

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

MASTER'S THESIS

**WOMEN NARRATIVES IN HAKKARİ BETWEEN THE
MILITARIST AND STATE FEMINISM**

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**THESIS ADVISOR
PROF. ALEV ERKİLET**

ISTANBUL, 2025

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**by
PINAR ŐEN ZENGİN**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
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ISTANBUL, 2025

ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

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ÖZ

HAKKARİ'DE KADIN ANLATILARI: MİLİTARİST VE
DEVLET FEMİNİZMİ ARASINDA

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Bu çalışma, Hakkari'de Kürt kadınları üzerinden yürütülen kadın bedeni politikalarını incelemektedir. Kürt kadınların, Türk feminist hareketi ve Kürt kadın hareketi arasında sıkışıklığını ele alırken, Türk kadın hareketinin devlet-feminizmi çerçevesindeki ilerleyişini ve Kürt kadınlarının güven kaygılarını tartışmaktadır. Ayrıca, Kürt kadınlarının Kürt kadın hareketi içerisinde tam anlamıyla temsil edilemiyor oluşunu, militarist feminist perspektifinden analiz etmektedir. Çalışma, Kürt kadın hareketinin temel argümanı olan jineoloji'nin temsiliyet boyutuna dair eleştirilerde bulunurken, Kürt ve Türk kadın hareketleri içindeki milliyetçi zihniyet yapıları ve kadınların beden politikalarındaki eril tahakkümü de gözler önüne sermektedir. Görüşmecilerin aktarımları ve derinlemesine literatür taramasıyla, kadınların özgürlük inşalarının eril politikalar karşısında nasıl kurban edildiği ve nesneleştirildiği ortaya konulmaktadır. Militarist ve devlet feminizmi bağlamında, cinsiyet ayrımcılığına maruz bırakılan kadınların, eril politik çıkarlar doğrultusunda ikincil ve "öteki" durumlarına nasıl itilmiş oldukları tartışılmaktadır. Ayrıca, Kürt kadınlarının beden performanslarının, koruculuk ve Kürt savaşçılığı gibi kavramlar altında nasıl manipüle edildiği vurgulanmaktadır. Çalışmanın ana teması, Hakkari'de kadınların politik çıkarlar doğrultusunda inşa edilen sözde feminist veya kadın hareketleri içindeki konumlarını ve feminist tartışmaların yeniden inşa edilmesi gerektiğini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devlet Feminizmi, Eril Politika, Jineoloji, Militarist Feminizm Kürt Kadını Bedeni Politikaları.

ABSTRACT

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The study examines the politics of women's bodies as Kurdish women practice them in Hakkari. Kurdish women's security worries, the Turkish women's movement's advancement within the framework of state feminism, and their precarious position between the Turkish feminist movement and the Kurdish women's movement are all covered. From a militarist feminist standpoint, it also examines why Kurdish women are not fully represented in the Kurdish women's movement. Additionally, the study exposes the masculine dominance in women's body politics and the nationalist mentalities within the Kurdish and Turkish women's movements while also critiquing the representational aspect of jineology, the central claim of the Kurdish women's movement. Moreover, women's conceptions of freedom are sacrificed and reified in the face of masculine policies, as demonstrated by the interviewees' testimonies and a thorough literature review. The way that gender-discriminated women are forced into subservient and "other" roles to serve masculine political objectives is examined in the framework of militarist and state feminism. It also highlights how ideas like Kurdish fighters and village guards are used to influence the bodily performances of Kurdish women. The study's central thesis contends that feminist discussions must be recreated and that women's status in Hakkari within the so-called feminist or women's movements was created under political aims.

Keywords: Jineology, Kurdish Women's Body Politics, Militarist Feminism, Patriarchal Politics, State Feminism.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to Kurdish women in Hakkari.



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Although I wrote this study, it involved many people's labor and support. For this reason, first of all, I would like to say that I am gratefully indebted to my advisor, Prof. Alev Erkilet, who supported me whenever I needed her through all stages of the thesis writing process. However, even though my thesis advisor is Prof. Alev Erkilet, my thesis advisor was Dr. Nursem Keskin Akay at the beginning of my study. Initially, she encouraged me to start on this topic. Then, we had to change my advisor due to some personal problems. I also thank my professors at İbn Haldun University. I would also like to thank Prof. Ramazan Aras for always believing in me during my academic life. In addition, my professors who supported me during my studies, Hidayet Tuksal and Neslihan Akbulut, I want to thank for them. I am especially grateful to my father, Bahrem Şen, who supported and believed in me during my education. I also want to thank all their support and help to my dear friends, Kıymet Doğan, Nora Avjin Goffre, Ines Ayachi, Roza Aygün Tatar, and Medya Çallı. In addition, I would like to thank my brothers, Sedat Şen and Halil Baran Şen, who were always with me on the way. And I send my endless thanks to Dilovan İstekli and Mehmet Yıldız, who did not leave me alone in the fieldwork. I want to thank psychologists Elif Yörükoğlu and Sercan Armut, who have always given me strength and friendship in the psychological sense. I want to thank my husband, Ersin Zengin, for supporting me. Lastly, I would like to thank all the victimized Kurdish women to whom I dedicate this thesis for having the courage to speak to me.

Pınar ŞEN ZENGİN
İSTANBUL, 2025

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DEM PARTY	People's Equality and Democracy Party
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
HEP	People's Labor Party
TJA	Free Women's Movement
TÜKD	Association of Turkish University Women
CDK	Republican Women's Association
ÇYDD	Association for the Support of Contemporary Living
KADEM	Women and Democracy Association
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
KJA	Free Women's Congress

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*“Meşa wê bi usûl kenê wê bi tore ye
Li ber destaran li rastîya jîyana xwe hay dibe
Xeyalên xwe jî tê de hûr hûrî dike
Gava her serê sibê tenûrê dadide,
ji bo li jîyanê bimîne,
daxwazên xwe dike ardû û pê zikê zarokên xwe têr dike.
Jîyan ji destên wê yên qemer diherike, lê mêr jê re dibe hewî.
Hewî devê felekê girê dide û wê li ber çavên jîyanê
Reş dike”*

(Gulîzer-Ji Anatomîya Jinekê)

*“She understands the realities of life in front of the hand spinners,
and it crushes your ambitions.
Her smile is decent, and his gait is appropriate.
She produces flour from her survival needs when she burns her tenûrê (floor furnace) every morning
and uses it to feed her kids.
Though her husband becomes a kuma (co-wife/second wife), life drips from her parched hands.
The cowife or second wife, known as the Kuma, blackens her in the eyes of life and places a gag on
her mouth”¹*

Even though the voices of Kurdish women have been suppressed, those who give voice to the voices of women have always expressed their pain and stories in literary language in their poems and elegies. Kurdish women’s laments have been seen in the Kurdish *kilam* (gazel/ türkû/ kelam/ folk song) in Kurdish societies. In this statement, Kurdish women’s pains can be seen frankly in their voices. Marlene Schäfers mentioned Kurdish women’s voices and their representation issue in *Voices That Matter: Kurdish Women at the Limits of Representation in Contemporary Türkiye*. The kilam is a crucial genre for Kurdish women and men to express loss, grief, and

¹<https://www.helbestakurdi.com/berhem/gulizer--ji-anatomya-jineke-dersa-yekemin>

tragedy. It has provided a cultural resource for Kurdish populations to portray violence, exploitation, and fight and for Kurdish women to address patriarchal morality. The kilam facilitates voicing pain and suffering, allowing individuals to speak out about their burdens. It also serves as a political act, claiming grievances against patriarchy and the nation-state. However, this understanding relies on a modern comprehension of the relationship between voice, self, and pain.² The suffering and pain of Kurdish women are never seen or represented by the patriarchal system. Even those who identify themselves as socialist Kurds tried to control the Kurdish women under the male cultural hegemony. The damage caused to Kurdish women by current body politics is becoming more evident today. As seen in many political battles from the past to the present, Kurdish women were physically turned into an instruments of both wars and conflicts. Kurdish women's bodies began to be apparatus through the male-dominated political interests in Türkiye, particularly in Hakkari.

This study examines how patriarchal domination has shaped women's movements in Türkiye, with a particular focus on the position of Kurdish women within these movements. It explores the nationalist mindset framework of Turkish and Kurdish politics and how Kurdish women have been systematically marginalized within both.

While the Turkish women's movement has constructed a state-centered feminism with a nation-centric perspective, the Kurdish movement has developed an androcentric women's struggle, both of which have had militaristic implications for Kurdish women. The power politics of the absolute male mindset are closely linked to the evolution of nationalist ideology within women's groups. Gender roles function on a foundation that upholds male, state-centered, and nationalist structures. In this regard, the repetition of these power relations is the primary cause of the masculine-centered nature of women's movements. As Mayer mentioned, a nation is a collection of sexed individuals whose gender identification and national identity are constructed by their "performativity." Control over reproduction, militarism, and heterosexuality are examples of repeated norms and actions that contribute to the construction of the

²Marlene Schäfers, *Voices That Matter: Kurdish Women at the Limits of Representation in Contemporary Turkey* (Chicago London: University of Chicago Press, 2023), 87-88.

favoured nation. These concepts are an aspect of power and power dynamics in hierarchies that are culturally produced. It is a disputed region since every nation, gender, and sexual orientation aspires to hegemony.³ A key issue in this discussion is the inability of Kurdish women to find a place within the Turkish women's movement while also encountering class and representation challenges within the Kurdish women's movement. This study analyzes the power dynamics of women's movements in Türkiye and how these power relations are constructed around masculinity and its nationalist mindset imagery.

Furthermore, by addressing the "outsider" (outside) position of Kurdish women in the historiography of women's movements in Türkiye, this study highlights how the Turkish women's movement has become an apparatus of nationalist-masculinist politics. Through concepts such as body politics, power, feminism, statism, and militarism, I will examine how state feminism and militarized feminism push women into a secondary and marginalized position. To do this, I will focus on answering the core question of my research: **"What are the main roles of Kurdish women within the framework of state and militarist feminism in Hakkari?"** In addition to this, another sub-research question is, **"What is the role of women's movements in a male-dominated political system?"**

Answering all these main questions with respondents' narratives will reveal how they attribute meaning to the structures they established. Given the participants' discourse, their narratives have cultural, political, and emotional implications. Sara Ahmed debates how the concepts used by narrators are shaped within the existing authority and emphasizes the variability of their emotional responses. On the other hand, it highlights, with many examples, that these narratives can build new discourses and need to be re-interpreted in a historical context.⁴ For this reason, I aimed to evaluate the interviewees' discourse by considering their different backgrounds, practices, and positions in Hakkari.

