Invisible Women Visible Islam: Engendering Everyday Lives Of Educated Islamist Women In Turkey*

Görünmez Kadınlar Görünür İslam: Türkiye'de Eğitimli İslamcı Kadınların Toplumsal Cinsiyet Bakımından Günlük Yaşamları

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Abstract: *Veiling is a pre-Islamic patriarchal practice designed to differentiate women in terms of their sexuality. While it is obligatory in some Muslim societies, a newly emerged form of Islamic clothing, namely tesettür became a problem for secular public regulations in Turkey. This study has been done based on a research with multi-method approach and it has aimed to understand gender issues in everyday lives of women, and derive 'typicalities'. In this relation, the main problematic of the research consists of everyday lives of educated Islamist women. The research has been held with in-depth interview and psychoanalytic method of free association of concepts, and it has employed theoretical and purposive sampling. The story of Islam in their lives shows variety including traditional influence of Sufism, changing Sufism, socialisation in family, class and cultural resistance, search for meaning in life, but only one 'hard ideologue'.*

Key words: *Modernity, Gender, Everyday Life, Patriarchal Bargaining, Cultural Controls of Female Sexuality*

Öz: *Peçe kadınları cinsellikleri anlamında ayırdetmeye yönelik olarak tasarlanmış İslam öncesi ataerkil bir pratiktir. Bazı Müslüman toplumlarda zorunluyken, yeni ortaya çıkan bir İslami giyim biçimi olan tesettür Türkiye'de seküler kamusal düzenlemeler bakımından sorun olmuştur. Bu çalışma çok yöntemli bir araştırmaya dayalı olarak yürütülmüştür ve kadınların günlük yaşamlarında toplumsal cinsiyet meselelerini anlamayı ve 'tipik durumlar' türevlemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu bağlamda, araştırmanın temel sorunsalı eğitimli İslamcı kadınların günlük yaşamlarından ibarettir. Araştırma derinlemesine mülakat ve psikanalitik serbest kavram çağrışımı yöntemiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir; teorik ve amaçlı örnekleme yapılmıştır. Yaşamlarında İslam hikayesi, geleneksel sufizm etkisi, değişen sufizm, ailede toplumsallaşma, sınıfsal ve kültürel direnç, yaşamda anlam arayışı, fakat sadece bir 'sert ideolog' içeren bir çeşitlilik göstermektedir.*

Anahtar kelimeler: *Modernlik, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Günlük Yaşam, Ataerkil Pazarlık, Dişil Cinselliğin Kültürel Kontrolleri.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, 1980s were the years that masses invaded everyday life to demonstrate Islam as a way of life. Those years, Islamic way of life introduced itself as an opposition to wider social system. Some groups tried to redefine life referring to Islam through private schools, cinema, theatre, architecture, and media institutions. At this step, Islam has become a political choice for some people in life organisation. Furthermore, women's integration to Islam made it possible to discuss the secular characteristic of the state and it sharpened the opposed relation between 'public' and 'private'.[1]

Islam has gained visibility especially through women's everyday clothing. The social and the sociological question here might be concentrated on the nature of the relationship between everyday life and clothing. It is supposed that the former determines the latter. However, this was not the case for new Islamic clothing. Actually, beginning by 1970s, some women began to practise a new style of clothing, which is radically different from traditional Islamic clothing practices. Differentiating from both black *çarşaf* and loose short headscarves with suits at knees length, or *tülbent* with *şalvar; tesettür* consisted of a large headscarf strictly covering hair, neck, and some part of cheeks, completed by a loose long overcoat, worn both in summer and in winter. *Tesettür* has caused a long-lasting debate for women who would like to practise it as a requirement of their belief, and this practice was interpreted as contradictory to the secular characteristic of state, in institutional sphere.

In the complex structure of everyday life, women's everyday clothing had the characteristics of repetition, and within the whole resistance, it became the symbol of a way of life defined in reference to the code of Islam. In understanding the relationship between women's clothing and everyday life, I shall refer to Heller's theory of everyday life. According to Heller, everyday life refers to the "aggregate of those individual reproduction factors which, *pari passu*, make social reproduction possible" (1984: 3). In everyday life, there are two possible categories of the person: particularity and individuality (Heller, 1984:8-15). The relationship between person and his/her world is a historical one, and it is not always possible to observe the person as a class unit in everyday life but he/she mostly is integrated to his/her class through group or community (Heller, 1984: 30). Everyday life is heterogeneous and meanings are plural in this sphere. The person in everyday life learns how to use and manipulate tools and objects, negotiate with custom and in the medium of language. However, the singular meaning which will organise the heterogeneity of everyday life is constituted by and within everyday life and signals about non-everyday, species-essential activity-for-itself, namely art, science, and religion (Heller, 1984: 119). These do not necessarily signify alienation and non-alienation (Heller, 1984: 120). However, within everyday life person can raise to generic conscious activity through work, morals, religion, politics and law, science, philosophy and the arts.

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[1] Deriving from Grek polis, Habermas (1992) puts the boundaries and the nature of the abstract concepts of private and public. According to him, private persons acting in public define public sphere. The kind of acts and the space that public persons could occupy are defined by public agreement. They must be for the good of the public, by definition. In result, *Res publica* is the total sum of private, public, and the public sphere. The headscarf dispute in Turkey can be summarised in this context as women's sexual politics in everyday life has contradicted with public agreement. In terms of legal aspects of the issue, freedom of belief and the secular principle have been opposed, and women have been strictly forbidden to enter public space, where public regulations are operated.

In this sense, clothing can be viewed as part of 'species-essential objectivations in-itself'. This sphere has common properties of repetition, the 'rule-character' and normativity, the sign system, economy, and situatedness (Heller, 1984:134-135). The insistence in *tesettür* puts it beyond the boundaries of 'species-essential objectivations in-itself'; especially with repetition, it gains the status of a symbol. It tells to the audience that this practice has assumed a determining principle between religion and everyday life.

In this relation, this study aims to typify how women relate themselves to *tesettür* subjectively in order that we might have a clear idea about the relation that they build between religion and everyday life. Moreover, it should be known at the level of practice, whether women relate themselves to *tesettür* in a homogeneous way or not. If not, can social science reach meaningful categories of the differentiation beyond the tendency of 'over-generalisation' in everyday life? This effort might seem as a trivial detail in the light of macro-level discussions on the Middle East but I believe that each difference is valuable though it might remain at micro level. Especially, women's subjective experiences of Islam can be sources for feminist research and they might help us in understanding women's relations with patriarchy.

