolescents, and to propose initiatives to seek

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<sup>351</sup> Çaha, *Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women's Movements in a Muslim Society*.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*

solutions by strengthening their legal, social, political, and financial entity'.<sup>353</sup> It actively pursues projects in the sphere of social, cultural, educational, academic and financial matters. Since 2019, HAZAR Foundation is a member of ECOSOC (The United Nations Economic and Social Council) which is one of the six main organs of the United Nations to coordinate the economic and social fields of the organization. HAZAR Foundation aims to participate in its projects regarding women and refugees with United Nations.

Since its founding moment, the activities of the HAZAR Foundation are to hold meetings, field trip activities and so forth to associate state institutions; to provide financial assistance through charity sales to individuals who deprived of basic; to conduct polls to guideline the academic works by collaborating with domestic and international foundations.<sup>354</sup> HAZAR also organizes seminars, talks, and conferences also conducts large-scale research on women related issues.

As a part of primary research to explore HAZAR, it's representation of Islamic feminism through the paradigm of multiple modernities, this chapter will analyze HAZAR Foundation's handbooks and reports such as research in 'The Covered Truth of Türkiye; Field Research On The Headscarf Ban' (*Türkiye'nin Örtülü Gerçeği*), project of 'Wo/men for Women Project' (*Struggle Against Domestic Violence Project*), workshops about 'To Be A Woman In Europe: Risks, Benefits and Gains' (*Avrupa'da Kadın Olmak; Riskler, Fırsatlar, Kazanımlar*).

Firstly, in 2007 and 2021, the 'Covered Truth of Türkiye; Field Research On The Headscarf Ban' aimed to research discrimination towards veiled women through public surveys and data collection.<sup>355</sup> The research had consulted by Prof. Dr. Ayşen Gürcan, the former Minister of Family and Social Policies. Independently of the second research's findings which did not announce yet, the first study carried out in

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<sup>353</sup> HAZAR Foundation, "Who we are?", <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/english-HAZAR/> [15.10.2022]

<sup>354</sup> HAZAR Foundation, "Terms of Reference" <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/terms-of-reference/> [15.10.2022]

<sup>355</sup> Türkiye'nin Örtülü Gerçeği, <https://turkiyeninortulugercegi.com/> [17.10.2022]

2007 was conducted on women between the ages of 18 and 50 who were affected by the ban on *hijāb*. The survey used face-to-face interviews as a research method associated with 1112 participants in Adana, Ankara, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Istanbul, Izmir, Konya and Samsun provinces of Türkiye. The study indicated that 97.7% of the subjects wear the *hijāb* because of their belief as a religious obligation rather than a political symbol. Only 3.2% of the subjects stated that the veiled woman needs to stay at home rather than in public places, and 77.2% supported conceivableness of the pioussness without wearing a *hijāb*. As 3.9% of the subjects normalized honour killing, 6% of them considered the practice of polygamy as a normal tenant. On the other hand, the research concluded that veiled women participating in the research believe in liberal and modern principles in the context of marriage<sup>356</sup>, economic empowerment<sup>357</sup> and equal obligations to share childcare and domestic work in the family<sup>358</sup>. As a result of the research, the concept of ‘turban’ (*türban*), which is widely used in the media and public opinion, is not preferred by the vast majority of veiled women. Thus, on the lines of the thesis tackled before, the study offers insight into the substantiality of discourses and wordage to assess female identity.

Secondly, within the scope of the ‘Wo/men for Women Project’ in 2014 incorporated with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, HAZAR Foundation was in Belgium to observe how European Union countries combat domestic violence against women and derive benefits from feminist theory and/or feminist practices.<sup>359</sup> By using the

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<sup>356</sup> 98.6% of the participant in the research think that marriage choice should need to be left to the discretion of women own choice. (See more: Türkiye’nin Örtülü Gerçeği, <https://turkiyeninortulugercegi.com/>)

<sup>357</sup> 85.6% are inclined toward women’s economic independence and working life. (See more: Türkiye’nin Örtülü Gerçeği, <https://turkiyeninortulugercegi.com/>, [17.10.2022])

<sup>358</sup> 87.5% supported that men and women should have equal rights and responsibilities in the family. (See more: Türkiye’nin Örtülü Gerçeği, <https://turkiyeninortulugercegi.com/>, [17.10.2022])

<sup>359</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Wo/men for Women Proje İçeriği”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/women-for-women-proje-icerigi/> [17.10.2022]

findings, it was conducted for aiming to prepare a situation assessment report about violence against women starting from the Küçükçekmece and Üsküdar Districts of Istanbul. Through the promotion of partnerships between the public, authorities and non-governmental organizations, HAZAR Foundation worked with government officials. Foundation also tackled domestic violence against women as a social problem instead of being bounded by the private sphere. In this context, it was emphasized that children are the victims of violence which should be evaluated in the context of multiple causations. As a result of the research, women who have been subjected to violence have severe psychological problems rooted in feelings of worthlessness and inability.

