

WestminsterResearch

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/westminsterresearch>

**Tracing the boundaries: women, nation and modernity in
Turkey**

Aybige Yilmaz

School of Media, Arts and Design

This is an electronic version of a PhD thesis awarded by the University of Westminster. © The Author, 2007.

This is an exact reproduction of the paper copy held by the University of Westminster library.

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners.

Users are permitted to download and/or print one copy for non-commercial private study or research. Further distribution and any use of material from within this archive for profit-making enterprises or for commercial gain is strictly forbidden.

Whilst further distribution of specific materials from within this archive is forbidden, you may freely distribute the URL of WestminsterResearch:
(<http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/>).

In case of abuse or copyright appearing without permission e-mail repository@westminster.ac.uk

Tracing the Boundaries:
Women, Nation & Modernity in Turkey

Aybige Yilmaz

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
University of Westminster for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2007

Abstract

This research project examines the dominant discourses of national identity and delineates the processes of othering in contemporary Turkey. It does this by following the various debates that have surfaced around women in Turkey. The data that informs this process consists of news coverage of selected case studies about women in mainstream Turkish newspapers. In doing so, the research also examines the role of women in the articulation of national boundaries.

In doing this, the research builds on the arguments developed by studies of nationalism and postcolonial theory that focus on the close relationship between the discourses of nationalism, modernity and gender.

The analysis of the case studies gives a clear, if not all comprehensive view, of the heated debates going on in Turkey, about what Turkishness entails, and *where* its identity can be located. While an unambiguous location does not emerge from the analysed data, the different proposals on the meaning of Turkishness which surface through the news stories point towards the opportunities, as well as the threats presented in the articulation of national boundaries. The research reveals that national imagination in Turkey today is still highly informed by the gender, ethnic and modernization discourses that have been anchored in the early years of the Republic. According to this, the symbolic role of women in representing the nation continues to form an obstacle to perceiving them as independent subjects. In discourses of national identity, whereas the ethnic understanding of Turkishness is largely clear and unquestioned, discourses about Turkey's modernity are more ambiguous and point to the hybrid character of the Turkish modernization project. The data also indicates an ambivalent relationship with Europe, which appears both as the desired locus of modernity and a source of threat – thus identifying with it and othering it at the same time. The analysis attempts to trace and interpret those ambivalences and point to where the possibilities for a more inclusionary understanding of national identity can emerge.

Acknowledgements

I am gratefully indebted to my supervisor Dr. Roza Tsagarousianou, not only for her guidance throughout this project, but also for her friendship and support. I am also indebted to my professors, Jean Seaton and Paddy Scannell -both have been wonderful sources of inspiration throughout my years at this institute, and also made it possible for me to undertake this doctorate study. And I am grateful to Dr. Peter Goodwin as well, who, many years ago in a telephone interview, convinced me to do an MA at Westminster (hence changing the course of my life) and supplied me with teaching jobs throughout the PhD. And of course to Mike Fisher –not only that he is a great administrator, but he also practically helped me stay and become a lecturer in London.

As for my friends and family, I believe I have to first extend them my apologies, even before my gratefulness, for the painfully long five years that they had to put up with. I cannot pay back the emotional support, as well as the constant academic feedback I got from Umut, Ece and especially Burcu. And also from my wonderfully patient husband, who was forced to read and comment on many many pages, continuously rushed to printing and scanning jobs, and deserves to complain the most -but never has.

And finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my dear mother and father, who have always, ever since I was a child, wanted me to become a doctor.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Chapter 1: Nation, boundaries and women -Sketching the frame	9
1.1 Conceptualising the nation	9
1.1.1 Explaining nation and nationalism	12
1.1.2 Discursive construction of the nation	16
1.1.3 The nation, its subjects and its boundaries -A shared national identity	20
1.1.4 Allowing for change	25
1.2 The role of gender in conceptualising the nation	28
1.2.1 The symbolic role of women in the discursive reproduction of the nation	32
1.2.2 National modernities and gender discourses	38
1.2.3 Conclusion and further remarks	45
Chapter 2: Taming modernity -Turkey, nation and women	49
2.1 The beginnings	50
2.2 The re-transformation	56
2.3 The academic resonance	65
2.4 Kemalist reforms, nationalism and women	67
2.5 Conclusion and further remarks	78
Chapter 3: Methodology -Constructing the Rationale for Analysis	81
3.1 Power, society and discourse	81
3.2 Who writes the stories? Journalists and the problem of authorship	84
3.3 Discourse analysis as a method	88
3.4 Photographs and visuals	94
3.5 Problem of translation	95
3.6 Object of analysis	96
3.7 Framework for analysis	100
Chapter 4: Victims, Villains and Guardian Angels - Batman suicide stories	102

4.1 Introduction of the case study	102
4.2 Thematic analysis	108
4.3 Overarching arguments and the main discourse	121
4.4 Processing the text -how the discourse was realised in the texts	124
4.5 Conclusion, and more about the guardian angels	136
Chapter 5: “She was faster than the tractor!” Sureyya Ayhan’s story	142
5.1 Introduction of the case study	142
5.2 Thematic analysis	150
5.3 Overarching discourses and concluding remarks	173
Chapter 6: ‘Everybody loves a bride?’ White Weddings and Political Meanings in Turkey	178
6.1 Introduction of the case study	178
6.2 “We gave away a bride to the Chancellor” -Elif Sozen’s wedding	188
6.2.1 Thematic analysis	188
6.2.2 Overarching discourses and concluding remarks	201
6.3 "Neither Islamic, nor Turkish, or Western..." -The wedding of Elif Erbakan	204
6.3.1 Thematic analysis	204
6.3.2 Overarching discourses and concluding remarks	219
6.4 “The veiled Diana” -Reyyan Mutluer’s wedding	221
6.4.1 Thematic analysis	221
6.4.2 Overarching discourses and concluding remarks	237
Conclusion -Tracing the boundaries	241
Bibliography	252



**Two girls dressed in the colours of the Turkish Flag
National Children's Day, 1983**

Introduction

In the very early days of this research I was given some clever advice: to write on a post-it note, in no more than one sentence, what I wanted to find out in my research and to stick it on the side of my computer to guide me through the coming years. Easy as it might sound, finding that perfect sentence that encapsulated my research turned out to be a truly frustrating experience. After several blocks of post-it notes had found their way to the waste paper bin, what ended up and stayed on the monitor for many years was a childhood photograph of my sister and I, dressed in the colours of the Turkish flag posing for our parents on National Children's Day. The picture was taken right after a ceremony at my primary school, where I had read a poem about the Turkish flag to a large crowd of parents, teachers and students gathered in the garden. As I read to my best acting ability, the poem about how I would readily shed my last drop of blood to protect my flag, my little sister was standing next to me trying to hold up an actual Turkish flag that was larger than her. At the end of the poem the crowd broke into loud applause, not a small victory for a ten year old! Coming down the platform, I even remember a watery eyed parent grabbing and hugging me and telling me how proud I made her feel.

I grew up in the nineteen eighties, in the surreally nationalist post-military coup years in Turkey when every school day started with a loud reading of our pledge to the nation in the school garden. My parents are middle-class secularists, back then highly idealist, and strong believers in their nation. My mother, a blond woman with striking looks who could easily pass for being 'European', and my father, a dark, good looking and very intelligent man, are both grandchildren of settlers who were encouraged to migrate from the Ottoman provinces to Turkey in the early years of the Republic. Despite their totally different looks, with one side of my family originally from the Balkans and the other from the Eastern borders of the Empire, my parents never had any doubt as to the Turkishness of their ethnic origin – a thing that has always remained a mystery to me. Neither had a privileged background; my father had studied his way up from a rural Anatolian town to professional life in Istanbul,

and my mother, although from Istanbul, was no different. For this reason, they both felt strongly about their children's education and had high expectations from all of us. However, being the eldest child, and being the only one who really seemed to be into books, they especially had high expectations for me. They sincerely hoped that I would one day become an internationally applauded doctor, a surgeon if possible, who would work in a well-respected medical institution in Europe and make everyone proud back home. For me, this was the incarnation of the poem scene, only on a grander scale, and I must admit that as a child I found the 'applause' part quite appealing. I had no problems with making the whole nation proud either – in fact I quite enjoyed the idea.

It was not until the early nineteen nineties that the role started to sound too restrictive, if not boring. For a university student, there were far more exciting routes to becoming internationally famous than being a heart surgeon and I no longer felt sure that I cared much about pleasing seventy million other people in Turkey. My parents resisted strongly, but in vain, to my 'liberalisation', and deep inside they still blame it on the Westernised education that I received. To my relief, and in time, their expectations faded leaving me with a curiosity about that perfect 'national daughter', which I once must have promised to be, and which is still longed for by many other people in Turkey today.

This research is therefore a personal journey into that very picture taken more than twenty years ago. I started out with a series of questions, from why we were dressed up as Turkish flags in the first place, to why we see similar pictures on newspapers everyday, and what stories those pictures can tell us about national identity in contemporary Turkey. In this attempt, I have examined three case studies about debates occurring around the lives of various women in mainstream newspapers in Turkey. Even though none of the three cases are essentially on politics or on matters of government in the classic sense, the discussions formed around them are highly political in terms of their power for marking the boundaries of Turkish national identity. At the same time, the stories that have formed the data are also very much symptomatic of a recurring pattern in Turkey: debates raised *around* women, which are not necessarily *about* women, and often not *by* women themselves remain as a common motif in public discussion in Turkey. By examining those debates that

transcend the lives of women, who are the main characters in the stories, I wanted to delineate the practices of national othering and boundary making in Turkey.

Following from this, the main objective of this project can be described as an exploration into the articulation of national boundaries in contemporary Turkey, while at the same time observing how this process takes place through the bodies of women.

The data that allows for this study is remarkably rich and diverse, with each of the three cases telling a different story: the first one narrates the distressing stories of women who committed suicide in Southeast Turkey; the second one tells an urban tale of a national athlete who raised herself from her rural town to competing at the European Championships, along with the heavy criticisms she received for her relationship with her married coach; and the last case which is about the weddings of three brides, two of whom are veiled in white wedding gowns, and all of whom have well-known political figures for fathers. While the particular stories might be quite unrelated to one another, they all converge around the ethno-nationalist, as well as modernist aspirations of Turkish national identity. They are united at the point in which these events have been turned into headline stories: all three reflect anxieties about the self-image, or identity, Turkey presents to itself and to the West through the women in the stories. Indeed, each of the three case studies introduces uncomfortable questions to the meanings of national identity and modernity in Turkey, and challenges the seeming harmony of the national unity from different grounds: the veiled brides can be seen as challenges to secularism and the accepted meaning of modernity, the national athlete's story resists the patriarchal discourses inherent in national identity, as well as contemporary class biases, while the suicides present the ultimate challenge to life in Turkey. The data analysis in chapters four, five and six, attempts to follow how these challenges are received, and how the journalists' try to reincorporate, negotiate with, or reject these alternative voices heard through the stories¹.

The third chapter explains the methodology chosen to deconstruct the data in these chapters, which is discourse analysis. This chapter also maps out the rationale

¹ Because I will be giving separate introductions to the case studies in the relevant chapters I am avoiding detailed summaries here.

followed in developing the methodological framework, through a discussion of the concept of discourse as used in the works of Michel Foucault. As well as the issues encountered in applying the Foucauldian approach to empirical research, it will also review some of the more systematic research conducted within the school of Critical Discourse Analysis. Moreover, each chapter that focuses on an individual case study also provides a detailed description of the data and the particular methodological issues raised within that case study.

While the readers might find the case studies the most engaging part of the project, the first two chapters are important in informing the deconstruction of data. In the first chapter, I try to sketch out a theoretical framework for understanding nationhood and national identity, drawing upon a plethora of research and theorizations in the field. The literature that has been used for this mainly comes from constructivist and discursive reviews of the nation. This literature foremost conceptualises nationalism as a discursive consciousness, or in Anderson's (1991) words, an 'imagination', that is comprised of an assemblage of manifold sub-discourses that may not always be consistent with each other, but nevertheless appear to be so. It also directs our attention to alternative versions of nationalism that circulate in society in everyday life, competing against the hegemonic version, turning national identity into a continuous process of negotiation. Such an understanding stresses the inherent ambivalence of the nationalist imagination, rather than seeing it as a unilinear and coherent ideology. Despite the need in nations to bind the community together around a certain and unchanging *nationness*, both the nation and its boundaries are strictly determined by their socio-cultural and historical context, requiring any definition to be always no more than a snapshot taken at that particular time frame. This is exactly what the case studies in this research offer to the readers. Secondly, it also sees the national process as an extension of the experience of modernity, resulting in relentless attempts to control that very experience through the enactment of boundaries, rules and national values to organize, sort and categorize the ambiguities that arise in that process. The deconstruction of the data in the three chapters attempt to interpret the debates around the news stories as part of this paradigm.

The second part of the first chapter moves away from the discussion of nations and nationalisms towards the rationale behind choosing the three cases about women. This discussion here presents a brief summary of the literature developed by feminist writers on the symbiotic relationship between gender and nation, and how women in different contexts have been seen as representatives of national boundaries. The symbolic role attributed to women becomes particularly poignant in national modernization projects, such as in the case of Turkey.

Chapter two picks up from this discussion and contextualises the data by giving a background summary on Turkey's experience in nation building, and the role of women in this process. This chapter explains how in the early years of the Republic the definition of modern has taken the West as its reference point and appropriated it, privileging certain identities, while submerging, subordinating, marginalizing or devaluing certain others in this process (Kandiyoti 1999). Again, it is in these formative years that women were given the role of representing the newly crystallised national identity. While, as the chapter later discusses, the Republican formulation is today largely seen as inadequate and restrictive in binding the community together, the experience of the early years still continue to inform, and oversee the dominant discourses of modernity, nation and gender in Turkey. In the course of this, femininity turns into not the only but one of the best front seats to observe the latest debates on Turkishness, its defining virtues, and sins that need to be remedied. In short, the second chapter attempts to make the case studies more meaningful by immersing them within the Turkish context.

As the readers will notice in the proceeding chapters, this research project has used literature from a number of fields, such as nationalism, post-colonial studies, feminism, and critical analysis of discourse, as well as research on Turkey, which have made this a strictly interdisciplinary project. However, I am hoping it will contribute to growing scholarship in at least a number of areas of research. Firstly, even though the data pertains strictly to the Turkish case, results of the analysis are important in showing how national boundaries, including inscriptions on ethnicity, culture and modernity, are constructed through, not outside gender. In this regard, the analysis can also contribute to the academic discussions that aim to bring gender into theories of nationalism and national identity.

Next, the research also attempts to contribute to the burgeoning deconstructions of modernity and national identity in Turkey. As will be discussed in the second chapter, Republican discourses on modernity and nation, and the dichotomies of East and West along which meanings of modernness and national identity have been situated, have been heavily criticised in academic circles, especially over the past ten years. In fact, my attempt actually goes against the grain of what is now more fashionable in academic research about contemporary Turkey. Today, the contemporary presence of nationalism and discourses about modernity that take Europe as a reference point are taken for granted phenomenon in Turkey, which has resulted in a shift towards research on the hybrid experiences that are often regarded as more interesting, with an exceptional body of work stemming from ethnographic research². While there can be no doubt about the need for examining new areas, we also need to bear in mind that the critical awareness of hegemonic discourses that put together national identity does not mean that they will disappear. Besides, without revisiting this now somewhat less fashionable site through analysis of contemporary data, we are in danger of freezing the dominant discourses within the framework of the early years of the Republic, and of missing out on the struggles, subtle changes, and possible openings for negotiation that take place in hegemonic inscriptions of modernity and national identity.

In short, I am more interested in observing how the hegemonic imagination about the nation still continues to inform Turkish national identity today. The case studies bring together some of the most important fronts where hegemonic discourses of Turkishness are challenged and asked to negotiate – such as on religion, ethnicity, gender, and the meanings of Europe. In doing so it gives a clear, if not all comprehensive view, of the heated debates going on in Turkey, about what Turkishness entails, and *where* its identity can be located. While an unambiguous location does not emerge from the analysed data, the different proposals on the meaning of Turkishness which surface through the news stories do point towards the opportunities, as well as the threats presented in the articulation of national boundaries. Therefore, I am hoping that in my attempt to trace through these

² See among others Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2001; Saktanber 2002; White 2002

boundaries, which are constantly being broken, disrupted and rebuilt, this project will present its readers with valuable evidence on the discursive construction of national identity in Turkey, and provide a useful platform from which further questions for research on Turkey can be launched.

Chapter 1:
Nation, boundaries and women -Sketching the frame

In what follows I attempt to sketch out a theoretical framework for understanding nationhood and national identity as discursive constructs. I do this by drawing upon the plethora of theory and research that has emerged in the field over the last two decades. This will be followed by a brief summary of the literature on nation and gender, developed mainly by feminist writers. This section will explain the symbiotic relationship between the nation and gender, and examine the processes through which women are turned into prime representatives of national boundaries. In the final part, the discussion will focus on the role of women in national modernization projects in the postcolonial and Muslim world, where the role of women in the construction of symbolic boundaries becomes particularly complex and significant. These issues will be examined more in detail in the following chapter by examining the Turkish experience.

1.1 Conceptualising the nation

“the image of the nation (...) is a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write it and the lives of those who live in it.” (Bhabha 1990a: 1)

The driving interest of this research has been to explore Turkey’s national identity and the boundaries formed around that identity, moulding perceptions, identities, and limits of acceptability within the nation. All of this rests on a strong nationalist rhetoric that infiltrates all levels of cultural life in Turkey as evident through discussions in everyday newspapers. However, it would be very misleading to assume that Turkey is alone, or one of the few countries experiencing the current potency of nationalism. On the contrary, this is a ubiquitous phenomenon peculiar neither to Turkey nor Turkish newspaper articles. The resurgence of nationalism, particularly in Europe following the end of the cold war, at a time when postmodernist perspectives had announced the end of grand narratives, has been an attractive area of investigation in the social sciences for some time. The year 1983 is usually cited as evidence of this academic outbreak with the publication of three core texts (Gellner

1983; Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). What is more surprising, however, is the fact that debates in this area did not lose their appeal, but rather generated a continuing number of theorizations and textbooks on the topic. The consensus generated by these growing number of publications is that nationalism today, far from being passé, continues to remain an important and embedded force, forming “the endemic condition” in the established nations of the West (Billig 1995: 6). Apart from a few wishful arguments, such as Hobsbawm’s (1990), that both nations and nationalism are a phenomenon past their peak, there seems to be near unanimous agreement in the mainstream literature. Moreover, in spite of the growth of globalisation and regional alliances like the European Union (whose power is once again being debated following the failure to ratify its constitution), the fundamental player in world-politics is still the nation state¹.

Given the scope and aims of this chapter, it is by no means possible to review all relevant theorizations in the mainstream literature that focus on the origins of nations in explaining their founding force of nationalism. Nevertheless, a necessary starting point is the work of modernists that attempt to expose and explain the novelty of nations, which is foremost for developing a discursive understanding of nationhood.

Modernist approaches see nations and nationalism as recent historical phenomena and distinctive features of modern industrial society. As the forerunner of the modernist camp Ernest Gellner (1983) strongly argued, the nation as a natural and God-given political entity is nothing but a myth. For Gellner, nations as we know of today have been invented as a direct result of changing social conditions and the needs of the industrial society (ibid.). Of the other founding texts in the field, Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983), and Hobsbawm (1990) also criticised the naturalness and historical permanence of nations, arguing that they rest on invented histories. In a similar vein, Anderson (1991) explained nations as culturally created constructs. In doing so, the modernist perspective rejects outright the primordialist claims that set the base for nationalist rhetoric: that nations have always existed and therefore are natural entities.

As Ozkirimli (2000: 64-5) points out, primordialism is an approach that includes a diversity of voices, extremists as well as less radical versions. For example, Shils advocated a less radical

¹ Many writers today, such as Mann (1996) or Ozkirimli (2005), emphasise the persistence rather than erosion of the power of the nation-state in the face of globalisation.

version of this approach in 1957, stating that nations have existed for a long time and therefore have their roots stretching back to ancient times. Smith (2001: 49-54) distinguishes this less radical version as perennialism, and includes Shils' work in this category while offering his ethno-symbolist approach as a third way in between modernism and perennialism. Smith has defended this position in his various books (see among others 1991, 1999, 2001), and Hutchinson (1994, 1996) also shares the ethno-symbolist approach.

There are elaborate attempts to justify the ethno-symbolist position, including a strong emphasis on the various arguments it shares with the modernists, foremost on the "modernity" of the nation-state. However, the ethno-symbolist approach also argues for the importance of the *longue duree* and the pre-modern - pre-existing *ethnies* (ethnic communities) that form the basis of nations and determines their political success. Smith (1991: 71) describes this middle way as follows:

"... if nationalism is part of the 'spirit of the age' it is equally dependent upon earlier motifs, visions and ideals. (...) And while a new era opens with the arrival of *nationalism*, it is impossible to grasp its impact on the formation of national identity without exploring its social and cultural matrix, which have owed so much to the presence of pre-modern *ethnies* and the gradual emergence of national states in the West."

In short, while this position agrees that the nation-state is a recent phenomenon, there is a particular emphasis on national roots that reach back into an ethnic past. Not surprisingly, the ethno-symbolist approach has been criticised for suggesting that the real ethnic cores of nations are buried in their history and origins (Ozkirimli 2003), for not paying enough attention to the discontinuities between modern and pre-modern understandings (Breuilly 1996), and for supplying selective evidence to support these arguments (Laitin 2001). In agreeing with these criticisms, and despite parallels with the modernists on various issues, I find little use in embracing this approach in my analysis.

As argued previously, modernists form the essential starting point in discursive understanding of nationhood. However, modernists do not form a uniform group. The range of perspectives in this group often complement one another while diverging in their emphasis on the conditions under which nation states came about, how they emerged and how they developed. In developing a theoretical framework for this research project, the works of Anderson

(1991), and Hobsbawm (1983; 1990), which emphasise the socially constructed character of nations, are particularly important. Their works have opened the floor to more recent studies that see nationalism as a discourse. They aim to deconstruct and analyse nationalism in a number of areas such as postcolonialism, gender and the media. Consequently these later studies, which are sometimes labelled as ‘postmodernist debates on nationalism’ for their deconstructivist approach (c.f. Spencer & Wollman 2002: 49; also Walker 2001), accept the nation-state as a central feature of modernity. At the same time, they direct their attention on to the nationalist discourses that have accompanied and underpinned its emergence. In return this has enabled further exploration and analysis of power relationships present in the discursive construction of the nation, particularly with regard to its boundaries, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion that are at play².

In the following discussion, I attempt to map out the debates that offer a discursive understanding of the nation, starting with the constructivist works of Anderson and Hobsbawm, but also referring to other writers, such as Renan’s voluntary nation ideal (1990) which Anderson also refers to.

1.1.1 Explaining nation and nationalism

Benedict Anderson’s widely referenced book *Imagined Communities*, in which he describes nations and nationalism as “cultural artefacts” (1991: 4) has been profoundly influential, not only in studies of nationalism, but also in cultural studies. In his work, Anderson regards the nation as a novel phenomenon, one that emerged around the time of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. His well-known argument is that a nation comes into existence when its members, despite never having met each other, imagine themselves as part of a “communion”- hence nations should be seen as “imagined communities” (1991: 6). Such a formulation is important not least for explaining nation-ness not as a political/ ideological force but more as a sense of belonging which is strongly felt at an individual level by citizens. Nations are imagined as communities “because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal

² While this research project also shares parallel concerns, this is not to privilege all micro-scale analysis and deconstructions of nationhood. As Walker (2001: 615) warns, there are many different approaches to nationalism that favour deconstructivist interrogation, and not all of them are as convincing as the others. At its most extreme, postmodern readings of the nation can imply abandoning the possibility of any criticism altogether in favour of specificity and deconstruction.

comradeship” (1991: 7). It is this conception of fraternity, Anderson explains, that makes people ready to kill and die for their nations.

What makes this sense of collectivity modern and different from previous religious and dynastic allegiances is the different apprehension of time and space. For Anderson, this is made possible only through material and cultural developments. Fundamental in this process was the spread of “print-as-commodity” (1991: 38). The printing of manuscripts, not only in Latin but also increasingly in the vernaculars to appeal to the masses, helped to bind the cognitive experience of collectivity in time and space. In particular the growth of novels and newspapers generated a shared simultaneity of experience and historicity. Furthermore, this new experience of nationhood also marked a political space with borders. Because nations are without exception “imagined as limited”, encompassing “boundaries (...) beyond which lie other nations”, the bounded territoriality of this imagined space also needed to be sovereign, and represented by sovereign states (1991: 7). Therefore the national territory also legitimised the existence of the nation state. As Anderson discusses in detail in his book, the development of maps was especially significant in representing the new spatially bounded unity³.

What has perhaps been the most fundamental contribution of Benedict Anderson’s work is his formulation of nations as embedded in the cultural systems within which they “come into being” (1991: 12) through a collective believing in the reality of the nation, rather than as a result of self-consciously held political ideologies. Here, Anderson agrees that nations are invented, but sees this invention as a process of creation rather than simply as fabrication and falsity (1991: 6). All nations without a ranking of falsity-authenticity become alive through a socially constructed reality, which he finds equally strong: “all communities larger than face-to-face contact ... are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (ibid.). Therefore Anderson not only formulates nations as imagined but also explains how they still can have such a profound appeal on its members, seeing nations as cultural constructs that arouse deep emotional attachments for their members. What makes nations such convincing, almost tangibly real entities is precisely the ways in which nations are imagined, and Anderson

³ In *Imagined Communities*, see particularly chapter 10, “Consensus, Map, Museum” p. 163-185.

allows a good deal of discussion of the importance of the past in solidifying the imagined community.

At this point, Anderson's arguments can be complemented by Hobsbawm and Ranger's edited book *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), which came out the same year as Anderson published *Imagined Communities*. In the introduction to their volume, Hobsbawm also sees nations and nationalism as constructs of 18th and 19th century modernity succeeding the Industrial Revolution. However, unlike Anderson, he does not describe this as a process subtly but powerfully taking place at a subconscious level among the citizens. On the contrary, Hobsbawm, like Gellner (1983), sees the construction of the nation as a process of social engineering⁴. This process is "often deliberate and always innovative" (ibid.: 13): it is led by the ruling elites who use and manipulate history and tradition to convince the populations to believe in the naturalness of their nations. This involves the re-interpretation, adjustment, and even invention of the nation's past and its traditions, so that a suitable historic continuity for the nation can be established. This restructuring process not only answers the present needs of the community, as envisioned by the elite, but also complies with future goals. However, Hobsbawm does not claim that this is a totally unprecedented phenomenon and notes that the 'invention of traditions' always accompanied history. And yet he also points out that unsurprisingly this process became strikingly more frequent in the past 200 years. What the invention process does is to fill in the voids created by modernity and change:

"we should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable or flexible, or are otherwise eliminated: in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or the supply side." (1983: 4).

While the restructuring of history is not at central to Anderson's analysis as it is in Hobsbawm's, it is nevertheless a common argument in both works and described as a crucial process in the emergence of nations. Anderson finds the reconstruction of memory and history critical in the new form of national consciousness as this consciousness could only arise "when it was no longer possible to experience the nation as new, at the wave-top moment of rupture" (1991: 203). National genealogies are constructed to narrate the histories

⁴ See also Hobsbawm (1990).

of nations, and amnesia becomes a common characteristic of this process. Renan had remarked a century ago that forgetting is essential in the formation of nations, the essence of which “is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things” (1990: 11). Following Renan, Anderson also agrees that forgetting becomes a need, or rather, a civic duty expected from the co-nationals⁵.

To sum up, the necessary amnesia combined with the re-writing process creates for the nation a natural continuity in time as opposed to its cultural temporality. Yet, it also turns the nation into ‘the modern Janus’, with one face that gazes back into the primordial past and the other extending into an infinite future (Nairn cited in McClintock 1993: 65). For Anderson, the main source of the emotional appeal of nations lies precisely in this relationship with the past and the future. With this, nations overtook the most important function of religions: to answer the existential problem of fatality. Nations that “loom out of an immemorial past, and still more importantly, glide into a limitless future” invoke the links between “the dead and the yet unborn”, and help to transform “fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning” (1991: 11). Here, Anderson largely shares Hobsbawm’s (1983, 1990) argument that the process of giving nations immortality is always shaped by the needs of the present. As Suny has also noted, in this process whatever actually happened becomes far less important than how it is remembered (2001: 864). To this, we can add that what is remembered from the past is not necessarily cherished wholeheartedly. For example, in the Turkish case, the past was re-created through a careful separation of what was seen as the authentic/desirable culture and elimination of what was regarded as inadequate, backward or traditional in order to legitimise the necessary break with the unsuitable past and to transfer power to the new and modern nation state. That is why the national entity can only survive as long as its subjects strive to keep the “myths of the past” - whatever their content involves - alive (Sirman 2002: 239). Such a perception of the nation as a process of articulation, in which members all take part and receive emotional gains from it, takes us a step further and asks us to investigate how that construction process is undertaken, often without anyone noticing.

Before we proceed, however, we must note that the argument on the construction of the nation as a cultural process has sparked intense debate in academic circles, with admiration and criticism of Anderson’s work. His arguments are doubtless not without flaws and the

⁵ For this discussion, see particularly chapter 11 in *Imagined Communities*, on “Memory and Forgetting”, p.187-206.

criticisms need to be taken into account to complement the mechanisms of control that take place behind the imagining. As will be discussed in the second part of this chapter, feminist writers have criticised his work for its masculine bias in missing the important role of gender in his formulation of imagined comradeship and fraternity while the postcolonial school, notably in the work of Chatterjee (1996), has criticised his work for its Western bias (c.f. Chakrabarty 2000). Breuilly (1996) raised a further criticism of Anderson for underestimating the power of political institutions in the wake of nationalism and instead giving priority to cultural transformations. For Breuilly nations will not have much power unless there is a political movement picking up ideas about the nation to negotiate with government and build support within society (ibid.).

The discussion in this chapter attempts to take these criticisms on board, and not to regard Anderson's theory as 'the' theory of nationalism. In fact, there hardly exists any such theory that fits all cases. In particular the role of the elite in the construction of the nation, as emphasised by Hobsbawm (1983, 1990) and Gellner (1983) cannot be dismissed. This is crucial to the Turkish experience. However, with an emphasis on culture as the locus of the nation's articulation, what Anderson's work does is to free the focus from state institutions and allow us to explore the various ways in which nations are imagined in everyday life, some of which are state led, some of which are not.

1.1.2 Discursive construction of the nation

Whatever the particular relationship with the past, the crucial thing is that the members of the nation should have the will, "the consent to continue a common life" (Renan 1990: 19). That is why it becomes essential that the nation is reproduced in everyday life in a myriad of ways to constantly renew this consent "until it becomes as ordinary and quotidian as the water in which fish swim" (Suny 2001: 871).

This reproduction of the nation takes place on two levels, which though not exclusive are largely overlapping processes. Firstly, the importance of political actors and the intellectual elite has been emphasised as a major force in fostering the reproduction process particularly at the formative stages of the nation. This includes the cultural institutions of the nation-state - schools, which teach the national curriculum, museums, which uphold national heritage, or statues and memorials, which mark national territory are some of the examples that are led by

the elite⁶. However, the reproduction of the nation cannot only be limited to conscious efforts of the state and its elite. As consent needs to be continuously renewed, ordinary citizens join in the daily reproduction of the nation, most remarkably through mediated means, as in the case of Anderson's reading public. Billig (1995) calls this inconspicuous reproduction of nationhood "*Banal Nationalism*". He argues that it is not through the obvious signs - such as a national flag being waved - that the nation is powerfully reproduced, remembered and reconfirmed, but rather through the most mundane ways of thinking and talking and the overlooked habits of everyday life such as the national flag that hangs unnoticed in the public building, or number plates, or national currencies, or the daily stories in newspapers that are not necessarily about political events. For Billig these paraphernalia of everyday life not only keep us from forgetting where we belong, but also silently form the backdrop of our everyday lives.

In short, imagining the nation emerges not only as a predominantly cultural process, but also as a continuous one, involving numerous mechanisms that usually go unquestioned while allowing its subjects to identify with the nation. It becomes, "part of a wider ideological, discursive consciousness", in which, "nations, national identities and national homelands appear as natural" (Billig 1995: 10; also see Suny 2001). This discursive consciousness keeps us from questioning the main claim of sameness within the nation, in terms of its culture, history, aspirations, sentiments and ideas, and presents the nation as a culturally coherent community. In doing so, it legitimises not only the political power of the nation-state, but also our natural - and naturally expected - attachment to and identification with the nation. This discursive consciousness, or the way of thinking that naturalises the idea of the nation, and legitimates the operations of power within it, is what is called *nationalism*⁷.

Such a conceptualisation opens up many different areas for exploration. It is only when we start thinking about nationalism in terms of a discursive consciousness, that we can see the articulation of national boundaries as not only a top-down process through the state apparatuses, but also one that operates through the dispersed mechanisms of power weaving reproduced through the routines of everyday life. At the same time the discursive definition

⁶ See Ozkirimli (2002) for a similar and more detailed description of the process of nation-building and everyday life, discussed with regard to Turkey. See Gellner (1983) for discussion of the dissemination of a standard national culture by the intellectual elite.

⁷ Today, contemporary writers mainly refer to nationalism as a discursive formation. See, for example, Calhoun (1997), Wodak et. al. (1999), Ozkirimli (2000, 2003, 2005), Suny (2001) and Delanty & O'Mahony (2002).

points to two conclusions about nationalism. Firstly, that perceiving nationalism as a discourse, not as one unilinear and coherent ideology, allows us to explore the different sub-discourses that put it together and that do not necessarily form a coherent whole. As Delanty & O'Mahony also argue, it should be:

“(…) conceived as a semantic space, that expresses through manifold discourses the many kinds of projects, identities, interests and ideologies that make it up” (Delanty & O'Mahony 2002: xv; also see Calhoun 1997: 23).

Therefore nationalism emerges as an assemblage of many other sub discourses that are only loosely united, forming, in Suny's words, a “cluster of ideas and understandings that came to surround the signifier ‘nation’ in modern times (roughly post-1750)” (2001: 870). This is especially important when analysing different contexts, as the particular assemblage of nationalism will be determined by the specific culture that it is rooted in. This does not just entail considering the cultural particularities of the context as local details, but also requires us to see nationalism operating with different dynamics in each society. For instance, in studying English nationalism Kumar (2003) proposes a new variety, which he calls *imperial* or *missionary* nationalism, in order to take the imperial heritage of the English into account. Acknowledging the varying demands and forms of nationalism also answers one of the main criticisms postcolonial studies brings to the existing works on nationalism, namely that we should stop universalising Western categories from our Eurocentric perspective and examine “each nationalist movement in its own terms and its own local language” (Parekh, cited in Walker 2001: 626). Indeed, as Kumar (2003) has shown these categories cannot even be universalised for the Western world. On this, Chatterjee (1996) has argued that postcolonial nationalisms differ largely because of the dilemma they suffer in struggling to keep the postcolonial nation's cultural sovereignty and uniqueness from the West, while at the same time trying to define it as modern and on a par with the Western world. Similarly the case of Turkey, and its particular nation building experience gives Turkish nationalism very different dynamics when compared with other nation states, making gender, modernity and Europe the indispensable categories for analysis. Therefore nationalisms take different forms in their cultural settings, asking us to foreground different variables in their analysis.

Second, we should also consider the possible volatility of the assemblage. Because of its discursive nature, nationalism can never be dominated by any one state project but remains

indeterminate, recalcitrant, and codified by a whole range of social actors in various ways (Delanty & O'Mahoney 2002: 8). If nationalism can take a diversity of forms, not only will the nationalism in France be different to the nationalism in Turkey, but also within Turkey (or France), there can be different nationalisms envisioning the nation in different ways within the same time frame. Contrary to claims of the commonness of nationalism, the web of multiple and contradictory forces operating in everyday life allows for different, alternative and resistant assemblages that answer the different needs and desires about the nation. In other words, there will always be dominant discourses of nationalism and interpretations of what constitutes the nation and alternatives resisting it, all competing for hegemony within the borders of the nation state, but without any of them securing it forever. Therefore imagining the nation turns into a continuous process that cannot stop once the nation is set and is always in need of justification and reconfirmation. This again brings us back to Renan's stress on the importance of consent: whatever its particular rhetoric holds, a nationalist discourse can become effective only as long as it can appeal to solidarity among the co-nationals, demanding collective action when necessary. In return, the nation becomes a "daily plebiscite" (Renan 1990: 19). Through this process, the alternatives can, in time, bend and transform the hegemonic imagining that is sponsored by the nation state, allowing consent to be renewed (though only provisionally) with variations each time.

From this, the conclusion follows that there can not be one but many nationalisms, differing both vertically and horizontally, all of which are only unified by the way they work through discourses⁸. This is why it is impossible to formulate clear-cut definitions for neither nationalisms, nor nations themselves. Nor can we find any one discourse of nationalism – or following Bhabha - any one privileged narrative of the nation that can adequately explain its myriad and contradictory historical forms (1990a). Here we can also refer to Katherine Verdery's (1996) quite relevant discussion in which she attempts to clarify the concepts of nations and nationalism. Verdery offers to see the concept of nation itself as "a potent symbol and basis of classification within an international system of nation states" (1996: 226). As a symbol, it links the state with the subjects, differentiates them from other subjects, while at the same time legitimating different social actions and movements. She argues that the nation works as a symbol because it is ambiguous in meaning "therefore people can mobilize disparate audiences (both internal and international) who think that they understand the same

⁸ See Calhoun (1997: 20-23), Ozkirimli (2000a: 231), and Wodak et. al. (1999) for specific discussions on this.

thing by it” (1996: 227). Suny (2001) has a similar definition, if slightly different in the choice of concepts, where he argues that beyond the particular narratives of nations remains the meta-narrative: the discourse of the nation.

While such attempts at definition might seem to strip away the general understanding of nation to nothing, it actually lets us see beyond the definition of nation and instead examine the carefully concealed varieties. Exploring the varieties within the same national context takes us right into the heart of the power struggles for change. In other words, defining nationalism as a discourse offers us a theoretical framework within which we can contextualise, understand and interpret change - how it occurs, how it is suppressed, and how it resists this suppression. It lets us analyse the mechanisms through which such struggles between the homogenizing forces of the nation and the resisting, alternative understandings of the nation take place. But above all, by exposing the process of continuous negotiation it allows us to examine the processes of identification. How does the nation relate to different identity categories, which, as Verdery (1996) notes, are also axes of social differentiation? How does it ask for identification from its subjects? What are the conditions under which alternatives are created? With these concerns in mind we can start to analyse nationalism as the continuous construction of boundaries, not only between its citizens and foreigners but also among (and *for*) its citizens.

1.1.3 The nation, its subjects and its boundaries - *A shared national identity*

Why do people willingly identify with the nation? If we agree with Suny that “self-identification is not a simple, rational calculation” but one that is “deeply implicated in emotional attachment and subjective preferences” (2001: 868), the answer seems to lie in its emotional appeal. The concept of nation holds an almost concrete, tangible reality for people -a point that has also been briefly discussed in reviewing Anderson’s (1991) work, particularly with regard to the seemingly eternal nature of the nation. For Calhoun nationalism;

“(…) moves people emotionally, not least because it provides a sense of location in a large and complex world and an enormous reach of history. (...) it is a positive source of meaning –and even sometimes an inspiration- and of mutual commitment among very large groups of people. If it were merely illusion and manipulation, it could not have the power it does.” (1997: 18)

The symbol of nation no doubt continues to offer a powerful source of identification and a sense of belonging for people in an increasingly changing world. The fact that nationhood is a discursive construction certainly does not weaken its emotional appeal for people who believe in it and identify with it. It offers the comfort of categorical identities, which provides “a guarantee that the world isn’t falling apart as rapidly as it sometimes seems to be” (Eley & Suny 1996: 31). In other words, the appeal of the nation, and the appeal of sharing its sense of nationality, lies in nationalism’s ability to extend a sense of security to its citizens, offering them the chance to participate in the nation’s cultural superiority, historicity, homogeneity and uniqueness. As Eley & Suny (ibid.) have argued, these claims all depend on the “reservoir of cultural meanings” that lie at the heart of the nation building process, and make the identification with the nation not only possible, but also to appear natural:

“National identification is clearly a matter of sensibility in this sense- something transmitted from the past and secured as a collective belonging, something reproduced in myriad imperceptible ways, grounded in everydayness and mundane experience. (...) A common memory of belonging, borne by habits, customs, dialects, song, dance, pastimes, shared geography, superstition, and so on, but also fears, anxieties, antipathies, hurts, resentments, is the indistinct but indispensable condition of possibility. Securing the existence of the nation, mobilizing the nation politically, presumes a long-accumulating identity in this way, one that can be brought to visibility both spontaneously and by concerted agitation.” (1996: 22)

Nationalism presents this “long-accumulating identity” as an unchanging essence, or what Paul Ricoeur calls *la mêmeme*- a *sameness* that is built on the ideas of relations, and of relations of relations and that remain continuous over time⁹. As an embodiment of this essence, the nation also represents the collectivity/ its citizens, its values and norms, and its true character. In doing so nationalism assumes commonness among its members, with a shared culture, common traditions, ancestry, and goals - hence it becomes only commonsense to remind the citizens to identify with characteristics represented by the nation, which members are already expected to share. As discussed in the previous section, nationalism’s continuous reminding and refreshing of our awareness of ‘who we are’ takes place in culture and on an everyday level. The consequence of this is that the claims of national identity and

⁹ See Denis-Constant Martin (1995: 7), and Bauman (1992: 677) who borrows Ricoeur’s formulation in explaining national identity.

our identification with it are embedded in the familiar and are therefore often overlooked details of cultural experience.

However, this cohesive entity called the nation, like for all identity categories, can only exist dialectically with the *other* by acknowledging itself as an “other” among many others. Ricoeur calls this *l’ipseité*, selfhood, that of differentiating oneself from the identity of the others (Martin 1995: 7).¹⁰ After all, as Anderson had noted, nations have boundaries beyond which other nations and in return nationals of those nations lie (1991:7). Just like all collectivities, national identities also define their characteristics in relation to what they consider as existing or remaining outside the nation, with references to spatial, temporal, or cultural boundaries¹¹. That is why the content of national identity will be, “more often than not, a counter-image of what is seen as distinctive in the culture of other nation or nations” (Kumar 2003: ix). In short, the collective identity of the nation, no matter how attractive its invented characteristics are, needs its boundaries to be provided by others. In the relationship between nationalism and nation, Bauman argues that *l’ipseité* (difference) even “precedes and conditions *la même*” (sameness) (1992: 677). As he underlines, the resulting national identity demands “unequivocal allegiance”, and does not tolerate competition, let alone opposition - the articulated divisions carefully separate the friends of the nation, the “we-ness” from the “outer circle” of enemies, “they-ness”, through an exclusive relationship, which is often actively led by the state (2004: 22; also 1992: 678)¹².

¹⁰ Here, we have to note that Ricoeur was not the first writer who argued about identity. Following the influence of Sigmund Freud’s work on identification, identity has been a major area of discussion in the 20th Century French philosophical movement, particularly in psychoanalytical theory and especially in the works of Jacques Lacan. Although from a different point of approach, Lacan also argued that the self cannot exist without the realisation of -and always in dialectical relationship to- the existing other (See, for example Lacan, 1987). However, compared to Lacan’s challenging writings on subjectivity, Ricoeur’s hermeneutical approach, which describes identity as a form of narrative always constructed by its plot, offers an inspirational and more accessible way of thinking about social identity categories. Bauman (1992), and Constant-Martin (1995) both use Ricoeur’s formulation in discussing national identity, as well as Wodak et al., who refer to his work, while warning against a wholehearted adaptation of his arguments to national identity (See Wodak et al. 1999: 13).

¹¹ Both Handler (1994: 29) and Martin (1995: 12,13) note that national identity is often defined with reference to boundaries that refer to the past/ historical roots, space/ geographical boundaries, and cultural traits which provide internal homogeneity.

¹² Bauman particularly emphasises the role of the state in national identification, i.e. in confirming the membership to the nation through identity cards and passports, while asking other, ‘smaller’ identities to conform to the dominant national identity. For Bauman, the smaller identities “were encouraged and/or obliged to seek endorsement-followed-by-protection from the state authorised offices, and thereby to obliquely confirm the superiority of ‘national identity’ relying on royal or republican charters, state diplomas and state-endorsed certificates.” (2004: 22)

This makes the construction of difference a fundamental concern in studies of nationalism. Since the other is regarded as imminently threatening to cross the boundaries of the nation, hostility towards the others is exuberantly supported and upheld by nationalism. Seyla Benhabib does not exaggerate when noting the dangers:

‘Since every search for identity includes differing oneself from what one is not, identity politics is always and necessarily a politics of creation of difference. One is a Bosnian Serb to the degree to which one is not a Bosnian Moslem or a Croat. ... What is shocking about these developments is not the inevitable dialectic of identity/difference that they display but rather the atavistic belief that identities can be maintained and secured only by eliminating difference and otherness. ... The negotiation of identity/difference is the political problem facing democracies on a global scale.’ (Cited in Wodak et al. 1999: 2, 3)

Wars provide the extreme case for observing not only the clear boundaries between “us” and “others”, but also the collective identification with the nation against the enemy. Yet, collective identification against the other is not limited to wars. International sporting events are also excellent examples where communal imagination is set alight and bonds of belonging are strengthened (Blain et al. 1993:12; see also MacClancy 1996). Similar examples can be found in other international contests, such as beauty pageants, where contestants’ praise for their countries becomes a performance to the international audience (See Wilk 1993).

At the same time, national identity is not necessarily aroused through obvious displays of collective identification. In fact, it mostly remains embedded in the subtle details of culture, covering a wide range of activities in daily life, including customs or traditions as well as the most trivial details of the quotidian realm. In a quite wonderful article on dishwashing habits in Sweden Linde-Laursen (1993) looks at exactly this. Linde-Laursen starts his analysis with a personal encounter in which, as a Dane, he attempts to help with the dishes in a friend’s house in Sweden one evening. He ends up being criticised for washing it “the Danish way” and is taught the right -and “Swedish”- way of washing the dishes. Arguing that there is no absolute cleanliness, but only a social construction of it, he finds that Swedish dishwashing habits had been officially advised through home economics guidelines in the nineteen forties. These guidelines had recommended rinsing the dishes before and after washing, and air-drying them for reasons of hygiene, as opposed to the Danish habit of rinsing only before washing and afterwards hand-drying the dishes. This in time had allowed a boundary to

develop on the basis of cleanliness between the Swedes, who saw themselves as cleaner and therefore more civilized than the Danes. Linde-Laursen's case study is a good example for showing how a nation's habits and identity can be modelled after an understanding of civilizational progress. But it is also perfect for showing once again that national identity is not always constructed painstakingly by the state and its agencies. In this case, even though the Swedish state had advocated the adoption of certain housekeeping rules, the appropriation of these as a marker of national identity and as a marker of difference had been culturally articulated.

If the trivial habits of daily life form one arena for the constant fashioning and reaffirmation of national identity, popular culture forms another. However, as Edensor (2002) has rightly criticised, mainstream writers of nationalism have not paid enough attention to popular culture, either ignoring the importance of culture in the formation of national identity, or focusing solely on folk or elite cultures¹³. In his book, Edensor argues that "national identity is being redistributed in a cultural matrix" and an important part of this process is popular culture, or "low culture" (ibid.: vii). Examining the symbolic objects of popular culture, such as cars in American and British contexts, he explores how these "can be reincorporated into national identity, can be adopted and adapted in different national contexts, both practically and symbolically, and drawn into particular affective relationships which cohere around ideas about national car cultures" (ibid.: 137). By focusing on the redistribution of national identity in popular culture, Edensor's work emphasises the fleeting nature of national identity and boundaries. Following Clifford, Edensor argues that if we are to agree that culture is not "a rooted body that grows, lives, and dies," but is rather "a site of displacement, interference and interaction", then national identity will also have to be multiple and dynamic (Clifford cited in ibid.: 2). Indeed, if national identity is articulated nowhere farther than the popular culture products we consume everyday, such as movies, exhibits, or the cars we drive, then it can be no more fixed or singular than culture itself. Therefore, Edensor concludes that acknowledging the importance of popular culture in everyday life also allows us to track the oppositions to national identity that culture will always harbour.

¹³ "There is no doubt that historically, in the first instance, there were attempts to formulate a nationally codified body of knowledge which foregrounded 'high' culture. However, once the nation is established as a common-sense entity, under conditions of modernity, the mass media and the means to develop and transmit popular culture expands dramatically, and largely escapes the grip of the state, being transmitted through commercial and more informal networks." (Edensor 2002: 4)

This takes us from the issue of positive identification with the nation, as officially approved by the state, to the creativity, tension and change that everyday life allows for in the conceptualisation of national identity. In fact, it takes us right back to the formulation of identity as a dynamic and relational process - because the *Self* is bound by a dialectical relationship with the *Other*, and neither can exist on its own, their interaction over the course of time will demand that in order for continuity to exist, transformations will be inevitable and necessary (Martin 1995: 7). National identity, like all social identities, involves this communicative process, which should not be seen as an abstract relationship between communities. Because national identity requires human agency, it will continuously be formed through identification of its subjects with the “national” on an everyday basis, at the same time continuously transforming it. Therefore change is not only inevitable but also ever-present in the construction of national identities¹⁴.

In what follows, I intend to expand further on this discussion with a focus on subjects and their negative identifications, which, in producing “internal others” for the nation, become the major motor of change.

1.1.4 Allowing for Change

It would be falsely pessimistic to assume that the “trump card of nationality”¹⁵ always wins over other, unapproved forms of identification in the game of identity. That would, in fact, be the utopia of nationalists. Based on a common ground of understanding as to what identity, as an analytical category means, writings on the discursive nature of national identity today agree that in spite of all claims of sameness and efforts to eliminate difference, in reality neither national identity (nor its others) can ever be uniform. It will always remain internally divided, always including other nationalisms and identities than the preferred or dominantly accepted ones for the imagined nation formed according to different audiences, settings,

¹⁴ Stuart Hall’s (1996) now well-known and much-cited formulation succinctly maps out this relationship between identity and identification. Basing his discussion on a discursive (and largely Foucauldian) framework, Hall argues that social and collective identities are dependant on an identification process that is always open to change and is always in process. This definition sees identification as temporary attachments to different discourse positions offering different identities in culture. The openness of identification, in return, prevents identity from being an essence “unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change; the bit of the self which remains always-already ‘the same’, identical to itself across time” (ibid.: 3). Since people will not identify with the nation in the same way, let alone forever, national identity can never be fixed, and will always remain as a project.

¹⁵ Calhoun’s metaphor (1997: 46)

topics and substantive contents (Wodak et al. 1999: 4). Dis-identification is as much a part of the process of national identity as are positive forms of identifying with legitimate perceptions of the nation. That is why nations are nothing but “hybrids of identity” where “the idea of a homogenous ‘pure’ identity on the individual or collective level” remains “a deceptive fiction and illusion” (ibid: 16). Today these hybridities are said to be enhanced due to the forces of globalisation, which challenge the dominant nationalist discourse’s singular and fixed reflection of a national culture.

On the part of the nationalist discourse, the existing differences can either be ignored or suppressed in favour of the national, or isolated as “internal others”. This means the difference threatening the order of the community is not only attributed to ‘foreigners’ that exist outside the geographical boundaries of the nation. Those who remain within the national borders but are culturally different from ‘us’ can also provide sources of threat. In fact, as Bhabha notes, the ‘other’ seldom lies outside or beyond the nation; but rather “emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between ourselves’” (1990a: 4). However, the boundaries of the internal others are usually not as clearly marked as the external ones, and being closer than the external sources of threat, the repressed and internal others continuously threaten to reappear and challenge the conformity of the nation. What results is, in Pierson’s words, “a national subject beset with tensions and ambiguities, exclusions and inclusions” (2000: 43).

For Bhabha, it is these hybridities and contradictions inherent in the nation that turn it into a text that is ceaselessly narrated in daily life and sees this continuous negotiation of identity and difference as an “ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write it and the lives of those who live in it” (1990a: 1). In this regard, perhaps one of the strongest arguments Bhabha brings, and one that has a significant relevance to the Turkish context, is his direct linkage of modernity and the narration of the nation. He finds the claims of the nation, such as “progress, homogeneity, cultural organicism, the deep nation, the long past”, as no more than “justifications of modernity (...) that rationalise the authoritarian, ‘normalising’ tendencies within cultures in the name of national interest” (1990a: 4). Any challenge from the margins to the boundaries will be an intervention into those justifications of modernity and will be seen as a threat to the modernity the nation *claims to* represent at the centre. Yet, Bhabha sees this arbitrariness, the “impossibility of closure” again as a part of the progression of modernity, and not only an inevitable but also a desirable part of it (ibid.:

1). Since the nation defines itself with respect to what is inside and outside, unsettlement and contestation from its margins will eventually force the centre to change and re-draw its boundaries. Therefore, it is at the boundaries that the nation is really narrated:

“It is from this incommensurability in the midst of the everyday that the nation speaks its disjunctive narrative. It begins, if that’s the word, from that anterior space within the arbitrary sign, which disturbs the homogenizing myth of cultural anonymity. From the margins of modernity, at the insurmountable extremes of storytelling, we encounter the question of cultural difference as the perplexity of living, and writing, the nation.” (1990b: 311)

Bhabha’s formulation offers a valuable insight into exploring the porous boundaries of national identity. This account of the nation, not only as a construction but as construction through negotiation helps us avoid limiting our analysis to the consequences of positive identification with the nation, and allows us also to explore the frictions and changes that are taking place at the centre as a result of its interaction with the peripheries¹⁶. At the same time, we should be aware that the counter-narratives produced at the margins, even as they radically challenge the dominant discourses of nation and nationalism “do not necessarily have to be progressive in their message” (Yuval-Davis 1997: 58)¹⁷. In analysing the peripheries and their power to transform the meanings of nation and modernity there is a need to avoid celebrating the margins through sheer optimism and to analyse critically the relationships of power inherent in the counter-narratives of national identity. This does not diminish the analytical importance of contestation: in analysing discursive construction of nationhood, exploring the openings for change inside the national framework is necessary and important irrespective of the particular messages involved inside the narratives.

Before we go into the second part of the discussion in this chapter, it might be important to briefly summarise the main arguments posited up to now. So far, this discussion has attempted to sketch out a particular conceptualisation of the nation that allows us to think of nationalism, national identity and national boundaries as discursively constructed phenomena. Such a perception favours a heavy stress on the importance of the everyday as a construction site for nationhood, where ongoing contestations, differentiations and cultural exchanges

¹⁶ Here, even though my discussion, and the research project as a whole focuses on the centre where dominant discourses of the nation are reproduced, I am not implying that change only happens at the centre, and the margins/peripheries are themselves immune to transformation upon meeting with the centre.

¹⁷ Such a word of caution also accompanies the deconstructions of national identity in Turkey (c.f. Bozdogan & Kasaba 1997).

within the national space result in the continuous re-defining of the dominant meanings of nation, national identity and its boundaries. That is why, as Lofgren argues,

“Instead of looking at “the national” just as a cultural category or a social identity, we might view it as an arena on which different interests, loyalties and strategies are acted out, an arena where the national is played off against, fused, contrasted or combined with other kinds of identities: class, gender, region, religion, generation etc. It is this chameleonic nature of the national which also may create a false continuity: “the national question” is always rephrased and reorganized according to the contemporary situation.” (1993: 191)

With these concerns, I now intend to focus on gender, which forms one of the major sites of boundary building for the nation, as well as a main contributor to its symbolic dimension.

1.2 The role of gender in conceptualising the nation

Conceptualising nationhood as a discursively constructed entity allows new grounds for exploration, one of which is the interaction of nationalism with gender discourses. In one of her articles, Enloe rightly remarks that the development of nationalism cannot be fully understood without looking into what goes on in the kitchen and the bedroom (2000b: 194) - two of the most common locations of everyday life and also the iconic sites of the private sphere where gender relationships are firmly fixed. The point Enloe is trying to make is indeed acknowledged by all serious debates on nationalism today. In the past fifteen years, and mostly through the works of feminist writers like Enloe herself, it is now agreed that nations are gendered constructs and operate on embedded gender hierarchies, excluding women from access to resources of the state and denying them the right to power. Furthermore, feminist writers have also stressed that the gendering of the nation is not a simple process, but depends on a “symbiotic relationship” between gender, sexuality and nationalism: not only are the discourses on gender and sexuality shaped by forces of nationalism, but they are also fundamental in shaping nationalism and the construction of national identities¹⁸.

¹⁸ See Sirman (2002); also, among others, see Yuval-Davis & Anthias (eds.) (1989: 1), Walby (1996), Yuval-Davis (1997), Ranchod-Nilsson & Tetreault (2000).

For feminist scholars, the driving concern behind analysing nationalism with regard to discourses of gender has largely been to understand women's participation in national projects, and their often-subordinate position in politics and as citizens. At the same time, feminist writing on nationalism has been quite diverse, mostly because the scholarly work is predominantly in the form of empirical case studies, their fragmented character reflecting the diversity of national contexts and particular gender experiences. Given the diversity of writing in the field, Ranchod-Nilsson (2000) makes a helpful distinction between the two waves of feminist writing on nationalism. The first of these waves includes the works produced during the 1970s and early 1980s, and which illuminated the role of women in terms of active or more hidden forms of involvement in national liberation struggles, particularly in the former colonial world. Analysed through case studies, these writings highlighted "the connections between modernization, feminism, and nationalism: and the location of politics within the household" (ibid.: 166-7). The common concern in this first current of works, including Jayawardena's (1986) well-known comparative analysis, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, was to understand the meanings of women's participation during nationalist movements and their aftermath, the state consolidation period, in terms of women's access to decision making authority and resources. Following this, in the late 1980s and under the influence of postmodernism, postcolonial and cultural studies, a second wave of feminist works on nationalism emerged (Ranchod-Nilsson 2000). Here the focus shifted from women's participation in nationalist movements to how the various meanings of the nation, the state or citizen are shaped by specific gender identities in different contexts. This, Ranchod-Nilsson argues, has required a re-conceptualisation of the nation as contingent, with shifting boundaries where the "embedded gender meanings inform not only nationalist movements, but also continuing struggles over just who constitutes "insiders" and "outsiders" and where the fluid identity boundaries of "the nation" get drawn." (ibid.: 167)

Particularly during this phase of the feminist deconstruction of nationalism, discussions often build on the core argument that nationalism and the institutions of the nation state are based on a patriarchal order conceptualising the national community as masculine. It is this

inherently gendered conceptualisation that results in the subordination of female citizens.¹⁹ Enloe, in a well-known formulation, describes nationalism as a construct that “typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope” (2000a: 44). Likewise, McClintock expands on the argument that nationalism has been from the very start constituted as a gendered discourse:

“All nationalisms are gendered, all are invented and all are dangerous- dangerous (...) in the sense of representing relations to power and to the technologies of violence. (...) All nations depend on powerful depictions of gender. Despite nationalism’ ideological investment in the idea of *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalisation of gender *difference*.” (1993: 61)

While exposing the differential treatment of men and women by the nationalist discourse, feminist studies also developed a strong critique of the existing mainstream analysis of nationalism for its plain negligence of gender (see among others McClintock 1993; Walby 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997; Ranchod-Nilsson & Tetrault 2000)²⁰. Ironically, as McClintock also points out, nationalism’s masculine bias is even evident in these mainstream writings, where nationhood is taken for granted to be a “male phenomenon” (1993: 62). The masculine bias particularly surfaces in Anderson’s work, where he describes the nation as a homo-social form of male bonding, “a deep, horizontal comradeship ... a fraternity that makes it possible (...) for so many millions of people (...) willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (1991: 7). Since Anderson did not pay direct attention to gender in his work, it is only through writers like Sommer (1991) and Parker et. al. (1992) that the missing gender link - alongside sexuality - was incorporated into the discussion on Anderson’s imagined community. And if Anderson’s work ignored gender, other mainstream works on nationalism have been no less gender-blind continuing to reproduce gender indifference. Research on gender and nationalism has therefore tried to address this much-neglected area, and through critical re-

¹⁹ Carol Pateman’s (1989) work, although not specifically about nationalism per se, significantly contributes to this debate. Pateman argued that the roots of sexual inequality can be found embedded in the very discourses that we use to describe and understand the origins and the development of the modern society and its political institutions. For the writer, modern civil society functions through a modern form of patriarchy, which is hidden under the discourses of civil freedom protected by the state, therefore it remains discreet in its subordination of women as citizens with lesser rights. Exploring the meanings of citizenship where liberty also implied sexual subordination of women, Pateman’s conclusion was that civil freedoms were ultimately subject to patriarchal right.

²⁰ This is not to deny that there were exceptions outside mainstream theorisations. There are works that looked at gender in the construction of nationhood, such as George Mosse’s (1988) groundbreaking study of nationalism and sexuality, Balibar’s (1991b) discussion on gender and family in nationalism, and Chatterjee’s (1989) discussion on the role of gender in postcolonial nationalist rhetoric.

readings of existing research on nationalism, there have also been attempts to bridge the gap between mainstream literature and gender (c.f. Racciope & See 2000; Wenk 2000).

In doing so, feminist research on nationalism has helped to deconstruct the claims of naturalness in nationalism and reveal the gendered relationships in the social constitution of nationhood (c.f. Eley & Suny 1996). Rather than looking at “the conditions under which and/or the ways in which collective identities of nations are formed in opposition to outside groups”, feminist scholarship has concentrated on the “constructions and reconstructions of gender difference and hierarchies” within the so-called national homogeneity (Ranchod- Nilsson 2000: 169). Following this, the main area of investigation in studies of nationalism and gender has been the women’s role in the naturalisation and reproduction of nationhood.

Without doubt, the key text in this area is Yuval-Davis and Anthias’ (1989) contribution, which Yuval-Davis (1997) later extended into her book *Gender and Nation*. In the introduction to their edited book, the authors identify five major loci for the role of women in the reproduction of the nation. The first three of these emphasise women’s reproductive role, both in a biological and ideological sense: firstly, women are biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities; next, and related to this, they are reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/ racial groups. Thirdly, women also participate centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and transmission of national culture, especially in socialising the young. Fourthly, Yuval-Davis and Anthias point out the role of women as signifiers of ethnic/racial differences. In this regard, women crucially symbolise collectivity in the national imagination. And finally, women are active participants in national, economic, political and military struggles. On this, the authors argue that not only is the active participation of women usually overlooked, but even when women “have taken all the risks” they are generally seen “in a supportive and nurturing relation to men” (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989: 10).

In examining the five major ways in which women are implicated in the social construction of the nation, Yuval-Davis and Anthias’ categorisation largely foregrounds the importance of the cultural-discursive level (Walby 1996: 237). While this might be a limiting factor, especially for research that seeks to analyse women’s active involvement in the nation-building

process²¹, it offers a very good starting point for research that attempts to deconstruct discourses of nationalism with regard to gender discourses such as this one. In particular the symbolic role that women occupy in nationalist discourse and collective action becomes important for such a discursive analysis. As Nagel also argues, this symbol “reflects a masculinist definition of femininity and women’s proper place in the nation” and becomes a means through which nationalism turns into a major venue for accomplishing masculinity (1998: 252). For the analysis of case studies in the succeeding chapters, it is necessary to understand how the masculine dynamics of nationalism translate into the symbolic role women hold in the national imagination, and how the female symbol in return becomes essential for marking the national boundaries, as well as for forming the boundaries for women in everyday life. For this reason, women’s symbolic part in the articulation of the nation and boundaries will now be discussed more in detail, expanding on Yuval-Davis and Anthias’ (1989) formulation.

1.2.1 The symbolic role of women in the discursive reproduction of the nation

In the first part of this chapter, the discussion has highlighted how nationalist discourses present the nation as having a homogenous and unchanging essence, which is shared by all its members, and which unites the community together: all despite the fact that the nation is always ridden with contradictions and ambivalences, and never actually has that unproblematic core²². In a wide variety of national cultures national unity has been modelled on gender and sexual norms (Parker et al. 1992: 6), which confirm the importance of the family as a core institution in the nationalist discourse, and also determines the role of women in the social constitution of the nation.

²¹ Walby (1996) in fact argues that Yuval-Davis & Anthias’ work is too skewed towards the discursive domain. For Walby, it privileges the role of women at the ideological or cultural levels of national reproduction, without expanding enough on women’s active involvement, such as in the economic field. Others have extended this criticism to existing feminist works in general, and have argued that a reconciliation should be reached between the discursive emphasis and women’s active contribution through discussing how we can situate women’s participation within the discursive processes and cultural representations, and how women’s activism is shaped by the cultural context (see Ranchard-Nilsson & Tetrault 2000; Ranchard-Nilsson 2000). These criticisms are important and should be taken on board. However, this research project, given its objectives, particular type of data and method of analysis, does not examine women’s political activism or subjectivity per se.

²² Parker et al. (1992) rightly note that this founding ambivalence, not having such an essence or core at its origin in the essentialist sense, derives for the “nation’s insatiable need for representational labour to supplement its founding ambivalence, the lack of self-presence at its origin or in its essence” (1992: 5).

As various writers have pointed out, the family has been an institution indispensable to the survival of the nation, not least for ensuring the continuous reproduction of the national community. By legitimising the heterosexual union of partners through the institution of the family, the nation secures its biological reproduction, and excludes all non-reproductive, homosexual activities from the national community (Mosse 1988; Parker et al. 1992; Peterson 2000). But besides being the loci of biological reproduction, the family is also essential, alongside school, in ideologically reproducing the nation and most prominently by teaching the “mother tongue” (Balibar 1991b; c.f. Anderson 1991: 154). Because of its reproduction of racial and linguistic ethnicities on which the nation rests its legitimacy, the family holds a key function in the nation-state.

The importance of the family has significant consequences for the role of women in the nation. The naturalisation of the family not only reinforces sexual hierarchy, but also the maternal role of women as child-bearers. As biological reproducers of the new generations, women guarantee the nation’s eternal existence, promising to endlessly fulfil the “fantasy of exact self-replication” (Heng & Devan 1992: 344). While this emphasises the importance of women’s participation, the control over reproduction ultimately resides with the masculine collectivity. As a result, Yuval-Davis and Anthias have argued that women face “various forms of population control” in which they “are encouraged or discouraged from having children who will become members of various ethnic groups within the state” (1989: 8-9). They are often “called into duty” to produce more children, but only with the “right kind” (ibid.: 8), so as to protect the “purity” of the nation’s “genetic pool” (Yuval-Davis 1997: 22)²³. In addition to this, women are also “controlled in terms of the ‘proper’ ways in which to have children” so as to ensure that the norms and boundaries that exist within the nation are protected (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989: 9). This can mean pressure to only have sexual relations with men from certain groups as used to be the case in South Africa, or pressure to follow the legitimised ways of having children (ibid.)²⁴. These confinements on women’s

²³ See Yuval-Davis (1997) and Sofos (1996) for further discussion on Eugenicist discourse and population control. Balibar (1991b) also mentions the importance of eugenics for the nation. Also see Tetreault & Al-Mughni (2000) for a discussion on how women in Kuwait are discouraged from marrying ‘foreign’ men and Anthias (1989) for similar remarks about Cypriot women both on the Turkish and on the Greek side.

²⁴ In her own article, Yuval-Davis (1989) presents the case of Israel, where the mother determines the child’s nationality. However, if the child is born through a forbidden relationship of incest or adultery the child will be an outcast and not be permitted to marry another Jew for ten generations. Yuval-Davis argues that this can be the case even if a woman chooses to remarry after she divorces from her first husband by the civil court rather than the religious -in which case her divorce will not be recognised by the religious court and her children from her second.

marriage and the strict controls over reproduction emerge because women not only reproduce their national community but also its ethnic/national boundaries. Furthermore, the biological function of women is accompanied by a second reproductive role of disseminating the culture of the community to the newly born in the families, therefore acting as “cultural carriers” (ibid.).