I conceptualized my respondents as "Kurdish women" and "village guards," which are

³Tamar Mayer, ed., *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation* (London: Routledge, 2000), 5.

⁴Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 116-118.

known in academic pieces of literature as what the participants define as *Bakur Kurds* in the East of Türkiye. Thus, I followed the speeches of the respondents throughout my research; I realized that they recognized themselves and their area with the words “Kurdish men/ women,” “village guards,” and “Kurdish geography” (The East and South-East of Türkiye). For this reason, I conceptualized my respondents as “Kurdish men/women” and “village guards” and for the area “Kurdish geography” in this research.

In addition to the body’s politics within the scope of state and militarist feminism, I discussed body politics with examples in the literature. As Butler stated, the body is seen as a set of boundaries, individual and social, signified and maintained, with sex being a performatively enacted signification, allowing for the proliferation and subversive play of gendered meaning.⁵ Thus, I debated the notion of the body and its performatives in Hakkari in terms of nationalist-political mindset interest through both Kurdish and Turkish women’s movements.

It is also most significant for my study to explain these concepts: *feminism*, as Hook’s footnotes asserted that feminism is a movement for the end of sexist exploitation and oppression,⁶ *militarizm*, as Howard’s footnotes stated, is perceiving the values of the military subculture as the dominant values of society⁷, and *jineology* is known as women’s studies, an approach improved by Abdullah Öcalan. This perspective examines the social, economic, and political roles of women and advocates for gender equality and women’s liberation.⁸ Additionally, for Turkish feminism and its historical view, as demonstrated by Bora, the Turkish “women’s liberation movement,” which permits itself to call itself such, shares a common ancestor with the first one: a pre-Republican past.

⁵Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 10. anniversary ed (New York London: Routledge, 1999),44.

⁶Bell Hooks, *Feminism is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, Canada: South End Press, 7 Brookline Street, 2000), 9.

⁷Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23.

⁸Abdullah Öcalan, *Özgürlük Sosyolojisi* (Köln: Uluslararası Abdullah Öcalan Özgürlük ve Demokrasi İnsiyatifi Yayınları, 2008), 45.

The leftist opposition groups that became more powerful in the 1970s should be considered the forerunners of the post-1980 feminist movement. Women who had been or were still involved in leftist movements, who lived in an environment where the left's ideological hegemony was powerful, and who considered accepting leftist movements to be a crucial part of defining their feminism were the women who founded the feminist movement. These educated women (just like the generation of their mothers) who had grown up in urban families were the group in Turkish society that most profited from the Republic's advantages. These two politics intersected and coexisted within the context of the "institutionalization" that defined the women's movement of the 1990s. Under the guise of republicanism, the Turkish nationalist mindset has also used feminism in Türkiye.⁹ By this statement, I tried to portray the politics of Kurdish women's bodies within the Kurdish and Turkish feminist movements in terms of reification-instrumentalization. On the other hand, the basis of the transgression of Kurdish women in the Kurdish movement should be considered in terms of Antigone being a man, which is mentioned by Sirman in the feminist "Trouble" in the Late Colony. The article mentioned how the desperation of women allowed them to exist through masculinity. Antigone represents the power of women to resist the sovereign. Her body became a weapon of struggle. Kurdish women are seen as a subject, but they are seen as a so-called subject within the political struggle. Frankly speaking, the "I" easily slides into a "we." In this political conflict, Kurds are forced to act as they do; on the other hand, they are forced to transgress. They become a collective subject rather than an individual.¹⁰ In this line, Antigone, which is the theatre of Sophocles, is considered the first example of resistance in world literature. Even though Antigone is known as a woman, the representation is understood in terms of masculinity within the patriarchal society. That is to say, as Kurdish women, their representation was seen as a man in patriarchal societies. Promoting and asserting masculinity is the path to social acceptance. When it comes to Kurdish women's rights, masculinity becomes the true language of their struggle. Regardless of women, this masculine language seems to be a potent weapon used against them. Masculinity is interwoven as a language, as seen by Kurdish women's macho attitudes, attire, political fights, tone of voice, and behavior.

⁹Aksu Bora and Asena Günel, *90'Larda Türkiye'De Feminizm* (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), 112-113.

¹⁰Nükhet Sirman, "When Antigone Is a Man: Feminist Theory and the Impasse Between Law and Justice," *PMLA* 132, no. 1 (2017): 25–30, <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/yyyy>

I have observed that Kurdish women have been instrumentalized in this way and detached from their nature and gender. I tried to demonstrate in my study that their bodies are, therefore, in a discussion beyond feminism. Whitford and Irigaray stated that women are ‘buried alive’ in our culture if they are prevented from becoming. As a result of the division, women’s bodies stand for sexuality, which is thus separated from the ideal or spiritual and reduced to a “lower” function that must be transcended in the service of the good.¹¹ I also discuss the notion of jineology and its representation of Kurdish women within the discourse of my interviewees’ narratives and in the literature in terms of an androcentric approach. In this line, my study focuses on the notion of jineology in Hakkari and its impact on Kurdish women and their attitudes towards gender-based roles. I also analyzed the jineology as well as the Turkish feminist movement in the scope of militarism. As seen in this context, I tried to demonstrate the concept of feminism as an apparatus within a nationalist mindset.

Through Kurdish women’s experiences and narratives, I examined how the Turkish-racist mindset exploits these cultural and historical systems against Kurdish women. Using concrete examples, I also attempted to show how all these systems relate to power and masculinity. I intended to use the idea of double consciousness to describe Kurdish women’s in-betweenness. Just like the Turk-racist mindset, I realized that even the Kurdish movement and its discourse about socialist perspectives have many contradictions regarding Kurdish women. Even though the Kurdish nationalist movement has a considerable role for Kurdish women, I will demonstrate that the role is mostly pertinent for fighting Kurdish women. Kurdish women’s relations with the patriarchy are the most crucial point in my research. In this context, I will try to analyze how the Kurdish women’s movement is integrated and managed by patriarchal-feudal perspectives in their political vision. I also analyzed my respondents’ narratives on the masculine-Kurdish women’s movement as physical (being a fighter). Frankly, a few of my respondents who were living in the village did not see the Kurdish women’s movement as a representation of them. I am also aware that the main reason they saw it this way was that they felt isolated.

¹¹Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (New York London: Routledge, 1991).149.

My study is a good example of understanding Kurdish women's experiences in the context of body politics and these dynamics in Hakkari. Being a Kurdish woman in this district demonstrates many roles, such as being a fighter, village guard, a woman, a wife, a sister, etc. Despite being fighters and warriors, Kurdish women have frequently been compelled to adopt roles that are dictated by the patriarchal society. The experiences of the women in this study have expressed their demands differently, even though it has been demonstrated that the fight for identity is the only way Kurdish women can be represented. This study will bring to light the voices of women whose voices have not been heard or who are not well-known enough to be heard, a phenomenon known as the victimization of women who are not engaged in the struggle. Thus, I address how Western feminist concepts alter women's bodies in this research.

In the context of male-dominated politics, this study explores how Kurdish women's active roles in women's movements in Türkiye are shaped. The in-betweenness that Kurdish women experience within both Turkish and Kurdish women's movements is addressed through the instrumentalization of women's bodies. The study reveals how women are used for the benefit of state feminism and militarist structures, which are linked to the patriarchal system and reduce women to subordinate roles.

The field research and existing literature also prove that the so-called subjectivity role attributed to women in both the Turkish and Kurdish women's movements has been shaped mainly to support specific political interests; thus, the limits of this discourse of freedom are determined by patriarchy. In this context, the study prioritizes issues that need to be discussed in depth within feminist theory, particularly how feminism has been transformed in the process of deconstruction and the links of the existing hierarchy with masculine rule.

In summary, this research aims to reveal the contradictory relations that women's movements have established with militarism and state mechanisms and argues for a critical re-evaluation of the links between the state and militarism in the feminist struggle. Additionally, this study aims to critically analyze the complex interrelationships of nationalism, militarism, and feminism within the framework of Turkish and Kurdish women's movements. By concentrating on the real-life

experiences of Kurdish women, it exposes the ways in which patriarchal power structures, whether they are part of the Kurdish movement or the Turkish nationalist framework, still use women's bodies and voices for political purposes. Despite the important roles Kurdish women have played in activism and resistance, male-dominated narratives that define their participation within inflexible military frameworks frequently shape and limit their agency. This study exposes the inconsistencies in both Kurdish androcentric feminism and Turkish state feminism by examining body politics, gender performativity, and the dual awareness that Kurdish women deal with. In the end, this study makes the case that feminist groups run the risk of replicating the exact oppressive systems they want to overthrow when they become entwined with nationalist and militarist ideas. These contradictions must be addressed, the masculinist underpinnings of political struggle must be questioned, and Kurdish women's voices must be given a platform outside of nationalism and militarism if a true feminist movement—one that genuinely represents all women—is to be born.

1.1. Research Methodology

In this study, I conducted an ethnographic study using semi-structured interviews to understand the issue of Kurdish women and analyze the experiences of women in Hakkari within the scope of state feminism and militarist feminism in Hakkari. That is why the study aims to analyze women's experiences in terms of body politics within the political, masculine hierarchy in their daily lives. In particular, I used ethnographic studies to analyze women's experiences in terms of gender roles in Hakkari. In addition to that, I tried to be a participant observer in Hakkari to do interviews.

I will demonstrate my inspiration for this topic, how I identify and contact my interviews, and my fieldwork notes. Additionally, I will mention my position in the fieldwork as an insider and outsider. Thus, I will try to portray both how my position affects my work and how my work affects my position during the interview.