Thirdly, in 2016, ‘To Be A Woman In Europe: Risks, Benefits and Gains’ (*Avrupa’da Kadın Olmak; Riskler, Fırsatlar, Kazanımlar*) conducted associated with TİKA (*Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency*) which is a government department subordinate to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The project critically highlighted the challenges of veiled women in Europe based on the Enlightenment and modernity, and illuminated that feminism is not the actual solution for gender-based problems.<sup>360</sup> As a result, the workshop emphasized that feminism has made improvements in women’s rights based on the principles of equality and freedom of the enlightenment in the first sense, but over time it has tried to expand its power and field with international conventions from its place of origin.<sup>361</sup>

In addition, HAZAR Foundation delivered a petition to Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs) to increase the number of female high-rank officials by removing ‘invisible walls’ for women.<sup>362</sup> Lately, HAZAR Foundation participated in the ‘20th Year Workshop on Social Policies’ held at the Justice and Development Party’s

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<sup>360</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Avrupa’da Kadın Olmak; Riskler, Fırsatlar, Kazanımlar”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/avrupada-kadin-olmak-2/> [17.10.2022]

<sup>361</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “To Be A Woman In Europe: Risks, Benefits and Gains”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/to-be-a-woman-in-europe-risks-benefits-and-gains/> [26.10.2022]

<sup>362</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Women Leaders for Diyanet”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/women-leaders-for-diyamet/> [17.10.2022]

Headquarters of Social Policies Presidency.<sup>363</sup> In this regard, HAZAR frequently works with the JDP government to cooperate and promote women's rights.

In July 2022, a semi-structured interview with Ayla Kerimoğlu who is the founding president of HAZAR Foundation was conducted for this research. The main contents that emerge from this interview are; the February 28 'post-modern' coup and its catastrophic impacts, the substantial women right's problems, the policies of the JDP government and the Istanbul Convention. Firstly, Ayla Kerimoğlu explained the main objective of the organization: 'Women's empowerment in the educational and social sphere for pursuing the way of balanced life prevail rightness (*hakkaniyet*) and justice (*adalet*)'.<sup>364</sup> Through the confrontational discourse on the gender-egalitarian framework, Ayla Kerimoğlu and the HAZAR Foundation refuse to embrace feminist discourse or read feminism through Islamic lenses based on a dialectical relationship. The official website of the HAZAR Foundation states:

*Instead of focusing on the distinction between genders, we should emphasize the idea of conscience. To promote a sensitive understanding of justice, we have to find a way in which human identity is a priority, without creating an enemy against women and men.*<sup>365</sup>

As a matter of fact, in the HAZAR Foundation's terms of references, both 'feminism' and 'gender equality' are not observed in any specific expression of the HAZAR Foundation. On its website to define its objective, HAZAR Foundation refers to the verse of the Qur'an<sup>366</sup>:

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<sup>363</sup> HAZAR Foundation, "AK Parti "Sosyal Politikalarda 20. Yıl Çalıştayı", <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/ak-parti-sosyal-politikalarda-20-yil-calistayi/> [17.10.2022]

<sup>364</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile R veyda  zmen, İstanbul, 15 Jun 2022.

<sup>365</sup> HAZAR Foundation, "Kadın G ndemi Tartışmaları: Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rollerini Açıısından T rkiye'de Erkeklik İnşası", <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/kadin-gundemi-tartismalari-toplumsal-cinsiyet-rolleri-acisindan-turkiyede-erkeklik-insasi/> [17.10.2022]

<sup>366</sup> HAZAR Foundation, "Who we are?", <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/english-HAZAR/> [15.10.2022]

*For each one there are successive angels before and behind, protecting them by Allah's command. Indeed, Allah would never change a people's state 'of favour' until they change their own state 'of faith'. And if it is Allah's Will to torment a people, it can never be averted, nor can they find a protector other than Him.*<sup>367</sup>

By its Islamic orientation, they also determine the current problems of women and youth for pursuing a solution for personal development. Since its establishment, HAZAR Foundation has pushed for education, cooperation and coordination as the key to the situation for 'collective Muslim consciousness'.<sup>368</sup> In this regard, Ayla Kerimoğlu strictly and solely defines her identity position as a 'Muslim'. She, when I asked about her and the foundation's identity position, replied,