Given the importance nationalist discourses have attributed to the family and the reproductive role of women for the survival of the nation, it is not surprising that the metaphor of family is a recurring theme in various narrations of the nation. McClintock notes that the crucial role accorded to the familial is very much visible in the iconography of the nations, which, “despite their myriad differences”, are all symbolically figured as “domestic genealogies” (1993: 63)²⁵. The key metaphor of family in the discursive construction of the nation also determines the symbolic part accorded to women in national iconography. Across different contexts, nations are fleshed out with female faces in the national imaginary, and sometimes through concrete personifications, such as the figures of Britannia, Germania, or Marianne, who symbolise the true essence of the national community through the female body (See Mosse 1988). However, this female representation always remains within the constraints of the familial imagery, as a mother, lover or daughter, and without exception described around the desires of patriarchy: modesty, chastity, purity, and dutifulness. It is important to note that the resulting female symbols are not fixed, but continuously re-appropriated and fine-tuned as they are continuously rearticulated according to national needs. George Mosse (1988) points to a very good example from the French national imagery, Delacroix’s painting of Marianne who symbolised the French Revolution, holding a tattered flag, scantily dressed, and leading the men into battle. After the success of the Revolution, Mosse explains, the Republic had opted for a more suitable representation of the nation, and properly sat Marianne down on a throne fully clothed, all the more respectable with her “revolutionary wings clipped” (1988: 91)²⁶.

²⁵ McClintock (1993) argues that the trope of the family serves a dual function: apart from naturalising sexual hierarchy within the society, it also naturalises social hierarchy. “The Family of Men”, a metaphor also common in British national narratives of the 19th century, provides a single genesis narrative for national history. The genealogy of the family, in return, offers the chance to naturalize and sanction social hierarchy, between different groups, within a seeming organic unity of interests that form the nation.

²⁶ For a similar yet more contemporary case study, on changing iconography of women in Indonesian nation-building process, see Sunindyo’s analysis (1998).

Then again it is not only the image that can change: the status of the female symbol can also be modified to adapt to the specific needs of the fraternity. Apart from the mother form, she can also appear as the daughter, which becomes particularly important in the context of national modernization projects, or as the 'lover', embodying male desire for the nation (see Najmabadi 1997; also see Sommer 1991). And yet, in all these figures the fertility of the female symbol and her rootedness within the familial remain intact: both the lover and the daughter promise to be 'potential' mothers. In other words, the key role nationalism attributes to women as the biological reproducers of the community and the nation is also replicated in her symbolic role.

Case studies, which cite concretised examples of the regenerative female body are abundant for various national contexts, and have become especially visible in academic literature as the gendered nature of national histories has been brought to light. Marvin and Ingle (1999) present another striking example to illustrate how the idealized femininity in male political fantasies signifies a unified and distinct nation in the case of America. The writers discuss the almost mythical story of *Betsy Ross*, who is nationally believed to have sewn the first American flag - even though no written evidence to confirm the story exists. Upon the request of George Washington/ the father of the American nation, Betsy Ross, not only sews but "gives birth" to the flag and to the nation, therefore becomes the mother of the "American holy family" and the creative centre of the nation (ibid.: 56-62). Here, her role becomes symptomatic of the ambivalent role of women in nationalist imagination. In spite of her symbolic importance, Betsy is not the real protagonist: in receiving the idea and the design for the flag from Washington, she does not produce but only reproduce the nation. For the writers, it is the "unity of male form and female substance- Washington's design and Betsy's bringing it to fruition that forms the creative paradigm for the nation, not Betsy herself." (See Marvin & Ingle 1999: 60; for further examples, see also Mosse 1988; Bloom et al. 2000; Caine & Sluga 2000).

The national community and the state, both imagined as masculine, are always depicted in a protecting and nurturing relationship to the female nation. Projecting the national as a vulnerable female in need of protection of the father state and the male community/soldiers serves an important function: firstly, it solidifies the national borders against possible threat from outsiders, a vulnerability which is also extended to women citizens in real life. Yuval-Davis argues that the linking of women with children and therefore "the collective, as well as

the familial future” often forms the main *raison d’être* for specific national and ethnic projects, such as military actions (1997: 45) that are claimed to be conducted “for women and children” (Enloe cited in *ibid.*). Moreover, the female-nation also reinforces the patriarchal discourses that connect the female body to male honour. As “sexual and national honour intimately construct” each other (Najmabadi 1997: 444), protecting the territorial integrity of the nation-woman (which belongs exclusively to the nation-state and guarantees its existence) gains a crucial prominence in masculine imagination and acts as a constant reminder of the imminent threat to national boundaries. Studying gender in a rural Turkish community, Delaney (1991) has argued that because male honour is seen as essentially dependant on the guarantee that a child is from his own seed, the protection of women becomes a matter of protecting the seed²⁷. Similarly, Peterson argues that within the imagery of “nation-as-woman”, the motherland is not only constituted as a woman’s body but, as such, is “ever in danger of violation –by “foreign” males/sperm” (2000: 68). Not only does she needs relentless vigilance to defend her frontiers and her honour against “rape” by “others”, but the patriarchal metaphor involves “a tacit agreement that men who cannot defend their woman/nation against rape have lost their “claim” to that body, to that land” (*ibid.*). As shown in the case of systematic rapes during the height of inter-ethnic violence in the former Yugoslavia, metaphor can easily become reality in ethnic conflicts, redefining rape as a weapon of war used to annihilate the preservation of the other nation’s patriline (Sofos 1996: 82).

Associating national strength with virility and masculine strength, while portraying the female as in need of male protection not only works to cement the nation against an ever-present threat from outside, but can also be used to assert the fraternity’s hegemony in international relations. Sexualisation of the other has been an important component of the colonial discourses of the West , which were saturated with sexual fantasies about local - and sexually available - women, alongside the images of “effeminate” local men (Enloe 2000a: 48-9; see also Young 1995). Today, military conflicts can also be seen as highly sexualised and “use the masculine imagery of rape, penetration and sexual conquest to depict military weaponry and offensives” (Nagel 1998: 258; also see Altinay 2004). While the first Gulf War supplied many instances of this, such as the circulating of expressions such as “Rape of Kuwait” or

²⁷ While Carol Delaney makes this comment regarding the protection of women in Muslim societies, making a distinction that in Western societies sex is detached from procreation, in times of national threat, as Sofos (1996) has shown, women’s symbolic association with land is equally strong irrespective of religion.

“Bend over, Saddam” written on USA missiles (Nagel 1998, Parker et al. 1992), the second Gulf War has cross-cut the symbolic oppression with reality through the revelation of photographs depicting naked pictures of male prisoners. Indeed, as Balibar argues, sexual oppression and racism are neither independent of each other nor do they exist in parallel, but rather they function together with racism in particular always presupposing sexism (1991a: 49).

While the gendering of the nation significantly moulds its citizens’ conceptualisation of it, for female citizens the consequences are more directly felt in everyday life. The trope of nation-woman translates into, as Yuval Davis (1997: 45) argues, a “burden of representation” for women citizens in daily life as they are expected to conform to the idealized metaphor. Through the collaboration of gender discourses and nationalism, the female body is firmly linked with the collectivity’s honour, and the trespassing of gender roles circumscribed by the collectivity’s symbolic boundaries is regarded as not only shameful, but also to be punished for the assault on the community’s honour. Therefore nationalism not only sets the boundaries for the woman-nation but also fixes sharp boundaries for women at the everyday level. On this, Yuval Davis argues that:

“Women in their ‘proper’ behaviour, their ‘proper’ clothing, embody the line which signifies the collectivity’s boundaries. (...) cultural traditions and the (re)invention of traditions (...) are often used as ways of legitimising the control and oppression over women. In situations in which individual men as well as the whole collectivities feel threatened by ‘others’ this phenomenon may intensify.” (1997: 46)

Two points need further elaboration here: while nationalist discourses are pervaded by discourses of patriarchy and therefore work to the disadvantage of women both in terms of political access and in everyday life, we cannot infer that all women experience the burden of representation or subordination in their everyday lives in the same way. On this there seems to be an evident divide between the European and postcolonial contexts, and furthermore between different groups competing for power within national contexts. Apart from the need to contextualise the role of women in different discourses of nationalism that are prevalent in different nation-states, we also need to be aware of the differential admission of women into the national in their own national contexts. Since women form a heterogeneous group within

the national community, differentiated by economic class, race and social status, the state is also related to women in a heterogeneous way²⁸.

Second and going back to the above quote by Yuval-Davis, the meaning of what is “proper” has to be analysed carefully, for it frames the fundamental question of identity not only for women citizens, but also given their representative role, for the national community as a whole. What is proper and what is not supersedes the gender question, and therefore calls for a definition of national identity. At the same time, the debate on proper behaviour is also inextricably bound with civilizational development and invites a further debate on what modern life should mean in the national context. Here again we are brought back to a seeming divergence between discourses of European and postcolonial and other nationalisms. It is this divergence in the gender-nation problematic that will form the discussion in the remainder of this chapter.

1.2.2 National modernities and gender discourses

This last section aims to bring together nation, gender and modernity, homing in on the arguments brought by postcolonial and Middle Eastern studies. In the previous part, I have outlined how gender and nation are symbiotically related discourses, without necessarily referring to contextual differentiations. This section will make a general distinction between the nation building experiences of the Western and non-Western contexts in an attempt to show how gender has a striking urgency in the latter, and particularly in the debates about modernity in non-Western nations.

Before we proceed, it is necessary to clarify the use of the concept of modernity in this discussion. Modernity is one of the most popular subject areas in social sciences, and a concept that has been defined in various ways by different writers. It is not possible here to go through the vast literature that has emerged around modernity, but it might be important to note that the discussion will remain more on a discursive level. In other words, I will not be focusing on the temporal experience of modernity which has been defined by key theorists in the field as “a matter of movement, of flux, of change, and of predictability” by Lash and Friedman (1992: 1), as “ambivalence” by Bauman (1991) or as a “condition that at once

²⁸ This point is strongly emphasised in Anthias & Yuval-Davis (1992: 114) and becomes particularly poignant in the analysis of the case studies, particularly on the female suicides in South East Turkey.

empowers people and constrains” people, by Berman (1992: 42). Given the vagueness and variety of these definitions, it seems more helpful to follow the advice that rather than trying in vain to define and fix the meaning of modernity, we should rather track the diverse ways that the insistent claims to being modern are made (Rabinow quoted in Abu Lughod 1998: 7). Therefore, the analysis here will remain on a discursive level: what will form the main concern is the different trajectories proposed by different national discourses to reach modernity, rather than discussing the lived experience of modernity itself.²⁹

As emerging nation-states aspire to build their own visions of what a modern nation is, discourses of nationalism and modernity invariably crosscut. Often, it is tempting to analyse this intersection with respect to social and cultural transformations in the latecomer nations, mainly outside Europe, and as parts of the Third World, the postcolonial context, or the Muslim world. However, even within the European context, from where modernity is said to have originated, nationalism has always involved cultural and social projects of modernization. Nationalism’s aspiration for modernity and to transform the national society has been theorised most thoroughly by Gellner (1983), who stressed the role of the elite and their “high culture” in this process. For Gellner, even though nationalism “usually conquers in the name of folk culture”, in reality it is “*essentially*, the general imposition of high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population” (1983: 57). Bauman (1992) explains this nationalism’s transformation as a result of the civilising process that took off in the 17th century in Europe. This process, he argues, was first and foremost an attempt by the enlightened elites to separate themselves from the masses they were responsible for educating, ordering and ruling (1992: 681). Resting historically on “intellectualized doctrine” (Delanty & O’Mahoney 2002: 17), nationalism adopted this civilising process, and “played the role of the hinge fastening together” the elite/state and the masses/society (Bauman 1992: 683). The creation of different “policing institutions” employing modern scientific methods to discipline the society, such as the educational, health, or legal systems can all be read as attempts to regulate and modernize the peripheries of the emerging nations of Europe³⁰. Therefore we

²⁹ Of course, we need to note that there is no clear-cut boundary between the experience of modernity and discourses about modernity, but a circular relationship between the two.

³⁰ Foucault’s writings (e.g. 1991) provide one of the most powerful analyses of this process in the emerging nation-states of Europe. Commenting on *Discipline and Punish*, De Certeau (1988) eloquently points out that Foucault’s writings resemble a detective story in which he follows how the Enlightenment discourse and the reformist projects of the 18th century has been “colonized” or vampirized through the “‘procedures’ of

can see attempts to modernise the nation as an embedded process within the discourse of nationalism, which should be seen as a dynamic and ongoing process, not excluding Europe, and certainly not limited to the nineteenth century. This has resulted in national appropriations of modernity within Europe, even when they appear to emulate a seemingly homogeneous European model.³¹

At the same time, to argue that modernity is always subject to appropriation and re-interpretation within the national is not to ignore the sharp divergences between different models of modernity in the Western and non-Western contexts. The impossibility of escaping the Western legacy of modernity, and reading the history of the non-Western context independently of the West, is strongly stressed in postcolonial studies (see among others Chatterjee 1989, 1996; Chakrabarty 2000, Goankar 2001). At the same time, Western experience of modernity and nation building cannot be adequate for understanding the non-Western context either. Writers have pointed out that it is within the non-Western, postcolonial context that the projects to nationalise modernity gain a crucial significance, rather than in Europe where “being-modern has been the dominant self-image” since the Enlightenment (Abu-Lughod 1998: 7). Similarly, Gole (1998) writing on Islamic modernities has noted the irony of the overwhelming presence of the discourses on modernity in especially non-Western contexts. Precisely because of the perceived lack of modernity, she argues, it is omnipresent “as a source of humiliation, aspiration, rejection or simple reappropriation, Western modernity is a constant historical preoccupation and a point of mental reference and positioning for social actors in non-Western contexts” (1998: 54). Goankar calls this fixation with the West “a rage of modernity” where “people (not just the elite) everywhere, at every national or cultural site, rise to meet it, negotiate it, and appropriate it in their own fashion” (2001: 21).

Chatterjee has strongly argued that these dynamics have shaped the nation building process in a distinctive way in the postcolonial context. For Chatterjee, what distinguishes the nationalist claims in the postcolonial world from Europe is very much related to a perception

penitential, educational and medical control at the beginning of the nineteenth century.” See De Certeau (1988: 45). Building on this, it is possible to argue for different “colonisations” in different contexts.

³¹ A good example of this process was given previously with Linda Laursen’s (1993) analysis on “the civilised ways of dishwashing” that became a marker of modern Swedish identity. On the same context Lofgren (1993: 182) has also pointed out how in the early twentieth century, under the Social Democrats, modernity became “a very Swedish project”, while still carrying the same idea of “collective progress: a nation moving united into the future.” Similar concerns about keeping up with the progress can be found in most national histories.

of difference. He rejects the universality of Anderson's theory of nation formed through an imagined identification:

"If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity." (1996: 216)

For Chatterjee, nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa is posited not on an identity "but rather on *difference* with the 'modular' forms of the national society propagated by the modern West" (ibid.). Such a perception of difference, which he notes as having begun long before the actual political battle with the imperial power, resulted in a separation between inner and outside domains. The West had already proved its superiority in such areas as the economy, statecraft, science and technology; and therefore in what Chatterjee calls the "material/outside" domain that included these areas, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and imitated. In return, the colonial society distinguished its essential "spiritual/inner domain", which held the traditions and symbols of cultural identity and which had to be preserved. Chatterjee states that it is in this inner domain that "nationalism launches its most powerful, creative and historically significant project: to fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western" (1996: 229). While the inner domain involved many areas, such as language and art, Chatterjee argues that the assertion of autonomy and difference was most dramatic in the familial world and in its representation of women (ibid.). Hence, women became the "inner sanctum" that holds the cultural particularity of the nation, and therefore needs to be protected from the West, as well as providing the ground on which self-independence could be declared (See Chatterjee 1989).

Here, Enloe's (2000a) criticisms on the colonial discourses of gender - which come out in her work that was first published at around the same time as Chatterjee's (1989) - offer further discussion of the context within which the position of women became central to postcolonial nationalist projects. In her discussion, Enloe explains that throughout colonisation, discourses of gender and sexuality that were embedded in Western civilisation were used to justify the domination and the superiority of Western culture over indigenous cultures. British colonizers' depiction of local women as "uncivilised" and "lacking Victorian standards of feminine respectability" was very much a part of this process:

“Ladylike behaviour was a mainstay of imperialist civilization. Like sanitation and Christianity, feminine respectability was meant to convince both the colonizing and the colonized peoples that foreign conquest was right and necessary.” (2000a: 48)

But local women needed the colonizers’ help for a more urgent matter: as well as being uncivilised, they were also seen as oppressed by their patriarchal societies, vulnerable and in need of protection from the colonisers against their own men. The local men were in return depicted as lacking chivalry and reverence for their women, and for this reason “they couldn’t expect to be allowed to govern their own societies” (ibid.). As a result, these gender discourses helped British imperialism to “establish European male rule over the men in Asian and African societies” while claiming to be on a “crusade to abolish male domination of women” (ibid.: 49). Given this context, it is not surprising that in postcolonial nationalisms, women, alongside family, became a part of the inner domain that needed to be shielded from Western influence.

However, the isolation of the inner from the outside domain is not an uncomplicated task. The inner realm of the family cannot be insulated from the changes going on in the outside world, and traditional forms of patriarchy that Europeans had criticised for being backward and even ‘barbaric’, - and by reference to which they had justified their colonial domination - needed to be remedied in the modern nation. This locates women at the heart of modernization discourses in the postcolonial context, where the position of women and the question of how much Western style modernization might be allowed for women, has to be handled carefully. Chatterjee states that Indian nationalism resolved this through an agreement that

“...the crucial requirement was to retain an inner spirituality of indigenous social life. The home was the principal site for expressing the spiritual quality of the national culture, and women must take the main responsibility of protecting and nurturing this quality. No matter what the changes in the external conditions for women, they must not lose their essentially spiritual (i.e. feminine) virtues; they must not, in other words, be *essentially* westernized.” (1989: 243)

For Chatterjee, appropriation of modernity within the national discourses meant new forms of subordination for women: in the modern nation, the westernization of women had to be markedly different than men. An educated and relatively emancipated vision of a “new

woman” who would, in return for her newly achieved freedom, have the social responsibility of keeping essential national values intact accompanied the modernization process, subjecting women to a refurbished patriarchy (1989: 244)³².

Chatterjee’s arguments cannot speak for the experience of all national projects that developed in response to the West, and particularly in the Turkish context we see apparent divergences from the postcolonial model³³. However, Chatterjee’s discussion of postcolonial nationalisms helps us understand why the question of women has a striking centrality for the national liberation movements in the emerging non-Western nations. The female symbol shaped by her familial role has always been an indispensable part of the discursive construction of nationalism regardless of the context. However, as Chatterjee explains, it is with the nationalization projects of the postcolonial world that women become potent symbols of national modernities, and represent the choices made to achieve the desired vision of modernity. Furthermore, these choices always rest on the central problematic of how one might “become modern when one was not, could not be, or did not want to be Western” (Abu-Lughod 1998: 14). It is this problematic that guides the selective incorporation and appropriation of a modernity associated with Western progress, what Kandiyoti calls the “salvaging” of modernity (1998: 271). In this context, women function as a signifier “in the contrary dialectic of stasis and change”, required not only to imagine a new and uniquely national modernity, but also to render it “ontologically stable” (Natarajan 1994: 79).

This has significant consequences. Most evidently, women’s burden of representation in everyday life is amplified through their representation of modernity that is adopted as a part of national identity. Here, the representation of modernity often involves its display in the

³² Again looking at the Indian context, Natarajan (1994: 79) argues that the woman’s body serves different symbolic roles in different moments in nationalism. She calls these 1) the movement from regional to national in the “modernizing” process; 2) the threat of communal or civil rupture within the body politic and 3) the rise of fundamentalism. For the first one she sees the female body as a testing site for modernity, for the second moment she observes women as a site of mythic unity and in the third, as daughters of the nation, a site for encountering the challenge posed by Westernisation.

³³ Divergences are apparent not only in terms of the strength of ‘identification with difference’ with Europe, but also at the implementation of reforms: For instance, Sirman (2002: 242) compares the Indian and Turkish contexts and argues that even though in Turkey women were also the representatives of the national self, they do not hold an inherent purity. Instead, Turkish national discourse has foregrounded the importance of women’s ability to think and use her wisdom to contribute to her society, as well as to know her place in it. Similarly, she finds the family not as a location of unchanging essence, but as a part of the process of transformation with the new woman setting up the new family. Ahiska (2006), on the other hand argues that even though Turkey suffered the same divide between civilisation and culture, a different kind of society to what Chatterjee describes was imagined. This, she argues, is because the divide occurred not on a visible spatial/horizontal axis (inside/outside domains), but on a temporal/vertical one (old/new), making it possible to embody the divide within the same space, or even the same person.

international arena. As the meanings of 'Western', 'authentic', and 'backward' - therefore discardable - are defined, revolutionizing society and transforming women become two sides of the same coin (See Moghadam 1994: 12). In this process, the popular female iconography of 'daughters of the nation/revolution' not only represents social change but also portrays women as active participants in social change. Needless to say, the specific definitions do vary according to different nationalist projects, and so does the extent of these projects in reforming the positions of women and the standards of propriety that determine the rules for the appearance and behaviour of women. As Moghadam has pointed out, nationalist projects that claim to "emancipate" women, while at the same time assigning them a "national feminine role", regard the desired transformation as vital for the nation, as do the fundamentalist projects which regard women mainly as markers of "cultural rejuvenation and religious orthodoxy" (1994: 2).

Such projects are prone to major problems in implementation. Firstly, we have to take into account that women are differentially involved in national projects, often working to support ethnic, racial and class hierarchies (See Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; also Walby 1996). As will be further discussed in the next chapter with regard to the Turkish context, such projects often privilege one dominant group, in most cases the urban middle classes from the dominant ethnic group. Second, the ways in which women can be involved in the new nation is never defined clearly and therefore always suffers from ambivalences. As it has been argued above, in non-Western nationalist projects, modernity is perceived through the dichotomies of national culture versus the foreign/Western influences. This makes it problematic as to how much visibility women should have in real life in the public and political sphere, and what position they should occupy in the new modern nation. The common discourse of women's liberation that accompanies most modernization projects has therefore been much criticised for the ambiguities it carries, allowing women a newly acquired access to the public sphere while at the same time accompanying this new visibility with constant surveillance and a "persistent anxiety over their sexual morality" (Kandiyoti 1998: 282). The admission of women to the public sphere as citizens does not necessarily bring equal access to decision-making processes. Even though women have been actively involved in most of these projects, their contribution is often decontextualised and idealised in

national narratives with their participation in the political and institutional realms often discouraged or even prevented (Gocek 2002a: 7)³⁴.

And lastly, we need to underline the fact that women themselves actively participate in this ideological terrain by reproducing or challenging the ‘appropriate place and conduct’ that is being negotiated. In this context feminism, as Abu-Lughod (1998) notes, becomes an inescapable term of reference for women, even though it is defined quite differently in different contexts. Even though this research project is more interested in analysing the different discourses of nation for and through women than tracing women’s agency, it is important to note that the case studies that will be analysed in the following chapters have all been created through the non-confirmative discursive positions taken up by women.

1.2.3 Conclusion and further remarks

In a recent article Tanil Bora (2005) succinctly sums up the discussion on women, nation and modernity, and points to the irony in this relationship. He explains that, regardless of the context, reduction of women to a national symbol and the reproduction of patriarchal gender norms - even though they have been ‘refined and reformed’ - becomes a fixture in all the modernization projects that nationalism undertakes. For Bora, this fixture limits the perception of modernity, and becomes “a modern obstacle” to perceiving modernity as a horizon, which is freeing, open-ended, and critical of itself. Hence, not exclusively but mainly through women, conservatism is articulated into modernity as its indispensable extension, even as efforts to modernize the nation are taking place (2005: 243-4).³⁵ Bora’s discussion in fact rewords what Bauman (1991) had called the ambivalence of modernity - an attempt to fix identity and maintain it as such, and locates women at the heart of that ambivalence in national modernization projects.

³⁴ See also Sunindyo (1998) for limits to women’s participation in military institutions, and Altinay (2004) for a similar analysis of the Turkish military context. For a more general discussion on the unequal distribution of power to women citizens, see the recent article on Mexican nationalism by Craske (2005) and also Tetrault & al-Mughni (2000) for an analysis of women and nation in Kuwait.

³⁵ Bora’s concise discussion successfully brings together the concepts of nationalism, conservatism and modernity, although, it has to be added, his argument is not new. Nagel (1998), for example, has argued the following on nationalism’s relationship with conservatism: “Lest this discussion of Muslim nationalism lead the reader to see masculinity and nationalism as an organizing and hegemonic relationship only for Islamic societies, it is important to remember that (...) all nationalism, tends to be conservative, and ‘conservative’ often means ‘patriarchal’ (...) This is partly due to the tendency of nationalists to be ‘retraditionalisers’ (...) and to embrace tradition as a legitimating basis for nation-building and cultural renewal. These traditions, real or invented, are often patriarchal and point out the (...) tight connection between masculinity and nationalism” (ibid.: 254)

The functions fulfilled by this fixture in the discursive construction of the nation, as well as its consequences in terms of shaping gender identities and relationships in the nation, have been the focus of discussion in the second part of this chapter. Feminist scholarship in the field has repeatedly emphasised that between the discourses of nationalism and gender there exists a strong symbiotic relationship, which often works to women's disadvantage in the imagined community, limiting their choices of identity as citizens and as women. The discussion has largely focused on the symbolic realm, where discursive articulations crystallize to form the boundaries, both for the nation and for women citizens. This continuous process is decisive in moulding the everyday level of the nation for both genders, as will be demonstrated in the next chapters with regard to the Turkish context.

Following from this, the discussion on modernity attempted to highlight the striking importance of gender in non-Western societies, both as a major site of boundary construction, and as a site for appropriating modernity. This discussion is particularly important in understanding the Turkish context where the problematics of Westernisation and modernisation are embedded within the very heart of national imagining. Here postcolonial literature can offer important insights into examining not only the tensions that arise in the construction of national identity in Turkey, but also how gender is positioned with respect to national identity.

It is often noted that Turkey does not comfortably fit into the postcolonial model, largely because of the fact that it never directly experienced colonial rule, and also because the Ottoman Empire itself was a colonizing force (Ahiska 2003). For this reason, it might not be possible to explain the historical experience and modern particularities of Turkey through postcolonial theory alone (c.f. Stokes 2002; Kandiyoti 2002). At the same time, postcolonial criticism can help us understand the main concerns in the articulation of Turkish nationhood - such as the perceived backwardness of the society as opposed to the superiority of the West, or the need to overcome the modernity gap while maintaining authenticity (Ahiska 2003: 359-60). Having a predominantly Muslim population in Turkey has significantly shaped the debate on national identity and caused it to share many of the problems - though not the outcomes - of the discussed context regarding the question of women. The Turkish context has also provided one of the most striking examples for the contradiction Bora has pointed out: the otiose obsession with the female to symbolize the modernization project of

nationalism. Moreover, this has neither remained limited to the critical period of “nation formation” more than eighty years ago, nor to any particular elite group³⁶. Because the questions about modernity and national boundaries are still tangled over the representative female body, the position and role of women has remained a contemporary debate for all groups competing to narrate their own version of the nation. This continues to turn gender into a major arena for further debates on the nation’s identity.

Lastly, before the Turkish context is examined, a further note needs to be made on the relationship between nation and modernity today. While an analysis of the national appropriation of modernity is crucial for understanding the central role of women in the non-western context, it is important to move beyond the framework of “national modernity”, as well as the dichotomies of the “West” versus “the authentic culture” that have shaped it. As both Navaro-Yashin (2002) and Kandiyoti (2002) have noted, even postcolonial studies have inadvertently contributed to the polarisation between East and West. Navaro-Yashin argues that especially when the “woman question” is at stake, the discursive nature of the definitions of East and West give in to an enthusiasm to track down the “culturally distinct”:

“Many scholarly narratives on the relation of Middle Eastern women with the West have mapped the signifier “European” too easily onto a conventional story of Westernization as imposed by upper-class elites on the rest of the population. An Occidentalism of sorts exists in such studies that look for the subaltern or Middle-Eastern in signifiers and symbols that contradict the Western, as if it were possible to disaggregate the Middle Eastern from the European in life stories, after a long history of relations of power between peoples of these regions. Such studies which would like to be critical of Orientalism, colonialism, and Westernization, as well as of the class structure in the Middle East, often end up reproducing the assumptions that they set out to deconstruct.” (2002: 67)

What is ignored in reproducing “pure” categories of the East and the West are the complex identifications, experiences and the dynamics of hegemony and resistance that contest the perceived meanings of and polarizations between those categories³⁷. But avoiding such pitfalls is not to deny the fact that that these dichotomies still continue to inform and shape the

³⁶ I agree with Walby (1996) that it is not very accurate to talk about a critical formative period. Walby proposes to talk instead about rounds of restructuring of the ‘nation-state’ (ibid.: 246) Seeing nation as a continuous articulation, it is not possible to limit the modernization process to one era only. We need to perceive this as an ongoing process in all nations today, even though the state might no longer hold the sole monopoly over it.

³⁷ Needless to say, in our attempts to transcend the dichotomies it is also equally important to avoid the trap of culturalism that can render critical inquiry useless

meanings of modernity and national identity, as the case studies in this research will show. What is important is to be aware that these categories are themselves discursively produced, not indicators of social and cultural reality, and therefore their meanings are always subject to change over the course of time. It is often through the negotiated meanings of these binaries that national boundaries are re-drawn as the centre differentiates itself from the peripheries, and the nation from its others. What should be explored therefore are the contested meanings these binaries hold in the national imagination, and how they are constantly being negotiated, inheriting new connotations, and how this process shapes the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the nation (c.f. Ahiska 2003).

This also has important consequences for the meanings of modernity - the vision of a uniform “national modernity”, informed through the dichotomies of East and West, seems to have been weakened, if not broken. Today, we can say that perceptions of nation and modernity no longer subscribe to the same nation-state framework, as the meanings of the modern are shaped by the multiple sources brought about by globalisation, not to mention the diversity of voices in nationalist discourse. The growing rift between the once interchangeable concepts of ‘West’ and ‘Europe’ is just one indicator of this shifting terrain. This brings up another major question: where to locate national identity and the new boundaries of the nation that had formed as a reaction to the binaries of East and West. Again, as will be argued, the answers are best discussed through women.

This brings up another major question: where to locate national identity, and the new boundaries of the nation that had formed its identity with respect to the binaries of the East and West. The contestations emanating from this question can find their best expression through debates on women, who have been the symbolic representatives of national identity and its modernity. The following chapter presents the background from which these issues have been raised in Turkey.

Chapter 2:

Taming modernity -Turkey, nation and women

The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to present a brief and selective overview of the Kemalist nationalist project, its beginnings, and the challenges it has faced in particular in the last twenty five years. It is inevitably selective as in one chapter alone it is impossible to give a detailed account of the changes in Turkish social and political life over the past decade let alone over the course of the Republican history of Turkey itself. Instead, and without any claims to be extensive, this overview only attempts to highlight some of the tension points, ambiguities, and points of contestation that Turkishness is facing today, to draw attention to those that surface in the case studies, and to provide some explanation as to why these points of conflict have emerged. In other words it aims to place the case studies in a wider context, especially for readers who might not be familiar with Turkey's history or its contemporary problems. This discussion also attempts to make the individual discussions on context that accompany each case study more meaningful.

The next goal of the chapter is to give the readers a more detailed account of how femininity has formed the nodal point of discourses on modernity and nationalism in Turkey. In hegemonic discourses of the nation-state, since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, women have stood for an ideal Turkey that has mastered modernity, positing an impeccable and singular image of the self - an image that despite having been heavily questioned for more than two decades, still continues to inform dominant discourses of national identity. The second section of the chapter will revisit the early years of the Republic in the light of feminist critiques and expand on the argument laid out in the previous chapter: i.e. the symbolic role women play in representing the nation and its modernity. By setting the gender debates on women within the larger context of debates on national identity and modernity in Turkey, this section aims to explain how and why the preferred narratives about women can help us understand the negotiations going on about what it means to be Turkish today.

In order to proceed with these discussions the necessary reference point, as in any study of identity politics in Turkey, is the early years of the Republic.

2.1 The beginnings

Every good narrative has a beginning, and the frequently told story of the Turkish people starts with the creation of the Republic. Already in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, discussions on Turkish nationhood and identity had started to gain ground through a developing nationalism, which was heavily inspired by the Enlightenment ideals of progress and which sought to achieve the civilisational status of the West. However, it was the revolutionary movement led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk that materialized these aspirations with the declaration of the new Republic in 1923.

From the very start, the state was the fundamental actor in shaping and protecting the newly emerging conceptualisation of nationhood and national identity. With the foundation of the Republic and the consolidation of single-party rule under Atatürk's Republican People's Party (CHP), a radical social engineering and top-to-bottom modernization project was launched. The republican elite/intelligentsia designed and implemented the changes deemed necessary to jettison the past and to transform the remnants of the empire into a modern nation-state. However, as Mardin (1973, 1997) stresses in his writings, this process preserved the strong state structure of the Ottoman Empire, where bureaucrats were regarded not only as the gatekeepers of the regime, but also as promoters of social change, through the projects they would plan and implement (See also Keyder 1997). The strong position held by the state also determined the extensiveness of the envisioned transformation: it included a total re-crafting of state institutions, culture, ethnicity and citizens, in short of national self-definition. Consequently, Turkish identity and nationalism were heavily moulded by the state at its initial founding stage. As Navaro-Yashin (2002) argues, Turkish nationalism "was not, unlike other nationalisms, imagined in the absence of state, but in the enduring presence of stately practices" - it had emerged mixed with statism, which Navaro-Yashin defines as "something beyond nationalism, as an identification not only or even necessarily with a nation, but with a reified state" (ibid.: 201).

In this social engineering project, the foremost constitutive element of the new Turkish identity was undeniably the adoption of a unitary ethnicity and culture. Turkish nationalism, notes Kieser, was radical in not only its attempt to force future national cohesion but in replacing the universalist worldview of the Ottoman Empire, and the Islamist culture that it rested on (2006b: viii). One has only to compare this to the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious cosmopolitan system that the Ottoman Empire had been built upon to consider the extent of the attempted transformation. The constitution of the new nation was re-constructed, eradicating - or subjugating - the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Muslim populations under the hegemonic identity of “Turkish”¹. For Keyder (1997), this required the silencing of the masses and a redefinition of the “popular” through the use of folklore and history. The defining vector of this reconstitution, he argues, “was an unsullied ethnic heritage endowed with all the positive virtues of might, unity, state-building acumen, and self-confidence” (1997: 45).

At the same time, the nation-building process did not only rest upon an ethnic conception, but also incorporated modernism as the fundamental ingredient of national identity. To put it more precisely, the two discourses, of modernization and nationalism supported and worked through each other. The commitment to catch up with the modern West, prompted by the modernization discourse, legitimised the elite-led nation-building project, strengthened the state and its institutions, while the West signified the final destination in the national imagination. Secularisation formed the cornerstone of this all-encompassing national project, as well as the first necessary step towards civilisational progress. A series of radical institutional reforms were enacted under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk, including the abolishment of the two fundamental institutions of the empire, the sultanate and the Islamic caliphate, resulting in the removal of Islam from the constitution and the adoption of secularism as state ideology. As Yesim Arat rightly points out, during this process the state not only separated itself from religion but also attempted to control religion, confining it to the private realm and to keep “its public expression under state supervision” (2001:

¹ While there was a conflation of being Muslim and a Turk, non-Muslim citizens were accepted as a part of the Turkish nation on the condition that they adopted Turkish language as mother tongue, Turkish culture, and the ideal of Turkism. See Bali (2006) - and other related articles in the edited book of Kieser (2006a) - for a good selection of articles on the politics of Turkification during the single party era.

35).² The foundation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, *Diyanet*,³ which reports directly to the office of the Prime Minister and is responsible for all religious issues, from the setting up of mosques to the approval of religious clerics, is the best evidence of this attempt (ibid.; cf. Davison 2003).⁴ The secularisation process was also supported by extensive cultural reforms that covered almost all areas of daily life, private as well as social realms, and changed the entire socio-cultural landscape of Turkey, re-modelling it along European standards.

Here the Turkish modernization project intersects with the experiences of other non-Western nation-states, where, as has been highlighted in the previous chapter, the perceived lack of modernity has been deriving force in national modernization projects. Chakrabarty (2000) discusses in detail how anticolonial nationalisms were predicated on the urgency of catching up with Western modernity, attempting to complete the transformation without delay, despite the absence of an industrialised society to mobilize for this purpose. This also summarizes the Turkish experience. Gole (1997) again argues that the political will to Westernise is common in the Middle Eastern context, resulting in a set of civilisational choices. However, as Gole points out, the Turkish experience is exceptional not only in the extensiveness of the civilising project, attempting to penetrate into all areas of everyday life, but also in the “epistemological break” it has made in its self-definition, from inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire to citizens of the Turkish Republic (ibid.).

It is at the conceptualisation of this break that the transformation of women’s status in society becomes pivotal. In other words, the epistemological break between the past and present found its expression through women’s identity in the newly found Republic. A direct association was formulated between the status of women and the new national identity. In his public speeches Kemal Ataturk himself strongly

² Similarly, Davison (2003: 336) argues that “by ‘secular state’ one understands a ‘religion-free’ state”, but in the case of Turkey, the state’s desire to control religion has never allowed it to be religion-free. I will be expanding on this debate in the analysis of the weddings case study in chapter six.

³ Today, *Diyanet* still functions as a state institution that administers religious education, mosques, religious foundations and charities in line with the principles of Sunni Islam.

⁴ The banning of major religious educational institutions in 1924, (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat kanunu*), and small religious institutions and orders in 1925 (*Tekke ve Zaviyelerin kaldırılması*) also form a part of this process.

advocated the equality of both genders in order to achieve the desired civilisational status:

“A civilisation where one sex is supreme can be condemned, there and there, as crippled. A people which has decided to go forward and progress must realise this as quickly as possible. The failures in our past are due to the fact that we remained passive to the fate of women.” (Cited in Jayawardena 1986: 36, and also in Yegenoglu 1998: 132)

The rhetoric of women’s emancipation and inclusion in the public sphere was supported by an extensive dismantling of the existing customs and social institutions that regulated women’s life in the Ottoman regime and their replacement in accordance with the needs of becoming a civilised nation. The legal changes included the introduction of compulsory primary education for both sexes in 1924, adoption of the Civil Code in 1926, modelled after the Swiss Civil Code which secularised family law, and the right to vote at a local level in 1930 and national level in 1934 (Kandiyoti 1989: 126). These changes also abolished polygamy, restricted the marriage age over a minimum, and permitted women a set of equalities on legal matters (such as inheritance and divorce) with men. The unveiling of women, backed with vigorous campaigning for Western dress, especially by Kemal Ataturk himself⁵, has a particularly symbolic importance in this reform process and in Turkey’s secularisation. While the new state neither prohibited the wearing of the veil nor required women to wear Western clothes, the Hat Reform, which in 1926 abolished the *fez* for male citizens, marked a preference for Western style dressing. Saktanber (2002a: 140-1) explains that by abolishing the symbolic head attire of the Ottoman Empire, the Hat Reform encouraged women to uncover their heads: once men donned the Western look, and replaced their Oriental *fez* with the bowler hat, this could constitute a legitimate example for women to follow. As a result, the reform had worked to convince men to give consent to women’s new and ‘open’ way of dressing (ibid.).

⁵ “In some places I have seen women who put a piece of cloth or a towel or something like it over their faces and who turn their backs or huddle themselves on the ground when a man passes by. What is the meaning and sense of this behaviour? Gentlemen, can the mothers and daughters of a civilised nation adopt this strange manner, this barbarous posture? It is an object of ridicule. It must be remedied at once.” Kemal Ataturk, quoted in Yegenoglu (1998: 133).

All in all, what was at stake in this process was not just the remaking of women but the wholesale refashioning of gender and gender relations (Kandiyoti 1997b, 1998). Women were emancipated but men also had to be reformed into attentive spouses and engaged parents who were emotionally close to and directly involved with their children, and particularly with their much-valued daughters (Kandiyoti 1998: 281; also 1997b). Kandiyoti (1997b: 125) notes that Atatürk's choice of daughters instead of sons as his adopted children, in a society where male child preference was the uncontested norm, is particularly heavy with symbolic significance. How the early reforms initiated by the modernising elite changed the status of women has remained a central narrative in the almost mythical story of the transformation of Ottoman remnants into a modern and independent Turkey. And because the new female symbolised the new nation, the central iconography of the regime from the early years of the Republic was formed by visual images, which depicted women unveiled, dressed in shorts and bearing the flag in athletic competitions, in school or military uniform, as pilots, as professionals or in evening dress in ballroom dancing scenes⁶. What essentially gave the Turkish Republic its new character and ideological identity based on secularism was the transformation of the role of women in society through Kemalist reforms (Saktanber 2002b: 323).

When the extent and impact of these reforms on societal life are considered, Turkey was not only the first Muslim country to undertake such a radical project to rewrite gender roles to include women in the public sphere and give them equal rights as men, but was remarkably early in doing so, even when compared to its Western counterparts. As a result, for a long time both women's emancipation and the modernization project it symbolised remained unchallenged. In international accounts too, Turkish modernization was heralded as a success story, and the reforms caused in Jaywerdena's (1986) words, "an international sensation", proof that the Western model of modernity could be implemented into a Muslim society.⁷

⁶ Highlighted by Kandiyoti (1997b: 125) Gole (1998: 59), these photographs are today remembered by many secularists with a nostalgic longing and especially on national days printed in newspapers.

⁷ Also, for classic examples of the praise of Turkey's civilizational shift from East to secular and modern Europe, see the well-known works of Bernard Lewis (1961), *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* and Daniel Lerner (1958), *The Passing of Traditional Society*. For comments on how these early works on Turkish modernization overlooked the embedded ambiguities in the project, see Kasaba (1997).

However, in practice such a comprehensive top-to-bottom project was destined to suffer major problems from the very early stages. The reforms did mark “a new positioning of the state vis-à-vis the woman question”, but at the same time they could not penetrate into the rural hinterlands and remained for a long time within the social circle of the urban bourgeoisie (Kandiyoti 1989: 126). This disjuncture was also apparent in other areas since the re-constructed nationhood and national identity were implemented in an instrumentalist fashion without much space for negotiation between the masses and the elite (c.f. Keyder 1997). In his seminal work Mardin (1973) discusses this lack of interconnectedness between the masses and the elite through the key concepts of the centre and the periphery. For Mardin the architects of the new nation had inherited a deep fissure between the centre, where the state’s ruling class, the military and the bureaucrats are located, and its peripheries, located primarily in the provinces, but also including “the lower classes who had difficulty in joining the stream of modernization” (ibid.: 179). The ties that had loosely connected the two during the height of the Empire, such as the judicial system, or the charitable foundations had been weakened in its decline, leaving mainly the religious institutions which Mardin sees as forming the “real hinge” (ibid.: 174) between the centre and the peripheries. With the modernization project in the nineteenth century, the peripheries were estranged from the centre; they further aligned with religion and united in their opposition to the attempts for national modernization and integration into the new cultural framework. The strictly secularist and more uncompromising Kemalist modernization project only widened the gap between the two groups. The Kemalists associated the provinces with rurality and backwardness, and identified them as a potential source of treason against the national and secularist aims of the Republic (ibid.: 182). The Kurdish and religious uprisings of the early years of the Republic sharpened the centre’s distrust of the peripheries. As a result, the strengthening of the state “partly against the periphery” became a priority before anything else, which Mardin sees as “profoundly unrevolutionary, despite the populist themes which the Republic developed” (ibid.: 183).

This had major consequences. Not being able to identify with or reach out to the peripheries, the Kemalist centre aimed for a linear top-down regulation that would eventually bring advancement. Yet, in doing so, they “missed the revolutionary-mobilizational aspect” that could mobilize masses for the attempted restructuring of

the society (ibid.: 184). Mardin argues that what Atatürk could not “achieve through political mobilization or through a commitment to radical changes in social structure”, he tried to do with ideology, national symbols and historical myths, all of which was too much of a burden for ideology to carry (ibid.). Following from this, it is not surprising that a significant portion of this ideological burden was placed on female gender identity.

While the centre-periphery duality offers some explanation to the problems of the early years of the Republic, there were also paradoxes inherent in the very discourse of the national identity that the centre was trying to sculpt, which suggests the heterogeneity of the centre itself. Çağlar Keyder (1999a) argues that even though the Republican state was nationalist, it was ambiguous in defining the constituent coordinates of nationhood. For Keyder, Turkish nationhood “mostly veered toward an ethnic definition rather than a constitutional one, and when ideological propping was required, religion was brought in as a defining element despite the state’s avowed secularism” (ibid.: 11). The existing ambiguities, particularly the role of religion in Turkishness was to create many paradoxes for Turkish identity in general and for women in particular who were given the task of representing it. Finally, as a top-down project, it was evidently unlikely that the Kemalist project could sustain itself in the long term. The experience of modernity brought different definitions of what it meant to be modern and different identifications with the nation, which the Kemalist discourse could no longer contain. As Scott argues, “one of the great paradoxes of social engineering is that it seems at odds with the experience of modernity generally. Trying to jell a social world, the most striking characteristic of which appears to be flux, seems rather like trying to manage a whirlwind” (Scott, cited in Bozdoğan 2001: 8). It is in the aftermath of the eighties that the growing tension between the experience and the demands of modernity - most importantly regarding the questions of identity and belonging - and the Turkish modernization project led to a questioning of the Kemalist discourse both in everyday life and in academic discussions.

2.2 The re-transformation

The aftermath of the 1980s once again marks a new era of transformation in Turkish culture and politics⁸. After years of ideological divisions and resulting violence that had severely ruptured the social and political structure, Turkey entered the new decade with a military coup in 1980, with the army taking over to re-establish the power of the state authorities and the rule of law. During the military regime that lasted until 1983, all left and right wing parties were banned, and political associations, particularly leftist organizations, which were regarded as a communist threat, and their networks, labour unions and intellectuals, or simply anyone or any institution involved with socialism, heavily suppressed or persecuted (Kalaycioglu 2005). A new constitution, which largely reified the role of the state, was adopted in 1982, and in 1983 general ‘multiparty’ elections were held under the strict supervision of the military with only three parties permitted to take part (ibid.). The discourse of the Kemalist military during this time was similar to the early Republican one. Kasaba notes that before the elections, military officials had warned the public against voting for politicians they labelled as “the remnants of the old order” responsible for driving the country to the edge of the precipice prior to the coup, and encouraged people to open up a new, brighter future for themselves (1997: 15). In doing so, Kasaba argues, the military reiterated the Kemalist argument that Turkey had to get rid of the burden of the past and start a new future in order to catch up with the modern world (ibid.).

Turkey did embark on a new phase in the post-1980s, but not exactly in the way desired by the Kemalist military. The dynamics of this change were external as much as internal. With the Cold War rhetoric dissolving and the Soviet Union finally disintegrating in 1991, Turkey found itself in a changing international context and was faced with new issues and challenges in terms of its foreign policy, particularly with regard to its relationship with the European Community, as well as the Balkans,

⁸This is, of course, not to say that there were no major political or social changes until the 1980s. The ending of the single-party era of 1923-50 is often discussed as a significant turning point in Turkish social and political life. With the multi-party democracy of the 1950s, the defeat of the Kemalist party and the rise of the more populist Democrat Party, and its eventual termination through the military coup of 1960 had important repercussions on the social scene. It is again around this time that the perceived axis of – and admiration for- modernity shifted from Europe to the USA. However, the impact of the 80s was radically extensive and influential. For a detailed overview of the dynamics that have shaped political, social and economic life in Turkey in different periods, see Ersin Kalaycioglu’s (2005) account of Turkish Republican history. For further discussion on the emergence of the USA as a new point of reference in the 1950s, see Bora (2002).

the Caucasus' and the Middle East. Domestically, following the 1983 elections, the Motherland Party (ANAP) led by Turgut Ozal came to power and changed Turkish economic policy from a protectionist model to a market oriented one. The neoliberal market agenda adopted by the ANAP government allowed for increased privatisation and liberalisation of the economy resulting in the gradual break-up of the self-containment policies. This in turn facilitated exposure to the forces of globalisation and an erosion of state authority.

The resulting context, combined with the ideological vacuum left by the purge of political life under the military regime, mobilised alternative identities and political demands, particularly those coming from two of the most influential contestants, the Kurdish and Islamist groups (Kalaycioglu 2005). As Kurdish nationalists challenged "Turkish identity", arguing that it represented not just a civic but an ethnic identity, the questioning of "Turkishness" and the debates on "who are the Turks?" took over the country (ibid.: 147-8). This challenge evoked two different responses from Turkish nationalism, with one group arguing for a definition of Turkishness as a "self-adopted" identity which does not belong to any one specific ethnic community, and another group, mainly the Turkish ethnic nationalists, responding by reaching out to their roots in Central Asia, just as Kurdish ethnic nationalists were reaching out to their own ethnic origins (ibid.). As the armed struggle between the terrorist wing of Kurdish nationalism, the PKK, and the Turkish armed forces intensified in the South East of Turkey in the mid eighties, ethnic nationalism escalated on both sides. Today, the heavy human cost of the armed conflict, which resulted in the death of 30,000 people between 1991 and 1999 alone, continues to fuel ethnic Turkish nationalism (ibid.: 144).

It was not, however, just the ethnic dimension of Turkishness that was heavily challenged, but also the state-inscribed modernization project it was to represent. The neo-liberal economic policies of the ANAP regime provided opportunities for a new class of entrepreneurs, many of them private businessmen rising through the networks they established with the public authorities (Bugra 2003: 462), creating a new prosperous class that could enjoy the rapidly developing consumer culture. At the same time a class of service sector professionals, who could demand high incomes and could afford the expanding range of consumer goods, came into being in urban

areas. However, with the changes brought about by globalization, both economic development and integration remained uneven resulting in marked differences in income distribution. As Bugra notes, the neoliberal agenda for market reform had little room for social security provisions and “neither was there much concern for a restructuring of the redistributive system in conformity with social and economic objectives” (2003: 458). In addition, in urban centres, the influx of migrants from Anatolia, mainly driven by the military conflict in eastern and southeast regions, accentuated the disparity in terms of income and life styles, while deteriorating social services and benefits further amplified the feeling of social inequality (Keyder 1999b). As a result of all these changes, a kaleidoscope of lifestyles became apparent particularly in the city centres, which were no longer distinguishable on the basis of previous class distinctions but instead on the basis of consumption patterns (Keyder 1999b, c.f. Kandiyoti 2002)⁹. In this transformation, the middle classes of earlier years, as well as the “decent” jobs of the previous era were left behind, creating an “additional awareness that the promises of assimilation that once held sway in the modernist era, were not to be reproduced in the postmodern one” (Keyder 1999b: 24).

The rise of Islamist politics in the eighties and nineties attempted to offer a solution to these new polarisations in society through religious unity, as well as offering protection from the moral degeneration/over-Westernization that global culture seemed to entail. At the same time, Islamists¹⁰ posed an open challenge to the secular “look” of modern life that the Republic had identified with. In the early eighties a new kind of headscarf, *the veil*, tied in a particular style to cover the neck and sometimes the shoulders and often accompanied by a long loose coat or jacket to disguise the body form, became the self-expression of Islamist women in the public sphere gaining a political meaning¹¹. The rising number of women wearing the veil

⁹ Articles in Caglar Keyder’s edited book *Istanbul* (1999a), as well as his articulate discussion (1999b) in the same book explore these irregularities within the context of Istanbul.

¹⁰ Jenny White (2002: 6) defines the Islamist movement as “a general mobilization of people around cultural, political and social issues that are presented through an Islamic idiom” while also stressing that Islamism is not coherent in organization, ideological interpretation, goal or method. The term ‘Islamists’ are used in this research in a similar sense, to refer to supporters bonded through the Islamist movement within the chosen time span of the study. It is important to note that even in the related case study of white weddings spanning only a two-year period, different meanings of the term and contradictions among the Islamists themselves clearly surface.

¹¹ The ‘veil’ or, in Turkish, ‘turban’ refers to a contemporary style and should not be confused with the pre-Republican veil. In the analysis of case studies, ‘veiled’ will refer to the contemporary Islamist headscarf. Far from being a uniform dress code, the veiled dress today can be seen in many styles,

was met with a strong reaction from secularist groups, resulting in the ban of the veil from state premises, including universities and for employees working in the public sector. To this day the confrontation between the Islamists and the state has focused on this garment¹². The landslide victory won by the Islamist-based Justice and Development party (AKP) in November 2002 has not resolved the conflict either. What the veil stands for, whether it is compatible with the secular principles of the Republic and what place it should hold in modern Turkey are still thorny issues that wait to be confronted.

Strikingly as the nineties unfolded, while the polarization between Kemalist secularism and Islamist politics continued on a discursive level, the “open” and “closed” identities started converging on the marketplace. As various writers point out, today the heterogeneities of both groups also find their expression through the choice of commodities, as observable in the growing market for Islamist fashion and the commodification of Islamist identities (See particularly Navaro-Yashin 2002; White 2002). The participation of Islamists in consumer culture and their reinterpretation of its uses and meanings to make its products compatible with Islamist lifestyles have challenged the secularist monopoly over the meaning of being modern. Consequently, and as my study of white weddings in Islamist circles will also show, Islamists’ use of consumer culture has been sharply criticised by most secularists, with only a few regarding this as a positive move and a convergence of identities in Turkey.

Finally, and related to this last issue, Kemalist inscription of women’s gender identity, which had been the major symbol of the modernisation project, was challenged, not only by the Islamists who openly rejected Kemalist discourses on gender, but also by feminists from the secular classes as well. The post-coup context increased the audibility of feminist voices and witnessed the growing questioning of the social role and status of women, including whether the Kemalist project itself actually had any

from the most conservative loose grey coats to the most colourful and fashion-aware styles, combined with jeans and trousers. The headscarf is today still banned in universities, as well as for women who work in government institutions, such as doctors, teachers, MP’s etc.

¹² See Elizabeth Ozdalgı (1998) for a detailed discussion of the background of the debate on veil.

feminist intentions¹³. This has led to a fragmentation of the meaning of feminism which had until then been regarded as synonymous with the Kemalist modernization project. I will discuss the feminist deconstructions of Kemalism in the second part of this chapter.

To summarize, the post eighties context witnessed the erosion of state power, the questioning of the linear modernization project, and as a result, serious challenges to the official account of Turkish identity. What is more, these changes blurred the boundaries between the centre and the periphery, and led to as Acikel (2006: 66) argues, new class, religious, ethnic and regional dynamics, which allowed the peripheries to be articulated onto state and bureaucratic mechanisms, breaking the seemingly indivisible unity of the centre, state and bureaucracy. However, Acikel notes, although the centre-periphery paradigm, as Mardin had explained, has been punctured and fragmented, the opposition between the metaphors of centre and periphery has not disappeared. Similarly, Ahiska (2006) argues that the concepts and representations that have been mapped onto the centre and periphery has shifted and changed over time, given the changing power dynamics in society: whereas in the aftermath of coups in Turkey the military has been the organising force of the centre, today it is the media and non-governmental organizations that are associated with the centre as its integral elements (ibid.: 17). However, like Acikel (2006), she also stresses that the duality between the centre and the periphery, and through them, between what is seen as modern and non-yet-modern, continues to inform Turkish politics and prevents the centre from imagining the society as one inseparable whole.

Alongside this disjuncture, what also continues to shape Turkish politics and everyday life is the hegemony of the nationalist discourse. Opinion polls today show that about 68 percent of the Turkish population describes itself as nationalist, while 32.3 percent declares itself as ‘fully’ nationalist (Tempo 2006). At the same time, writers note that nationalism in Turkey today should not be seen as a homogenous discourse of Kemalist nationalism, but one that includes, alongside the official Kemalist version which forms the “root-language” of Turkish nationalism, many other sub-discourses

¹³ For further discussion on 1980s and the feminist movement, see Tekeli 1990b: 33-6. For a comparative discussion on first (Republican) and second (post 1980s) wave feminist movements in Turkey, again see Tekeli 1998. See Also Ozturkmen (2000) and Yesim Arat (2000) for further discussion on post-80s feminism.

that account for its supremacy (Bora 2003: 436; Yumul and Ozkirimli 2000; Ozkirimli 2006). Among these, radical nationalism offers one version with its ethno-essentialist/racist rhetoric, and Islamist nationalism offers another, stressing the ethnic value of Turkishness while suppressing the modernist aspirations inherent in Kemalism (ibid.). Another version is what Bora (2003) calls the *liberal neonationalism*. This strand, Bora argues matured by the end of the 1980's, and since then, it has been particularly - and most influentially - advocated by the media (ibid.: 441).

I find a brief discussion on this discourse useful for further demonstrating the changing nature of the centre periphery relationship in Turkey, and to elaborate on the dynamics of this change. But such a discussion is also relevant due to the strong support it receives from the media, which sees itself as firmly located at the centre. The analysis in this research reveals this discourse, along with its preferred point of identification, the *EuroTurk* (or its popularly used synonym the “*White-Turk*”) to be strongly evident in the reporting of the case studies. Therefore, I will shortly expand on this discourse of nationalism building on Bora's (2003) definition.

Bora defines liberal nationalism as an offspring of the modernist-Westernizing vein in official nationalism, one that adapts to market fetishism the Atatürkist ideal of “attaining the rank of modern civilisation” and “defines cultural identity in terms of its ability to “achieve” and “catch up” with the modern lifestyle” (2003: 443). While the liberal nationalist discourse, with its emphasis on economics and economic performance achieved in the international markets has always accompanied the official Kemalist nationalism, it gained a more prominent position in the eighties with the integration of the Turkish economy with the global markets under what Bora calls the “dazzling aura of globalisation discourse” (2003: 441). By the nineties, it had transformed into a more radicalised and chauvinistic neo-nationalist version. With this version, Europeanised urban upper middle classes distinguished themselves from the impoverished lower classes, which they saw as a hindrance to national progress, particularly to Turkey's membership of the EU (ibid.: 442).

The term “*Euro-Turk*”¹⁴, a phrase first coined and taken up by columnists in the early nineties, refers to this Europeanised class and forms the preferred national identity of the liberal neo-nationalist discourse. These urban Turks are described as urbanites that have ““caught up” with the EU norms, educationally, professionally, and in terms of consumption, as well as with their good manners, cultural interests, and even biological standards” (Bora 2003: 442). Yumul (2000) points out that the civilisational progress achieved by the new urban populations are expected to be reflected in their physical outlook - handsome, young, well groomed, clean-shaven – certainly no moustaches - fair complexion, and tastefully dressed. Furthermore, with their civilised manners and Western looks, these new Turks also sported a new and “narcissistic” nationalism, which presented itself as “the nationalism of the twenty-first century” (Bora 2003: 444). Bali quotes the praise for the clean-shaven, handsome Turkish soldiers in the column of Hurriyet newspaper’s editor in chief as a good example of this new, almost fashionable nationalism:

“All three are young. All three are Western looking. All three are dressed in comfortable clothes, as an American youth would. All three have modern haircuts. (...) In short, all three are universal. All three are universal, but at the same time all three are also national, even more ‘national’ than we would have guessed. From the Turkish flag waving on the long pole in the entrance, the picture of Ataturk in the inside, and the way they perceive Turkey’s most important problems emerges the new national identity of the new citizen. Turkey crafts a new citizen that many have not yet discovered, and will never discover. With his life style, cultural values, cultural consumption, *this new citizen is totally Western.*” (2002: 316, my emphasis.)

Bali rightly notes that this outright elitist division of society between those who are privileged and those who are not is quite similar to the American WASP figure (ibid.: 324). At the same time, this discourse carries more than a just blatant declaration of elite chauvinism. As Irzik and Guzeldere (2003) argue, the emergence of the Euro-Turk identity is largely due to the urban middle class’ disappointment at the economic

¹⁴ Bora argues that the term “White-Turk” is more often used by those who critically oppose this discourse (2003: 443). However, as Bali shows, the term itself has been coined by a columnist in Hurriyet newspaper in the mid-90s, and was taken up by journalists themselves for some time. To avoid confusion, and to be consistent, I will use the term Euro-Turk in this discussion here. However, what I am more interested in here is not the terms themselves, or whether they are literally taken up, but the ways in which they help us understand how and why certain segments of the society see themselves as belonging to the centre, and different from and superior to the peripheries.

and social consequences of Turkey's insertion into the global market (c.f. Demiroz & Oncu 2005). The lack of state regulation on the economy, the disturbing inequalities caused by the spreading commodification and increasing migration from rural areas, the mobilization of new networks between aspiring businessmen and public authorities for private gain leading to "downright corruption" (Bugra 2003: 462) have all changed the social and economic dynamics in the urban centres and accentuated the feeling of frustration in the liberal segments of the population (See Demiroz & Oncu 2005).

The liberal neo-nationalist discourse sharpened in response to these changes and the emerging others in the urban centres, and in time grew and developed to involve new meanings. According to the urban elite, the new rich who had originated from Anatolian towns would have the money but lack the desired upbringing and refined taste to accompany their wealth. The migrants, recently having arrived from their villages, simply did not have the means to adapt to civilised urban life¹⁵. In contrast, the Europeanised Turks would have the taste and refinement to take part in global consumer culture, and their lives would easily blend into the modern life styles of the West. With the inclusion of the Islamists in the list of unwanted others, this ideal identity also acquired a political edge (Bali 2002). The urban elite strongly rejected the Islamists, showed full support for Kemalism and the secular principles of the Republic and fully anchored its identity in secularism. In the more recent years, with the continued ascent of the Islamists, mounting tension resulting from income differences, and the realisation that the segments of population that were rejected would not disappear, the urban elite's attitude to the lower classes started to change from contempt towards philanthropy (Bali 2002). Urban liberals began discussing the problems of what they saw as the peripheries of Turkey under the rhetoric of 'other Turkey'. This 'other Turkey' often refers to the outskirts of the cities or the Southeast region of Turkey and also comes up quite frequently in the data in this research. However, this discourse, despite its seeming philanthropy, still maintains the sharp distance between the Europeanised Turks and others, as well as confirming the

¹⁵ The *maganda* stereotype of the machismo male was widely used in public discourse in the late eighties to represent these new dwellers of the cities. As Bali (2002) reminds us, this stereotype was highly important in triggering the formation of the White-Turk identity. The *maganda* stands for an undesirable hybrid of traditional immigrant culture with urban culture, resulting in vulgar and tasteless over-consumption and loss of the moral and cultural values of the urban middle classes. See Oncu (1999) for a detailed discussion of this stereotype.

superior position of the urban elite vis-à-vis the 'other Turkey' and as the hegemonic group that defines and excludes the nation's internal others (c.f. Yumul 2000: 46).

In their discussion on the attraction of the new nationalist discourse, Demiroz and Oncu (2005) argue that it offers the disillusioned urban elite the promise of progress - even a revolutionary hope. Being a Europeanised Turk implies belonging to a segment of population who has the necessary skills to further the progress and democratisation of Turkey once started by the Kemalists (ibid.). In other words, the liberal neo-nationalist discourse repeats what Ahiska (2003) calls 'the frustrating and endless efforts' to catch up with the 'train of Western civilisation' and to overcome the 'time lag', this time with the help of the new urban elite. Following Yumul (2000), we can also add that this unilinear vision of progress largely results in the desire to reinstate the boundaries of the centre and the periphery, the West and the East, and along this axis to relocate the meaning of modernity with the urban elite. Such an attempt can only result in further tension, argues Yumul, because Turkish modernity is essentially a hybrid, and it continues to hybridise further as its peripheries are constantly carried into the centre, changing the meaning of the centre in the process (ibid.: 47). In rejecting that hybridity, the centre once again denies that the peripheries are an autonomous dynamic realm with the potential to offer alternative meanings of modernity and nation, and instead imagines them as a non-entity (Ahiska 2006).

2.3 The academic resonance

The growing visibility and political appeal of divergences from the official definitions of modernity and national identity have also been apparent in the burgeoning list of academic publications, particularly since the nineties, that aimed to deconstruct the Kemalist project together with its modernist and nationalist aspirations. Bozdogan and Kasaba's edited work, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (1997a), reflects a powerful collection of such critical engagement. In their very first sentence in their introduction, the authors firmly state that both in Turkey and around the world today what is being witnessed is "the eclipse of the progressive and

emancipatory discourse of modernity”(1997b: 3)¹⁶. For the authors what Turkey is experiencing is closely linked to the demise of nationalist developmentalism and the rise of globalising trends in the world:

“As these global trends ensnarl the country with all their energy and unruliness, official modernization, with its singularity, austerity, and paternalism appears woefully inadequate both as a source of inspiration and as a mechanism of control in economics, politics, and cultural production.”(1997b: 5)

While some of the recent publications have concentrated specifically on the nationalist discourses of the Kemalist project (e.g. Altınay 2004, Kieser 2006a), others have invited the readers to see beyond the polarities of East versus West, Islam versus secularism, state versus public, or tradition versus modernity that were embedded at the heart of Kemalist discourse, and instead examine the hybrid patterns which either do not fit into these dichotomies or offer alternative meanings and experiences of modernity and identity outside the official nationalist discourse (e.g. Keyder 1999a; Kandiyoti 2002; Navaro-Yashin 2002). With a similar concern, Irzik and Guzeldere (2003) in the introduction to their edited work, ask us to explore what is taking place at the fault lines of Turkish identity. For the writers, Turkey is:

“neither caught between nor a successful synthesis of an “East” and “West” ... rather a country in which many of the fundamental social divisions have been experienced, articulated, concealed, or displaced in a cultural/ideological vocabulary mobilising the “West” in different power and justification strategies.” (2003: 285)

¹⁶ Recently, this work has also been criticised. Ahiska (2003: 358) criticises it for seeing Turkish modernization as a failed imitation of the West, a copy, therefore replicating modernization discourse as the reference point. Similarly Alev Cinar’s (2005: 3) argues that the work retains a Eurocentric perspective, and missing out that Turkish modernity was not an imitation (a copy) implemented top down. While some of the arguments in the book, such as those in Keyder’s article (1997), fall into the danger of reinscribing the essentialist categories of model versus copy, this criticism cannot be generalised to all the contributions in the book. Many of the articles in the book point towards the inherently hybrid character of Kemalist modernization, and highlight its deliberate attempts at negotiating with Westernization rather than copying it wholeheartedly. Articles by Mardin, Kandiyoti, or Bozdoğan invite readers to look at the hybrid forms, ambiguities or appropriations that did not fit into the Western model even in the very early years of the Republic. Bozdoğan’s book (2001), which examines, as in her article in her edited book, Turkish architectural culture in the early Republic, is also a good example of this effort.

In terms of scholarship on Turkey, feminist criticism, which has been challenging Kemalism heavily on the gender front since the eighties, can be considered both as a pioneer of and a main contributor to the attempts to deconstruct national identity among academics. The literature in this field has not only highlighted the intricate relationship between gender, state and national imagining, particularly the integral role of the female signifier for Kemalist nationalism, but also re-examined the links between gender, national modernity and identity in the light of contemporary experiences. As Gole argued, women were integral to both the modernist and the nationalist discourses of the Kemalist project:

“The way Kemalism approaches the woman question can shed light to the dilemma of civilisation and nationalism. Women have been the main ingredient of the Kemalist movement both in its civilisational project and nationalist ideology. We can, in a way, say that women have carried the flag of the Kemalist reforms.” (Gole 1991: 90)

In the following section of this chapter, I will try to summarize briefly those main arguments emerging from this rich volume of feminist scholarship¹⁷. This will not only provide the background from which the more contemporary debates on women in Turkey have emerged, but will also help us explore the gaps and contradictions that had been embedded in national identity from the very early years of its inception and have multiplied ever since.

2.4 Kemalist reforms, nationalism and women

In the previous chapter, we have discussed how, by the mid-80s, heated academic debates had emerged on the problematic relationship between nation and gender as feminists started to eye nationalism with suspicion and no longer saw it as compatible with and complementary to feminism. The feminist literature on women and nation in Turkey is one of the early contributors to the academic debate on gender and nationalism.

¹⁷ Most writers on women in Turkey, whose works I will be heavily referring to in the following discussion, can be regarded as being within the feminist canon, such as Sirin Tekeli, Deniz Kandiyoti, Zehra Arat, Yesim Arat, Ayse Saktanber, Nukhet Sirman, Meltem Ahiska, and Ayse Durakbasa. Nilufer Gole strictly refuses to align herself with any political stance even though she has written heavily on the women question in Turkey, therefore I hesitate to call her a feminist writer. See interviews with Gole, Ozcan (2002: 18).