When I started my fieldwork, I considered a lot of work to do in this study. The effect of growing up in İstanbul (West side) and the exoticism of being far from my hometown made me consider Hakkari and Kurdish women's daily lives. Even though

I had lengthy visits to Hakkari, my position there has always been complicated as an insider and an outsider. The first time I wanted to self-criticize myself, I thought about Hakkari from a Western perspective, and mostly the political side, because I did not know how I should feel from a sociological perspective of my hometown. After that, the Kurdish women's movement made me consider the framework of male-dominated political interests through both Kurdish and Turkish views. In addition to this, I considered the place of Kurdish women in the Turkish feminist movement. Then, I tried to analyze the Turkish and Kurdish women's movements within the framework of state and militarist feminism by reviewing women's narratives and literature in Hakkari. However, I try to understand what is going on in Hakkari and what the roles of Kurdish women are within the male political profits. That is why I decided to move to Hakkari after 33 years. When I came here, I saw people's daily routine, their perspectives, and wishes. I visited many villages and the province of Hakkari to see women's lives. After a while, I tried to evaluate the women's life and their practices in society; nevertheless, I did not know how I could work on this issue due to the cultural and political structures of Hakkari. I started my case study with an overly political point of view. However, everything changed when I began to locate someone with whom to converse because I began to learn how to think like a researcher in sociology and anthropology. The most influential book that was my inspiration on it that *Devletsiz Ulusun Kadınları (Kürt Kadınları Üzerine Araştırmalar)*, written by Shahrzad Mojab.

I decided to interview Kurdish women to talk about their experiences in terms of state feminism and militarist feminism. I conducted over 15 interviews in total. Two of those whom I interviewed were village guards in the Turkish army. Two of them were working for the Dem (People's Equality and Democracy Party) Party. Eleven of them are Kurdish women who talked about being women in Hakkari. I conducted semi-structured interviews; however, I usually asked my respondents to tell their stories, duties, and work, focusing on their experiences in the fieldwork and the feelings they had.

I tried to analyze the theoretical framework of state-feminism and militarism-feminist with written material. I examined many books and articles written about women's body politics, nationalist mindset, and gender to comprehend the body politic issue in

Kurdish communities, particularly in Hakkari. In this way, I evaluated their roles as an apparatus in the political interest, both in the context of the Kurdish and Turkish nationalist mindsets.

On the other hand, my work has many limitations. I did not talk enough with Kurdish women about their perspectives on feminism and their roles in their communities because of the male-dominated cultural preferences. Moreover, the effect of political conflict in Hakkari, mostly women, turned me down to talk about the Kurdish women's movement and their perspectives on it; because of that, they mostly supposed that the Kurdish women's movement was regarded as political. For this reason, they hesitated to speak. Hence, this study mainly considers the theoretical critique of the feminist movement by both the Turks and Kurds, with a few interviews conducted in Hakkari.

1.1.1. The Dilemma of Feminist Ethnography in Kurdish Women's Studies

Ethnographic research is a crucial method in social science, especially in gender studies, because the masculine perspective dominates feminist work, undermining its transparency. That is why there should be feminist ethnography studies that are objective and not part of the masculine. However, it does not mean the feminist perspective should ignore men's roles in feminist studies. Notably, in Kurdish women's studies, feminist ethnography is important to produce more subjective and valid information against the information produced by the patriarchy and power structures. In that sense, it is important to evaluate the necessities and the dilemma of feminist ethnography in Kurdish women's studies.

Stacey's feminist ethnography's point of view is crucial for understanding Kurdish women's studies. Stacey suggests a feminist ethnography that highlights the viewpoints and experiences of women while also acknowledging how gender interacts with other forms of inequality and power. In addition to analyzing women's lives, this method also looks at the social and cultural circumstances in which they are found. The egalitarian research process seeks authenticity, reciprocity, and intersubjectivity.¹²

¹²Stacey, Judith. "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 11, no. 1 (1988): 21–27. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(88\)90004-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(88)90004-0).

Namely, the ethnographic method is ideal for feminist research, as it yields a synthetic cultural account and is more compatible with feminist principles than positivist methods. That is why Kurdish areas and their research on Kurdish women involve dilemmas about producing knowledge. When considering the women/gender issue in Hakkari, it can be said that the fieldwork is hard for ethnographers/researchers. Due to the geopolitical structure of Hakkari, the limitation of feminist ethnography mostly aligns with political ideology. The political structure of the Hakkari zone does not allow researchers to work on the feminist side. The Kurdish women in Hakkari often see themselves as women of a stateless nation. Consequently, their way of thinking is politicized and masculinized.

On the other hand, knowledge as a notion should be considered as dominant knowledge throughout Kurdish regions. Particularly, the lens of Nataša Pivec, the knowledge is partial, and the productivity of knowledge is mostly seen by males. In the 1960s, second-wave feminism was mostly comprehended as ‘malestream knowledge.’ With this idea, knowledge is mainly an institutionalized experience that can also be seen as a partial, perspectival, and situated knower’s social position. In addition, liberal feminism mostly concentrated on equal rights between males and females, while radical feminism focused on women’s rights and on demolishing the hetero-patriarchy. In contrast, materialist and socialist feminism considered class oppression of women and the capitalist vision of the social organization, while postmodern feminism deconstructs meta-narratives such as gender and women. However, post-colonial feminism, which is known as black feminism, concentrated on ethnic variety, racialization, colonialism, and racism in feminist theory.¹³ Mainly, the historical process of feminism demonstrated that the vision of feminism is mostly focused on the demands of social structure. The social structure, on the other hand, has been seen as masculine cognitively in women. For this reason, ethnographic research cannot be independent of mainstream knowledge. Kurdish women’s studies on post-colonial feminism and materialist and socialist feminism approaches can be considered

¹³Nataša Pivec, "Feminist Thought(s) as Dirty Intellectuality: The Case of Andrea Dworkin," *GENDER- Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft* 7, no. 3 (2015): 31–43, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-461236,33-34..>

during the fieldwork because of Kurdish women's experiences in Hakkari. Furthermore, male domination in these approaches should be considered within the women's movement.

These problems show two critical factors in the dominance of male oppression in Kurdish women's studies. The first relates to men's power and their relationship between cultural norms and political conditions. Indeed, the problem reveals the most important question: why do Kurdish men and their political perspectives always explain the Kurdish women's bodies issue? This is not to say that Turkish academics do not have a perspective on Kurdish women's issues. Still, their political positions can be more masculine, as seen in the Turkish feminist movement.

Additionally, feminist ethnography is crucial for comprehending, contrasting, and evaluating women's perspectives, societal norms, and day-to-day behaviors in light of feminist theory. The masculine political perspective determines Kurdish women's study. Namely, much of the research was conducted by political activists or political scholars to obtain positivist (scientific) knowledge. However, obtaining knowledge is not completely accurate, such as "partial knowledge." According to Haraway, all knowledge is situated, which means that the specific viewpoint, context, and interests of the knower shape it. She highlights that knowledge is never complete and that there is no single, impartial viewpoint that can include all of reality.¹⁴ In this context, obtaining knowledge from the side of a political scholar is neither completely correct nor reliable. Turning back to the relationship between ethnography and knowledge, there is a reciprocal relationship between them. As Stacey mentioned, ethnography emphasizes contextual and interpersonal knowledge, drawing on feminist strengths such as empathy, connection, and concern. Thus, to arrive at accurate information within the field of social sciences in the context of a theory, the feminist ethnographic method, which is particularly important in Kurdish women's studies, is required. Even though feminist ethnography has a significant place in Kurdish studies of women, it encounters dilemmas. The text's conflict between feminist theory and ethnographic methodology and its contradiction between fieldwork practice and ethnographic output

¹⁴Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.

are its most crucial features. The researcher and the informants are frequent partners in the ethnographic method's collaborative quest for understanding, but the study output is ultimately the researcher's, no matter how altered or impacted by the informants. Anthropology gives interpretations that are registered in a researcher's voice and are primarily organized by the aims of the researcher. Feminist ethnography may encounter fresh contradictions since it involves an intrusion into the relationships and lives of its people. For instance, a researcher must follow feminist ethical norms if they choose to omit a certain aspect of their past from their ethnographic report.¹⁵ The dilemma in the context of Kurdish women's studies demonstrates that even female researchers handle their studies with a political mindset, and their interpretations give the study a political voice. However, there are numerous environmental and familial factors as well as political causes for women's issues. For this reason, the research's neutrality should be shown to prevent it from being managed by a single voice. This prompts academics to think back on the fundamental tenets of feminism, considering the epistemology of the term and its practice within feminist ethnographic studies. To illustrate, to comprehend women's experiences in the Kurdish area, it should be considered beyond feminism in terms of many facts, such as cultural, political, and male domination of women.

Furthermore, the author concurs with Strathern that there is ambivalence in the relationship between feminism and ethnography, which can be lessened but not eliminated. They contend that while a feminist ethnography is impossible, partial feminist ethnographies are possible if the authors are self-aware and modest about the bias in their ethnographic perspective. They think that the significant moral costs associated with "partially" feminist ethnography are justified by the possible rewards. Although fieldwork can help researchers build beneficial relationships with their informants, it can also result in researcher desertion. One can keep an eye on and reduce some of the risks by being aware of the ethical flaws in the process. We may be able to create cultural accounts that can attain context, depth, and nuance through an unsettling synthesis of feminist and critical ethnographic knowledge.¹⁶ In this sense,

¹⁵Stacey, Judith. "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 11, no. 1 (1988): 21–27. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(88\)90004-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(88)90004-0).

¹⁶Stacey, Judith. "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 11, no. 1 (1988): 21–27. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(88\)90004-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(88)90004-0)

Kurdish studies also need such scholars who have the principle of feminist/gender perspective for research.

To sum up, feminist ethnography is an essential and sophisticated approach to comprehending Kurdish women's studies. It provides a way to generate knowledge that questions patriarchal power structures and emphasizes women's lived experiences, bridging the gap between feminist theory and ethnographic practice. However, there are serious problems with this strategy, especially when it comes to negotiating the masculinized and politicized settings that shape women's stories. The political and cultural limitations in places like Hakkari are a prime example of the difficulties ethnographers have in upholding feminist ideals and remaining objective.