Middle East is characterised by the emergence of monotheist religions, and patriarchy, as well. The population is, now largely formed by Muslim societies. However, Turkish society has been, for long time, the unique one represented by a secular state, in the Muslim world. Women are obliged to cover their bodies in most Muslim societies, to different extents. We see examples, differing from black veil to *burka*.[2] Veiling is a pre-Islamic clothing practice in the Middle East, designed to categorise women. According to Lerner, (1986: 139) the division of women into the categories of "respectable" and "disreputable", was fundamental to the patriarchal system. Similarly, Ahmed (1992: 15) concluded that the veil not only marked the upper classes but it was used for differentiating between "respectable" women and "those who were publicly available".

In result, women in Middle East are born into patriarchal cultural aura. Moreover, this might have various forms. Kandiyoti, (1997: 72) argues, "different cultural controls of female sexuality create different subjective experiences of womanhood and these should be studied to the extent that they contribute to a feminist consciousness". Here my emphasis is that women's subjective experiences of Islam, provides an important sphere to be discovered. However, I do not deny the existence of patriarchy as a historical system, which is subordinating women through collaborative modes of production and reproduction. I agree with Kandiyoti only in that we have to discover subjective experiences of womanhood. The subjectivity of educated Islamist women presented here is only one among all others. First, I would like to know about the quality of life proposed by Islamist ideology. Then, I simply would like to know how women negotiate Islam and everyday life and describe gender aspects of their everyday lives, for feminist purposes.

From such a viewpoint, this study has a modest curiosity such as what Turkish women in university education or in various professions have found in Islam while, Islam is not

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[2]   Burka is one of the most rigid traditional clothing, widely used in Afghanistan. It covers whole body and face. Çarşaf is similar to *burka* and widely used in Middle East. *Tülbent* is loose-knitted cotton headscarf worn in different ways mostly by rural women in Turkey. Turkish rural women also wear loose pants called *şalvar.*

promising an equalitarian society for men and women.[3] In this relation, everyday lives of women who make such a choice might give us clues about the nature of this choice, as well, since everyday life might serve as the sphere of *praxis*. In addition, it is the proper place to see the specific logic of any practice. For this aim, I have interviewed thirty women from four industrial cities of Turkey, namely Istanbul, Ankara, İzmit and Eskişehir. The type of sampling is the one that covers theoretical and purposive sampling, for I would like to derive meaningful categories, out of women's lives. According to Lin (1976: 158), this kind of non-probabilistic sample is employed, "when the boundaries of the population are not accurate and when meaningful categories are aimed". The findings here are derived from a qualitative research employing in-depth interview and psychoanalytic method of "free association of concepts".[4] The study aims to describe and engender, that is, capture gender aspects of, everyday lives of educated women, and it is concentrated on gender issues in women's lives, and on how they perceive the significance of Islam. As the mode of interpretation, I try to adapt Smith's feminist sociology of everyday life and her emphasis on telling the story through "women's wording" (Smith, 1987: 107). Smith, (1987: 106-107, and 184-5) emphasises on the 'standpoint of women'. According to Smith, "it cannot be equated with a perspective or world view" it is rather, a method that lets "actual women speak of and in the actualities of their everyday world", a method far from "universalising a particular experience" (1987: 107). It is not the objective of this study to discuss the absolute necessity of reductionism in doing social sciences but it is quite adequate to note that I aim to conceptualise and typify *tesettür* from women's wording. As I indicated above, I applied theoretical and purposive sampling to derive meaningful categories out of researched women's subjective experiences of Islam. Such an effort cannot promise any new explanation, which has not been reached in the field, but it is aimed to be 'grounded' and able to show the diversity in *tesettür*. I tried to associate women's wording with probable conceptual correspondents. However, this has ended up with the result that the study has little to share with already existing studies on the general topic "women and Islam". Consequently, five women's experience would be presented as derived 'typicalities'[5] out of thirty women.

1.1. Researched Women

The common characteristic of women is that they practise *tesettür* and they have been faced with the problem of headscarf during education or in the workplace. Families of

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[3] Beyond all cultural defense of Islam and womanhood in Islam, it is clear that an application of Koranic principles would not bring the status of 'full citizenship' for women. They are not equals to men in any sphere of life, not in "true" Islam, and in "practiced" Islam, either. Instead, "women are entrusted to men", in Koranic principles. See Koran, ayet 34, *sura* of Nisa.

[4] For a leading application of this method, see Hollway, Wendy and Jefferson, Tom (2000). Here it is applied for the themes such as womanhood, sexuality, patriarchy. Within this method, interviewer only introduces the concept and follows wording, ordering, and phrasing of the interviewed, avoids the question of why. S/he can ask open-ended questions, and first memory that the interviewed remembers and associates. This method is in fact a simplified form of psychoanalysis, in which the self is reconstituted through memory.

[5] According to Schutz, the social world has multi-form structures. Each form should be known in its own context intersubjectively. Furthermore, everyday should be known as *prolegomena* (preliminary observations) to science, for knowledge of the everyday precedes scientific one. Everyday knowledge, is the realm of reality, directly lived experience in intersubjective perception, socially constructed, and typical. This is the knowledge giving way to action. See Schutz, Alfred (1962) and Schutz, Alfred (1967).

twelve women have migrated to the cities they are still residing, namely, Ankara, Eskişehir, and Istanbul. Twenty-nine women out of thirty have housewife mothers. In addition, half of researched women's fathers are retired factory-workers. Artisans, small-commercialists, and officers compose the rest. Researched women are coming from crowded families. They had to compete for everything, even for love. There are only two women having one sibling. The concentration is on the numbers 2, 3, and 4. Six teachers, six secretaries, two pharmacists, two accountants, twelve students, a journalist, and a computer programmer have formed the group. Among them, two women have left school, and two women are working in jobs, which are not related with their education. The rest has adopted different 'tactics' such as wearing wig, hat, or headscarf partially.

2. ISLAM AND GENDER ISSUES IN WOMEN'S LIVES

2.1. A Preliminary Approach

This study has been designed to understand the relations among the spheres of women, Islam, and everyday life. As being carried out to produce knowledge in favour of women, among women, and by women, it is supposed to be within women's studies in general, and as it overlaps with different sub-disciplines of sociology, such as sociology of Middle East, sociology of religion, and sociology of everyday life, it is a sociological analysis, in particular.