Given the key symbolic role which the “modern female” image had (and still has) in representing national identity in Turkey, feminist critiques of the content and intentions of Kemalist reforms, as well as the liberating power of *state feminism*¹⁸ in terms of women’s rights in Turkey, mark a steep turn in conceptualising the national project. For a long time, not only did women’s rights remain tantamount to Kemalism and Turkish modernity in official discourses, but also among the early generation of women who had benefited from the opportunities offered by the new nation, there was a strong feeling that they “figuratively, owed their existence to Ataturk” (Arat 1997: 96). At a symbolic level, a very strong and uncontested paternal relationship was formed between Ataturk and his new, emancipated daughters¹⁹. In sharp contrast, the main starting point for feminist critiques in the post-1980s has been an agreement that the reform process was done for a Kemalist-nationalist cause rather for women themselves. Sirin Tekeli’s writings (1981, 1990b and 1998) are among the earliest to raise this criticism. Tekeli argued that the republican reforms concerning women, such as the granting of suffrage rights to female citizens, served more than one goal: they were mainly strategic moves to sever the ties with the Ottoman past and showcase the evidence of the new democratic nature of the new nation to the West, but they also helped Ataturk offset any accusations of becoming a dictator (1981: 298). Similarly, Kandiyoti argued that there was “no doubt that the woman question became one of the pawns in the Kemalist struggle to dismantle the theocratic remnants of the Ottoman state” (1989: 139). Along the same lines, Yegenoglu (1998) has emphasised how the unveiling of women has held a strategic value in the construction of nationalist ideology and in distancing the new Republic from its Ottoman past. And argued that woman’s status in the new nation formed “one of the main reference points of the ideological debates and arguments that characterised this complex process of transformation of a feudal world empire into a nation-state” (1997: 126).

In these arguments, the nationalist cause emerges as an obstacle to women’s full liberation. For Zehra Arat, Kemalism fell short of bringing about full liberation to

¹⁸ This concept has been coined in Tekeli’s writings (and has been used largely by post-1980 feminists.

¹⁹ For further discussion on this, see Carol Delaney’s article (1995) where she discusses in detail the fatherly figure of Ataturk for the Turkish nation in general but for women in particular.

women particularly because its reforms “were *not* aimed at liberating women or at promoting the development of female consciousness and feminine identity” (1994: 58). Arat is even cynical of the term “state feminism” or any associations between the early republican era and feminism:

“With a goal of socioeconomic development, these reforms are hardly feminist, and their perception of the role of women and definition of womanhood would not qualify them to be taken as “state-sponsored feminism,” as done by some analysts.” (Ibid.)²⁰

While highlighting the instrumentalism of the reforms, these studies also revealed continuity, rather than a radical break with the past in terms of the Republican elite’s interest in women’s rights. Writers have argued that the direct relationship between the emancipation of women and building a modern nation had started to emerge alongside the developing Turkish nationalism in the nineteenth century, particularly through the attempts to modernize the Ottoman state during the Tanzimat era²¹. Questions about the role and status of women entered political discussions as the intellectuals of the time, inspired by Enlightenment ideals, started to problematise modernity and criticise the Empire’s weak position vis-à-vis the West, seeking for ways to reconcile modernization with the Islamic culture without imitating Western ways of life. With the rising power of the more political, constitutionalist Young Turks in the political scene at the end of the century and the start of the second constitutional period in 1908, both nationalism and women’s emancipation began to be regarded as indispensable to the civilisational process. Yegenoglu (1998) points out that the essential features of this debate were fundamentally shaped by the nationalist discourse. In primarily attempting to transform and save the empire, demands for modernization focused on issues like family, responsible motherhood, and the education of citizens, which, as Yegenoglu notes, were all regarded as part of the “woman’s question” (ibid.: 127).

²⁰ Zehra Arat (1994: 74) strongly rejected the term arguing that for any movement to be called feminist, it has to recognize gender inequality and male domination and take measures against it. Given the early Republican women’s sincere belief in, and adoption of Kemalism as a guarantor of rights, and emancipation from the old system of patriarchal domination, the term clearly points at a different discourse about feminism and women’s rights than used by the post-80s feminist researchers.

²¹ There is an abundance of literature on how the woman’s question first appeared in political discussions during the Tanzimat era (1839-76) in the Ottoman Empire. See particularly the discussions in Kandiyoti (1989, 1997b, 2000), and also Gole (1991), Yegenoglu (1998) Sirman (2002). Also see Jayawardena (1986).

Analysis of novels published after the Tanzimat period reveals the evident desire that urban male intellectuals had felt for a new woman, liberated but still modest, and for the new nuclear family bond that would be formed between them (See Kandiyoti 1997a; Sirman 2002). Sirman (2002) particularly emphasises how the transformation in the conceptualisation of the family had also transformed the expectations from women. In the new social order, envisioned by the post-Tanzimat novelists, women would be educated, unselfish and wise partners who would raise patriotic children for the nation²². At the same time, these novels also pointed to the dangers of excessive Westernization through the portrayal of “loose” female characters, reflecting the desire to achieve Western progress while maintaining the spiritual essence of the Islamic-Ottoman heritage. The problematization of womanhood in this period marks the selective and inconsistent appropriation of European and Islamic concepts for a political project, which would eventually lead to a republicanism which the writers of the time “could neither have anticipated, nor, indeed, approved” (Kandiyoti 1998: 274).

In short, the conceptualisation of Turkishness from the very start had problematised gender: in pre-Republican discourses, women’s transformation was foremost necessary for a more civilised national self-definition, provided that men themselves would take measures towards betterment. But women also played an important part in fostering the image of the nation as an ethnically coherent entity with roots reaching back into history. This ethno-nationalist discourse was advocated largely through the works of Ziya Gokalp (1876-1924), a major theoretician of Turkish nationalism, foremost ideologue of *Turkism* and a strong advocate of women’s rights. Furthermore, he also had a very significant influence on the development of Kemalism, with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk claiming Gokalp to be his “intellectual mentor and father” (Fleming 2000: 127). Consequently, feminist scholarship has devoted considerable attention to the writings of Gokalp, who is arguably the founder of Turkish nationalism, to demonstrate how discourses around female gender are tightly embedded in Turkish nationalist thought.

²² In Sirman’s words, in these novels “men are still the head of the household, but the pashas of Tanzimat are no longer around. The new regime will be set by the new man. These young men, mainly from the middle class, mostly in governmental jobs, are modest men who are affectionate towards the women, the freed slaves, that they have power over” (2002: 237).

In Kandiyoti's (1989: 141) words, Gokalp marks "a major departure from earlier approaches to the women question", from those that had a modernist yet still Islamic stance, towards one that is anchored strictly in Turkish nationalism²³. While Gokalp, like most other intellectuals of his time, found it necessary to differentiate between Western civilisation and Western culture, his work was different in attempting to bring together Western civilisation with a national Turkish culture and a secular form of religion. Gokalp summarized this ideal synthesis in his well-known self-definition: "I am from Turkish nationality, Islamic community, and Western civilisation." (Parla, quoted in Gocek 2002b: 73). For Gokalp, while Western civilisation was seen as desirable, a cultural submission to the West had to be avoided, and civilisation had to be achieved while protecting national culture. More importantly, Gokalp argued that this was possible because Turkish culture, in its pre-Islamic pure form rooted in central Asia, was inherently compatible with Western civilisation. Therefore, it needed to be freed from 'foreign' effects that had destroyed its original form. It is significant that by foreign Gokalp particularly meant the Islamic and Arabic influences on Turkish culture, and attempted to detach the meaning of "Turkishness" away from the East and bring it closer towards the West. These oppressive, non-Turkish practices that had disrupted the 'essence' of Turkish culture and moral values were also responsible for women's poor status in society. For the author, Turkish society was inherently egalitarian, and a return to its cultural roots also required a re-establishment of the original gender roles in society:

"The reason why Turkists are both populist and feminist is not simply because these ideals are valued in this century; the fact that democracy and feminism were the two main principles of ancient Turkish life is a major factor in this respect." (Gokalp, quoted in Kandiyoti, 1989: 141)

Fleming (2000: 128) argues that Gokalp's interest in women was based on the idea that they were repositories and guarantors of the past. By locating women's ideal status in the past, Gokalp did not just provide evidence that pure and authentic

²³ Similar discussion of the development of Turkism and concerns about women's rights can be found in Gole's analysis of the ideal Turkish woman (1991) and also Jaywardena (1986). A detailed analysis of Gokalp's nationalism and his arguments on women's emancipation can also be found in Fleming's article (2000). My discussion here on Gokalp builds from these works.

Turkish culture already holds all the necessary potential for progress. He also urged the community to recover its original culture in order to restore women's proper position in society, and reinstate the nation's civilisational potential (see also Gole 1991: 67). Women, as in other nationalisms, had a significant representative role in Gokalp's version, but this time stood for the inherent progressiveness of the collectivity. As a result, not only was the question of women's emancipation central in Gokalp's utopian "New Nation", but also his conceptualisation of nationalism itself was to a large extent "predicated on the proper positioning of women" (Fleming, 2000: 128). As research on gender and nationalism in Turkey has repeatedly underlined, Kemalism's moulding of nationalism and the modernization project was significantly influenced by this vision.

The importance Kemalists accorded to history as the prime mover of national consciousness and citizenship is a good case in point. The foundation of the Society for the Study of Turkish History²⁴, which was set up by Ataturk to study and rewrite Turkish and Ottoman history, paid particular attention to carefully studying Turkish women before Islam (Kandiyoti 1989: 142). The 'Turkish History Thesis' was a product of this extensive rewriting, arguing that the Turks had contributed to civilisation long before they had become a part of the Islamic World and the Ottoman Empire, and had maintained their cultural identity, rooted in their Central Asian origins throughout their history²⁵. Ataturk's adoptive daughter, Afet Inan, educated as a historian, took an active part in these studies and in the dissemination of the Turkish History Thesis, also writing in detail about women in pre-Islamic Turkish culture (see Kandiyoti 1989: 142; Durakbasa 2000b: 141-148). In these writings, the essential Turkish cultural identity was the authentic source of women's redeemed status in the new nation.

Given this rhetoric, it is no coincidence that an almost mythological 'Anatolian woman' decorates narratives of the War of Independence that had founded the nation. Gole argues that:

²⁴ *Türk Tarih Tetkik Cemiyeti*, later renamed as *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, Turkish Historical Society.

²⁵ Altınay (2004) offers a critical discussion on the ideological purpose and findings of the Turkish History Thesis.

“(…) the Anatolian woman displays the formation of national consciousness with respect to Western civilisation: Instead of “a coquettish Ottoman woman who is alien to her own nation” or the “Muslim woman who is fanatical and alien to civilisation”, Kemalism had put forward the “Anatolian woman” (…) as both the saved one and the saviour of Turkish nation: Anatolian woman would save Republican reforms from degeneration, and the reforms would save her from the fanaticism of Islam.” (Gole 1991: 91; c.f Toska 1998)

It is evident that women were assigned the significant symbolic role of not only representing the nation, but by already rooting the potential for progress in the nation’s cultural essence, they also helped to legitimise and, in Kandiyoti’s words, “salvage” the modernization project that was undertaken (1998: 271). It is within this discursive framework that the first generation Kemalist feminists had started discussing the woman question. However, as Sirman (2002: 274) underlines, it is important to regard national gender roles not as imposed from outside, but as adopted willingly by individuals who would like to benefit from the opportunities these roles can offer. Certainly the early generation of women in the Turkish republic felt they benefited from the new gender roles assigned them by the new Republic, and even when asked about it decades later in the 1990s, they strongly supported and defended Kemalism (Zehra Arat 2000b; Yesim Arat 1997). In contrast, the feminist wave of academic literature that developed in the eighties and nineties attempted to deconstruct and criticise the ways in which the nationalist framework had moulded and limited gender discourses for women in Turkey.

In this respect, two major consequences of Kemalist discourse on women have received particular emphasis. Firstly Kemalism was, like in most other national projects, also hostile to individualism and required the submission of all identities under the national one. Consequently, all independent or alternative identities outside the Kemalist project were suppressed, including feminist organizations and movements. Therefore the equation of women’s rights solely with the national project has been strongly criticised by writers like Tekeli, who rightly argued, “the thesis that argues women’s rights have been granted from above, by Ataturk, is not fair, and is wrong” (Tekeli 1998: 345). Feminist research has shown that the official version of national history omitted the activities of feminist organisations of the late

Ottoman Empire, which were especially visible between 1910 till the end of 1920s (Cakir 1993; Demirdilek 2000). In the newly found Republic, the attempts of these organizations to influence the modernization process were cancelled out by the Kemalist regime, and women's independent and active participation in politics was curbed. Saktanber (2002b) notes one good example as the case of the Women's People Party, which was founded in 1921 but was prevented from taking part in the elections as it would be competing against Ataturk's Republican People's Party. After turning into the Turkish Women's Union in 1924, the organization was eventually closed down completely in 1935 for not conforming to the national interest. Halide Edip Adivar's well-documented biography also shows how, as one of the strongest figures of Turkish feminism and nationalism, and a leading symbol of the War of Independence, she was forced into retiring into exile abroad when she opposed the Republican regime (Durakbasa 2000a). With the suppression of existing feminism, the claim that Ataturk granted women their rights almost without any demands became the widely accepted argument of the Kemalist discourse on women's rights (Saktanber 2002b: 325). This discourse, in return, has formed one of the main obstacles that prevented women from developing new conceptual frameworks that question patriarchy and from becoming politically active individuals (ibid.).

A second common argument emerging from feminist criticisms was that, despite its modernist character, and claims of gender equality, Kemalism had an inherent patriarchal conservatism, and had not altered "the traditional norms of morality that guaranteed a biologically defined and socially constraining femininity for women" (Durakbasa 2000b: 148). Writers have focused on two areas where conservatism is particularly apparent: the role of women in the social and public sphere, and women's sexuality. On the first issue, the argument is that, while the social responsibilities of women were given a new prominence with Kemalism, this had not cancelled out their domestic duties. In fact, Kemalism continued to see the reproductive responsibility of women as simply their most important function, and regarded their enlightenment as simply necessary in order for them to better perform their domestic duty (Durakbasa 2000b; Arat 1994). Often, Kemal Ataturk's own words, defining motherhood as

women's most important duty have provided writers with the main proof of this bias²⁶.

Added to this are the almost unanimous criticisms about the resilience of a patriarchal morality in Kemalism that saw women's sexual purity strictly as representative of male – and national - honour, which posed a striking contradiction to the emancipatory rhetoric of Kemalist reforms. The images that propagated the idea of the new woman in ballrooms, doing sports, or even wearing bathing suits at the beach were inevitably inconsistent with the sexual Puritanism and patriarchal conservatism of Kemalism. Kandiyoti (1998) has noted that because of this inherent contradiction, the inclusion of unveiled women in the public sphere resulted in a perpetual anxiety over the sexual morality of new modern woman who “incurred the constant risk of overstepping dangerous boundaries”, and therefore “required diffuse, but persistent monitoring” (ibid.: 282; cf. Berktaş 2002).

Altınay's (2004) case study on the memoirs of Sabiha Gökçen, Turkey's first female combat pilot and Atatürk's adoptive daughter, provides an excellent illustration of this patriarchal anxiety operating alongside the encouragement for women to take a more active part in the public sphere even including national defence. As Altınay explains, Gökçen's training as a pilot and the support she got from Atatürk throughout shows that motherhood was not the only option offered to women who were invited into the nationalist project through the military. Nevertheless, her essential femininity, and concerns about protection of her honour/sexual purity, still remain a key obstacle she has to face. Altınay points to the striking incident where Gökçen asks Atatürk his permission to take part in the military operation against the Kurdish insurgency - the Dersim operation in Southeast Turkey. Atatürk not only grants her his permission but also gives her his pistol, reminding her of the sacrifice she has to make in the worst

²⁶ See for example, “The most important duty of woman is motherhood. The importance of this duty is better understood, if one considers that the earliest education takes place on one mother's lap. Our nation had decided to be a strong nation. Circumstances today require the advancement of our women in all respects. Therefore, our women, too, will be enlightened and learned and, like men, will go through all educational stages. Then, women and men, walking side by side, will be each other's help and support in social life.” Atatürk, quoted in Arat (1994: 60).

case scenario (i.e. falling into the hands of the enemy) that may await a female soldier²⁷. Altinay acutely notes that:

“In Ataturk’s view, the threat to her honour (through rape, an unspoken, unnamed act in this narrative) was the ultimate danger, not death. Her permission to go was based on her readiness to kill herself in order to protect her honour, and her nation’s.” (Altinay, 2004: 39)

For Altinay, in a nation that defined itself as a “nation of soldiers”, Gokcen’s military participation is symbolic of the acceptance of women as a part of this soldier-nation, alongside the male citizens. However, for all her participation in military operations, the compliments from both the military and the media and her ambition, Gokcen’s success as a military operations pilot did not further open up the military ranks or service to her or other women.

Altinay’s discussion also highlights a paradoxical situation for women: the difficulty in building their self-identity from male role models. On this, Saktanber (2002b) argues that even though men also have to go through a problematic reconstruction process, they have Kemal Ataturk as their clear role model, the leader of the nation whom they can identify with in formulating their public identity. Women also had their role models, their fathers, husbands and Ataturk. However, while they were declared as equal to men as citizens, they were also asked to preserve the division of labour based on sexual differences. The need to balance the two has, for Saktanber and other writers (See among others Kandiyoti 1997b; Kadioglu 1998, Durakbasa 2000b), resulted in a particular female type. She is patriotic and loyal to the nationalist cause, modern, but most importantly, all the while avoiding promiscuity and remaining fully virtuous. Hence, the new woman is marked by her de-eroticised image; she is an asexual woman, a sister figure in the public sphere, and dressed in the classic Kemalist attire, the suit. Even as she mixes with men in her social or work life, she remains, as Kandiyoti (1997b: 127) puts it, “as pure as the driven snow”. This ‘good, new woman’ of Kemalism is also identified by her undemanding nature - she is someone who has willingly accepted all her familial, social and national

²⁷ “Gokcen, then, I will give you my own pistol.... I hope that you will not face any risk. But if anything that will put your honour to risk should happen, do not hesitate to use this pistol against others or to kill yourself.” Gokcen’s memoirs, as quoted in Altinay (2004: 39)

responsibilities and who lives for others. In this pragmatic/modernist discourse, women are described as self-sacrificing, complementing others and existing for others, and most importantly, for the nation²⁸. It is at this point that the “burden of representation” discussed in the previous chapter becomes an acute problem for women, for the highly paradoxical Republican discourses of gender do not offer clear blueprints to follow.

A major conclusion emerging from feminist criticisms has been that the contradictory demands on women’s identity embody the paradoxes inherent in the Kemalist modernization project, particularly regarding the location of Turkishness along the axis of East-West /change-stability/ modernity-tradition. Chatterjee (1989) forms a favoured reference in these arguments, and writers have pointed out that what lay at the heart of these ambivalent attitudes can also be found in Chatterjee’s contention that women in postcolonial nation-states are asked to acquire the cultural refinements of the West but without jeopardizing the spirit of the nation by ‘over-Westernising’ (Yegenoglu 1998: 134; Berktay 2002; Sirman, 2002; c.f. Kadioglu 1996). Therefore the healthy balance that women are asked to sustain between two perceived dichotomies becomes a reflection of the healthy balance that the nation needs to strike for its own national identity. As argued previously, while Chatterjee’s argument is not fully applicable to the Turkish case, it also makes us aware of the impossibility of ever arriving at such a national balance in everyday life.

All in all, the conservatism in Kemalism’s approach to women has been better explained not as resilience of patriarchal discourses, but as of a consequence of modernity. Berktay (2002) argues that the exasperation, frustration and paranoia that surface as the nation tries to sever its ties with the past has been symbolically projected on to gender, particularly women’s gender identity in Turkey. For Berktay, the insecurity male nationalists feel in the course of transformation results in attempts to reproduce the patriarchal ideology and adapt it to the current context as a proof that some things remain unchanged (ibid. 275). Similarly Bora (2005) has remarked that what is important is to follow how the attempts to limit and regulate modernity allow conservatism to be articulated with Kemalist-modernist discourse through the woman

²⁸ See Sirman (2002) for a discussion on this, through an examination of pre and post Republican national novels.

problem. As Bora succinctly argues, Kemalist modernization discourse joins conservatism, not exclusively, but mainly through the women question. As a result, *change* becomes the source of further conservatism, rather than an old form of patriarchy that remains unchanged throughout the modernization process.

Finally, and following from this, as the forces of modernity and nationalism are locked in a permanent struggle to define and redefine each other, the possibility of closure in national identity becomes only a very temporary discursive stop, if not a mere fantasy. As Kandiyoti notes, the very contradictions inherent in the modern, yet chaste, ideal open it up to further challenges:

“(...) the replacement of the physical veil by its metaphoric counterpart, chastity was, at best, an unstable solution and one that failed to effectively dissociate modernity from potential sexual transgression. The modern woman’s presumably disciplined and de-eroticised body could constantly reinvent and refashion itself by selecting from the many images offered by global consumerism and invite renewed changes of both immorality and “inauthenticity”. (1998: 283)

Today, it is undisputable that the hegemonic discourses of Kemalism on gender and national identity have been weakened. The ideal – and paradoxical - Turkish woman has also been criticised and deconstructed heavily by academics. However, it is far too early to declare her death. As the analysis in the following chapters will show, Kemalist perceptions of women, with all its contradictions, is still highly popular among journalists and those that see themselves as a part of the centre. Perhaps we can argue that the paradoxes inherent in national gender and national identity do not only expose them to further challenges as Kandiyoti has argued: they also contribute to their survival. In other words, it is the contradictory nature of the Kemalist discourses that has allowed them to adapt and articulate into different situations, and that can largely explain its pervasiveness.

2.5 Conclusion and further remarks

This chapter attempted to present a brief overview of the historical context necessary for understanding the articulation of national identity in contemporary Turkey. At the same time, it also tried to highlight the ways in which discourses of national identity

have been tightly intertwined with gender discourses in Turkey. Here, the discussion followed up on the theoretical framework mapped out in the previous chapter. It explained the discourses of nationalism as both a product of modernity while at the same time trying to control modernity through a unilinear vision of progress and the clear categorisation of the roles and places of different social groups in the name of national unity. I have also tried to explain that women, through the various missions they fulfil in the discursive construction of the Turkish nation, offer the best chance to explore the paradoxes that surface in this process. Historically, women have always been at the heart of debates on where and how to strategically best locate national identity between the dualities of East and West, still the core question of national identity in Turkey. The position, look and status of women in society still act as a significant barometer of whether Turkey has caught up with the West, and if so, whether this has happened without surrendering to Western culture. In other words, through women it is quite easy to observe the daily negotiations with the West, which can usually mean the simultaneous identification and othering of Western identity. At the same time, as the carriers of national culture and representatives of ethnicity, through women it is also possible to follow through the ethnic foundations of Turkishness. As discussed before, the modernist and ethno-nationalist discourses are inextricable constituents of Turkish national identity, and work through each other, with women offering the prime case of observing how this takes place.

This framework forms the reasoning behind the selection of the case studies that will be analysed in the following chapters. My attempt to demonstrate the paradoxes in Turkishness today through the debates on women is part of a rich and ever growing literature. Today, beyond the feminist deconstructions of the early Kemalist discourse, there is a thick volume of research that focuses on the contemporary situation and tries to understand debates about Turkey through examining women. However, in these more contemporary researches, Islamist women have been the most popular area of investigation for feminist researchers in the 90s (c.f. Navaro-Yashin 2002: 67). Today the 'woman question' seems to be brought up largely within analyses of the state/secularism, Islam and modernity triangle, and with attempts to observe how everyday experiences transcend the fault lines set by the Republican era (See Saktanber 2002a; White 2002; Arat 2005; Cinar 2005). While the ethnographic research accompanying such a focus has contributed extensively to the important

debates on the different meanings of modernity in Turkey, certain areas have been neglected. How the discourses of women and ethno-nationalism are interlinked in Turkey today is one of those rather neglected areas that the case studies will highlight, by analysing the gendered discourses of ethnic difference and ethnic purity²⁹. Another area that seems surprisingly unpopular in most contemporary studies is the centre, and its secular urban women (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 67). Again through the analysis of the data in the next chapters, secular women will appear in various forms, as the subjects of the news stories, as an ideal, and also through the self-representation of female journalists.

Unlike the more restricted focus of most studies on gender and national identity, my goal here is to provide a broad, though certainly not all-encompassing overview to follow how discourses on nationalism and modernity intersect and interact over the representative body of the female. This will be done through the analysis of the debates occurring through a variety of subject positions, often more than one appearing over the same body: the 'national daughter', 'urban journalists', 'Kurdish women', 'Anatolian woman', the 'adulteress', the 'manipulated woman', the 'Republican woman', the 'well educated young woman living abroad', as well as various versions of the 'Islamist' women. However, before we can explore the interweaving discourses of nation, modernity and gender in contemporary Turkey, the next chapter will briefly introduce the methodology for the analysis.

²⁹ A recent contribution that breaks the pattern is Altınay's (2004) book on gender, militarism and national identity in Turkey. While the book is not exclusively about women, it offers contemporary data on the links between nation, ethnicity, militarism and gender, as well as rich and fresh data from the early years of the Republic. Another interesting article is offered by Lale Yalcin-Heckmann and Pauline van Gelder's article (2000), which looks at images of Kurdish women in Kurdish media, and compares them with images of Turkish women in mainstream media in Turkey.

Chapter 3: Methodology -Constructing the Rationale for Analysis

The theoretical framework as well as the analytical structure of this research is woven around the definition of discourse as based on the works of Michel Foucault -which proved to be an inspiring, challenging and at times problematic task. This chapter will explain how his arguments can offer answers to methodological concerns, while also presenting new problems at the same time. The discussion will also introduce the framework for analysis, which was developed to deconstruct the texts.

3.1 Power, society and discourse

Discourse over the last couple of decades has received high popularity among researchers working across a wide range of academic disciplines in the social sciences. As a result, many different uses and interpretations of the term exist today, bringing with them different traditions of how to conduct discourse analysis. Some of these are useful for analysing media discourse, such as critical discourse analysis as developed by Fairclough (1995), himself a linguist, or the narrative analysis developed by Alan Bell (1991). Others such as the ethnographic or psychological approaches are less so¹. Given the daunting range of voices in the field, it is necessary to underline that in this research, discourse is definable, in its simplest form, as the social construction of reality through language. This definition stems from the critical writings of Michel Foucault, who uses discourse to explain individual acts of language, or rather ‘language in action’ and is very much related to his explorations of *power* with which he became especially concerned in his later works². To expand on this definition then, we can briefly discuss the two “radically novel” propositions made by Foucault on power, namely on the relationship between knowledge, truth and power, and the way power

¹ See Jaworski & Coupland (1999) for a comprehensive overview of the various approaches to discourse analysis.

² I.e. *Discipline and Punish* (1991), *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1; The Will to Knowledge* (1998), Volume 2: *The Use of Pleasure* (1992) particularly deal with how power operates through discourses.

functions (Hall 1997)³. These propositions also inform the argumentative framework of methodology developed for the analysis.

Foucault conceived a very important linkage between knowledge and power, and argued strongly that truth and knowledge, rather than being opposed to the workings of power, are closely involved with it. Not only is knowledge, assuming the authority of truth, always a form of power, but also power itself produces further knowledge through its institutions of discipline (such as the prison or the hospital in his earlier works), which is why he rejects the temptation to think of power as operating in a direct and brutally repressive fashion. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1998), he calls this ‘the repressive hypothesis’ of power - power is regarded as dominating people, while knowledge, the truth, is seen to set people free. Foucault radically disagrees with this proposition and argues that it is different conceptions of knowledge and power that actually bind people into certain roles, such as how sexuality should be conceived. Foucault’s now well-accepted warning about the links between the production of knowledge and power is nowhere more relevant than in the analysis of news stories.

Second, and following this, Foucault does not perceive power as radiating from one single direction, from an institution, a structure, or a general system of domination exerted by one group over another. He tells us not to seek sources of power in certain people or state apparatuses, but rather in the “manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families and in institutions” as “the basis of wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole” (1998: 94). For Foucault,

“(…) “Power”, insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in return to arrest their movement. (...) it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategically situation in a particular society.”(ibid.: 92)

What Foucault finds especially striking in the modern period is that there is an unremitting and unstoppable expansion of power dispersed in society and its institutions. “Power is

³ In his discussion on Foucault, Hall focuses on these propositions and gives a similar (although much more detailed) summary to the one I am giving here.

everywhere,” he says, “not because it embraces everything, but it comes from everywhere” (ibid.). Foucault’s insight becomes especially valuable for this research in exploring the operation of power in nations in general, and in understanding the experience of Turkey in particular. Even in analysing the early years of the Republic, rather than power residing simply with an elite engulfed in a project of modernization from above, his approach directs us towards exploring the specific historical conditions that enabled the elite to justify their radical project, namely their new perception of reality about nation and modernization. Similarly, trying to understand the growing appeal of Islamism simply as a consequence of the political visibility of Islamist parties would be just as meaningless. In his outlining of the questions to be asked in analysing the discourses of sexuality, Foucault already laid down what should be the necessary concerns of a social researcher:

“In a specific type of discourse, in a specific form of extortion of truth, appearing historically (...), what are the most immediate, the most local power relations at work? How did they make possible these kinds of discourses, and conversely, how were these discourses used to support power relations? How was the action of these kinds of discourses modified by their very exercise, entailing a strengthening of some terms and a weakening of others, with effects of resistance and counter investments, so that there has never existed one type of stable subjugation, which in retrospect takes on a aspect of a unitary and voluntaristic politics of sex?” (1998: 97)

What Foucault advises, therefore, is to consider the expanding production of discourses in the field of multiple and mobile power relations. In fact, a co-existence of competing discourses trying to fix the meaning, in our case, of the nation, is only possible because the power to define it does not emanate from one single specific source. As power circulates through myriad patterns, different social groups can have the chance to put forward their definitions and claims on what the concept of nationhood, or nationality implies. Therefore Foucault’s formulation sets the basis for discussing the various ways of imagining the nation today, or its desired version of modernity, or why the dominant discourses of nation are continuously prone to change over time.

Lastly, Foucault’s views on modern society are again helpful in understanding how power can mould identities in society. In *Discipline and Punish* (1991), Foucault shows how power relations in modern societies can go ‘right to the depth of society’ through a range of social, cultural and economic institutions, such as the hospital or the school where everyday practices

of normalization and disciplining are developed to monitor, shape and govern the behaviour of individuals. It is through this *microphysics of power* that discourses of nation and modernization can empower or constrain people, and shape the construction of cultural identities. In fact, Foucault strongly emphasises that the subject is produced as an effect through and within discourse and has no meaningful identity outside discourse. This again helps to question the normalization of identities that surface through the analysis of case studies - just as the madman, or the hysterical woman could not exist outside the clinic and the clinical discourses of the time, just as the 'homosexual' as we know of today is known only to the modern era and had not existed before, the stereotyped identities of the veiled Islamist girls, the poverty stricken Kurdish women, or the national daughter figure that we meet through news stories are discursive constructs from contemporary Turkey. Such a formulation, while inspiring, does cause problems when analysing news texts, which I will discuss below.

3.2 Who writes the stories? Journalists and the problem of authorship

The above framework for perceiving social realities as constructed through discourses is invaluable in the analysis of media texts for at least two reasons. Firstly, by dispersing power and the articulation of discourses through social layers, it raises doubts as to how much power the media really has in what it communicates to the public. As Macdonald argues, the concept of discourse

“(...) acknowledges more readily than other analytical concepts that the media are at best partial originators of ideas and values. (...) Discourse reminds us that the media’s forms of talking and thinking interact with those of the wider society- sometimes setting an agenda, but frequently reacting to perceived public desires or concerns.” (2003: 2)

Second, and related to this, seeing the media not as a sole producer but more accurately, a reproducer of already existing discourses urges us to explore the relationship between the texts themselves and the operation of power in the society. In other words, it extends the focus from the texts themselves, per se, to the social construction of the texts, in which media plays only a part. Macdonald points out that such an approach helps to avoid “the pitfalls of an ontological/epistemological split between an objective ‘reality’ out there in the ‘real world’ (ontological state of being) and interpretative form of being (epistemology) achieved through

media” (2003: 3). Instead, she argues, “it acknowledges the role of media in constituting the very realities that are referenced in media texts” (ibid.). Following this, we can add that media texts form the conceptional crossroads in society, where dominant discourses meet, react to, and even negotiate with the resisting ones.

The constructivist model of media, rather than a representational one is informed by Foucault’s rejection of reality as existing outside discourses, and has also shaped the analysis of news stories in this project. This has in fact been one of the main concerns in directing the analysis onto how the identities of the main characters in news stories are constructed through the media texts, rather than examining how these characters interpret and react to dominant discourses. To expand on this further we can take the example of the national athlete Sureyya Ayhan’s case study. The analysis here is not interested in who the main character Sureyya Ayhan is, but primarily with how she appears in the news⁴. At what points does she form a subject position that the Turkish readers can identify with? How does her identity stir up awareness about national identity among Turkish readers? Where does she set up the boundaries of “others” for the nation? How does she build up a vision for the nation? How does she reorganize the nation’s past for specific purposes? In short, how is she constructed through discourse to set the boundaries of the nation?

These concerns in turn have determined my decisions on which parts of the text to analyse. Initially, the texts contain, in terms of their narration, a number of elements: the story that explains how events unfold as well as a more personalized account of the story by the journalist, which takes the form of comments, subjective remarks and so on. Interwoven into the story are also a number of quotes from eyewitness accounts, or first hand comments by the main protagonists in the story. Because the research is interested in exploring journalists’ narrations (such as how the media reacts to events, rather than the events themselves; how they talk about women’s identities rather than how women talk about their own experiences) the analytical focus was only directed to journalistic accounts of the stories, with information given in the form of quotes disregarded. This means that it is not the quotes themselves - say, the content of remarks made by Sureyya or Sureyya’s family members etc.- but how those remarks were foregrounded, emphasised and selected that would be analysed. This decision was taken because the analysis seeks to reveal the linguistic strategies employed by journalists

⁴ The analysis here is not interested in following the characters’ (e.g. Sureyya Ayhan’s) version of reality, which is not possible without ethnographic analysis.

in the coverage of the stories, that express who is to be included in or excluded from the national boundaries of Turkishness, and under what conditions this inclusion/exclusion takes place. The decision to focus the analysis on the journalists' interpretation of events was then applied to all three case studies.

While such a focus helped to clear up practical and theoretical questions that could have been raised about narration, it also raises further issues about authorship. By directing the focus on to journalists, are we not falling into exactly the same epistemological split Macdonald was mentioning? Moreover, while the particular authors of the news stories are usually irrelevant, with the columns and feature stories -particularly in the Batman suicides where features were mainly written by women as a "women's story"- it is not possible to completely disregard the particular names attached to the stories. If this is taken as attribution of authorship to journalists, then we cannot convincingly dismiss the power of the press in producing realities. This problem can only be avoided by resorting once again to Foucault, particularly his discussion on the relationship between texts and authors, and "the manner in which a text apparently points to this figure who is outside and precedes the text" (1980: 115).

In his article "What is an Author?" Foucault (1980) radically questions the notion of authorship; the way authors are seen as privileged creators of their texts, and the way meaning is seen as inscribed by them. For Foucault, the idea of authors as having the sole authority over their texts is, like many other concepts, which he challenges in his works, a sociohistorical construct, a conceptual framework that we might better abandon. However, once having declared the death of the author, he is careful not to transfer his creative power to the texts themselves, and expect the real meaning to reside in texts. Foucault argues that writing creates an opening for meaning/discourse, which is continuously constructed and in which the author as the individual, as the writing subject "endlessly disappears" (1980: 116). Therefore he rejects the futile discussions about where "real" meaning resides, or who creates it and embeds meaning within its specific culture:

"Discourse that possesses an author's name is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten; neither is it accorded to the momentary attention given to ordinary, fleeting words. Rather, its status and manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates." (ibid.: 123)

In doing so, Foucault directs his attention away from the individuality of the author and towards his role or function in society. Foucault points at a complex and circular relationship here: the author, as a concept, is no more than an extension of discourse itself and at the same time, his role is to “characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society” (ibid.: 124). In other words, the author is “a function” of discourse and functions to circulate discourse (ibid.: 123).

In short, Foucault asks us to direct our attention away from the ‘absolute nature and creative role of the subject’ and towards the discourses he disseminates. Such a conceptualisation has radical consequences for perceiving subjectivity since it seems to completely disregard it. However, what it does is to look at a process that is much more exciting: how the subject appears through discourse, how it negotiates with it, how it works its way through it. Indeed Foucault seems to be much more sympathetic to the subject than he is usually given credit for:

“But the subject should not be entirely abandoned. It should be reconsidered, not to restore the theme of an originating subject, but to seize its functions, its intervention in discourse, and its system of dependencies... we should ask: under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what position does it occupy, what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse? In short, the subject (and its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analysed as a complex and variable function of discourse.” (ibid.:137)

While Foucault’s discussion pertains to literary texts, his arguments help us see the identity of the journalists, even when named, as no more important than the discourses they help to reproduce. By focusing on these issues we will also be following Foucault’s advice that we should leave aside questions about who the real author is and instead ask ourselves more pertinent questions, such as what the modes of existence of the discourses are, where they come from, how they are circulated, and how they determine possible subject positions in society⁵. To an extent then, Foucault’s echoing of Beckett’s words can also inform this research:

“What matter who is speaking, someone said, what matter who is speaking?” (ibid.: 115)

⁵ In the analysis of the case studies, this concern includes the dominant position that journalists themselves, not individually but as a group, hold in the society, as well as the different subject positions characters occupy in the stories. It is through the comparison of the two that the analysis gains its critical edge.

3.3 Discourse Analysis as a Method

However inspiring the concept of discourses is discourse analysis, having become one of the most popular approaches to studying texts, is full of ambiguities for the researcher. As mentioned above discourse analysis is used in diverse ways and in various disciplines in the relevant literature and as a result, the term far from implies a homogeneous method for analysis. In fact, Fairclough (1999) has noted that if discourse analysis is to establish itself as a method in social sciences, the aim cannot be uniformity of practice but a common agenda, an establishment of at least some consensus over what the main theoretical and methodological issues in the field are. Nevertheless, in this plurality of approaches, we can observe two broad patterns that have informed the research (See Fairclough 1995). The first is to see discourse as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge as we have already discussed with respect to Foucault's works. The second is the predominant usage of the term as in language studies, defining discourse as social action and interaction in certain social situations. Both of these approaches, with their own sub-divisions, are useful for the analysis of the chosen case studies.

As helpful as Foucault is for understanding and forming the overarching theoretical framework for the research, he is also a great inspiration for analysing the case studies. Both his archaeologies and genealogies point us towards studying the power relationships that are embedded in the signs and linguistic details of the texts, but are irreducible to language and speech. However, his work provides no comfort in terms of how exactly we should track and analyse those power relationships from the texts, and how to find the actual methodology for systematic analysis of news articles.

This difficulty exists because Foucault's work changes and shifts over time, offering fragmented thoughts but without solid theories that remain constant. For Gutting (1994) each of Foucault's books "is determined by concerns and approaches specific to it and should not be understood as developing a theory or a method that is a general instrument of intellectual progress" (ibid.: 2). Therefore Gutting describes Foucault, in Isaiah Berlin's adaptation of Archilochus's metaphor, "not as a hedgehog but a fox" (ibid.) We can say that what he offers is more of an approach to understanding and exploring society, rather than theories on society. Ignoring the fragmented nature of his work and trying to extract broad theories often leads to misreading, "muffling and distorting" his works as we try to harmonize them (ibid.: 3), while

producing a scientific methodology from his work seems almost impossible (c.f. Sawyer 2002). In fact, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault himself denies any scientific pretensions in his analysis:

“I have never presented archaeology as a science, or even as the beginning of a future science...the word archaeology is not supposed to carry any suggestion of anticipation; it simply indicates a possible line of attack for the analysis of verbal performances.” (Cited in Gutting 1994: 5)

As for the linguistic approaches to discourse, these offer systematic and detailed methodologies to analyse texts, which is more promising when studying actual news articles. However, they usually have the disadvantage of treating the texts in isolation from socio-cultural practices and discourse, foregrounding the text and its linguistic aspects but without focusing on the context. What writers in the school of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have proposed instead, is to examine the dialectical relationship between semiosis (where meaning is produced, such as language, visual images, or body language) and social practices (Fairclough 2001: 122-123). In this project, the theoretical and analytical insights of CDA have been informative in analysing the data, particularly its linguistic structure.

3.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis & analysis of the language

CDA sees discourse –language use in speech and writing- as a form of social practice (See Fairclough 1995: 54; Wodak et al. 1999). This approach studies language and its linguistic aspects, not in isolation but within its context, in order to create an awareness of the reciprocal influences language and social structure have on each other. In doing so, CDA closely examines the relationships of power and dominance. Wodak summarises the aim of CDA as follows:

“The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language use.” (Wodak et al. 1999: 8)

In this research, the aims of conducting the analysis, as well as the effort to link texts with their socio-cultural context, sit within the theoretical positioning of CDA. Still, beyond its main goals and objectives in analysing the texts, even in CDA there appears to be no unifying

methodology. This is mainly because the analytical methods in discourse analysis are employed depending on the type and size of the data set that is being investigated, as well as the specific research questions that are being asked (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak et al. 1999). In an analysis of parliamentary debates on immigration, Van Dijk (2000) also acknowledges that CDA should be considered as offering a shared perspective rather than a unitary method. He comments upon how he chose the structural categories for his research:

“How to avoid getting lost in the jungle of a multitude of discursive structures and strategies, and how to make a reasoned choice of relevant, or at least interesting, discourse properties to be studied in detail? Relevance is a contextual, and hence a relative notion. In our case, this means that the choice of categories for analysis depends on, for instance, the research questions, problems or aims of our research project. For the same reason, in discourse analysis there is not one method to analyze a text. It depends on what one wants to know, and why, and what theoretical instruments one has to relate text structures with the contextual aims one has.” (2000: 86)

In other words, while there is a unifying perspective in CDA, the methodology is data driven, requiring that a combination of strategies are used in building the methodological framework, which in return has resulted in different ways of conducting CDA (See also Meyer et. al. 2000; Wodak & Meyer 2001).

Amongst the variety of approaches within CDA, two methodological approaches were found to be particularly helpful in designing the analytical framework for this research. The first of these is the basic scheme Norman Fairclough developed in full detail in his 1995 book *Media Discourse*. As a linguist, Fairclough uses the word discourse mainly “to refer to spoken and written language” (1995: 54) and argues that media language should be analysed as a discourse. However the linguistic analysis of media should only form a part of the critical discourse analysis of media. For Fairclough, the whole analysis should extend beyond that:

“Linguistic analysis focuses on texts, in a broad sense: a newspaper article is a text, but so too is a transcription of a radio or television programme. But discourse analysis is concerned with practices as well as texts, and with both *discourse practices* and *sociocultural practices*.” (1995: 16)

Fairclough’s aim is to “show the systematic links between texts, discourse practices, and socio-cultural practices” (ibid.) as he argues that discourse analysis of media texts should

weave between these three levels. He is firstly concerned with the linguistic analysis of texts, how meanings and forms, representations, identities and relations are created via linguistic means. Next is the level of discursive practice, by which he refers to the processes of text production and consumption. This includes “the ways in which the texts are produced by media workers in media institutions” (ibid.), or more specifically, “institutional routines such as editorial procedures involved in producing media texts” (1995: 59). The level of discursive practice also includes “the ways in which they [texts] are received by audiences”, such as the consumption patterns that might shape the interpretation process, as well as “how media texts are socially distributed” (1995: 16). Fairclough underlines the fact that the discursive level mediates between the text and sociocultural practice. Finally, there is the analysis of sociocultural practices within which the text and the discourse practice are placed. At this level, questions of power in society become the central interest of the analysis.

While such clear-cut distinctions between different levels hardly exist when it comes to the analysis of data, Fairclough’s attempt to relate the text and grammar to different levels of media production, consumption and society is informative in developing an analysis on newspaper texts. In particular his emphasis on the institutional routines and genres can be helpful in understanding the possible variations in the narration of the same story depending on the choice of paper or genre of the news item. In all three case studies examined for this research, I also found that some differences existed among the papers. These depended upon the choice of particular news genres within which the story was covered, particular editorial policies, and the influence of columnists in the newspaper. It is indeed interesting to observe how these differences in journalistic practices shape the language and content of the news articles and they have been closely observed and noted in the description of the data in each case study. However, in application, the differences are often not meaningful enough to subvert attention from the emerging common themes. This can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, in attempting to observe patterns of discourse in large amounts of data, variations fade away unless they are significant. Second, choosing three newspapers from the mainstream media with similar, if not the same, ideological standpoints has largely eliminated some of the differences that we could have otherwise observed in the coverage of the story (i.e. a left wing newspaper, or one from the religious right might have covered the stories differently). In other words, the common sociocultural practice shared by these newspapers erases any meaningful variations that could have arisen at the institutional and textual levels.

Following this, we can also add that Fairclough's framework would work best with a small number of texts, which would allow for a detailed micro-level analysis between the three dimensions he outlines. Given the large bulk of data chosen for this research, his framework could not be applied to the developed methodology for analysis, but has been informative in developing the linguistic analysis. His emphasis on the representations, particular constructions of writer and reader identities, as well as particular construction of the relationship between the reader and the writer have also been the focal points in the analysis of case studies. Such an analysis, Fairclough underlines, would be "sensitive to absences as well as presences in texts" (1995: 58), to things that haven't been said by journalists when they could have. Where significant, such absences have been discussed in the research. However, more common than the absences were the presuppositions that surfaced in all three case studies. Rather than focusing upon what is present in and what is absent from the texts, Fairclough asks researchers to look at a scale of presence, "running from 'absent' to 'foregrounded': absent – presupposed – backgrounded - foregrounded" (1995: 106) The implicit meanings that are left unsaid but presupposed in the texts are important particularly in the way in which journalists position their readers (1995: 107) and have been further discussed in analysis of the case studies.

In building the general analytical framework for this research, the methodological approach as laid out by Ruth Wodak and her colleagues (1999) on the discursive construction of Austrian national identity was more useful. The Viennese School of CDA, to which these authors belong, diverges from other analysis of discourse in its shift of focus: their concern is not to "study the linguistic system and its functional and semantic potential in all its dimensions per se but rather to establish the linguistic relations between specific linguistic subsystems and social structures" (ibid.: 9). The focus here is to explore interconnectedness through the principle of triangulation - which the authors define as approaching the discursive phenomena "from a variety of methodological and theoretical perspectives taken from various disciplines"(ibid.). Using historical, socio-political and linguistic perspectives in their study of national identity, the authors distinguish between three dimensions of analysis: *contents*, *strategies* and *means and forms of realisation* (1999: 30).

Hence in contrast to Fairclough's emphasis on texts as the focus of analysis, Wodak et al. start out by examining the general content before moving toward linguistic analysis, arguing that the interpretation process is shaped by the preset discursive frames. On the level of content

major thematic areas are outlined. On the strategy level, the discursive strategies employed in the discursive formation of national identity are analysed at macro and micro levels. And finally the linguistic means, the lexical units and syntactic devices that serve the discursive strategies are closely examined. It is neither possible nor useful to impose their detailed methodological framework for analysis to the case studies. However, in analysing the large collection of data here, it was possible to use and adapt their approach of moving from themes to strategies and then following how those strategies are realised in the linguistic details of the texts.

3.3.2 The role of the interpreter

One other important discussion that has informed the methodological framework is the hermeneutic impetus in analysis. The notion of hermeneutics can be basically described as a process in which “all understanding is conditioned by the prior knowledge of the interpreter and that it is extended through interpretation and thereby creates new conditions for understanding” (Meyer et al. 2000: 198-199). Meyer points out that in terms of the methods and procedures used for the analysis of discourse, CDA generally sees its procedure as a hermeneutic process (2001: 16). Similarly, in their research on discourses in late modernity, Chouliaraki and Fairclough also attempt to combine structuralist and interpretivist approaches, arguing for “a way of seeing and researching social life as both constrained by social structures, and an active process of production which transforms social structures” (1999: 1-2). Seeing analysis as implicated within the hermeneutic process also conforms to the Foucauldian conception of power as outlined above: while the researcher might take an alternative position, he or she will always be positioned with respect to, not outside the already existing power relationships.

However, arguing that understanding is conditioned by the prior knowledge of the interpreter raises a common criticism brought against discourse analysis regarding the selection and interpretation of data. Being a strictly qualitative method, discourse analysis always faces the problem of justifying the selection of materials as research data (See Jaworski & Coupland 1999: 36). Why certain findings and categories are attributed to the selected data is again a problem. As Wodak et al. emphasize, in analysing discourse, a priori categories cannot be imposed upon the data (1999: 30). On the contrary, the categories used in analysing the data

are strictly shaped by the data itself, necessitating the construction of a particular framework for each data set and research question (c.f. van Dijk 2000).

In answering a criticism about the role of the analyst in shaping the data analysis, Chouliaraki and Fairclough note that all analysis brings the analyst's theoretical preoccupations and categories to bear on the discourse, and these preoccupations "determine not only what data is selected for analysis but also how it is perceived" (1999:7). However, by insisting on the impossibility of a formal analysis that excludes the theoretical preoccupations of the analyst, the writers are not claiming, "anything is possible". It might be the nature of the data that largely answers and legitimises the method and its findings, and yet, the analysis itself should also be able to justify the selection and examination of the structural categories. As Meyer rightly notes, hermeneutic interpretation urgently needs detailed documentation, and yet "the specifics of the hermeneutic interpretation process are not made completely transparent by many CDA oriented studies" (2001:16). Hence, throughout the analysis of the case studies, the need to make the process as transparent as possible has been a major concern.

3.4 Photographs and Visuals

Even though the term discourse includes a large number of communicative practices and can not be limited to texts alone, CDA often focuses on language use, and neglects the visual part of signification, particularly when mapping out general discursive patterns rather than analysing specific texts (See Macdonald 2003: 4). In this research, even though the texts form the main source of analysis, photographs and other visuals are also considered to be an important part of the data and will also be analysed. Visuals are seen not as separate entities but as fundamental parts of news stories, enhancing the power of the dominant discourses just like sentence structures, lexical styles, chosen metaphors, euphemisms and other properties of the texts. In particular, the photographs, with their claims of presenting the real world - a correspondence between what the readers normally would see with the naked eye and visual representation - can normalize the discourses that construct versions of reality for the readers. In addition, the choice of layout will also increase or determine the visual impact of the particular news story, and along with it the discourses transmitted. These issues have been noted as an important part of the analysis.

Lastly, it has to be noted that the importance of visuals has also shaped the collection of the data. As layout was important for the analysis, the Internet web pages of the newspapers proved to be insufficient for conducting research. Though some papers have recently started to upload scanned versions on to the Internet⁶, during the time of the analysis this was not common practice. Therefore, most data was collected through classic archival research, mainly in Ataturk Library in Taksim, Istanbul, which is a modest version of the Colindale Library in London. After the news stories were scanned in this library, the Internet was used to check whether all related data was collected, and was particularly helpful in catching the columns, or small news items that might have been missed during research in the archives.

3.5 Problem of Translation

One of the major problems in textual analysis remains the language. As the data is in Turkish but the research in English, two alternative methods for textual analysis were possible: either translating the data into English and applying textual analysis methods, or doing the analysis in Turkish then translating the data. The latter has been adopted for this research as working with translated data can lead to a loss of meaning and misreading of the text. As Fairclough also agrees, analysis of translated texts is vulnerable to serious objections:

“What light can analysis of the researcher’s English translation of a Gorbachev speech cast upon the political and discursive analysis of a Soviet, and Russian-language, discursive event? In my opinion, discourse analysis papers should reproduce and analyse textual samples in the original language, despite the added difficulty for readers.” (1999:186)

Here, given the large amount of data, it was not possible to supply the news items in the original language. However, when they are particularly significant, words or phrases in the data have also been provided in their original form.

⁶ As of December 2006, Hurriyet and Sabah had scanned electronic versions of the whole paper on the Internet, whereas Milliyet only has the front page.

3.6 Object of Analysis

3.6.1 Newspapers:

For this research, newspapers were chosen as the medium to conduct the analysis. While the selected case studies also received coverage in the broadcast media, mainly on television, television news was not considered in the analysis. This was a deliberate choice made firstly on the basis of methodological concerns, particularly regarding the question of reliability, which would have emerged when introducing another medium to the analysis. The second reason was the qualitative difference between the coverage of events in newspapers and television. Although TV news is a main source of information in Turkey, it is only a small part of what popular Turkish television channels offer to their audiences⁷. When they do broadcast news, stories are determined by ratings concerns, they are momentary and fresh, and they remain on the news agenda for a shorter period of time compared to print news. Conversely newspapers can offer more breadth and depth in their coverage, and analyses of events are sustained for a longer period of time, during which the journalists revisit, reflect on and reinterpret the events, particularly through feature stories and columns. As a result, it is possible to closely follow, and conduct in-depth analysis of how the discourse shifts and develops through the texts.

Among national newspapers in Turkey, three papers, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Sabah* were chosen for the purposes of this research. Here mainstream refers not only to the circulation numbers of the newspapers but also to their the political affiliations, which can be described as being of the centre right, showing strong support for secularism, economic liberalism and some degree of political liberalism depending upon the subject matter. The selection inevitably excludes local papers, tabloids⁸ and newspapers that favour different political objectives, such as the radical left wing, ethnic, Kemalist, Islamic or strongly nationalist newspapers, some of which have high circulation numbers as in the case of the Islamic newspaper *Zaman*. However, considered together, the three selected papers have the majority circulation figures in Turkey and therefore their coverage can be taken as a good measure of

⁷ The popular main channels are all commercial in Turkey. Channel D leads the audience market share with 17.1 percent; Show TV follows with 15 percent, Star 14.3 percent and ATV 13.1 percent. These channels all belong to different media groups. The public channel TRT-1 on the other hand has only 6.2 percent of the audience share (2002 figures cited in Bek 2004: 383).

⁸ It is important to note that a clear-cut tabloid and broadsheet categorization does not exist in Turkey as in the UK. In terms of format, all national newspapers are broadsheets. However, in terms of content, a crude differentiation can still be made between newspapers depending on the level of populism and sensation in the coverage of news stories.

what the majority of readers receive as everyday news. As the research seeks to uncover dominant discourses, these newspapers fulfil the purposes of the project in terms of both their political positioning and their audience reach.

It is also important to note that there have been some changes in these newspapers in terms of their pool of journalists. For example, in 2003, Sabah newspaper changed hands and a number of writers from all three newspapers have also changed their paper since they covered the analysed events.⁹

3.6.2 Type of Data analysed:

As has already been discussed, an important methodological choice has been to focus the analysis on news reporting, rather than the news reported. This has allowed consistency and reliability in the analysis and focus on the narration of the events and the discourses involved in this process, without being distracted by the events themselves. As previously mentioned, this has had some implications on the selection of the analysed data. As the focus is on the reporting itself, when interviews or comments by witnesses are included in the item, the analysis has been on the selection of particular quotes, or the foregrounded themes from the quotes, rather than the quotes themselves. In other words, if a journalist, for example Ayse Arman, interviewed Sureyya Ayhan, the focus was not on what Sureyya Ayhan has said but how Ayse Arman has reported the interview.

Within this context, all news items on the specific case studies, regardless of their particular genres were included in the analysis - commentaries, headlines, news written by a certain reporter, news from the Turkish wire services, interviews and more. In the beginning this might have seemed problematic in terms of methodology. However, in spite of the fragmented character of the data, the aim here is not to observe differences among the genres through a generic analysis but rather to find a unifying pattern across the various narrations and news genres. Not only are such differences insignificant across the whole body of data, as explained in the discussion on Fairclough, but the analysed texts are also united through a 'storytelling' news style, a tabloid narrative which can be described, in the words of Bird, as focusing on personal narratives about individuals, giving predominance to visual images and

⁹ For example, Fatih Altayli from Hurriyet is now in Vatan newspaper. Ahmet Hakan from Sabah, on the other hand, has transferred to Hurriyet.

the sensational over analysis and rational description, and entailing a growing use of dramatic techniques, such as photo enhancement and re-enactments (See Bird 2000: 215).

In terms of referencing the data, only the date and if not specified, the name of the newspaper are given inside the text, so as not to disrupt the flow of the discussion. However, the full reference details, such as the name of the journalist, the title of the news item, and where relevant, the particular type of news item are supplied in the footnotes below. These details not only provide the necessary extra information to contextualise the extracted data within its relevant story, but also help to distinguish different items appearing in the same paper on the same day. Lastly to highlight the data and set it apart from the interpretations, all the data analysed in the research has been supplied in italics in the text. Unless further explanation is provided in the footnotes, all the data that is emphasised with bold letters have also been emphasised in the original texts.

3.6.3 Time span:

The selected newspapers were analysed within the time span of 1999 to 2003, marking the end of a century, and the start of a new one. This specified time frame also marks the ending of a decade in which prominent changes had taken place in all aspects of social life in Turkey, with significant consequences for the press. The liberal policy of “opening up” that had started in the mid-eighties had brought with it a dramatic shift from a state-protected to a liberal economy, which was followed by considerable liberalization of the political agenda, privatisation of broadcast media and the emergence of news media outlets, opening up the country further to the currents of globalisation in the nineteen nineties. As media texts “constitute a sensitive barometer of socio-cultural change” (Fairclough, 1995: 52), locating the research at the dawn of a new century can offer the opportunity to draw conclusions about the changes that have taken place, as well as some answers on how to approach the emerging problems of identity and modernity that are likely to remain on Turkey’s agenda for the coming decades.

3.6.4 Selected Cases

Three case studies have been selected for the project. In the selection of these cases one criterion was to find events that had received significant headline coverage in all three papers, and beyond the main reporting of events, the stories were taken up and further discussed by journalists in columns or features. However, a more important rationale for their selection is

that they present a good picture of the conflicting and competing discourses around nation, modernity and women in Turkey. The selected events themselves show clear evidence about how different identities struggle and compete in society for inclusion in the national and how negotiations are made on this ground.

3.6.4.1 Media coverage of female suicides in Batman

This case study focuses on the media coverage of the high rate of female suicides in Batman and the surrounding area, an impoverished southeast region of Turkey. It is important to note that most of the suicides reported by the media are of people of Kurdish origin. The media covered these events with more attention throughout the autumn of 2000, however, important follow-ups in the form of feature stories continued in 2001.

3.6.4.2 Süreyya Ayhan

The second case study is about Turkey's first popular national female athlete, Sureyya Ayhan. After having made it to the final eight in Sydney Olympics in 2000, she turned into a source of curiosity for the media. She was first acclaimed as a national hero, then not content with stories about her career, media coverage shifted to her private life only to discover that she was having an affair with her married coach, twenty years her senior. She was criticized heavily until summer 2002 when she won a series of competitions, including the European Championships, and was announced as the best athlete of the year in the foreign sports press. The time span for this case study covers summer 2000 to summer 2002.

3.6.4.3 Three weddings

The weddings case study differs from the other two in being a composite of three case studies of three different weddings. The first of these is the wedding of Elif Sözen to Helmut Kohl's son in May 2001. This light news event received extensive front-page coverage in the press, praising Elif Sözen's educational and career achievements, and portraying her as a modern Turkish girl. The next wedding, of Elif Erbakan, involves the daughter of Necmettin Erbakan, the now politically banned leader of the religious right and Turkey's former PM in 1997-1998. This white wedding, a lavishly organised event starring a veiled bride, attracted significant media attention. The third wedding, which took place in summer 2003 involves the son of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the present PM of Turkey, and his veiled bride. Media attention on this event was heightened by Silvio Berlusconi's attendance at the wedding as one of the witnesses.

3.7 Framework for analysis

It should be noted that given the large quantity of newspaper data in each case study, the data analysis seeks to map out the emerging pattern of conflicting and overarching discourses across the data, rather than presenting a microanalysis of specific texts. In each case study, detailed information about the methodological concerns raised by the specific content of the case is given at the very start. What is presented here is only a general framework, which changes slightly according to the specific case studies.

The following framework was developed for the analysis:

- 1. Introduction of the case study**
 - 1.1. The setting- summary of the events & a brief description of the context within which the events took place**
 - 1.2. Objectives in the selection of the case study**
 - 1.3. Overview of the data**
 - 1.3.1. Time frame**
 - 1.3.2. Type of data to be analysed**
 - 1.4. Organizing the data for analysis- methodological decisions**
- 2. Thematic Analysis**
 - 2.1. Linguistic Analysis**
- 3. Overarching Discourses, interpretation and concluding remarks**

In the case studies of the weddings and Sureyya Ayhan, the thematic analysis also included an analysis of language. However, the more compact nature of the data in the Batman case study along with the specific narrative details made it possible to conduct the linguistic analysis separately. To provide a framework to guide the language analysis for all case studies, a flexible checklist was also planned. The aim was not to limit the study by setting a fixed structure or order to it, as not all linguistic means are relevant, or equally important for the mentioned mechanisms. The checklist that guided the linguistic analysis is as follows:

a) General Style/ Tone of language

- Particular choice and use of graphics/ visuals
- Particular use and choice of headlines, headings, subheadings

- Particular choice and use of style- storytelling, descriptions, frequent use of ellipsis
- Journalistic differences among the newspapers- if any

b) Word level - choice of specific words used in the stories

c) Sentence level - syntax

d) Other rhetorical means - in what ways they are used, what meanings they serve

(I.e.: implications, exaggerations, sensationalism, partial/hanging quotes, clichés, clichéd descriptions, euphemisms, collective symbolism or ‘figurativeness’ in symbolism, metaphors in language and graphic contexts, word games, idioms, sayings, references & other sources of knowledge.)

Chapter 4:

Victims, Villains and Guardian Angels -Batman suicide stories

4.1. Introduction of the case study

4.1.1 The setting - Brief description of the context within which the suicides took place

The following discussion examines the media coverage of the unprecedented rate of suicides among women in Batman. The analysis focuses on directly related news stories that appeared between 2000 and 2001, as the suicides reached their peak in 2000¹. Official records state that between 1995 and 2000 the total number of people reported committing suicide and attempted suicide in this region was 191. Seventy five percent of these were women, a figure well above the world average. During 2000 only twenty-two suicide attempts resulted in death among women living in the area of Batman.

The setting for these stories, geographically speaking, is in the impoverished southeast region of Turkey, which hosts a large population of Kurdish citizens. Even though the area is mostly rural, dramatic levels of migration from the rural areas to the city of Batman resulted in a growth rate of 2325% in the city population in only 50 years, increasing the population from 443 people in 1945 to 427,000 in 2000 (See Bagli & Sever 2003: 69). Bagli & Sever (2003) point out that the discovery of modest oil reserves in the region was significant in attracting the rural population into the cities, in the hope of achieving a higher standard of living. However, oil profits were not enough to prevent Batman from suffering all the hazards of rapid urbanization, including escalating poverty, unemployment and insufficient health and educational opportunities.

The transition to urban life was also hastened due to the escalating terrorist threat in the region, particularly through the activities of the PKK and Hezbollah². Both of these groups

¹ Further details and statistics can be found in Deniz & Ersoz (2001), also see the article by Bagli & Sever (2003).

² PKK is a separatist Kurdish organization, Hezbollah an ultra-religious organisation operating in the Middle East. Both groups were strongly committed to using violence against the Turkish state in the 90's. The armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state subsided in the first few years after 2000, although recently there has been a sharp increase in armed combats and losses on both sides.

benefited from the chaotic urbanization in the city and the geographical remoteness of the area (Bagli & Sever, 2003: 70-71). As the armed conflict between these groups and the state escalated, civilians, particularly the Kurdish population, were not only caught in the cross-fire but their villages were also evacuated or destroyed, forcing them to seek greater security in the city and thus augmenting their social and economic displacement. Even though terror in the region had died down by the time of this case study, the damage it has left behind is seen as significant and appears as a recurring theme in the discussion of suicides.

The brief context paints an already disheartening picture in terms of living standards, yet the extremely patriarchal society that exists further deteriorates living conditions for women in particular. For the majority of the population living in the region, patriarchal oppression is a part of everyday life, making the issue of women's problems in the region a frequent subject of debate in the mainstream press³. In spite of the existing Civil Law which guarantees equal citizenship rights for both men and women in Turkey, women's rights and their status within the family and society are mostly still determined by traditions and religious rules, which usually work or are interpreted to work to the advantage of the patriarchal system (Ilkcaracan, 1998). With escalating migration into the urban areas, these existing patriarchal structures were seen as forming a stark contrast to the urban city life and as a result focused the attention of the media.

4.1.2 Objectives in the selection of the particular case study.

The case study focuses on the meanings and interpretation of 'difference', following the initial set of questions selected to guide the analysis:

- **Who are the female figures in the case study?**
- **In what ways are they described as different?**
- **Is that difference described as a desired or an unwanted one? If the latter, what are the proposals to eliminate that difference?**
- **In what ways is their difference significant for a particular understanding of modernity & national identity in Turkey?**

³ An example is the problem of 'honour killings' of women, which has been a particularly hot topic of debate in recent years, and in the press is mostly associated with the culture and traditions of Southeast Turkey.

It is important to note that the goal of this study is not to offer causal links between suicides and social variables, a task which should be left to social researchers. In contrast, the object of analysis, namely the news stories, are themselves nothing but relentless attempts to explain the recurring suicides providing an ongoing debate on the perceived causes and offering suggestions as to how they could be prevented. However, through a discourse analysis of this data, the Batman case study provides a perfect context for achieving the primary research goal, that of observing the construction of boundaries for the desired nation, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion that serve this process.

Positioned both geographically and culturally at the peripheries of Turkey, Batman is a part of the still mostly rural Southeast region, and as the news stories will show, challenges the modern/urban life the journalists see themselves as holding. Nor does the region allow for unproblematic inclusion within the category of Turkishness, due to its largely Kurdish demographic structure. Therefore, what is often being discussed in the stories is actually the centre's interpretation of what is going on in the "margins of modernity" (Bhabha 1990a) and of national identity in Turkey. From within this context we can start to understand how the centre, where the journalists see themselves as located, looks at the periphery, what they see as problematic, and what solutions they propose to bring the periphery closer to the centre. The oppression of women in the region, which is cited as the foremost cause of suicides, also introduces an extra urgency into the situation, as the liberation of women has always been regarded as the first and foremost responsibility of the modern Turkish state.

4.1.3 Overview of the data

4.1.3.1 Time frame

The data, which comprised 49 items published in *Hurriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Sabah*, was collected from September 16th 2000 to December 22nd 2001⁴. These dates do not signal the first and last suicide occurrences during the period. Rather they roughly mark the period the suicides first started receiving significant media attention and when their coverage started to decline. The escalating suicide rates among women started to pick up the national media's interest in

⁴ The only exception to this time frame remains on an article published on 16.06.2002. Titled "*Hear this scream*", this article formed the major news piece for the Sunday supplements of *Hurriyet* newspaper with coverage too extensive to ignore. Spread over three pages, this is a feature story that aims to follow up on the problem of high rate of female suicides, this time in a neighbouring city to Batman, Urfa, where, it is argued, the female suicide rate has highly exceeded that in Batman. The journalist had written extensively on Batman in 2000, so this feature, in terms of narrative style is the same as the other suicide features published in 2000.

mid September in 2000 with reports of about 30 women who had committed suicide in the preceding six months. Media attention faded away towards the end of 2001, which is marked by an article in Sabah newspaper on 22.12.2001 announcing that according to official figures suicide rates had halved. After this article, short news items still appeared, but not frequently enough to set a different time frame for the case. However, the dimming of media interest does not mean that suicides have stopped. For example, Hurriyet newspaper on 30.04.2003 informed the readers that within four months in 2003 there had been 37 suicide attempts with 12 resulting in death⁵. Therefore, the selected dates should be seen not as the start and end of events, but as markers of the rising and falling points of an open ended parabola showing the media's interest in the issue, which reached its peak in autumn 2000.

4.1.3.2 Type of data to be analysed

The events were covered under a variety of genres, one of which was the 14 individual columns included in the data. The columnists' need to show their concern about the high rate of suicides provides useful reference points in interpreting the results of the analysis within its specific context. Even though columnists from the same paper do not have to be in agreement about a certain issue, or comply with the editorial line of the newspaper, for this case study their arguments pertaining to the suicides did converge towards the overarching arguments found in the analysis. The language used was also not dissimilar to the language used in the human-interest features.