By embracing a self-aware and situated perspective, as Haraway suggests, feminist ethnography can provide more nuanced, contextualized insights. Acknowledging the partiality of all knowledge allows researchers to critique dominant narratives and foster an egalitarian research process. According to Strathern, the ambivalence that characterizes feminist ethnography emphasizes the significance of ethical consciousness and reflexivity in fieldwork¹⁷. For Kurdish women's studies, this entails recognizing the interplay between political ideology, cultural norms, and gender dynamics while striving for research that is real, inclusive, and transformational. We can only promote feminist study that accurately captures the complexities of Kurdish women's lives and struggles by using this approach.

¹⁷Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 13-27.

CHAPTER II

CONTEXTUALIZATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: STATE FEMINISM AND MILITARIST FEMINISM

It is essential to understand the historical development of Hakkari to comprehend the connection between politics and discourse on the scope of the state and militarist feminism. Initially, there should be a mention of Hakkari as a historical background. Hakkari has gone by various names throughout its history, particularly from the Ottoman era until now. Originally, a large area in the east of Türkiye was known as *Hekari* from ancient times and referred to by the same name in Kurdish communities. The latter is perhaps the core of this region, presently known by the genuine name *Culemerg*. Yaşar Kaplan stated the history of Hakkari: “Historical records indicate the Hekari region as being quite large. The outlines of Hekari’s borders appear in various documents as follows: The word Hakkari derives from the term Hakariye, which the first Muslims used. It was used as the name of a region of Hakkari, near the south shore of Lake Van, starting from a hilly region in the mountainous parts outside the borders of today’s Türkiye. The central incidents of the region contain Colemerik.”¹⁸ On the other hand, Tan mentioned that Hakkari, formerly located south of Lake Van and home to a section of the “Hakkar” tribe, extends into districts reaching Iran. In Arabic literature, the region is referred to as “ye,” meaning “The City of Hakkarlar.” According to research conducted in the area and rock inscriptions found nearby, prehistoric civilizations such as the Sumerians, Akkadians, Urartians, and Assyrians once inhabited the region, indicating that it has been continuously settled for a long time.¹⁹ According to Hirori, Hakkari is a vast region, with its eastern border adjoining Iranian Azerbaijan, its northern boundary with Van province, its western edge reaching

¹⁸Yaşar Kaplan, *Tarih: Osmanlı Döneminde Hakkari* (Hakkari: Hakkari Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Bernamegeh), 2.

¹⁹Zeki Tan, Mevlana Halid-i Bağdadinin Talebelerinden; Seyyid Taha el - Hakkâri’nin İlmi Kişiliği.. *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi / Journal of Social Sciences Sayı / No. 3, Nisan / April (2013)*,99.

Cizre, and its southern border extending to Mosul. In interviews with residents of Hakkari and Duhok, many elderly individuals mentioned that Culemerg, historically known as Upper and Lower Hakkari, was once a unified area, especially during the Ottoman era when Hakkari and Duhok were connected. Supporting this, border studies from the 1920s reveal that Duhok, Imadiye, and Zaho were separated from Hakkari in 1925, leading to an economic downturn in the region, as much of its trade had been with the neighboring cities. Historically, Culemerg, now known as Hakkari, was a small center located 115 km south of Van, near the Zap River, in a valley surrounded by mountains.²⁰

Hakkari is seen under more government control than Yüksekova because the region has been seen as a conflict zone due to the political conflicts between the PKK and the Turkish army. In Hakkari, there are too many Turkish law enforcement officials, soldiers, and other civil servants. Because it is a small city, Hakkari has various people. Mostly, the people who live in Hakkari have many dichotomies because they live in a conflict area, and the political chaos makes them take one side, either the Turkish government or the Kurdish movement. In addition, politics and cultural conversion caused the differences between these two regions to become separated. Fundamentally, Hakkari is a city, and Yüksekova is one of the provinces of Hakkari, as well as Çukurca and Şemdinli. These four regions are most crucial to comprehending the cultural and political mess and disorder. As a political effect, Hakkari is seen as a “central public sphere” because of the domination of governmental vision. Namely, Hakkari is seen as a more controlled region by the Turkish government and its military system. It has been known by other townships as most apolitical. Furthermore, in these regions, each side has an ethno-political and political perspective. The notion of state and militarism in terms of ethno-politics and its deep political structure on Kurdish women should be considered through this lens. As Yeğen mentioned in his article about ethnopolitics, the historical background of nationalist mindset or ethnopolitics is established as relationality inside rather than as “something other than itself.”²¹ This means that there is a different mechanism for understanding this notion. In comparison, the ethnopolitical side should consider

²⁰Hirori, Attributed: Yaşar, Tarih, Osmanlı Döneminde Hakkari, Bernamegeh, Hakkari Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, (2010), 3.

²¹Mesut Yeğen, “Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu,” *Kültür ve İletişim* 2, no. 2(4) (1999),154.

Kurdish tribes, nationalist mindset perspectives, and religious facts on Kurdish communities. The political side should consider the Turkish nationalist mindset system and its mechanisms, such as *Turkification* (Türkleştirme) for Kurds. That is why all complex structures in Kurdish and Turkish start with viewing Turkish as a “*Kurdish problem or question*.” The most important issue is what could be the exact meaning and reasoning of Kurdish problems for Turkish and Kurdish? Even though this problem has been known from various perspectives, it should be looked at as a historical process on the Kurdish problem, which has been mentioned by Mesut Yeğen during the Ottoman period so far. Mesut Yeğen’s state discourse on the Kurdish Question is a comprehensive study that focuses on the Kurdish question within the context of the Ottoman Empire’s multilayered formation, based on decentralization and the liquidation of peripheral powers. It examines the state discourse, including modernization, centralization, nationalist mindset, and authoritarianism, which emerged during this process. The Kurdish question is also analyzed as something other than itself in the state discourse, including denial of the Kurdish people, the revival of the Sultanate and Caliphate, tribes and bandits, foreign provocation, enemy discourse, and territorial subalternity. The study also examines the various forms of Kurdish ethno-politics that emerged concerning modernization, centralization, nationalist mindset, and authoritarianism. Arguing that the Kurdish question’s presence in state discourse is not a deliberate destruction of the state but rather a result of state discourse.²² The historical process after the Ottoman process is crucial to understanding the Kurdish problem with the Turkish state and its politics. According to Ocalan and his perspective, the explanation of the Kurdish problem or question has not been analyzed clearly in academia. His works highlight a pandemic trait of the Kurds’ social history, but they have not fully addressed the need for a comprehensive sociological study of the Kurdish social structure. Many books and articles address the Kurdish question or problem, focusing on the Kurdish peoples’ existence when their existence is no longer defined as a question or problem.²³ The reasons for the acceptance of the existence problems and the Kurdish question can be seen as the fact that the Kurds in the four parts of the Kurdish area (Kurds of Türkiye, Iraq, Iran, and Syria) have been experiencing their language, political, and identity problems since

²²Mesut Yeğen, “Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu,” *Kültür ve İletişim* 2, no. 2(4) (1999), 155.

²³Ali Kemal Özcan, *Turkey’s Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*, Repr., Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies 7 (London: Routledge, 2007), 3.

the Ottoman period until the construction of not only modern Türkiye but also modern Iran, modern Syria, modern Iraq, etc. It can be said that the Kurdish problem has such a complex structure, and figuring out this is still unclear. Because, as a political matter, conflict and complex structure cannot be solved.

Moreover, the Kurdish ideology and fighter system are most significant to understanding the conscience of Kurdish nationality and the Kurdish problem/question in this sense. Because of that, some Kurdish communities first wanted to establish self-government and it has converted to taking their emancipation under self-government. For this reason, democratic confederating speech was the most important ideology for Kurdish communities, its defender (PKK), and Abdullah Öcalan. As Öcalan mentioned in his book, *Democratic Confederalism* is a non-state political administration or democracy without a state that differs from public administrations in decision-making processes, power, and legitimacy. Democracies are based on collective consensus, direct elections, and voluntary participation, while states use coercion. Democratic confederalism is flexible, multicultural, anti-monopolistic, and consensus-oriented, with ecology and feminism as central pillars. Democratic confederalism is described as a form of self-administration for the people, contrasting with nation-state administration. It can coexist peacefully with the nation-state as long as it doesn't interfere with central self-administration matters. However, it cannot stand idly by in the face of assimilation. Overcoming the state is a long process, and democratic confederations will maintain self-defense forces at all times.²⁴ It can be said frankly that Öcalan's vision of Kurdish communities and their values is seen as constructed as the opposite of the Turkish governmental perspective, which has been considered a false mentality. That is why he constructed PKK as an organization in 1978 with his friends.²⁵ The idea of PKK and its manifesto mentioned Kurdish emancipation and defending Kurdish self-government. *The Kurd* book, which is edited by Bozarslan, Güneş, and Yadırgacı, mentioned that the 1980s and 1990s saw a significant period of Kurdish political activity in Türkiye, with the PKK gaining popular support and increasing its influence. Kurdish political demands were also

²⁴ Abdullah Öcalan, *Democratic Fedaralism*, Transmedia Publishing, (2015), 10-16.

²⁵ *BirGün*. "Abdullah Öcalan: PKK Silah Bırakmalı ve Kendini Feshetmelidir." *BirGün*, March 27, 2024. <https://www.birgun.net/haber/abdullah-ocalan-pkk-silah-birakmalı-ve-kendini-feshetmelidir-603246>.

expressed through legal channels by pro-Kurdish parties, such as the People's Labour Party (HEP), which grew in the 2000s and 2010s despite constitutional court closures.²⁶ For many years, under different and new names, the ideology of HEP has lasted in Türkiye.