*HAZAR Foundation is a women's association, a civil initiative that works on women's rights and issues and aims to contribute to the intellectual enhancement of women. I am sensitive to women's issues, but I do not call myself a feminist. Feminists do not have a monopoly on thinking, producing and operating in the field of women's rights. For me, 'being a Muslim' is a sufficient adjective. Our association does not have such a mission and definition for its members.*<sup>369</sup>

After the February 28 process, the *hijāb* had perceived as a political attribute rather than an agent of piety.<sup>370</sup> It conduces to dispose of the veil to power relations and the political sphere from its preceding function. The veil is considered as a 'disobey both traditional and secular ways of imaging self-emancipation and becoming public'.<sup>371</sup> The HAZAR Foundation's research on Covered Truth of Türkiye

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<sup>367</sup> The Qur'ān, trans. Mustafa Khattab (Message for Humanity, 2016), Surah Ar-Ra'd 13/11.

<sup>368</sup> HAZAR Foundation, "Who we are?" <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/english-HAZAR/> [15.10.2022]

<sup>369</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile R veyda  zmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>370</sup> Ayşe Gökçe Arslan, "Türkiye'de Politik Nesne Olarak Kadın: 28 Şubat Örneği" (Published dissertation. İnönü Üniversitesi, 2019), 66.

<sup>371</sup> Göle, *Islam in public: New visibilities and new imaginaries*, 108.

(*Türkiye'nin Örtülü Gerçeği*) refers that 'Those who redefine the *hijāb* into a political symbol from sacred commitment are the ones who impose the headscarf ban'.<sup>372</sup> Şule Yüksel Şenler, on the other hand, considers the *hijāb* as the liberation of women and society from the West, atheism and feminism.<sup>373</sup> Kerimoğlu comments on the issue of *hijāb*:

*I disapprove of attributing such a meaning (Şenler's definition) to the veil because of its similarities to the arguments of February 28. At that time, the hijāb had become an identity, a symbol of piety. Indeed, wearing a hijāb does not directly denote religiosity. The veil is crucial as a religious obligation, but it does not represent the essence of religion or freedom. Being emancipated is a state of consciousness, a soul, without form or schema.*<sup>374</sup>

Evaluating February 28 as the 'nightmare' (*karabasan*) to descend on Turkish democracy, Kerimoğlu's education life has continued since her distance education under the influence of the February 28 process. She said that veiled women were deprived of their basic rights, education and business life, but also 'the definition of public realm became unspecified by declaring streets, parks and hospitals as public sphere. February 28 caused psychological destruction by its aim to continue for 1000 years.'<sup>375</sup>

Due to the human rights violations and the democratic deficit on February 28, seventy-six per cent of women who had to quit school never took legal action against the state. Because of the distance education preference of Kerimoğlu, she did not encounter with persuasion rooms (*ikna odaları*). However, she underlines that anti-democratic and fascist implementation psychologically affects all veiled women within Türkiye.<sup>376</sup> Thereafter the postmodern coup of February 28, despite of the Justice and Development Party's lifting the religious headscarf ban, women who wear headscarves

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<sup>372</sup> Türkiye'nin Örtülü Gerçeği, <https://turkiyeninortulugercegi.com/> [23.10.2022]

<sup>373</sup> Şule Yüksel Şenler, *Bize Ne Oldu* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2011), 57.

<sup>374</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Rügeyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

are still challenged to find jobs in leading private companies and elsewhere with equal pay for equal work.<sup>377</sup>

Including those mentioned earlier in the thesis, there have been numerous decisive moments in the history of Türkiye regarding women's rights through the state's actions and discourses. In 2005, the enthusiasm for European Union's membership declined with the partial suspension of the negotiation process just as the egalitarian atmosphere of gender climate in Türkiye.<sup>378</sup> When the then Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed his intention to recriminalize adultery,<sup>379</sup> JDP's religio-conservative gender understanding based on strong references to tradition and religion, was harshly criticized by the European Union and feminist groups. Besides, the claim of state-led protection of 'family nest' and 'sacred motherhood' had divided societies in Türkiye, including feminist conservative women groups because of its restrictive traditionalist substratum. According to Kerimoğlu, the Justice and Development Party has made improvements on women's issues more than expected as a conservative democrat party.<sup>380</sup> To illustrate, subjects such as mobbing and stalking were included in the scope of crimes, and good conduct time was abolished in crimes against women. A process of change occurred owing to micro-credits, maternity leave, breast-feeding permission, positive discrimination and law amendments to combat child and forced marriages (CFM). Kerimoğlu also points out the increasing enrollment rates of women, women's empowerment in the business sector, socio-economical promotion of women.<sup>381</sup> Nevertheless, she critically argues that despite all the legal arrangements,

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<sup>377</sup> Daily Sabah, "Veiled women still suffer from Feb 28 measures", <https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/meryem-ilayda-atlas/2016/02/29/veiled-women-still-suffer-from-feb-28-measures> [23.10.2022]

<sup>378</sup> Ayşe Güneş-Ayata and Gökten Doğangün, "Gender Politics of the AKP: Restoration of a Religio-conservative Gender Climate", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, V. 19 (6), (2017): 610-627.