Apart from columns, the remaining news articles appear in different forms and styles, some of which have an intertextual mix of genres. The theme of female suicides lends itself to human-interest articles rather than hard news, yet there are a few news items which are more perishable and have impersonal language that is essentially institutional and bureaucratic even when by-lined. However, even the articles that come closest to the hard news genre can contain varying degrees of personal language. One such example is an article titled "*Psychological tragedy in Batman*" in *Hurriyet* newspaper (06.10.2000). Covering the press brief by the Directorate General of Religious Affairs (Diyamet) on the preventative measures the institution is taking to stop the suicides, this news item is written in the conventional news style, and aside from the topic, the style is no different from a hard news item reporting the press brief of a political party member. *Milliyet's* coverage (06.10.2000) of the same brief,

⁵ No-bylines, 30.04.2003, 'Three more women have committed suicide in the East', *Hurriyet*.

however, has a tabloid twist focusing on the uneasiness of the religious authority in answering questions pertaining to sexuality. The theme already blurs the distinction between hard news items and human-interest stories and the title '*The question that made the president of Diyanet sweat*' adds to the less formal style. Another similar article appears in *Hurriyet* newspaper (11.08.2001), not by-lined, reporting the findings of research with the title "*In Batman, it is hard to be a man, too*" which has inside a star graphic reading "*they too are in depression*". The tone of the article is very impersonal and bureaucratic, but the topic, and the emphasis on the headline and layout makes it suitable for a human-interest story.

Therefore, apart from a few items where distinctions are relatively clear, it is almost futile to attempt to categorize all news stories as either hard news or human interest. Some stories, on the other hand, have clearer genre distinctions, and whenever possible, genres have been highlighted in the analysis and also in the footnotes. This is the case with two interviews in the data -one specifically on suicides in the region and the other a more indirectly related item, focusing more on the educational projects developed by an NGO in the region- and one review of a book on Batman suicides, including a short interview with the book's writer. Feature stories are also clearly distinguishable from the rest. There are nine feature stories all written by women journalists where the journalist's own eye witness account and personal interpretation of the events are evident, even when supported by selections from interviews done with authorities, victim's families or girls living in Batman. It should be noted that while the data may not seem striking in terms of quantity; the feature stories with their human-interest appeal and significant coverage, which are large enough to be spread over three whole pages⁶, and their accompanying visuals, helped to make the case a memorable issue in the public sphere.

4.1.4 Organizing the data for analysis- methodological decisions

Without exception, all stories were analysed thematically, and the main themes of the case study were mapped out. How discourses around these themes reveal themselves requires textual analysis, which is more problematic. Having such a variety of genres, it is impossible

⁶ Here I am referring to Gulden Aydin's feature titled 'Hear This Scream' covering up one whole front page of the weekend edition of *Hurriyet* on 16.06.2002, and spread over two pages in the inside with the title 'In the last five months, thirteen women committed suicide in Urfa'.

to find a selection of articles that are, in terms of language and style, representative of the whole case study. And yet, when we look at the total data in general, the remarkable feature of the Batman stories is the continuous intervention by the journalists with subjective remarks, self-reflexive comments and opinions, which provide an excellent opportunity to follow the hegemonic discourses circulating within the suicide discussions. Discourse researchers also note that reflexivity can effectively add to our awareness of the ideological locatedness and contingency of reporting, and alert us to the discursive gaps and silences that are otherwise hard to detect (See Macdonald, 2003: 77). Therefore observing reflexivity and subjectivity, and how journalists want to narrate their own account of the suicides rather than stating what has happened have been the main concerns throughout the linguistic analysis.

Having thus set the focus, certain generic decisions needed to be taken in selecting the data for the micro levels of analysis. Linguistic analysis was steered away from items without by-lines, or items with impersonal and bureaucratic language in the hard news style, which are not as heavily laden with suppositions, assumptions or biases as the features or columns are. This is not to say that hard news language is free of any discourses, even though as noted previously they are harder to identify. And yet, most of these stories will be pulled from news agencies in Turkey, only to be printed with slight alterations while the goal in this part of the analysis is to focus on the three newspapers. Therefore the preference here was to keep in the spotlight the journalists' comments and arguments conveyed through the articles. Again for this very same reason, quotes from witnesses were not analysed. Whereas the selection of witnesses and their words for quotation are significant in understanding the context within which discourses are placed, the wording or arguments provided by sources and quoted directly were not analysed on their own. The purpose in such a selection is to focus the analysis on the journalist's own input in terms of language and style, which inevitably puts features and columns at the foreground for analysis.

And lastly, because of the compactness of the Batman case study in comparison to the other two cases, it offers a unique opportunity to follow a very distinct pattern of linguistic mechanisms used in almost all feature stories and columns. I have therefore expanded on these mechanisms in a specific section rather than highlighting them throughout the discussion of the themes.

4.2. Thematic analysis –themes addressed in the coverage and allocation of sub-themes to thematic areas

Certain general themes emerge through the stories about the identities of the Batman women, their social context, their perceived needs, and aspirations. The thematic analysis focuses on how these general themes are discussed through the coverage of the case study, and allocates sub-themes to the thematic areas. These themes also address how journalists perceive of the specificities of living in Batman as a woman.

4.2.1 Gender problem - being a woman in Batman

Perhaps the most recurring theme is a concern about gender roles in the region, and how they make life unbearable for women. It should be noted that the Turkish equivalent for *gender*, which is “*toplumsal cinsiyet*”, is not mentioned directly in the articles. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that journalists around the time did not use this term commonly, although it had already become established in academic circles⁷. However, the condition of women in Batman, their role in society, their rights and needs, are reported as urgent problems and without exception are explained as resulting from the social structure in the region. For this reason, I have grouped these stories under the theme of gender.

The coverage pertaining to the gender problem is very similar in the three papers. “*Loss of hope*” and “*unwillingness to live*” are the most common phrases used to describe the situation throughout the stories. Among the problems women face, the foremost is described as the gridlock of patriarchy, namely the treatment of women as second-class citizens compared to males. Journalists describe the situation as one in which “*women are regarded as property*”(Sabah, 07.01.2001)⁸, and where “*they are trampled on*” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁹. Cases in which women who committed suicide had been previously beaten by their fathers or husbands are frequently cited to emphasize the bleakness of the situation, which, as described by one columnist, leave women with no alternatives but to “*make a difficult choice between an authoritarian father and an authoritarian husband*” (Hurriyet, 21.03.2001)¹⁰. The pressure on females and the extreme patriarchal structure is described as an extension of the

⁷ Today this term appears in mainstream media more often, although it is still not a commonly used concept.

⁸ Elif Urgan, feature story, 07.01.2001, ‘I am neither a traveller, nor a free one’ Sabah

⁹ Ferai Tinc, column, 27.10.2000, ‘When life becomes a burden’ Hurriyet

¹⁰ Enis Berberoglu, column, 21.03.2001, ‘The difficult choice facing the girl in Batman’ Hurriyet

traditional structure of the society, with customs and traditions as the main obstacle to women achieving basic rights. The headline *“Either get married or die”* (Milliyet, 23.10.2000)¹¹ is a good example, which sensationalizes the drama of women attempting relationships outside of marriage. The customs, obliging women to remain sexually pure until marriage, and allowing polygamy for men in marriage are shown as the main driving force behind suicides in all stories¹². What is more, family members and relatives, especially men, appear insensitive to the suicides, and unwilling to change the system:

“In the meanwhile, I ask where the first wife was, and this disturbs him. He says “in the other house” and changes the subject.”(Hurriyet, 30.03.2001)¹³

“Metin Ok left his wife (...) whom he continuously beat up like his daughter, with his other children; he is now said to be preparing to remarry.”(Sabah, 21.09.2000)¹⁴

“Nobody talks about the reasons of (her) suicide. (...) He says he had built two different houses for the two wives, and they got along very well.”(Hurriyet, 16.06.2002)¹⁵

Particular attention is also paid to the families’ unwillingness to talk. This is a recurring point of criticism particularly in the feature stories:

“Families don’t talk. Even though they cannot understand the reason for their daughter’s suicide, they agree that silence is the best attitude.”(Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)¹⁶

“That is all. She does not say a word more. However Nurcihan’s neighbours tell a different story. (...) Nurcihan burned herself with a gallon of gas exactly a month ago. The mother, Makbule, says there is nothing to tell.”(Sabah, 16.09.2000)¹⁷

¹¹ no by-line, front page main headline, 23.10.2000, Milliyet

¹² The tone of such remarks is very direct. Consider for example Figen Unal Sen’s article in Sabah, ‘The truth behind the suicides’ on 16.09.2000: “This was actually the “problem” that led Filiz to death. (...) Losing her virginity at a young age in Batman city in Southeast had led Filiz to death.”

¹³ Gulden Aydin, feature, 30.03.2001, ‘A mother of 13 in the suicide caravan’, Hurriyet

¹⁴ Halil Beytut, human interest story, 21.09.2000, ‘When she could not succeed, she ran away’, Sabah

¹⁵ Gulden Aydin, feature, 16.06.2002, ‘In the last 5 months, 17 women committed suicide in Urfa’ Hurriyet

¹⁶ Gulden Aydin, feature, 27.10.2000, ‘Suicide has become fate’ Hurriyet

¹⁷ Figen Unal Sen, feature, 16.09.2000, ‘The reality behind the suicides’ Sabah

“Just like the other girls in Batman, Diyarbakir and Mus, the cause of suicide for Gulcan, who died at the age of only 17, was left buried under the white paint. The wall was first washed, and then painted white. As if it was never lived, as if it never happened, all was silent, nothing was spoken.” (Milliyet, 19.10.2000)¹⁸

As well as necessitating an urgent rescue mission, such depictions inadvertently imprison women within a terminology of rescue and helplessness, as will be further discussed in the linguistic analysis. As a main part of the rescue efforts, journalists stress the importance of education and of earning a living to improve the quality of life for women in Batman and a path to solving their problems. Girls who have jobs are described as happier and are widely presented as desirable examples. In the full-page feature story ‘*Suicide has become fate*’, girls who contemplated suicide before they found employment are presented as perfect examples of the transformation that a job can provide:

“16 year old Aynur has dropped plans of suicide because she can earn 200 million Turkish Liras per month. She is happy for looking after her family, buying her trousseau, and dreaming her dreams.” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)¹⁹

The same theme also appears in columns:

“When I ask the girls “their plans about the future”, none of them say it is “getting married”. I always hear “I want to learn” and “I want to set up my own business.” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000, author’s emphasis)^{20 21}

In this same column, education and earning a living are described as “*the only hope for salvation*” in the region. Another columnist chooses the title “*Women and education*”(Milliyet, 28.10.2000)²² while expressing his approval of the Ministry of Education’s decision to take action and investigate the relationship between suicides and education in the region. In November 2000 and January 2001, two whole page news items, an

¹⁸ Semra Kardesoglu, feature, 19.10.2000, ‘Batman, the city where hope dies’, Milliyet

¹⁹ Gulden Aydin, feature, 27.10.2000, ‘Suicide has become fate’ Hurriyet

²⁰ Ferai Tinc, column, 27.10.2000, ‘When life becomes a burden’ Hurriyet, author’s emphasis.

²¹ Most columnists in this data favour darker fonts to provide extra emphasis in their arguments. When significant, I have also found it necessary to highlight some of the data in the text throughout. To avoid confusion I will be giving the source of the highlights in the footnotes in the case studies.

²² Taha Akyol, column, 28.10.2000, Milliyet

interview and a feature story, appeared in the Sunday edition of Sabah newspaper, both raising awareness of the importance of education for women in the Southeast region. The interview headlined “*It only costs 10 million TL to give a girl an education*” (Sabah, 05.11.2000)²³, was conducted with a female NGO member working with the CATOM, the Multi-purpose Community Centres designed to improve gender parity in this part of Turkey²⁴. In the January feature, again prepared by the same female journalist (Sabah, 07.01.2000)²⁵, this time the coverage was about the efforts of an NGO to educate girls in the Southeast with the help of a sponsoring mobile communication company²⁶.

The main suggestion here was that, by educating girls and offering them the opportunity to earn their own income, the discrepancy between the modern girls of Turkey and the girls of Batman would be significantly reduced with gender relations in the region reshaped. In other words, a career and an education are seen as the foremost vessels in bridging the gap between the luckier girls of the big cities and the suppressed girls in Batman. While there appears to be no doubt that poor education in the region is a major social problem in general, stress is always placed upon educating women and saving them, rather than on changing gender relations by educating the men.

4.2.2 Ethnic identity & difference

There seems to be no concrete research about the ethnic origins of the suicides. And yet, the articles back up the assumption that since the region hosts a dense population of Kurdish citizens, an overriding majority of the suicides will be Kurdish²⁷. Five feature stories, written by journalists investigating the events in the region, especially emphasize the ethnic identities

²³ Elif Urgan, interview, 05.11.2000, ‘It costs only 10 million TL to give a girl education’, Sabah. (Back in 2000, 10 million TL would cost probably around six or seven pounds.)

²⁴ CATOM provides classes on various subjects, and skills and workspace for women where they make crafts that are later to be sold through the Centre.

²⁵ Elif Urgan, feature, 07.01.2000, ‘I am not a wanderer, neither free...’ Sabah.

²⁶ The title of this feature ‘I am not a wanderer, neither free’ is a word pun on a TV advertising campaign launched in 2000 by the company. The series of TV advertisements would feature an independent and free spirited young backpacker girl travelling all around Turkey including the eastern regions and singing that she was free. The pay-as-you-go cards of the company would contribute to her freedom. When Batman suicides were brought to the media’s attention, many writers pointed out the sad irony of the two contrasting worlds. For example, in the feature entitled ‘Batman, the city where hope dies’ on 19.10.2000 by Semra Kardesoglu, the feature on the story of a girl who had just recently committed suicide ends with the following: “In the room where Gulcan’s blood stains were cleaned, a girl with her rucksack on her back sings “I am free” on the television.”

²⁷ News items which report new suicides or research conducted about the increasing rate of suicides, do not share the same emotive descriptions on ethnic difference.

of the women who committed suicide, by detailed descriptions of the language spoken in the households or by specific cultural particularities. In these feature stories, the suicide's cultural context is described as almost exotically different. In fact, efforts to illustrate this sympathy are sometimes overtly exaggerated, as in the feature story in Hurriyet (30.03.2001)²⁸. The feature has the striking subtitle "*The cats that spoke Kurdish*":

"I go on to explore the rest of the house. Inside a hut covered with plastic hang series of tobacco leaves. When I see the tawny cat, I walk after it and call it "psi psi" it does not look at me. Years ago Musa Anter's cats also had not looked at me. Anter had said: "My daughter, we are Kurdish, our cats are Kurdish too. How would they understand psi psi? Call it miri miri so that they will come to you." I call the tawny cat "miri miri", and it turns and looks at me."

In other features too, there is a special emphasis on ethnic identity by referring to the spoken language:

"Even though she could not speak a word of Turkish, she told the truth so well with the words her neighbour translated, simple but heavy words each of which came as a blow on our face." (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)²⁹

"The old woman did not know Turkish. Her younger daughter Selma, goes and sits next to her mother who tells Filiz's [the suicide's] story in Kurdish." (Sabah, 16.09.2000)³⁰

In one feature story, ethnic identity is sympathetically emphasised through the cultural preferences of a suicide victim who would listen to Kurdish singers, but also watched Turkish movies: "...She would listen to Şivan Perver, but she would not miss the Turkish movies" (Milliyet, 19.10.2000)³¹. The writer in this case approves of, even legitimising her culturally specific choice of music with the subtle use of the compensatory conjunction "but". For the journalist, the girl was pleasingly open to two identities, and enjoyed both Turkish and Kurdish culture. We find the follow up on this theme in a column published in the same newspaper almost a week later. This column is in fact the only one that directly discusses the

²⁸ Gulden Aydin, feature, 30.03. 2001, 'Mother of 13 in the suicide caravan', Hurriyet, emphasis mine.

²⁹ Gulden Aydin, feature, 27.10.2000, 'Suicide has become fate', Hurriyet

³⁰ Fugen Unal Sen, feature, 16.09.2000, 'The truth behind the suicides', Sabah

³¹ Semra Kardesoglu, feature, 19.10.2000, 'Batman, the city where hope dies', Milliyet, emphasis mine.

relationship between being Kurdish and suicides, and underlining that there is a clash of modern and traditional cultures in the region: the journalist argues “*not being Kurdish but being Kurdish in a closed society is an additional problem in this clash of cultures*” (Milliyet, 25.10.2000)³². It might be useful to quote here the rest of the argument by this columnist:

“If the multiple causes of depression, which can result in suicide, are to be briefly summarised, we can call it “the difficulty to socialize”. Living in such a ‘closed society’, it is harder for a Kurd to overcome “the difficulty to socialize” by forming comforting relationships and communications.”

The columnist here makes a direct link between the suicides and the Kurdish social structure in the region which leads to, in his terms, *a difficulty to socialise*. When we consider his assertion alongside the description of the Kurdish girl who impressed the journalist by watching Turkish movies, we are pointed at a perceived difficulty, i.e. for the two different worlds to mix. In this regard, overcoming the barriers of living in a closed society and opening up to the urban/Turkish world of the journalists is seen as a painful but nevertheless vital task.

Not all columnists discuss the specific ethnic identity in the region in detail. In fact, the Kurdish make up of the region is often not directly discussed. However, it should be noted that euphemistic terms like “*differences in ethnic origin and religious sects*”, “*regional difference*” or “*Southeast*” are frequently used while referring to Kurdish citizens. In short, we can say that most news stories do allude to the ethnic particularity of the region, while in the feature stories there is an attempt to focus more on the exotic and folkloric elements in their depictions.

4.2.3 Poverty

Another much repeated theme throughout the stories is the economic background of the suicides with a clear link often made between the economic backwardness of the region and the suicide rate. Since the research undertaken by government institutions, such as the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) and the Family Research Institution of the

³² Taha Akyol, column, 25.10.2000, ‘Batman is a symbol’ Milliyet

Ministry, has identified economic status as one of the prominent causes of suicides, quite frequently news articles bring up the issue of poverty, referring to the findings of this research. This factor is again emphasised most heavily in feature stories and columns, and it allows for a dramatic human-interest angle in the coverage. Those who commit suicide are described as unable to stand the circumstances in which they lived.

“She lives in that ruin, which destroys mental and physical health, is too small even for the minimum amount of reason. She wants a fridge, a TV. She misses things. It does not happen. It makes her commit suicide.” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)³³

The poverty of the families is conveyed through detailed depictions of the houses the journalists have been into. The descriptions are very visual, and narrated to create an effect of liveliness for the readers, hence adding to the dramatisation:

“The house, which was transformed from a one floor shanty house into an apartment with three floors” (Sabah, 16.09.2000)³⁴

“That night, I cannot find anything to say in that room where the smell of dung and sewer does not even for a second let a person alone” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)³⁵

Another feature goes to lengths to describe the poverty of the suicide’s family:

“According to police documents, her address is “The Opposite Neighbourhood”³⁶, the house next to the electric transformer”. Semra’s [the suicide] house does not have a legal address because it does not have a place in the housing development plan. There are shanty houses and windmills sparsely scattered in the middle of a plain. There is no public transportation. Semra’s house is an unfinished shanty house. No outside painting, no door, no glass on the windows.” (Hurriyet, 16.06.2002)³⁷

³³ Gulden Aydin, feature, 27.10.2000, ‘Suicide has become fate’ Hurriyet

³⁴ Fugen Unal Sen, feature, 16.09.2000, ‘The truth behind the suicides’ Sabah

³⁵ Ferai Tinc, column, 27.10.2000, ‘When life becomes a burden’, Hurriyet

³⁶ In the original text, “Karsi neighbourhood.” In Turkish, “karşı” means “the opposite.”

³⁷ Gulden Aydin, feature, 16.06.2002, ‘In the last five months, 17 women have committed suicide in Urfa’, Hurriyet

For the columnists, the picture is one of high contrast between the rural and urban parts of Turkey, and this economic inequality is largely found to be responsible for the “*social outbreaks*” (Hurriyet, 28.05.2001)³⁸, which in return result in suicides. One columnist remarks “*terror in the region has ended but the economic wreckage is devastating*” (Sabah, 07.11.2000)³⁹. In fact, all columns refer to poverty either directly or indirectly pointing to how economic change had brought about social change in an unbalanced and undesirable way. This is because, it is largely argued, the region cannot socially and culturally catch up with the technological change that is already under way. One columnist ironically mentions how the local education centre had to open up a course on “*how to use mobile phones efficiently*” (Sabah, 18.09.2000)⁴⁰. This, for the columnists, produces “*another Turkey*” in the Southeast (Hurriyet, 25.09.2000)⁴¹, which, to the inhabitants of Istanbul’s high streets is like “*another planet*” (Sabah, 18.09.2000)⁴². Another columnist describes the gap as the “*clash of times*” and asks if “*Turkey had grown in a more balanced way, would the “clash of times” be so violent?*” (Hurriyet, 24.10.2000)⁴³

4.2.4 Protecting moral values - the dangerous media

For the journalists, then, the “other Turkey” clearly differs from the western cities, with its poor villages, traditions, and gender inequality. This difference is seen as posing the greatest problem, not only because it needs to be eliminated for the living standards of women to improve, but also as the media (particularly TV) makes women aware of their difference by presenting them with images of alternative life styles, making their lives even more unbearable. Journalists emphasise the impact of television on women’s lives very clearly as can be seen in the subtitle “*the only way out is television*” (Sabah, 16.09.2000)⁴⁴:

“In the Southeast, the only thing that brings the outside to the young girls is television. For this reason as soon as work is done they sit in front of the TV. In front of that TV that is taken out onto the terrace passes days, years, lives. Seeing lives that are so much more colourful than theirs, young girls become depressed.”

³⁸ Enis Berberoglu talks especially about this social outbreak in his column ‘Women are dying in Batman’ on 28.05.2001, Hurriyet

³⁹ Ruhat Mengi, column, 07.11.2000, ‘Southeast should be declared a disaster zone’ Sabah

⁴⁰ Ahmet Tan, column, 18.09.2000, ‘Zeugma is there, Batman is here’ Sabah

⁴¹ Serdar Turgut, column, 25.09.2000, ‘What is happening in the other Turkey’ Hurriyet

⁴² Ahmet Tan, column, 18.09.2000, ‘Zeugma is there, Batman is here’ Sabah

⁴³ Zeynep Atikkan, column, 24.10.2000, ‘The clash of the times’ Hurriyet

⁴⁴ Fugen Unal Sen, feature, 16.09.2000, ‘The reason behind the suicides’ Sabah

Again, this argument is often discussed within the context of economic inequality. A columnist argues, “*Our society has had a serious, very heavy blow. Lives have been deformed*”(Hurriyet, 25.09.2000)⁴⁵ and explains:

“In the other Turkey, people want to be happy, fall in love, be with beautiful women and handsome men, earn money, buy a car, in short, live like a human being in this short life. Before, when there was no television and so on and so forth, it was possible to hide the possibility of alternatives from them. Not anymore.”

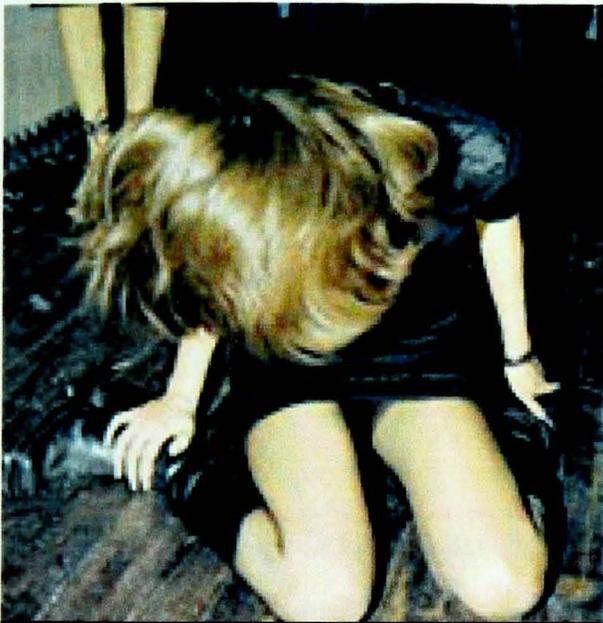


Fig.1 "Bad examples", Sabah

This awareness, in one columnist’s words, is actually what leads “*the rebellion of the slaves*”:

“Now they see a light oozing from TV screens, radios, and newspapers into their worlds which are no longer as small as they used be, and they try to reach that light.” (Sabah, 01.10.2000)⁴⁶

In this last quote, the journalist openly welcomes the way the media interlinks homes in Southeast Turkey

with the urban city centres in the West and in doing so incites awareness in the “slaves/women” in spite of their spatial/local constraints.⁴⁷ However, not all journalists are as optimistic about the revolutionary “light” emanating from the media. Most of the news items point to a danger: women are not only demanding more when they watch television, but they cannot tell the (morally) good from the bad in TV programmes, and try to follow “bad examples” such as those presented in celebrity shows⁴⁸. This recurring argument is based on

⁴⁵ Serdar Turgut, column, 25.09.2000, ‘What is happening in the other Turkey?’ Hurriyet

⁴⁶ Gulay Gokturk, column, 01.10.2000, ‘The rebellion of the slaves’ Sabah, emphasis mine

⁴⁷ For the journalist, by connecting the life in the East with that in the West, the traditional way of life will inevitably change. If we leave aside the journalist’s enthusiasm about the prospect and content of such change, the argument on how media reshapes traditional life and identities is in fact very much reminiscent of what Meyrowitz (1985) argues in his seminal work, *No Sense of Place*.

⁴⁸ In these stories, what is seen as especially dangerous to national moral codes are Turkish celebrity programmes, called *Televole* by the Turkish public. These are strongly criticised for broadcasting nationwide the eccentric lives of a minority, movie stars and members of the upper classes, as if their lives were the norm in the big cities.

the findings of Diyanet's (Directorate of Religious Affairs) investigations in the region, and the President of Diyanet's harsh criticisms of these programmes, as well as the observations of other witnesses, including families, friends, local bar and security organisations. In fact, there seems to be agreement between the journalists and the state institutions on the desirability of limiting exposure of modern life for the region.

This becomes particularly evident when journalists frequently foreground the debate on the negative influence TV has on women and young girls in Batman. This is the case in the full-page feature story "*Suicide has become fate*" (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁴⁹. On the left hand side of the page runs a one-column box, an interview with a police official in the Batman Security Office, in which he shares his observations about the causes of suicides. His very last comment is on the influence of television in the region; however, the box has a title in bold letters stating "*Televole programmes should be stopped*". A similar example can be observed in a human-interest story in Sabah newspaper, titled "*Bad Examples*" (Sabah, 19.01.2001)⁵⁰. The news reports a speech by the President of Diyanet, and the journalist's open support is evident:

"The President of Diyanet has made important warnings about the images of "fake world" that are broadcast to millions on TV. (...) The devastating consequences that these images can lead to were again revealed by research carried out by Diyanet. (...) [The President] Mehmet Nuri Yilmaz invited the rich and the famous to act more responsibly and made the following call..."

Six visual images accompanying the article also support the argument that television is a bad influence. One of these is the picture of the President of Diyanet, the second a clipping from a (possibly) local newspaper showing a young suicide's picture and lamenting "*Again a suicide, again a young girl*". On the top part of the news item there are three pictures, displaying girls drunk in nightclubs, or dancing ecstatically. Perhaps the most striking visual image on the page is a small illustration of two women dancing in a nightclub with the banner "*fake world*" circling around them.

⁴⁹ Gulden Aydin, feature, 27.10.2000, 'Suicide has become fate' Hurriyet

⁵⁰ Mehmet Cetingulec, human interest, 19.01.2001, 'Bad Examples' Sabah

In these depictions the threat that inflicts the peripheral *other* comes from the urban centre, the imagined locus of progress and modernity, and the place where journalists see themselves as located. Journalists are quick to disown these undesired aspects of modern life as belonging to an eccentric minority of the rich and the famous in the urban centres. However, it is not only morally dubious television content that the centre imports. Journalists were also interested in one of the findings of the investigation undertaken by the Institution of Family, which argued that girls in Batman go into relationships with public officials working in the region, in the hope that they will save them from their miserable lives. When the officers do not marry them, however, the only option left is to commit suicide⁵¹. The only time a suicide story makes it to the front-page headlines is actually when Milliyet's "exclusive" article emphasises this causal link with the title "*Either get married or die*" (23.10.2000)⁵². Later, other journalists also take up this news item. In her column, the journalist Zeynep Atikkan (Hurriyet, 24.10.2000)⁵³ twists around the metaphor of the 'father state' by portraying it as a collaborator in the suicides along with the other fathers in the region who oppress their daughters. The critical language is especially strong in this column:

"When times clash", "father state's public officers in ties" becomes only good for dirty flirting. He becomes the exploiter of "the times that clash". He seduces the girl in the mini skirt. He makes her a "whore" in the eyes of the neighbourhood. (...) (The father) beats her. Either kills her, or forces her to commit suicide."

We can argue that while these threats emanate from the centre, they are described as the deformed forms within the urban centre, which in any case the centre tries to expel, hence preserving the wholeness of the ideal Turkey for the reader.

4.2.5 Terror, insecurity and instability

The damage terror has caused in the region is another regular theme in the suicide stories, which again emerges as a differentiating factor between the region and the cities. Stories

⁵¹ This finding is supposed to be in the preliminary research conducted by the Institution. It might be interesting to note that the finding was not mentioned in the three articles reporting the preliminary research on 31st October 2000 published in Milliyet and Hurriyet, and the preceding research findings published in Hurriyet on 16 February 2001. All three are articles based on press briefs and do not have by-lines. The argument is also not mentioned on the Institution's website www.aile.gov.tr/batman.htm.

⁵² Semra Kardesoglu, front page headline, 23.10.2000, 'Either get married or die' Milliyet

⁵³ Zeynep Atikkan, column, 24.10.2000, 'The Clash of the Times' Hurriyet, emphasis mine.

usually discuss this problem by referring to the relevant findings of research carried out in the region, like that of the Diyanet, or through eyewitness accounts. There is one news article focusing solely on this subject, published in Sabah newspaper, titled *“Depression caused by terror kills”* (Sabah, 17.09.2000)⁵⁴. The item summarises the comments by three MPs from Batman, each representing a leading party. Two of the MPs mention terror among the other causes of social distress in the region; however, with the title and subtitle employed the journalist prioritises terror as the main cause of suicides:

“According to the MPs from Batman, the reality behind the increasing suicides in Batman is that the depression caused by years of terror is at the point of bursting.”

Other journalists point to the heavy feeling of distrust and insecurity in the region, but not always with the same emphasis. For example, Ferai Tinc, from Milliyet newspaper, draws attention to outlawed groups and their assaults, and how people living in the region were given false promises by these groups:

“Black clouds gather on this city, which was famous for murders with unknown perpetrators, and its Hezboullah. (...) For 23 years, these lands have bred suspicion. All tales of liberation have ended in disappointment. No one saves anyone. Neither Hezboullah, nor the PKK. But now women want to save themselves.” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁵⁵

Here, Ferai Tinc distinguishes between the terrorist groups against whom a curfew had to be implemented by the state and the population who have been exploited. Distinct from these two she locates the women, who are no longer content with false promises and want to save themselves. The state, by its very absence, is detached from this chaos and only indirectly enters the picture as the implementer of a curfew that appears both necessary and inevitable.

On the other hand, the state is very much a part of the apparent feeling of mistrust in Gulden Aydin’s feature story in Hurriyet newspaper. Even though she appears to be retelling what was told to her by her sources, mainly using direct quotes, the angle from which she chooses to tell the story distinguishes her features from others. She particularly stresses in two consecutive features how one of the suicide victims missed the village she had left behind,

⁵⁴ Sebnem Hosgor, human interest story, 17.09.2000, ‘Depression caused by terror kills’ Sabah

⁵⁵ Ferai Tinc, column, 27.10.2000, ‘When life becomes a burden’ Hurriyet author’s emphasis

“The state had emptied their village ten years ago.” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁵⁶

“She also wanted her village back, which was evacuated ten years ago.” (Hurriyet, 06.12.2000)⁵⁷

In another feature story, she interviews the family of a suicide (Hurriyet, 30.03.2001)⁵⁸. The family brings up the issue of how the armed conflict between the state and the terrorist groups had influenced them psychologically, and she also adds her own observations:

“(…) we set on the road. On certain points, there are queues because of army controls.”

“Oztekin family used to live in a village (...) 35 km further from where they now live. Armed conflicts, deaths, raids take place and at last in 1992 their village is burnt. Nurettin Oztekin [the husband] first tells of those days, then the beauty of their village.”

“The household points towards the Heybeli Mountain which goes down to the other side of the river. Two years ago 16 people were killed. Their skeletons were still there. They say Sabriye [the suicide] had witnessed this fight, and the same day saw that nightmare after having been forced to look at the corpses whose noses and ears had been cut, and following that nightmare she was no longer the same Sabriye.”

Here Gulden Aydin paints a vivid picture of terror, and while she is careful to avoid putting any blame directly on the Turkish state, by the choice of memories she decides to foreground from her interviews, she does take a critical position against the state and presents it also as responsible for the insecurity in the area. This is a divergence from other stories, where criticism is directed more at educational, social or even political policies, but not at the military actions of the state.

⁵⁶ Gulden Aydin, feature, 27.10.2000, ‘Suicide has become fate’ Hurriyet

⁵⁷ Gulden Aydin, feature, 06.12.2000, ‘In the seventh try, she succeeded in dying’ Hurriyet

⁵⁸ Gulden Aydin, feature, 30.03.2001, ‘A mother of 13 in the suicide caravan’ Hurriyet

In other criticisms of the state's handling of the problems in the region, focus is largely placed upon the discrepancy between the region and the more developed parts of Turkey. One columnist argues that "*Clash of the times*" also results in "*the clash of the cultures*" because

"Turkey missed the importance of education, and whenever regional difference was brought up as an issue, had seen them as the fantasy of the leftists, so today two different times clash in her! The rules, traditions, clothes, food and hopes of the two times clash." (Hurriyet, 17.10.2000)⁵⁹

Seeing education as the only cure to bridge the gap, she asks: "*Now, if Turkey had developed in a more balanced way, would the clash of times have been so violent?*"

Another columnist hints at the negligence of the region's problems on the part of the state. For the journalist, the problem is bigger and beyond the recent visibility of the female suicides.

"The lifting of the political ban on the Southeast has now helped us to re-discover the bitter and old tragedies. (...) If we think about the fire that took over the whole region, and the blood that was shed, we cannot tell for sure whether or not the deaths of the young girls, one after another, would be lost in between all that was taking place ten years ago. But even if this tragedy were noticed, it would probably be interpreted within the limits of a political cause and effect relationship." (Hurriyet, 21.03.2001)⁶⁰

In short, then, journalists agree that it is the duty of the state to "*give hope and excitement to the people in the Southeast, which has been cleaned of terror*" (Sabah, 17.09.2000)⁶¹ and urge the state to develop policies to help people in the Southeast, to bring about a new direction now that the terrorist threat has been overcome. However, the degree and content of the criticisms varies when discussing the past policies of the state.

4.3 Overarching arguments and the main discourse

⁵⁹ Zeynep Atikkkan, column, 17.10.2000, 'Clash of the times' Hurriyet, emphasis not mine

⁶⁰ Enis Berberoglu, column, 21.03.2001, 'The tough choice facing the girl in Batman' Hurriyet, author's emphasis

⁶¹ Gungor Mengi, column, 17.09.2000, 'Come on' Sabah

As noticeable from the analysis of main themes emerging through the coverage of the Batman suicides there is no prominent divergence between the three newspapers, in terms of the degree of criticism they level against the state, the emphasis placed on the hardships of life for women in Batman, or on the picture of the Southeast painted for the readers. This is not unexpected given the very similar political standpoints of the newspapers within which the journalists work. Divergences of opinions are observable only on a more individual level depending on the journalist, and particularly on the role and responsibilities of the state regarding the negligence of the region. On this issue, the image of the state in the journalists' discussions varies from that of a benevolent to a malevolent father figure.

Nevertheless, the convergence in the stories is much more apparent and striking. Certain journalistic preferences in coverage aside, we can see the following common arguments emerging through the discussion of the themes:

- Batman is a part of the Southeast, which has suffered from terror in the past.
- There is a clash between the cultures of Turkey and the Southeast, which is not easily bridgeable.
- Social class and lack of education are major impediments to achieving freedom and happiness in the region.
- The traditional structure in the region resists change and modernization.
- Women in Batman are very much oppressed and silenced by their society, and therefore urgently need help.
- Most of the women who committed suicide are Kurdish.
- Relatives of the victims are not willing to change the social system, or investigate the reasons for the suicides.
- Women in Batman often cannot differentiate between what is modern and what are degenerate forms of modern ways of living – they can become the victims of undesired patterns of modern life.
- Women in Batman, along with other residents, have also been victims of the armed conflict between the state and terrorist groups.
- It is the state's responsibility to help these people.

When we consider the arguments as a whole, we can find them converging towards a general and overarching theme that can be summarised as the notion that women in Batman in particular and the region as a whole are in urgent need of help from the centre in order to be saved. This urban centre, where journalists clearly locate themselves along with the modern institutions of the state and the urban dwellers, emerges here as the other of “Other Turkey”. Put differently, where journalists are located is also where modernity exists, as opposed to the “other Turkey”, an evident declaration of *l’ipseité*, where not only poverty but also gender inequality, oppressive traditions, unfulfilled wishes from life, ethnic differences and serious problems caused by armed conflicts in the region prevail. As a result, the stories narrated by the journalists simply present the accounts of outsiders visiting the peripheries and the other people who live there. In this respect, the occasional divergences among the journalists’ criticism of certain state policies also lose their significance, as it is not the state in particular but the agreed image of the centre as a whole, which becomes the motor of change by representing the model of development for the ‘Other Turkey’⁶².

And yet, this Turkey is not only a model, but also a protector and guardian for the “Other” one. This entrusts the centre with certain responsibilities, while enhancing its superiority and power. In fact, there is an agreement among the journalists that whatever is going on in the Southeast is/should be of great concern for the centre. “*Until what is going on in the Other Turkey is a matter of conscience for this country and people take active action, such a country cannot have a future*” (Hurriyet, 25.09.2000)⁶³ argues one columnist, carefully distinguishing between his country (Turkey) and the other country, the other Turkey. His call for urgent action and help is an important one, replicated in many other columns and features and reminds us of Spivak’s criticisms of the role of intellectuals in perpetuating hegemonic relationships. Even though Spivak’s concern in her writings is with the subaltern, and she takes careful effort to make it clear that it is not enough to be postcolonial or to be the member of an ethnic minority in order to be *subaltern* since “that word is reserved for the sheer heterogeneity of decolonised space” (1999: 310), the discussion that she develops is nevertheless applicable to our analysis. In her well-known article (1988b), she argues that the intellectuals, in representing and speaking for the oppressed, naturally take the position of the “Self”, and they persistently form the oppressed as the “Other”. Through this process the

⁶² How journalists linguistically separate themselves from the “other Turkey” and incorporate themselves within the centre will be further analysed in the following paragraphs.

⁶³ Serdar Turgut, column, 25.09.2000, ‘What is happening in the Other Turkey?’ Hurriyet.

oppressed turn into what Spivak calls “the Self’s shadow, the periphery”. Such a conception does not only disguise the power relationship implicit in this positioning, it also locates the agency of change not in the oppressed, who are seen as too helpless or incapable, but in the intellectuals, who emerge as the saviours.

In the suicide stories written by the intellectuals in this case study, namely the journalists, we can observe the formation of a similar discourse on the centre/periphery relationship in Turkey. As journalists clearly distinguish themselves and their lives from that of the region, they create a problem-free centre to represent Turkey and Turkish people, and offer it as a model which can be replicated, with their help, to solve the problems in the region. This approach not only locates the source of progress outside the Southeast, but it also further enhances the divide between the two regions in Turkey, and results in the construction of the discourse legitimising the superiority of the centre/us with regards to the periphery/them.

The discourse defining the centre and peripheries of Turkey is apparent not only on a thematic level, but also more importantly, realized through discursive strategies at a language level in the texts. The following part of the analysis seeks to display the linguistic means through which this discourse is fleshed out in the texts. While exposing those means, the analysis can also help us reveal the intricacies of how the centre-periphery relationship is constructed through women -and by women- in Turkey.

4.4 Processing the text- how the discourse was realised in the texts

Unlike the other case studies, the Batman case offers two commonly used literary mechanisms that enhance the superiority of the centre in the Batman stories, which are the forms of narration and characterisation used by journalists to cover the events. Because I find them uniquely important in this case study, I have decided to expand on them specifically. The first of these is narration and the second is characterisation.

4.4.1 Narration

With its already emotional content, the Batman stories are written to direct the reader’s attention to the particular problems by highlighting the dramatic set of events. In this respect, the headlines and titles emerge as problem oriented, rather than offering solutions, and

highlight the tragic dimensions of the events: “*Batman, the city where hope dies*” “*The weather is not of spring but of sadness in Batman*”, “*Hear this scream*” “*When life becomes a burden*” (Milliyet, 19.10.2000; Sabah, 07.04.2001; Hurriyet, 16.06.2002; Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁶⁴. The subheadings are also developed to further the dramatic effect, such as “*Could not reunite with her love*” “*Children and flies*” “*It is over now*” or “*The responsible ones*” (Sabah, 16.09.2000; Milliyet, 19.10.2000; Milliyet, 23.10.2000; Sabah, 09.01.2001)⁶⁵.

The visuals accompanying the news stories, which include pictures of the suicides, their families and children who are left behind, are especially powerful and increase the emotional charge of the stories. Where possible photographs of the authorities interviewed on the matter are also included in the layout. Visuals are used more heavily in feature stories, some of which also include pictures of happier girls who, with help from NGO organizations, could get a job or continue their education. These girls are, in the words of the previously quoted journalist, “*the freed slaves*” (Sabah, 01.10.2000)⁶⁶. Their happiness is in stark contrast to both the emotional and physical deprivation that can be felt through the other pictures, and they confirm to the readers that all can be bettered only through education and job opportunities. (See fig.3)

This rich visual content usually helps to dramatise the stories further but what is more, it enhances the credibility of the eyewitness accounts of the features stories. And yet, even without the help of photographs, detailed descriptions with vivid adjectives provide the visuals for the story. In fact, adjectives remain as the single most powerful tool for the journalists in the narration of the stories. They set the *mise en scène* with “*dusty roads*” “*sparsely scattered squatters*” “*broken Turkish*” “*short runty man*” “*delicious almond trees in pink-white blossoms*”(Sabah, 16.09.2000; Hurriyet, 16.06.2002; Hurriyet, 30.03.2001; *ibid.*; Milliyet, 07.04.2001)⁶⁷. In many cases, exaggerations, metaphors and personalisations also

⁶⁴ In the order of citation: Sema Kardesoglu, 19.10.2000, Milliyet; Leyla Umar, 07.04.2001 Sabah; Gulden Aydin, 16.06.2002, Hurriyet; Ferai Tinc, 27.10.2000, Hurriyet.

⁶⁵ In the order of citation: Fügen Unal Sen, 16.09.2000, ‘The truth behind the suicides’ Sabah; Semra Kardesoglu, 19.10.2000, ‘Batman, the city where hope dies’ Milliyet; Semra Kardesoglu, 23.10.2000, ‘Either get married or die’ Milliyet; Mehmet Cetingöleç, 09.01.2001, ‘Bad Examples’ Sabah.

⁶⁶ Gulay Gokturk, column, 01.10.2000, ‘The rebellion of the slaves’ Sabah, emphasis mine

⁶⁷ In the order of citation: Fügen Unal Sen, 16.09.2000, ‘The truth behind the suicides’ Sabah; Gulden Aydin, 16.06.2002, ‘In the last five months, 17 women have committed suicide in Urfa’ Hurriyet; Gulden Aydin, 30.03.2001, ‘Mother of 13 in the suicide caravan’ Hurriyet; *ibid.*; Leyla Umar, 07.04.2001, ‘The weather is not of spring but of sadness in Batman’ Milliyet.

accompany the graphic descriptions and add to the visual imagery provided for the readers. In the following extract, a columnist translates the miserable living conditions for her readers:

“She drags life in this cold room, with her husband’s other wife and God knows how many children, with old paint falling from the walls, and black bugs scrambling to and fro under the mattresses on the floor, even they do not want to stay here.”(Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁶⁸

In this elaborate narrative style, choice of words is particularly significant: it is not the suicide that wants to escape – even her life needs to be *dragged* along in the rundown house. The personification of the black bugs who know better than to stay also helps the reader to visualize her suffering. Again, another columnist describes a derelict setting where girls not only die, but are *“walked to their deaths”* by the realities of the region:

“Batman, where the blackness of the oil [petrol] has darkened the fates of some young girls, can be best told by the dusty roads, the fields of yellow grass, and silence. What tells of the realities that walk the girls to death?” (Sabah, 16.09.2000)⁶⁹

The metaphor of deathly silence is a common motif used throughout the narrations:

“As soon as we step inside through a wooden door, we are greeted by silence.” (Sabah, 16.09.2000)⁷⁰

Most of the time, this heavily emotional coverage resembles the narrative style of fiction rather than news. Once again, this is particularly evident in columns, especially in columns written by female journalists, and in feature stories, all of which are written by female journalists, narrating the events as personal accounts of what has happened. This style of narration, especially in the features, places the journalists at the centre, observing a tragic story unfolding. In some cases, even though the journalists could not possibly have witnessed the last moments of the suicides, events are told as if they are eyewitness accounts:

⁶⁸ Ferai Tinc, column, 27.10.2000, ‘When life becomes a burden’ Hurriyet

⁶⁹ Fugen Unal Sen, feature, 16.09.2000, ‘The reality behind the suicides’ Sabah

⁷⁰ Fugen Unal Sen, feature, 16.09.2000, ‘The reality behind the suicides’ Sabah

“(...) On the morning of March 17th, when everybody was asleep, she went into the kitchen. She tied the rope into a loop, put it around her neck and kicked the chair...” (Hurriyet, 30.03.2001)⁷¹

“The rest happened very fast. Filiz came home, cleaned the house, and helped with the dinner. And then...” (Sabah, 16.09.2000)⁷²

“Fatma put the barrel across her neck, and pulled the trigger. Her head blew up.” (Hurriyet, 16.06.2002)⁷³

Particular descriptive tools of Turkish language can also be employed to enhance the fictionalisation of the stories, such as the use of the inferential past tense⁷⁴. This particular form of past tense is often associated with fiction writing rather than fact and contributes to the tale telling effect. It is mainly encountered in stories or jokes, and gives the effect of hearsay being widely used in daily spoken and written Turkish. Exact translation of the inferential tense does not exist in the English language however the intended meaning is as follows⁷⁵:

“(...) When she learned how to read and write, she would say, “this much is enough”. And then she would go to the cotton fields to work. If, working from six in the morning till the darkness fell, she gathered 100 kilos; she would earn three million liras. She would take the money to her family. If anything were left after that, she would buy herself a skirt.” (Milliyet, 19.10.2000)⁷⁶

“(...) Fadile would not leave any notes before she put the rope around her neck. She would not have known how to read or write anyway.” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁷⁷

⁷¹ Gulden Aydin, feature, 30.03.2001, ‘A mother of 13 in the suicide caravan’ Hurriyet

⁷² Fugen Unal Sen, feature 16.09.2000, ‘The reality behind the suicides’ Sabah

⁷³ Gulden Aydin, feature 16.06.2002, ‘In the past five months, 17 women have committed suicide in Urfa’ Hurriyet

⁷⁴ in Turkish: miş’li geçmiş zaman

⁷⁵ This tense can imply many other meanings, such as doubt, possibility, and uncertainty. Here it is used to enhance the story effect and therefore I have tried to translate it to give the same impact in English.

⁷⁶ Semra Kardesoglu, feature, 19.10.2000, ‘Batman, the city where hope dies’ Milliyet

⁷⁷ Gulden Aydin, feature, 27.10.2000, ‘Suicide has become fate’ Hurriyet

The effect here is significantly different to that of a sentence with regular past tense. The informality of the inferential tense contributes to the emotional tone and invites the readers to empathise with the suicides, while at the same time evoking the visual aids of the imagination one uses while listening to a tale.

Another commonly applied tool to add to the dramatic effect is to use mis-constructed sentences. Again this is a narrative form specific to the Turkish language and is made by changing the word order by for example putting the verb at the start of the sentence. Even though it is almost impossible to translate a mis-constructed sentence, the word order would have sounded irregular in the same way as saying “*Nefiye Kaya exactly six times had been at death’s door and come back. Finally succeeded she in dying*” (Hurriyet, 16.12.2000)⁷⁸, instead of “Nefiye Kaya had been at death’s door and come back exactly six times. (...) She finally succeeded in dying.” Mis-constructed sentences are a more dramatic form usually met in literary pieces in Turkish. They again detach the text from the conventional style used in news items, while also allowing the writer to shift the emphasis of the sentence as desired. In the above example, the mis-constructed sentence puts the stress not on the event but on the character and the number of times she had tried to commit suicide before.

Frequent use of ellipses, both in features and in columns also charge these depictions with emotions. The readers are first invited to witness the lives of the suicides and then with the use of the ellipses, they are expected to think further about the events and complete the story in their minds, as in the case of the column quoted below:

“According to her sister, she never had any loved ones that she wanted to be reunited with...”
(Milliyet, 19.10.2000)⁷⁹

When used in columns, the ellipses also ask the reader to join the author and fill in the imagery or vision started out by her/him:

“A few years ago in Hakkari, in between the seeds that were beginning to sprout, I had from time to time witnessed gazes with no hope of future... The feeling of not being able to see the

⁷⁸ Gulden Aydin, feature, 06.12.2000, ‘In the seventh try, she succeeded’ Hurriyet

⁷⁹ Semra Kardesoglu, feature, 19.10.2000, ‘Batman, the city where hope dies’ Milliyet

light at the end the tunnel was growing through scarcity and poverty...”(Milliyet, 26.10.2000)⁸⁰

“Life will beat death. Maybe now, maybe in two generations...” (Sabah, 01.10.2000)⁸¹

Regardless of where they are used, the ellipses introduce a feeling of interactivity in inviting the reader to complete the depictions or arguments initiated by the writer. It provides a shared platform on which the journalist and the reader can build imagery around the suicides in Batman. The use of punctuation, the often-exaggerated emotional style, generous use of metaphors, personalisation and other literary tools, combined with the already dramatic content almost turn the events into fiction. Given the fact that most of these literary tools are employed by female journalists, we could assume an effort here to approach the issue with female sensitivity, a declaration of solidarity with the “women out there”. However, an inherent division already exists in this attempt, putting women in Batman in one camp, and the journalists, and through them, us the readers into another. This is particularly evident in the frequent use of the deixis ‘we’ throughout the stories:

“What we are going to tell now is the story of the last one to commit suicide, Sabriye Öztekin’s. The story of a mother of 13 children.” (Hurriyet, 30.03.2001)⁸²

“We sit down next to Filiz’s mother Hanife Teyze. We listen to Filiz’ last supper and the 19 years of life that carried her to this end” (Sabah, 16.09.2000)⁸³

As discussed previously, journalists here see themselves as initially located in the centre, witnessing/living/commentating on the events temporarily, rather than being a part of the “other Turkey” where suicides are taking place. However, the readers are also carefully positioned through the mode of address used to narrate the stories. The deixis “we” in these quotes clearly distinguishes the storytellers from the story, as the journalists tell “us”, the readers, about “them”, the suicides. This not only assumes that all readers are located, in a geographical and more figurative sense, outside the “other Turkey” along with the journalists, but it can also help the readers visualize and live through the events with the storyteller, and

⁸⁰ Zeynep Oral, column, 26.10.2000, ‘Deaths and Roles’ Milliyet

⁸¹ Gulay Gokturk, column, 01.10.2000, ‘The rebellion of the slaves’ Sabah

⁸² Gulden Aydin, feature, 30.03.2001, ‘A mother of 13 in the suicide caravan’ Hurriyet

⁸³ Fugen Unal Sen, feature, 16.09.2000, ‘The reality behind the suicides’ Sabah

associate themselves with the storyteller rather than the characters in the story. The story, after all, is told to “us”, who are naturally closer to the writer, who can complete the imagery that she lays out to us, and who will share her concerns about the tragedies of the region. This is nowhere more evident than in the following words of a female columnist:

“We cannot just give our attention to prisons, political and economic mistakes and leave them to their fates, it is enough we did that!” (Sabah, 07.11.2000)⁸⁴

Through the distinct mode of address in the Batman case study, which is also apparent in the other two case studies, the news stories select their readers. It is important to note here that the discursive subject positions in the texts should not be collapsed outright with the actual readers of the newspapers. At the same time, readers of these columns should not just be dismissed as an ideal/fictitious reader either, constructed by the author, and fixed by his text forever. Rather this double figure of readership opens up a relationship between the readers *in* the stories and the actual readers *of* the stories, which Wolfgang Iser (1974), in his analysis of literary texts, calls the *implied readers* of the texts.

Iser uses the term ‘implied reader’ as a concept that incorporates “both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader’s actualisation of this potential” (1974: xii). The implied reader is called into existence at the moment of the actual readers’ active engagement with the texts. The readers relate to the texts, and “slip into the role mapped out by the texts” for them whenever “we perform the role assigned to us by placing ourselves at the disposal of someone else’s thoughts” (2000: 248). For Iser, this process will bring about a split of roles, a moment of hesitation and maybe rejection, for “on the one hand we are prepared to assume the role, and on the other we cannot cut ourselves from what we are” (ibid.). The resultant tension will call for a resolution but this will only come about by incorporating the new experience offered by the text, in short accepting the position asked by the text (ibid.: 249). This will be encouraged through the repertoire of familiar patterns and themes in the text, which steer the act of reading, and techniques or strategies used to set the familiar against the unfamiliar (1974: 288). But most important of all, Iser notes that the implied reader, as an active process of meaning making, will always be strictly contextual,

⁸⁴ Ruhat Mengi, column, 07.11.2000, ‘The Southeast should be declared a war zone’ Sabah

and “will vary historically from one age to another –and not to a typology of possible readers” (1974: xii)

While Iser’s study is about novels, it can explain the function and role of the readers in the news stories for the operation of dominant discourses in the society. While there is always the chance that the actual readers might reject these subject positions, it is more likely that readers will choose to identify with them. This is helped not only by the style and the mode of address in the text, but also because within the time frame in which the actual readers are reading the texts, they will already be positioned within the dominant discourses of national identity and modernity within Turkey

And finally, before analysing the characterisations in the stories, it is necessary to note that all quotes cited in this part of the analysis come from news items written by female journalists. The similar subjective, self-reflexive and dramatic styles found across the three newspapers might actually hint at editorial expectations from these journalists to introduce that sensitivity in covering these stories, and approach the events with pure empathy. This is not particular to Turkey, many critics have voiced their concern over how market-driven dynamics of journalism today encourage more humanized news to increase the appeal for audiences, rather than traditional news journalism. As van Zoonen (1998) demonstrates, stereotypical views on what female journalists can and cannot do fit in perfectly with the shift in news towards human interest and more life-style news. This trend can lead to assigning female journalists “to subjects they are supposedly good at and expecting the human touch of women” in the newsroom (1998: 46). And yet, it would be unfair to claim that it is only editorial decisions that lead to the overly reflexive and emotional style in the coverage of suicides. While this probably had been expected on an editorial level, female journalists do come across as sincere in their concerns about the deaths in Batman and personally and emotionally involved with the stories they are covering. However, this ironically comes at the cost of making suicides a problem of Southeast women, something emotional, feminine, personal, happening not “here” but “out there”. As such, it confirms the divide within Turkey, while also working to naturalise the superiority of the more powerful centre with regard to the weaker periphery in need of help, which will come in the form of change located initially in the centre.

While this narrative style works to naturalise the superiority of “Turkey” with regard to the “other Turkey” (since the journalist/centre remains as the only one that can change the

narrative/women's fates), it also allocates the parts to be played by the main characters of the story.

4.4.2 Characterisation - Main actors/ victims, villains & guardian angels

Narrative style alone does not create a good story, there also needs to be a well-defined cast of characters⁸⁵. As with all good stories, the Batman suicides offer dramatised personae that act to a narrative line. The recurring characters in the suicide stories can be grouped into villains, victims, and guardians who offer their help, which works to the victimization of women, vilification of men in the region, and securing the role of the centre as the guardians.

The foremost victims in the stories are without doubt the women who commit suicide. As



Fig.2 "Batman, the City Where Hope Dies", Milliyet

discussed previously in the thematic analysis, women in Batman are often discussed within the rhetoric of saving, as 'helpless women' to be rescued. The theatrical depictions of how women committed suicide in a state of hopelessness, the use of literary tools also confirm their victim status. The descriptive tone without exception portrays a picture of suffering. Images

of *dying women, children crying, children left behind, girls forced into*

marriages, women who want to be saved, suffering women are accentuated with the metaphors such as *slaves, young girls running towards death one after another, women beaten blue by their husbands* and so on. These *stories of tyranny* also stand in sharp contrast to the status of the female journalists who conduct the interviews and write about the events.

⁸⁵ The importance of characters in stories has been highlighted first and in most exquisite detail by Vladimir Propp (1968) in his book *Morphology of the Folktale*. Even though his work studied fairy folktales, his concern on the functions played out by characters has been an inspiration in building up this part of the analysis. The analysis here also differs from his work by the significance it gives to the characters themselves, not dismissing them in trying to expose their functions. In Batman news stories who the acts are done by is as important as the act that has been done.

The victim status in the Batman stories firmly places women within the terminology of slavery and rescue. And yet, women are not only portrayed as passively suffering the patriarchal pressures, but also as actively trying to “*protest their lives*” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁸⁶, “*determined to save themselves*” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁸⁷. They are described as “*forever slaves*” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁸⁸ wanting to have a future and it is particularly for this reason that they must be helped. The most dramatic use of this depiction is a column headline by a female journalist, which describes the situation as “*The rebellion of the slaves*” and the suicides as the “*martyrs of liberation*” (Sabah, 01.10.2000)⁸⁹. She argues that:

“Those young girls are looking for a way out of their lives that are turned into hell by traditions, customs, feudal morality and religious pressure. They now know that there is a world out there where to love is not punished by death, where men and women take part as equals”.

The articles define suicide as the victim-women’s last attempts at saving themselves, which makes death and suicide synonymous with freedom: “*The name of liberation in Batman is suicide*” (Milliyet, 23.10.2000)⁹⁰. Within this context, suicide resulting in death can be described as a tragic “*success*”, as visible in headlines “*When she could not succeed in dying, she ran away*” (Sabah, 21.09.2000)⁹¹ and “*In the seventh try, she succeeded in dying*” (Hurriyet, 06.12.2000)⁹².

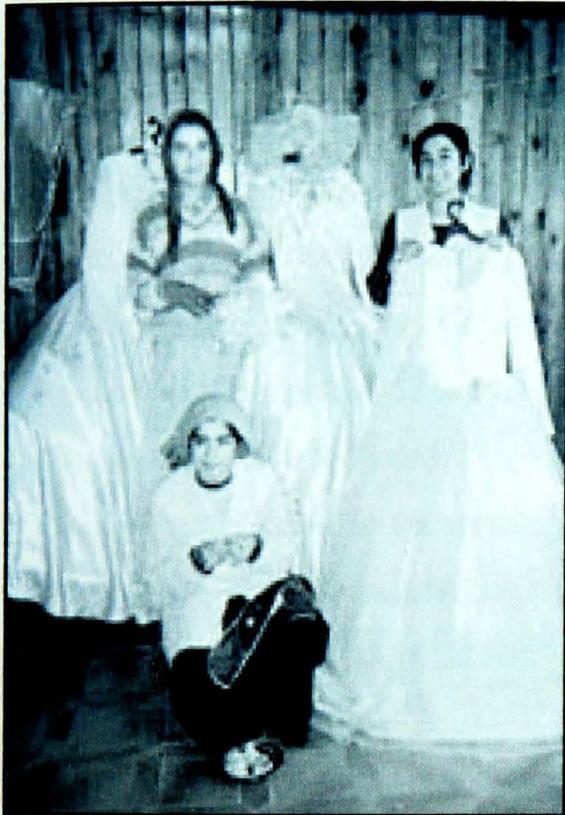


Fig. 3 “Suicide has become fate”.
Black&white photo of young girls
working in an atelier, Hurriyet,

Through this narrative, the news items not only attempt to dramatically describe the bleakness of the situation, but also call for action to save the women, which is at times voiced urgently

⁸⁶ Gulden Aydin, feature story, 27.10.2000, ‘Suicide has become fate’ Hurriyet

⁸⁷ Ferai Tinc, column, 27.10.2000, ‘When life becomes a burden’ Hurriyet

⁸⁸ Semra Kardesoglu, book review & interview with author, 29.05.2001, ‘While they seek freedom, they arrive at death’ Milliyet

⁸⁹ Gulay Gokturk, column, 01.10.2000, ‘The rebellion of the slaves’ Sabah

⁹⁰ Semra Kardesoglu, feature, 23.10.2000, ‘The name of liberation in Batman is suicide’ Milliyet

⁹¹ Halil Beytut, human interest story, 21.09.2000, ‘When she could not succeed in dying, she ran away’ Sabah, emphasis mine

⁹² Gulden Aydin, human interest feature, 06.12.2000, ‘In the seventh try she succeeded’ Hurriyet, emphasis mine

in the headlines as in “*Hear This Scream*” “*Southeast should be declared a disaster zone*” “*Come on*” (Hurriyet, 16.06.2002; Sabah, 07.11.2000; Sabah, 17.09.2000)⁹³. Photographs are powerful tools in accentuating the victim imagery, and in some items pictures of young girls who are saved and happy are also used. When considered within the whole context of Batman stories, these photographs not only create a ‘before and after’ image for the readers, but also create a small myth about the saved women. (See Fig.3) However, covering the stories within the rhetoric of saving has further consequences. Firstly, it defines and discusses women within the cliché of victimization. One female journalist makes an exception as she notes the apparent danger in her column, and argues that thinking within the discourse of social clichés leads us to accept and normalize violence within the family, which further feeds suicides and honour killings:

“Let alone changing stereotypical roles, we have internalised and accepted them so much that we keep reproducing these and setting them out as examples. As the society defines (and since we live in a male hegemonic society, defining from men’s perspective), women are “Mother” “Sister” “Housewife” “Honourable woman” “The bird that makes the nest” “Angel” “One that needs to be protected” “Altristic women” “Weak and helpless” and many times, we have elevated them to the status of “victims”. (...) Unless we overcome these clichés, these stereotypes, this perspective and this discourse, I do not think we can end violence within the families.” (Milliyet, 26.10.2000)⁹⁴

In fact, the totality of the stories does exactly what the journalist warns against, and works to strengthen clichés. Ironically, the journalist herself contributes to the emotion-laden descriptions in the rest of her column⁹⁵, without which the victim character could not have been realized.

Second, the victim character helps to carve more convincing villains out of *husbands/fathers beating up wives/daughters, authoritarian fathers/husbands, and oppressive customs and*

⁹³ In the order of citation: Gulden Aydin, feature story, 16.06.2002, ‘In the last five months 17 women have committed suicide in Urfa’ Hurriyet; Ruhat Mengi, column, 07.11.2000, ‘Southeast should be declared a disaster zone’ Sabah; Gungor Mengi, column, 17.09.2000, ‘Come on’ Sabah.

⁹⁴ Zeynep Oral, column, 26.10.2000, ‘Deaths and Roles’ Milliyet

⁹⁵ See for example the previously quoted extract from the same column: “*A few years ago in Hakkari, in between the seeds that were beginning to sprout, I had from time to time witnessed gazes with no hope of future... The feeling of not being able to see the light at the end the tunnel was growing through scarcity and poverty...*” The journalist uses the same emotional narrative style that contributes to the stereotype of hopeless victim/woman of the Southeast.

traditions. At the same time, it should be noted that men are not described with the same dramatic details as the victims are. This is not only because the already powerful presence of the helpless victim proves any further details about the oppressors to be unnecessary, but also because men themselves can appear as the victims of their surroundings. In other words, here victimization occurs at two levels through the stories, first for women and then for men. As discussed previously, men are also portrayed as suffering from poverty and terror in the region, even though there is only one human interest story reporting the findings of research under the title “*In Batman it is hard to be a man too/ they, too, are in depression*” (Hurriyet, 11.08.2001)⁹⁶ which clearly reflects this concern. However, columnists often do bring up the position of men as they discuss the situation in Batman. On such occasions, the rhetoric used for men is similar to that used for women, albeit less emotional. Men are described as “*hopeless*” souls “*who have had a blow from life*” (Hurriyet, 25.09.2000)⁹⁷, and as in urgent need of rescue, just like women: “*not only young girls and women, but also the army of jobless young men, sons, fathers who from morning till night stroll around in boredom should be considered*” (Hurriyet, 27.10.2000)⁹⁸. As one columnist argues, it is “*the people of the region*” including men, as well as women, that needs to be “*saved from the tyranny of traditions*” (Sabah, 07.11.2000)⁹⁹.

The categorization of first the women and then the men as the victims furthermore establishes the significance of the centre as a protective force. As discussed previously, the centre is associated with the journalists, the readers, and certainly involves the state. The state is one of the problematic characters in the stories, as the role played out by it can change throughout the stories. At times, it is described benevolently, as “*flooding into the region with its institutions*” (Sabah, 22.12.2001)¹⁰⁰, and as in the coverage of Diyanet, emerging as the ultimate defender of women’s rights, even raising its voice against the moral degeneracy of liberal/extravagant lifestyles emanating from within the centre. In other news items, it is criticised for negligence, or for its military policies, which were analysed in the thematic analysis of terror. Nevertheless, this does not reduce the state’s prominence as a solid part of the centre, and as a necessary mechanism that needs to be operated efficiently to prevent the suicides.

⁹⁶ no by-lines, 11.08.2001, ‘In Batman, it is hard to be a man, too’ Hurriyet,

⁹⁷ Serdar Turgut, column, 25.09.2000, ‘What is happening in other Turkey’ Hurriyet

⁹⁸ Ferai Tinc, column, 27.10.2000, ‘When life becomes a burden’ Hurriyet

⁹⁹ Ruhat Mengi, column, 07.11.2000, ‘The Southeast should be declared a disaster zone’ Sabah

¹⁰⁰ Halil Beytut, human interest, 22.12.2001, ‘The suicide rate has halved in Batman’ Sabah, emphasis mine

With the inclusion of men and the whole region in the victim category, the centre/periphery divide gains a more precise meaning in drawing national boundaries through social, geographical and ethnic divides between the “*real Turkey*”, and the “*other Turkey*”. While national boundaries are acted out, boundaries of modernity are also confirmed by associating the centre with modernity, education and progress, and the periphery, which lies in the east and is inconspicuously ethnicised, with traditions, customs, and backwardness.

4.5 Conclusion, and more about the guardian angels

Buried underneath all the sad stories, the Batman case study can offer the readers one or two rare instances, which inadvertently put a smile on the faces of critical readers. If the delightful anecdote about the cats who spoke Kurdish is one, the plausible complaint of one sociologist on the absurdity of government policies in the region is certainly another (Milliyet, 01.11.2000)¹⁰¹. In an interview, the sociologist complains about how the government perceiving women and young people in the region as stuck in between modernity and traditions, implements certain modernization policies. In an attempt to ease their transformation, the government would distribute six thousand free hand radios to young girls in education centres, so that they could bond with popular culture.

If we leave aside the dubious likelihood of the success of such a project, neither the distribution of radios nor the rationale behind it should be unfamiliar. It in fact echoes Daniel Lerner’s observations in his book, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958), the classic example of modernization theory of the 1950s and 60s. In his study of modernization in the Middle East, in which he has no reservation about taking the West as the ultimate model of modernization, Lerner finds the story of the Middle East “encapsulated” within the “career” of the village of Balgat in Turkey (ibid.: 19). Having read the survey conducted by one of his investigators for his study in 1950, Lerner is fascinated by the story of this desolate village, which is home to a poor farming community, situated just outside of Ankara, yet with no roads to connect it to the capital. In the whole community, there is only one single radio, which is owned by the village Chief, a contented old man with no desire to experience anything new, and a living symbol of traditional Turkish values for Lerner. The only resident

¹⁰¹ Naki Dogan, interview with Associate Prof. Yasin Aktay, 01.11.2000, ‘Death is given a more aesthetic look’ Milliyet

who seems to disrupt the emotional stillness of the village is the village's only Grocer with his "city-dressed ways" and his "eye at the higher places", constantly "hungering for whatever is different and unfamiliar" (ibid.: 25). For Lerner, the Grocer is an infidel in the village, someone who yearns for modern life.