On the other hand, the practices of PKK in terms of militarist policies and its mechanisms, such as being a woman fighter, should be comprehended within the scope of militarist feminism. In this sense, there should be a critique of militarist feminism in terms of Kurdish women's practice. Additionally, with this statement, the militarist policies of the PKK have been seen and considered in terms of the Kurdish women's movement to illustrate being a fighter. The strong idea of the PKK about Kurdish women creating their policies for women under the Kurdish movement. In this context, the ideological foundation of the Kurdish women's movement can be interpreted through a national mindset, while the subjectivity of Kurdish women can be analyzed within the framework of militarist feminism. Moreover, in terms of subjectivity processes and resistance strategies, gender studies consider women's position in armed structures to be a significant topic of discussion. In this regard, women's active involvement in military groups can be analyzed as a component of gendered experiences shaped within disciplinary systems as well as a protest against patriarchal norms. In addition to being linked to discourses of emancipation, the visibility and subjectivity that women acquire in these organizations also call for a critical examination of the ways in which gender is reproduced in military settings. This frequently results in gendered disparities being reconstructed in various ways and individual experiences being masked inside a group narrative. Therefore, women's actions within armed formations necessitate a multi-layered analysis in terms of gender theory since they both challenge and create a contradictory space for the reproduction of conventional gender roles in many ways.

Additionally, the conceptualization of militarist feminism, which is mostly related to jineology, should be discussed in terms of the Kurdish movement as well as Turkish Feminism and should also be considered within the scope of the Turkish nationalist

²⁶Hamit Bozarslan, Cengiz Gunes, and Veli Yadirgi, *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 9-10.

mindset under the notion of state feminism. When these two notions are compared, the politicized role of Kurdish women in the Turkish and Kurdish women's movements can be clearly understood. For this reason, it should be noted that conceptualizations of gender, feminism, jineology (Kurdish women's movement), Turkish women's movement, nationalist mindset, and performativity with body politics should be considered in terms of state feminism and militarist feminism. These observations are made in the sense of revealing a general tendency with regard to existing feminisms. To comprehend all these concepts, initially, it is necessary to comprehend the meaning of state feminism and militarist feminism. The most vital concepts, which are body and politics, have been seen by many types, and these concepts have been shaped by lots of institutions, politics, states, academia, patriarchal systems, and mostly women. That is why, in this context, the meaning of body politics should be analyzed in terms of these concepts. Initially, the concept is most significant in terms of the comprehensive nature of women's bodies pertaining to politics by all mechanisms. What are these mechanisms? What are their aims for women, particularly Kurdish women, on both sides of the Turks and Kurds? Because of that, the notion of body politic should be recognized in terms of instrumentalization. The concept of body politics has commenced to consider feminist policy; the most crucial point is how that concept has begun to grow in the world, to what extent it produces, and by whom. In the world, the concepts of feminist policy and body politics have been taught, mostly in academia and in political discourse. That is why it can be said that it has produced those concepts as the elite side and with many arguments. In the meantime, the production of a feminist policy began to be institutionalized. The feminist policy needs to go beyond politics, institutions, and academia to access all women in the world to illustrate that for women who do not know about these concepts, to get all the points, there need to be other items to help them get the meaning of those. That is why Hooks assessed that the academization of feminist thought has led to a depoliticization of the feminist movement, with theory being housed in an academic ghetto with limited connection to the outside world. This has resulted in a lack of understanding of the positive contributions of the feminist movement to communities and society. To ensure that feminist education is meaningful to everyone. It is essential to reach beyond academic and written words, using various methods such as books, songs, radio, and television. A feminist television network, which is not the same as a network for women, could help spread feminist thinking globally. Feminist education is crucial for

highlighting the positive contributions of the feminist movement to communities and society. By promoting feminist thought and practice, we can ensure that the negative information produced in mainstream media is not undermined. By sharing feminist thought and practice, we can sustain the feminist movement and ensure that the positive changes made by the feminist movement are recognized and appreciated by the public.²⁷ In this sense, feminist policy should be narrated by other items.

In other respects, being a militarist feminist or framing Kurdish women within a militarist movement should be examined in terms of women's rights in both the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state. It should be argued that its performativity is based on nationalist mindset policies. Can it be said that the women's rights movement actually supports the national identity it is part of? In this case, it is significant to consider whether women's roles are shaped by the male-dominated ideas of the nation or the ideology they belong to. Initially, to comprehend militarist feminism, there should be discussed the term of jineology which mostly represents Kurdish women's rights in Türkiye. Kaser mentioned that since the early 1990s, the women's movement has been involved in a critique of the masculine and militarist nation-state. As a result, the movement has developed its forms of organization and reproduction of knowledge, such as Jineology, the "science of women."²⁸ Nevertheless, Çağlayan stated that the conceptual framework for creating current intellectual work in the Kurdish women's movement was provided by this analytical engagement, which gave rise to Jineology. The PKK coined the term in 2008 to establish a critique of the male-dominated nature of social sciences. It is derived from the words jin (meaning woman in Kurdish) and logos (science). This idea was then discussed by women's working groups that are part of the movement.²⁹ The Kurdish women's movement has consisted of being a fighter against the policies of the Turkish state, which are directed against the Kurdish people in this sense. That is why the notion of jineology mostly represents an androcentric approach within Kurdish communities, particularly Kurdish women. In this line, there should be argued this terminology with militarist feminism because Kurdish women

²⁷Bell Hooks, *Feminism is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, Canada: South End Press, 7 Brookline Street, 2000),22-24.

²⁸Isabel Käser, *The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement: Gender, Body Politics, and Militant Femininities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021),63.

²⁹Handan Çağlayan and Simten Coşar, *Women in the Kurdish Movement: Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 78.

in Türkiye integrate with the Kurdish national movement and its ideology. Furthermore, the Kurdish women's movement should also be considered in terms of the classification of women in Kurdish regions. For this reason, the concept of militarism and militarist feminism should be explained in the scope of discussing feminism in academia. As Burke mentioned, militarism is the willingness of states to use organized and purposeful physical force to carry out their policies. There are material and ideological manifestations of militarism as a process. These vary according to the culture and period, but they have some characteristics. The fundamental tenet of militarism is "power over the other," and the military is an exaggerated microcosm of this domination that serves to defend the powerful. Because they are frequently absorbed by society, the intellectual expression of militarism is more challenging to recognize.³⁰ There is also another context, which is the national mindset and its mechanism for Kurdish women. Tom Naim argues that the nationalist mindset is the pathology of modern developmental history, with its roots in the dilemmas of helplessness imposed on societies, equivalent to childhood, and is burdened with fundamental ambiguity. nationalist mindset is an imagined political community that is imagined as both sovereign and limited.³¹ As linked with the notion of feminism, the subjectification of Kurdish women and their roles are most significant within the context of the national mindset in order to achieve its main goals. According to Mojab, "have surrounded the women's movement with the interests of Kurdish nationalism."³² Even the Kurdish women and their movement under the jineology, unfortunately, portray the national mindset of Kurds in Türkiye. Even though the jineology demonstrates itself as authentic, the Kurdish movement sees it as a part of their national profits. That is why, if the Kurdish women's movement is considered within the scope of militarist feminism, it can be clear to get the main idea between the Kurdish women's movement and Kurdish nationalist approaches in Kurdish regions, particularly in Hakkari. Due to the fact that demands for social order are usually shaped by a masculine mentality, states have historically regulated women's rights within their control to avoid complications for women. In contrast, women from minority and non-state-organized communities, like the Kurds, find an opportunity for

³⁰Colleen Burke, *Women and Militarism* (San Francisco: People's Press, 1983), 2-3.

³¹Benedict Anderson, *Hayali Cemiyetler* (Istanbul, Turkey: Metis Yayıncılık, 1995), 20.

³²Shahzad Mojab et al., eds., *Devletsiz ulusun kadınları: Kürt kadını üzerine araştırmalar ; feminist bir yaklaşım*, 1. baskı, Avesta Kürt araştırmaları, 192 2 (İstanbul: Avesta, 2005),25.

authenticity that is often linked to the pursuit of statehood. In this context, Kurdish women's movements are in line with larger political struggles in Third World countries, where they are a minority. The militaristic orientation of the Kurdish movement emphasizes class differences among women by portraying Kurdish women as being exclusively involved in an absolute form of struggle. As a result, the Kurdish women's movement's sphere of representation is constrained, primarily addressing women involved in organized resistance. What role do other Kurdish women—those who live in villages, those who want to preserve their Kurdish identity without fighting, working women, apolitical women, and Muslim women—play in this movement? This is a crucial question. The main goal of this discussion is to highlight the Kurdish women's movement's militaristic trajectory and how it forms the basis of class-based differences. Examining how it intersects with state feminism is also crucial. This larger system illustrates how feminism itself becomes politicized, as it is based on masculine ideology and the reification of women. As an example of the jineology and its historical background, it is demonstrated by Dila Dirik that feminism is not about visibility or representation inside an unjust world; in fact, feminism should never be compatible with the dominant power-based system and its liberal discourses. She aligns with those who see feminism as a constantly evolving, critical, and self-critical resistance movement for justice and liberation, a method of radicalizing society's freedom consciousness to organize the world differently. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) refers to 'anticapitalistic transnational feminist practice' as a way of building 'non-colonizing' bridges across particular and universal struggle contexts. As it is not a classical national liberation struggle but a mass movement with a claim to a universal struggle against dominant systems of power, the revolutionary Kurdish women's movement's experience and analyses are valuable to anyone interested in anti-colonial and anti-capitalist politics, feminism from below, revolutionary social change, climate justice, system-critical theory, and democracy without the state. In this sense, unconcerned with exceptionalized Kurdish women, she hopes that this book can be one of the many efforts to build transnational alliances for peace and justice against the systems that colonize, devalue, and destroy life.³³ In this context, even Dirik mentioned that feminism and liberal ideologies of the prevailing power-based system

³³Dilar Dirik, *The Kurdish Women's Movement: History, Theory, Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 2022), 22.