<sup>379</sup> Zana Çitak and Özlem Tür, "Women between Tradition and Change: The Justice and Development Party Experience in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, V. 44 (3), (2008): 461.

<sup>380</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Ruvéyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

women's struggles could not completely disappear as in all the countries throughout the world.<sup>382</sup> Kerimoğlu employs an analytical method about the JDP's indecisive stance on gender policies' discourse related to the conservative party grassroots. She set forth there is still a long way to go to change mentalities, but rather than sole legal interventions.

Moreover, Ayla Kerimoğlu maintains a critical approach towards controversial topics in Türkiye: femicide and the country's withdrawal from Istanbul Convention. According to the reports of the women right's platform, 26 women were killed by men and 19 women were found suspiciously dead just in Türkiye in September 2022.<sup>383</sup> It is important to emphasize that 16 of these women were murdered by the man they were married to. Kerimoğlu emphasizes this fact as the reality of men's perspective to consider their spouses as their property but rather their equivalent.<sup>384</sup> Femicide can be prevented in Türkiye, Kerimoğlu argues, by means of socioeconomic empowerment of women reinforced by political system.<sup>385</sup> Further to that the archaic idea of women as the honour of men needs to be abandoned. In addition, economic problems, immigration, unemployment, and lack of education increase psychological problems. According to Kerimoğlu it has to be acknowledged that anger and emotional control can be lost in these situations. She claims that increasing rehabilitation opportunities, and establishing family counselling centres can resolve the femicide problem in Türkiye without resorting to violence.<sup>386</sup>

On the other hand, Ayla Kerimoğlu commented about Istanbul Convention and 6284/Domestic Violence Act:

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> We Will Stop Femicides Platform, "We Will Stop Femicides Platform September 2022 Report", <https://kadincinayetleriniidurduracagiz.net/veriler/3033/we-will-stop-femicides-platform-september-2022-report> [19.10.2022]

<sup>384</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile R veyda  zmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

*In the process from withdrawal of the Istanbul Convention, there is an understanding that fails to interpret social change correctly and seeks a scapegoat instead of confrontation. Moreover, those who interpose to the Istanbul Convention on the pretext of religion were neither opposed to the liberalization of adultery, nor any other similar issue so loudly. The femicides did not mobilize this mass along these lines. Where were your values until the Istanbul Convention? Why were so many women killed if perchance producing a suitable law with your values?<sup>387</sup>*

Emphasizing that withdrawing from Istanbul Convention is incorrect in terms of both politics, human kindness and the promises made to women, Kerimoğlu said:

*The contract was only an instrument in the combat against violence against women; no doubt, the articles of the Istanbul Convention could be changed and adapted. Our traditions and religious beliefs could guide us in this regard.<sup>388</sup>*

In 2020, Ayla Kerimoğlu signed a declaration in support of the Istanbul Convention with the Family and Social Research Platform (ASAP), including journalist Ayşe Böhürler, one of the founders of the JDP. The ASAP's statement considered the Istanbul Convention as an effective tool in preventing violence against women. The declaration indicated that only Türkiye and Bosnia-Herzegovina are Muslim-majority countries that signed the Istanbul Convention. It reveals the unfounded claim that the Convention was designed to disrupt the Muslim family structure. Indeed, the ASAP's declaration aimed to illuminate the controversial articles in the Istanbul Convention, such as Article 4 with the statement of 'sexual orientation':

*The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language,*

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<sup>387</sup> Gülsüm Ekinci, "Sözleşmeye kadar o değerleriniz neredeydi?", <https://serbestiyet.com/haberler/sozlesmeye-kadar-o-degerleriniz-neredeydi-54536/> [17.10.2022]

<sup>388</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Rüveyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

*religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.*<sup>389</sup>

In this context, the ASAP's declaration denominated the statement of the Secretary General of the Istanbul Convention that the Convention does not intend to grant legal status to LGBTI+ people. In addition, the statement also stressed another disputatious expression in Article 12:

*Parties shall take the necessary measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices, which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women, and men.*<sup>390</sup>

In agreement with ASAP's declaration, the word 'eradicate' contained in this article refers to 'traditional customs that humiliate women's rights', but rather than any particular religion or culture. As a result, the declaration signed by Ayla Kerimoğlu suggested that the convention should not be understood as a binding or final text, but should be implemented until an improved one is written. Therefore, the declaration recommended Türkiye's submission of a supplementary document to the Council of Europe about how Türkiye evaluate the main purpose of the Istanbul Convention in conformity with its values and norms. However, through Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's announcement on 20 March 2021, Türkiye withdrew from the Istanbul Convention by presidential decree.