Studies of Middle East perspective as a whole (Gellner, 1981; Geertz, 1968; Gilsenan, 1973; 1982) have been criticised for they lack data from everyday life (Tapper and Tapper, 1987). However, some of the studies themselves suggest of detailed data from everyday life as a separate and necessary research topic (Gilsenan, 1973: 5; Mardin, 1989: 232).

My critique of Middle East perspective is that most of the studies carried out in this field do not differentiate between what is Islamic, what is cultural, and what is patriarchal. The tendency of trying to understand everything under Islam is an equally dangerous one. Like anywhere in the world, Middle East also has a history of its own, production processes, a geography, politics, etc. These should be known and then it might be possible for the significance of Islam to be discussed. Similar questions have arisen within the discipline of women's studies, and, the necessity of a social history of women and gender in the Middle East has been pronounced (Meriwether and Tucker, 1999).

Another group of studies are replying the necessity of knowing about socio-economic processes. They are mostly concentrated on the themes of women and poverty in the third world and have examples from Muslim world (Afshar and Agarwal, 1989; Bina and Zangeneh, 1992). However, as cultural analyses are in lack of the knowledge of socio-economic processes, these are lacking in subjective sphere of women. How women cope with already existing reality under specific conditions might have many clues for better ways of coping with or transforming already existing conditions.

Studying on the theme of women and Islam in Turkey might have important differences than studying on women in the Arab world. Islam has an original path in terms of Turkish case because Turkey has lived a secular revolution and Islam has remained in the sphere of culture; it has been extracted from the sphere of law and its control was held by the

state. Turkey has some similarities with Shah's Iran and Egypt in terms of women policies and for this reason; it has been noted among countries where a kind of 'state feminism' is operated (Fleischmann, 1999: 116). Hatem, (1999: 77) also, for instance, cites Turkey among these countries; and finds surprising that 'trivial' issues like women's dressing are given very important meanings and women are wanted to have such clothing that they represent modernity. Fleischmann and Hatem are right in the fact that women have benefited much from "state's support of women's rights, but the state made gender a political tool used to satisfy state interests" (Fleischmann, 1999: 119; Hatem, 1999: 77-9). However, I do not agree with the idea that 'state feminism' has taken place in Turkey. Before Republican era, a serious feminist movement has been noted (Sirman-Eralp, 1989; Demirdirek, 1993; Çakır, 1994). In this respect, I do not formulate Atatürk's will on modernisation as an accidental issue for Turkey. Instead, Turkish Revolution supported by military elite, educated elite and intellectuals, (including figures like Halide Edip) merchants, and peasants, has found its image in Atatürk's will on modernity. If this was an accident for this society, social, economic, and legal transformations would not have any echo, but they did. In the last two centuries of the Ottoman Empire, the social sphere, which prepares revolution, has already been occurred (Timur, 1993: 104).

In the light of these discussions, I think, Middle East perspective should be enriched by a kind of a social history of gender, and of institutional sphere; and Turkey's specificity should be preserved. Women's studies in Bedouin society, or in post-revolutionary Iran, or women ideologues of Islam with rural origins (in metropolitan cities of Turkey) differ very much in anthropological and sociological terms. This is not an obstacle to compare data from Middle Eastern Women Studies, but to employ the perspective in full manner might have some problems. Macro processes also operate in Middle East, and the specific knowledge of the region is helpful in placing it in the reality of the world-historical processes.

The theme of women and Islam has covered studies from Turkey, beginning by 1980s. The phenomenon of Islamicisation, for instance, has been noted by Vergin (1985). Vergin's analysis is based on the idea that religion as an institution in society is in the process of change, like other institutions in society. She emphasises on the process of urbanisation, and rapid socio-economic change.

State, as an institution reflects class interests; and, state policies are the products of power struggles among organised groups. A detailed analysis of state policies beginning by the period 1950-1960's and covering each government's policies about (at least) women, education, religion, and economy might explain macro processes related to women's integration to Islamist ideology. Akşit's work (1991) provides, for instance, a comparative analysis of education policies about İmam-Hatip schools and describes the experience of *medrese* reform in Ottoman period.

Social science literature from Turkey was rich in terms of content or discourse analysis (Acar, 1991; Saktanber, 1991; Yeğenoğlu, 1995). One of the earliest interests in the theme of women, Islam, and state, was of Kandiyoti's and her last point had been formulated as the necessity of formulating the relationship between Islam and patriarchy. The awareness of the fact that patriarchy precedes Islam is, not very much different from feminist discovery of the fact that patriarchy precedes capitalism. Precedence of patriarchy makes neither Islam nor capitalism innocent, because they well fitted in collaboration. Their coexistence means that they share same space.

Content and discourse analyses were essential at the beginning because first, social scientists were trying to understand what some people, so-called Islamists, were claiming. This required textual analysis of both holy texts and written material referred by Islamists. In this relation, 1980s became a period of being informed.

Later, we see studies trying to understand the meaning of *tesettür* for women (Göle, 1991; Saktanber, 1994; İlyasoğlu, 1994). According to Göle, there is a modernised privacy in *tesettür* issue. Women defined by domestic sphere have gained some publicity through integration to Islamist ideology (Göle, 1991: 128). An important observation of Göle (1991: 126) is that gender relations are becoming questioned among Islamist women.

Another study has been carried out by Saktanber (1994) among a group of urban women; she got the answer "*fitrat* in genesis" for her questions about women's condition in Islam and for the logic of headscarf (Saktanber, 1994). The concept of *fitrat* in Koran means opposite and complementary parts. According to Koran, God with the name of *al-Fatır* created beings in this character but it does not explain unequal distribution of social roles by gender; it is only an essentialist proposition about man's and woman's nature. I have had the same answer, that is, *fitrat* in genesis, during the fieldwork in a small Turkish town for my questions about the logic of secondary status of women and unequal division of labour in *tarikat* (Sündal, 1993).

According to İlyasoğlu, (1994: 27) Islam has become a reference for women's identity and Islamist women perceived themselves different, through headscarf. Her study is inspiring in terms of its sample: educated professional women working in paid jobs. Such a sample might be enriching for the studies on the theme of women and Islam because it should be questioned why Saktanber's (1994) study in urban space and Sündal's (1993) study in rural space got the same answer: *fitrat* in genesis. This is exactly Islamist gender ideology and perhaps 'class *habitus*'. In this sense, demographic picture of women might be enlightening.