Lerner revisits Balgat in 1954, only to find it has changed drastically. A bus service regularly connects the villagers – who are now predominantly factory workers rather than farmers-, there are four impressive grocery stores instead of one. He is even more impressed as he, on his way out of the village "absently" counts 69 radio antennas on the roofs, confirming his estimate of over 100 new radios: "And only four years ago, I counterpointed to myself, there was but a single battery set in the village" (ibid.: 40). Although Lerner is distressed to find out that the Grocer had died, he is pleased to see that the Grocer's dream survived at the end, and Balgat is set on the path of modernization.

It is evident that Lerner sees modernization as a continuous and unilinear process, emanating from the centre to the peripheries, and forming a neat line of categories of Traditionals, Transitionals and Moderns. Media - particularly the radio - plays no less part than to accelerate this process. Although Lerner's strong belief in a rigidly linear theory of modernization is academically outdated, it is very much alive in the discourses surrounding the Batman case study. Just as Balgat of 1950 lied in the 'Traditional' category for Lerner, so does the region of Batman for the journalists and for the government authorities who want to distribute radios in an attempt to move Batman into the 'Transitional' stage, like Balgat had done in just four years.

This modernist perspective very much shapes the discourse on women in Batman and modernity in the news stories. The coverage separates first the women and then the whole population of two Turkeys, feeding into and strengthening the centre/periphery division, while offering ways to incorporate them into a desired and pleasant version of modernity. This results in problematic consequences for the definition of modernity and national identity in Turkey. Firstly, it makes the mistake of sharply dividing up the two regions into two perfectly unrealistic and monolithic entities, the centre with the modern and global popular culture and the periphery with all its backwardness. Through this division, the centre largely emerges as an unproblematic whole, offering the model to be replicated for the other Turkey, and also as the guarantor of that process. In fact, the whole problem is perceived as a

difficulty in replicating the urban centre. The stories share the wish that all problems would disappear if only the periphery could have been like the centre. This wish, which holds for the whole region, is clearly audible regarding the condition of 'other Turkey's' women in Batman. This outlook distracts us from critically evaluating the centre itself, and focus on the ways to eliminate undesired differences, which can vary from the distribution of free radios to more serious projects for creating work opportunities. The second consequence that follows from this is the denial of the region's possibility to offer alternative definitions of modernity. In doing so, the centre negates the autonomy of its peripheries, and its women living in the peripheries.

The third consequence is very much related to this last issue and pertains to the ethnic difference of the region, which cannot be eradicated through modernization. It not only disrupts the modernity the nation claims to represent at the centre, but also the ethnic identity, the *Turkishness* of the nation. It is at this point that ethnically inscribed discourses of national identity become hard to disentangle from the dominant discourses of modernity: Batman will only be accepted into the centre if civilisational differences are eliminated, and yet, sameness can never be fully achieved unless the region is culturally and ethnically the same. In this context, as Kirisci and Winrow also point out, the connections between assimilation and modernization will be inevitable (1997: 4), and this can build up further tension in the already problematic relationship between the region and the centre. Members of threatened ethnic groups can feel that their culture is under attack from the state, and may perceive the state as identifying itself with the interests of a majority/dominant ethnic group/nation (ibid.). Equating modernity with the centre and backwardness with the periphery where a major Kurdish population lives can only intensify the conflict and obstruct the channels for progress.

Lastly, we have the consequences awaiting women in particular. Throughout the coverage of suicide stories, women in Batman become the means through which boundaries were built within Turkey. As mentioned in the previous chapters, this is generated through one of the main discourses embedded within the Kemalist modernization project, which regards women as the strongest signifier of the modern nation. Within this context, women in Batman encapsulate the unfinished part of that project, which not only the state but the whole centre, in all its modernized forms, is willing to complete, which in turn justifies the centre/periphery distinction discussed above. Of course, as has been discussed throughout the preceding chapters, as national boundaries are built through women, they also set certain boundaries *for*

women. Within the Turkish context, the most popular discourse seems to be the one arguing that women, rather than men, can be influenced by (and therefore should be protected from) the too liberal by-products of modernity. This argument places the need to liberate women through modernizing them alongside the need to protect them from the presumed threats that modern life can entail. We can see the same discourse emerging with regard to television programmes depicting liberal lives of urban men and women, which are carefully singled out as reflecting not the reality of modern life in the cities but only the “lives of an eccentric small group”. As the centre, which includes the liberated women journalists of modern cities, sets the limits for the women in Batman, it echoes the Kemalist project, which has been carefully trying to control the meanings of “modern” for women since the foundation of the Republic.

While it is clear that women in Batman share the restrictions, along with the emancipatory rhetoric of the dominant discourses of national identity and modernity in Turkey, it is also important to note that they are, in Spivak’s (1988b) words, doubly marginalized, by discourses of national identity that other the region, and also by discourses of patriarchy. Here again it is useful to draw some parallels between Spivak’s discussion of women and discourses of *sati* in India, and the suicide stories examined in this case study. Even in the attempts of the benevolent intellectuals to speak on behalf of the women, the women are spoken for, and therefore marginalized, rather than speaking out for themselves, and “one never encounters women’s voice-consciousness” (ibid.: 297). Spivak here quickly adds that although “such a testimony would not be ideology-transcendent or ‘fully-subjective’” it would have still provided a ‘countersentence’ (ibid.). As a result, “the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the “third-world woman” caught between tradition and modernization” (ibid.: 306). Although it can be argued that the women in the Batman case have spoken and made their ultimate protest through their bodies, if we are to follow Spivak again, this does not matter. Through the news stories the suicides’ identities still remain as difference, and as long as they remain on the other side of difference, that speaking cannot matter much. “Representation has not withered away” and she remains muted inside the dominant discourses of representation by the centre (ibid: 313).

As the discussion throughout has shown, it is not possible to dismiss the potential of postcolonial theory in exploring discourses of centre/ peripheries, and inclusion/ exclusion in the Batman case. Postcolonial theory does not only help us, through Spivak, to examine the

meaning of these discourses for women in the region. The very act of deconstructing these discourses calls foremost for questioning the cultural authority and civilisational superiority of the centre, which forms the main of both postcolonial theory and postcolonial criticism. However, a caveat needs to be made against the adoption of a strictly post-colonial or Spivakian perspective which might result in the categorisation of the case as one of internal colonialism. This is particularly because of the demographic structure of the region, which points to a large population of Kurdish origin. Kirisci and Winrow (1997) rightly argue that such theories of internal colonialism and relative deprivation can offer only partial explanations when discussing the Kurdish population living in Turkey, since factors like internal migration, historical, social and cultural variables should also be taken into account in addition to economic factors (ibid.: 17).

And finally, we should conclude with a few words on the actuality of what has been taking place in Batman, even if at the risk of slightly moving beyond the boundaries of this dissertation. The analysis here has attempted to show how women are an important means in constructing national boundaries, particularly here in ethnic terms. As with the other case studies that will be analysed in the next two chapters, this case study also arose from a challenge to the system - in fact we can call it the ultimate challenge, in the form of suicides. However, apart from this generalisation, this chapter cannot tell us more about the mysteries behind the suicides, and perhaps such information can never be fully within our grasp. As Henry Montherlant writes, "There is nothing more mysterious than a suicide":

"(...) When I hear someone explain the reasons for one suicide or another, I always have the impression of being sacrilegious. Only the suicide has known them and was in a position to comprehend them. I do not say, 'to make them comprehensible'; they are usually multiple, inextricable, and beyond the reach of any other person." (Cited in Minois 1999: 323)

While no explanation can solve all the mysteries behind all the suicides, attempts to interpret them will (and in fact, should) continue to understand and perhaps prevent further losses. In fact, this was what the journalists had sought to do all throughout their stories and columns, as did the government institutions, NGO's, and social researchers who went to Batman region to investigate the deaths. Some others were also hopefully sparked into action by this analysis.

And yet, at the heart of all any such interpretation and explanation process lies the very same and simple question: “What can I *do* for them?”¹⁰²

One should admit that it is easier to criticise the offers that are being made, than to offer a better solution. This chapter has no unrealistic ambitions to offer a solution to female suicides in Batman, but has attempted to show them as part of a wider discourse shaping the boundaries of national identity in Turkey. Yet, by doing just so, it sought to prove that understanding the female suicides in Batman and finding the right answers needs to go beyond just the woman question in Turkey. It has to take into consideration many other factors, and perhaps the most important of all, avoid causing the creation of discursive distances on cultural identity in our clumsy attempts to eradicate them.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Spivak (1988a: 135) notes that this question lies under all western feminist attempts of studying third world women.

¹⁰³ Parts of this chapter appeared in ‘Victims, Villains and Guardian Angels –Batman Suicide Stories’ (2004) *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 1(1), 66-92.

Chapter 5:

“She was faster than the tractor!”- Sureyya Ayhan’s story

5.1 Introduction of the case study

5.1.1 The setting - Summary of events and the brief description of the context

This chapter provides an analysis of articles about the Turkish national athlete Sureyya Ayhan, which appeared in the Turkish mainstream press during 2001 and 2002. During these two years Sureyya received extensive press attention with three main storylines, the first of which focused on her eighth place finish in the 1500 metres at the 2001 World Athletics Championships. Both prior to and after the games, her promising talent was heavily covered in headlines and feature stories. Focusing on her humble background from a small Central Anatolian town, the features narrated her achievement as a remarkable story of ascent from village life to international competition. These stories also strongly emphasised the fact that she had received almost no significant financial or institutional support and that since the age of thirteen she had been trained in the cities of Anatolian by her coach, Yucel Kop, who had no experience of training international athletes or of international competition.

The second storyline concerned Sureyya Ayhan’s private life with revelations that she and her coach were having a relationship coming to light as she competed at the World Championships. Given their 22-year age gap and the fact that the coach was married with children, Sureyya’s private life was quickly turned into a main news item. Coverage increased after an interview she and her coach gave to Hurriyet newspaper in autumn 2001 where they talked openly about their relationship, provoking a heated debate on morality amongst newspaper columnists. Following the interview an MP even took the debate to the Turkish General Assembly proposing to penalize their relationship for transgressing professional rules of ethics, though the proposal was subsequently turned down. Morality aside, however, Sureyya Ayhan’s insistence on keeping Yucel Kop as her coach, instead of working with a new and professionally more experienced trainer, was regarded by a large number of journalists as a reckless decision influenced by emotions and a major obstacle to furthering her career.

The third time stories about Sureyya Ayhan peaked was after she won the gold medal at the European Athletics Championships in 2002 for which she was extensively praised in front page headlines. In celebrating her international success, the coverage depicted Sureyya as someone who had succeeded against all the odds, including the social pressure placed upon her over her relationship.

The exceptional coverage Sureyya Ayhan received on the front pages becomes more meaningful when one considers that Turkey does not have any real tradition in athletics. The last athlete, for example, to win a medal in international competition was a triple jumper at the 1948 Olympics¹. Thus, the context within which she rose to success also contributed to the press interest in her story, which was largely covered as the 'Sureyya miracle'. Lastly, it should also be noted that her success coincided with a difficult time for Turkey. In February 2001, Turkey went through a deep economic crisis leading to a change of cabinet, and the adoption of a new IMF package to prevent the country from falling further over the economic precipice. However, this wiped out already shaky public confidence in the coalition government, which was made up of the far-right Nationalist People's Party (MHP), a centre-left Democratic Left Party (DSP), and the centre-right Motherland Party (ANAP) – a coalition that was already suffering from a governmental crisis. In November 2002, about two months after Sureyya had won the gold medal at the European Championships, early elections were called and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power. While there is almost no direct reference to the political and economic challenges of the time in the coverage of Sureyya Ayhan², it is not unlikely that the dispiriting context also contributed to the extensive coverage her international achievements received in the newspapers.

5.1.2 Objectives in the selection of the case study

This case study illustrates the different demands and visions inherent in Turkish national identity, mainly its cultural roots, moral codes and preferred and rejected readings of

¹ Turkey finished third in the triple jump in 1948. Football is the most popular sport in Turkey with the national team having some international success, especially during the 2002 World Cup. Football is followed by the rising popularity of basketball, and in terms of individual sports weight lifting and wrestling is where Turkey has achieved success on the international stage.

² I have noted such a direct correlation in only one column by Hayrullah Mahmud, where he enthusiastically thanks Sureyya Ayhan for making the Turkish public proud of itself in spite of the burden of economic crisis. Mahmud, Hayrullah, column, 'What will Mr.Gardner say now?' 12.08.2002, *Hurriyet*,

modernity, relationship with European identity, and the degree to which class distinctions play a part in the secular journalists' preferred images of Turkey. One medium through which these get to be debated is Sureyya Ayhan's identity - providing us with an excellent case study to explore how femininity is circumscribed by national demands. As a result, Sureyya Ayhan's story offers us a twofold, tightly intertwined focus for analysis - revealing the visions and ambivalences inherent in Turkish national identity, while at the same time also exposing the interplay between gender norms and national identity in Turkey. Discussion of modernity weaves through both levels in the news stories - we see it being discussed indirectly through Sureyya's rise from her rural background to international tournaments, but more explicitly in comments about Sureyya's mostly unapproved of relationship. Therefore, besides the nationalistic sports coverage of Sureyya's successes, this is a multi-dimensional case study, heavily loaded with different discourses on Turkishness. As with the other case studies, through the different debates on who Sureyya is and how she should behave, it is possible to identify the fault lines that circumscribe Turkish identity.

The guiding questions remain the same as in the other two case studies, with an added emphasis on sameness, as will be discussed below.

- **Who is the female character analysed in this case study?**
- **In what ways is she described as different (or the same)?**
- **In the case of difference, is this described as a desired or unwanted one? If the latter, what are the proposals to eliminate that difference?**
- **In what ways is her difference (or sameness) significant for a particular understanding of modernity and national identity in Turkey?**

Although the questions remain basically the same for all the case studies, apart from some slight variations, the answers offer different discussions on discourses of inclusion/exclusion. This is because of the changing meaning of difference in each case study. While all three case studies, through their female protagonists, inform the readers about what is seen as divergence from national norms and standards, the content of this difference - or rather what is seen as different by the journalists - varies in each case study. In the Batman case the issue of difference surfaced through discourses on ethnicity, as well as civilisational discourses of modernity. As the analysis will discuss, with Sureyya the focus is more on nationally

accepted norms of gender and modernity. At the same time, Sureyya Ayhan's story is also as much about discourses of sameness as it is about difference. Thus, what makes Sureyya's case particularly interesting is her representation of both sameness and difference. Compared with the evident otherness of women in the Batman case study, Sureyya's identity is firmly located within the ethnic definition of Turkishness, and she emerges strongly as the centre's very own daughter. Therefore, debates approving or disapproving of Sureyya's behaviour turn into debates about those that the centre would already accept and describe as its own people, those that make *la mêmete*. In doing so, the stories also reveal the biases and hierarchies, in terms of class and gender, which the centre holds about its people.

5.1.3 Overview of the data

5.1.3.1 Time frame

The first appearance of Sureyya Ayhan's name in the newspapers coincided roughly with her participation in the finals of the 2000 Golden League with coverage increasing further in the same year as she reached the semi-finals of the Olympic Games. However, it was after her achievements in the World Championships finals in 2001 that the coverage spread from the sports pages to headlines and front page stories. There are three moments in which the coverage climaxes, in August 2001, in November 2001, and in August 2002 and this is triggered by a number of key events. On August 6th the news that Sureyya Ayhan would run in the finals is covered as a front-page item in both Hurriyet and Sabah, and continued as a feature story in the inner pages. Her relationship with her coach was first mentioned in Sabah in the feature story titled "*I have fulfilled my promise*" on 07.08.2001³. However, it is through the same item⁴ that appeared in Milliyet and Hurriyet on 08.08.2001 that her relationship became a main news story. Hurriyet announced this as one of the three large news items on page four, under the headline "*This love has made Sureyya run*" whereas Milliyet announced it in a column on the front page, carried into a full feature on page 17, as "*Sureyya runs with love*". The debates regarding their relationship are reheated on November 18th, 2001 with an interview conducted by a well-known female journalist, Ayse Arman, in Hurriyet, titled "*My coach yearns for me*". The interview received a strong reaction from a

³ This was covered under a smaller item on the same page "Father and daughter reconciled", telling the story of how Sureyya Ayhan's father reacted after learning the rumours about her relationship, and how they had reconciled just before the competition.

⁴ Dogan News Agency provides stories for both newspapers therefore the same item, written by the same journalist/s can appear in both Hurriyet and Milliyet, although often with different titles or visuals. In this particular case, for example, journalists Ahmet Kaya, Nihat Duzgun and Serkan Gemici had written both items.

popular male journalist in the same newspaper, Fatih Altayli, and resulted in a debate about gender and morality in the two journalists' columns. This time the discussion, although lasting more than a week, was contained mainly within the same paper. The third time the stories climaxed was just prior to and after the European Championships held in Munich 11.08.2002. Sureyya Ayhan's success is covered in all three papers as front page headlines on 12.08.2002, it is also covered extensively in the inside pages, and continued with more features and front-page announcements on 13.08.2002. After that, the headlines fade out and coverage is returned to the sports pages.

Even though this case focuses on these peak moments in coverage, there are also related news stories scattered throughout the two years, such as the news about Sureyya's first place at the University Olympics on 30.08.2001, or her victory in the Golden League right after the European Championships, on 31.08.2001, which again was announced on the front pages and continued into the sports pages. Yet neither the front-page announcement, nor the inside page stories are comparable to the coverage of her achievements in the World and European Championships. Because these stories do not offer new debates in terms of research objectives, they will be referred to where relevant but are not foregrounded in the analysis. It should also be noted that the coverage of Sureyya Ayhan actually extends for six years, continuing to this day, including the coverage of her second place in the Paris World Championships in 2003, her marriage to her coach in 2004 on Valentine's Day, and her disqualification from the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 due to allegations of drug use. While all these stories hold significant news value for the journalists, in terms of the discourses they disseminate in their coverage, they do not diverge significantly from the time-span chosen for this case study.

5.1.3.2 Type of data to be analysed

In terms of its two-year time range, and the emotional writing style observable in the feature stories, Sureyya Ayhan's story resembles the Batman case study. However, in terms of the narration of the story, Sureyya Ayhan's case differs from both Batman, and also from the weddings case study. This is because the stories in this case are not centred on a particular event but unfold through a series of different events that take place in her private and career life into one long narrative. Within the selected time frame for the case study, Sureyya's story begins with her unexpected success, covered alongside the backdrop of stories about her

childhood. It develops with the news about her relationship, which complicates the coverage of her achievements, and ends with a resolution, her final achievement and society's acceptance of her relationship⁵. While the Batman case study, just like a storybook, tells the readers about the experiences of different women, Sureyya Ayhan's story resembles more of novella, with its happy start, obstacles on the way and then a nationally celebrated happy ending, against all the odds, through to a nationally agreed moment of forgiving and forgetting.

The data that forms this narration includes all news stories, which can be grouped into three main categories: news stories on sports pages, news stories on front and inside pages excluding sports pages, and lastly, columns. It must be underlined that in spite of the wide diversity of different news genres, all items in the three newspapers converge tightly around a subjective and self-reflexive style in the reporting of these stories, which often contributes to the strongly nationalist rhetoric. The stories often convey the feeling of being about "one of us" discussed "amongst us", forming a strong link between the journalists and the readers.

There are however, divergences, mainly in terms of the themes raised within certain types of news items. On this, there is a need to open a further parenthesis. As explained in the methodology chapter, this research project is interested in lifting up and examining the pattern of discourses about national inclusion and exclusion, rather than focusing on what Fairclough (1995) would call 'the media order of discourse'. At the same time, Sureyya Ayhan's case study offers a chance to follow how institutional journalistic practices can contribute to the shaping of these discourses. The ways in which the sports journalists' narrate the stories, presents an interesting case of the differences between journalistic styles and priorities. Even though sports journalists' items are mainly located in the sports pages, they have often contributed to the feature stories and headline news covered on the front pages, and therefore differences emerge across the paper, between those items covered by sports journalists and those covered by others. While the sports journalists often share a patriotic and personalised style of coverage with other journalists, they foreground Sureyya Ayhan's identity as a national athlete, rather than her gender identity. As a result, throughout the two years of coverage, sports journalists, regardless of which page they have covered the story, have

⁵ All news stories, as Bell (1991) explains, have a narrative structure. However, what I am suggesting here is, different storylines that make up the data for analysis, mainly the two competitions and her relationship unfold into one long narrative where, to follow Todorov's (1977) narrative theory, distinct stages of disruption, complication and resolution are identifiable.

downplayed the ‘relationship’ aspect of the story, or have covered it in a more positive light⁶. Finding their different attitude to gender and their shared attitude to national rhetoric interesting, I have tried to identify the sports journalists throughout the analysis. However, this divergence in journalistic coverage is not directly pertinent to the questions of this research and its overall conclusions, and it is not further explored in the analysis.

Added to this, and outside the items prepared by sports journalists, the gender of the journalists also appears to have shaped the coverage. This case study, in contrast to the Batman suicides, is without question a male dominated discussion with only 7 out of 28 columns written by women, and 5 of these columns written by Ayse Arman during the aforementioned polemic she entered into with Fatih Altayli. In columns written by female journalists the emphasis is mainly on supporting Sureyya and her relationship, and national identity comes as secondary to her identity as a female athlete. It can be assumed that had the news been covered by sports journalists who, for professional reasons, seem to be more interested in Ayhan as a national athlete, or by female journalists who shared different concerns for covering her identity, the discussion about her relationship might not have been as heated.

Apart from the items discussed, two other news items are generically different and form an exception. These are the two interviews conducted by Ayse Arman in Hurriyet newspaper⁷. One of these interviews is especially significant as it is held with Sureyya Ayhan and her coach; the other interview is with another female journalist, about the book she had recently written about Sureyya Ayhan and women in Turkey. Again, as along the lines developed in the methodology, the focus of analysis in these items will be Arman’s interpretation of events and choice of headlines and titles, rather than the particular views submitted by the athlete, her coach or the journalist she interviewed.

5.1.4 Organizing the data for analysis - methodological decisions

⁶ I have come across only one small news item that does not fit this pattern: ‘Oh no, my father!’ published the sports pages of Sabah newspaper on 28.07.2001. The item is written as an insider’s gossip to sports and explains how Sureyya’s father had stormed in on the couple during one training session. It is interesting that even though Sabah was the first newspaper to bring up the gossip, the newspaper strayed away from Sureyya Ayhan’s private life once her identity as a national athlete became more prominent.

⁷ Ayse Arman, 18.11.2001, ‘My coach yearns for me’, Hurriyet; Ayse Arman, 10.03.2002, ‘Unfortunately women do not get a piece of the cake’, Hurriyet. As explained in the methodology chapter, this decision was taken to keep the analytical focus sharply on the journalistic perception in the newspapers.

Even though the Sureyya Ayhan case study offers generically diverse data, these do not pose stark linguistic differences as was the case in the Batman case study. As mentioned above all news items from sports news and columns to headlines, converge around an informal and mostly nationalistic tone of reporting. The complexity of this case study lies instead in terms of authorship, and the narrative structure of the actual case study.

This case study differs from the other two with the main protagonist's involvement in the actual shaping of the verbal data. Unlike the two other case studies, Sureyya is not a passive character but actively contributes to the verbal discussion through the briefs or interviews she gives, commenting on the different levels of her identity: as a sportswoman, as a national athlete representing her country, as a daughter, or as a woman in a relationship. This enables the readers to observe, to some degree, Sureyya's internalisation, and active and verbal involvement in the production and dissemination of nationalist discourses, as evident in the front page headline that quotes her as rather ambitiously saying, "*I will be the idol of Turkish youth*" (Hurriyet, 13.08.2002)⁸, or in the titles that comment on how she had "*cried out*" the following words: "*I carried 65 million Turkish people in my heart, and exceeded my goal*"(09.08.2001)⁹. In the one interview she gives, she again underlines her ambition to represent Turkey. Therefore in this case study, Sureyya Ayhan is not only talked about but also talks back as she communicates with the journalists. While it is fascinating to see how Sureyya tries to break in and contribute to the discussions, what is more interesting, and for our exploration of hegemonic discourses, more crucial, is how her attempts to break in are being interpreted, which of her words are carried onto the headlines and titles, or which information is emphasised or prioritised. Therefore the analysis here is also in line with the methodological choices made at the start and focuses on the journalistic interpretations of the events, rather than attempting to compare the different accounts of realities (Sureyya's and the journalists) by different sources.

Another particularity of this case study is closely linked to the ways in which the data unfolds. The data is in the form of a long story, and the journalists live through the story just like the readers do, they form their opinions and rethink the events in their attempts to narrate the separate events into one storyline. To follow how journalists' perceptions have evolved and

⁸ Mehmet Arslan (sports journalist), front-page headlines, 13.08.2002, 'I will be the idol of Turkish youth' Hurriyet.

⁹ Sports department, 09.08.2001, feature story, 'Sureyya is the Champion of our hearts', Sabah

matured through the narration, the thematic analysis has largely followed the temporal development of the storyline.

5.2 Thematic analysis – themes addressed in the coverage and allocation of sub-themes to thematic areas

The thematic analysis follows the different debates that have emerged around Sureyya Ayhan's identity, and falls roughly into two interrelated parts. The first two themes explore the aspects of Sureyya's identity that depict her as a hero, sharing and reflecting the cultural roots of the Turkish nation, as well as the inherent potential of Turkish people to succeed in the international arena. The next two themes observe how Sureyya Ayhan's gender identity conflicts and/or enhances Sureyya Ayhan's role of representing the nation.

5.2.1 National roots- "the girl in the black school uniform"

Sureyya Ayhan's background is a very prominent theme in the coverage of her achievements, and also forms the ground on which the readers can create their perceptions about her identity. References to her origins can be found in all three newspapers, but particularly in detail in Hurriyet and Sabah's coverage in the first week of August 2001. On August 7th,



Fig. 1 "Victory of the girl in the black school uniform", Hurriyet

the day of the competition, Hurriyet published one of the most potent images of Sureyya Ayhan on the front-page, under the headline "The story of the miracle girl" (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)¹⁰. The picture shows a rural town and a group of primary school girls running in

¹⁰ No-bylines, on front page, 07.08.2001 'The Story of the Miracle Girl', Hurriyet

black school uniforms, with the audience, apparently other primary school children and their teachers, lined up on the side. The girl who is winning on the front is said to be Sureyya Ayhan, and the captions read “*The victory of the girl in the black school uniform- Sureyya is ahead in a race in primary school. Years later the girl in the primary school uniform is running ahead of world famous athletes in Canada.*” Next to this picture is a contrasting picture of a smiling Ayhan today, in red and white running suit, with one hand victoriously raised up as a fist. With its two visuals, this news item largely dominates the front page, and flags up the full-page feature on Sureyya’s background in the inside pages.

The image of Sureyya in black uniform is surprisingly powerful as it is one of the ordinary everyday experiences of growing up that most adults in Turkey can clearly remember, and easily associate with¹¹. It creates a ‘witness account’ for the story of how a hero is born, yet at the same time creates an immediate point of identification for the readers. On the same day, a full-page feature on Sureyya’s background in Sabah newspaper (07.08.2001)¹² complements the coverage in Hurriyet. In the centre of the feature a distinct subtitle reads “*The trials that shaped Sureyya’s destiny -A star was born as she came first in the competitions on national Children’s Day*”, explaining how she owed her interest in athletics to a race she ran and won in on Children’s Day during her first year of primary school. Just like the black uniform, the Children’s Day strongly establishes her as one of the many Turkish children, while at the same time distinguishing her exceptional talent. It is also important to notice that the binding reference points between the readers and Sureyya in the two stories is the national uniform and national day, hence adding to the feeling of oneness for the national readers.

The images of Sureyya’s childhood owe their strength to the underprivileged setting she grew up in; a rural Anatolian district, another very familiar memory for many Turkish readers, and one that forms a stark contrast to the international success of the national athlete. The full-page feature in Hurriyet reaffirms this contrast with five further visuals (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)¹³. Three of these images tell the readers about Sureyya’s background: on top, a repeat of the front-page primary school picture, in the middle, Sureyya’s family proudly

¹¹ Until the start of this decade, the norm was black uniforms, with only a few exceptions. Today, primary school uniforms are largely blue.

¹² Tayfun Bayindir (sports journalist), 07.08.2001, ‘I kept my promise’, Sabah. The National Children’s Day is celebrated on the 23rd of April each year- to commemorate the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on the same date in 1920.

¹³ Serkan Gemici & Ahmet Kaya, feature, 07.08.2001, ‘From gold coin to gold medal’ Hurriyet

posing with the trophies she won, and next to it one particularly striking picture of Sureyya's father pointing to the run down house in which Sureyya was born¹⁴. These visuals, alongside captions "*Sureyya was born in this house*", and subtitles like "*She did not even have the money to buy sports shoes*" or "*Sureyya's incredible journey*" accentuate the 'against all odds' theme. It would however be wrong to assume that the news item draws a picture of total deprivation and poverty about Sureyya's hometown. The conveyed images and depictions have an almost tangible feeling of warmth and nostalgia about the rural Anatolian life, and particularly regarding the people who live there. On the front-page, the subtitle "To the finals, with collective work" conveys this feeling vividly. Here the Turkish word 'imece' is used to imply 'collective work', but this word is not without its warm connotations: it refers to the inhabitants of a village or town working together for a communal goal, or to help members of the community who need help, such as gathering the harvest. In this case the 'imece' had been held to transform Sureyya into a national athlete. To emphasise this point, in narrating Sureyya's story, journalists constantly refer to local people who have supported her or who believed in her or participated in her journey. The journalists even manage to directly quote the long dead grandmother, providing a powerful, although impossible, eyewitness account of her childhood:

" 'You will be a very good sportswoman one day. Maybe I will not live to see those years, but my prayers are always upon you.' So said the grandmother and left this world a year later... if she had lived...she would have been proud. " (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)¹⁵

The language chosen to describe the epic story of the national hero is nowhere more striking than in this over-romanticised feature published in Hurriyet. The extent to which journalists have themselves embraced Sureyya's experience is very much evident in the choice of past tense, describing her story as if witness to the events. Other options would have been to use the Turkish past participle tense, which adds a story-like quality to news items by distancing the storyteller from the actual event itself. While this tense was used much more in the depictions of women in Batman, it is not a popular narrative tool in the coverage of Sureyya's childhood, where journalists prefer to tell her story through their own eyewitness accounts.

¹⁴ The other two visuals include a large centre photo of Sureyya as the athlete, and a small photo on the left hand side, showing Sureyya sitting next to the city mayor –one of the few people who had supported her.

¹⁵ Serkan Gemici & Ahmet Kaya, feature, 07.08.2001, 'From gold coin to gold medal' Hurriyet

Sureyya is the uncontested heroine in these stories, but journalists also point to supporting actors. Sureyya's father, her primary school teacher and her coach are all described as the guiding men who have helped her along the way. In similar coverage of Sureyya Ayhan's childhood, Sabah newspaper (07.08.2001)¹⁶ explains how Sureyya *"would train even on her way to the fields to work with her family."* Her father is described as Sureyya's *"biggest supporter"* who *"set out a racecourse, and everyday waited next to the water fountain, timing and watching her daughter from the distance."* Similarly, the feature in Sabah newspaper (08.08.2001)¹⁷ describes how she had once ran a race against her uncle's tractor and won. These items create a fondness and nostalgia around the deprived childhood Sureyya has had, and are again referred to in the news coverage of her success in the European Championships of 2002 (See Milliyet, 12.08.2002)¹⁸.

In these romantic depictions, the difference of class, between the superior city life and the small town life from which Sureyya raised herself up, inconspicuously runs as a backdrop to the stories. As will be pointed out throughout the analysis, what is being conveyed, between the lines, to the readers is an idealization of the Anatolian Heimat, and the naivety and the unspoilt kindness of the Anatolian people, but all the while establishing a feeling of 'parental' superiority for the urban life and journalists. A wonderful example of this can be found in the Sabah reporter's amusement at the commotion that was taking place in Sureyya's hometown, Korgun, right before the World Championships. The reporter, who went Korgun to watch the Games on television with Sureyya's family, describes the atmosphere in detail, while using a language similar to what one would use when observing a much loved child:

"Korgun was taken by a flutter. The 'bugbear', as her father calls Sureyya, is going to run, that is a serious matter isn't it! Filo pastries are being prepared, critiques about the competitions are made." (Sabah, 09.08.2001)¹⁹

It also has to be noted that in these stories, the understanding of national roots is not devoid of ethnic meanings. It is not only Sureyya's cultural background, or where she was born, that wins the journalists' admiration, but also her ethnically pure Anatolian heritage. Sabah

¹⁶ Tayfun Bayindir (sports journalist) feature 07.08.2001, 'I kept my promise', Sabah

¹⁷ Ali Erdogan (sports journalist) feature 08.08.2001 'She was faster than the tractor' Sabah

¹⁸ Sports department, 12.08.2002 'I have just started' Milliyet

¹⁹ Ali Erdogan (sports journalist), 09.08.2001, 'Look how brave our bugbear is!', Sabah. The title is taken from the father's words to the mother. This item appeared on a full page coverage under the main headline 'Sureyya is the Champion of our hearts' prepared by the sports department.

newspaper reports Sureyya Ayhan as the first Turkish athlete who has got to the finals in the World Championships, yet Milliyet and Hurriyet newspapers acknowledge a previous achievement: Ebru Kavaklioglu, originally a Russian athlete who became a Turkish citizen by marriage, had finished in fifth place in the 1999 World Championships (Milliyet, 07.08.2001; Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)²⁰. Nevertheless, Sureyya's success is reported as the first time Turkey has achieved this, in the words of the Milliyet reporter, "*with an athlete from its own*" (Milliyet, 07.08.2001)²¹. Here, a fine line is drawn between Turkish citizenship and being Turkish, and this subtlety is explained to the readers in the very front-page subtitles of the above-analysed news story "*The Story of the Miracle Girl*":

"For the first time in our history, a Turkish girl born within the borders of the Turkish Republic has become a source of our pride by making it to the finals of the World Championships." (Milliyet, 07.08.2001)²²

In a column the same day, a well-known economic journalist makes the link clearer to the readers:

"Sureyya is of course not the first Turkish girl who has run in the finals of an international level. (...) However, she (Ebru Kavaklioglu) was the product of the opportunities of education and growing up that another nationality gave her in other lands. Yet Sureyya is the rare sapling that could rise her head up in the local draught." (Hurriyet, 08.08.2001)²³

The admiration for Sureyya's authenticity can be best felt in a column by Kanat Atkaya, a journalist best known for his usually humorous and ironic style (Hurriyet, 08.08.2001)²⁴. After considering the various pleas for which Turk to clone, he proposes Sureyya Ayhan as the best candidate with an unusually emotional tone that diverges sharply from the humour he had used in considering the other candidates.

"Leaving everything aside, I am thinking of one person that really needs to be cloned.

Her name is Sureyya Ayhan.

²⁰ No-bylines, sports page, 07.08.2001 'Bravo Sureyya', Milliyet, emphasis mine; Mehmet Arslan (sports journalist), 07.08.2001 'She wrote history on the tracks', Hurriyet

²¹ No-bylines, sports page, 07.08.2001 'Bravo Sureyya', Milliyet, emphasis mine

²² No-bylines, sports page, 07.08.2001 'Bravo Sureyya', Milliyet, emphasis mine

²³ Mumtaz Soysal, column, 08.08.2001, 'The Finalist', Hurriyet

²⁴ Kanat Atkaya, column, 08.08.2001, 'Lets clone Sureyya', Hurriyet

*... Sureyya is 23 years old. Sureyya is the daughter of a working class man.
Today, in newspapers there is a photograph titled "This is the house she was born in".
Sureyya was born in a building in ruins.
There is another picture of Sureyya. From a competition she ran in her school uniform.
Sureyya is running meters ahead of her nearest competitor, with a laughing face.
Sureyya is one of those athletes that win a race laughing."*

For the journalist, Sureyya's humble Anatolian background, combined with her determination to succeed in spite of all odds, makes her the genetically perfect Turkish candidate to clone. He ends his column with an openly proud nationalist stance in which there is an apparent division of Turkey into two camps -one that promises a progressive future and one that forms an obstacle to the work of those that struggle for progress. From his words, it is clear that he sees Sureyya and himself in that first lonely camp.

*"Sureyya is one of those that accomplish something for Turkey in spite of Turkey.
Anyhow, this nation survives thanks to those that do something for Turkey in spite of
Turkey.
They are the ones that really need to be cloned.
Sureyya might not win a medal today.
That is not important at all.
I will wake up at 04.30 and watch her [on television], just so that she does not feel alone.
And I will be proud of the Sureyya, running and laughing in her black school uniform."*²⁵

5.2.2 A sense of pride- Sureyya as "the bright face of Turkey"

What transforms Sureyya Ayhan into a national hero is undoubtedly the victories she wins for Turkey in the international competitions. In the two competitions where she is elevated to hero status, in the World Championships of 2001 and the European Championship of 2002, there is an unreserved nationalism and sense of pride in newspaper coverage, conveyed through again the mythical and epic descriptions. However, the source of pride extends beyond the achievements on the running tracks. Through Sureyya Ayhan Turkey proves itself firstly, to itself, the Turkish nation, and then to Europe. In other words, through Sureyya

²⁵ Explanation and emphasis mine.

Ayhan, journalists frame the discourse of the modern Turkish woman representing modern Turkey and place it in comparative context. In the subtitles following a headline, journalists argue that Sureyya Ayhan had

“showed the whole world what gems there are in Anatolia... Is there better proof than this to show what more can be achieved if the opportunities are given?” (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)²⁶

However, this comparison also brings a feeling of frustration over the meagre number of success stories. This feeling is nowhere clearer than in the mythical description of Ayhan by a columnist who calls her *“The Turkish girl of the wind”*:

“And now Sureyya Ayhan has sent the Turkish flag with the crescent and the star up the flag-staff...”

She has once again written Turkey’s name on the world map! She has once again made the Turkish public, which has been heavily suffering under economic crisis, proud to be Turkish... Thank you Sureyya, for once again making us say, ‘We can become someone!’...” (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002)²⁷

As in the above-analysed column by Kanat Atkaya, the frustration is again directed, to ‘others’ who stand in the way of Turkey’s progress, and there are a number of candidates to blame. In the above example, the others within are the politicians who have dragged the country into economic crisis; in another column (Hurriyet, 08.08.2001)²⁸ they are the governing bodies responsible for sport in Turkey. The journalist asks why Turkey has had to wait since the 1948 Olympics to have an international achievement in athletics, and why so much money had been spent on promoting Turkey’s Olympic bid when no real efforts were made into developing sports, when *“a huge nation of seventy million people could not even make the leap Greece has made in athletics”* (Hurriyet, 08.08.2001)²⁹. Giving Greece as a reference point especially works, when we consider that historically Greece has been one of Turkey’s most distinct external others, and falling behind its neighbour is the ultimate humiliation for Turkey’s national pride. In 2002, with Sureyya Ayhan’s second success, another columnist uses the same reference point:

²⁶ Serkan Gemici & Ahmet Kaya, 07.08.2001, ‘From gold coin to gold medal’, Hurriyet

²⁷ Mahmud, Hayrullah, 12.08.2002, ‘What will Mr.Gardner say now?’ Hurriyet, my emphasis

²⁸ Mumtaz Soysal, column, 08.08.2001, ‘Finalist’, Hurriyet

²⁹ Mumtaz Soysal, column, 08.08.2001, ‘Finalist’, Hurriyet, my emphasis

“I observe the international athletics competitions with interest, and as best as I can. In recent years, I was watching Greeks showing themselves on international running tracks. I used to secretly envy this, and resent the fact that we are so uninterested in athletics. Why weren't our people competing in these tournaments? Why weren't our children stepping onto the podium, wearing the gold medal and making our national anthem play?” (Hurriyet, 14.08.2002)³⁰

The columnists' resentment here stems from the lack of success in an area, where 'even the Greeks' had shown some improvement. The journalist compares Turkish athletics to a swamp; however, his frustration is eased by the hope Sureyya offers him for the future:

“Now Sureyya has left this door ajar. And I believe with all my heart that there are many other Sureyya's, just like Sureyya has said. Our most beautiful orchid in the swamp has blossomed, now its others' turn.” (Hurriyet, 14.08.2002)³¹

In these almost revengeful lines, Sureyya does not only represent the modern, successful and “*bright face of Turkey*” (Hurriyet, 18.08.2002)³². As described in a subheading on one front-page headline, “*She is Europe's best*” (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002). In the international competitions, Sureyya also wins for the Turkey, which has been left behind and humiliated for its failure to 'catch up' with the West. By proving that Turkey has now caught up and is on a par with European nations, Sureyya Ayhan represents the metamorphosis of Turkey, from swamp to an oasis where orchids blossom, and therefore avenges the past, and offers hope for the future. This euphoric feeling of optimism is echoed in the upper title of the front-

³⁰ Tufan Turenc, column, 14.08.2002, 'The most beautiful orchid in the swamp has blossomed', Hurriyet, my emphasis

³¹ Tufan Turenc, column, 14.08.2002, 'The most beautiful orchid in the swamp has blossomed' Hurriyet, my emphasis. As the journalist also reminds his readers, after the Sydney Olympic Games back in 2000, he had written a column “The orchids in the swamp” (26.08.2000 Hurriyet) where he had likened Sureyya and a few other young athletes to blossoming orchids.

³² Reha Erus, 18.08.2002, 'The bright face of Turkey', Hurriyet

The Rome correspondent of the newspaper has pulled his title from La Stampa's coverage of Sureyya Ayhan's achievements in the European Championships.

page headlines: “*Basketball, football and now athletics... We are here too.*” (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002)³³

The coverage of Sureyya Ayhan’s success, particularly in 2002, is full of many similar joyful declarations of national pride enhanced with blown up photographs of Ayhan draped in the Turkish flag, or holding out her medal. These references to and comparisons with Europe, point to the mixed feelings Turkey has about Europe. On the one hand there is the positive identification with Europe, in the form of emphasising the Europeanness of Turkey. On the other hand, Europe is positioned against Turkey, in an ever-competitive stance: little details, such as how the international sports commentators had not at first taken Sureyya seriously, are continuously reminded to the readers. One columnist describes Sureyya as the athlete whom “*the Eurosport commentators first looked down upon her and then stood up in front of her with respect*” (Sabah, 07.08.2001)³⁴, and the comments of international journalists are largely reviewed under striking headings such as “*Eurosport busted up*” (Milliyet, 13.08.2002)³⁵, “*A message from Sureyya to EU*” (Hurriyet, 13.08.2002)³⁶, “*RAI 3 cuts into its normal broadcast and has its audience listen to [Turkish] national anthem*” (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002)³⁷ or the subtitle quoting the Italian reporter’s remark when he finds out that Sureyya can’t speak English: “*We will have to learn Turkish.*” (Milliyet, 01.09.2002; Sabah, 01.09.2002)³⁸ The fact that Sureyya beat her closest competitor Szabo in the European Championships is a particularly important source of pleasure in the reports and is repeatedly emphasised in subtitles such as “*Szabo cried*” (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002)³⁹ or “*Szabo accepted her defeat - ‘I will not run again’*” (Sabah, 13.08.2002)⁴⁰. While one reporter, intoxicated with happiness, describes how he put his head “*onto the pillow supping this unbelievably delicious happiness*” (Milliyet, 12.08.2002)⁴¹ hoping to relive the moment in his dreams. Another journalist explains in detail, and almost sadistically, the ex-World Champion’s state soon after being beaten by Sureyya:

³³ Front-page headline, no by-lines, 12.08.2002, ‘Our lion girl’, Hurriyet

³⁴ Hasmet Babaoglu, column, 07.08.2001, ‘Our legend’, Sabah

³⁵ Sports department, 13.08.2002, ‘Eurosport busted up’, Milliyet

³⁶ Reha Erus & Ihsan Dortkardes, 13.08.2002, ‘A message from Sureyya to EU’, Hurriyet

³⁷ Reha Erus, 12.08.2002, ‘RAI 3 cut into its normal broadcast and had its audience listen to (Turkish) national anthem’, Hurriyet

³⁸ No-by-lines, sports news, 01.09.2002, ‘The new queen of the tracks’, Milliyet; also as a part of news item in Sabah, no-by-lines, sports news, 01.09.2002, ‘The queen of the tracks’

³⁹ Mehmet Arslan (sports journalist), 12.08.2002, ‘And here is my answer’, Hurriyet

⁴⁰ No by-lines, 13.08.2002, ‘This is only the beginning’, Sabah . The referenced item is a large picture-box in two-page spread news coverage under that heading.

⁴¹ Fuat Ercan, 12.08.2002, ‘I wished for the best’, Milliyet

“While my eyes were searching for Ayhan, a short, blonde petit athlete got my attention. She was the Romanians’ big athlete - the World and Olympics champion Gabriel Szabo. The athlete walking in front of me had put her head on the shoulder of her coach... Tears flooded from her eyes...”(Hurriyet, 12.08.2002)⁴²

After contrasting Szabo’s current state with her former glory, the journalist starts to feel pity for her, and attempts to comfort her in his own way:

“I am not writing these lines to exaggerate our athlete’s success. (...) I tried to comfort her by calling behind her back “Don’t worry champion. You are a big athlete”. But she made a disapproving head gesture. She was still crying.”

Apparently not satisfied with the conversation, the journalist goes and asks Szabo where Sureyya is:

“She lifted up her right hand thumb. And only said “Good”.

Here, while Ayhan represents the winning Turkey, Szabo stands for the beaten Europe. It almost fulfils a fantasy: for the journalist, the tide had finally turned and he was feeling the pleasure of victory on a very personal level:

“At last in the European Championships I thoroughly enjoyed the pleasure of being from the same country as the champion. I was so happy when my foreign colleagues heatedly congratulated me. We finally had a champion and we were living through this pleasure to its full. (...) Thank you Sureyya.”

5.2.3 “Our flying girl”- Sureyya as the national daughter

The coverage of Sureyya Ayhan reveals a strong sense of nationalism, but embedded in the nationalist rhetoric is also a sharp emphasis on nationally preferred gender roles and responsibilities. This is achieved through the continuous reminding of readers that Sureyya

⁴² Mehmet Arslan (sports journalist), 12.08.2002, ‘And here is my answer’, Hurriyet

Ayhan is not only a national athlete but also “our” national daughter, who has to adhere to the expectations of her nation, not only in terms of her career, but, as will be discussed shortly, also morally.

The role of the daughter surfaces at two overlapping levels in the stories, Sureyya is a daughter in her private life, but she is also attributed the role of national daughter in the news items. Her daughter role in her family is largely determined not through child-parent relationship, but through the special relationship between the father and the daughter, which sets limits and responsibilities to Sureyya’s female identity. Journalists often quote and foreground her father’s opinions on the competition and Sureyya Ayhan’s performance, and he appears as the main figure behind the “*Sureyya miracle*.” (Sabah, 07.08.2001; Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)⁴³ In Hurriyet’s feature in 2001, he does not only appear as a role model for Sureyya, having run and won a medal in a high school competition, but he is also praised for the “*surprising support*” he showed for his daughter’s running career - revealing the journalist’s slight astonishment at finding such a progressive father figure in an Anatolian town (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)⁴⁴. In the extensive coverage following the European Championships in 2002, all three newspapers cover the joy in the Ayhan family, and all three quote the father’s words about how proud he was to see his daughter “*wave the Turkish flag in Europe*” (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002; Milliyet, 12.08.2001; Sabah, 13.08.2001)⁴⁵. The mother is quoted only in Milliyet with a brief approval that she too was proud. In another full-page story a picture can be seen showing the father hugging his daughter on her return to Turkey (Milliyet, 12.08.2002)⁴⁶.

Even though the father is the most prominent figure in these stories, in the words of the Hurriyet journalists, “*meeting the right people*” had also contributed to this miracle (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)⁴⁷. The right people turn out to be other male characters in the long features about Sureyya’s rise to success, such as her uncle who watches her exercise and even holds a race

⁴³ See features in Sabah and Hurriyet. Tayfun Bayindir, sports journalist, 07.08.2001, ‘I kept my promise’, Sabah; Serkan Gemici & Ahmet Kaya, 07.08.2001, ‘From gold coin to gold medal’, Hurriyet

⁴⁴ Serkan Gemici & Ahmet Kaya, 07.08.2001, ‘From gold coin to gold medal’ Hurriyet

⁴⁵ ‘Tears of joy in her family’- this item is a part of a larger full page coverage by Mehmet Arslan (sports journalist), 12.08.2002, ‘Here is my answer’, Hurriyet; ‘Her family: we are proud’ as an item in the full page coverage with no-by-lines, 12.08.2001, ‘The Sureyya Legend’, Milliyet; Saban Ozgul’s item ‘Her family is flying with joy’ as a part of a larger coverage on a two-page spread, no specific by-lines, 13.08.2001 ‘This is only the beginning’, Sabah

⁴⁶ Ihsan Dortkardes, 12.08.2002, ‘The unknown Turk has ran from the highway’, Milliyet

⁴⁷ Serkan Gemici & Ahmet Kaya, 07.08.2001, ‘From gold coin to gold medal’, Hurriyet

with her while riding the tractor, her gym teacher at school who had discovered and supported her training and who *“had passed away without having the chance to witness Sureyya’s worldwide success”* (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)⁴⁸, her coach Yucel Kop who would never let her go (yet whose contributions are also highly debated in news about their relationship), the city mayor and the professor/journalist who sponsored her. It is striking how little women appear in these stories, compared to the space allocated to the ‘fatherly figures’. Apart from a grandmother figure who foretells that she is going to be a star and dies, the only other female figure is the mother appearing only through some brief snapshots. It is through the Sabah news reporter’s coverage of Sureyya Ayhan and her family during the World Championships in 2001 that the readers get to hear most about her. The day before the Championships we learn that *“as Sureyya was busy running, with the money she (Sureyya’s mother) has saved, she had put together Sureyya’s dowry”*(Sabah, 08.08.2001)⁴⁹. In a feature the next day, the same journalist reports the commotion at Sureyya’s home, and uses the metaphor of wedding while describing how women make preparations ahead of watching the Championship on television.

“It looked as if Sureyya’s family was marrying off their daughter. On the one side savoury bread parcels and filo pastries, on the other side flat breads and pancakes were being prepared, potatoes were being baked for the coming guests.” (Sabah, 09.08.2001)⁵⁰

Next to the item is a small picture showing two rural women preparing the food. After Sureyya only finishes the race in eight place, the father is directly quoted for his comments whereas the mother is indirectly quoted as having linked her daughter’s less than expected performance to her excitement. Through the news stories, we get the feeling that the father sees Sureyya not only as his daughter, but also as a daughter with national responsibilities; therefore through him, the daughter role of Sureyya in her private life blends into her identity as a young female athlete with national responsibilities. The mother, on the other hand, is seen as related to Sureyya only on a private level, through the typical mother-daughter relationship, which can explain why she remains in the background in the coverage. However, she does not disappear from the stories altogether as she also fulfils an important

⁴⁸ Serkan Gemici & Ahmet Kaya, 07.08.2001, ‘From gold coin to gold medal’, Hurriyet

⁴⁹ Ali Erdogan (sports journalist), 08.08.2001, ‘She was faster than the tractor’, Sabah

⁵⁰ Ali Erdogan (sports journalist), 09.08.2001, ‘Look how brave our bugbear is!’ Sabah

role in Sureyya's life. While the men try to help Sureyya achieve a career in athletics, the mother secures Sureyya's gender role as a wife.

From the daughter of a loving mother and a father, Sureyya is quickly elevated to the status of becoming a national daughter. This is normalized through the extensive use of deixis "we" and "our" in the news items such as the headlines "*Sureyya is the Champion of our hearts*" (Sabah, 09.08.2001)⁵¹, "*Our lion girl*" (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002)⁵², which are made even more powerful through the dramatic use of metaphors in the subheadings:

"She is Europe's best. She is the golden girl of Turkish athletics. She is our girl like the wind, she is our girl with the gold medal, our girl who has written her name in history. She is Sureyya Ayhan." (ibid.)

If Sureyya is the nation's daughter, she is first and foremost a daughter figure in front of the nation's founder Ataturk or as his name already suggests, 'the father of the Turks'. The emphasis on Ataturk in the coverage will only be intelligible when one considers that in dominant discourses of nationalism, every progress and achievement in Turkey is linked to Ataturk's reforms in the early years of the republic. In this context, Sureyya Ayhan emerges



Fig. 2 Putting flowers onto Ataturk's mausoleum, Hurriyet & Milliyet.

as someone three times indebted to the national leader, once for being a member of the nation that had been saved by the leader, once again for being a woman who historically had been emancipated by the leader, and lastly as an athlete. As with other aspects of modern life in Turkey, the development of sport is also largely attributed to Ataturk's support and encouragement in this field. Not only do his words on sport often decorate gyms and sports halls in Turkey, but the

19th of May, which he had proclaimed as Youth and Sports Day in the early years of the Republic, is still being commemorated as a national holiday. Therefore, it is only to be

⁵¹ Sports department, full page coverage headline, 09.08.2001, Sabah

⁵² No by-lines, front-page headline, 12.08.2002, Hurriyet

expected that Sureyya will feel indebted to Ataturk, and voice her undying respect and faithfulness by his grave.

The admiration for the leader, or 'the cult of Ataturk', as Navaro-Yashin (2002) calls it⁵³, can be clearly observed in the news items with attractive visuals reporting Sureyya Ayhan's visits to Ataturk's mausoleum⁵⁴. Two of these items are half-page long headline stories in Sabah's sports pages, and stress the importance of the ultimate father figure. In these stories, Ataturk emerges as no less than a God-like figure. Following the 2001 World Championships, Sabah reporters had put a captivating picture of Ayhan outside in front of the mausoleum, with a solemn face and both hands open towards the skies as if praying (Sabah, 17.08.2001)⁵⁵. The headline reads "*She made a promise to Ata*", using the short form of Ataturk, which means the father. From the subheadings the readers learn that Sureyya has promised the father that she will bring back medals from the 2003 Paris World Championships and 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. The second headline that appeared in the sports pages of Sabah in 2002 and again dominated half the page is basically a repetition of the previous year's storyline (Sabah, 14.08.2002)⁵⁶. This time however, the headline is more personalised through the use of the first person "*I promise you, my Ata*".

In this one Sureyya is pictured as putting flowers on the national leader's tomb, while helped by the soldiers guarding the mausoleum. This is again a powerful image, also used by Milliyet and Hurriyet positioned as the centrepiece on their pages. In Sabah, accompanying this picture is another photograph of Sureyya outside the mausoleum. The visual design of the headlines again exaggerate the nationalist feel through the use of special fonts that colour the already bold letters in red, against a backdrop of a pattern of the crescent and the star from the Turkish flag. The colour gets darker towards the end of the headline and finally the word

⁵³Navaro-Yashin (2002) finds that the image of Ataturk after the 1990's has changed from being an emblem for the sovereignty of the state and turned into a fetishlike national father figure. Calling it "the cult of Ataturk" she argues that the public participated in this new Ataturkism loaded with "magical, ritualesque, and mystical dimensions", turning someone who is supposed to represent secularism into a figure who is worshipped. The trips to the mausoleum, she finds similar to "visits to a saint's tomb". See particularly the chapter on 'The Cult of Ataturk', p.188-203.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that mausoleum visits are not extraordinary stories in Turkish newspapers - indeed, they are common, and expected events by journalists. Yet, their commonality, or in Billig's (1995) terms, "banality", makes them so much more powerful. While Ataturk's mausoleum is open to public, it has now become a tradition for visiting foreign members of state, political figures, nationally famous figures to especially visit Ataturk's mausoleum and write in the open guest-book. If the visitors are well-known figures, their visits and what they have written into the guest-book becomes a favoured news item for the press.

⁵⁵ Ali Erdogan, sports pages, 17.08.2001, 'She promised Ata', Sabah

⁵⁶ Ali Erdogan, sports pages, 14.08.2002, 'I promise you Ata', Sabah

Ata, which is at the end, is coloured in a black-red, emphasising the prominence of the ultimate father. These visuals strengthen the already powerful emotional charge of the news item, which creates a powerful 'oneness' between the journalists, readers and Sureyya. Through the use of the first person in reporting her promise, simultaneity of experience is created for the journalists and the readers alike as they witness Sureyya making her pledge in front of the whole nation. What she promises here is not just a gold medal, but also the fulfilment of the founder's dream of modern Turkey. In this context, the use of the first person can also be seen as turning Sureyya's words into the national readers' very own pledge to the founder, for furthering his project. The deliberate choice of reporting through the first person is not limited to Sabah's coverage but is also observable in Hurriyet's reporting of Sureyya Ayhan's words written in the mausoleum's guest book. Alongside a picture of Sureyya laying flowers, Sureyya is seen as talking on behalf of the nation:

"My Ata, we as the Turkish youth are signing successes in the road you have paved."
(Hurriyet, 14.08.2002)^{57, 58}

5.2.4 'The national athlete who destroyed a family'



Because of her relationship with her coach, Sureyya's image in the media oscillates back and forth between the ideal national daughter figure and the rebellious/loose daughter disobeying her father. As mentioned previously while describing the data, all three newspapers have covered the relationship early on in August, with varying degrees of emphasis. In particular, the news stories that appeared in Hurriyet and Milliyet early on in August exploited the tabloid storyline, and made direct links between Sureyya's career

Fig.3 "Pre-honeymoon is from the government", Hurriyet & Milliyet.

⁵⁷ Serdar Uluer, sports pages, 14.08.2002 'The big lottery for Sureyya' Hurriyet.

⁵⁸ The same news was covered in Milliyet and Sabah with the following words: *"My Ata, I bow with respect in your presence, and promise to continue my life on the road you have paved for the Turkish nation and remain faithful to the ideals you have left"* Necmi Kepcetutan, sports pages, 14.08.2002, 'Szabo fell into the trap' Milliyet; Ali Erdogan, sports pages, 14.08.2002, 'I promise you Ata', Sabah.

performance and her private life with titles such as “*Sureyya runs with Love*” “*This love has made Sureyya run*” (Milliyet, 08.08.2001; Hurriyet, 08.08.2001)⁵⁹. These stories also inform the readers about the how Sureyya’s relationship with her coach damaged her relationship with her the father. In the following months, news coverage of the relationship focused on Yucel Kops’ ending of his marriage with titles such as “*The national athlete ruined a family*”, “*Here is the photograph that destroyed a family*” (Milliyet, 11.11.2001; Hurriyet, 11.11.2001)⁶⁰. These items are accompanied by a photograph of Sureyya Ayhan smiling, lying on her coach’s lap in shorts and a t-shirt, while the two embrace each other, along with the picture of the sad wife.

While it might not be too unsurprising to find media interest in the national athlete’s private life, the coverage here extends beyond the simple news value of the relationship. Having declared Sureyya as a national daughter, journalists, almost all of who are male, take over the paternal role in the national parenting and attempt to bring her into line. One news story even criticises the state, for being too soft on her and not assuming fatherly authority. This item, written by the same journalists for both Milliyet and Hurriyet (22.12.2001)⁶¹, appeared with the headline “*The pre-honeymoon is from the government*”, followed by the subheading:

“National Athlete Sureyya Ayhan, who is having an affair with her coach, has completed her medical treatment in Germany. With the request of the sports organisation, her lover was also with her during the ten days”.

For the journalist, the illicit relationship between Sureyya and her coach also make their work relationship no longer acceptable and turned every trip into a pre-honeymoon paid for by the state. Both papers have accompanying visuals - Hurriyet has the picture of the couple embracing each other, Milliyet has a photograph of Sureyya Ayhan, in her uniform, and with what can be interpreted as thankful smile. Again both stories share a striking second news item embedded into the first, with the subtitle “*Any other institution would have shown her the door.*” The item argues that the sports minister even “*admitted that they have had double*

⁵⁹ Ahmet Kaya, Nihat Duzgun, Serkan Gemici, 08.08.2001, ‘Sureyya runs with love’, Milliyet; Ahmet Kaya, Nihat Duzgun, Serkan Gemici, 08.08.2001, ‘This love has made Sureyya run’, Hurriyet.

⁶⁰ Ahmet Kaya, 11.11.2001, ‘The national athlete destroyed a family’, Milliyet; DHA (Dogan News Agency) 11.11.2001, ‘Here is the photograph that destroyed a family’, Hurriyet

⁶¹ Murat Agca, 22.12.2001, ‘The pre-honeymoon is from the government’, Hurriyet and Milliyet

standards for Sureyya Ayhan."⁶² Sureyya might have had her accomplishments, but she is still a daughter who needs to follow the rules just like all women do.

Despite the extensive coverage of "the affair" in similar news stories, what I find more interesting than the tabloid coverage is the discussion that took place among the columnists on Sureyya Ayhan's relationship. In this discussion, three different camps emerge: some journalists criticise Sureyya's relationship on moral grounds, some (feminists) argue that the moralist line reflects the double standards of patriarchal Turkish society, while others regard Sureyya's relationship as a threat because it jeopardizes her future achievements in the international arena.

5.2.4.1 The moralist

Fatih Altayli, who had one of the most popular columns in *Hurriyet*, can be seen as representing the moralist camp. While he has strong opinions about Sureyya Ayhan's relationship with her coach, it should be noted that his criticisms are ignited not by the initial stories about the relationship but by an interview Ayse Arman conducted in the weekend edition of his newspaper (*Hurriyet*, 18.Nov.2001)⁶³. In this interview, spread over a whole page, plus half a page of extras in Ayse Arman's own weekend column, Sureyya is quoted as saying "*My coach yearns for me*". While the headline is the journalist's choice, throughout the interview readers meet a young woman standing fully behind her relationship, without any apologies. The visuals also accentuate this image: in the centrepiece visuals she is posed not in her usual tracksuits in national red and white colours, but in a sharp black trouser suit, and one small photograph shows her standing next to Yucel Kop. On the opposite half page, the columnists reflect on her interview, under a very striking series of photo shoots of again the same 'dressed up' Sureyya Ayhan, smiling, laughing teasingly, and in the last one sticking her tongue out. After the publication of the interview, what can only be called a battle of words between the two journalists broke out. Fatih Altayli made the first attack by focusing on Ayhan's words when she told Arman that her coach had a major role in her success as he had been supporting her since she started training with him at the age of 13, and that Yucel Kop was "*her coach, her lover, her brother, her best friend, her father*", all at once, underlining the strength of their relationship. The day after the interview, Altayli read this as an affair that

⁶² Emphasis mine.

⁶³ Ayse Arman, interview, 18.Nov.2001, 'My coach yearns for me', *Hurriyet*

started between an adult male and a girl at the age of 13, and asked his column “*Would you let your child do sports when there are such coaches around?*” (Hurriyet, 20.11.2001)⁶⁴

“This relationship started when Sureyya was 13.

Can you see what is happening? (...)

They put a small, very young girl, or rather, a child, into the hands of a man.

He is a coach, so he should train her. However, the man does more than training “the child”⁶⁵. (...)

It is obvious that Sureyya’s mind is a bit confused. Or someone has confused it.”

In Altayli’s words, not only Yucel Kop turns into a much hated child abuser, but Altayli himself takes over the fatherly role for the rest of the readers as he asks:

“The fact that this is told so much out in the open, in front of everyone is a big blow to sports.

(...)

If you were a father, would you comfortably let your daughter go to sports trainings? Even if her coach was old enough to be her father?”

In his columns Altayli addresses his readers directly, and asks them to identify with his position, which he offers as the only nationally accepted position. Morality, in these lines, is not a private matter; it is also a national matter. To support his argument, Altayli calls upon the well-known words of the nation’s father as his reference point⁶⁶:

“Ataturk liked sportsmen who are intelligent, agile and of good moral character.

The Directorate General of Youth and Sports used to write this on all sports halls.

Obviously they forgot to put it on where Yucel Kop and Sureyya Ayhan were training.”

In his column, Altayli’s initial reaction was to the couple, not to Arman who “*could not have known the disgrace*”. For Altayli, Arman was just a journalist doing her job and “*The one who reports about the situation cannot be the one who is trampling on the moral values.*”

⁶⁴ Fatih Altayli, column, 20.11.2001, ‘Would you let your child do sports when there are such coaches around?’ Hurriyet

⁶⁵ Author’s emphasis.

⁶⁶ “I like sportsmen who are intelligent, agile and of good moral character”

(Hurriyet, 21.11.2001)⁶⁷ However, as Arman responded in her own column fully supporting the relationship, the debate got sharper and eventually the discussion about Ayhan's private life became an open debate over modernity and national values. For Altayli, Ayse Arman, by attacking him was trying to "*make her own moral perspective and values the dominant one*" (Hurriyet, 23.11.2001)⁶⁸. Directly addressing the readers, Altayli again appealed to the nationally accepted moral norms that all Turkish fathers would behold and protect:

"If you like, think of it this way.

"You have a daughter. You take her to a teacher when she is 13, for him to educate her. And after a while, you learn about the love affair that your little daughter, who has not come of age, is having with her teacher.

How would you feel?

I do not know about Ayse Arman but I would not feel too well."

It is interesting to follow how the debate about morality suddenly turns into a debate over modernity in these columns, as Altayli accuses Arman of having a faulty vision of what modernity is:

"Ayse Arman defends her column in the name of modernity. And she uses this argument for whatever she does. And while she is doing this, she uses the fact that her mother is German as a reference point. Maybe Arman does not know this but if the relationship between Sureyya Ayhan and Yucel Kop had taken place in Germany, according to German laws Yucel Kop would have been taken to court for abusing someone that had come to him for education." (Hurriyet, 26.11.2001)⁶⁹

This is one of the strongest attacks Altayli launches on his colleague. As he reminds the readers about Arman's non-Turkish 'origins', he questions the applicability of her values to Turkish society (Hurriyet, 01.12.2001)⁷⁰. In an almost racist tone, Altayli brings up Arman's

⁶⁷ Fatih Altayli, column, 21.11.2001, 'A very stupid situation' Hurriyet

⁶⁸ Fatih Altayli, column, 23.11.2001 'Ayse Arman has made what s 'private', public' Hurriyet

⁶⁹ Fatih Altayli, column, 26.11.2001, 'The Oriental Fox, Ms Ayse' Hurriyet

⁷⁰ Altayli, of course, is not the only one who questions "modernity". In his column in Hurriyet on 01.12.2001, titled 'A tragic case' Bulent Bog criticises the relationship along the same lines: "*A relationship such as the one between Sureyya and Yucel Kop used to be something unacceptable for Turkish people. However, under the blanket of 'keeping up with the times' today people can take in a lot of things. For somebody to say 'I am a coach' and take the responsibility of a 13 year old girl, for the relationship to turn into a love affair even though one of them is already married, has become perfectly normal.*"

half-German background, and warns the readers against her efforts to inflict upon the society her own moral values, which for him do not really portray the real meaning of modernity anyway. Here it is not really the West that poses the risk, rather it is the misinterpretation of what Western modernity is. For Altayli, it is clear that Arman is a living example of over-westernisation. In this context, just like Kop, Arman with her attempts to challenge the existing moral norms and her unacceptable perception of modernity also turn into a threat to the nation (Hurriyet, November 2001)⁷¹.

5.2.4.2 The modernist

Arman's arguments are not unpredictable: she rejects the moral grounds on which Altayli criticises the couple, finding them conservative at the least. While she underlines that she does not intend to challenge all cultural values, she has objections to what defines Turkish family tradition and what needs to be preserved from the existing moral norms:

“But my intention is not to deny the institution of marriage, nor the family. (...) Then let me ask you:

On the 21st of November, there was a news item in Hurriyet about how a father killed his daughter for not being a virgin, and at the end, it turned out that she indeed was a virgin. Is this the Turkish family tradition?

If it is, I have no more to say.

But just note that this is no different than Taliban's logic.” (Hurriyet, 25.11.2001)⁷²

If for Fatih Altayli the danger awaiting the nation was in over westernisation, for Arman the real danger is traditionalism. While both journalists voice their desire for a modern Turkey, each see the requirements of that modernity with respect to gender and morality differently, and therefore blame each other for trying to impose his/her set of values upon society. To support her interpretations of modernness, Ayse Arman, just like Fatih Altayli uses Ataturk as her ultimate reference point:

⁷¹ Altayli retained his strongly critical stance about the relationship between Ayhan and Kop not only in these four columns he wrote in November 2001, but also in the column titled “*Should success change the understanding of morality?*” which he wrote after the European Championship in 13.08.2002. Arguing that Sureyya's victory has not changed his moral perspective, since “*success is not related to morality.*”

⁷² Ayse Arman, column, 25.11.2001 ‘Human beings do not have contracts’, Hurriyet

“How can Altayli look at this as “Ataturk used to like sportsmen who are intelligent, young, agile and of good moral character”?”