To put a broad framework of the state's actions and to offer an alternative understanding of women's rights history in Türkiye, the thesis presents a critique of state feminism in Türkiye. Atatürk's reforms based on state-led promotion aimed to

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<sup>389</sup> Council of Europe, Text of the Convention, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/text-of-the-convention> [26.10.2022]

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

transform patriarchal rural life into what Kandiyoti called a ‘patriarchal bargain’<sup>391</sup> between elite republican women and the government.<sup>392</sup> Kerimoğlu impresses on the state feminism in Türkiye to create a prototype of ‘womanhood’ based upon *laïcité*:

*Whether it is a state, an ideology, or a religion, all powers want to control the body to dominate its citizens. The policies of the Kemalist government in the first years of the Republic and later the banning of the headscarf and introduction of a series of clothing regulations are an example of state feminism. Iran’s mandatory dress code requiring all women to wear the veil is along the same line as these instances. The elites of the Turkish Republic disposed Turkish women to the dominant role in the process of social transformation.*<sup>393</sup>

Moreover, it has to be acknowledged that in their struggle for a place in public life, ‘today’s veiled women are indeed rebelling against traditional patriarchy and abandoning customarily defined roles and spaces’.<sup>394</sup> To emphasize the requisite role of religious scholars (*âlim* in Turkish) who do not recognize today’s values such as human rights, women’s rights, democracy and anti-gender discourse within the Islamic world, Kerimoğlu reminds that the lands where revelation landed were the places where patriarchal culture prevailed. Since the time of the death of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) to date, the achievements obtained regarding gender issues began to be lost one by one. Yet, for Kerimoğlu anti-women discourse originating from androcentric cultures and traditions, exegesis and interpretation of scholars, and woman’s economic poverty.

In the context of modernity, Türkiye is a substantial model through its aspiration of democracy as a de-centering European understanding of modernity and opening up to multiple modernities. It also brings indigenous cultural and religious references into the public sphere. By breaking away from defining veiled women by referring to

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<sup>391</sup> Kandiyoti, *Bargaining with patriarchy*, 113-114.

<sup>392</sup> White, *State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman*, 156.

<sup>393</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Rûveyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>394</sup> Göle, *Snapshots of Islamic modernities*, 102.

Western codes of feminism, Nilüfer Göle says that Islamic feminism is one of the examples of the changeable structure of modernity.<sup>395</sup> She explains the increase of the veil in public space through ‘multiple modernities’.<sup>396</sup> Kerimoğlu identifies modernization as a concept emerged from fundamental changes in urbanization and the Industrial Revolution, that appeared in Western societies and spread all over the world.<sup>397</sup> She underlines the different modernization models to propose a more accurate sociological conceptualization of Muslim women’s daily lives. Veiled women reinterpret the modernity through their own indigenous values as being urbanized, educated, bilingual, professional and sensitive to women’s rights.<sup>398</sup> Kerimoğlu emphasizes the development of common femininity and idealistic norms drawn from liberal pluralism bringing along its fascist implementations:

*It is necessary to understand religion as a set of values based on fairness and compassion, a verse of rights and responsibilities to remove it from being an instrument unstinting to masculinity’s disposal.*<sup>399</sup>

Although there are many elements that feminism does not adopt, Kerimoğlu believes that mental and political contributions it provides to women are decisive by dismantling the centers of patriarchal power, adopting the female perspective as a value to society and offering seminal propositions. In connection with the discussions on multiculturalism, women groups exhibit a heterogeneous structure and are included in subcategories such as different races, languages, religions, classes, ethnic groups as having different life experiences and challenges.<sup>400</sup> Kerimoğlu, argues that feminism

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Rüyeyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> Altuntaş, *Feminen İslam, Küresel Çağda Alternatif Bir Kadın Kimliği İnşası*, 87.

makes a positive contribution to multiculturalism as cultures are the structure to receive the social values and norms.<sup>401</sup>