Women from rural origins born into Muslim culture are supposed to form a different group from educated working women. However, İlyasoğlu's study is demonstrating that these women are daughters of housewives with primary school education and they have not met a working woman role model (İlyasoğlu, 1994: 93). Most of women have been living in Istanbul almost for twenty years (İlyasoğlu, 1994: 92). In sum, İlyasoğlu shares the idea of Göle (1991: 85-6) that *tesettür* is an urban issue. Spending twenty years in Istanbul means that these women had migrated to Istanbul during their childhood or adolescence. Furthermore, *tesettür* has macro determinants in Middle East, both historical and cultural. Mardin, (1989: 103) for instance, goes back to nineteenth century in order to understand current revitalisation in Islam.

Tesettür is a kind of male remembrance to women, referring back to the origins of Islam, for the flexibility that women gain by modernisation. The urban space might have been influential in the formulation of *tesettür*, which is radically different from traditional forms of clothing. However, data from towns especially might show that *tesettür* has also become prevalent. Therefore, we do not have adequate studies to judge for the urban character of *tesettür*. On the other hand, populations with rural origins might have lived problems of settlement, subsisting a living, and of sense of belonging, of identity. These are obvious components of new Islam, but the issue of new Islam does not consist of these.

In this relation, I prefer sociology of everyday life, for it gives the possibility of searching all components of life. For instance, if İlyasoğlu had formulated questions about father's occupation, and about quality of life, of let us say new friends, new networks of relationships, we could have seen possible achievement stories in women's lives. Although psychological dimension is emphasised much in her study, her questions about the changes in women's lives after *tesettür* inspired me in terms of my curiosity about what women find in Islam, how Islam transforms their everyday lives.

Özdalga evaluates the issue of *tesettür* in the historical context of secular development in Turkey. According to her, the issue is not a problem of law but a problem of regulation, and the regulations should be in accordance with the law (Özdalga, 1998: 59-60). However, if the regulation does not clash with 'the individual rights', it clashes with 'the secular definition' of the state. Beyond legal aspects of the issue, through Özdalga's short history of 'headscarf issue' we see the changing decisions, instability, periodic flexibilities, and different applications within different branches of bureaucracy, for the application of regulations are based on the control of chief executives. This kind of instability has created different survival strategies and tactics. Therefore, we have to talk about generations of Islamist women.

I completely agree with Özdalga's observation that the issue of headscarf has a deep ethical dilemma. With this insight, I expanded 'typicalities' of interviewed women, as much as possible. While resistance caused inner conflict, (Özdalga, 1998: 75) putting off headscarf, I think, should be evaluated carefully, for it is a more complex issue. The Islamist ideology has lived serious problem of legitimacy. These have not been made very public, but have divided the movement, and caused relaxation. However, this study does not go further on the issue for analysing sample texts from Islamist intelligentsia falls beyond the scope of this work.

Now let us turn back to the initial questions: what is the logic of women's integration to Islamist ideology and what are material conditions of womanhood (womanhood in everyday life) of Islamist women? I employ sociology of everyday life and then engender this sphere in order to have an idea about such questions. However, this is an effort in understanding and interpretation, but not a claim in coming up with exact answers for I refused to utter concepts at the beginning of the study. Instead, this is an effort in typifying and conceptualising from women's wording.

2.2. Islam and Gender Issues in Researched Women's Lives

Researched women represent the first educated woman generation in their families. For most of them, it is a serious challenge to have social acceptance for higher education, and going out to work, in their 'social worlds'. Women's wording about their interest in Islam is mostly based on the theme of "gaining consciousness". They clearly differentiate their religious practice from popular forms of believing. Moreover, most women have begun to practise *tesettür* in the first year of university education.

The first distinction that women have shown is between women who have communal ties with *Sufi* orders,[6] and who do not. Women who are practising their belief individually seem to challenge in traditional constraints but women with traditional *Sufi* influence seem to reinforce patriarchal distinction of space between sexes. Moreover, they seem to adopt a rigid gender ideology, which legitimises women's subordination through essentialist premises. Most women I interviewed had no question in mind about unequal distribution of space and freedom in everyday life between sexes. By the term Islamist gender ideology, I mean a body of constructs, ideas, and assumptions related to the nature of the sexes and their interrelationships, which are legitimated through the reference of Islam. Referring to Islam in terms of life-organisation, relationships between community and individual are defined, including gender aspects of everyday life.

In this relation, one of two functions of religion in everyday life is that it provides an "ideal community" (Heller, 1970: 164-165) in believers' imagination. However, 'ideal community' of Islam does not promise 'full citizenship' for women. Instead, they are entrusted to men; in other words, men are the safe keepers for women.

In this relation, how women explain Islamic clothing, gains more importance. Seventeen women have explained *tesettür* through premises showing its aims. Their phrases are such that it covers attracting parts of women's bodies, protects women from sexual harassment, exposes personality rather than sexuality, helps women in participating social life, and protects men from the 'forbidden'. The rest of women explain it by its legitimating ground. They clearly put it: "because it is God's order"; nine women agreed with the idea that women should hide themselves from men's eyes. Four women have remembered that they had felt more comfortable and closer to God, in *tesettür*. As far as I have felt during the interviews, women's explanations of *tesettür* have come close to 'in order to-motive' and 'because-motive'. According to Schutz, (1967: 86) these two motives "make up the meaning of action". While the 'in order to-motive' explains action in future perfect tense, 'because-motive' does the same in past perfect tense. The former is closer to meaning, and the latter is the legitimating ground. Women's phrases have shared a relation with sexuality in both kinds of explanations so that I conceptualise *tesettür* as 'sexual politics'.[7]

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6   *Sufi* orders are Muslim brotherhoods, diverged from philosophy of Islam and reached present. In all their multiplicity, they widely represent fundamentalist Islam. In Middle East, we reach three interpretations of Islam. The radical Islam has examples of *Taliban*, and Iran, with different sects. Fundamentalist Islam refers to Koran and the wording and practice of Muhammed, namely *hadis,* and *sünnet*. The third is the scripturalist interpretation, which is based on Koran only, aiming to purify religion from the influence of tradition. Turkey has witnessed this interpretation among theologians and specialists of Islamic law. See for a clear distinction between these, Sivan, Emmanuel (1985). See as rich examples of anthropology of Islam, describing *Sufi* orders, as well, Gilsenan, Michael (1973), and Gilsenan, Michael (1982).