How can he present relationships that do not fit into the morality he formulated in his mind as a piece of rag?

Dear friends, even Ataturk would revolt at this!

This is not fair. One does not have the right to call someone else immoral, judging from his own perspective.” (Hurriyet, 21.11.2001)⁷³

Ayşe Arman’s mode of address is also direct in her columns, positioning the readers as her friends as she complains about Altayli. In fact, on two occasions she published readers’ comments only, which largely support her in her polemic with Altayli. Arman defended her case in the four other columns she wrote on this issue in 2001 and 2002, after the European Championship (Hurriyet, 17.11.2001; Hurriyet, 26.11.2001; Hurriyet, 30.11.2001; Hurriyet, 14.11.2002)^{74, 75}. However, in these liberating columns there also is an evident elitism that puts a distance between Arman’s already-liberated self, and the rural girl Sureyya, in need of support to complete her liberation. This is particularly evident in the very first column Arman wrote on the issue alongside her interview. Titled *“Should Sureyya Ayhan stay in Antep?”* her column discusses whether or not Sureyya should do as advised, leave the southeastern Anatolian city of Antep, come to Istanbul and start training with a new, more experienced team:

“Then I saw them together.

I saw the electricity between them, the communication, the warmth, the love.

Then I started thinking.

Why are we so obsessed with progress?

Why do people always have to go forward, higher, further?

They are so beautiful where they are. They are so untouched.

Yes, their world is little, but will they be happier when it gets bigger?

⁷³ Ayşe Arman, column, 21.11.2001 ‘I make a complaint about Fatih Altaly, to his wife Hande’, Hurriyet

⁷⁴ Ayşe Arman, column, 17.11.2001 ‘Everybody says I love you’ (original title is in English.), Hurriyet;

Ayşe Arman, column, 26.11.2001 ‘Uniting in one in goals and in destiny’, Hurriyet; Ayşe Arman, column, 30.11.2001, ‘What do sports professionals say about Sureyya’, Hurriyet; Ayşe Arman, column, 14.11.2002 ‘Forgive us Sureyya’, Hurriyet

⁷⁵ There are at least two other columns by other journalists that also criticise the patriarchal standards of morality, which work to women’s disadvantage: Ece Temelkuran, column, 12.08.2001, ‘It is allowable for Sukru Bey, but forbidden for Sureyya!’ Milliyet; Gungor Uras, column, 13.04.2002, ‘We (I mean men) both love and beat women’, Milliyet

Can there be something better than what they are living?

I do not know.” (Hurriyet, 18.11.2001)⁷⁶

There is an almost patronising feel to these lines. As Ayse Arman paints a romantic picture of Sureyya with her coach, she also draws a clear line between the girl from the small town, content with her little world, and her modern, urban self who is one of those with a bigger world, an obsession with progress and a desire to go “*forward, higher, further*”. By attempting to protect Sureyya, and by placing her in an imaginary pastoral town setting, Arman also manages to place her outside the world of progress.

5.2.4.3 The pragmatist

The third group can be represented by Hincal Uluc, a popular writer in Sabah, who has a half-page daily section, as well as the occasional sports column he writes for the sports pages. Uluc clearly states his position from the beginning: he sees the relationship as a threat to Sureyya’s career, and to her further national victories. For the journalist, Sureyya’s private life is her own business:

“If Sureyya is in love with her coach, if, just to be nearer to him, she chose Gaziantep University, if she can take two hours of commuting time back and forth, just to work with him, this is her choice.” (Sabah, 18.08.2001)⁷⁷

However, Uluc also makes it clear that this is a waste of Sureyya’s potential:

“As a worldwide talent, instead of competing on the world stage with thousands of pounds in her pocket, win medals in Olympic Games, in World Championships, have her name written in history, become a hero, and in order to do this, train with the best coaches of the world, if instead of doing these things, just for the sake of her relationship she chooses to train with her humble coach in, let’s say not in running tracks in L.A. but in the upland meadows of Erzurum, this is her choice, and one of the biggest sacrifices done in the name of love. Maybe this is a love story that needs to be written...”

⁷⁶ Ayse Arman, column, 18.11.2001, ‘Should Sureyya Ayhan stay at Antep?’, Hurriyet

⁷⁷ Hincal Uluc, column, 18.08.2001, ‘A star cannot be born’, Sabah

Using a sarcastic style, Uluc makes a comparison between Sureyya who chooses her love, trains in Anatolian cities such as “in the upland meadows of Erzurum” and her “humble coach”, and the Sureyya who chooses her career and opportunities that await her, such as “thousands of pounds in her pocket”, fame of “becoming a hero” and “training in LA”. This is an elitist depiction of the urban centre and its modern athlete vis a vis the small Anatolian town and its Sureyya. The comparison makes it evident for the readers which path Sureyya should be choosing and the opportunities she will be missing in her career and life in general if she does not move to the urban centre where the journalist is already positioned. However, what is at stake here is much more than an athlete’s career. What Sureyya will be sacrificing is also the nation’s newly found international success in athletics. Therefore, for Uluc, Turkey’s success is conditional upon Sureyya’s cooperation, whether or not she follows the journalist’s advice:

“For the first time in our history we will live through the happiness and pride of having a winner at the Olympics, a World Champion, a record breaker.

Sureyya is talented enough to do all these ...

Only if...” (Sabah, 26.09.2002)⁷⁸

That conditional clause “if” determines national progress and Uluc sees it as his responsibility to direct the athlete towards the right choices. In doing so he sharply criticises the modernist/feminist camp for missing the point and protesting about the news coverage of Sureyya’s private life. Uluc contends that if Sureyya stays in Antep with her humble coach, national success is under threat. Therefore Uluc raises his protests once again after her European Championship victory:

“Who is Sureyya Ayhan’s coach?.. What is his career, his education?.. What are the facilities he has access to?.. To train an athlete, who has beaten an Olympics Champion, requires a real team play, starting with psychologists... Weight training requires specialists, the way she eats requires specialists... And much more... Does this team exist in Turkey, particularly in the Anatolian cities and towns?” (Sabah, 15.08.2002)⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Hincal Uluc, column, 26.09.2002, ‘Sureyya Ayhan!..Till where?’, Sabah, emphasis mine

⁷⁹ Hincal Uluc, column, 15.08.2002, ‘The Sureyya Ayhan incident and our media’, Sabah, my emphasis

The Anatolian town is again a recurring image in these lines. However, instead of romanticising it as Ayse Arman does, Uluc focuses on its deficiencies, its not having caught up with the global standards - which the urban centre clearly has. The Anatolian city should wait and follow the lead of the urban cities of modern Turkey, and give up its grip on Sureyya. For the journalist, Sureyya is no longer an ordinary athlete but national property, which he and his readers hold the ownership of, and this property needs to be put to good use. In this context, in return for representing the nation, individuality has to be sacrificed:

“We will continue own and see to Sureyya and if necessary, in spite of Sureyya. Because today Sureyya is a national asset. No one should ever forget that.”

5.3 Overarching discourses and concluding remarks

The dominant discourse throughout the stories is an evident nationalism, which is reflected through the sports coverage. This is not a phenomenon unique to the Turkish context - how nationalism works through the medium of sports is a much-discussed area. If nationhood is built through the imagination, then sporting events become one of the major channels that feed into that communal imagination and strengthen our bonds of belonging. Blain et. al rightly suggests that “due in part to the universality of sporting activity, sport has been an important cultural arena through which collective identities have been articulated” (Blain et al., 1993: 12). Media plays no small role in the process of “coalitional identification through sports” (MacClancy, 1996: 6). In particular, international competitions and games seem to be an area where the media continuously and openly arouse national sentiments, flagging up nationalist identity through such strong rhetoric that it would have appalled us elsewhere. In fact, many scholars have pointed out that the reporting of national sporting events in almost all contexts echo the language of warfare, with international games more and more starting to be perceived as “substitute wars” (Blain et al., 1993: 77; see also Billig, 1995). As Elias notes, sports continue to constitute an area of social activity in which overt emotional engagement remains publicly acceptable in ways that would have been unthinkable in other contexts (cited in O’Donnel, 1994: 354). When it comes to supporting one’s country in the field of play, fervent nationalism turns into a natural and even expected feeling. Without our realizing, these events transcend the sports field, quietly carrying nationalist discourses into our everyday lives, and generating social and cultural meanings far beyond the world of sport.

Given this context, the key role sports people play in symbolising and strengthening national belonging becomes more significant. In reporting sports events, the media continuously identify us, the readers, with the national team or, as in our case study, national sports hero. As Hobsbawm has pointed out through the mass media coverage of international contests, ‘sportsmen representing their nation or state’ became ‘primary expressions of their imagined communities’ (cited in Alabarcas et al., 2001: 548). That is why the lives of sports people have become a major point of interest for both the people and the communities that they represent. Therefore, in some respects, this case study does not present unusual findings. The use of epic, almost mythological language interwoven with jingoism, or the constant references to the athlete with the deixis “our” are also commonly found in other national contexts. The news value Ayhan’s private life holds for journalists is also not surprising. However, the ways in which her identity, her career and the choices she makes are discussed, and how journalists position themselves with respect to her, reveals aspects of nationalism that are unique to the Turkish context. Through her story, three location points emerge that are fundamental to the positioning of Turkish national identity: Turkey’s relationship with Europe, Turkey’s relationship with its past, and Turkey’s stance regarding women’s morality.

Firstly, through the reporting of Sureyya Ayhan’s European Championship, Turkey’s ambivalent relationship to Europe vividly surfaces. As Sureyya is turned into the symbol of Turkey’s struggle against Europe’s presumptions, her victories become a testimony to Turkey’s ability to keep up with and be a part of successful Europe. By being transformed into the national daughter figure, Sureyya gets Turkey accepted by its European counterparts, and fulfils the role set out for modern Turkish women from early on in the Republic. However, the coverage also reveals a deep resentment that paradoxically ‘others’ Europe at the same time as Turkey tries to secure acceptance and inclusion in Europe. The resentment arises from the perceived initial gap with Europe, and is most clear in the news coverage about ‘foreign athletes’ with whom Turkish athletes have always had to catch up.

At the same, Sureyya also serves as a reminder of overcoming a troubled past. Narrations of Sureyya Ayhan’s childhood are a key mechanism in building up the readers’ identification with the national athlete, as they play upon the shared social memories about the Turkish homeland, such as the barren lands, the poor but genuine Anatolian people, and their inherent wisdom and belief in progress. If identity is a “question of memory, and memories of ‘home’ in particular” (Morley & Robins, 1995: 91), then the memories evoked by the journalists

about Sureyya Ayhan's hometown confirm Turkish national identity most powerfully. In fact, Sureyya's Anatolian hometown in Cankiri, a neighbouring city to Ankara, gives the perfect description of the Turkish heimat⁸⁰. It must be noted that Anatolia is a powerful signifier in Turkish national imagination, most importantly because Kemal Ataturk organised and led the war of independence from Anatolian cities. After the war, the capital of the New Republic was set not in Istanbul, the imperial capital, but in what was then a small Anatolian town, Ankara. Therefore just like the position of women, the transformation of the deprived Anatolian town became one of the symbols of the modernization project. We can say that Sureyya's rise from the Anatolian town and her success in international arena actually play upon the historically embedded feelings of national progress, and turn her into an even better candidate for representing national identity.

This is very much evident in the detailed depictions of Sureyya's childhood, in which the rural Anatolian town emerges as a fondly remembered and over-romanticised place. The way her story was covered in the papers strengthened the feeling of nostalgia, through the use of exaggerations, metaphors, inverted syntax and narrative style, which all add a touch of fairy-tale quality to Sureyya's story. The powerful images accompanied by anecdotes told by her relatives – such as the quoting of Sureyya's long dead grandmother - work to convince the readers of the credibility of the “*incredible*” story of a hero “*which is much better than the ones told in the movies*” (Hurriyet, 07.08.2001)⁸¹. However, as the journalists continuously remind the readers, that fondness arises only from having moved on to a better, more modern place, the urban centre with further opportunities for national progress. It can be said that the poor little Anatolian town will best be remembered only once left behind, and national aspirations have become closer to fulfilment. Even though the image of Anantolia evokes fond national memories, it is not a place that one should to return to, or where the athlete should remain. In other words what is evoked is nostalgia for a place that should remain in the past, and nobody really wants to revisit today.

In pointing to the gap that Sureyya needs to jump, journalists already position themselves within a Turkey, which is urban, Kemalist, and in league with European standards of progress – very much in line with the identity attributed to ‘white Turks’ discussed in the second

⁸⁰ Here, I am using Heimat not as a German-specific concept, but more in a general sense. Rathzel's definition here is useful in explaining Heimat as a concept that “lies between the home in which one lives and the country” and expressing “a prime symbol of the nation” (1994:84).

⁸¹ See the coverage in Hurriyet, 07.08.2001, ‘From gold coin to gold medal’

chapter. We can argue that while the barren rural village has always been an important image in Turkish modernization, the way it is re-considered in terms of class difference, and compared with the globally recognizable patterns of life – such as psychologists, nutritionists, training sessions in LA, terms associated with the life style of the urban city dweller - belong to the context of the nineties and the present decade. The troublesome image of the past is left behind through a necessary leap - whether or not Sureyya will make that move is a recurring debate throughout the coverage. Here, the gap between the town and the city that the athlete is expected to jump stands for the very same move that Turkey has been trying to make towards Europe.

In this, the discourses that narrate Sureyya's story intercept those that we saw in the Batman case study. At the outset the Anatolian towns and cities journalists talk about seem very different to the peripheries of Batman, which were imagined as a part of 'another Turkey' outside the journalists' vision of the modern Turkish core. However, while the two cases differ in their ethnically inscribed discourses about Turkishness, they share the same modernization discourse that expects modernity to move in a unilinear line, from the urban centre to the rural peripheries. The much-loved Anatolian towns are, just like Batman, still located outside the journalists' centre, and outside its modern life, and progress. While they certainly offer some excellent potential, as proven by the 'Sureyya miracle', they still have to wait until they are modern enough to be trusted with national assets like Sureyya.

Lastly, another contradiction emerges when Sureyya is not only asked to move to the urban centre, but also to take with her what needs to be preserved from her cultural roots - most importantly moral values. Through her, the readers witness the classic debate about the "limits of modernity", which mainly refer to the moral boundaries for women. The data presented shows clear evidence that the moral discourses that see women as a signifier of male honour – in this case, national honour- are far from extinct and they continue to define the binaries of 'Western culture' versus 'authentically Turkish' through women's bodies. Sureyya is simultaneously criticised for not being modern enough, in her insistence to train in the Anatolian city with her coach, and also for not conforming with Turkish cultural norms by having a relationship outside of marriage. Like most women in the post-colonial context, and as Chaterjee (1989) had argued, Sureyya has the difficult task of modernizing through acquiring the cultural refinements of the West, without jeopardizing the national culture by 'over-westernising'. The delicate balance Sureyya, as the nation's daughter, is asked to strike

here is also the balance that the journalists envision for the modern nation's identity vis-à-vis the West. The debates that follow, such as the above-discussed polemic between Fatih Altayli and Ayse Arman, are actually debates about where that perfect point of balance lies for Turkey today.

Having stressed the still important stronghold of discourses on gender and morality, we should also note that when compared to the supremacy of nationalism in the coverage, and the accompanying discourses about the need for Turkey's modernization, gender discourses are more open to debate. The very fact that Sureyya's moral values became an issue of debate marks a relative flexibility about the codes and conduct of Turkish moral values, particularly when national victories are at stake. Following her European Championship in 2002, there is an evident softening of news coverage in all three papers on this issue⁸². The titles "*My love gave me strength*" (Milliyet, 13.08.2002)⁸³, "*I will not talk about my private life*" (Sabah, 13.08.2002)⁸⁴ or "*She did not cave in, she remained strong - She had told Ayse Arman that he was her "everything"*" (Hurriyet, 12.08.2002)⁸⁵ point at the possibility of acceptance of rebellious daughters, and the questioning of the *nationalness* of moral values and norms. With the victory in the Europe, it seems, wrongs are largely forgiven and hostilities are forgotten.

Nevertheless, the possibility of change does not mean that gender and moral norms will be radically rewritten in any foreseeable future. After all Sureyya did get married to her coach on Valentine's Day in 2004, not only to the relief of the expectant writers, readers, and government authorities, but according to the news coverage, also to Sureyya herself. "*It feels like a big burden has left my shoulders*" (Milliyet, 17.02.2004)⁸⁶ she was quoted as saying shortly after the wedding, showing the nation her conformity to the gender norms.

⁸² The only exception is again by Fatih Altayli who insists on his position in the aftermath of Sureyya's European Championship. (Fatih Altayli, 13.08.2002, 'Should success change my moral values?' Hurriyet.)

⁸³ Sports department, 13.08.2002, 'I have just started', Milliyet

⁸⁴ No by-lines, 13.08.2002, 'This is only the beginning', Sabah

⁸⁵ Mehmet Arslan, 12.08.2002, 'And here is my answer', Hurriyet

⁸⁶ Front-page item with picture of the bride and groom, no-byelines, 17.02.2004, 'Sureyya has become a bride', Milliyet. Unfortunately, Sureyya's story, beyond this case study, does not have a happy ending. After one other gold medal in Europe and a silver medal in the World Championships in 2003, apart from many other gold medals in European League events during the year, the news that she would not be competing in Athens 2004 was a big blow for the Turkish media. With allegations of doping usage, the media fury directed at her coach (now also her legal husband) was much worse than in 2001. He was vehemently accused of national treachery and of standing in the way of Sureyya's/nation's progress. See for example Hincal Uluc, 08.08.2004 'He finished Sureyya with his own hands' Sabah; Emin Colasan, 10.08.2004 'The multi-dimensional disgrace of Sureyya' Hurriyet

Chapter 6:

'Everybody loves a bride?'

White Weddings and Political Meanings in Turkey

6.1 Introduction of the case study

6.1.1 The setting - Summary of events and the brief description of the context

This case study examines the news coverage of three weddings, each of which included a significant political actor as the father of the bride or groom and therefore received extensive front page reporting in mainstream newspapers.

The first of these weddings was that of Elif Sözen to Helmut Kohl's son on 26th May 2001. During his tenure as German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl had been very vocal in his opposition to Turkey's inclusion in the EU. News of the couple's planned wedding was therefore received with direct irony in the press. In the stories published in the build up to the wedding, Kohl's speeches or acts were often quoted as evident signs that the former German Chancellor had finally changed his attitude towards Turkey with the help of his son's Turkish bride. The wedding itself, set in the five star Kempinsky hotel in the historical Ciragan Palace by the Bosphorus, was covered in exquisite detail, both during the preparations and following the wedding day. What also received exceptional coverage were the religious ceremonies that preceded the official ceremony, the traditional Islamic marriage and the Church wedding prior to the official signing of the papers on the wedding day¹. Pictures of Elif Sozen taken inside the Church and in the Palace accompanied front page headlines that focused on how the marriage vows were exchanged three times, through one secular and two religious

¹ To avoid confusion later in the analysis, it is necessary to make some clarifications. In Turkey, in order to get married, couples have to sign official papers in front of witnesses and a marriage registrar. Depending on the couples' financial means or preferences, this can take place either in the registry office, or the registrar can be called to the venue where the wedding reception will take place. If they wish, couples can also have the religious Islamic marriage, which requires the presence of witnesses and a religious authority. However, religious marriages are privately organised, they are not legally recognized and they do not grant the couple any marital rights.

ceremonies, with the Islamic marriage, though not confirmed, forming one of the major storylines.

The second wedding also took place in Ciragan Palace, only about a month after Elif Sozen's. The bride, again named Elif, was a young woman who covered her hair and was from a prominent Islamist family. She was the daughter of Necmettin Erbakan, the founder of the political Islamist movement in Turkey and a former prime minister, who came to power in 1997 leading the coalition government with his Welfare Party². Erbakan served for only a short term until the government collapsed under pressure from the military in 1997. In 1998 both Erbakan and his party were banned by the Constitutional Court³ for violating the principles of secularism and for being a threat to the democratic regime in Turkey.⁴ Given Erbakan's strong Islamist stand, and his daughter's veiled looks, the press was particularly keen on the details of the wedding ceremony, which took place on June 17th. News coverage started months in advance and became headline news during the week of the wedding, particularly focusing on the special white wedding dress that would cover the bride's hair, as well as the choice of the extravagant venue. When the wedding photos were made public, many journalists ironically criticised the wedding for not reflecting Islamist traditions and values, which Erbakan had so long stood for in Turkish politics. Comparisons were also made with Elif Sozen's wedding, especially after photographs revealed that Elif Erbakan had walked down the aisle with her father to be given away, just like Elif Sozen had done in her church wedding – a common sight in the Christian tradition but not in Turkish weddings. Many other details of the wedding, from the choice of music to the dresses of the guests, were

² Refah Partisi (RP)

³ The Constitutional Court was formed by the 1961 constitution following the military coup of 1960. It was founded as a part of the attempt to give the judiciary considerable powers in the exercise of sovereignty, as it has the power to control the constitutional validity of statutes passed by Parliament. It was an attempt by the military to avoid any abuse of power by the Parliament and counterbalance political institutions, and still plays an important part in the political system in Turkey. As Kalaycioglu (2005: 137) notes, 18 political parties have been banned by the Constitutional Court in the last two decades, however parties with religious fundamentalist, Kurdish ethnic nationalist, Marxist-Leninist credentials have been much more at risk of suffering from a legal ban than others. Further information on the Constitutional Court can be obtained from the official government website <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/court.htm>

⁴ Before he lead the coalition government in 1996, Erbakan was known for his staunchly anti-Western position, including opposition to Turkey's membership of the EU, arguing it would result in the assimilation of Turkey's Islamic/cultural identity. After becoming the prime minister he followed a more moderate line, albeit still pro-Islamist. By Feb 1997, the government received an ultimatum from the National Security Council to reaffirm the secular nature of the state, and under increasing pressure Erbakan resigned in mid-1997 resulting in the collapse of the coalition government, a process which is termed as the post-modern coup in Turkey. Soon after, in January 1998, the constitutional court ruled that the party had violated the principles of secularism and outlawed it, imposing a political ban on Erbakan, along with some other leading names in his party.

covered in minute detail, turning what was seen as a Western-style wedding organized by an Islamist political leader into a major news story.

To frame the political context more accurately it is important to note that at the time of these two weddings the Democratic Left Party⁵, which is strongly secularist and pro-EU, led the ruling coalition in Turkey. On the Islamic front deputies who were not subject to the political ban imposed by the closure of the Welfare Party in 1997, joined forces to form the Virtue Party with Erbakan becoming the party's 'behind the scenes' leader⁶. The party participated in the 1999 elections and entered the parliament with approximately 15% of the national vote. Although from the very start the Virtue Party showed a concerted effort to reform its identity, promoting itself as pro-democratic and pro-EU, its future was no different to the party it succeeded. Following the elections, a female MP, Merve Kavakci insisted on wearing her veil while taking the parliamentary oath, causing the Democratic Left Party to object on the grounds that it violated both the Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Turkish General Assembly. This event, and the following debates on what the veil symbolised, whether it was a sign of modernity or an open threat to secular Turkey, also triggered what was to be the end of the Virtue Party. Following a complaint from the Public Prosecutor in 2000, the Constitutional Court eventually closed down the Virtue Party in June 2001 for being a continuation of the Welfare Party, breaching the principle of secularism. This event took place only five days after Erbakan's daughter's wedding, and it confirmed the already sharp divide between the secularists and the Islamists, as well as foregrounding the role women played in representing the modern nation.

By the time of the third wedding, however, the political picture had changed dramatically. The debates on the meaning of modernity and the role of religion in Turkey had split the members of the Virtue Party into two new parties. The 'traditionalists' formed the pro-Erbakan Felicity Party⁷ and the 'renewalists' led by Tayyip Erdogan formed the Justice and Development Party⁸. Following the elections in 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP)⁹ came to power, winning the majority of the votes, and soon after its leader, Tayyip

⁵ Demokratik Sol Parti (DSP)

⁶ Fazilet Partisi (FP)

⁷ Saadet Partisi (SP)

⁸ Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP)

⁹ Both Erdogan and leading names of the AKP had in the past close links with the Islamist parties lead by Erbakan. Erdogan himself became active in politics first in the now defunct National Salvation Party (MSP), which re-formed under the name Welfare Party following the coup in 1980. Later, with the success of the

Erdogan, started serving as the Prime Minister of Turkey. This was a major shock for the secularist circles in Turkey, especially when Erdogan himself had been sent to prison and banned from politics for inciting rebellious feelings against the secular principles of the Republic in a speech he gave in 1997. Given the Islamist roots of the Party's leadership, including those of Erdogan himself, the success of his party was alarming news for the secularists who did not trust the AKP with negotiations over Turkey's entry into the EU. In spite of the expectations, Erdogan was careful to sever any ties with the party's pro-Erbakan background, consistently stating that the party did not represent an Islamist movement but rather a "conservative democrat" stance. Furthermore, as soon as the Party came to power, it launched a staunchly dedicated campaign for Turkey's membership into the EU, which diverged from the discourse about the EU as the 'Western Club' which had been strongly advocated by Erbakan and supported by his followers only a couple of years before. The attempts of the AKP, especially in its first year, to show that the party was loyal to the aims and goals of the Republic, in return led to mixed reactions from the secularists ranging from hesitant trust to outright rejection of the Party and the new Prime Minister. The wedding of Erdogan's son to the veiled Reyhan Mutluer¹⁰ took place within this context.

Newspapers covered the build up to the wedding by focusing on a range of stories from the couple's youth to the arranged nature of the marriage and the bride's 'covered' wedding dress. However, two issues received particularly large coverage, one being the choice of the wedding venue. On the one hand the wedding was a comparatively a low profile occasion with only a civil ceremony and no dinner reception. On the other, though, it was held at a conference centre in front of an estimated 9000 guests most of whom were Erdogan's supporters. It can be said that of the three weddings, Reyhan Mutluer's remains the most plain and formal, even though it was a major event and had the largest guest list when compared to the other two weddings. It had the least ballroom glamour. For the journalists, this wedding also had the added attraction of Silvio Berlusconi attending as one of the witnesses. Berlusconi was reported to have come for the wedding on the request of Tayyip

Welfare Party in local elections in 1994, he became the Mayor of Greater Istanbul as well as the president of the Greater Istanbul Metropolitan Council. He served until he was tried and convicted of inflicting religious hatred in a public speech he made in an east-Anatolian province to protest the ban of Welfare Party in 1997, while he was still the Mayor of Greater City of Istanbul. He was sent to prison and also barred from public office until the AKP came to power in 2002 and amended the constitution to uplift his ban. Again, see Kalaycioglu (2005: 163) for further details.

When the AKP came into power in November 2002, for the first time in 15 years one party held absolute majority in Turkey.

¹⁰ Erdogan's bride, as well as his daughters, and his wife are all veiled.

Erdogan¹¹, and said to have addressed the Prime Minister as his ‘friend’ throughout the ceremony. Following this, the news stories on the wedding gave a mixed reaction to the ‘modernness’ of the actors and the wedding itself.

6.1.2 Objectives in the selection of the case study

Like the other two case studies, the analysis of the three weddings also explores the question of difference, attempting to understand the desired boundaries for the nation through women. Here, the question of difference concentrates on the representation of modernity and its most prominent signifier for the journalists, Europeanness.

As so often is the case in wedding stories, the data here positions the brides at the centre of attention, but unlike other wedding stories, these brides, through their or their husbands’ families, are also accredited with representative power and therefore turn into the focal points for discussing Turkey’s position vis-à-vis a modern Europe.¹² The storylines try to find an answer as to whether the actors in these weddings are “modern” enough to qualify for inclusion within the category of a “European” Turkey. To put it more simply, there is one very simple concern underlying all three storylines: does this wedding bring Turkey closer to or away from Europe and the EU? In this regard, the three brides and their weddings are assessed according to a set of factors, such as family and educational background, careers, hobbies and achievements, the bridal dress worn at the wedding, or the venue, all of which are examined in detail to measure their proximity to the conduct of the ideal Turkish citizen.

In doing so, this case study deals with both internal and external others. While Elif Sozen is described, similar to Sureyya Ayhan, as the nation’s daughter, Elif Erbakan and to a large extent also Elif Sozen appear as the brides that the journalists hesitate to call their own. However, the coverage of the weddings does not only try to situate and fix the identity of the Islamists, and the role of religion, but also to define Europe, and Turkey’s relationship to Europe. The inconsistencies that arise in this process are valuable in revealing the ambivalences inherent in Turkish national identity today. As the analysis will show, fixed

¹¹ During the time of the wedding, Berlusconi was not only the Italian Prime Minister, but as Italy had the rotating presidency in EU, Berlusconi also held an important position within the EU. Given this and the AKP’s dedication to take Turkey into the EU, his attendance at the wedding was also symbolically important.

¹² However, unlike the Sureyya Ayhan case, this is not a representative power emanating from the individual identity of the brides, nor is such a representative position eagerly owned by them as Sureyya had done. It is the families, or specifically, the father figures, that turn the brides into representatives of their communities.

criteria for approval and criticism do not exist for the brides. The same wedding venue can be a source of praise for Elif Sozen, and a reason for sarcasm for Elif Erbakan; just as a veiled wedding gown can be described as a ridiculous imitation of the West for Elif Erbakan, but might lose its novelty in the case of Reyhan Mutluer. Following these inconsistencies we can easily lay out the discourses on national identity. Moreover, by comparing the coverage of the first two weddings that share the same time frame as the third wedding, we can also examine whether the changing political context under the AKP government resulted also in changes in value judgements about modernity and national identity in Turkey.

Indeed, the wedding case study helps us sweep through these debates in a rapidly changing political context within a very short period of time. During the two years that the data spans, the political scene changed dramatically in Turkey. The closing down of the Felicity Party, the splitting of the Islamist politicians into renewalist and traditionalist camps, the election of the renewalist AKP to power with the 2002 elections, and the staunchly pro-EU campaign it pursued particularly in the first two years of its tenure, all contribute to the discursive framework that unfolds through the data. These developments resulted in a more heated debate among the Islamists and secularists themselves as to who is secular and who is Islamist and who should be praised or criticised according to which criteria, making the Kemalist dichotomies of Islamist/secularist more problematic. Even though the focus of the analysis in this research is the journalists' impressions of the events rather than the events taking place, it is impossible to ignore this context, within which both the weddings and the journalists covering them are situated. For this reason alone, the case study contributes invaluable data to witness the different claims to what identity and modernity entails in Turkey, as the political tables turn in this period.

As for the objectives that lead the study, the same initial set of questions as with the previous two cases will be used to guide the analysis. However, because the weddings case contains a large bulk of data that includes three mini cases, these questions are supported by a subset of questions to anchor the analysis and explore the specifics of the wedding case in more depth:

- **Who are the brides in the case study?**
- **In what ways are they described as different (or same)?**
- **In the case of difference, is this described as a desired or an unwanted one? If the latter, what are the proposals to eliminate that difference?**

- **In what ways is their difference significant for a particular understanding of modernity & national identity in Turkey?**
 - **What is the meaning of being modern in these stories? In what respects do the stories and the brides differ from one another? What are the signifiers and criteria for being modern for each bride?**
 - **How are the concerns about ‘becoming European’ and ‘joining the EU’ revealed through the reporting of these?**
 - **Where do the journalists place religion within this context?**
 - **Where do the journalists position themselves?**
 - **Can we observe a change throughout the cases?**
 - **In the journalists’ coverage?**
 - **In the shifting discourses on being modern and being Turkish?**
 - **If so, how can we interpret this change?**

6.1.3 Overview of the data

6.1.3.1 Time Frame

The initial data includes all related news items that appeared between 2000 and 2003, and concentrates around the week of the weddings. As a general rule coverage of the weddings peaks right before they take place or on the day of the event itself, when plans are announced, as well as right after the weddings when photographs are available. Coverage then peters out soon after the weddings take place.

Following this pattern, news about Elif Sozen’s engagement appears in news pages as early as 18th December, 2000, but is limited in the days following the engagement (between 18th and 23rd of December) and is not followed up until 6th May 2001 when the wedding plans for the 26th of May are revealed. The detailed coverage of the wedding dies away after the 30th May.¹³ News stories announcing Elif Erbakan’s engagement also appear as early as 5th January 2001, and although there are several news stories between then and the wedding in May, the most extensive coverage appears around the time of the wedding on the 17th, and dies away after the wedding day on the 20th June.

¹³ Following the death of Helmut Kohl’s wife on 05.07.2001, Elif once again appears in the headlines, this time as the responsible and supportive Turkish bride pulling the grieving family together. The coverage here supports the findings of the initial data regarding the wedding, but given its different theme, it was not included in the analysis.

For the third wedding, news stories are more limited in their timeframe. There are a few possible reasons. Firstly, the marriage was strictly arranged, as we learn from the reporting; second there was a short time span between the actual marriage and the announcement of the marriage; and lastly the two families strived to keep the news regarding the wedding as private as possible. The coverage about the engagement starts appearing on the 11th July, about a month before the wedding, which took place on the 10th August. In spite of these restrictions, this wedding was given the largest coverage, with the bulk of the items appearing between the 7th and the 13th August. The stories die away soon after this, so the 14th can be taken as the end date for this case study.

6.1.3.2 Type of Data to be analysed

In terms of news genre, all three wedding stories can be topically categorised as soft news items, or human-interest stories. They are largely covered as headline news because of their expected interest to the public due to the involvement of well-known father figures, with varying degrees of tabloid elements in the language. Most headlines reflect a very strong tabloid style reminiscent of celebrity news, as revealed in headlines such as “*Kohl’s grandchild is on the way*”, “*She had seen that she was getting married in her dream*”, “*A watch for the groom from his uncle Silvio*”. However, there are also news items which report the events from a more bureaucratic perspective, most of which are found in the reporting of the prime minister’s son’s wedding.

In terms of style and language used, further distinctions emerge between the coverage of the three weddings. The patriotic style in the coverage of Elif Sozen’s wedding and the sharp sarcasm accompanying Elif Erbakan’s wedding contrast with the relatively more objective headlines found in the news stories about Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding. This is also observable in the selection of visuals. The photographs from Elif Sozen’s wedding, showing the couple kissing on the lips, or pictures of Elif Erbakan walking into the venue in her father’s arms, and the captions accompanying these photographs have a strongly tabloid feel, compared with the visuals from Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding. In other words, Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding lacks the ‘gossip’ factor: it is more concentrated on not the storylines building up to the wedding but rather on the reporting of the event itself. This might be due not only to the different style

of this wedding, as explained in the previous sections, but also because of respect for a prime minister.

Although Reyhan Mutluer's wedding might lack the gossip factor, it certainly is the object of attention for the columnists. In total, there were 34 columns written solely or partially on the selected weddings. Two of these were on Elif Sozen's wedding, seven on Elif Erbakan's wedding and a record number of twenty five columns discussing Reyhan Mutluer's wedding, reflecting the columnists' value judgements regarding the significance of each event. Reyhan Mutluer's wedding, in fact, is distinguished from the other two by its relatively less intrusive coverage, which can mostly be attributed to the limited time, the unwillingness of both sides to speak about it, the silence of the couple who are said to have met shortly prior to the wedding, and the style of the wedding itself. These have not, however, affected the newsworthiness of the event, as Reyhan Mutluer's wedding received the most extensive coverage in all three papers. As Hurriyet pointed out, the news of the wedding received a record level of coverage compared with all Turkish newspapers.¹⁴

The heavy coverage is not surprising given the families involved. The fact that the last wedding is the Prime Minister's son's wedding, in front of thousands of guests, including Berlusconi as the witness, puts the young couple in a significant position in terms of representing the Turkish public and young Turkish people in particular. Given that both the bride and the groom were dressed in an Islamist style, the bride having the veil and the groom wearing a shirt with banded collar and no ties, even the pictures from the wedding turns their representation into an 'interesting', if not 'problematic', story for the journalists. These factors can explain the extensive coverage of this wedding in the columns, even though all three marriages have dominated the headline news and the front pages of all three papers.

6.1.4 Organizing the data for analysis - methodological decisions

The case study of the weddings differs from the Batman and the Sureyya Ayhan case studies in that it is made up of three different cases, and therefore requires an adaptation of the

¹⁴ Answering a reader's criticism about why the Hurriyet newspaper had devoted so much space to such a 'frivolous event', journalist Dogan Satmis argued "*News stories about the Prime Minister's son have received extensive coverage not only in Hurriyet, but also in other newspapers as well. In a recent news article, it was announced that the amount of news about the wedding had reached a record level.*" Dogan Satmis, 01.09.2003, 'Readers Letters' Hurriyet

general methodological framework developed for this research. Applying the preferred template, all news items were analysed thematically, and the main themes of the case study were mapped out, to arrive at overarching discourses. However, given the existence of three different weddings, and their different contexts, it was necessary to contextualize the themes within each wedding separately. The textual analysis exposing the specific linguistic tools was undertaken alongside the unfolding themes, and varied in each wedding. For example, and as has been previously mentioned, Reyhan Mutluer's wedding with the prime minister's son neither got the sharply sarcastic headlines that Elif Erbakan received, nor the jingoistic news coverage of Elif Sozen's wedding. At the same time, most columnists did not see Elif Sozen's wedding as a worthy event, whereas each of the other two weddings was the 'meal of the day' for the columnists, which has an important bearing on the analysis. Treating the analysis as one big case study throughout would have meant compromising some of the data, especially the linguistic details, in an attempt to level them out in line with the common themes. Conducting the analysis as three separate studies allowed me to focus on these differences, and how they enhanced the unfolding discourses. Parallels or comparisons between the three weddings were then discussed in the conclusion sections of each analysis.

The second methodological concern regards the type of data. As discussed previously, in terms of genre, in all three papers the coverage converges around columns and soft-news items, even though the language and style used in the news items have varying degrees of tabloidization. Therefore, in terms of the variety of genres, the weddings case is not a very complex case study. However, the data is far from being un-problematic, particularly when it comes to documenting the news stories. Whereas it was relatively easy to follow the coverage of individual journalists from the by-lines in the Batman case study, and reasonably so for the Sureyya Ayhan case, this is not the case for the weddings. Various journalists followed the events at various times, and for the coverage of the wedding day in particular, the stories are the outcome of collaborative work, rather than being produced by one or two journalists. This collaboration can either take the form of journalists writing their relevant news items under one larger headline news story, with specific by-lines for each or most of the pieces, or putting together the whole page as a team, without any specific by-lines for the individual items. The latter is particularly the case for the day-after stories of the weddings, where a long list of journalists working on the news are given in the form of a banner at the bottom of the page. Milliyet newspaper on 11.08.2003 offers a good example on this, where Reyhan Mutluer's wedding is covered with a striking picture of the couple in the middle of

the first page, while in the inside pages, coverage is on two consecutive pages, both with full page spreads. The team covering this wedding included nine journalists' and four photographers. While in such news the number of journalists working on the event is striking in terms of pointing to editorial decisions about the newsworthiness of the event, it proves to be cumbersome in referencing and documenting. To overcome this problem, and for practical purposes, I have decided to reference the by-lines of these items in the form of *et al.*, citing the first journalists' name rather than all ten or eleven. These large spreads were then treated as one big news story, but with their own sub-stories, and when important further information was provided regarding the space covered by the sub-stories in the spread.

6.2 “We gave away a bride to the Chancellor”- Elif Sozen’s wedding

6.2.1 Thematic analysis –themes addressed in the coverage and allocation of sub-themes to thematic areas

The thematic analysis follows how the news stories, through their coverage of Elif Sozen’s wedding and her persona, reveal concerns and ambitions regarding Turkey’s identity. Among the three brides, Elif Sozen emerges as the most approved of bride by the journalists, for being a modern Turkish woman who has made the former German Chancellor shed his biases about Turkey’s Europeanness. The first three themes in the analysis explore how, through Elif Sozen’s marriage, Turkey’s identity is played out with respect to Europe’s perceived identity. The last theme looks at the journalists’ concern regarding the role religion plays in Turkey’s identity vis-à-vis Europe.

6.2.1.1 The importance of the CV- Acceptance

News stories introduce Elif Sozen to the readers as a strong, well-bred and talented Turkish woman. Unlike the coverage in Sureyya Ayhan’s story, news here does not offer any first hand information in the form of direct quotes from Elif Sozen or her family. Despite this, there is an abundance of news stories offering information on the bride. In these stories Elif Sozen’s upper middle class family background is frequently highlighted¹⁵, as well as her achievements in her education and career. In particular her high school, Robert College, a

¹⁵ For example Sabah introduces her as the “(...) *the daughter of the General Director of the Kalekalip Machinery and Molds Inc.(...)*” no-bylines, 18.12.2000, ‘We gave away a bride to the Chancellor’.

well-established and American-sponsored private high school in Turkey, is an important reference point for the journalists in locating her on the social map of Turkey. From the very first stories about her engagement to the later news stories on her wedding, her high school is repeatedly mentioned even when this information sounds out of place and irrelevant, as in the following example:

“The bridal gown of Elif Sozen, who is about to tie the knot in her eleven year long relationship with Peter Kohl, and who is a graduate of Robert College, is being designed by the famous fashion stylist Yildirim Mayruk.” (Hurriyet, 06.05.2001)¹⁶

Arguably because of the prestige of the school in Turkey, and probably also due to the lack of first hand information, news coverage freezes the 32-year-old bride in her high school years. Her high school yearbook seems to be the only source of information and is frequently quoted to inform the readers that she is *“passionate about nature, literature and especially poetry”* (Hurriyet, 06.05.2001)¹⁷, which helps to construct the image of Elif Sozen as the romantic bride. A picture of a very young Elif Sozen, apparently from that same yearbook, showing her in an elegant white dress, accompanies her feminine description in the newspapers and remains as the only visual image of the bride until the wedding.

In addition to the emphasis on her school, Elif Sozen’s other academic and professional achievements are repeatedly foregrounded, which help to compare Elif with Peter Kohl and stress her equal position to the groom:

“Elif and Peter, who met while studying at MIT, in Boston, work as brokers in the British finance organization J.P. Morgan. Peter is a specialist in corporate mergers, and just like his bride-to-be, he can speak six languages.” (Sabah, 06.05.2001)¹⁸

Here, the journalists’ praise is twofold. Elif Sozen is not only a qualified woman but through her qualifications she has won the love and respect of the Kohl family, which is headed by the former Chancellor of Germany, who had adamantly resisted Turkey’s accession into the EU. Before the wedding, Hurriyet and Sabah both give substantial space to their report on the

¹⁶ No by-lines, 06.05.2001, ‘The Wedding of the Year’ Sabah, emphasis mine.

¹⁷ Ayla Ozcan, 23.12.2000, ‘The bride with the poet’s sprit’ Sabah

¹⁸ Ayla Ozcan, 23.12.2000, ‘The bride with the poet’s sprit’ Sabah

interview done by the German Bild newspaper with the mother of Peter Kohl in which she praises his Turkish bride. The front-page title “*Our bride is very clever*” in Sabah newspaper clearly stresses how Elif is fully accepted in the Kohl family, and the news item quotes Mrs. Kohl’s description of Elif who attended “*the top prestigious schools, after which she started her career as a financial consultant to the Russian government. She is now the Assistant Director of J.P. Morgan*” (Sabah, 23.05.2001)¹⁹. Hurriyet also reports the same interview from the front page, which reads “*Mother Kohl praised her Turkish bride*” (Hurriyet, 23.05.2001)²⁰. On the inside, the same news takes the headlines with more than half a page of coverage reading “*Our Turkish bride is very cute and clever*” and “*My bride is the one and only*”. With these lines, directly reported in the first person, Peter Kohl’s mother not only reaffirms Elif’s qualifications for the Turkish readers, but also expresses the Kohl family’s admiration of their Turkish bride.

Such a focus should not be discarded as a tabloid concern. From the very start, news stories make it clear that the meaning of this marriage extends beyond an ordinary union of families, let alone a couple. This is evident from the very first news headline announcing the couple’s engagement where journalists position themselves and their readers as the members of the Turkish nation. Here, the nation is envisioned as a family, giving away to Kohl who is still referred to as ‘the Chancellor’, their bride:

“*We gave away a bride to the Chancellor*” (Sabah, 18.12.2000)²¹.

As Elif becomes the nation’s bride, her marriage to Peter Kohl becomes a symbol of the changing relationship between Turkey and the Kohl family, and beyond that, between Turkey and Europe. News stories foregrounding the best from Elif Sozen’s past not only put Elif on equal grounds with, if not higher than the Kohls, but also prove that she is as European as Kohl himself, who used to be deeply against Turkey’s inclusion in the EU. Her academic and career achievements are shown as proof of this, as well as key to the “praise” received by the Kohl family. In this regard, the Turkish bride’s entrance into the Kohl family turns into a

¹⁹ no by-lines, 23.05.2001, ‘Our bride is very clever’ on the front page, on the inside: ‘Our bride Elif is very cute and clever’ Sabah

²⁰ no by-lines, 23.05.2001, ‘Mother Kohl praised her Turkish bride’ on the front-page, on the inside ‘My bride is one and only’ Hurriyet

²¹ no by-lines, 18.12.2000, ‘We gave a bride to the Chancellor’ Sabah, emphasis mine

metaphor for Turkey's acceptance as a modern, European nation state, and more specifically, Turkey's acceptance into the EU.

In spite of the news about Elif Sozen's acceptance by the Kohl family, the coverage throughout is dominated by a feeling of resentment, if not outright frustration. This is because the very terms of acceptance imply a superior side agreeing that the other, which had previously been rejected as being inferior, is now equal. Therefore journalists received the news about Elif Sozen's 'admission' to the Kohl family with bitterness, rather than with pride and joy. On hearing Helmut Kohl's statement that they gladly accepted Elif and her family, one columnist expresses her annoyance in the following words:

"And also, what was Mr. Kohl supposed to do but accept? His son is, as it is apparent, madly in love with our girl. On top of all, our girl is also educated; she is in no respect less than his giant son who is his look-alike, only 20 cm. taller. What is this superiority complex?" (Sabah, 29.05.2001)²²

Here the journalist, clearly positioning herself and her readers as the family of the bride, is enraged to think about the possibility that Kohl might not have found her nation's daughter suitable enough for his son. For the journalist this is just another case of Europe's unfounded superiority complex. By referring to the groom as a 'tall, giant Kohl look-alike', the journalist attempts to turn the other side's feeling of superiority into inferiority.

6.2.1.2 Bringing up the past - Repentance

Given its symbolic associations, Elif Sozen's 'acceptance' is a reminder of the Turkey that has once been rejected by Kohl. Within this context, present acceptance becomes not enough to compensate for the humiliation caused by Kohl's rejection in the past. To erase the superiority of the West, and to readjust the power balance in favour of Turkey, the other side needs to be humiliated as well – just as the above quoted journalist had attempted to do. This is done through continuous comparisons between the past and the present, using a highly sarcastic tone of voice. It might be that Kohl's "*son's love has made him forget the past*"

²² Ruhat Mengi, column, 29.05.2001, 'Everybody needs justice' Sabah, emphasis mine

(Milliyet, 26.05.2001)²³, but journalists are keen to continuously remind Kohl and affirm their readers that Turkey has not forgotten.

This is nowhere more apparent than in the front-page headlines of Milliyet newspaper on the day of the wedding, proclaiming that “*Kohl has made peace with Mehmetcik*”²⁴ (Milliyet, 26.05.2001)²⁵. Covering half the front page, the news story focuses on a small, but quite nationalist note on the wedding invitations. The note requests the guests not to send any flowers to the wedding but instead to make donations to the Mehmetcik Foundation, a Charity set by the Turkish armed forces to help war veterans and the families of those who have lost their lives in war. This forms quite an irony for the journalist, who recalls right below the headline, Kohl’s adamant objection to Turkey’s inclusion to the EU, his policies against the Turkish Diaspora and his opposition to the selling of weaponry to the Turkish army. In addition, an extra item on the right side of the headline states in large fonts that “*During his tenure, he refused to sell weapons to Turkey. However, his son’s wedding invitations say ‘Donate to the Mehmetcik Foundation’...*” Beside the pictures of Kohl and the invitation, there is also a picture of Elif pointing to the bride’s role in the sudden change in Kohl’s attitude. In the ‘detailed news story’ in the inside pages, half a page is devoted to an extended version of the same story under the highly ironic headline “*Something strange is happening to Kohl*” (Milliyet, 26.05.2001)²⁶. The journalist covering the story is clearly not convinced by this sudden change and regards Kohl’s attitude with suspicion, and then gives his reasons for doing so:

“Even though the wedding is regarded as “the kinship of Turkey and Germany”, the fact that Kohl was not on very good terms with Turkey remains fresh in memories. In the European summit in 1997, he had asked Turkey “What have you got to do with Europe when your religion and your culture are different?” and at the Luxemburg summit in 1998, he had been against Turkey’s membership of the EU”

Here the reporting of Kohl’s words helps to enhance Kohl’s representative role for Germany and for the Europeans who share his opinion. From the informal tone of address in the question, it is arguable that the quote is as direct as it claims to be. The particular way in

²³ Metin, Pervin, 26.05.2001, ‘Kohl has made peace with Mehmetcik’ Milliyet

²⁴ Mehmetcik is a general name used to refer to any enlisted Turkish soldier.

²⁵ Metin, Pervin, 26.05.2001, ‘Kohl has made peace with Mehmetcik’ Milliyet

²⁶ Metin Pervin, 26.05.2001, ‘Something strange is happening to Kohl’ Milliyet

which his words have been put together not only adds an exaggerated tone of aggression to Kohl's opinions, but also personalizes the feud between him and Turkey. Since a personal offence calls for a personal defence, the news item, also as apparent in the subheading "*He was against our membership of the EU - A struggle to erase the past*", serves as a reminder of what had happened, presenting the readers with further evidence and asking them to take it personally and not forget the past. In doing so, the coverage reflects a deep cynicism about seeing Europe as the friendly partner.

The day after the wedding, Hurriyet newspaper also had a front-page headline focusing on the contrast between the past and the present. The tone was, however, more forgiving than the sharp sarcasm of Milliyet newspaper. Under a striking title "*The fine confessions that arrived with the wedding*" (Hurriyet, 27.05.2001)²⁷, the heading reads:

"In his son's wedding, Helmut Kohl, who followed policies against Turkey during his Chancellorship said, 'I had been biased against the Turks. What politicians could not do, Elif succeeded in doing'."



Fig.1 Elif Sozen and her father walking into the Church

In this context Elif Sozen emerges as the Turkish girl who brought Kohl down on his knees. Her role in Kohl's repentance is further reinforced with the two subheadings, "*I had been unfair*" and "*Elif's success*", followed by a slightly extended version of the heading. In the inside pages, there is a two-page coverage of the wedding, and the second largest news piece of the spread has the title "*My bride Elif's success*". On the same day, Milliyet newspaper on its front page calls attention to Kohl's apologetic comment in the wedding under the subheading "*Kohl confessed his sins*" (Milliyet, 27.05.2001)²⁸, repeating the same title again in its coverage of the wedding in the inside pages. Again on the same day, Sabah newspaper uses the very same title inside an eye catching star illustration in its coverage (Sabah, 27.05.2001)²⁹.

²⁷ Nilgun Karatas et.al, 27.05.2001, 'My bride Elif's success' Hurriyet

²⁸ Omer Erbil et.al, 27.05.2001, 'A wedding with three times 'I do's' Milliyet

²⁹ Yusuf Demir et. al. 27.05.2001, 'Three times: I do, I do, I do' Sabah

The phrase “confession of sins” is powerful, not only in identifying Kohl as the Christian other, but also positioning Turkey as the superior side from whom Kohl asks for forgiveness. Having Kohl ‘confess’ fulfils the desire to shift power towards the Turkish side. However, confessions may not be seen as enough repentance for some journalists. The previously quoted columnist, Ruhat Mengi openly admits that she does not yet feel satisfied:

“And shall I tell you something, Uncle Kohl said those words “I was unfair to the Turks, I was prejudiced” a little too quietly. In between us... as if confessing to a priest..

He should go and say it right in the heart of Europe so that everyone can hear. Of course, they voice their enmities in the loudest tone, and confessions in the lowest.. Whatever you say, I am still angry!” (Sabah, 29.05.2001)³⁰

There is a high degree of cynicism in these lines, as the journalist clearly suspects the sincerity of this ‘too quiet’ confession. Moreover, Europe’s hostility towards Turkey is not limited to the past and to Kohl only. Here the guilt extends from Kohl to ‘them’, i.e. other European states and their leaders, who have been and still are, united in their loud opposition to Turkey. For this reason, it is not enough for Kohl to quietly repent; by demanding Kohl to confess audibly and “right in the heart of Europe” the journalist desires to see both Kohl and Europe defeated. Within this rhetoric of repentance and confessions, Europe clearly emerges not as a locus of positive identification, but as an ‘other’ in the form of an aggressor who has been trying to exclude Turkey.

6.2.1.3 Compliance - having it the Turkish way

Among the three weddings, the Kohl wedding offers a surprising emphasis on religion and traditions, as the journalists are especially keen on watching how the events unfold with regard to Turkish customs. Hurriyet newspaper, before the engagement took place, informed its readers that Helmut Kohl had come to Turkey to ask Kemal Sozen, the bride’s father, for permission to marry his son to Elif Sozen, emphasising that “*Kemal Sozen is known for his conservatism*” (Milliyet, 18.12.2000)³¹. The next day, following the engagement, the language used to describe what happened assures the readers that things took place in the accustomed Turkish way, such as the news item titled “*We gave away a bride to the*

³⁰ Ruhat Mengi, column, 29.05.2001, ‘Everybody needs justice’ Sabah

³¹ no-bylines, 18.12.2000, ‘Kohl visits the in-laws’ Milliyet

Chancellor” (Sabah, 18.12.2000)³². Here, the verb “give” implies that Helmut Kohl asked for permission from Elif’s father, as it is the custom for the father of the would-be-groom to visit the would-be-bride’s family and ask for permission for his son to marry the girl. As discussed in the previous sections, since the families stand metaphorically for the two nations, pressing for Turkish customs becomes significant in exerting Turkey’s authority in its relationship with Europe. The following lines leave no doubt that events proceeded in the accustomed way:

“(…) and then Helmut Kohl went to the house of the Sozen family. Asking there for Elif Sozen’s hand for his son Peter, who has been deeply in love with her for the past eleven years, Helmut Kohl got a positive answer. With a little ceremony among the family, the bride’s family has agreed to give away their daughter into marriage.”

The coverage of the engagement stresses the difference between the two cultures, while emphasising Helmut Kohl’s compliance with Turkish customs. In fact, all three papers address Kohl and Elif Sozen’s father as ‘dunur’, the informal way the in-laws of the bride and the groom address each other in Turkey, as accustomed in Turkish traditions³³. Milliyet newspaper sees Kohl’s visit to Elif Sozen’s parents’ home and her father’s work in Canakkale as further evidence that the “...former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl complied with Turkish traditions in his visits” (Milliyet, 18.12.2000)³⁴. Readers are told in detail about Kohl’s visit, such as the fact that the Kohl and Sozen families went to Canakkale to visit the factory Mr. Sozen is the manager of, in a helicopter provided by Mr. Sozen’s boss. These details help to paint a prestigious picture of the Sozen family. However, perhaps the most interesting piece of information comes from Sabah reporters who write that “*Helmut Kohl first went to the Gallipoli Cemetery for Turkish Soldiers*” (Sabah, 18.12.2000)³⁵, adding a nationalistic touch to Kohl’s visit, which the readers would presume to be pre-planned by his Turkish host.

These events, in fact, have symbolic significance in reassuring the readers that even though the bride is marrying the German groom, her cultural identity is still protected and will not be lost through the marriage. As will be further discussed in the next section, retaining Turkish

³² no-bylines, 18.12.2000, ‘We gave a bride to the Chancellor’ Sabah, emphasis mine

³³ Metin Akpınar, 17.12.2000, ‘Tomorrow Kohl will ask Elif’s family if his son can marry her’ Hurriyet; no-bylines, 18.12.2000, ‘Kohl visits the in-laws’ Milliyet; no-bylines, 18.12.2000, ‘We gave a bride to the Chancellor’ Sabah

³⁴ no-bylines, 18.12.2000, ‘Kohl visits the in-laws’ Milliyet

³⁵ no-bylines, 18.12.2000, ‘We gave a bride to the Chancellor’ Sabah,

values and customs in the face of Western ones becomes particularly important as the day of the wedding, which is announced to involve a church ceremony, approaches:

“In December, Kohl (...) visited Elif’s house and asked for permission for his son to marry Elif, and in line with Turkish customs, the families agreed on the marriage.” (Sabah, 06.05.2001)³⁶

There are, however, still two contradictions that need to be resolved in order to convince the readers that the marriage will not endanger Elif’s Turkishness. One is the fact that her fiancée, no matter what, is German. The Turkish public needs to be assured about the groom’s intentions. Stories that describe Peter Kohl as *“an amazing friend of the Turkish people, and acts like an ambassador in advertising Turkey abroad”* (Hurriyet, 17.12.2000)³⁷ as well as someone who knows *“six languages and through their relationship learned Turkish from Elif”* (Hurriyet, 17.12.2000)³⁸ work to serve this purpose. In May, when covering the wedding ceremony at Ciragan, all three papers excitedly report that the groom had said, “I do” in Turkish after which *“the whole party had burst into big applause”* (Milliyet, 27.05.2001)³⁹. Again reporting the wedding, Hurriyet journalists noted that it *“got everyone’s attention how the groom, in line with Turkish customs, kissed the hands of Elif’s father and witness after the wedding papers had been signed”* (Hurriyet, 27.05.2001)⁴⁰. In addition to his willingness to follow Turkish customs, the groom is also reported to *“know and has read a lot about Islam”* (Sabah, 29.05.2001)⁴¹. Moreover, reporters also hint that he offers potential for conversion, as made clear in the striking caption title *“Elif can put Peter on the right track”* (Sabah, 28.05.2001)⁴². Quoting an imam who says he has known Elif since her childhood, the caption reports that *“Elif, just like her family, is a very strong believer”* and repeats the title once again for stronger emphasis, *“she will definitely put Peter on the right track”*.

These depictions assure the readers that Elif is not compromising her identity by marrying Peter Kohl. Unlike his father or other Europeans who were so unfair to the Turks, the groom is portrayed as ‘a good European’ who is already half Turkish. However, this does not solve

³⁶ no-bylines, 06.05.2001, ‘The Wedding of the Year’ Sabah

³⁷ Metin Akpınar, 17.12.2000, ‘Tomorrow Kohl will ask Elif’s family if his son can marry her’ Hurriyet

³⁸ Metin Akpınar, 17.12.2000, ‘Tomorrow Kohl will ask Elif’s family if his son can marry her’ Hurriyet

³⁹ Omer Erbil et.al., 27.05.2001, ‘A wedding with three ‘I do’s’ Milliyet, front-page headline

⁴⁰ Nilgun Karatas, et.al., 27.05.2001, ‘First St. Antuan, then Ciragan’ Hurriyet

⁴¹ Nebahat Koc, 29.05.2001, front page summary news ‘There was no Islamic marriage’, followed on the inside

‘No Islamic marriage’ Sabah

⁴² Ahmet Ozay, 28.05.2001, ‘A Grandson is on the way for Kohl’ Sabah

the second problem: what to make of the church ceremony that took place on the wedding day. Even though the wedding in the Ciragan Palace was described as prepared ‘*in the Turkish style*’ (Sabah, 18.05.2001)⁴³, where the menu, even including the wine, was completely Turkish, where classical Turkish music was played and where the groom complied with Turkish customs, for many these were not enough to compensate for the Christian form of the wedding that took place in the church, nor for the photographs of Elif walking into the church in her father’s arms. To counterbalance the situation, it is necessary to assert the nation’s own religious identity – yet the problem remains regarding what form of Islam is compatible with Turkish national identity.

6.2.1.4 Confusion - But what is the Turkish way?

Rumours and predictions about the wedding intensified in the news coverage around the time of the marriage. Among these, the most talked about issue was whether or not the couple were going to have an Islamic marriage. On May 6th, both Sabah and Hurriyet newspapers announced on their front pages that an Islamic marriage would in fact take place alongside the church wedding. Sabah newspaper chose the title “*Islamic marriage for the groom Kohl*” (Sabah, 06.05.2001)⁴⁴ informing readers that two religious ceremonies would be held on the day: “*After the Islamic marriage, there will be a ceremony at St. Antoine Church*”. Similarly, Hurriyet had the front page title “*A marriage with both the Imam and the Priest*” (Hurriyet, 06.05.2001)⁴⁵. The day after the marriage, when news of the wedding dominated the front pages of all three dailies, the emphasis was again on the existence of the three weddings. Milliyet and Sabah used the similar headlines of “*A marriage with three ‘I do’s*” (Milliyet, 27.05.2001)⁴⁶ and “*Three times: I do, I do, I do*” (Sabah, 27.05.2001)⁴⁷. On the inside pages, all three papers again extensively covered the issue, displaying pictures from the church ceremony but also remarking that the Islamic marriage came prior to the Christian one.

Quite contradictorily, there seems to be no official confirmation that the Islamic marriage did in fact take place, and careful readers would notice the questionable reliability of the news stories about the Islamic wedding, as the wedding’s coverage included different versions of

⁴³ Nebahat Koc, 18.05.2001, ‘Kohl is in Cesme until the wedding’ Sabah

⁴⁴ no-bylines, 06.05.2001, ‘Islamic marriage for the groom Kohl’ Sabah, front-page summary

⁴⁵ Kubilay Keskin, 06.05.2001, ‘A marriage with both the Imam and the Priest’ Hurriyet, front page summary

⁴⁶ Omer Erbil (et.al) 27.05.2001, ‘A marriage with three ‘I do’s’ Milliyet, front-page headline

⁴⁷ Yusuf Demir (et.al) 27.05.2001, ‘Three times: I do, I do, I do’ Sabah, front-page headline

when or how it actually took place. According to Milliyet newspaper, the Islamic marriage had taken place in a room at the Ciragan Palace, Hurriyet newspaper claimed that there had been an Islamic marriage in the bride's house two days prior to the wedding, while Sabah newspaper mentioned that such a marriage had taken place prior to the Christian one, but gave no further details. This implies that the journalists did not have clear information about the matter, and relied on rumours and vague remarks such as those by Hannolere Kohl that the wedding would conform to both Islamic and Catholic traditions (Sabah, 23.05.2001; Hurriyet, 23.05.2001)⁴⁸. Indeed, the journalists' insistence on bringing it to the foreground can be interpreted as a desire to make up for the Church wedding, for which the civil ceremony in the Ciragan Palace would not compensate.

Yet, religion is not easily accommodated within the secular identity of Turkishness, especially when it has been seen in Turkish dominant discourses of modernization as a potential threat to the secular principles of the Turkish Republic. The idea of Islamic marriage itself contradicts the initial efforts of the Republic to replace it with a civil marriage as a part of its modernization project in its early years. While Islamic marriage is still a very common practice in Turkey and is not illegal as long as it succeeds the civil one, adopting it publicly under the critical gazes of the Europeans who would be watching is quite another matter. In this context, religion is perceived as a problem; on the one hand it is necessary to counterbalance the religious identity of the other side, and hence the journalist's eagerness to cover it. On the other, it presents a contradiction to the efforts to become modern. It is a no-win situation. This explains the indecisiveness of the journalists on how to cover the situation. A subheading in Sabah newspaper makes an effort to highlight that the Islamic marriage did take place, while at the same time carefully not including it as a part of Turkish customs:

"Following the Islamic marriage, the couple, Elif Sozen and Peter Kohl, said 'I do' according to Christian traditions in St. Antoine's, and in line with Turkish traditions in the Ciragan Palace." (Sabah, 27.05.2001)⁴⁹

⁴⁸ No by-lines, 23.05.2001, 'Our bride is very clever' on the front page, on the inside: 'Our bride Elif is very cute and clever' Sabah. Also see Hurriyet on 23.05.2001 with the front page headline 'Mother Kohl praised her Turkish bride' continued on the inside as 'My bride is one and only'

⁴⁹ Yusuf Demir (et.al) 27.05.2001, 'Three times: I do, I do, I do' Sabah, front-page headline

The same concern is also evident in the Hurriyet newspaper, which, unlike its previous headline of May 6th, chose not to mention the number of marriages on its front-page headlines (Hurriyet, 27.05.2001)⁵⁰. Instead, it had a short news summary titled in German “*Einmal ist keinmal*”, meaning only once does not count. The news story is covered extensively in the inside pages and on a separate page from the wedding coverage, and reminds the readers that it is actually illegal to have the Islamic marriage prior to the legal signing of the papers. However, the story adds that this mischief can be ignored as a one-off mistake. In the rest of the wedding coverage taking up a further two-page spread, a related news item titled “*First St. Antoine’s, then Ciragan*” argues that “*before the couple had the legal signing of the papers, they have followed both Islamic and Christian traditions*”, subtly drawing a line between what can be called Islamic and what can be Turkish.

Once the wedding is over, the idea of having an Islamic marriage is more openly questioned and rejected by the journalists. Two days after the wedding, Hurriyet comes up with a new topic of debate which it frames as a “*public discussion*” titled “*Can a Muslim woman marry a Christian man?*” (Hurriyet, 28.05.2001)⁵¹. The article asks whether there can be an Islamic marriage between Peter Kohl and his Muslim bride, and then questions the whole concept of the Islamic marriage. The article gives extensive space to directly quoted arguments from various religious authorities. The subheading “*There is no such thing as Islamic marriage*” puts particular emphasis on the arguments of one official, according to whom Islamic marriage is just a custom not a religious requirement, and what it intends to do is already fulfilled by the civil ceremony.

Sabah newspaper also resorts to first hand information from religious authorities in a similar story. The item appears on the front page with the title “*There was no Islamic marriage*” (Sabah, 29.05.2001)⁵² and under a photograph of the newly wed couple. On the photo, inside a star illustration it writes “*The new debate on the wedding of the year*” and under it another title reads “*The shocking declaration from the Associate Professor*”. The front-page item informs readers that certain prayers were read to sanction the couple’s marriage, without the rituals of the traditional Islamic ceremony. There is also detailed information on the religious

⁵⁰ Nilgun Karatas (et.al) 27.05.2001, ‘The fine confessions that came with the wedding’ Hurriyet, front page headline

⁵¹ Ayhan Can, 28.05.2001, ‘Can a Muslim woman marry a Christian man?’ Hurriyet

⁵² Nebahat Koc, 29.05.2001, ‘There was no Islamic marriage’, front page summary news, followed on the inside as ‘No Islamic marriage’ Sabah

authority present at this ceremony. He is introduced as an associate professor in theology who had “*written 22 books on law in Islam*”, as well as being the bride’s religion teacher from Robert College and a close friend of her father. The item also quotes the scholar’s argument that there is in fact no such obligation to have a religious marriage in Islam. The story is picked up in the inside pages where it appears as a main news item covering half a page and titled “*No Islamic marriage*”. The article is based on the interview with the same scholar where he argues that what is seen as ‘Islamic marriage’ by the public is only tradition and is not compulsory having lost its function with the civil marriage. His arguments are also backed up through an interview with another professor, who assures the readers that Islamic marriage is not a must. The news item, while emphasising that the groom “*had read and knows a lot about Islam*” also highlights that “*Elif’s hair was not covered*” and that she was wearing a low cut shirt while the prayers were being read in the Islamic ceremony. Elif’s unveiled attire is also the subheading of the same item.

In both stories, the strong emphasis on religion serves to mark Turkey’s difference from the West. At the same time, the news coverage also helps to depict the Islamic practices followed by the bride’s family as fully compatible with their European identity, and with the secular norms and values of the Republic. In the stories, the bride’s side emerges as a Turkish family that has remained loyal to its cultural distinctiveness and has not compromised its religious identity, without being traditional or backward. The religious authorities that are chosen to offer support to this picture come from academic circles, and are not too far away from the secular social circle of Elif Sozen and her family.

It is important to note that newspapers do not overtly advocate this interpretation of religion to their readers who might still find it controversial that Islamic marriage is nothing more than a tradition that can be left behind. Instead, news stories chose to present the issue as a “*public discussion*”, “*a new debate*”, or as in Sabah’s coverage “*a shocking revelation*” which got “*people confused*”. And yet, the very choice of this issue for coverage in the newspaper, the extensive space it is allocated in the news pages, the selection of witnesses, and the framing of it as a major discussion in the public sphere when only based on a few interviews conducted by the journalist, reflects a desire to re-read the prerequisites of religion and reinterpret it not as an obstacle to, but as compatible with a desired notion of Turkishness. In this regard, Elif Sozen and her religious practices provide a progressive example for the readers.