Whether veiled women should be included in the same ranks as other feminist groups is one of the contentious issues in the literature. Göle exemplifies the feminist parade of 8 March 2004 in Paris to the relegation of two ‘unwanted’ feminist groups, veiled women and sex workers, by mainstream feminist groups, which resulted in the unexpected unification of these two figures.<sup>402</sup> In the framework of ‘the personal is political’, taboos such as sexual harassment, sexuality, and abortion became disputatious. The opinion of the HAZAR Foundation and Ayla Kerimoğlu on this issue is moderate. Although Kerimoğlu disapproves of abortion and scrutinizes the issue from the point of view of children’s rights rather than women’s rights, she controversializes the state bans on abortion. She argues that since the prohibition of abortion can provide opportunities for illegal ways, it may be right to grant limited permissions by taking into account maternal health with legal regulation.<sup>403</sup> Kerimoğlu, who said that it is possible to take different positions in the same ranks at points shared with different women’s groups, gives the example of the Beijing Conference<sup>404</sup> and the February 28 process in Türkiye. At the same time, she believes that it is important to increase the number of these common fields in order for society to live in reconciliation and peace.<sup>405</sup> Within this context, HAZAR Foundation’s operations are cited as an example, such as its meeting with ‘Caledeiscoop’ women

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<sup>401</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Rügeyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>402</sup> Göle and Billaud, *Islamic Difference and the Return of Feminist Universalism*.

<sup>403</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Rügeyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

<sup>404</sup> The Fourth World Conference on Women, located in Beijing, was the most influential of four conferences on women attended between 1975 and 1995, setting the foundation for the international mission for gender equality.

<sup>405</sup> Ayla Kerimoğlu, interview by Cemile Rügeyda Özmen, İstanbul, 15 June, 2022.

organization based in Belgium<sup>406</sup>, the visiting to refugee camp in Suruç<sup>407</sup>, the studies conducted with ‘Irish School of Ecumenics’<sup>408</sup>, the visiting to ‘Şahkulu Djemevi’ to familiarize with Alevi faith<sup>409</sup>, the meeting with Japanese researcher of Osaka University Foreign Studies<sup>410</sup> and Jewish non-profit women’s organization ‘Peace X Peace’.<sup>411</sup>

Upon being joined, Lila Abu Lughod suggested who suggests that feminism has ‘become by now an inescapable term of reference’ for women who ‘actively participate in these [gender] debates and social struggles’.<sup>412</sup> Therefore, despite Kerimoğlu has reservations to the term ‘feminist’, her ideas should be studied within the broader category of ‘Islamic feminism’ following Aysha Hidayatullah’s usage of ‘feminist’:

*...in classifying these [gender justice and women’s rights] works to emphasize their pointed challenge to male power and interpretive privilege—which vitally links them, for better or for worse, to feminist thought regardless of authorial intention or self-identification.*<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Caledeiscoop Derneği Yetkililerinin Ziyareti”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/caledeiscoop-dernegi-HAZAR-ziyareti/> [21.10.2022]

<sup>407</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Suruç Kampını Ziyaret Ettik”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/suruc-kampi-HAZAR/> [21.10.2022]

<sup>408</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Dublin’den HAZAR’a Ziyaret”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/dublin-HAZAR-ziyaret/> [21.10.2022]

<sup>409</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Şahkulu Cem Evini Ziyaret Ettik”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/sahkulu-cem-evi-2/> [21.10.2022]

<sup>410</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Sawae Fumiko HAZAR’ı Ziyaret Etti”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/sawae-fumiko-HAZAR/> [21.10.2022]

<sup>411</sup> HAZAR Foundation, “Peacexpeace temsilcisi Elana Rozenman’ın Ziyareti”, <http://www.HAZARdernegi.org/elana-rozenman-dernek/> [21.10.2022]

<sup>412</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod, *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (NY: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3.

<sup>413</sup> Aysha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur’an* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 4.

Accordingly, this thesis has used the multiple modernity theory and Islamic feminism as compatible frameworks to discern and advocate diverse demands of veiled women in accommodating their so-called anti-modern rights and identities. Veiled women in Türkiye articulated their own values and ways of life to reconcile modernity and religion without transplanting the Western mold or religio-cultural traditions. The thesis envisages the multiple modernity theory and Islamic feminist ideology as an ultimate concurrence to address the articulations of veiled women's different modernity narratives for solving their specific women/human right problems.