7   By employing the term 'sexual politics', I follow Millet's (1973: 47) question, that is, whether the relations between the sexes can be understood under the light of politics, or not. She applies politics as the total sum of methods and tactics to the issue of sexuality. Millett (1973: 51-102) describes how a patriarchal process on sexuality encircles women through ideology, biology, society, class, economy and culture, violence, mythology and religion, and psychology. Because of the institutionalised encirclement of women, the sexual revolution should cover the political quality of the relations between the sexes. See chapter three for the possibility of sexual revolution in Millett, Kate (1973). By the term 'sexual politics', I refer to all methods and tactics employed by women in everyday life, resulted by the relations between their consciousness of womanhood and patriarchal cultural aura. For "the centrality of sexuality in feminist theory", see MacKinnon, Catherine A (1989: 83).

Such a politics have some implications in everyday life. We can expect that everyday life would be organised with some certain emphasis on female sexuality. Any culture can be evaluated through three aspects of female sexuality. These are "(i) acceptance of female sexual physiology, (ii) freedom of female sexual expression, and (iii) ideal womanhood" (Rosenthal, 1977: 199). A woman in *tesettür* means a denial of 'freedom of female sexual expression', at least in the rhetoric. Islam "accepts female sexual potential"; (Boudhiba, 1985: 10) but it "does not let women have it in their own way" (Mernissi, 1987: 19). In addition, "women are conceived as potential dangers for men's self-control and for the sensitive relation between mind and desire" (Sabbah, 1995: 149-151). This means men are put at the centre of human existence. Although there is no idiom on ideal womanhood in Koran, it is not surprising that different social strata produce certain stereotypes in ideal womanhood and legitimise these stereotypes in terms of Islam.

Women have various levels of reconciliation with patriarchy and *tesettür* is one of them. While women, who are practising *tesettür*, are arguing, that *tesettür* aims invisibility in everyday life; they also make visible whom they are, how they perceive manhood and womanhood. The invisibility that women aimed has provided the visibility of Islam, inward. However, in everyday life, there are various tactics of invisibility among women; and it is important to clarify here the significance of Islam.

In this respect, it is important to see how women's lives have changed with *tesettür*, whether it became easier or more difficult, in terms of describing their 'social worlds'. Women reported that they got rid of sexual harassment, and they were more respected and trusted. On the other hand, they were excluded in the wider social relations.[8]

In result, there are examples of *Sufi* influence, socialisation in family, pure *habitus,*[9] identity, solving inner conflict, class and cultural resistance, but only one 'hard ideologue'.[10] Whatever the reasons are, women's stories show serious support for a 'patriarchal bargaining', which refers to the existence of a set of rules regulating gender relations, on which both sexes agree meanwhile which can be refuted, redefined, and re-examined (Kandiyoti, 1997:109). The critical role here is in their capability to create 'area' to manipulate the system.[11] This is to say that they are not 'puppets' at all even if we take the determining power of *habitus* into consideration.

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[8]   For the process of becoming the 'other' as a Muslim in Turkey, see Saktanber Ayşe (1994).

[9]   According to Bourdieu (1990: 56) "practice has a relative autonomy" and this is provided by "specific past through which *habitus* is the product: The *habitus*…is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product". By calling some forms of *tesettür* as pure *habitus*, I imply the form with a specific past through which woman in *tesettür* is the product.

[10] Here I employ Mardin's distinction between 'soft' and 'hard' ideologies. He means cognitive systems of the masses by "soft" ideologies, and he means a structure, of which its content is strong, systematic, relying on basic theoretical works, and limited by the elite culture when he refers to "hard" ideologies. For his theoretical supports, see Mardin, Şerif (1983: 14).

[11] According to Bourdieu (1990: 53) individuals are not "puppets" for "they are able to manipulate the system to their advantage". In terms of this study, I have witnessed that women are referring to Islam in a selective way, in favour of womanhood; and they gain better levels of reconciliation with patriarchy. However, I think, as far as we are not aware of the "existential arc" that Merleau-Ponty (1962: 136) has described, we are puppets. His hypothesis has no empirical evidence yet but it describes the relation that Foucault (1999: 11) tries to explore between "reality, self, and power". According to Merleau-Ponty (1962: 136), "there is the layer of the habitual body at the base of the motor circuit within the physiological body. Equipped with the bodily motor scheme, the habitual body latently forms an existential arc towards targeted things in the external world. At the outset, the bodily schemes existential arc already potentially reaches the action's aim and, thereby, an actual (physiological) perception becomes a "phenomenological" perception endowed with a definite meaning".

Kandiyoti (1997:109) emphasises the necessity of analysing the relation between Islam and patriarchy. She refuses to employ the concept of patriarchy in abstract manner. It represents different systems of male domination, in her view. Furthermore, it is not possible to talk about one form of Islam (Kandiyoti, 1997:130). Her critique of feminist scholarship on the concept relies on the thesis that the concept of patriarchy is still one-dimensional and abstract for its mechanisms are uncertain (Kandiyoti, 1997: 114). She rather focuses on women's integration strategies and conceptualises these as 'bargaining with patriarchy'. This is established by women and originated by a series of necessities of the system (Kandiyoti, 1997:114). However, Kandiyoti does not question the existence of the 'system' itself. Her main thesis is that focusing on women's 'bargaining with patriarchy' would bring a more useful angle of approach for analysing processes of transformation (Kandiyoti, 1997:130).

3. FIVE WOMEN: FIVE TYPICAL STORIES

3.1. Hatun: Muslim *Habitus* from Oppression to Independence

Hatun was born as the third child of a bank officer and a housewife with five children, in Konya, which is a city populated mostly by religious people. She witnessed domestic violence towards her mother during her childhood, and explains the conflict between her parents as an educational gap. Her mother was a primary school graduate and Hatun learned from this that she should be educated in order not to be beaten. She was a successful student. She wanted to go to a school that would prepare her for university. She had in mind faculty of theology, for her elder sister was newly accepted, and she admired her. However, her elder brother claimed that the school she aimed was far from the house and the exit hour was in the evening time. Therefore, her parents sent her to another school, which was not promising too much. By the way, her elder brother was a primary school graduate. Although parents desired a good education for him, he could not succeed. He was given many chances. For instance, they sent him to a private school, which was supposed to be easier but he failed, again. In spite of this clear discrimination, Hatun studied hard, and was accepted to faculty of theology. This time, her parents arranged a marriage for her. Hatun cried, begged but could not change their decision, and married at the age of seventeen.

Her husband was also from Konya, and as a young couple, they began to live with her husband's family. This period was a real hell in her life. Hatun and her husband decided to leave Konya for Eskişehir for they could not find a way to make better their relations with her husband's family. They were settled in Eskişehir, had a pastry shop, worked together and built a life together.