6.2.2 Overarching Discourses and concluding remarks

The coverage of Elif Sozen's wedding is dominated by an overriding discourse of nationalism and unapologetic praise for the national self. As Ozkirimli and Yumul have found in their study on Turkish dailies, the positive evaluation of the national self is often accompanied by open or hidden messages about the inferiority of others (2000: 797). In the case of Elif Sozen's wedding, there is not a hidden but continuous and overt attempt to describe the European other, represented mainly through Helmut Kohl's persona, as the inferior side. This becomes most evident in the front-page headlines, predominantly written in a sarcastic style, and quite often ridiculing the former Chancellor's attempts at repairing his strained relationship with the Turks.

This attempt to position Europe as the inferior side also points to existing anxiety about Europe. Throughout the coverage of the wedding, Europe is present as the initially powerful other, posing a continuous threat to the aspirations and self-perception of Turkish people by the possibility of rejecting them and excluding them from Europe. The wedding and particularly Helmut Kohl's changed attitude presents the chance to not only show the readers the turning of the tables in terms of power relationships, and but also to teach Europe a lesson. In other words, Elif Sozen's wedding provides the opportunity to symbolically normalize the relation of power between Europe and Turkey, and to overcome the threat of exclusion.

All this, however, does not eliminate the existing desire to be accepted by Europe. In this context, the desire for inclusion, frustration and anxiety from the possibility of exclusion result in a continuous and what can only be regarded as an exasperating comparison between Turkey and Europe. At this point, the coverage of Elif Sozen's wedding intersects Sureyya Ayhan's story: both point to, beneath the declaration of superiority, a heavy feeling of *ressentiment*, which Greenfeld defines as a psychological state resulting from "suppressed feelings of envy and hatred (existential envy) and the impossibility of satisfying these feelings" (1992:15). This does not undermine the significance of the nationalistic rhetoric that shows up unapologetically in the headlines, but the overt nationalism should be read as a camouflage for this resentment. The linguistic tools that enhance a positive presentation of the self and negative presentation of the other, such as in the form of sharp sarcasm and cynicism, help to reinforce the feeling of national superiority in order to compensate for the frustration.

At the same time, the threat from the European other is double-edged: it is not only exclusion that threatens the envisioned national identity. Inclusion, or more precisely, becoming “European” is also problematic, for it poses the risk of cultural assimilation. This is again a shared concern with the case study on Sureyya Ayhan. With Sureyya Ayhan, the significance of protecting the cultural distinctiveness of the nation surfaces in the debates about over-Westernisation, and the emerging risk to national norms on gender and morality. With Elif Sozen’s wedding, the unfolding discussion is concerned with preserving the authentic culture through customs and traditions, and not compromising these through marriage with the European other. The news stories on how the two families followed Turkish customs during the couple’s engagement provide a good example of this concern. However, the meaning of authentic culture becomes a contested issue once Europe presents religion as a part of its cultural identity, through the Church wedding, and Turkey has to meet it by asserting its Muslim identity through an Islamic marriage. At this point, whether Elif did or did not have an Islamic marriage becomes important because Elif, in becoming the nation’s daughter, not only represents the nation’s cultural authenticity, but also its modernity and secular lifestyle. It is at this point that the coverage reveals the contradictory relationship between Islam, secularism and national identity.

The inconsistencies that arise regarding the place of religion in national culture can be found embedded in Turkey’s modernization project and its secularist policies. Today secularism is a hegemonic public discourse in contemporary Turkey and forms the “state’s preferred narrative about itself” (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 6-7). However, its definition is far from being self-explanatory or clear; neither does it mean that religion and state are exogenous categories. As discussed briefly in the second chapter, from the first formative years of the Republic, secularisation was seen as “a necessary, if not sufficient” (Arat 2001: 35) condition of Westernisation and formed the backbone of Kemalist modernization reforms. Zurcher (cited in Gole 1998: 57-58) groups the radical changes introduced by the secularisation process under three headings: firstly, institutional changes were followed to secularise the state, its education and law, such as the abolition of the caliphate, secularisation of the educational system and the adoption of the civil code. Second, changes were undertaken to replace religious symbols by European symbols of European civilisation, such as the replacing of the Arabic script with Latin alphabet, or the adoption of a new, Western-style dress code. Lastly were the attempts to secularise everyday social life and popular religion,

such as the banning of religious shrines and dervish orders. What is striking about all these changes is that they show the Kemalist state elite's attempts to constrain religion, rather than refusing or eliminating it. As Davison (2003) points out, this is because from the very beginning the state, let alone rejecting religion, sought to maintain it as a constitutive part of the nation's identity and its cultural distinctiveness vis-à-vis the West.

This did not imply a wholehearted acceptance of Islam with all its meanings however, but rather crafting a version of it that was carefully supported through state institutions, ensuring the "proper relationship between nationalism, national solidarity, and Islam" (ibid.: 339). In this relationship, the desired version of religion would not have certain forms of Islamic control and expression which were seen as wrong and "rejected as superstitious, fanatical, reactionary, and obscurantist" (ibid.: 341). This understanding, which aimed to shape "the content of belief and norm" (ibid.: 341) and "privatise Islam" (Arat 2001: 43) was – and still is - sustained through state institutions and cultural policies. The continued instruction of religion in national primary and intermediate schools, state-sponsored religious education and training, and the practices of the Directorate of Religious Affairs which oversees all religious matters, from the monitoring of mosques to the determining of texts to be read in mosques across the country in Friday sermons, help to maintain this understanding.

As Davison argues, while this state-sponsored understanding of Islam might be at odds with the understanding found amongst other people at large, "it still is an understanding of Islam" (ibid.). For this reason, he argues that the series of hybrid and alternative arrangements in the politics of secularisation that lie at the heart of the Turkish modernization process can hardly be examined within the analytical category of secularism. Neither can the Turkish state be studied as a secular one in the sense that the state is free from religion (ibid.; c.f. Navaro-Yashin 2002). But if we leave the debate over the analytical usefulness of the concept aside, what we see here is a powerful discourse in Turkey about secularism that excludes Islamic identity from definitions of modernity, but at the same time accepts it as a constitutive part of national identity. Although it might be hybrid, ambiguous or ambivalent, this discourse serves two very important functions: it not only helps to define and control religion, but also, it uses that constrained version, to resist and negotiate with Europe. In other words, Turkish secularism, while legitimising the claims of the Europeaness of the Turkish nation, also limits its Europeanisation.

The coverage of Elif Sozen's Islamic marriage fits this framework. What the journalists do in their reporting is to reinstate religion's part in the nation's identity and use it to distinguish the nation from Europe. Elif Sozen's wedding allows Europeanisation, but one that is ultimately limited by the nation's cultural distinctiveness, including its religious identity. At the same time the news stories also appropriate the expression of religion to make sure it is in line with the desired version of Islam. The interviews with religious authorities, all of them state approved officials, the continued storyline on Islamic marriage, and the framing of the discussion as a 'public debate' all work towards achieving this goal.

6.3 "Neither Islamic, nor Turkish, or Western..." - The wedding of Elif Erbakan

6.3.1 Thematic analysis - themes addressed in the coverage and allocation of sub-themes to thematic areas

Of these three weddings covered by the newspapers readers received most information about Elif Erbakan's. Though journalists conducted no direct interviews with her, readers gained an insight into her relationship with her fiancée, and had the chance to familiarize themselves with her in a number of photographs published prior to the wedding itself. However despite her visibility, of all three brides Elif Erbakan was treated least favourably by the journalists, mainly because she was the daughter of the Islamist politician Necmettin Erbakan. My thematic analysis in the first four sections examines the reasons for the journalists' criticism of the bride and of the wedding itself. The last section examines the coverage by certain columnists that diverges from the hegemonic reading and offers an alternative interpretation of the wedding.

6.3.1.1 Introducing the happy couple - Elif Erbakan and her fiancée

Unlike Elif Sozen, Elif Erbakan's qualifications are not a prominent theme in the news stories prior to the wedding. Rather, the groom's achievements and the couple's relationship are foregrounded in the coverage during the early months of their engagement. The first news about the couple appears in the newspapers as early as January, when Elif Erbakan's fiancée,

Mehmet Altinoz, is described as “*the centre of attention for the press*” (Sabah, 13.03.2001)⁵³. With their emphasis on the groom, these stories reflect the journalists’ curiosity about who is marrying the religious leader’s daughter. Particularly Sabah’s coverage in its three stories (Sabah, 05.01.2001; Sabah, 06.01.2001; Sabah, 07.03.2001)⁵⁴ highlights the groom’s educational background and that he is a “*university graduate*”. In particular, the news item places an exaggerated emphasis on the groom’s qualifications:

“(…) 27 year old Mehmet Altinoz is *the son of one of the best known families in Bursa*. (...) like all other members of his family, Mehmet Altinoz is also in the furniture business. Altinoz, who has a degree in business administration, also had two years of language education in the UK. The groom-to-be, who can speak English and Italian, took over the Altinoz furniture business in Bursa after finishing his degree.” (Sabah, 07.03.2001)⁵⁵

Such a detailed introduction of the groom contrasts with the brief description of Elif Erbakan in the following paragraph of the same news item, which reads simply “*Erbakan’s Bilkent University graduate daughter*”. Another news item offers slightly more detail, describing her as “*Elif Erbakan, who is responsible for the Women’s Commission (of the party) in Istanbul, was born in 1974, and is a graduate of Bilkent University.*” The explanatory clause foregrounds her political activities rather than her education. Except for a passing quote from the groom in Milliyet newspaper, which reveals that “*Elif is an interior architect*” (Milliyet, 26.05.2001)⁵⁶, Elif Erbakan’s education is hardly ever emphasised throughout this case study. This is in sharp contrast to the coverage of Elif Sozen analyzed earlier.

Instead, the journalists show sustained interest in Elif Erbakan’s fiancée. A month before the wedding, Sabah newspaper portrayed the groom in great detail in a boxed news item titled “*The groom feels sure of himself when it comes to swimming*” (Sabah, 03.05.2001)⁵⁷. I find this item particularly successful in arousing the curiosity of the readers about the groom, especially as swimming is regarded as a Western sport in Turkey, and an indicator of Westernness. Pictures of young people, especially women, wearing swimwear and proving to

⁵³ Nebahat Koc, 13.03.2001, ‘I love Elif’ Sabah, emphasis mine

⁵⁴ Nebahat Koc, 05.01.2001, ‘A new Groom for Erbakan’ Sabah; Nebahat Koc, 06.01.2001, ‘Apparently Elif Erbakan got engaged during her holy visit (Umre)’ Sabah; Yavuz Ozgunay, 07.03.2001, ‘Elif Erbakan liked the groom from his photograph’ Sabah

⁵⁵ Yavuz Ozgunay, 07.03.2001, ‘Elif Erbakan liked the groom from his photograph’ Sabah, emphasis mine.

⁵⁶ Erdogan Pacin, 26.05.2001 ‘She drew her own bridal dress’ Milliyet

⁵⁷ Nebahat Koc, 03.05.2001 ‘The groom is very sure of himself when it comes to swimming’ in ‘Our honeymoon is in Venice’ Sabah

the world the modernness of the new nation have an important place in the iconography of the Republic. A good example of this is a meaningful advertisement campaign for a swimwear company that launched in 1997, the same year Erbakan was forced to step down as Prime Minister. Showing Atatürk in his swimsuit by the beach, and with the title ‘We missed the sun’, the campaign was a big success and a favourite among the secularists.⁵⁸ Given this context, the groom’s hobby can be seen to contradict the lifestyle of the religious family he is marrying into. The remaining news story again mentions his “*well-known family*” alongside references to his educational background including the languages he speaks and “*his business administration degree from the Open University*”. Furthermore, more personal details are supplied, such as his membership to foreign business clubs, his passion for sports, interest in reading, and that his favourite stations on the radio are the ones that play “*foreign music*”. All these contribute to his image as a young and active businessman with a Western lifestyle.

This item is part of a large news report on the same page, based on an interview with the groom with the headline “*Our honeymoon will be in Venice*” (Sabah, 03.05.2001)⁵⁹. The accompanying titles above and below the headline are again based on the groom’s words:

“The groom Altinoz reveals his wedding plans: Elif and I are going to get married with Hungarian Gypsy music playing as our wedding tune”

“Elif will wear a covered dress but without a veil. We chose its fabric together in Bursa.”

“ [the groom] likes to surprise Elif, mostly by bringing her Orchids”

As well as information on the groom’s relationship with the bride, the journalist reporting the interview also puts special emphasis on the groom’s relationship with Elif’s father. The caption under the groom’s picture highlights in bold capital letters that he “*gets along very well with his father-in-law*” followed by a short paragraph about how he “*insistently*” mentions his love for Erbakan.

⁵⁸ More recently, devout Islamist women and men’s ‘covered’ swimsuits - full-body for women covering from head to ankle, and long shorts for men and both made out of special non-clingy fabric- and their segregated beaches in Turkey have been seriously challenging the establishment’s ownership of this leisure activity. Not surprisingly, Islamist swimming and beach practices have been an item of media curiosity, if not ridicule for mainstream papers.

⁵⁹ Nebahat Koc, 03.05.2001 ‘Our honeymoon is in Venice’ Sabah

In this, and in other news items, Erbakan's identity continues to shape the journalists' expectations of and the reactions towards the groom and the bride. In the coverage preceding the wedding Erbakan is often referred to as "*The politically prohibited leader of the banned Welfare Party*" (Hurriyet, 05.01.2001; Sabah, 06.01.2001; Sabah, 03.05.2001; Sabah, 13.03.2001; Sabah, 19.04.2001; Milliyet, 25.05.2001; Milliyet, 26.05.2001; Milliyet, 17.06.2001; Sabah, 03.05.2001)⁶⁰ in the very first paragraphs, reminding the readers not of his former position as the Prime Minister but his political ideology, which was a threat to the modern aspirations of the state and therefore had to be banned. Following this, Elif Erbakan's identity is defined through her father, often as "*the daughter of the politically prohibited leader of the banned Welfare Party*" (Hurriyet, 05.01.2001). Within this framework, it is no coincidence that the journalists were more interested in the groom than the bride. The groom's hobby of swimming, his musical tastes or his business memberships seem almost too Western and out of place compared to the journalists' expectation of the Islamist lifestyle.

6.3.1.2 Romance Muslim Style - Elif Erbakan's relationship with her fiancée

All wedding stories, by default, raise expectations about romance, as well as curiosity about the nature of the relationship. The news stories about Elif Erbakan's wedding also share this interest. However, in this instance the coverage is highly sarcastic, reflecting the journalists' incredulity in imagining a romantic relationship for the Islamist leader's daughter. As noted in the previous section, Mehmet Altinoz emerges as the dominant figure in the relationship, adhering to western ideals of romance, surprising his bride by buying her orchids, and by "*declaring*" his love for Elif Erbakan, which finds its way into the tabloid headline "*I love Elif*" (Sabah, 13.03.2001)⁶¹. This article, based on a short interview with the groom, describes him as "*travelling back and forth*" between the two different cities where the couple live, and more than once quotes him as having commented on how much they love to go out to dinner, as highlighted by the subheading "*Romantic dinners alone*". While such details could be regarded as common content for most tabloid stories, the newsworthiness of articles such as "*Our honeymoon will be in Venice*" or "*I love Elif*" emerges from their juxtaposition with Islamist tastes. Even when there is no direct sarcasm in these earlier stories about the couple,

⁶⁰ See for examples 05.01.2001 Hurriyet; 06.01.2001 Sabah and 03.05.2001 Sabah; 13.03.2001 Sabah; 19.04.2001 Sabah; 25.05.2001 Milliyet; 26.05.2001 Milliyet; 17.06.2001 Milliyet; 02.06.2001 Sabah.

⁶¹ Nebahat Koc, 13.03.2001 'I love Elif', Sabah

the Turkish secular reader targeted by the journalists can easily pick up the irony that is produced by bringing together the stereotypical signifiers of Western romance and Islam.

In one of the first articles about the couple, Sabah (06.01.2001)⁶² reveals a good example of this attitude. The headline for the news item explains to the readers how the decision to marry was taken during her pilgrimage to Mecca: “*Apparently Elif Erbakan got engaged during her holy trip*”⁶³. The following spot also notes ‘*It was revealed that Necmettin Erbakan’s younger daughter Elif Erbakan got engaged to the furniture store owner Mehmet Altinoz during her holy trip*’. The insinuation that arises with the word choice “*apparently*” and “*it was revealed that*” points to the seemingly odd combination of pilgrimage and romance, while calling into question the romantic nature of such an engagement.

How the couple initially met is an issue of major interest for the journalists, as apparent from its repeated coverage in all three papers. According to the titles of an item in Sabah, Elif had “*liked the groom from his photograph*” (Sabah, 07.03.2001)⁶⁴. The story notes that the couple were shown each other’s photographs by their elders, pointing to the arranged, but flexible, nature of their marriage. If the journalists covered such information with a subtle tongue in cheek attitude, they were openly amused by the case of another story of how the couple had met that was revealed shortly after the wedding. All three papers ran the story on the same day (Hurriyet, 20.06.2001, Milliyet, 20.06.2001, Sabah, 20.06.2001)⁶⁵, having picked it up from another story published in the pro-Erbakan and pro-Islamist newspaper, *Milli Gazete*. It is a major story in all three papers covering a quarter of a page with Milliyet also running a summary of the story on its front-page. According to the story, an elderly friend who knew both families first brought up the issue of marriage. Following this, Elif prays and then goes to sleep in the hope of receiving divine guidance in her dreams about the matter and is told that the family friend promises to meet her on the holy pilgrimage. Later Elif and her future husband end up flying on the same plane on their way to the pilgrimage and the families officially agree on the engagement.

⁶² Nebahat Koc, 06.01.2001 ‘Apparently Elif Erbakan got engaged during her holy trip’ Sabah. The insinuating conjunction “meğerse” is translated as “apparently” here.

⁶³ Emphasis mine.

⁶⁴ Yavuz Ozgunay, 07.03.2001, ‘Elif Erbakan liked the groom from his photograph’ Sabah,

⁶⁵ no by-lines, 20.06.2001, ‘Elif dreamt of her own marriage’ Hurriyet; Omer Erbil, 20.06.2001, ‘In her dream, she saw she would get married!’ Milliyet; Nebahat Koc & Huseyin Ozalp, 20.06.2001 ‘The steps to matrimony were taken on the way to the pilgrimage’ Sabah. The front-page summary in Milliyet is titled ‘The promise of marriage came with the dream’, again by Omer Erbil.

The story was covered with much amusement. News headlines on the inside pages of both papers announced that she “*had dreamt of her own marriage*”, with the Milliyet journalist stressing his incredulity with an exclamation mark, while Hurriyet created the same feeling by the use of the inferential past tense. Both news items, covering almost a quarter of the page, have a box explaining the custom of praying to see the groom-to-be in one’s dream, assuming that most readers would not know about it. The language used throughout the story is openly sarcastic, which is particularly evident in the use of punctuation marks:

“Milli Gazete, which is known for its affiliation to Erbakan, saved the whole of the back cover of yesterday’s edition to the renowned (!) wedding ceremony.

But with one difference; starting from how the couple had met...” (Hurriyet, 20.06.2001)⁶⁶

“ (...) the way the couple met is very interesting. Milli Gazete reported the story of the meeting, which is much better than old Anatolian legends, under the title “The Story of the Matrimony” (...)” (Milliyet, 20.06.2001)⁶⁷

The rest of the story, both narrating the ‘meeting’ in a style that mimics fairy tales, is quite similar in both papers. The apparent similarity between the wording and the coverage suggests that both newspapers could have used the same journalist. However, the coverage is not different in Sabah either. Under a picture of a Saudi Arabian Airlines aeroplane, the caption reads “*See you in Mecca*”, while a subheading reads, “*They met on the Jumbo [jet]*” (Sabah, 20.06.2001)⁶⁸.

This story is powerful in not only satirising the Erbakan family, but the Islamists as a whole through the Islamist newspaper. The use of sarcasm is evident albeit in varying degrees across different storylines and newspapers in the reporting on the couple’s relationship. This can be seen as an indication of the unwillingness to see romance, which is portrayed as a Western construct, as compatible with the life of the Islamist leader, regarding them as exclusive categories. The same attitude also emerges with respect to the dress, and other wedding details.

⁶⁶ no by-lines, 20.06.2001, ‘Elif dreamt of her own marriage’ Hurriyet

⁶⁷ Omer Erbil, 20.06.2001, ‘Elif dreamt of her own marriage!’ Milliyet

⁶⁸ Nebahat Koc & Huseyin Ozalp, 20.06.2001 ‘The steps to matrimony were taken on the way to the pilgrimage’, Sabah

6.3.1.3 The white dress with a twist – with or without the veil?

Elif Erbakan's wedding dress forms a main theme of the coverage. Since she wears the veil in everyday life, the news that she will be wearing a bridal gown without the Islamist veil sparked considerable media interest about her dress.

Apart from one article (Sabah, 19.04.2001)⁶⁹ all news items which specifically mention the bridal dress prior to and after the wedding inform the readers about the lack of the Islamist veil. Milliyet and Sabah newspapers specifically emphasise that this was the groom's decision. One news article in Milliyet focuses solely on this issue. On the front page, in a short teaser titled "*A wedding dress without the veil for Hodja's Elif*" (Milliyet, 25.05.2001)⁷⁰, the article draws out the contrast between the political leader who advocated the wearing of the veil and his daughter who refused to wear it at her wedding. The same article also reports that Erbakan gave in to the demands of the groom:

*"(...) when the groom pushed for a wedding gown without the veil, Erbakan agreed on a bridal veil or a cap that would cover his daughter's hair."*⁷¹

In the inside pages, the story, headlined "*The Groom wants a bridal dress without the [Islamist] veil*" (Milliyet, 25.05.2001)⁷² mentions the groom's role six times, even though there is no direct or indirect quote from him supporting this. In the subheading, the repeated comment that "*The groom wants a dress without the veil*" is highlighted in bold red colours for added significance. The language in the article describes a "*crisis*" within the family, where the parents had to be "*convinced*". The conflict is said to have been resolved when "*the dress was prepared according to the wishes of the groom*" who "*got what he wanted*". In the end "*Erbakan's family could not say anything*" and "*Erbakan accepted*".

The next day, the same paper had another much shorter article called "*She [Elif Erbakan] designed her wedding dress*" based on comments made by the groom. Even though there is the subheading "*She asked the groom's opinion*", the news indicates that the groom might not have been solely responsible for choosing the veil:

⁶⁹ Ibrahim Oge, 19.04.2001, 'They went shopping for the dress' Sabah.

⁷⁰ No by-lines, 25.05.2001, 'A wedding dress without the veil for Hodja's Elif' Milliyet, front-page title

⁷¹ emphasis mine

⁷² Yildiz Yazicioglu, 25.05.2001, 'The Groom wants a bridal dress without the veil' Milliyet

“Ms. Elif is an interior architect. She designed her wedding gown. She asked for my opinion as well. (...) As far as I know, the dress will not show her hair. Only her face will show.” (Milliyet, 26.05.2001)⁷³

It might have been the case that the groom had felt the need to speak, to give another interpretation of what happened, even though Milliyet was reluctant about letting go of their own story, and emphasised the groom’s role in deciding about the headdress in another news article prior to the wedding (Milliyet, 17.06.2001)⁷⁴. What really took place is not the concern of this research. Indeed, from the existing data it is impossible to make reliable assertions. However, the emphasis on the dress without the veil, combined with hints about the groom’s role, help to portray the un-veiled dress as Erbakan’s inability to apply the social order he politically stood up for in his own home. A very troubled-looking photograph of Erbakan rolling his eyes and with one hand on his head above the caption *“Erbakan accepted,”* confirms this image (Milliyet, 25.05.2001)⁷⁵.

While the coverage in Hurriyet and Sabah does not foreground the groom’s role in the decision over the dress, there is still a persistent emphasis on the dress as evident in news headlines and subheadings. The day after the wedding, Sabah reported that *“Elif Erbakan did not want a dress with the veil, she preferred to cover her hair with a cap”* (18.06.2001) and Hurriyet reported that Elif Erbakan had *‘a dress which she had designed and had a special veil covering her hair rather than the Islamic one’* (18.06.2001)⁷⁶. What seems to have been neglected in these stories is the fact that the decision had still been on a form of veil. The novelty for the journalists might have been in the style of the veil, yet even this seems unconvincing. A photograph taken at the wedding of Erbakan’s oldest daughter and published on two consecutive days also shows the bride wearing a white dress with a covering of her hair through what resembles a cap, rather than the Islamist veil tightly tied around the neck. Therefore, the conflict about the *‘un-veiled wedding dress that still covers the hair’* can be related to the journalists’ perception of the veil. The veil here is not seen as a garment that changes with fashion and style and therefore is adaptable, but as a covering that stays the same. In doing so, the news stories fix not only the form but also the meaning of the veil as

⁷³ Erdogan Pacin, 26.05.2001 ‘She designed her own bridal dress’ Milliyet

⁷⁴ Asli Oktener, 17.06.2001 ‘The banned wedding’ Milliyet

⁷⁵ Yildiz Yazicioglu, 25.05.2001, ‘The Groom wants a bridal dress without the Islamic veil’ Milliyet

⁷⁶ Muharrem Aydin et. al. 18.06.2001 ‘A palace wedding to Hodja’s daughter’ Hurriyet

an anti-modern, and anti-Western garment which is incompatible with the Western wedding dress.

6.3.1.4 A real white wedding – criticising the event

As the wedding drew near, criticism similar to, but stronger than that about the wedding dress appeared regarding the wedding venue, the choice of music and the style of the invitations - all of which were regarded as ‘too Western’ for the Islamist leader. Sabah announced the preparations for the wedding in a front-page headline as “*From Erbakan Hodja to his daughter: A High Society wedding*” (Sabah, 02.06.2001)⁷⁷ which continued on a full-page on the inside. This deliberate choice of addressing Erbakan as the ‘Hodja’ helps to caricature a traditional man in an extravagant and posh setting, described as “*one of the most luxurious hotels in the world*” on the front page. Around the date of the wedding news coverage in all three papers frequently refers to Erbakan in this form.

In general, coverage of the wedding draws attention to changes in Erbakan’s actions and beliefs. Journalists are keen on providing evidence from the past to compare it with any differences in his attitude in the present. For example, in his front-page coverage a journalist from Sabah explains that although the venue for the wedding of Erbakan’s oldest daughter was also a five star hotel, the preparations for Elif Erbakan’s wedding are remarkably different. In the full-page coverage⁷⁸ inside, Elif Erbakan’s wedding is described as a “*real Western wedding*”⁷⁹, not comparable to that of her sister.

*“While Erbakan had married off his older daughter with readings from the Kur’an, he westernised himself for Elif”*⁸⁰

*“However, Erbakan is going to perform a first and have a completely ‘Western’ wedding for Elif”*⁸¹

⁷⁷ Huseyin Ozalp, ‘From Erbakan Hodja to his daughter: A High Society wedding’ 02.06.2001 Sabah

⁷⁸ The story inside is titled ‘A High Society Wedding for Elif’

⁷⁹ Emphasis mine.

⁸⁰ Emphasis mine.

⁸¹ Emphasis mine.

Further details are provided to fully convince the readers of the westernness of the impending wedding. The date is “*not the ‘Holy Friday’ but Sunday*”⁸², and the wedding venue is “*the high society’s favourite, the Ciragan Palace*”. The subheadings emphasise that the dress is “*without the Islamic veil*” and “*Romanian gypsy music*” is chosen for the wedding. A picture of the invitation is also provided, pointing out that “*no religious motifs have been used*” in the invitation but the “*& sign from English was used in between the names of the bride and the groom*”, interpreting this as yet another sign of the western look of the wedding. All these details, which are reported to “*have surprised everyone*”, are termed as “*Hodja’s revolutions*”.



Fig.2 “The much talked photograph”, Erbakan bringing his daughter to the wedding venue, Milliyet

Similar themes also appear on Milliyet’s news story on the day of the wedding. An item with the title “*First the prayers then the gypsy music*” appears on the front page, informing readers that Elif’s sister had religious hymns at her wedding (Milliyet, 17.06.2001)⁸³. The story receives half-page coverage on the

inside. The wedding day coverage also highlights similar contradictions for journalists, foremost of which is the “*dress dichotomy*” (Sabah, 18.06.2001; Hurriyet, 18.06.2001; Milliyet, 18.06.2001)⁸⁴ accompanied by pictures of veiled guests as well as guests in fashionable cocktail dresses. While these news items repeatedly cite examples highlighting the Westernness of the wedding, what the journalists actually emphasise is the hybrid form of the wedding that will never be completely Western. As Sabah’s headline notes, what results is a:

⁸² Friday is a holy day in Islam.

⁸³ Asli Oktener, ‘First the prayers then the gypsy music’

⁸⁴ Ali Ozluer et. al, 18.06.2001, ‘The dress dichotomy’ Sabah. Also see Muharrem Aydin et.al, 18.06.2001, ‘A palace wedding for Hodja’s daughter’ Hurriyet; Emine Turker et. al. 18.06.2001, ‘Erbakan was late for his daughter’s wedding too’ Milliyet

“ (...) *synthesis of Islamic traditions and European celebrations. As the fireworks went off, red roses were scattered to symbolise love; while prayers were being said, non-alcoholic tropical cocktails were sipped.*” (Sabah, 20.06.2001)⁸⁵

For the secular journalists, this is not a desired synthesis but a contradiction in itself. The perceived absurdity of the situation is powerfully conveyed through the choice of contradictory images such as the sipping of tropical cocktails, blowing of fireworks, scattering of red roses and chanting of prayers all described as if taking place at the same time. A columnist from Milliyet is more direct in her judgement. For her, this is a “*distasteful*” and “*odd-looking*” picture which is “*neither Islamist, nor Turkish, and not Western either*” (Milliyet, 21.06.2001)⁸⁶. She finds the hybrid form of the wedding so absurd, so incredulous that she caricaturises it in detail in her column. For the columnist, far from being a sign of Islamist modernization, the wedding is “*a freakishness*” caused by bad “*imitation*”.

This column is not the only item in which the wedding is framed as ‘Western imitation’. Two days after the wedding the front-page headline of Milliyet read as “*The much talked photograph*” (Milliyet, 19.06.2001)⁸⁷ revealing a secretly taken picture from the wedding of Elif walking into the venue in her father’s arms. The large captions for the picture inform the readers that the scene is just like the “*famous Hollywood movie, Father of the Bride!*” Again on the front page, under a subheading “*This is not in the traditions*”, a well-known professor of religion is quoted as complaining that this is a disgrace and that in Islam there is no such custom. The short summary on the front page emphasises the fact that the wedding caused a stir in Islamist circles.

The coverage continued on a full page inside the paper with the headline “*This picture looks very familiar*” (Milliyet, 19.06.2001)⁸⁸ sharpening its level of sarcasm. The two photographs showing Erbakan walking his daughter down the aisle have the caption titles “*American style wedding*” and “*Flowers on the jacket*”. The rose pinned to Erbakan’s jacket is circled in one photograph, and a small picture next to it shows Kohl at his son’s wedding, again with flowers on his jacket. According to the heading under the headline people responded to the

⁸⁵ Nebahat Koc & Huseyin Ozalp, 20.06.2001, ‘Six thousand red roses for Elif’ Sabah, continued coverage from the front page

⁸⁶ Berrin Cankanat, column, 21.06.2001, ‘Odd-looking’ Milliyet

⁸⁷ Emine Turker, 19.06.2001, ‘The much talked photograph’, front page headline, Milliyet

⁸⁸ Emine Turker, 19.06.2001, “This picture looks very familiar” Milliyet. Provincial edition of the paper has a different headline that is more direct in its sarcasm “You, imitator Hodja”.

wedding by arguing that “*Hodja carried out Christian traditions*”. In a separate column under the title “*This is against Islam*”, there are six short interpretations of the wedding from various opinion leaders who all but one, an MP from the Virtue Party, denounce the wedding. The spot highlights two of the opinions: “*As opposed to some who argue that ‘There is no such wedding in Islam’ there are also others who say ‘when Hodja does it, it can become our tradition’*”.

This news story is particularly powerful as it places the mental image about Erbakan, and what he represents next to Christianity. It is important to note that Erbakan is not compared with Elif Sozen’s father, or satirised for imitating the previous wedding. Instead, he is directly compared to Helmut Kohl, and criticised for mimicking Christian traditions. In the coverage Erbakan appears as no friendlier than the Christian Kohl. At the same time, this story and others appearing in all three papers also seriously undermine Erbakan’s credibility as the leader of Islamist politics, who is known to have worked to “establish ‘just order’ on the basis of his Sunni Islamic ‘image of good society’” throughout his political career (Kalaycioglu, 2005: 156). The headlines in Hurriyet and Sabah “*A palace wedding for Hodja’s daughter*” (18.06.2001) and “*Six thousand red roses for Elif*” (20.06.2001) reflect this attitude⁸⁹. This criticism is most poignant in a column titled “*This is the wedding of the ‘just order’*” by Bekir Coskun:

“I have looked at the photos of our respectable Muslim brother Erbakan bringing his daughter in his arms...

We wish them happiness...

But then, what about the “You evil imitators of the West”?..

Wasn’t it with such words that enmity towards Ataturk has escalated... That Mustafa Kemal was declared a “heretic” just because he looked up to Western civilisation and did away with Shari’a?...

(...) After turning naive people against the founder of this Republic with words like “These are Western imitators, we want Shari’a”... After causing young girls to protest on the streets, making them enemies of the secular regime, what is this wedding?” (Hurriyet, 20.06.2001)⁹⁰

⁸⁹Muharrem Aydin et. al. 18.06.2001 ‘A palace wedding to Hodja’s daughter’ Hurriyet; Nebahat Koc & Huseyin Ozalp, 20.06.2001, ‘Six thousand red roses for Elif’ Sabah

⁹⁰Bekir Coskun, column, 20.06.2001, ‘This is the wedding of the just system’ Hurriyet, emphasis mine.

In his lines, Coskun firmly positions himself together with Ataturk and his secularist readers who are included in his depiction of the 'we' against Erbakan, who emerges as a clear threat to the Republic and to the society whose religious feelings he has exploited. The journalist here makes a careful distinction between Erbakan and his party, and the *naïve* believers, the *young girls*, "*all our sincerely religious Muslim brothers who voted for these*"⁹¹. This is also a distinction between the preferred and undesired versions of Islam, and the good Muslims from the bad. The good Muslims for the columnist form the masses of the society who are, like all masses, prone to manipulation.

As for himself, Coskun sees himself not as against religion but, on the contrary, as a *brother* who has interpreted his religion in the right way. Calling out to his readers, Coskun argues that the wedding "*concerns us*"⁹², as it is evidence revealing how "*naïve people have been deceived... And a society has been broken into pieces.*" In doing so, Coskun, and through his column his readers, emerge as the bastion of Ataturk's values and beliefs, a protector of national unity and a guide for the Muslim masses who might have lost their way.

Coskun's column sharply voices the concerns felt through the wedding coverage. In one news story included in Sabah's wedding coverage, readers learn about one naïve Muslim who has lost her way. Under the title "*Her sister-in-law has also covered her hair*" (Sabah, 20.06.2001)⁹³ readers are told that the groom's sister has started veiling "*through the advice of Elif Erbakan*". The following lines only work to enhance the feeling of threat for the secular readers:

"Nurdan Altinoz, who had two years of graduate education and continued her education for another year in the States, had never covered her hair, nor dressed in a way that was more covered than normal, until the engagement. After the engagement, major changes were observed in Nuran Altinoz, and she started covering her hair."

The item offers the case of a young woman, highly educated - let alone one of the masses - who fell victim to the Islamists. The story could have served as a justification for Bekir

⁹¹ Emphasis mine.

⁹² My emphasis

⁹³ Nebahat Koc & Huseyin Ozalp 20.06.2001, 'Her sister-in-law has also covered her hair' Sabah

Coskun's column. Here real Muslims are not inherently bad but naive, and in much need of the secularist intellectuals' guidance.

6.3.1.5 Reading the wedding differently - the event as a sign of change

Despite the general coverage, there are a few journalists who welcomed the wedding as a sign of change, or rather, as evidence of modernization. For Erdal Bilaller from Hurriyet, the wedding is a conscious effort on Erbakan's part (Sabah, 19.06.2001)⁹⁴. The columnist argues that as the Virtue Party is waiting to be closed down by court order and renewalists within the party are preparing to break free, Erbakan is getting ready for a "*fundamental change (!)*":

"Why not?

(Maybe) Erbakan Hodja also realized that it is time to change and explain and show this change to the public? And he proved it by even marrying his daughter in a wedding with gypsy music playing in the background..."

Billaller's tone is suspicious, yet not overtly pessimistic about the possibility that Erbakan "*might have*" changed, moved closer to the centre to appeal to a larger political base. In other words, the wedding is a sign of the compromise Erbakan is willingly making. On the other hand Can Dunder, writing for Milliyet newspaper, locates change elsewhere, seeing it as emanating from the tension between "*the Western lives of our children and A la Turca lives of our ancestors*" (Sabah, 21.06.2001)⁹⁵. He argues that Erbakan probably would have preferred another kind of wedding for his daughter, however he did not have much choice:

"(...) life drags a leader, whose political career had been devoted to lamenting the Western Club, towards the wedding table of the Western Club with his daughter in his arms, and a red rose on his jacket"

Laughing off the claims that the wedding did not conform to Islamic traditions, he sees the much criticized wedding as yet another inevitable outcome of modernization, where traditions are destined to change:

⁹⁴ Erdal Bilallar, column, 19.06.2001, 'The new keeper of the Hodja's (treasures)' Sabah

⁹⁵ Can Dunder, column, 21.06.2001, 'The groom is ours, the bride is ours' Sabah

“We are running towards modernity, shedding on our way all the traditions that we have been keeping for centuries. In this run, some traditions change, some disappear, some remain the same.”

Here change is not matter of choice but an inevitable, affecting both the secularists and the Islamists. Furthermore, Dunder does not see hybridisation as limited to the Islamists. For the journalist, the weddings of the “*secularist*” families are no different:

“They start with the Islamic marriage, continue with the civil ceremony and the La Comparsita. When the first show is over, and alcohol loosens up the minds, there is a return to the “roots”; jackets end up being tied around the waists, folk dance starts, (...) and the bride gets showered down with money”⁹⁶

Dunder’s column is evidently more welcoming than many other news items towards the notion of hybridities, which he sees as a part of Turkey’s experience of modernity. Nevertheless, he still envisions this process as producing one irresistible experience, towards which all groups in society, secularist or Islamist, are pulled into, transforming them all the same, and dragging them towards an inescapably more Westernised/modernised model.

In this context, I find the interpretation offered by Taha Akyol, another columnist from Milliyet newspaper, more radical (Milliyet, 20.06.2001)⁹⁷. Having been invited to the wedding, Akyol sees a contradiction in the conservatism of the criticisms directed at Erbakan:

*“Since Erbakan is a **fundamentalist**, even if you attack him with the most ‘traditionalist’ arguments, you will be considered as progressive!”⁹⁸*

This paradox is caused by an “*iron cage of rules that do not permit individual choices*”, which may belong to either secular or religious authorities, yet all reflecting the same authoritarian mentality. Hence, Akyol finds the secularists also responsible for what had been in a previously analysed column coined as “*the society broken into pieces*”. For the journalist, what is happening with the Islamists is a totally different hybrid formation which Erbakan

⁹⁶ Author’s emphasis

⁹⁷ Taha Akyol, column, 20.06.2001, ‘Erbakan’s daughter’s wedding’ Milliyet.

⁹⁸ Author’s emphasis.

himself could not have foreseen twenty years ago. In another column (Milliyet, 22.06.2001) he regards the emerging hybridities as “*the colours of life*”⁹⁹, or rather as a sign of “*multiple modernities*”, as opposed to black and white categories that “*equate a particular modern life style with ‘modernity’*”. In doing so, Taha Akyol’s column draws attention to the possibility of different interpretations of modern life existing side by side.

The only other journalist, who is openly critical of the secularist attitude, is a columnist Hadi Uluengin, from Hurriyet. Voicing his support for Taha Akyol’s arguments, the journalist criticises the two polarized alternatives, which limit and forces people to choose between the veil and modernity (Hurriyet, 21.06.2001)¹⁰⁰. Finding this same attitude responsible for the unsolved problem about the ban on wearing the veil in universities, he asks:

*“What do we want, gentleman, let’s now talk about this frankly!
Do we prefer our girls to be educated, or remain ignorant?
Either covered or not, that does not change the vital importance of this question!
(...) Authority, instead of forcing the girls to uncover their hair, open your eyes!”*

Here Uluengin retains a highly patriarchal form of address, gendering the decision makers as men who need to decide on how they “*prefer*” their women to live. In spite of this, he remains along with Akyol, one of the two journalists who attempt to distance themselves from what they call ‘the authority’ of the secularists.

6.3.2 Overarching discourses and the concluding remarks

With a few exceptions, the coverage of Elif Erbakan’s wedding remains largely faithful to the Republican discourses of modernity and secularism, and replicates the binaries of ‘religious versus secularist’ created by those discourses. These discourses are also apparent in Elif Sozen’s wedding, however, the way they unfold with respect to the two brides differ strikingly. In the case of the first wedding, Elif Sozen was portrayed as the nation’s daughter representing her nation-family. In the case of Elif Erbakan, she appears as the bride that represents, largely through her father, the Islamist community that poses a direct threat to the nation’s modern identity and its secular ways of life. It is important to remember that at the

⁹⁹ Taha Akyol, column, 22.06.2001, ‘Modernization?’ Milliyet

¹⁰⁰ Hadi Uluengin, column, 21.06.2001, ‘Covered hair or uncovered eyes?’ Hurriyet, emphasis mine.

time of the wedding, the 'reality' of this threat was also officially confirmed through the Constitutional Court's decision to close down Erbakan's two parties¹⁰¹ and ban him from politics. The negative coverage and criticisms of Elif Erbakan's wedding indirectly give support to this decision.

But beyond this apparent 'othering', the extensive coverage of the wedding is less concerned with the threat represented by Elif Erbakan's family, than it is with the perceived inconsistency of the wedding with the Islamist identity. This is reflected in the particular attention journalists pay to the minute details in the coverage, from the groom's hobby of swimming to the red roses decorating the wedding tables, or the couple's plans of having a romantic honeymoon in Venice. Throughout these stories, the Erbakans are seen as selectively using the habits, tastes, lifestyles and cultural preferences that have been associated with the secular elite and their *de-Islamisation* in the Turkish modernization discourse (Gulalp 2003, c.f. Kandiyoti 1997). According to this discourse, as people urbanize and move up the class ladder, they are expected to shed their Islamic traditions on the way and their cultural practices will evolve toward a Western lifestyle (Gulalp 2003: 390). Such a unilinear vision of modernization reproduces the dichotomies of the *secular* that is modern, Western and urban, versus the *religious*, that is traditional, local and rural. In this discourse, religiously defined identities remain external to Westernisation and modernization¹⁰².

In contrast, Elif Erbakan's relationship and her white wedding disrupt these dichotomies by merging Islamic patterns and values, with what are seen as Western consumption practices and lifestyles. In doing so, the wedding also re-appropriates the meanings of modernness and Islamism in Turkey. In other words, the wedding resists and challenges both the secular journalists' definition of the Islamists, as well as their monopoly over the meaning of modern.

The coverage that results in retaliation can be seen as journalists' attempts to re-enact those dichotomies that distinguish the modern secular from the traditional religious, and convince the readers of the incompatibility of the two lifestyles. This is largely achieved through the sharply satirical and sarcastic language used in the narration of the events, which portrays the merging of Islamic and Western practices as no more than laughable oddities, such as the

¹⁰¹ The Virtue Party was closed shortly after the wedding.

¹⁰² I should once again reiterate that modernization and Westernization are interchangeable concepts in Turkish modernization discourse. (See also Gulalp 2003:388)

exaggerated coverage of the ‘romantic meeting’ of the couple on their way to the pilgrimage. The Islamist white wedding, in this context, is written off as a “*bad imitation*”, an unsightly hybridity that has tried but failed to replicate the Western model. This has important consequences: firstly, it discredits Erbakan’s political leadership - and through him Islamist politics in general - for being unfaithful to his own political agenda and harbouring a secret desire for the West. This is particularly evident in the news stories that criticise the way he brought his daughter into the venue, or the way, just like Helmut Kohl, he pinned a red rose on his pocket. Second, in seeing the wedding as a hybrid of different traditions, and by equating that hybridity with poor imitation, even “*freakishness*”, the journalists maintain the hegemonic imaginary about modernity as purely de-Islamised. Following from this, we can infer that in the secularist journalists’ discourse, appropriations of modernity will always suffer from not being modern enough, and appropriations of religion will always result in a negation of the authenticity of religion.

However, such a rejection reveals a highly paradoxical attitude: hybrid forms that were regarded as ‘normal’ or even desirable with Elif Sozen’s wedding are criticised as ‘anomalies’ in Elif Erbakan’s wedding. By too easily scorning Elif Erbakan’s wedding for being a poor imitation, journalists also ignore the hybrid character of both the Turkish modernization project itself, and Turkish secularism, which clearly surfaced through the analysis of the previous wedding.

6.4 “The veiled Diana”- Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding

6.4.1 Thematic analysis - themes addressed in the coverage and allocation of sub-themes to thematic areas

On the face of it Reyhan Mutluer seems like any other Islamist bride who covers her hair while wearing a white wedding dress. In her case, however, the meaning of the veil has a particular resonance because she is marrying the Prime Minister’s son. This posits the bride and the whole wedding with an exceptional representative power. However, it is this representation that becomes problematic for the journalists who try to define who is being represented through the bride, in order to position themselves, their readers and the wedding guests with respect to it. The themes in the analysis reflect the journalists’ attempts to

distinguish themselves from the bride, while acknowledging her status as the Prime Minister's daughter-in-law.

6.4.1.1 The arranged little bride

As noted previously, in relative terms to the other two weddings, Erdogan's son's wedding provides the reader with the least amount of information about the bride and the groom, their personalities or preferences. This might be due to the short time span within which the journalists found out about the engagement and the wedding plans, and their inability to access the couple or the two families for further information¹⁰³. The first items that appeared on the wedding underline the arranged nature of the marriage, such as Milliyet's story titled "*Arranged style from Erdogan*" (Milliyet, 11.07.2003)¹⁰⁴. The news item is more about the parents rather than the couple who are to be married, as evident from the opening sentences:

"AKP leader and PM Erdogan is in a wedding flutter. Erdogan is planning to marry his youngest son Necmettin Bilal to engineer Orhan Uzuner's daughter Reyyan Uzuner in the next month."

The opening sentence from Sabah's story similarly mentions that, "*The Bride that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan wants for his younger son Bilal is the daughter of an engineer father and a lawyer mother*" (Sabah, 12.07.2003)¹⁰⁵. Such details not only position Erdogan as the focus of the stories from the very start, but also help to locate the bride, through her parents, as middle or upper middle class urban Islamists in the social map of Turkey. These items also underline the Islamist character of the approaching wedding – the 'arranged' nature of the wedding informs the readers that this is not an ordinary love story between two young people who have met and fallen in love.

Apart from her parents' socio-economic status, the readers do not learn much about the bride, who is reported to be "*uneasy with the media attention*" (Hurriyet, 06.08.2003)¹⁰⁶. She is presented as a "*little girl*" or "*her father's treasure*" who would be driven to school by her

¹⁰³ Of course, given the groom's father, there might also have been a concern about the degree of 'acceptable' tabloidization in the coverage. With the groom being the Prime Minister's son and the very young age of the bride the private lives of the young couple might have deliberately not been questioned further.

¹⁰⁴ no by-lines, 11.07.2003, 'Arranged style from Erdogan' Milliyet

¹⁰⁵ Ibrahim Gok, 10.07.2003, 'The flurry about the second bride at Erdogans' Sabah

¹⁰⁶ Asim Gone, 06.08.2003, 'Ms. Bride's home is under siege' Hurriyet

father every morning, and “*treated with tender care*” (Hurriyet, 05.08.2003)¹⁰⁷. Through her teacher’s comments, readers also learn that she has not yet completed her high school education but is planning to pick it up when she moves to the States where the groom is doing his masters degree (Hurriyet, 05.08.2003; Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹⁰⁸. In these stories Reyhan Mutluer appears as a ‘child-bride’ and all three papers particularly emphasise the bride’s young age.¹⁰⁹ While the depiction of Reyhan Mutluer as the little bride raises questions as to the eligibility of the bride for marriage, the concern about her age is nowhere more evident than in Milliyet’s coverage a few days before the wedding (09.08.2003)¹¹⁰. In Milliyet’s story, covered on the front-page under the title “*Little Reyhan can get married*”, Milliyet journalists reveal a copy of the court decision that approved Reyhan’s marriage. Inside, one full-page is devoted to covering the wedding, and the headline follows up the front-page item: “*And here is the permission for ‘Little Reyhan’s marriage’*”. The scanned image of the court’s decision is provided on the page and the coverage itself implies that this is not a ‘normal’ marriage as it requires the state’s permission. Furthermore, the story also repeatedly notes that in order to get approval, witnesses told the court that the couple had been engaged for a year, which is reported as highly dubious, since the couple had only recently announced their engagement. Ece Temelkuran, a female columnist for the same newspaper finds this no less than a serious crime, committed not only by a specific ‘community’ but also by the secularists and even the state who have permitted it to happen:

“In fact, girls as young as ‘Ms.’ Reyhan can only flirt. However, since ‘flirting’ is not approved of in that community, they quickly married off the two kids. A court judge decided that ‘She is capable of carrying the responsibilities of marriage’. How could a judge know this? And why should a judge know this? Should everybody remain silent just because the groom is a good chance for her? Two children will, in one night, become husband and wife. Two children, just as it is preferred, will get married ‘without seeing too much’ and a divine door will be locked onto them. May they recover soon!” (Milliyet, 11.08.2003)¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Senol Coskuner, 05.08.2003, ‘Flurry in the bride’s house’ Hurriyet

¹⁰⁸ Senol Coskuner, 05.08.2003, ‘Flurry in the bride’s house’ Hurriyet; the same information is also given in the court decision quoted by Sukran Cakmak, 09.08.2003, ‘And here is the ‘Little Reyhan’s permission for marriage’ Milliyet

¹⁰⁹ According to Turkish laws men and women need to be older than sixteen to get married, but cannot get married without their parents’ permission and the approval of the court until they are eighteen.

¹¹⁰ No by-lines, 09.08.2003, ‘Little Reyhan can get married’, front page summary news, Milliyet

¹¹¹ Ece Temelkuran, column, 11.08.2003, ‘Wedding in between philosophy’ Milliyet, emphasis mine

What is portrayed here is a young bride who is not free to decide on the life she wants to lead and instead follows through the life path drawn for her by her community. This is a community that is outside the journalist's own, where 'flirting' and 'seeing too much' are not approved of. Not finding this other life fair, the journalist feels obliged to speak up against all those that remain silent and watch the child bride get married. For the journalist, the child bride is a victim of her community, whom nobody wants to rescue.

The arranged nature of the marriage and the age of the bride help to distinguish the two communities where the journalists and the prime minister's family are located. But more



Fig.3 "The veiled Diana",
Milliyet

importantly, they become proof of the lack of modernity in the Islamist community, and question the modernness of the Prime Minister. Derya Sazak, a columnist for Milliyet newspaper, finds a contradiction in the Islamist claims about modernness and questions the genuineness of Erdogan's efforts for EU membership:

*"In the EU candidate Turkey, while the Prime Minister argues for a liberal conservatism that is open to the West, he is marrying his son through an 'arranged marriage', and the 17-year-old 'veiled' bride is leaving her education and **surrendering to tradition.**" (Milliyet, 11.08.2003)¹¹²*

Strikingly, journalists are more divided over the 'right interpretation' of Reyhan Mutluer's wedding than they were with Elif Erbakan's wedding. Consequently, not all journalists agree with the victimisation of the bride, or see the young couple as surrendering to their parents' demands. Ayse Arman, a columnist for Hurriyet, draws a highly romanticised picture of the couple, describing her impression of the groom as *"a fine boy, studying at Harvard. Well behaved and well educated"* and the girl as *"very beautiful and cute. And tasteful. And ready to **play the marriage game**"* (Hurriyet, 12.08.2003)¹¹³. While her choice of words also complies with the

¹¹² Derya Sazak, column, 11.08.2003, 'The Wedding', Milliyet, emphasis mine

¹¹³ Ayse Arman, 12.08. 2003, 'Emine Erdogan will watch over the marriage like an eagle', Hurriyet, emphasis mine.

image of the ‘child-bride’, she also expresses the initial surprise she had in seeing the couple for the first time at the wedding:

There was something tangible between those kids. (...) The girl’s eyes smiled continuously. They seemed as if they could not care less about the criticisms about being arranged, backward, young etc. etc. (...) They looked at each other lovingly.”

Another journalist, who does not agree with the passive image of the young couple, is Can Dunder, who chooses the title “*The veiled Diana*” for his column (Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹¹⁴. Calling the wedding one where “*“Modern Turkey” asks “traditional Turkey” for a dance*”, Dunder maintains the argument he had voiced on Erbakan’s daughter’s wedding (Sabah, 21.06.2001)¹¹⁵. For Dunder, young people are the source of change through which hybrid patterns that involve the old and the new are formed. What he sees is the localization of the modern, as signified through the Turkish version of Princess Diana. In his version of events young people are far from surrendering passively:

“Covered young people emerge, who agree to the arranged marriage, but disagree with their parents who tell them to “wait another year”; and go to the “West”, to the States to continue their education...”

Here, the journalist implies that it is Reyhan Mutluer who has chosen not to wait but to get married and leave for the States where she plans to continue her education. She emerges among the young people as actively producing a new life, a “*Westernised lifestyle which is peculiar to Turkey*” where young people from different groups, Islamist or secular, mix, match and blend different lifestyles. In doing so, the journalist argues, young people create a new experience of modernity, which Dunder calls “*the new face of Turkey*”.

6.4.1.2 Descending into the maddening crowd – when secularists and Islamists meet

Most journalists are, however, not as keen about the ‘new face of Turkey’ as Dunder is. Even for those who are not as critical about the meaning of the wedding, the differences between the two communities are undeniably clear. However, unlike Elif Erbakan’s wedding, the

¹¹⁴ Can Dunder, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The veiled Diana’, Milliyet, author’s emphasis

¹¹⁵ See Can Dunder, column, 21.06.2001, ‘The groom is ours, the bride is ours’, Sabah

focus is no longer on the ‘surprising adaptations’ visible in Islamists’ lifestyles or the consumption patterns of the Islamists. Neither is the veiled wedding dress the centre of attention and portrayed as an anomaly. This time, the coverage highlights the nervous encounters between the two worlds which the wedding brings out.

One of the early instances where the theme of the ‘meeting of the two worlds’ clearly surfaces is an interesting and light story about coincidence. On the day of the wedding, and in the same conference centre where the wedding was due to take place, the 5th World Philosophy Conference was also being held with famous academics such as Jurgen Habermas attending. All three papers found the coincidence ironic, calling it a “‘*philosophical*’ wedding” (Hurriyet, 10.08.2003)¹¹⁶, and using a tongue-in-cheek attitude in informing the readers “*Philosophy with the morning prayer, wedding with the afternoon one*” (Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹¹⁷. However, the most striking headline on this emerges the day after the wedding, when the Sabah newspaper’s front-page headline announces that President Sezer had attended the opening of the Philosophy Conference in the morning, but did not stay for the wedding in the afternoon (Sabah, 11.08.2003)¹¹⁸. The headline, “*He did not stay for the wedding*”, is followed by the heading “*President Sezer opened the philosophy conference in the same building, and left without waiting for the Prime Minister’s son’s wedding*”. In terms of visuals, the page is dominated by a very sulky picture of Sezer on the left, with the caption title “*He prefers philosophy*” and the smiling bride receiving her marriage certificate from Berlusconi on the right with the optimistic title quoted from Erdogan’s words “*May we wish the same happiness for Turkey*”. Such a tension between Sezer who ultimately represents the secular state, and Erdogan who represents the AKP government, would not surprise the Turkish readers. Since the start of Erdogan’s tenure, Sezer famously vetoed many government bills, which were interpreted as tension between the secular Republic and the Islamist government. The news item re-emphasises already existing tensions in its headlines and pictures. At the same time, it should be noted that the language used in Sabah’s coverage does not support Sezer’s choice:

“Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan had also invited President Ahmet Necdet Sezer”

¹¹⁶ Tamer Yuksel, 10.08.2003, ‘High security alert for the ‘philosophical wedding’’, Hurriyet

¹¹⁷ Sukran Ozcakmak, 09.08.2003, ‘And here is the permission for ‘Little Reyhan’s’ marriage’, Sabah

¹¹⁸ No-bylines, front-page headline, 11.08.2003, ‘He did not stay for the wedding’, Sabah.

*“He did not attend even though he was invited: Even though he had been in the conference centre that same day, he did not attend the wedding in which three prime ministers were present. Sezer left without waiting for the wedding after opening the Philosophy Conference in another room.”*¹¹⁹

The insistent stress on the invitation that Sezer had received, the repeated use of the negative conjunction *even though*, the contrasting titles accompanying the two visuals and details such as the presence of three prime ministers all point out that it was not polite of a President to act as such. Mehmet Barlas, a columnist in Sabah newspaper also reiterates this opinion with a long title for his column: *“Sezer should have gone to Erdogans’ wedding”* (12.08.2003)¹²⁰:

“Maybe, as an individual, he does not want to be seen in a veiled community. Maybe he got angry at the fact that a 17-year-old girl left her school, took on the veil and married through arranged marriage. But these are the realities of the country he is presiding over.”

Although Mehmet Barlas finds Sezer’s attitude inappropriate, he also implies that Sezer has plenty of reasons to disapprove of this marriage. Barlas is ready to accept these as a part of Turkey’s reality, yet carefully detaches himself from those realities, which he calls *“local”*. Barlas’ argument is very much loyal to the ideal of modernization and believes that through the merging of the ‘local’- which we can read as the ‘un-modern’ or ‘traditional’- with the modern, he attempts to elevate the local to the standards of the developed world. He is sure that his readers (also implying President Sezer as well) are all after the same goal:

“Aren’t we all after fusing these local realities with the realities of the developed world?”

Despite Barlas’ calls for further merging between the two realities, no matter how unpleasant a task this might be for the secularists, President Sezer is not alone in his unwillingness to enter the other world. Most journalists find it at best uncomfortable to join a crowd with which they don’t find themselves sharing much in common. Ilker Sarier, a journalist writing in Sabah, offers a good example of this in his column titled: *“The analysis of the wedding”*

¹¹⁹ My emphasis.

¹²⁰ Mehmet Barlas, column, 12.08.2003, ‘Sezer should have gone to Erdogans’ wedding’, Sabah

(Sabah, 13.08.2003)¹²¹. In his lines he criticises the media for exaggerating a crowded but very simple wedding into an “*amazing*” ceremony and blames some of his colleagues for being too keen to receive an invitation¹²². He then remarks that:

“I was not sent an invitation. Even if I had received one, I most probably would not have gone.

Because I would have been heavily bored.

I don't like formal gatherings. (...)

*And besides, there is also this atmosphere of “conservatism” that is played out so obstinately, to be honest, it is all a bit unnerving.”*¹²³

Journalists who attended the wedding also share the same discomfort about being in alien territories, where people do not have a similar lifestyle, education and social class as themselves. Again in Sabah, Ahmet Hakan expresses this feeling candidly in his column when he makes the distinction between the *white Turks* and Erdogan's followers (Sabah, 11.08.2003)¹²⁴. As discussed in more detail in the second chapter on Turkey, this expression refers to the elite, urban, middle or upper class, well-educated and secular population of Turkey. In his column, Ahmet Hakan not openly labels himself as ‘a white Turk’, even though his column implies that he would not mind it, but he makes it clear that Erdogan's guests do not belong to this category. The journalist “*cannot believe his eyes*” when he finds the unusual crowd, “*the contingency AKP leans on*”, gathering in an affluent neighbourhood which he describes as one of Istanbul's white Turk populated residencies:

“What do I see? A crowd of conservative common citizens who normally do not visit this neighbourhood surrounding the area! People looking at shop windows, passing time in the cafes until the wedding hour arrives..”

The scene reminds the journalist of the *conquest celebrations* that used to be held in the past, to celebrate the conquest of Istanbul by the Ottomans. He argues that in these celebrations, to enact the conquest itself, people would march from the outskirts of Istanbul to the city centre.

¹²¹ Ilker Sarier, column, 13.08.2003, ‘The analysis of the wedding’ Sabah

¹²² Similarly, Emin Colasan, a prominent columnist in Hurriyet, criticises a colleague who had voiced his resentment for not receiving an invitation with sharp sarcasm and mockery in his column on 10.08.2003 titled ‘Parazites in our press history’.

¹²³ Emphasis mine.

¹²⁴ Ahmet Hakan, 11.08.2003, ‘A wedding that resembles conquest celebrations’, Sabah

Here, we can point to two issues surfacing in the journalist's ironic and imaginative depiction. Firstly, in comparing 'the conservative masses surrounding the neighbourhood' to 'the Ottomans conquering the city from the Byzantine Empire', the journalist reiterates the modern-western/traditional-religious distinction, if albeit in a very imaginative way. At the same time, in the metaphors of 'conquest' or 'masses surrounding an area' there is a powerful warning about power changing hands from what he calls the 'white Turks' to the masses. The elitist stance of the secular intellectual whom he represents, and the uneasiness felt about the high numbers of "others" is acutely felt in the following lines:

"Even though the host was the Prime Minister, this was not a wedding that would be highly esteemed by the white Turks.. I am sure that any white Turk, who had to be at the wedding, looked for ways to reach Lutfi Kirdar [the conference centre] without being seen by anyone."



Fig.4 Mr. Press, Hurriyet.

The journalist describes how he leaves the wedding venue without queuing up to congratulate the couple and the parents, and walks up to a shopping arcade at the heart of the neighbourhood. There, away from the "maddening crowd", he sips his coffee in a café, which he describes as "the home of peace and quiet on Sundays"¹²⁵. Through the contrast between the welcoming calmness of the café (clearly a familiar spot for the journalist) and the maddening crowd (the trespassers in this neighbourhood) it becomes apparent that the natural habitat of the journalist lies in a part of Turkey far away from Erdogan's guests, in a location which is more fantasized than geographical, and whose original residents the journalist calls the white Turks.

Even though the analysis here concerns news items, a cartoon that appeared on the front page of Hurriyet on the day of the wedding presents a wonderful piece of data, by making fun of the alienation the journalists feel towards this other world. The cartoon shows its main character, Mr. Press, a self-seeking journalist who knows perfectly how to exploit situations to his own advantage, and his wife. As Mr. Press is getting

¹²⁵ Emphasis mine

ready for the wedding, his wife, in an absurd combination of very low cut summer dress and a colourful headscarf tells him resentfully “*Press, I can’t believe you made me wear the veil for Necmettin Bilal’s wedding...*” to which Press replies “*Come on, just for a couple of hours, you can surely manage that...*” (Hurriyet, 10.08.2003)¹²⁶

Although Mr. Press and his wife are fictional and exaggerated characters, the cartoon is not too detached from reality. In fact, the awkwardness of Mr.Press’ wife is clearly echoed in Ayse Arman’s column in Hurriyet. After attending the wedding ceremony, Arman not only wrote about her impressions in a full page article (Hurriyet, 11.08.2003)¹²⁷, but also expressed her feelings about the wedding separately in her column (Hurriyet, 12.08.2003)¹²⁸. In the column, Arman provides the readers with a sincere account of her feelings; starting from the time she started to get ready for the wedding:

“There is no apparent reason. I feel like I am going to the wedding of “the children of another world”. I pick the least revealing black dress from the hanger.”



Fig.5 Ayse Arman with her black dress and two veiled girls at the wedding, Hurriyet.

For Arman, the dress she is going to wear to the wedding gains a particular significance as a bearer of her identity in the alien world she is about to enter. She then quotes a conversation with her partner about whether the dress she has chosen is suitable for the event, and confesses that she does not “*have such conversations*” or concerns about ‘the propriety of her dress’ when she is going to places that belong to “*her world*”¹²⁹:

*“I only have one goal there, to look chic. (...) But in here, there is another issue: I am going into a crowd that I don’t know, whose attitudes, reactions I cannot calculate. I obviously do not want to compromise my character, but I want to adapt and to be approved of as well”*¹³⁰.

¹²⁶ Latif Demirci, front-page cartoon, 10.08.2003, ‘The wedding of the year from Mr. Press’.

¹²⁷ Ayse Arman, 11.08.2003, ‘The abundance of colours in the veils’, Hurriyet

¹²⁸ Ayse Arman, column, 12.08.2003, ‘Emine Erdogan will watch over the marriage like an eagle’, Hurriyet

¹²⁹ Emphasis mine

¹³⁰ Emphasis mine.

In this, she finds a strange irony, and points out that “*it is usually the veiled girls who feel nervous when going somewhere*”. However, at this wedding she feels uneasy because she is now in “*the minority*”¹³¹. It is clear that Arman feels that her identity is under threat as she prepares for the wedding. But she is certainly more relaxed by the end of the wedding, as she discovers that the other world is not as hostile as she feared:

“Nobody treats me with an attitude that says, “He is not your PM. You are different.” (...) I feel like we can start communicating. And this makes me happy.”

6.4.1.4 The obvious danger that nobody sees

Despite the psychological challenge of entering ‘the other side’, Ayse Arman seems to find condolence in the fact that her minority status is only for the wedding, and once it is over, it will be the veiled girls who will again feel uneasy when going somewhere in her world. However, for Necati Dogru, a columnist writing for the newspaper Sabah, the wedding is not simply a one-off experience, but a major revolution that will overturn the existing balance of power in Turkey. In short, it is something much more serious:

“Bilal’s green wedding was a declaration of power by a public that used to feel suppressed, exploited, backward, ignorant, alone, deprived, and that embraced Tayyip Erdogan as their leader, and that live mostly in shanty-towns. (...) It is the celebration of the Anatolian revolution.” (Sabah, 12.08.2003)¹³²

Here, Dogru picks up the same concern about the masses that Ahmet Hakan had depicted in his portrayal of the maddening crowd, but for him, the threat is far more serious and real. The journalist argues that the masses, who were looked down upon (by the secularists) in the past are now the new rulers. They had even managed to do a wedding “*with a veiled bride, tightly covered followers, female party members covered in black chadors, male members sporting Islamic beards, with water served as alcohol*” in “*a location where the owners of the established system, Istanbul’s elite, the heads of the big capital’s big holdings dwell.*” Dogru’s choice of metaphors to express his impression of the wedding reflects an open fear

¹³¹ Emphasis mine.

¹³² Necati Dogru, column, 12.08.2003, ‘A white, bloodless revolution’, Sabah

about what he calls the ‘*white, bloodless revolution*’ of the belittled masses. In using the term ‘*revolution*’, the journalist implies the election of the AKP government. The wedding is simply a ‘*celebration*’ of this ‘*Anatolian revolution*’, which overthrew the white Turk establishment. Dogru admits that he does not know what will follow next, but expresses his wish that Tayyip Erdogan would “*give in to the system in spite of his contingency*”¹³³, and swap the fearful masses for the support of the secularists.

The metaphor of revolution reveals not only a fear about the loss of power, but also the fear that the very foundation of the Republic is in peril. This is a hidden danger, well disguised under democracy. Some journalists hinted at such a risk by paying particular attention to the middle name of the groom, which is Necmettin, the first name of former Prime Minister Erbakan. For Guneri Civaoglu, a prominent columnist in Milliyet newspaper, this name is a reminder of Erdogan’s past: when Tayyip Erdogan’s son was born, he looked up to Necmettin Erbakan as his leader and out of adoration, or as a political investment, gave his son Erbakan’s name. Civaoglu argues that “*Children are responsible for the life they lead and the things they will do*” (Hurriyet, 09.08.2003)¹³⁴ but hopes “*his [Bilal’s] life, his mind and his fate does not resemble his namesake Erbakan*”. What Civaoglu hopes will not happen is certainly a dormant threat for Ahmet Hakan writing in Sabah newspaper:

“I am holding the wedding invitation in my hands. Inside it is written the expression “Our children Reyyan and Bilal”, but on the cover, the names of the young people appear as follows: “Reyyan and N. Bilal”. Now, in that letter “N” hides a “Necmettin”.. A hidden, concealed Necmettin.” (Sabah, 10.08.2003)¹³⁵

Here the name Necmettin, an enemy of the Republic who was warded off only a couple of years ago with the closing of his parties returns under the disguise of the AKP government. It is this same danger that leads Yalcin Bayer, a journalist from Hurriyet, to choose the self-explanatory title “*Anxiety about the future of the Republic*” for his column (Hurriyet, 13.08.2003)¹³⁶. Bayer starts his piece by announcing an Atatürkist declaration published over eight pages in a magazine, calling the nation to come together and save the future of the Republic against all impending threats. He does not mention the wedding in this part of his

¹³³ My emphasis.