As a result of examining all the findings, the interview with Ayla Kerimoğlu and the pronouncements on the Foundation's website, it is seen that the HAZAR Foundation is in cooperation with the government and state authorities. It is aimed to take women's rights and problems in Türkiye not only on an individual basis, but also within the framework of the family. Correspondingly, issues such as abortion and violence against women have been examined in terms of children's rights, not only in the context of women's rights. As the Foundation criticizes the policies of the JDP government, it also positively approached the feasibility of improvements. In the light of all the facts mentioned above, the HAZAR Foundation separates itself from mainstream liberal feminist organizations by taking a constructive approach to the decisive role of the family and the state. It was determined that the Foundation has a religious-oriented discourse differing from the secular feminists through the medium of referring to the verses of Qur'ān in its statements. On the other hand, the HAZAR Foundation's cooperation with women's organizations of different religions, races, and political ideologies on women's rights makes the Foundation stand out from the traditionalist line. The Foundation, which does not define its position as feminist, advocates that feminism has made improvements in women's rights and discourse, especially in its place of origin. In particular, it distinguishes itself from other conservative women's organizations by stating the need for legal regulations on abortion and finding Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention as a crucial mistake. The HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation case identifies spheres of congruence and incongruence between the pro-governmental gender discourse and anti-gender Muslim body.

Based on the case of Türkiye's pious women association HAZAR Foundation, this thesis has supported the following argument. By putting all theoretical framework that

the thesis tackled on the previous chapters, incidents of Türkiye and specifically HAZAR Foundation create a third-way in terms of veiled women who had been challenged with the western-driven assumptions of femininity and modernity as traditionalist patriarchy. The modernity process based on structural and fundamental changes of Türkiye ignores the experiences of veiled women by Eurocentric conception of rights and values within republican paradigm. Whilst the sociopolitical context of veiled women is divisive subject, the disjuncture of their presence from public sphere cultivates the patriarchal interest driven by modernists and traditionalists. Combining religious values with the Western type of modernity, HAZAR Foundation act relatively autonomously from any particular political parties or political discourse of gender issue such as veiling and violence against women – which are all taboo subjects for public debate. Through its both gender-egalitarian and critical discourse and activities, it contributes the essential theoretical literature on ‘multiple modernities’ in framing of the thesis in terms of gender, religion and multiple modernity in Türkiye. Within the ‘alternative code of modernity’, HAZAR Foundation is reluctant to act as a ‘feminist’ women group. It also reconciles with modernity and religion by contend with being the ‘other’ towards secularists and Islamists in contemporary Türkiye. HAZAR’s multi-modern demands such as preserving the women’s right to abortion and headscarf framing a new type of feminist understanding anchored in Muslim women population to promote veiled women’s individual autonomy and self-identification.

HAZAR’s critical engagement with traditionalist Islamic tradition and its opposition to Kemalist subordination of the Islamic veil provides an alternative to both liberal feminist theories, which depicts veiled women for lacking subjecthood and agency, and Kemalist feminism, which views religion as a hinderance to gender empowerment. What we need for achieving the constructive dialogue of Islamic feminism and multiple modernity, which are both theoretical insights as a third-way for veiled women’s individual and collective self-identification. In that regard, the thesis does articulate the need for theoretical reconciliation of Islamic feminism and multiple modernity to configure the veiled women’s right and identity as multi-faceted rather than universalist promoted by the discourses of Islamic traditions, and mainstream feminism and modernity. Even though the hesitant position of pious women, as HAZAR case reveals, the thesis subsequently concludes that Islamic feminism is an

alternative agent to protect the rights of veiled women in Türkiye who are more subordinated than other women's groups by modernist-traditionalist patriarchal clash. The participation of receptive, active and free Islamic civil society organizations in the policy-making processes is an opportunity space for responding to gender subordination promoted by both liberal feminist and Kemalist feminist theory.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis mainly inquires how the notions of Islamic feminism and ‘multiple modernities’ are used as conceptual frameworks in understanding contemporary veiled women’s public articulations as an alternative to *laïcistes* and traditionalist Islamic accounts of womanhood in Türkiye. The project aims at identifying how veiled women in Türkiye invented a new Muslim lifestyle without compromising either over their modern or pious identity, nor had to choose one only and forgo the other. Even though there have been several attempts made in the literature to develop some understanding of the nuanced relationship between modernity, tradition, and gender, but these somehow fail to comprehend the experiences of veiled women in Türkiye within the case study of Islamic civil society organizations. However in addition to the gap present in theoretical literature, there is also a lack of studies conducted with regards to case studies on Islamic women-led civil society organizations, such as HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation. I follow the theoretical framework to put scholars’ unanalysed arguments together applicable for the case study of the thesis.