She had three daughters. However, living as a housewife was not satisfying her. She entered the Open University and was graduated as a primary school teacher. By the way, she followed courses of computer, and English. She explained her hard working personality with her unsatisfied desires in her childhood, and added that her husband was the only chance that she had in her life, for he never prevented her from doing what she desired. Not surprisingly, for her, womanhood meant "discrimination" and the "ideal woman" in her mind was the one who did not let oppression.

Hatun began to wear headscarf at the beginning of her adolescence. For her, it was something that came from social environment because; modern types of girls are not accepted in Konya, at all. When she was a little girl, she could not think of not wearing headscarf. Now, she is a mature woman, a mother. She is far from her parents' oppression. If she does not want to wear it anymore, it is her own business. She is sure that headscarf is a part of her personality. Otherwise, she would leave it, but she did not. Furthermore, when she was faced with the headscarf ban, Hatun preferred leaving her teaching career that she finally reached after a series of difficulties. Her personality would be divided if she left her headscarf. Then, she turned back to the pastry shop.

Hatun respects also her present job, she does. She manages six persons and it is not an easy task. She also manages her house herself, and five times a day she goes home, which is not very far from the pastry shop, for religious pray, namely *namaz*. Although I formulate headscarf as a patriarchal practice, from feminist point of view, I have felt that this is Hatun's 'sexual politics' and it can also be defended as a cultural practice from the same point of view. *Tesettür* was not a freely chosen act in her adolescence but she identified herself with this clothing so strongly that she could not leave it. Islam had always been a term of reference for her to battle with her parents and in-laws. She judged them in the name of Islam. She is not oppressed little girl, any more. Now, she is respected. However, her whole life passed with a disciplined, hard-working mood. She adopted Islam for the sake of preserving her self-esteem. Her struggle might seem as a double burden to embarrass patriarchal oppressors, as well. However, this would not represent her subjectivity.

3.2. Firdevs: A Learned Woman of Islam Resisting from the Fronts of Class and Culture

Firdevs was born in Eskişehir as the fifth and last child of a construction worker and a housewife. She was the single daughter of the family. During her adolescence, her brothers were already married or left home for schooling. Her father was a very peaceful man; she lived in a good family atmosphere, and she was treated as if she was the single child.

Her social environment was also Islamic. She remembered herself trying *çarşaf*, when she was five years old; she liked it very much. Firdevs wanted to wear headscarf at primary school. However, her teachers made fun of her, it was too early for this much religiosity. Then, she put off her headscarf at school. However, the reactions of others were not this much. Firdevs remembered how she felt sad when her mother was not paid attention and when the shop assistant in a luxurious shop belittled her mother because of her traditional clothing. She immediately imagined a place, in which everyone was accepted as s/he was.

During secondary school, Firdevs had a teacher of religion. She was impressed by his knowledge of Koran. She asked for private coaching in theology. She also convinced her girl friends for private coaching to prevent his hesitation. She also convinced her teacher by saying that he was responsible for teaching somebody who was asking for knowledge, according to Islamic principles. The male teacher taught her and her friends Koran for six years and Firdevs became a follower of him. When she was accepted to faculty of pharmacy in Eskişehir, she thought that the term university was from the same root with the term universal. So she should have been accepted with her identity. However, this was not the case.

Firdevs tried to get into relationship with various *Sufi* orders but she could not find what she was searching for. She was also far from feminist discourses of the time, which were discussing womanhood in every span of life. In the second year of her education, a student from department of economics proposed her marriage through her theology teacher. She accepted to meet, and felt sympathy towards him, at first look. Firdevs made a serious bargaining with him about marriage life, the city to live, future working life, and housework. Then, she decided to marry. At the end of the third grade, she was already married. As soon as she was graduated, Firdevs had her own pharmacy. She borrowed money from her father and a common friend with her husband.

Her husband is working as a sales manager in a company. Firdevs' family has a two-levelled building and she is living in the first floor, which consists of three rooms. Her family is not getting money from her, although she wants to pay for the rent. Moreover, her mother is looking after her children when she is at work. She manages housework herself, and her husband helps in cooking. He is a lovely and caring father, as well. He spends much time with his children, as he has promised before marriage.

Firdevs defines herself as someone who tries to know herself and her relationship with religion, as that she is someone who tries to live *Sufism*. She has fifteen minutes in the evening time, for her private *Sufi* experience, as she learned from theology teacher, her 'virtuoso' indeed.

Unlike most Islamist women, Firdevs' decision of *tesettür* does not seem to be a reactionary act towards her parents. Rather than this, she adopts her mother's clothing. She defends her mother's cultural practice (headscarf) and class position (*şalvar*). Peaceful family atmosphere seems to make it easier for her to be identified with her mother.

3.3. Bican: From Inner Conflict to Meaning in Life

Bican was born in Eskişehir as one of three children of a worker and a housewife. She had high school education in a boarding school, in the same city. At the beginning, she was not confused about her life. She was generally spending time with a friend group, going somewhere together, listening to metal music. These are her acts that she remembers from that period. However, she began to question her life when she was alone with herself at night. She was in search for meaning. Her thoughts were concentrated on the theme of death, and about what would happen after death. She was feeling that she was not the real actor of her life, just watching from outside. She was always crying with these sentiments. In this period, she noticed that some of her friends were worshipping. She joined them in worshipping, and felt herself better. After she had read the books that she borrowed from these friends, Bican decided to wear headscarf. Her mother warned Bican to think about her decision saying that it was a serious task, not a childish one.

Bican entered faculty of pharmacy. When she was faced with the headscarf ban, she decided to put off her headscarf at school but, this was a painful decision for her, and she was still confused and sad about this. In the first years of university, she lived a friendship through internet chat but after a while, she discovered that he was not the person that she imagined. He was writing literal messages, and acting as if they were his own but they were taken from books. Bican could never bear a shadow in a relationship. Then, she

decided to marry a young engineer. This was an offer through arranged marriage. During the interview, Bican was newly married (three and a half months), 21 years old and she was assisting Firdevs.

Bican likes cleaning her own house. Her husband usually helps in cooking. She defines herself as someone who wants to be successful, who values time, and who wants to be free. Bican likes achieving what she has planned, and she hates changing her plans for the sake of others. However, she became unsuccessful, after she had decided to put off her headscarf. She could no more be concentrated on her lessons, and felt no more so self-confident. After solving her inner conflict in the synthesis of *tesettür*, she now faced with headscarf problem, and she has found herself in a new dilemma. The meaning that her life gains through *tesettür*, is now in danger.