should never coexist; the practice of jineology seems to be a power-based system within the ideology of the Kurdish movement. On the other hand, jineology mostly depends on TJA (*Tevgera Jinen Azad/ Free Women Movement*), which is known as an organization. This organization is comprised of national and international women; however, it is mostly based on Kurdish women. Its main argument is that “if women are liberated, all communities can be liberated.” It means that it refuses life without being organized. Their struggle for women’s liberation focuses on spreading the ideology of freedom, building a democratic way of life, and fostering a communal society based on equality. They embrace jineology as its core, committing to resisting the historical oppression of women and challenging exploitation in all forms- social, political, economic, cultural, and intellectual.³⁴ The Free Women’s Movement (TJA) and jineology are closely linked due to their shared philosophical and ideological foundations. Jineology critiques patriarchal structures that marginalize women in knowledge production, while TJA advocates for women’s greater participation in knowledge production and social organization. The Kurdish women’s movement in Türkiye, which had a complex structure before the 2016 coup attempt, played a crucial role in policymaking, education, and securing women’s rights.³⁵ In this context, it is also significant to note where the TJA positions Abdullah Öcalan (the leader of PKK), the producer of the jineology, while rejecting patriarchy in its knowledge production systems. The construction of the notion of jineology by Abdullah Öcalan reveals that the concept itself is androcentric. That is why, even though the concept of jineology is considered beyond feminism, it is mostly associated with the Kurdish nationalist movement. Therefore, the argument of the Kurdish women’s movement is still under the political profits, and it is a part of the organization. For this reason, the conceptualization and representation of jineology have too many contradictions, and making organizational lines is also tied to the militarist conscience. As Dirik mentioned in her book, the Kurdish Women’s Movement is based on Kurdish politics. For example, the Rojava Revolutionary in 2012 (Syria Kurdish side) and the Kurdish women's movement in Türkiye have shifted their focus from state violence to women's liberation, a shift that has prompted the emergence of the HDP and the movement's local politics. The HDP's elected women politicians are connected to the women's

³⁴<https://www.tevgerajinenazad.com/biz-kimiz/>

³⁵Isabel Käser, *The Kurdistan Women's Liberation: Movement Between Violence and Resistance* (PhD diss., SOAS, University of London, 2019), <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/32799>, 100.

struggle through its Women's Assembly, the Free Women's Movement in Bakur, and other grassroots organizations. The assembly views all historical women's struggles, including the women's revolution of Rojava, as part of its heritage. The HDP's policies are rooted in actual women's movements, allowing them to share the parliamentary seat with the women's movement.³⁶ Jineology has often been viewed as a sacrifice within the Kurdish movement, embraced by both men and women, though it is largely seen as a women's revolutionary movement. Therefore, instead of simply deconstructing the concept, approaching it from a more contextual and dynamic perspective allows for a deeper comprehension of its historical roots and its role in today's struggles. By examining both its theoretical and practical dimensions, the contradiction that emerges can ultimately bring jineology closer to fulfilling its true purpose. In this situation, women's bodies are used as weapons and commodities in their fight for independence. This demonstrates how the Kurdish women's movement, in particular, is associated with the Kurdish movement and uses their bodies as weapons to establish a militaristic line. The most significant indicator of the Kurdish movement's battle is the revolution carried out by women under the guise of the women's liberation movement. Apart from the violent struggle of organized women, it is also evident how weak the local functioning of jineology is in terms of practice when considering the issues facing Kurdish women. The effort of a mechanism where theory and practice are so contradictory to unite Kurdish women under a single roof becomes an unacceptable phenomenon, and at the same time, it ignores the existing class reality by considering the solution to the problems of local women within the organization. The Kurdish identity and the identity of womanhood of women who cannot take part in an armed or unarmed struggle are ignored, and the basic problems of women, such as domestic violence, economy, and education, are postponed. In fact, the weakness of the local people's knowledge of the Kurdish women's movement was definitely revealed when women in Hakkari and its districts were asked what jineology is. To illustrate, many Kurdish women living in the villages of Hakkari responded as follows when asked about the notion of jineology:

What is the meaning of jineology? We do not know about it. I have never heard of the Kurdish Women's Movement before. Is Jineology a Kurdish woman fighter?

³⁶Dilar Dirik, *The Kurdish Women's Movement: History, Theory, Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 2022), 209.

Jineology is a women's organization that fights for Kurds. I do not know; you mean that it is gynecology (jinekoloji).

In this sense, it can be said that the Kurdish women's movement, also known as jineology, is not yet represented within the Kurdish communities. It portrays that the conceptualization of jineology and its action within the Kurdish communities is not deficient and meaningful for Kurdish women.

Overall, despite its revolutionary potential, the practical implementation of jineology is limited and not widely understood or embraced by many Kurdish women, especially in rural areas. In conclusion, the Kurdish women's movement, symbolized by jineology, has made significant strides in challenging patriarchy and advocating for women's rights, but it remains deeply entwined with nationalist ideologies and militaristic frameworks. The movement's focus on armed struggle and its connection to Kurdish nationalism frequently obscures the broader, more diverse needs of local women, especially those who do not participate in the political or armed struggle. To ensure that the fight for women's liberation is inclusive of all women's struggles for equality, education, and economic opportunity rather than being limited to a militaristic agenda.

Besides, the Turkish women's movement is a vital point in comprehending the concept of state feminism and its mechanism in Türkiye. In this line, there should be argued the notion of state-feminism on the scope of "national Turkishness." Besides that, the concept of Turkish feminism should be debated within these arguments to understand the place of Kurdish women. Initially, the process of Turkishness, building its mindset, is a crucial point in the debate on the feminist movement in Türkiye. The most significant question is, which ideological foundations is Türkiye being built on? Even though the building of the Turkish Republic demonstrates that it consisted of being a democratic state, it is based on Turkishness, a nationalist mindset, and Westernization. As Feroz Ahmad argued, the features of Western democracy were absent from the Kemalists' 1923 regime. There was no political rivalry between elites or class distinctions during this time. Democracy would only be established at the conclusion of the Kemalists' time of revolution. The Kemalists attempted to overcome the consequences of the previous order after seizing political power in the middle of the 1920s, but they had to contend with dormant opposition and public unhappiness. When

confronted with internal resistance and Kurdish uprisings, the Kemalists used unprecedented powers, including the "Takrir-i Sükûn Law," to ruthlessly suppress counter-revolutionary groups. Political multiparty existence during this time was brief; the Communist Party was outlawed, and the Progressive Republican Party (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası) was disbanded in 1925. The fact that an opposition party was founded in 1930 (Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası), however, shows how sincerely the Kemalists took pluralism. Nevertheless, this program also ended due to public outrage against the government. Whether Kemalist ideology had a democratic bent is up for debate. It might be argued that a democratic society is needed to bring Türkiye up to the level of Western civilization. The notion that capitalism will lead to democracy was widely held during this time, and the Kemalists tacitly accepted this view.³⁷ It shows that the Turkish Republic was built by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to signify Turkish nationalism. For this reason, how can it be considered state feminism for women in Türkiye? The policies of Turkish feminism are linked to the Turkishness policies in this context. The first Turkish feminist appeared in the *Büyük Mecmua Journal* by Sabiha Sertel. One of the most influential magazines of the new national identity that would emerge in the years between the two world wars was *Büyük Mecmua*. It remarked to its readers, "No one can kill a nation that exists and has the right to live, no matter how great the calamities are." There was no place for hopelessness and pessimism if the inhabitants of these territories were a "nation." It is everyone's responsibility to take the required steps to live as a nation if they do not exist as one.

In other words, Turkism, which was focused on nationalism in a modern setting, was the ideal that was discussed here. Turkism was described as "a national movement whose hearts were rooted in the past" by the magazine. She mostly stated the term modern and being Turkish, particularly in her fourth column of *Büyük Mecmua*. She says that figuring out the women's problem is only going to be able to be solved in accordance with the Turkish spirit and Turkishness.³⁸ Even though this perspective seems to be a state approach, it is mostly related to the nationalist-feminist mentality

³⁷Feroz Ahmad, *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme*, trans. Fatmagül. Berktaş, 7. Basım: Eylül 2014 (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014),160-161.

³⁸Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de kadın özgürlüğü ve feminizm (1908 - 1935)*, 1. basım (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015),177-180.

in this context. For this reason, it can be said that the feminist approaches are a remnant of the Kemalist for the Turkish feminist movement. At that time, the Turkish feminist movement was more nationalist and focused on education and modernization. From 1919 to today, the mentality of Turkish feminism has never changed in Türkiye since the Turkish feminist movement could not free itself from the nationalist line. All nationalisms are gendered, all are invented, and all are dangerous - dangerous in the sense that they represent relations with political power and technologies of violence," according to Anne McClintock's argument in her article "No longer in a Future Heaven." Nationalism ideologies incorporate men and women in different ways.³⁹ Additionally, she mentioned that nationalism is produced and shown via the embodiment of women. The key takeaway from this is that, in nationalism, women play a significant role in using their bodies to represent the country and its culture, giving birth to future generations and raising them properly, while men symbolize the nation's relationship with the future. Numerous nationalist theorists discuss nationalists' propensity to compare the country to a family. A nation is frequently compared to a family, in which moms are exalted as the nation's mothers and men and women fulfill their natural duties. According to this example, the conventional roles that are assigned to men and women are replicated and accepted in the country's center. In this way, McClintock contends that men are associated with the progressive principle of nationalism, but women are the objects of the conservative continuity principle of nationalism, the bodies through which national traditions are transmitted to generations.⁴⁰ In her essay, Anne McClintock skillfully challenges nationalism's intrinsic gendered nature, which assigns different duties to men and women. She contends that whereas men stand for the nation's advancement and future, women's bodies are used by nationalism to signify the country and its customs. By normalizing traditional gender roles, the comparison of the country to a family serves to uphold patriarchal systems. McClintock also criticizes nationalism's use of gendered violence, pointing out that women's roles are frequently limited in the national narrative to maintain the country's conservative continuity. Her writings demonstrate how nationalist ideologies conflate gender and power. Nowadays, many Turkish

³⁹Anne McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Nationalism, Gender and Race," in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*, ed. Anne McClintock (New York: Routledge, 1995), 352–389.

⁴⁰Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 375-380.

Feminist associations have opened in Türkiye. These are Türk Üniversiteli Kadınlar Derneği (Turkish University Women's Associations), (TÜKD)- 1949, Cumhuriyet Kadınları Derneği (Women of the Republic Association), (CDK)-1997, Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği (Association for Supporting Modern Life), (ÇYDD)-1989, Türkiye Kadın Dernekleri Federasyonu (Federation of Turkish Women's Associations), (TKDF)-1976, Kadın Araştırmaları Derneği. The problem is the operation of these organizations and their mechanical system since it is crucial how they address Kurdish women in the scope of the nationalist mindset.