In this regard, as an attempt for systematic and theoretical clarity, the methodology of the thesis had carefully been chosen for offering principled and practical tools. The project does not pursue whether or not religion is adaptable to Western modernity like in the existing secondary literature. Instead of two main modernity theories (classical modernization theory and neo-modernization theory), the thesis mainly follows more broader, concurrent and somehow inconspicuous ‘multiple modernity’ theory by Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt who refers to the constant process and evolvement of Western forms of modernity. Accordingly, this project clearly illustrates that concepts about gender, modernity and tradition can change from time to time, and that their positioning regarding each other is dynamic. This approach critically provides new insight into identification of fixed and universalist concept of women which had become as that of a mannequin by forcing veiled women to opt between either keen distinction of Western modernity or religious traditions. This paper concludes by arguing that through their accommodative position for possessing a contemporary, active and public lifestyle, veiled women in Türkiye challenge, undermine and subvert the fixed concept of modernity and understanding of freedom.

Throughout my work, I have followed the path of ‘constructed’ femininity appearance regardless of its ground – Western self-righteousness or Islamic traditions. Therefore, the thesis has investigated two path-breaking ideologies: multicultural feminism and Islamic feminism. Firstly, multiculturalism proposes to protect minority groups’ interests and identities by way of moving beyond the ethos of liberal theory on autonomy, toleration and freedom for association.<sup>414</sup> In connection with the inclusionary notion of multicultural theory, multicultural feminism does seek to accommodate women’s autonomy within group rights vis-à-vis liberal school of thought’s individualistic and universalistic understanding of rights and identities. Through endorsement to more legal pluralist arrangements in favor of cultural diversity rather than a homogenous structure within women groups, multiculturalist feminism props up religious freedom and toleration. Thus, the thesis does pursue multicultural feminist theory as an opportunity for religious accommodation within the political institutions of Western countries based on multicultural literature.

Secondly, to regard the women’s emancipation and modernity as multifaceted concept, Islamic feminism has brought about the agenda of pious women’s engagement as agents in their own struggle against both Western secularist and traditional patriarchal assumptions. This is an important finding in the understanding of Islamic feminism and Turkish model of modernity that confronted with several normative transformation throughout the history, particularly in the nation-building process; 1997 Turkish military memorandum and the political rise of JDP. By appearing as a battleground of patriarchal interest, veiled women became passive, silent and double-marginalized actor according to *laïcistes* and traditionalist narratives. The findings confirm that in the presence of all the paternalist state interventions towards women’s rights and identity, veiled women struggle to exist in public and private sphere with their own singularity vis-à-vis the cultural homogeneity produced by secular feminism<sup>415</sup>, without bargaining with patriarchy. Accordingly, throughout the political turmoils in Türkiye, veiled women play a critical role in portraying newly defined and

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<sup>414</sup> Chandran Kukathas, “Are There Any Cultural Rights?”, *Political theory*, V. 20 (1), (1992): 127.

<sup>415</sup> Göle and Billaud, *Islamic Difference and the Return of Feminist Universalism*.

alternative identity based on multiple modernity theory. In that regard, Islamic feminism is the theoretical tool for a third way to reconcile religion and modernity of veiled women in terms of self-identification in public life by rebelling against *laïcité* and traditional patriarchy.

Turkish veiled women's demands, as in the case of HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation, indicate the limitations and paradoxes within the mainstream modernist and feminist discourse on women's rights surrounding the *hijāb* and body practices of women. The substantive women's rights need to be applied for the veiled women who aim to integrate with public sphere and social interaction aligned with their *hijāb* to 'resistance, protest, empowerment, and entry into male space'.<sup>416</sup> The thesis offers that veil should be considered as a mediation and religiopolitical subject to subject for reconciliation between different groups within the Turkish society as a human right issue. It needs to be an independent act to shape the veiled women's position to get through its existing situation dictated by political parties' discourse and actions.

Importantly, the theoretical results of the thesis provide evidence for that political engagement of veiled women needs open space that engender individual participation, involvement and respect. For being active participants in political and social life, consciousness-raising groups organized by civil organizations such as the HAZAR Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation need to be theoretically and practically supported and studied. The concepts of women's rights and identity need to be invigorated through non-governmental organization in the context of development of women's own interpretations of Islam and to gain an opportunity for solidarity. Consequently, by confirming critical, inclusive and dialogical framework, this thesis has substantial baseline to distinguish the experiences of veiled women and different codes of modernity and gender in Türkiye.

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<sup>416</sup> Mounira M. Charrad, "Cultural diversity within Islam: veils and laws in Tunisia": *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity within Unity*, ed. Herbert L. Bodman, Nayyirah Tawḥīdī (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

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