Bican was one of few women whom I interviewed, who were in peace with their mother figure. She is the one who defends her right like her mother. She had questions in mind about womanhood, the logic of *tesettür*, and the ideological dimensions of it, after the interview. Bican seems to make a synthesis between life and thought, in her act of *tesettür*. In her previous life, she felt as if she were just watching from outside. By *tesettür*, she denied an alienated self and life gained meaning.

3.4. Adlı: Changing *Sufism*

Adlı is twenty-four years old, has a brother. Her mood is changeable. For instance, she can react to something that she did not react a week before. She expresses herself easily. Sometimes, she hurts people but this is her mood. Her father is a state bureaucrat and her mother is a housewife. Her parents are from Malatya, and they are still living in Ankara. During the interview, Adlı was engaged, she was planning to have a baby immediately after marriage and leaving her job for she wanted to look after the baby herself. I did not hide my feelings about her plans because; she put off her headscarf to continue her university education, so why it was so easy to leave job. Now, she is married, and expecting a baby. Her mother is eager to take care of the child. Her husband is a commissar. She knew him in a birthday party, talked about him to her mother. Her mother informed her father and he decided engagement for them.

Although her father is a very religious man, and a learned man of religion, worked for NSP (National Salvation Party) in 1970's and having a network of relationships composed by *Nakşibendi*s from different cities, and Welfare Party members, and although her mother had always wanted her to wear headscarf Adlı did not see herself suitable for this choice. She feared that she could not do it properly. After high school education, she could not be successful in university examinations. That year she was sent to a dormitory of *Nurcus* in which private coaching for university examinations were also in charge. The dormitory had been advised by her uncle, who was a *Nakşibendi* leader having a group of *ıhvan* (followers) in Eastern part of Turkey.

In the dormitory, Adlı met a girl, who had chosen Islam and been punished by her family because of her choice. They put her in the bathroom, and tortured in many ways. Adlı thought that this girl could choose Islam with such a family (not related with religion); why she could not do the same although she came from a religious family. She decided to be in *tesettür* after staying two months in dormitory. The girl, who had been punished by

her family because of her belief, more or less represented the same difficulties lived by first Muslims following prophet Muhammed. In addition, such a model seemed to stimulate competitive feelings among young people.

Adlı had many reactions from her cousins. She lived tension in some of her relationships. One of them told that she was too worldly, and her personality had never been suitable for living as a religious one. There had been lived many discussions at home but in the end, people accepted her. Now, she removes headscarf at work. After the interview, she discovered that she was not related with political matters, and she was confused with the questions about life in Islamic societies, especially Iran. I had an impression that she was more pragmatic than most women with *Sufi* influence were, and she did not seem so deep in the rhetoric of Islam. It was clear that her family required the lingual dimension of religion in everyday life so that Adlı had to declare her religious standpoint in the "system of signs". Heller (1984: 138) argues that generic objectivation-in-itself, as vehicles of repeated significance are also systems of signs. In case of *tesettür*, women's everyday clothing has served as a symbol; and it is clear that Adlı has required it. Adlı's story also exposes that *Nakşibendi*s are speedily fragmented; and some of the breaks are being radicalised.

3.5. Ahsen: A 'Hard Ideologue' of Islam

Ahsen was born in Eskişehir as the first child of a couple, who had to leave Ahsen to her grandmother, and migrated to Germany as workers. I felt that Ahsen was deeply influenced by this, for she proved no feeling in her face, when she was talking about the issue. Ahsen was a lonesome child. All through her childhood, books were the mere friends for her. Her grandmother was an illiterate woman, what she did was only taking care of her. In terms of a religious education, she got nothing from her grandmother or her parents, who were already in Germany.

When she was accepted to faculty of medicine in 1979, Ahsen found herself in the sharp distinction between left and right in 1970s Turkey. At the beginning of 1980s, she found her way. Ahsen was neither a very religious person nor an atheist. The left did not seem attracting, for she already read Marx's Capital in high school years, and did not find it extraordinary. On the other side, there was Turkish nationalism with an anti-communist discourse. She did not feel this much apathy towards communists, either. There were fifty students in the classroom. Everybody had a view, an ideology, and she was too much in the middle for that period. In the end, she chose Islam. She was twenty-one years old, when she decided to be in *tesettür*.

In terms of Islam, what she had was only a faith in God, when she entered university. She read the *ayet* about *tesettür*, and decided to practice it. She began by wearing headscarf and continued her readings from Islamic intelligensia. When she decided wearing headscarf, her grandmother reacted sharply, and her parents rejected her. Those days, she knew a young teacher who was also on the Islamic side. He seemed to be a good man. He was an intellectual and popular among students. They met each other in a library, first; and in those days, she saw marriage as a solution for the crisis that she was living with her family. She proposed marriage to him, informing about the family crisis, as well. He thought for three days and accepted to marry her.

Those years, medicine was a very prestigious career, and her family never understood her decision. It took five years for her to be accepted by her family. They understood that she would not change, and by the time passed, they became more religious, anyway. Ahsen's education had breaks with different reasons, from time to time. She left medicine at second grade because of headscarf ban, and then when students like her were given a chance, she turned back to school. She could reach fourth grade and then, left school because of financial problems. After she had brought up her children, she entered a school of librarianship. Then, she preferred sociology, and left it in the fourth grade again, because of headscarf ban. In fact, her story of education is very long. Before the faculty of medicine, she tried school of cinema-TV and engineering of communication. She was 41 years old mother, with two daughters during the interview.

She defined herself as someone out of standards. She proved a high level of self-control during the interview. It was so high that she did not confess that she had fallen in love with that young teacher, who was her husband. She had always been so strong that love was a sign of weakness.

Apart from other women, Islam senses a social order for Ahsen. She is aware of what she signified: ideal womanhood in Islam. All women who are practising *tesettür*, including herself are functional in attracting more people to their side, in her view. They are functional as 'collective representations'.[12] She has conceptualised her practice as a struggle for the domination of Islam. She frequently uses concepts like social class, oppression, and material conditions of existence. However, she is not a leftist. The logic inherent in her integration to Islam is the logic of the shift from leftist ideologies to the Islamist one, in recent decades, in Turkey.