¹³⁴ Guneri Civaoglu, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The Wedding’ Hurriyet

¹³⁵ Ahmet Hakan, column, 10.08.2003, ‘About the Wedding’ Sabah

¹³⁶ Yalcin Bayer, column, 13.08.2003, ‘Anxiety about the future of the Republic’ Hurriyet, emphasis mine

column. The second section has the subheading “*The Erbakan and Erdogan tradition*”, and draws a parallel between the two leaders, resembling them to two historical Middle Eastern rulers with different political strategies - the pharaoh versus the populist king. In line with these strategies, he argues, Erbakan and Erdogan chose different wedding venues - Ciragan versus the conference centre- for their children. The journalist suggests that both leaders should be assessed on the outcomes of their different strategies, not on their common Islamist heritage. However, the title of his column, the resemblance of the two leaders to no other than a Middle Eastern monarch, and the generous space allocated to the Atatürkist call of the magazine, all ask the readers not to wait, to be vigilant, and to protect the Republic.

In this context the veil emerges as a symbol of the failure the Republican modernization project. Unlike the common attitude at the time of Erbakan’s daughter’s wedding, in their coverage of Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding journalists do not see the veil simply as a marker of tradition. On the contrary, they are well aware of the contemporary political and social meanings it carries, and agree that it signifies new life patterns, and even admit that the veiled students in universities raised the visibility of covered women in the public sphere (Milliyet, 11.08.2003)¹³⁷. Yet, this new phenomenon is seen as going against the grain of Republican modernization, and journalists cannot understand why women insist on wearing the veil in order to take part in the public sphere. As journalist Derya Sazak argues in his column:

“if this community did not refuse the earnings of the Republic, they could take their place in public life ‘without veiling themselves’. While the mothers of today’s AKP MPs were not veiled in the 1930s and 40s, their wives and daughters today prefer ‘the veil’.”

As Sazak nostalgically remembers the modern but modest women of the Republican era, he also warns his readers that “*This trend cannot be considered outside the context of ‘Islamization of the public!’*”¹³⁸,

The warning bells about the hidden agenda revealed by the wedding are more audible in Tufan Turenc’s column entitled “*This is not the picture of happiness that I want to see*”

¹³⁷ Derya Sazak, column, 11.08.2003, ‘The Wedding’, Milliyet. Here, the writer particularly refers to and quotes Nilufer Gole’s edited book on ‘Hybrid Patterns’, which argue that the veil signifies new life patterns where the veil should be read as an attempt at reconciling belief with modern urban life, which causes its own set of contradictions.

¹³⁸ My emphasis.

(Hurriyet, 13.08.2003)¹³⁹. The journalist openly refuses to see the wedding as a happy merging of the government and the nation and argues “*The picture of happiness desired by modern people, and that which Tayyip Erdogan and his friends want to create are totally opposed to one another.*” For Turenc, the wedding shows the plain difference between the two different visions of Turkey, one that has veiled women, and one that does not. His mode of address is very direct and clear:

“From our colleagues who watched the wedding, we learned that 80% of the guests (...) were veiled.

It is a significant contradiction for a Prime Minister, who claims he is trying all he can to put Turkey into the EU, to be proud of such a picture.

It is because of this difference in culture and perception that a large number of people in Europe do not want to include Turkey.”

For Turenc, the picture of Turkey created under Tayyip Erdogan’s government is a big threat to Turkey’s ultimate goal, being accepted as “*European*”. It also questions the credibility of his government’s efforts to get Turkey into the EU. But perhaps, the journalist’s anxiety is perhaps best captured in his description of a photograph from the wedding:

“A bearded man. He is going to the wedding in loose, baggy, creased trousers, and a white shirt.

A step behind, he is followed by four women in black chadors.

(...) It is not possible to tell if one is his wife and the other three are his daughters, or if all four are his wives.

Because only the eyes of the women are visible.”

The powerful picture he chooses to share with his readers also speaks for the feeling of threat felt by other secularist journalists. It is a picture not of progression but regression under the AKP government. “*This should not have been the point reached in the 80 year struggle for modernization in the Turkish Republic*” argues the journalist. For the journalist, the AKP

¹³⁹ Tufan Turenc, column, 13.08.2003, ‘This is not the picture of happiness I want to see’, Hurriyet

turns back the clock to a time when Turkey is still struggling to make the jump into the European future.

6.4.1.5 What difference does Berlusconi make?

One more interesting theme running through the wedding coverage relates to the remarks made about Silvio Berlusconi's presence at the wedding as the groom's witness. From the day Berlusconi's attendance was announced, there was remarkable media interest in the issue. At the time Berlusconi was not only the Italian Prime Minister, but as Italy held the rotating presidency of the EU he also held an important position within the EU.¹⁴⁰ Given his position and the symbolic significance of his attendance, it is not surprising that Berlusconi was turned into the celebrity of the event.

Prior to the wedding all three papers announced his attendance on their front pages, with ironic comments about the 'friendship' of the two Prime Ministers. The day before the wedding, Hurriyet's title on the front page was "*Will Berlusconi sing at the wedding?*" (Hurriyet, 09.08.2003)¹⁴¹, followed by half page coverage on his singing exploits at a previous wedding he had attended, noting that "*people are curious to see if he will pick up the microphone in Erdogan's wedding as well.*" (Sabah, 09.08.2003)¹⁴² Again on the same day Sabah's front page announced Berlusconi's wedding gift with the title '*And this is from your Uncle Silvio*', accompanied by pictures of Berlusconi being embraced by Erdogan and the picture of a gold watch. The headline to the half a page of coverage inside reads "*The groom gets a watch from his Uncle Silvio*", with a tongue-in-cheek attitude about the friendship between Erdogan and Berlusconi. Following the wedding all three papers again had pictures of him on the front page this time while giving the wedding certificate to the bride.

And yet, it is in the columns that journalists discuss the symbolic significance of Berlusconi's attendance. Overall, it would be fair to say that Berlusconi is not the most reputable European leader in the journalists' opinion. There is not a single columnist who is impressed by him,

¹⁴⁰ Although the Albanian Prime Minister was also present at the wedding as one of the witnesses, there was no such coverage about his attendance.

¹⁴¹ No by-lines, 09.08.2003, 'Will Berlusconi sing in the wedding?' Hurriyet, front page summary news

¹⁴² Foreign news department, 09.08.2003, 'Will he sing again?', Sabah, part of larger news item 'Silvio Berlusconi is being the wedding witness' on the same page.

his role in the EU is regarded as “*nothing to be exaggerated*” (Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹⁴³ and they don’t hesitate to remind their readers about his poor reputation and the charges of fraud brought against him, even when they might find his attendance a “*very elegant, (...) simpatico gesture*” (Sabah, 14.08.2003)¹⁴⁴. There are two female columnists, Ece Temelkuran and Meral Tamer, who do not hesitate to use sharply critical language, describing him as “*dishonourable*” and “*up to his neck in fraud*” (Milliyet, 11.08.2003; Milliyet, 10.08.2003)¹⁴⁵. However, journalists are also generally pleased to see Tayyip Erdogan’s choice of a European leader as his “*best pal*” (Sabah, 10.08.2003; Sabah, 14.08.2003)¹⁴⁶ and his son’s witness. One journalist interprets his attendance as Erdogan’s “*very clear answer to those who wonder where the AKP is facing relative to Erbakan’s tenure*” (Milliyet, 10.08.2003)¹⁴⁷. In these lines, Berlusconi’s attendance expresses the hope – albeit faint – that Erdogan might have been deterred from Erbakan’s Islamism and embraced the national goal.

This comparison between the AKP and Erbakan is a recurring remark in many columns. On this, Guneri Civaoglu from Milliyet asks “*Would it have been better if the witness were a mullah from Iran, a Gulf Region Emirate, or Kaddafi instead of Berlusconi?*” (Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹⁴⁸ Such associations are not coincidental. As Navaro-Yashin (2002: 49) notes, the Turkish nation has been constructed as regionally and culturally different from the Arab world, and regional affinity with the Arabs has been seen as an obstacle to Turkey’s westernisation. With the Erbakan government, there was a radical attempt to change this regionalist stand, unite Turkey with its “Muslim brethren” and make new alliances with the Muslim world (ibid.: 50). Here, the chosen examples, and the particular emphasis on Kaddafi are to remind the readers about Erbakan’s deliberate choice of the Arab World for his first visits abroad as Prime Minister. Although the items imply that Erdogan is a better alternative, it is significant in that in the secular journalists’ imaginary, Erdogan is expected to put his

¹⁴³ Guneri Civaoglu, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The wedding’, Milliyet

¹⁴⁴ Servet Yildirim, 14.08.2003, ‘The friendship of the PMs’, Sabah

¹⁴⁵ There are two female journalists both from Milliyet who before the wedding criticise Berlusconi very strongly and see no good in his attendance. Ece Temelkuran notes that “*Berlusconi, who is announced as dishonourable because he has committed fraud, is the guest of honour at the wedding*” while Meral Tamer thinks such a questionable man cannot bring any fortune to the young couple and thus should not be made the witness. She makes a wish: “*You never know what may happen between now and then. Maybe he decides not to come in the last minute (...)*.” Ece Temelkuran, column, 11.08.2003, ‘Wedding in between philosophy’, Milliyet; Meral Tamer, 10.08.2003, ‘There can be no fortune about Berlusconi’s (witnessing of) the wedding’, Milliyet.

¹⁴⁶ See Ahmet Hakan, column, 10.08.2003, ‘About the Wedding’, Sabah; and Servet Yildirim, 14.08.2003, ‘The friendship of the PMs’, Sabah for an emphasis on this theme.

¹⁴⁷ Meral Tamer, column, 10.08.2003, ‘There can be no fortune about Berlusconi’s (witnessing of) the wedding’, Milliyet.

¹⁴⁸ Guneri Civaoglu, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The wedding’, Milliyet, author’s emphasis

allegiances with the Islamic World, rather than with Europe. The previously quoted Sabah journalist Ahmet Hakan also mentions that “*There are no visitors coming from neither Arab countries, nor countries such as Malaysia, or Indonesia*” (Sabah, 10.08.2003)¹⁴⁹. A journalist writing a column for Sabah from Washington chooses the subheading ‘*Thank God Berlusconi is coming instead of another friend and brother from the ‘Muslim leaders’*’, not forgetting to mention that Erdogan’s invitation is received with smiles in the foreign circles that are ‘*watching over Turkey*’ (Sabah, 11.08.2003)¹⁵⁰.

It is this Western gaze, constantly keeping an eye on Turkey, trying to decide on its Europeanness, that worries the columnist Guneri Civaoglu. He argues that given Berlusconi’s celebrity status in Europe, his visit to Istanbul to attend the wedding of the Prime Minister’s son will gain wide coverage in the European media. For the journalist this “*is a great propaganda opportunity for Turkey. It is a rare chance in terms of tourism advertisement.*” (Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹⁵¹ However, along with the optimism, the writer notes that he is “*still fretting with worry*” about the possibility that all this might be ruined with “*scenes that Turkey does not deserve, and is not Turkey’s reality*”. It is evident that Civaoglu thinks it is the wrong crowd that, unfortunately, will represent Turkey to the Western world in this unique PR opportunity. His column is also a warning note to that ‘wrong crowd’, asking them to behave:

*“Of course Turkey has Islamic customs. There is nothing to say against that. But these should not be exaggerated, exploited. Ataturk’s secular Turkey should reflect these local colours with this wedding “without overdoing” them.”*¹⁵²

6.4.2 Overarching discourses and concluding remarks

As with Erbakan’s daughter’s wedding, news coverage of Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding also converges around a powerful othering of the Islamists, and reiterates the hegemonic imaginary of modern Turkey. However, if the coverage of the two weddings shares Republican discourses of modernization and secularism, it also differs in the ways in which journalists voice those discourses, and how they perceive themselves with respect to the

¹⁴⁹ Ahmet Hakan, column, 10.08.2003, ‘About the wedding’ Sabah

¹⁵⁰ Asli Aydintasbas, 11.08.2003, ‘The Wedding’ Sabah

¹⁵¹ Guneri Civaoglu, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The wedding’, Milliyet, author’s emphasis

¹⁵² Author’s emphasis.

'Islamist other'. Again, as with the wedding of Erbakan's daughter, the political context within which these discussions take place is important. Unlike the first wedding, when Islamist politics had been curbed by the closing down of the two Islamist parties, at the time of Reyhan Mutluer's wedding the ruling government party in Turkey was one that had splintered from those previously closed Islamist groups. The tone of coverage, ranging from uneasiness to moral panic and to a more aggressive call to arms to protect the secular Republic, reflects journalists' reactions to this context.

This context also determines the striking difference between the journalists' perception of the two brides. Whereas Elif Erbakan does not pose any confusion over whom she represents, in the case of Reyhan Mutluer, it is a more problematic issue. The journalists do not accept her representation, like they had voluntarily done so in the case of Elif Sozen's wedding. However, they cannot ignore her position as the Prime Minister's daughter-in-law either. Berlusconi's presence at the wedding complicates the issue further, not only because of the Western gaze he introduces to the wedding, but also because his presence alights fears about the possibility that Europe sees the young bride as representative of "*Turkey's reality*".

Given the problem of representation, the discussion in the coverage heavily centres upon the question of gender, much more intensively than had been the case with Elif Erbakan. This is not surprising given the fact that gender has formed the touchstone of change throughout the different stages of the secularisation process in Turkey, with the removal of the veil as its most symbolic sign (Gole 1998: 58). For the journalists, the veiled child-bride who leaves her school because of her arranged marriage – and who largely appears as a victim "*surrendering to tradition*" (Milliyet, 11.08.2003)¹⁵³ – clearly stands for the undoing of the modernization efforts of the Republic. In doing so, the Islamists are seen as reversing the progress made in modernization, with Turkey still trying to catch up with Europe. The previously discussed depiction by a Hurriyet journalist of a bearded wedding guest with four women walking behind him in black chadors with only their eyes visible, best captures this secularist imaginary (Hurriyet, 13.08.2003)¹⁵⁴.

If sarcasm and satire were the significant narrative tools that supported the secularist discourse of Erbakan's wedding, then in Reyhan Mutluer's wedding the secularist imaginary

¹⁵³ Derya Sazak, column, 11.08.2003, 'The Wedding', Milliyet

¹⁵⁴ Tufan Turenc, column, 13.08.2003, 'This is not the picture of happiness I want to see', Hurriyet

is transmitted most vividly through the particular choice of adjectives and metaphors. These strongly associate the Islamists with the concepts of **tradition**, **locality** and **masses**. Examples are apparent in the depiction of the wedding guests as “*Ottoman conquerors*” (Sabah, 11.08.2003)¹⁵⁵, “*an obstinately conservative crowd*” (Sabah, 13.08.2003)¹⁵⁶, “*covered in black chadors, male members sporting Islamic beards*” (Sabah, 12.08.2003)¹⁵⁷, “*Anatolian*” (Sabah, 12.08.2003)¹⁵⁸, “*local*” (Milliyet, 09.08.2003, Sabah, 12.08.2003)¹⁵⁹, “*a maddening crowd*” (Sabah, 11.08.2003)¹⁶⁰, or as people “*that live mostly in shanty-towns*” (Sabah, 12.08.2003)¹⁶¹. At the same time Erdogan himself is portrayed as resembling an ancient “*Middle Eastern monarch*” (Hurriyet, 13.08.2003)¹⁶² and journalists are pleasantly surprised to have Berlusconi attend as a guest when, they were expecting “*Muslim leaders*” (Sabah, 11.08.2003)¹⁶³ “*mullahs, Gulf Region Emirates, Kaddafi*” (Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹⁶⁴, and “*visitors from Arab countries, or Malaysia or Indonesia*” (Sabah, 10.08.2003)¹⁶⁵. All of these are strong signifiers of the Muslim world, the opposite of Europe, and one of the important ‘other’s of national imagination.

These metaphors express, to borrow the title from one column, “anxieties about the future of the republic” (Hurriyet, 13.08.2003)¹⁶⁶. The coverage of Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding, particularly in the columns, is highly different from the caricaturing of Islamists as “wannabe-moderns” that dominated the coverage of Elif Erbakan’s wedding. With Reyhan Mutluer’s wedding, there is not so much an attempt to disregard the credibility of Islamists. Here the ‘other’ is accepted as an alive and functioning reality of Turkey, but situated nowhere close to the imagined realm of the journalists. On the contrary, it is felt as an acute threat to the journalists’ world. While some feel this more at an individual level, as in Ayse Arman’s concerns about wearing her little black dress to the wedding (Hurriyet, 12.08.2003)¹⁶⁷, for others it is the secular homeland of the journalists that is under attack. Again the use of

¹⁵⁵ Ahmet Hakan, 11.08.2003, ‘A wedding that resembles conquest celebrations’, Sabah

¹⁵⁶ Ilker Sarier, column, 13.08.2003, ‘The analysis of the wedding’ Sabah

¹⁵⁷ Necati Dogru, column, 12.08.2003, ‘A white, bloodless revolution’, Sabah

¹⁵⁸ Necati Dogru, column, 12.08.2003, ‘A white, bloodless revolution’, Sabah

¹⁵⁹ Guneri Civaoglu, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The wedding’, Milliyet; Mehmet Barlas, column, 12.08.2003, ‘Sezer should have gone to Erdogans’ wedding’, Sabah

¹⁶⁰ Ahmet Hakan, 11.08.2003, ‘A wedding that resembles conquest celebrations’, Sabah

¹⁶¹ Necati Dogru, column, 12.08.2003, ‘A white, bloodless revolution’, Sabah

¹⁶² Yalcin Bayer, column, 13.08.2003, ‘Anxiety about the future of the Republic’ Hurriyet

¹⁶³ Asli Aydintasbas, 11.08.2003, ‘The Wedding’ Sabah

¹⁶⁴ Guneri Civaoglu, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The wedding’, Milliyet

¹⁶⁵ Ahmet Hakan, column, 10.08.2003, ‘About the wedding’ Sabah

¹⁶⁶ Yalcin Bayer, column, 13.08.2003, ‘Anxiety about the future of the Republic’ Hurriyet

¹⁶⁷ Ayse Arman, column, 12.08.2003, ‘Emine Erdogan will watch over the marriage like an eagle’, Hurriyet

metaphors of “*revolution*” (Sabah, 12.08.2003)¹⁶⁸, “*conquest*” (Sabah, 11.08.2003)¹⁶⁹ and “*Islamization of the public*” (Milliyet, 11.08.2003)¹⁷⁰ accentuate this conceptualisation. However, the threat here is not only to the secular foundations of the Republic, but also to the nation’s goal of ever being accepted by Europe.

It is this goal that unites the coverage of the three weddings. In all three weddings, Europe is imagined as external to Turkey, and as the ultimate source of modernity that Turkey needs to catch up with. With this, all three weddings become performances to test whether the nation has caught up with Europe, or whether it still lags behind.

However, because that catching up is measured through similarity with Europe, it also involves a threat to the nationalist aspirations of ‘being different’. What is needed is to reiterate sameness with Europe, while at the same time maintaining difference. To borrow from Bhabha’s much cited formulation of mimicry, what is needed is to maintain “*difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (1994: 86).¹⁷¹ For Bhabha the necessary ambivalence that emerges with the desire for the same-but-different, ruptures the authority of the discourse resulting in a continuous “slippage, excess and difference” that resists the West (ibid.). Similarly, in the desire to be Western-but-Turkish, the meaning of the West and Western modernity are appropriated, which attempt to prevent total Westernization. In this context, religion forms the secularists’ touchstone which if used sparingly - or as in the words of one columnist, “*without overdoing*” it (Milliyet, 09.08.2003)¹⁷²- might provide the desired difference from Europe by appropriating Western modernity without hampering the ongoing efforts to catch up with Europe. However, this inherent ‘in-betweenness’ of Turkish modernization is never brought up, mentioned or discussed when criticising the ‘laughable hybridity’ of other modernities as we saw in the case of Elif Erbakan’s wedding.

In the next and concluding section I will further expand on the above-discussed anxieties about catching up and maintaining difference by borrowing insights from postcolonial theory.

¹⁶⁸ Necati Dogru, column, 12.08.2003, ‘A white, bloodless revolution’, Sabah

¹⁶⁹ Ahmet Hakan, 11.08.2003, ‘A wedding that resembles conquest celebrations’, Sabah

¹⁷⁰ Derya Sazak, column, 11.08.2003, ‘The Wedding’, Milliyet.

¹⁷¹ Author’s emphasis. Although Bhabha discusses mimicry in the context of colonization, and particularly to explain the colonizer’s construction of the colonized/Other, his concept can be translated into explaining the operation of the modernization discourse in non-Western contexts (c.f. Ahiska 2003: 374).

¹⁷² Guneri Civaoglu, column, 09.08.2003, ‘The wedding’, Milliyet, author’s emphasis

Conclusion:
'Tracing the boundaries'

In the first chapter, I set out a theoretical framework which showed how discourses of the 'nation' are never clear-cut, consistent and unambiguous, though they always present themselves as such. They are never singular or homogenous in their messages but offer "a cluster of ideas", an assemblage of various sub-discourses that mould our imagination about nationhood (Suny 2001). As a result, all nationalisms and national imaginations are "haunted by" ambivalences and contradictions (Bhabha 1990a), and the national identities that result are "beset with tensions and ambiguities, exclusions and inclusions" (Pierson 2000: 43).

The same holds for the hegemonic imagination of nationhood in Turkey, which was the object of this research. As discussed in chapter two, this imagination merges two main sub-discourses: firstly, an ethno-nationalism, which envisions national identity in ethnic terms, and secondly the discourse of modernization, which defines the authentic source of modernity as Europe. It is because of this particular assemblage that the ambivalences that haunt Turkishness surface most vividly in discussions about Europe. In this, Turkishness is imagined as already holding an intrinsic capacity to be modern like Europe, but has not yet fulfilled its potential. This particular imagining, shaped by the state elite during the formative years of the Republic, is not the only narrative of the nation in Turkey today and has been subjected to growing criticism both academically and from a number of social groups. Nevertheless, it is still a functioning discourse that continues to inform other nationalist varieties in Turkey as their root nationalism, and has a stronghold in the mainstream media particularly with its neoliberal version (Bora 2003). It also unites the three case studies despite their wide differences in topic.

Following from this, the data reveals a chronic fixation with 'Europe', and a continuous appraisal of Turkey's position vis-à-vis the West, fuelled by the ambition

of becoming modern/European, and the awareness of not having yet fulfilled its potential. The very fact that the case studies received headline coverage in the mainstream press confirms the importance of the “imagined Western gaze” in Turkish national identity (Ahiska 2003: 365). The tragic suicides in the Batman region became a fashionable media story in Turkey only after their publication in a foreign newspaper, triggering the debate amongst journalists as to why the Southeast region had not kept up with the progress of the Western region. Similarly, the name of the athlete Sureyya Ayhan was pretty much unheard of, except to those who read the sports pages in detail, until one day Turkey woke to the headlines that a girl from an Anatolian town had made it to the finals of the World Championships. As for the news coverage of the three brides, the debate focused almost exclusively on whether or not the brides could successfully represent the modern Turkey to Europe.

The central importance of Europe in the national imagination also reveals a set of anxieties about the desired national identity. Although these anxieties might be shaped by the specific dynamics of the Turkish context, they are hardly unique. With other non-Western and post-colonial nations, Turkey also shares the perception of modernity “as an ideal to be achieved, as a source of aspiration, as an expectation” rather than a nation-specific experience (Gole 2000: 40), and along with this perception, many of its concerns. First of these is the imagined delay in becoming modern, and the anxiety about making the necessary jump to catch up with the West (c.f. Ahiska 2003). This anxiety runs through all the case studies, and is particularly evident in the narration of Sureyya Ayhan’s life story, becoming a defining element in the national imagination. Gole (2000) has argued that this feeling of delay results from a conceptualisation of modernity as unfolding in a linear and sequential time from the Western centre into the peripheries. If modernity has already happened in the West, then the non-West is doomed to be late, to lag behind, and be ‘backward’, resulting in what Johannes Fabian has called the “denial of coevalness” (Fabian cited in Gole 2000: 47). Similarly referring to Fabian, Chakrabarty (2000) criticises this denial in his deconstruction of historicism - the assumption that a certain amount of time elapses in the very process of development. Because his discussion about the post-colonial experience offers a valuable framework to understand the Turkish case, I will elaborate on his thesis here shortly and later in the discussion.

In his book *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty argues that the ideology of historicism, i.e. that modernity originates ‘first in Europe and then elsewhere’, enabled Europe’s domination of the world by equating the difference in historical time as cultural distance (ibid.: 7). This assumption relegates the non-Western to the waiting rooms; where national modernities are regarded as incomplete and partial, having to do some ‘preparatory work’ until they become fully modern. In an attempt to abolish the waiting rooms they have been placed in, the nationalist elite can resort to the argument that the nation “has had it from the beginning of history”, (ibid.: 10) – which offers us an insight into understanding Turkish nationalism’s stress on the inherent potential of the Turkish people to be modern. This is the core argument in the work of Ziya Gökalp as discussed in chapter two. Despite this, the nationalist elite can never erase the hold of European historicism from the national imagination. Being modern always remains as a potential and the imaginary waiting rooms are never abolished, resulting in a continuous anxiety to minimize the waiting period by urgently making the necessary jump into the modern future, or more specifically in the Turkish case, into the EU. This feeling is nowhere clearer than in Sureyya Ayhan’s story, which allows the nation to imagine itself as having made the desired leap from the small Anatolian town to the European Championships.

The second recurring concern throughout the case studies is the problem of preserving the nation’s cultural authenticity while becoming modern and European. If no modernity resides outside Europe, how will the nation become European, but also keep its cultural distinctiveness and prevent itself from becoming a mere copy? This is a main preoccupation in postcolonial nationalisms, which struggle to keep their nations’ uniqueness from the West, while defining themselves as modern and on a par with the Western world (Chatterjee 1996). It has been equally important in the development of Turkish nationalism, and is still a defining concern as evident in a number of accounts throughout the data, particularly in the news coverage of Elif Sozen’s marriage to Helmut Kohl’s son, which continuously reassures the readers that Turkish cultural identity has not been compromised.

These anxieties result in a paradoxical attitude in Turkey that resents and ‘others’ Europe, at the same time as it desires acceptance from and inclusion in Europe. The frustration resulting from this is apparent in the coverage of Sureyya Ayhan’s

victories, which are reported to have made her European rival “cry”, and Eurosport commentators “stand up in front of her with respect”. It is also visible in the coverage of Elif Sozen’s marriage, which reflected a strong wish to see Europe bowing to Turkish terms.

This frustration is channelled towards those factors that are seen as obstacles to forming a less problematic identification with Europe. The Batman case study presents a lucid example of this. The backwardness and feudalism in the “other” undeveloped Turkey is reported as holding back the developed, European Turkey in which the journalists see themselves as located. This, however, disguises the inconspicuous ethnicization of backwardness and the labelling of the region as the ‘other’ - after all, Batman seems to be a region where even the cats speak another language. The argument that backwardness emanates from another Turkey also serves a dual purpose. Not confronting ethnicity directly makes the discomfiting obstacle less paradoxical to deal with in terms of national identity, while at the same time protecting and enhancing the supremacy of the national identity at the centre – the desired *la mêmété*. To sustain this, Kemalist discourses on gender are employed: the other/Kurdish women are to be saved and re-incorporated into the national, but this requires firstly the acceptance of the superiority of the Turkish centre. In this process, the modernization discourse inherent in Turkish nationalism supports and justifies its ethno-nationalist claims.

The case study of the three weddings shows that the role accorded to religion in Turkish national identity is more ambiguous, and hence the terms of its negotiation are more difficult. While Turkish secularism never excludes religion from Turkish identity (and as Elif Sozen’s wedding shows, uses it as a source of cultural distinctiveness vis-à-vis Europe when needed) it makes sharp social and class distinctions along the binaries of secular/modern versus religious/backward. Consequently, protests are raised when the Islamists challenge these boundaries between themselves and the secularists by reinterpreting the meaning of Europe and modernity, and positioning themselves within, not outside, Europe. The dissenting comments about Elif Erbakan’s lavish white wedding or Reyhan Mutluer’s civil ceremony with Berlusconi attending reveal this attitude. The open challenges which the veiled white weddings direct towards the Kemalist/secular classes’ monopoly over

representing modernity, Europeanness and the associated life styles, blur the boundaries between the two classes and also question the Kemalist assumption that as people move up the class ladder, they will become Westernised and cast off their religious attachments (Gulalp 2003). Moreover, unlike the Batman case study, the internal other this time can no longer be easily excluded to the geographical peripheries, but has an undeniable visual presence at the centre. The debates, in general, can be seen as an attempt to re-erect the boundaries and secure the identity claims of secular classes with women forming the site of the struggle.

Dreaming of a 'whiter' Turkey

In spite of the ambiguities that infect the national boundaries, the analysed stories insistently voice fantasies of an ideal Turkey where challenges or threats to national identity have been expelled or eliminated, and the desired level of progress has nationally been achieved. Since this cannot be acquired in reality, in all three case studies, journalists carefully distance themselves from the sources of their anxieties, which they locate in another community. The result is a Turkey imagined as divided into sections, if not geographical regions, such as the outskirts of urban towns, the Southeast, or the Anatolian villages, and with distinct populations that occupy these territories like the Islamists, the Kurdish population or the local townspeople and peasants. Such a vision disguises larger problems by restricting the debates to a particular locality, as was the case with the Batman suicides; presents transgressions as anomalies, as was the case in Elif Erbakan's wedding and Reyyan Mutluer's marriage; or when in line with national aspirations, portrays them as miracles as in Sureyya's story. The ideal enclave is reached by cutting off from the 'other Turkeys', or as one journalist referring to Sureyya had rightly put it, by arriving at a Turkey that one can be proud of "in spite of Turkey"¹.

At the same time, this ideal community, purified from problems is also more than a mere fantasy - openly or in between the lines, journalists describe themselves as belonging to a 'whiter' Turkey, an identification which came up explicitly in the discussion of Reyyan Mutluer's wedding, but can be traced throughout the data. In

¹ Kanat Atkaya, column, 08.08.2001, 'Let's clone Sureyya', Hurriyet.

fact, this rhetoric is surprisingly strong in all three case studies. The elitist enclave favoured blatantly or implicitly in the news coverage strongly upholds an ethnic bias in constructing Turkish identity. While this is most strikingly observed in the Batman case, through the geographical location of the backwardness, the clash of cultures and the Kurdish other in the Southeast (thus leaving the Turkey where journalists are located free from such problems of difference), the ethnic undertones of nationalism are equally strong in the news stories supporting the “Anatolian miracle” of Sureyya Ayhan, or in praising the bride who will give Helmut Kohl “Turkish grandchildren”. If we are to see these depictions as part and parcel of the modern and civilised Turkey in which the journalists prefer to locate themselves, then nationalism naturally becomes a welcome discourse in this universe. In this ideal community, there is also full support for Kemalist secularism. As mentioned previously, journalists are quite clear when it comes to the rejection of the Islamists, even though the justification of this expulsion and the positioning of religion in the construction of identity are much more ambiguous. Even when some writers advocate open dialogue with the Islamists, they do so by carefully disassociating themselves from this group, and locating themselves outside the mental landscape of the Turkey that the Islamists occupy.

Intertwined with the ethnic and secularist preferences, and supporting these, is an unapologetic class bias. The inadequacy in economic status is seen as one of the major causes of cultural clashes between communities occupying the different Turkeys. In this context, class distinction becomes not about financial means, but about how those financial assets, combined with civilisational progress, help the secular journalists easily blend in with the Western world (Bora 2003). Class bias frequently surfaces to justify national preferences, such as in the ostracizing of Sureyya Ayhan’s coach; in the pity felt for the poverty stricken Kurdish women; through the discussion of the journalist’s ‘little black dress’ that feels out of place in front of Erdogan’s veiled guests; or with the unbearably ‘kitsch’ wedding of Erbakan’s daughter. In doing so, the news stories align the ideal Turkey with the refined tastes and looks of the journalists, and its internal others and dissenting voices with the other Turkeys that hinder the level of progress achieved by the former.

If anything such a “harmonious heimat” (Rathzel 1994), ignores the ambiguities that are inherent in its very own depiction - the ambivalences and negotiations that exist in

the very idea of nationhood envisioned by the journalists. Furthermore, it creates a no-win situation - locating the other Turkeys in rural hinterlands, or at the outskirts of modern urban life, already sets the balance of power against those that are seen as occupying the outskirts of the ideal Turkey.

Here, I want to return to Chakrabarty's discussion, which I find noteworthy in illuminating two issues. Firstly, he draws our attention to the politics of historicism taking place not only between Europe and the non-West, but also within the non-Western nations. He accurately points out that different non-Western nationalisms produce "local versions of the same narrative, replacing "Europe" by some locally constructed centre" (ibid.: 7) We can say that this doubles the effect of historicism: at the same time as the nation anxiously waits for its much deserved leap out of its own waiting room, by demanding a certain path of progress from those that lie outside the established centre, journalists locate the nation's peripheries in the nation's waiting rooms, rejecting alternative experiences as potential contributors to modernity, and moreover, rejecting coevalness with its own peripheries. By trapping itself in a vicious circle, the centre also makes it impossible for it to leave the room that it waits in.

However, as well as delineating the repressive character of modernity, Chakrabarty also directs our attention to the ongoing challenges and interruptions to modernity. This he does through a positive re-reading of Marx. Chakrabarty uses Marx's historical understanding of capital and his argument that capital initially posits a particular past as its 'necessary precondition' –which Chakrabarty calls History 1. By setting those preconditions, capital denies other alternative pasts and narratives of itself. It sees those pasts as its antecedents but *not antecedents established by itself*, and therefore not as constitutive of its own life-process –Chakrabarty calls this rejected past History 2 (ibid.: 63). Here, Chakrabarty observes two processes that take place side by side: firstly, global capitalism tries to repress difference and reduce all histories to its own. As a result, it becomes constitutive of historical difference (ibid.: 70). At the same time, History 1 can never be fully totalising. This is because capital's singular history, its universality, its 'totalising thrusts', is constantly interrupted and deferred by the alternative narratives of History 2 (ibid.: 66). But this

relationship need not be limited to the narrative of capital only, History 2 can just as well disrupt other narratives, most importantly, the narrative of modernity.

Throughout his book, Chakrabarty repeats insistently that by ‘provincialising Europe’ he does not aim to reject the values of European modernity altogether – rather it is the singular history that he attempts to deconstruct. What Chakrabarty is more interested in is the translation of those ‘diverse life-worlds and conceptual horizons about being human into the categories of Enlightenment thought’ (ibid.: 71). Such a perspective also allows Chakrabarty to read what historicism has often labelled as modernity’s ‘lack’, ‘failure’ or ‘inadequacy’ as ‘plenitude’ and ‘creativity’ (ibid.: 34).

Here, Chakrabarty is not alone in his argument. Other writers in the *Alternative Modernities* school have stressed the need to accept that modernity results in multiple and incomplete trials in the national site, which, for Goankar, should be seen as “creative adaptations of modernity” (2001: 18). Similarly, Gole has argued that modernity in non-Western contexts should be approached “neither in symmetrical terms, nor in terms of deficiency and contrast with the West, but rather in its “extra” character” (2000: 50). Labelling the non-Western modernity as “extra” not only expresses the modernist aspirations of the non-West, the “fetish of modernity” but also “conveys the sense of the uncommon as extraordinary, open to surprises, hence worth knowing” (ibid.). In short, it gives an “opportunity for awareness and new ways of seeing” (ibid.).

These arguments can help us reconsider the Turkish case. In discussing the Turkish experience, a good starting point is to re-construct the meaning of - and expectations from - modernity within Turkishness, and see the hybridities and the paradoxes that become more pronounced at the peripheries, not as anomalies, but as a part of Turkey’s engagement with modernity. *Both* the Turkish modernization project, which has often been assessed on the basis of its success in copying the Western model², *and* the further hybridisations outside the centre constitute what Chakrabarty wants to discuss as plenitudes of modernity. Denying the hybridity of what the journalists see

² Remembering Daniel Lerner’s observations, which I briefly discussed in Chapter 4 should suffice. See also Ahiska’s (2003) argument on academic scholarship’s evaluation of the Turkish case as a copy of the Western model.

as ‘margins’ also denies the hybrid modernity that the centre has crafted since the formative years of the Republic. The uncomfortable asks to be negotiated by its acceptance within the national boundaries.

It is also worthwhile to note an objection that is raised about the usefulness of this paradigm by Meltem Ahiska (2003). Ahiska argues that the alternative modernities framework “does not really address the problem of the worn-out but still alive representations of modernity”, neither do the hybridities and heterogeneities of the identities erase the historical markers of East versus West that are still present in the hegemonic imaginary (ibid.: 362). She continues: “the limiting and the totalising imaginary may not be at all congruent with the efforts of “creative adaptations” of modernity practiced by heterogeneous groups in society”. (ibid.) Here, I do agree with most of what Ahiska argues. However, I find the above outlined arguments helpful not only in understanding the experiences that run counter to the Turkish hegemonic imagination, such as ‘Islamist modernities’, but also in studying the ambivalent discourses of the hegemonic imagination in Turkey³. If we are to start first by deconstructing Turkish imaginary, we should start by accepting Turkish national modernity as composed of multiple, and not necessarily consistent discourses about modernity. From that starting point we can then begin to discuss the “modernity at the margins” (Bhabha, 1990).

Lastly, a caveat: although the meaning of modernity is essential to national identity in Turkey, both for the hegemonic imagination and for the more resistant forms, it does not hold all the answers to solving the problems of belonging in Turkey. What I found in the data analysis more recalcitrant to deconstruction than the secularist discourses of modernity are the discourses about ethnicity. Turkishness as an ethnic belonging is the one discourse that remained unquestioned by journalists in all three cases. But this not only takes place through the overtly nationalist headlines that we see in the coverage of Sureyya Ayhan’s victories, or Elif Sozen’s wedding. It also emerges through the gaps and silences in the Batman case study. As Foucault

³ Ahiska acknowledges the hybrid character of the Turkish modernization project, but she does not explain why this cannot be considered as an alternative itself. In my opinion, she too quickly and unconvincingly writes off the alternative modernities paradigm, especially when her main thesis about the displacement of the present in Turkish hegemonic imagination can be traced straight back to Chakrabarty’s discussion.

reminds us, silences, “things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required by different speakers” are “an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses” (1998: 27; c.f. Macherey 1978⁴). In the coverage of the suicides, the violent experience of the State-Kurdish conflict is only alluded to by the journalists, it is barely mentioned, yet it is never discussed or interrogated. Without this silence, the story could not have been covered as a problem of (or rather, a lack of) modernity. This is something that cannot be completely resolved without transcending the ethnic basis of nationalism. For Turkey, as well as for many other nation-states, as long as national identity is centred on ethnic belonging, exclusion of ‘other’ ethnicities is inevitable.

Finally, as just mentioned, I would like to pick up on what is left silent and remains untold when discussing the role of women in the case studies. As all the case studies have revealed, the discussions about modernity and national identity take place through representations of women, with the continuous comparison of “our” women to the women of the ‘other’ Turkey. However, these debates do not give voice to the women who themselves have caused the debate. Instead, women appear in different subject positions throughout the data. With the Batman case study or the veiled brides, they are seen as too helpless, incapable or brainwashed to speak the right words themselves. In particular the debates about modernity, and in Turkish national modernization discourse in general, women are often imagined as passive receivers of modernity. Alternatively they emerge as representatives of the nation, in which case the importance of the national symbol stifles any individual demands or possibility of identity, which can be said to be true in the cases of both Sureyya Ayhan and Elif Sozen. Within the boundaries of these roles, other subject positions follow: such as the ‘national daughter’, the ‘urban journalists’, the ‘Kurdish women’, the ‘Anatolian woman’, the ‘adulteress’, the ‘Islamist’. But outside these pre-described roles women cannot speak directly to us in these stories. As the news stories refuse to give them voice, women turn into what Macherey (1978) calls the *structuring absences* in the texts.

⁴ Although Macherey and Foucault have both pointed to the significance of gaps, it has to be noted that their approaches and theoretical perspectives are very different. In opposition to Foucault’s discourses, Macherey works from within a Marxist paradigm and seeks to reveal the ideologies that remain in the literary texts’ absences. Spivak (1988b), not surprisingly, also uses Macherey’s work.

Undoubtedly women, through whom the ideal Turkishness is constantly played out, will be the first to benefit from any attempts to deconstruct the nation and reconstruct it on a more inclusive basis. An open dialogue on the meaning of modernity and national belonging can only give more voice to women who have for so long represented national boundaries, helping to relax the tight link between discourses of gender and national identity.

Bibliography

- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1998) 'Introduction: Feminist Longings and Postcolonial Conditions' in Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women: feminism and modernity in the Middle East*, Chichester and Princeton: Princeton University Press, 3-31.
- Acikel, Fethi (2006) 'Entegretif toplum ve muarizlari: 'Merkez-cevre' paradigmasi uzerine elestirel notlar', *Toplum ve Bilim*, 105, 30-69.
- Ahiska, Meltem (2000) 'Gender and National Fantasy: Early Turkish Drama' *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 22 (Spring), 25-60.
- Ahiska, Meltem (2003) 'Occidentalism: The Historical Fantasy of the Modern' in Sibel Irzik and Guven Guzeldere (eds.) *Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide- The South Atlantic Quarterly Special Issue* 102:2/3, 351-395.
- Ahiska, Meltem (2006) 'Turkiye'de "cevresiz merkez" ve Garbiyatcilik', *Toplum ve Bilim*, 105, 11-29.
- Alabarces, Paul, Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young (2001) 'Argentina versus England at the France '98 World Cup: Narratives of Nation and the Mythologizing of the Popular', *Media, Culture and Society*, 23 (5), 547-566.
- Altinay, Ayse Gul (2004) *The Myth of the Military Nation*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anderson, Benedict (1991) [1983] *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Anthias, Floya (1989) 'Women and Nationalism in Cyprus', in Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds.) *Woman-Nation-State*, London: Macmillan, 150-167.
- Anthias, Floya and Yuval-Davis (1992) *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle*, London: Routledge.
- Arat, Yeşim (1997) 'The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey' in Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 95-112.
- Arat, Yesim (2001) 'Liberal Democratic State: Rethinking the Headscarf Controversy in Turkey', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 25 (Fall), 31-46.
- Arat, Yesim (2005) *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics*, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Arat, Zehra (1994) 'Turkish Women and the Republican Reconstruction of Tradition' in Fatma Gocek and Shiva Balaghi (eds.) *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East*, 57-84.

- Arat, Zehra (ed.) (2000a) *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, New York: Palgrave.
- Arat, Zahra (2000b) 'Educating the Daughters of the Republic' in Zehra Arat (ed.) *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, New York: Palgrave, 157-180.
- Bagli, Mazhar, Aysan Sever (2003) 'Female and Male Suicides in Batman, Turkey: Poverty, Social Change, Patriarchal Oppression and Gender Links', *The Women's Health & Urban Life: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), 60-84.
- Bal Krishnan, Gopal (ed.) (1996) *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso.
- Bali, Rifat N. (2002) *Tarzi-i Hayattan Life Style'a: Yeni Seckinler, Yeni Mekanlar, Yeni Yasamlar*, Istanbul: Iletisim.
- Bali, Rifat N. (2006) 'The Politics of Turkification during the Single Party Period' in Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.) *Turkey Beyond Nationalism*, London: I.B. Tauris, 43-49.
- Balibar, Etienne (1991a) 'Racism and Nationalism', in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London: Verso, 37-67.
- Balibar, Etienne (1991b) 'The Nation Form: History and Ideology', in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London: Verso, 86-106.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1991) *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1992) 'Soil, Blood and Identity', *The Sociological Review*, 40(4), 675-701.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (2004) *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, Cambridge: Polity
- Bek, Mine Gencil (2004) 'Research Note: Tabloidization of News Media –An Analysis of TV News in Turkey', *European Journal of Communication*, 19(3), 371-386.
- Bell, Allan (1991) *The Language of News Media*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Berktaş, Fatmagül (2002) 'Dogu ile Bati'nin Birlestigi Yer: Kadin Imgesinin Kurgulanisi' in Uygur Kocabasoglu (ed.) *Modernlesme ve Baticilik*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 275-284.
- Berman, Marshall (1992) 'Why modernism still matters' in Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (eds.), *Modernity and Identity*, Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 33-57.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1990a) 'Introduction: narrating the nation', in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, New York: Routledge, 1-7.

- Bhabha, Homi K. (1990b) 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation', in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, New York: Routledge, 291-322.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) *Location of Culture*, New York, NY: Routledge
- Billig, Michael (1995) *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage.
- Bird, Elizabeth (2000) 'Audience Demands in a Murderous Market: Tabloidisation in U.S. Television News', in Colin Sparks & John Tulloch, eds. *Tabloid Tales*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 213-228.
- Blain, Neil, Raymond Boyle and Hugh O'Donnel (1993) *Sport and National Identity in European Media*, Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Bloom, Ida, Karen Hageman and Catherine Hall (eds.) (2000) *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Bora, Tanil (2002) "Turkiye'de Siyasal Ideolojilerde ABD/ Amerika Imgesi: Amerika: En Bati ve Baska Bati" in Bora ed. *Modernlesme ve Baticilik*, Istanbul: Iletisim
- Bora, Tanil (2003) 'Nationalist Discourses in Turkey' in Sibel Irzik and Guven Guzeldere (eds.) *Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide-- The South Atlantic Quarterly Special Issue* 102:2/3, 433-451.
- Bora, Tanil (2005) 'Analar, Bacilar, Orospular: Turk Milliyetci-Muhafazakar Soyleminde Kadin' in Ahmet Oncu and Orhan Tekelioglu (eds.) *Serif Mardin'e Armagan*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 241-81.
- Bozdogan, Sibel (2001) *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Experience in the Early Republic*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
- Bozdogan, Sibel and Resat Kasaba (1997b) 'Introduction' in Sibel Bozdogan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 3-14.
- Bozdogan, Sibel and Resat Kasaba (eds.) (1997a) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
- Breuilly, John (1996) 'Approaches to Nationalism', in G. Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London:Verso, 146-75.
- Bugra, Ayse (2003) 'The Place of the Economy in Turkish Society' in Sibel Irzik and Guven Guzeldere (eds.) *Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide- The South Atlantic Quarterly Special Issue* 102:2/3, 453-470.

- Caine, Barbara and Glenda Sluga (2000) *Gendering European History*, London and New York: University of Leicester Press.
- Cakir, Sibel (1993) *Osmanli Kadin Hareketi*, Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari.
- Calhoun, Craig (1997) *Nationalism*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000) *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Chatterjee, Partha. (1989) "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question" in Sangari & Vaid (eds.), *Recasting women*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 233-53.
- Chatterjee, Partha (1996) [1993] 'Whose Imagined Community?' in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 214-25.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie and Norman Fairclough (1999) *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Cinar, Alev (2005) *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Place and Time*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Craske, Nikki (2005) 'Ambiguities and ambivalences in making the nation: women and politics in the 20th century', *Feminist Review*, 49, 116-33.
- Davison, Andrew (2003) 'Turkey, a "Secular" State?' in Sibel Irzik and Guven Guzeldere (eds.) *Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide-The South Atlantic Quarterly Special Issue* 102:2/3, 333-350.
- De Certau, Michel (1988) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Delaney, Carol (1991) *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Delaney, Carol (1995) 'Father State, Motherland, and the Birth of Modern Turkey' in Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney (eds.) *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, New York & London: Routledge, 177-199.
- Delanty, Gerard and Patrick O'Mahony (2002) *Nationalism and Social Theory: Modernity and the Recalcitrance of the Nation*, London: Sage.
- Demirdilek, Aynur (2000) 'In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women's Movement' in Zehra Arat (ed.) *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, New York: Palgrave, 65-81.
- Demiroz, Demir and Ahmet Oncu (2005) 'Turkiye'de Piyasa Toplumunun Olusumunda Hegemonyanın Rolu: Bir Gerceklik Projesi Olarak Beyaz Turkluk' in Ahmet Oncu and Orhan Tekelioglu (eds.) *Serif Mardin'e Armagan*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 171-199.

Deniz, Idris and Dr. Aysel Gunindi Ersoz (et.al) (2001) '1995-2000 Yillari Resmi Kayitlarindan Batman'da Gerceklesen Intihar ve Intihar Girişimleri Uzerine Bir Inceleme', *Aile ve Toplum*, 1 (4), 27-47.

Durakbasa, Ayse (2000a) *Halide Edip- Turk Modernlesmesi ve Feminism*, Istanbul: Iletisim.

Durakbasa, Ayse (2000b) 'Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey' in Zehra Arat (ed.) *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, New York: Palgrave, 139-155.

Edensor, Tim (2002) *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Oxford and New York: Berg.

Eley, Geoff and Ronald G. Suny (1996) 'Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation', in Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press

Eley, Geoff and Ronald G. Suny (eds.) *Becoming National: A Reader*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press

Enloe, Cynthia (2000a) [1989] *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Enloe, Cynthia (2000b) [1995] 'Feminism, Milliyetçilik ve Militarizm' in Ayse Gul Altinay (ed.) *Vatan Millet Kadınlar*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 189-212.

Ersin Kalaycioglu (2005) *Turkish Dynamics- Bridge Across Troubled Lands*, New York: Palgrave.

Fairclough, Norman (1995) *Media Discourse*, Edward Arnold: London

Fairclough, Norman (1999) [1992] 'Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis Within Discourse Analysis' in Adam Jaworski & Nikolas Coupland (eds.) *The Discourse Reader*, London: Routledge, 183-211.

Fairclough, Norman (2001) 'Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research' in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage, 121-138.

Fleming, Katherine E. (2000) 'Women as Preservers of the Past in Zehra Arat (ed.) *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, New York:: Palgrave, 127-138.

Foucault, Michel (1980) 'What is an Author?' in Donald F. Bouchard (ed.) *Language, Counter-memory, Practice- selected essays and interviews by Michel Foucault*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 113-138.

Foucault, Michel (1991) [1975] *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, London: Penguin Books.

- Foucault, Michel (1992) [1984] *The Use of Pleasure- The History of Sexuality: 2*, London: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1998) [1976] *The Will to Knowledge- The History of Sexuality: 1*, London: Penguin Books.
- Gellner, Ernest (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Goankar, Dilip P. (2001) 'On Alternative Modernities' in Dilip P. Goankar (ed.) *Alternative Modernities*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1-23.
- Gocek, Fatma Muge (2002a) 'Introduction' in Fatma Muge Gocek (ed.) *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1-12.
- Gocek, Fatma Muge (2002b) 'Osmanli Devleti'nde Turk Milliyetçiliginin Olusumu: Sosyolojik Bir Yaklasim' in Tanil Bora (ed.) *Milliyetçilik*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 63-76.
- Gole, Nilufer (1991) *Modern Mahrem*, Istanbul:Metis Yayinlari.
- Gole, Nilufer (1997) 'The Quest for the Islamic Self' in Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 81-94.
- Gole, Nilufer (1998) 'Islamism, Feminism and Post-Modernism: Women's movements in Islamic Countries', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 19 (Fall), 53-70.
- Gole, Nilufer (2000a) 'Global Expectations, Local Experiences- Non-Western Modernities' in Will Arts (ed.) *Through a Glass Darkly*, Leiden: Brill, 40-55.
- Greenfeld, Liah (1992) *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- Gulalp, Haldun (2003) 'Whatever Happened to Secularization?: The Multiple Islams in Turkey' in Sibel Irzik and Guven Guzeldere (eds.) *Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide- The South Atlantic Quarterly Special Issue* 102:2/3, 381-395.
- Gutting, Gary ed. (1994) 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Guide to Foucault*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-27.
- Hall, Stuart (1996) "Introduction: Who needs Identity?" In Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage Publications, 1-17.
- Hall, Stuart. (1997), 'The Work of Representation' in Stuart Hall (ed.) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage, 1-74.

Handler, Richard (1994) 'Is "Identity" a Useful Concept?' in John R. Gillis (ed.) *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 27-40.

Heng, Geraldine and Janadas Devan (1992) 'State Fatherhood: The Politics of Nationalism, Sexuality and Race in Singapore' in Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yaeger (eds.) *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, London: Routledge, 343-364.

Hobsbawm (1983) 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-14.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. and Terence Ranger (eds.) (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchinson, John (1994) *Modern Nationalism*, London: Fontana

Hutchinson, John (1996) 'Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration' in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Ethnicity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 122-131.

İlkkaracan, Pinar,(1998) 'Dogu Anadolu'da Kadin ve Aile', in Ayse Berktaç Mirzaoglu (ed.), *75 Yilda Kadınlara ve Erkekler*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayinlari, 173-192.

Iser, Wolfgang (1974) *The Implied Reader*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Iser, Wolfgang (2000) 'A Conversation with Wayne Booth' in Martin Mcquillan (ed.) *The Narrative Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 244-250.

Irzik, Sibel and Guven Guzeldere (eds.) (2003) *Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East-West Divide- The South Atlantic Quarterly Special Issue 102:2/3*.

Jaworski, Adam, Coupland, Nikolas (1999) 'Introduction: Perspectives on Discourse Analysis' in Adam Jaworski & Nikolas Coupland (eds.) *The Discourse Reader*, London: Routledge, 1-44.

Jayawardena, Kumari (1986) *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, London: Zed Books.

Kadioglu, Ayse (1996) 'The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity' in Sylvia Kedourie (ed.) *Turkey, Identity, Democracy, Politics*, London: Frank Cass, 177-193.

Kadioglu, Ayse (1998) in 'Cinselligin Inkari: Buyuk Toplumsal Projelerin Nesnesi Olarak Turk Kadinlari' in Ayse Berktaç Mirzaoglu (ed.), *75 Yilda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yayinlari, 89-100.

Kalaycioglu, Ersin (2005) *Turkish Dynamics –Bridge Across Troubled Lands*, New York, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1989) 'Women and the Turkish State: Political Actors or Symbolic Pawns?' in Yuval-Davis, Nira and Floya Anthias (1989) 'Introduction' in Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds.) *Woman-Nation-State*, London: Macmillan, 126-149.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1997a) [1988] 'Cariyeler, Fattan Kadınlar, Yoldaslar: Turk Romanında Kadın İmgeleri' in Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacilar, Yurttaslar*, Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1997b) "Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity" in Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 113-132.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1998) 'Some Awkward Questions on Women and Modernity in Turkey' in Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women: feminism and modernity in the Middle East*, Chichester and Princeton: Princeton University Press, 270-287.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1999) [1991] 'Identity and its Discontents' in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds.) *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*, Harlow: Longman, 376-391.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (2002) 'Introduction: Regarding the Fragments' in Ayşe Saktanber and Deniz Kandiyoti (eds.) *Fragments of Culture*, London: Tauris, 1-21.

Kasaba, Resat (1997) 'Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities' in Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 15-36.

Keyder, Caglar (1997) 'Wither the Project of Modernity? Turkey in the 1990s' in Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 37-51.

Keyder, Caglar (ed.) (1999a) *Istanbul*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlewood.

Keyder, Caglar (1999b) 'The Setting' in Caglar Keyder (ed.) *Istanbul*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlewood, 3-28.

Kieser, Hans-Lukas (ed.) (2006a) *Turkey Beyond Nationalism*, London: I.B. Tauris.

Kieser, Hans-Lukas (2006b) 'Introduction' in Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.) *Turkey Beyond Nationalism*, London: I.B. Tauris, vii-xvii

Kirisci, Kemal, and Gareth M. Winrow (1997) *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict*, London: Frank Cass

Kumar, Krishan (2003) *The Making of English National Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lacan, Jacques (1987) [1973] *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Laitin, David (2001) 'Trapped in Assumptions- Review of Anthony D. Smith's Myths and Memories of the Nation', *Review of Politics*, 63 (1), 176-9.

Lale Yalcin-Heckmann (2000) [1999] '90'larda Turkiye'de Siyasal Soylemin Donusumu Cercevesinde Kurt Kadinlarinin Imaji: Bazi Elestirel Degerlendirmeler' in in Ayse Gul Altinay (ed.) *Vatan Millet Kadinlar*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 308-338

Lash, Scott and Jonathan Friedman (1992) 'Introduction: subjectivity and modernity's Other' in Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (eds.), *Modernity and Identity*, Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1-29.

Lerner, Daniel (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society –Modernizing the Middle East*, Collier-Macmillan Limited: London.

Lewis, Bernard (1961) *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Linde-Laursen, Anders (1993) 'The Nationalisation of Trivialities: How Cleaning Becomes an Identity Marker in the Encounter of Swedes and Danes', *Ethnos*, 58 (III-IV), 275-93.

Lofgren, Orvar (1993) 'Materialising the Nation in Sweden and America', *Ethnos*, 58 (III-IV), 161-96.

MacClancy, Jeremy (1996) 'Sport, Identity and Ethnicity' in Jeremy MacClancy (ed.) *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*, Oxford: Berg, 1-20.

MacClintock, Anne (1993) 'Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family', *Feminist Review*, No.44, 61-80.

Macdonald, Myra (2003) *Exploring Media Discourse*, London: Arnold.

Macherey, Pierre (1978) *A Theory of Literary Production*, London: Routledge.

Mann, Michael (1996) 'Nation-states in Europe and Other Continents: Diversifying, Developing, Not Dying' in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 295-316.

Mardin, Serif (1973) 'Centre Periphery Relations –A Key to Understanding Turkish Politics', *Daedalus* (1), 169-190.

- Mardin, Serif (1997) 'Projects as Methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science' in Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 64-80.
- Martin, Denis-Constant (1995) 'The Choices of Identity', *Social Identities*, 1(1), 5-20.
- Marvin, Carolyn and David. W. Ingle (1999) *Blood, Sacrifice and the Nation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McClintock, Anne (1993) [1991] "'No Longer in a Future Heaven": Nationalism, Gender, and Race', in Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 260-85
- Meyer, Michael (2001) 'Between theory, method, and politics: positioning of the approaches to CDA' in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage, 14-32.
- Meyer, Michael, Stefan Titscher, Eva Vetter and Ruth Wodak (2000) *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis: In Search of Meaning*, London: Sage.
- Meyrowitz, Joshua (1985) *No Sense of Place*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Minois, Georges (1999) *History of Suicide -Voluntary Death in Western Culture*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press
- Mirzaoglu, Ayse Berktaý (ed.) (1998) *75 Yilda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları.
- Moghadam, Valentine (1994) 'Introduction and overview: Gender dynamics of nationalism, revolution and Islamization' in Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.) *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, London: Zed Books, 1-17.
- Morley, David and Kevin Robins (1995) *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, London: Routledge.
- Mosse, George (1988) [1985] *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Nagel, Joane (1998) 'Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21 (2), 242-69.
- Najmabadi, Afsaneh (1997) 'The Erotic Vatan [Homeland] as Beleaved and Mother: To Love, to Possess and to Protect', *Comparative Studies in Culture and History*, 39 (3), 442-67.

Natarajan, Nalini (1994) 'Woman, Nation and Narration in *Midnight's Children*' in Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (eds.), *Scattered Hegemonies*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 76-89.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael (2002) *Faces of the State*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

O'Donnel, Hugh (1994) 'Mapping the Mythical: a geopolitics of national sporting stereotypes', *Discourse and Society*, 5 (3): 345-380

Oncu, Ayse (1999) 'Istanbulites and Others: The Cultural Cosmology of Being Middle Class in the Era of Globalism' in Caglar Keyder (ed.) *Istanbul*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlewood, 95-119.

Ozcan, Zafer (ed.) (2002) *Nilufer Gole ile Toplumun Merkezine Yolculuk*, Istanbul: Ufuk Yayinlari.

Ozdalga, Elizabeth (1998) *Modern Turkiye'de Ortunme Sorunu: Resmi Laiklik ve Populer Islam*, Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi.

Ozkirimli, Umut (2000) *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Ozkirimli, Umut (2002) 'Turkiye'de Gayriresmi ve Populer Milliyetçilik' in Tanil Bora (ed.) *Milliyetçilik*, Istanbul: İletişim, 706-717.

Ozkirimli, Umut (2003) 'The Nation as an Artichoke? A Critique of Ethnosymbolist Interpretations of Nationalism', *Nations and Nationalism*, 9 (3), 339-55.

Ozkirimli, Umut (2005) *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ozkirimli, Umut (2006) 'Turkiye'de Milliyetçilik Arastirmasi' *Tempo*, April, No.957, 22-24.

Ozturkmen, Arzu (2000) 'A Short History of Kadinca Magazine and Its Feminism' in Zehra Arat (ed.) *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, New York: Palgrave, 275-294.

Parker, Andrew, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yaeger (1992) 'Introduction' in Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yaeger (eds.) *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, London: Routledge, 1-20.

Pateman, Carol (1989) *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Peterson, V. Spike (2000) 'Sexing political identities/ nationalism as heterosexism' in Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tetrault (eds.) *Women, States, and Nationalism: At home in the nation?*, London: Routledge, 54-80.

Pierson, Ruth Roach (2000) 'Nations: Gendered, Racialised, Crossed With Empire' in Ida Blom, Karen Hageman and Catherine Hall (eds.) *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 41-62.

Propp, Vladimir (1968) *Morphology of the Folktale*, 9th edition, Austin: University of Texas press.

Raccioppi, Linda and Katherine O'Sullivan See (2000) 'Engendering nation and national identity' in Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tetrault (eds.) *Women, States, and Nationalism: At home in the nation?*, London: Routledge, 18-34.

Ranchod-Nilsson, Sita (2000) '(Gender) struggles for the nation: power, agency, and representation in Zimbabwe' in Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tetrault (eds.) *Women, States, and Nationalism: At home in the nation?*, London: Routledge, 164-180.

Ranchod-Nilsson, Sita and Mary Ann Tetrault (2000) 'Gender and nationalism: moving beyond fragmented conversations' in Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann

Rathzel, Nora (1994) 'Harmonious 'Heimat' and Disturbing 'Auslander'' *Feminism and Psychology*, 4 (1), 81-98.

Renan, Ernest (1990) [1882] 'What is a Nation?' in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, New York: Routledge, 8-22.

Saktanber, Ayse (2002a) *Living Islam*, London- New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers

Saktanber (2002b) 'Kemalist Kadin Haklari Soylemi' in Ahmet Insel (ed.) *Kemalizm Istanbul: Iletisim*, 323-333.

Sawyer, R. Keith (2002) 'A Discourse on Discourse: An Archeological History of An Intellectual Concept' *Cultural Studies* 16(3), 433-456.

Shils, Edward (1957) 'Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations on the Relationship of Sociological Research and Theory', *British Journal of Sociology*, 8 (2), 130-145.

Sirman, Nukhet (2002) 'Kadinlari Milliyeti' in Tanil Bora (ed.) *Milliyetçilik*, Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 226-244.

Smith, Anthony (1991) *National Identity*, London: Penguin.

Smith, Anthony (1999) *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Anthony (2001) *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, Cambridge: Polity.

Sofos, Spyros S. (1996) 'Inter-ethnic Violence and Gendered Constructions of Ethnicity in former Yugoslavia', *Social Identities*, 2 (1), 73-91.

Sommer, Doris (1991) *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Spencer, Philip and Howard Wollman (2002) *Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, London: Sage

Spivak, G. (1988a) *In Other Worlds- Essays in Cultural Politics*, London: Routledge

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1988b) 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in Cary Nelson & Lawrence Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 271-131.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1999) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Stokes, Martin (2002) 'Afterword: Recognising the Everyday' in Ayşe Saktanber and Deniz Kandiyoti (eds.) *Fragments of Culture*, London: Tauris, 322-38.

Sunindiyo, Saraswati (1998) 'When the Earth is Female and the Nation is Mother: Gender, the Armed Forces and Nationalism in Indonesia', *Feminist Review*, 58 (1), 1-21.

Suny, Ronald G. (2001) 'Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations', *Journal of Modern History*, 73, 862-96.

Tekeli, Sirin (1981) 'Women in Turkish Politics' in Nermin Abadan-Unat (ed.) *Women in Turkish Society*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 279-299.

Tekeli, Sirin (ed.) (1990a) *1980'ler Turkiye'sinde Kadin Bakis Acisindan Kadinlar*, Istanbul: Iletisim.

Tekeli, Sirin (1990b) '1980'ler Turkiye'sinde Kadinlar' in Sirin Tekeli (ed.) *1980'ler Turkiye'sinde Kadin Bakis Acisindan Kadinlar*, Istanbul: Iletisim.

Tekeli, Sirin (1998) 'Birinci ve Ikinci Dalga Feminist Hareketlerin Karsilastirmali Incelemesi Uzerine Bir Deneme' in Ayse Berkay Hacimirzaoglu (ed.) *75 Yilda Kadinlar ve Erkekler*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yayinlari, 337-346.

Tempo (2006) 'Turkiye'de Milliyetcilik Arastirmasi' April, No.957, 20-44.

Tetrault, Mary Ann and Haya Al-Mughni (2000) 'From subjects to citizens: women and the nation in Kuwait' in Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tetrault (eds.) *Women, States, and Nationalism: At home in the nation?*, London: Routledge, 143-163.

Todorov, Tzvetan (1977) *The Poetics of Prose*, Oxford: Blackwell.

- Toska, Zehra (1998) 'Cumhuriyetin Kadın Ideali: Esigi Asanlar ve Asamayanlar' in in Ayse Berktaç Mirzaoglu (ed.), *75 Yilda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayinlari, 71-88.
- van Dijk, Teun A (2000) 'On the analysis of parliamentary debates on immigration' in Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak (eds.), *The semiotics of racism- Approaches to critical discourse analysis*, Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 85-103. Also available from <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles.html>, last accessed 20 March 2007.
- van Zoonen, L. (1998) 'One of the girls? The changing gender of journalism' in C. Carter, G. Branston and S. Allan (eds.) *News, Gender and Power*, London: Routledge, 33-46.
- Verdery, Katherine (1996) [1993] 'Whither 'Nation' and 'Nationalism'?' in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 226-234.
- Walby, Sylvia (1996) [1992] 'Woman and Nation' in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 235-254.
- Walker, Rachel (2001) 'Postmodernism' in Alexander J. Motyl (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, vol.1, San Diego, California: Academic Press, 611-30.
- Wenk, Silke (2000) 'Gendered Representations of the Nation's Past and Future' in Ida Blom, Karen Hageman and Catherine Hall (eds.) *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 63-77.
- White, Jenny B. (2002) *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
- Wilk, Richard (1993) 'Beauty and the Feast: Official and Visceral Nationalism in Belize', *Ethnos*, 58 (III-IV), 294-316.
- Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer (eds.) (2001) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage.
- Wodak, Ruth, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl, Karin Liebhart (1999) *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Yalcin-Heckmann Lale and Pauline Van Gelder (2000) [1999] '90'larda Turkiye'de Siyasal Soylemin Donusumu Cercevesinde Kurt Kadınlarinin Imaji: Bazi Elestirel Degerlendirmeler' in Ayse Gul Altinay (ed.) *Vatan, Millet, Kadınlar*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 308-338.
- Yegenoglu, Meyda (1998) *Colonial Fantasies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Young, Robert J.C. (1995) *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London: Routledge.

Yumul, Arus (2000) 'Bitmemis Bir Proje Olarak Beden', *Toplum ve Bilim*, 84 37-50

Yumul, Arus and Umut Ozkirimli (2000) 'Reproducing the Nation: Banal Nationalism in the Turkish Press', *Media, Culture and Society*, 22 (6), 787-804.

Yuval-Davis, Nira (1997) *Gender and Nation*, London: Sage.

Yuval-Davis, Nira and Floya Anthias (1989) 'Introduction' in Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds.) *Woman-Nation-State*, London: Macmillan, 1-15.

Yuval-Davis, Nira and Floya Anthias (eds.) (1989) *Woman-Nation-State*, London: Macmillan.