There are also a few associations that are not known from a Kemalist perspective are that KADEM (*Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği/ Women and Democracy Association*), AKDER (*Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Hakları Derneği, Women's Rights Association Against Discrimination*), İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı Kadın Kolları (*IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation Women's Branch*), Hazar Eğitim ve Kültür Dayanışma Derneği (*Hazar Education, Culture, and Solidarity Association*). For Kurdish women, these associations were often not seen as safe and right because of their duality of political perspectives. Nowadays, even though many Kurdish women who mostly struggle with identity issues have tried to participate in these associations, they are held back by identity issues that get in the way. On the other side, about Kurdish women's studies, it can be seen that they have Kurdish women's movement studies in this association, but there is more discourse on the historical progress of the Kurdish women's movement and that it is a left-feminist movement. The association sees that the Kurdish women's movement carries out the struggle for national identity and gender at the same time, and in this context, its relationship with the feminist movement is sometimes on controversial ground.⁴¹

In the Turkish context, feminist organizations are often shaped by the structural relationships they establish with state institutions, leading to the positioning of women's movements within the framework of state feminism.⁴² While this model increases the public visibility of women, it also tends to produce structures in which

⁴¹Hazar Derneği, "Kürt Kadın Hareketi," *Hazar Derneği*, erişim 31 Mart 2025, <http://www.hazarderneği.org/kurt-kadin-hareketi/>.

⁴²Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 275.

political autonomy is limited.⁴³ The works of Tekeli and Arat demonstrate that state-supported feminism in Türkiye typically operates within a modernist and nationalist framework, which makes it difficult to build alliances with pluralistic or ethnically-based women's movements.⁴⁴ However, it would be reductive to subsume all components of the feminist movement under this definition. Many women's associations operating at the local level, though not explicitly adopting the state's line, are unable to develop open criticism of the prevailing political order due to dependence on funding and political pressures. This situates them in a position that is neither fully critical nor entirely compliant. This "in-betweenness" becomes a defining factor, especially for Kurdish women, who experience multiple forms of marginalization due to their ethnic identity. In Spivak's terms, these women are not "voiceless" but rather "unheard," placed in a subaltern position.⁴⁵ Fieldwork conducted in Hakkâri illustrates that some women's organizations aligned with state feminism tend to adopt policies of silencing in their relationships with women subjected to violence. There is one woman participant expressed the following:

We witnessed how politically motivated the stances of certain prominent associations were in 2021, especially regarding the rights violations many women faced. We, as women, were subjected to violence, harassment, and rape. Yet, their primary intention in meeting with us was mostly to keep the issues contained, not to make them public.

This statement reveals how the traumas experienced by women are often not transformed into political struggles but instead are managed and confined. This approach resonates with Sancar's conceptualization of the "strategic domestication of feminism"⁴⁶ and aligns with Cindoğlu and Özkazanç's observations on institutional dilemmas in addressing violence against women.⁴⁷ Moreover, many Kurdish women refrain from expressing themselves in their mother tongue and tend to stay away from such institutional structures due to suspicions that perpetrators may be present within

⁴³Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yeşim Arat, *Violence Against Women in Turkey: A Nationwide Survey* (Istanbul: Punto, 2009), 45.

⁴⁴Şirin Tekeli, "Women in Turkish Politics," in *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (London: Zed Books, 1995), 279; Yeşim Arat, *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), 93.

⁴⁵Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 287.

⁴⁶Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), 138.

⁴⁷Dilek Cindoğlu and Alev Özkazanç, "The Politics of Domestic Violence in Turkey: Institutional Discourses and Resistance," *Social Politics* 19, no. 3 (2012): 412.

these frameworks. Thus, Kurdish women are increasingly turning to alternative feminist solidarities that are more horizontal, culturally sensitive, and organized at the local level.

Because of the political environment and institutional requirements, women's organizations in Türkiye shouldn't be assessed from a standardized ideological perspective. The fact that certain women's organizations choose not to openly express their political views does not necessarily indicate that they are in direct opposition to the state line when considering factors like financing availability, legal requirements, and institutional viability. Even while these groups frequently avoid overtly taking sides, they adopt a calculated silence to endure and carry on with their operations in the current political climate. However, Kurdish women who live locally and face multiple forms of discrimination may also understand this state of "neutrality" as a "silent partnership" or "turning a blind eye." As a result, perceived political posture and structural neutrality are in serious conflict. However, it should not be overlooked that certain Kurdish women in urban areas are able to connect with state-sponsored or state-compliant women's associations and make use of the opportunities these groups provide. This demonstrates that Kurdish women do not have a uniform political outlook; rather, many forms of relations exist based on factors such as identity, class, geographic area, and personal experiences. Therefore, while assessing women's groups in Türkiye, a more thorough and critical study that considers both structural imperatives and local/social perspectives is needed.

Kurdish women had to embrace their Turkishness for their unquestionable presence in the Turkish feminist movement to be acknowledged. However, because of the dual nationalism policies they face, Kurdish women's ability to exist with their own identities and intersect with other women has been marginalized, and they have begun to produce hate speech similar to Turkish women. When Kurdish women joined the PKK in the 1990s, they created hate speech and insults, which is the primary cause of this. The main reason for this was the hate speech and insults generated by Kurdish women when they joined the PKK in the 1990s. A significant propaganda effort against female rebels was started by nationalists and male chauvinists working together. Official nationalist mindset stigmatized women as "*prostitutes*" while labeling men as "terrorists." This was due to its patriarchal policies. From a chauvinist

perspective, a women's revolt had to be denigrated in terms of their gender because it was against the "indivisibility of the Turkish nation" and its "territorial integrity." Therefore, it was impossible to characterize them as bandits or terrorists.⁴⁸ It is clear that the nationalist mindset has long held the belief that Kurdish women can only be used as prostitutes by terrorists or as traitors to their country. Since Turkishness and the state govern it, the idea of state feminism, which is shaped by the masculine mindset in how the nationalist-feminist construction is mirrored today, is crucial in this regard. So much so that, under the pretense of women's rights and liberties, the Turkish state objectified Turkish women for its nationalist ends and created a space for state feminism that was incompatible with its male mindset system. With the knowledge of Kemalism, it has attempted to approach women's rights and liberties from a more Western perspective; nevertheless, it has also demonstrated via its autonomy that the male state still controls women. To illustrate, the behaviors of several feminist groups in Türkiye show that they have not entirely abandoned male ideological frameworks. State-sponsored or institutionally affiliated women's associations, in particular, have a tendency to define women as persons in need of protection rather than as autonomous subjects. Instead of promoting gender equality, the goal here is to empower women through conventional roles like motherhood and wifehood, which perpetuates patriarchal discourse. Activities like home economics seminars and tailoring classes restrict women to household responsibilities rather than encouraging their presence in the public realm. Furthermore, the mainstream feminist movement's aloof attitude toward the Kurdish women's movement exposes a centrist and frequently nationalist approach that overlooks the struggles of ethnically based women, thereby excluding diverse experiences of womanhood. These instances make it abundantly evident that the Turkish feminist movement is not a monolithic entity and that it occasionally unintentionally perpetuates masculine discourses. As a result, a critical and inclusive feminist approach that acknowledges a variety of identities is required.

An extension of this, state feminism, has been understood in various literary works and has been demonstrated to have comparable structures in several state structuring

⁴⁸Shahrazad Mojab et al., eds., *Devletsiz ulusun kadınları: Kürt kadını üzerine araştırmalar; feminist bir yaklaşım*, 1. baskı, Avesta Kürt araştırmaları, 192 2 (İstanbul: Avesta, 2005),19.

systems. As Sirman mentions, the period of Turkish feminism exists as it is difficult to define, and it is influenced by cultural and social forces that are not explicitly Western. Black women in Britain and the US have expressed dissatisfaction with imperial feminism, challenging ethnocentric conceptions of family and sexuality. Turkish feminists are taking over Western concepts without questioning them, and the movement's origins are uncertain. Optimists argue that feminism is still in its infancy in Türkiye, while pessimistic observers argue it is stillborn. Feminism is an ideology that aims to articulate women's position as a central political issue, interacting with left-wing ideologies and Islamic discourses. The non-parliamentary opposition, informed by these ideologies, forms the basis of Turkish feminism. Additionally, understands the nature of the feminist movement in Türkiye by examining the reasons behind its positioning in the non-parliamentary opposition and how Islamic and leftist discourses shape the content and demands of Turkish feminists. Debates about women's position in Turkish society have been central to the political and ideological agendas of the Ottoman and Turkish states at three crucial moments. The first wave of debates occurred during Ottoman reforms in the mid-19th century, focusing on the revival of a floundering empire. The second wave of debates took place in the early years of the Turkish Republic, culminating in the enfranchisement of Turkish women in 1934. This second phase of debates led to the development of 'state feminism,' which emerged after the 1980 military coup. This movement, largely developed in opposition to 'state feminism,' is part of the non-formal opposition forces. Her paper aims to elucidate the political demands of these women and define the parameters of Turkish feminism.⁴⁹ It can be said that state feminism began around the 1980s as a legal phenomenon; nevertheless, instead of state feminism, nationalist feminism had also existed before those years. On the other hand, Çakır mentioned that women's demands for political and social rights were formed and constrained by nationalist and modernizing state policies during the Ottoman Empire's transition to the Republic.⁵⁰ To illustrate, Türkiye's state feminism policies have restricted women's social status to the conventional roles that the state has established. State-backed organizations founded for women's rights during the 1980s and 1990s stifled the feminist movement's autonomous voice by functioning inside state-defined borders. These

⁴⁹Nüket Sirman, "Turkish Feminism: A Short History," *Woman Living Under Muslim Laws*, no. DOSSIER 5-6 (May 1989): 1-9, <https://doi.org/DOSSIER 5-6, 2>.