4. CONCLUSION

Patriarchal cultural aura based on misogyny is the macro component of women's everyday lives. In some respects, it is the 'reality principle' for all women. Women have different tactics of coping, differentiating between identification with the dominant figure in family, to the denial of reality. I assume that we, as women born into patriarchy, have different levels of reconciliation with it, based on class and gender. Not only Islamist women but also the rest have 'tactics' of invisibility in everyday life. The paradox in the question of Islamist women is that they make an ideology visible, while they are aiming to be invisible. However, they are 'active agents' of Islam. The fact of Islamicisation in everyday life in Turkey can be interpreted as masses trying to act as 'specialised subjects' in the 'institutional sphere'. They are not satisfied with having faith, any more. They want to be 'specialised' subjects of religion. They want the 'institutional sphere', if we tell the story in Heller's (1990: 50-60) concepts.

In terms of their integration to Islam, I have observed that they refer to Islam in favour of womanhood and gain relatively better fronts in the 'patriarchal bargaining'. For instance, the *archetypes* they referred were Hatice, who was prophet Muhammed's first wife, a commercialist woman; and Ayşe, who was representing a powerful woman, as the

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[12] According to Heller (1970: 165), the second function of religion in everyday life is that it provides "collective representations".

youngest wife of prophet Muhammed, and who was dominating men with her knowledge of Islam.[13] Moreover, women were well taking the advantage of knowledge of Islamic law, which was also restricting men. The kind of interpretation that women do has shown three 'typicalities': direct reference to Koran, *Sufism* including tradition and *archetypes* of Middle East, and changing *Sufism*. However, they have defined themselves different in relation to their mothers, not to modern women. They see headscarf as a mere difference between themselves and their contemporaries. This might have more than one implication. First, it is clear that they differentiate themselves from 'mass religiosity' so that their *tesettür* practice seems to be a proposal for a 'heroic religiosity' in everyday life, suitably with Weber's distinction.[14] However, their wording does not support this for *tesettür* does not seem to regulate everyday life.

El-Guindi (1981) for instance, argues that it represents a kind of new synthesis between modernity and authenticity. However, *tesettür* marks a need to express identity. The problem is how we shall interpret the nature of this need of expression. Following Heller (1984: 141) let us remember that in the Middle Ages dress was fixed by custom, and for instance, "if a high-born damsel donned peasant clothing she was overstepping the critical limit. With the growth of bourgeois society, it became more difficult to make inferences from clothes". Although women in *tesettür* take the advantage of a modern world and its bonuses like the right for education, work, and political participation; their need of expressing themselves, especially their sexual identity is not due to a modern world, it is a pure medieval sanction, which is now adopted by some women in the 'patriarchal bargaining'. In its essential features, *tesettür* does not go well with modernity, which is the outcome of bourgeois society and which "embodies relations of symmetric reciprocity and ...it offers conditions of freedom simply by throwing men and women back into their contingency" (Heller, 1990: 8). However, *tesettür* still carries paradoxical aspects, and different subjective explanations among women who practise it. Women's insistence in *tesettür* needs further effort, and especially the stories 'within'.

In recent studies, we are faced with findings about resistance in women's Islamic clothing practices. MacLeod (1992) interprets it as gender resistance, towards colonisation among lower class women in Egypt. Similarly, I have observed resistance from class, gender, and culture. Women insist in *tesettür* as long as these three fronts coexist. I mean, women's insistence in *tesettür* is three-fold. They defend *tesettür* sometimes as a cultural practice; some women explain it as part of their gender identity that regulates their relationships with men and with other women, in everyday life. In addition, some women have defences of their class-positions through *tesettür*. I saw that their insistence was strong when they have more than one form of resistance.

I have also observed an emergence of middle class taste among most women who have family origins with working class, peasants, and small trading. Their opposition to lives of their mothers is I think not a mere opposition to patriarchy, but represents a will to live better, and admiration to a higher-class culture.

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[13] For a detailed analysis of *archetypes* of womanhood in the Middle East and the relation of these to Muslim women's self-images, see Zuhur, Sherifa (1992). For a phenomenology of religion, and a perspective such as religion as archetype, see Eliade, Mircae (1959).

[14] See Weber's chapter on religion in Gerth, Hans H and Mills, C Wright (1948).

In result, what they challenge in everyday life would give the logic of their practice. Most married women seemed to have relatively more power in the organisation of daily issues, and consumption. They earn and spend together with their husbands. They are the ones who are responsible for domestic sphere but their husbands are helping to some extent, and this is a kind of challenge, relatively because; they perceive a husband who is preparing salad and taking care of children as a helpful one. Their families, husbands, and husbands' families support their working lives. They are taking the advantage of this kind of social approval. However, women with communal ties with *Sufi* orders have shown a rigid gender ideology. For instance, these women have internalised separation of the sexes in public sphere, or they are not against polygamy in case of woman's infertility.

Certainly, five women above have met Islam, which was formulated as an ideology, and their life stories show different forms of integration to Islam. This differentiation can be interpreted in the sense that there is nothing dangerous in women's Islamist movement in Turkey. However, I think, this differentiation is important in the sense that Islam has the power because of greater possible audience, and its communitarian aspect. As it can bring different individual *habitus* together, it can generate different groups with different class *habitus*, as well. Moreover, a social movement has chance to succeed, if it has class allegiances that is difficult to bring in today's economic world, but possible with communitarian aspect of religion. In this context, headscarf ban functioned to show different life chances for women from different social strata; and they remembered class differences among themselves.

Apart from macro aspects of the movement, the headscarf ban put women in a dilemma between education and their belief. As Özdalga (1998: 76) noted, there is "deep ethical problem in this choice, and the dimensions of the headscarf dispute should not be underestimated". Women have been the determining population in political sphere, in recent years. We have to think about the relation between culture and women, again; and elaborate on different cultural controls of female sexuality. As far as I have witnessed during the study, women could not abandon this control even with this clothing. In a very paradoxical way, 'sexual politics' of Islamist women in the form of *tesettür*, and feminist movement in Turkey, with its emphasis on sexual emancipation have coexisted in 1980s, and have not been in frequent dialogue. However, it seems that the ultimate reconciliation between Islam and modern Turkish Republic shall have been resolved through a power struggle between feminist women and Islamist women though this struggle is very weak.

Apart from what it makes to womanhood, some forms of *tesettür* aims a conscious organisation of everyday life. It is a proposal to unite life and thought; and this makes an ideology visible in public sphere. This is a practical project of abolishing "the distinction between the body as a mechanism in itself and consciousness as being for itself" as Merleau-Ponty (1962: 139) proposes. Since body is something that can be seen and that sees, it has "symbolic" or "representative" function (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 124). Moreover, Islam has been embodied by women's tesettür, it has become visible through women's bodies, carrying all existential aspects of womanhood in Islam.

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