⁵⁰Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı'da Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994), 165.

organizations promoted the notion that women should fulfill traditional roles like mothers and teachers rather than calling for significant social and economic reforms for women. Another example of the state's limitation of women to particular roles is the Ministry of Family and Social Policies' units for women, which were created in the late 1980s and concentrated more on family values than on topics like women's access to school or employment. In the 2010s, organizations such as the Women's and Democracy Association (Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği, or KADEM) promoted women's adherence to the "Turkish family structure" in public life while operating within the state's ideological framework. These actions demonstrate how state feminism turns feminism into a tool to further the ideological goals of the state by objectifying women not from a gender equality standpoint but instead with national identity and state interests. As Hook stated, women are frequently assigned to tasks by patriarchal structures that are intended to uphold and strengthen the social and political order, where institutional authority and societal norms limit their autonomy.⁵¹ Although KADEM shares many of the state's ideological views, organizations like Hazar take a more independent approach to women's issues. They focus on specific rights-based concerns, such as the Istanbul Convention, child marriages, and lifelong subsistence for divorced middle-aged women.⁵²

Davis mentioned that black women have long played an important role in society by working outside the home. Black people were considered chattel during the slave system, while women were seen as valuable labor resources. The changing nineteenth-century notion of femininity, which placed an emphasis on women's roles as gentle companions and nurturing mothers, viewed Black women as abnormal.⁵³ In connection with this, Black women's historical positions under slavery and the legal improvements afforded to them in the new republic both show how larger patriarchal and nationalist structures have influenced women. Women's duties were still limited to serving the country as mothers and teachers, even though the new republic gave them legal rights, including the ability to vote and an education. These reforms were motivated more by

⁵¹Bell Hooks, *Feminism is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, Canada: South End Press, 7 Brookline Street, 2000),16.

⁵² Hazar Derneği, "İstanbul Sözleşmesi Kadını ve Çocuğu Koruyor," *Hazar Derneği*, August 7, 2020, <https://www.hazarderneği.org/istanbul-sozlesmesi-kadini-ve-cocugu-koruyor/>.

⁵³Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011), 9-10.

national modernization objectives than by feminist principles. In the slave system, Black women were also seen as valuable labor units, which ran counter to the ideal of femininity of the 19th century, which placed an emphasis on loving mothers and kind companions. In both situations, societal systems that exploited women's positions to uphold the existing quo restricted their autonomy and agency, stifling more profound feminist movements that aimed for true social and economic change.

Therefore, in the context of feminism, it is seen that women are objectified in state feminism. Patriarchal feminism shows us that women are subject to the infrastructure of the feminist movement in the ideology of Turkishness, but in the actual functioning of feminism, it also shows us a side of hypermasculinity. To illustrate, in the 1980s, the Feminist Movement in Türkiye began to show other women as 'others' whose nations are not Turkish from a nationalist perspective. The feminist movement in Türkiye during the 1980s, which was mostly influenced by middle-class, urban, and secular women, frequently demonstrated a narrow definition of inclusivity. In mainstream feminist discourse, women from diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds—especially those who did not fit into the prevailing cultural framework—were often ignored or underrepresented. This was demonstrated by the movement's emphasis on issues that predominantly affected women in urban areas, such as work, legal rights, and domestic abuse, while largely ignoring the unique struggles and experiences of women from different social and cultural backgrounds. Although revolutionary in many respects, this early stage of feminist organizing functioned within a somewhat limited social and cultural framework, which limited its applicability and reach for a wider spectrum of women.

The process has affected women, particularly Kurdish Women, who fall into trouble with their identity in Türkiye; additionally, they have also started to discriminate against the Turkish Feminism Movement. Furthermore, although the Turkish Feminism Movement thinks that the movement's subject is women, they have fallen with their practice/ performance, which occurs with their nationalist and masculinist perspective against Kurds. That is why the second wave of the Turkish Feminism Movement addresses how the women's movement has affected the period of socio-economic and political interests. In this statement, Karagöz mentioned that the women's movement after 1980 faced contradictions in its political environment,

balancing liberation with oppression. The movement's rise was influenced by the re-identification of society and the ruling class's need for social support during the regime's difficult days. Feminism, born under the military regime and supported by neo-liberal individualist discourse, made significant progress but was not socialized and could not spread to society at large. The process of reconstructing identities and neutralizing democratic-pluralist structures also fluctuated the women's movement.⁵⁴ Therefore, the Turkish Feminist Movement has included many contradictions in itself. In contrast to the Kurdish political movement, it is not completely said that in that time, there was women's armyfication like the Kurdish Feminism Movement, but women's association with national elements is indirectly ensured. This indirectly contributes to militarism. However, it might be mentioned that there is state feminism, and it has produced discrimination against women because of nationalist politics. Tekeli mentioned that three phases of the feminist movement's historical growth in Türkiye are examined. Throughout the Second Constitutional Monarchy, a separate women's movement developed, and throughout the Republican era, women were given legal rights through state feminism, but autonomous groups were stifled. The state's influence over the feminist movement is symbolized by the Turkish Women's Union's 1935 dissolution. Women's organizations began to prioritize protecting vested rights in the 1950s, demonstrating their loyalty to Kemalism over feminism.⁵⁵ This demonstrates how the state mostly impacted women's rights in Türkiye and how the autonomous feminist movement was long suppressed. The feminist movement's reliance on state policies based on nationalism and secularism has limited the space available to women's collective fight. On the other hand, Kandiyoti asserted that although state feminism in Türkiye has made it possible for women to participate in public life, this has happened as part of the state's modernizing initiative rather than in accordance with the goals of the women themselves.⁵⁶ It means that the Turkish feminist movement has also sacrificed women in Türkiye in the interests of nationalism and masculine domination.

⁵⁴Betül Karagöz, "Türkiyede 1980 Sonrası Kadın Hareketinin Siyasal Temelleri ve 'İkinci Dalga' Uğrağı," *Memleket Siyaset Yönetim* 3, no. 7 (2008/7, August 2008): 170–171.

⁵⁵Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "Türkiye'de Kadının Siyasete Katılımı," *Kadın Bakış Açısından 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın*, der. Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), 28-30.

⁵⁶Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case," *Feminist Studies* 13, no. 2 (1987): 321.

If there is state feminism, it has not been seen as an axis of intersectionality in terms of the Turkish Feminist movement. Additionally, state feminism has been normalized in the Turkish Women's Movement. That is why women have been portrayed as an objects, and it has made them devalued. In this context, the justification for the factors underlying the problem of the reification of women is again the devaluation of women themselves, intending to protect the interests of the masculine by putting forward feminism. It can be seen as the domination of masculinity over Turkish women with a nationalist mindset perspective. Consequently, the functioning of nationalist roles assigned to women in constructed state feminism within women's movements remains far from intersectionality because of masculine domination.

As a description of masculine and feminine, as stated by Beauvoir, the terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically in legal documents, but their relationship is not like two electrical poles. Men represent both the positive and neutral aspects of human beings, while women represent the negative, defined by limiting criteria. Being a man is not a peculiarity, and it is the woman who is in the wrong. This concept is like the absolute vertical in ancient times, defining the masculine human type.⁵⁷ Apart from this vision, there is a domination of masculinity, which Bourdieu mentions. The author discusses masculine domination as a paradoxical submission, a result of symbolic violence, which is invisible to its victims. This violence is primarily exerted through communication, cognition, and feeling, highlighting the logic of domination in the name of a symbolic principle, such as language, lifestyle, and distinctive property like skin color. It is most crucial to comprehend the point of feminism in terms of political profits.⁵⁸ That is why the concept of feminism has always remained under masculine oppression. Although attempts have been made to unite Turkish and Kurdish women under intersectionality, the issue of the women's movement in Türkiye has fallen short of unifying Turkish and Kurdish women due to the problem of identity.

The concept of intersectionality is also a significant point in comprehending Kurdish women's approaches to Turkish feminism; however, this way also has many contradictions on each side. For comprehensive *intersectionality*, there should not be

⁵⁷Simone de Beauvoir and Sheila Rowbotham, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Capisto-Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage Classics (London: Vintage Books, 2011), 16.

⁵⁸Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 3.

just an explanation conceptually but also should be treated in the context of all women's issues on the earth. Even though the scholar's studies demonstrate that the notion of *intersectionality* is known in the Black Women's theory, *Williams Crenshaw* shows meaning in the social context. Demarginalizing intersectionality, a concept that focuses on the experiences of black women, black men, and white women, is a critique of the representational problem faced by these groups. Courts often refuse to recognize black women's discrimination claims based on race and sex, arguing that their experiences are the same as white women and black men. This leads to the belief that black women are too alike to represent either white women or black men as a group. This not only prevents black women from representing themselves but also gender or race. Scholars have used intersectionality to analyze complex social processes such as classism, homophobia, Islamophobia, xenophobia, nativism, ageism, and ableism rather than just anti-black racism and sexism. This genesis of intersectionality in black feminist theory limits the ability of some scholars to envision potential domains for intersectionality and to see it in places where it is already working.⁵⁹ Although some feminist scholars do not discuss this in their studies, as scholars, it should be considered in the context of social facts. It can be said that with new academic perspectives, most scholars or defenders of the feminist ideology have begun to gather to debate women's issues without discrimination against nation, language, religion, etc. But in this setting, feminist philosophy itself has become politicized, and the viewpoint on the Kurdish women's struggle has grown more exoticized. Specifically, women in the Hakkari area, who were not quite aware of the Kurdish women's movement's ideological axis, indicated which side they would favor in the following tasks:

As a woman, I will turn to the Kurdish women's movement if I am having issues. Despite my lack of knowledge about the specifics of the Kurdish women's movement, I am confident that, as a Kurd, they will support me. It is the Kurdish women's movement that starts. Although there are a lot of women's organizations in Hakkari, I am aware that the majority of them are focused on the state. For this reason, I don't believe they undertake any significant effort in this area regarding women's rights. They operate more in the name of integrating and Turkifying Kurdish women, in my opinion. As a Kurd, I can't ask for help from there anyhow. I would still visit the

⁵⁹Devon W. Carbado, "Colorblind Intersectionality," essay, in *Seeing Race Again* (Oakland, California: Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Luke Charles Harris, Daniel Martinez HoSang, and George Lipsitz, 2019), 176–95, 178-180.

Kurdish women's movement, even though it may only be politically well-known. Dealing with people who speak the same language as me feels more genuine, even if I don't understand the subject. In any case, the party (Dem Party) usually takes center stage when there is a domestic issue or other issue affecting women here. Men's attempts to solve women's problems are the party administration's worst shortcoming. We might not have this issue if the Kurdish women's movement were more active and only focused on women.

As seen in this statement, the problem of the Turkish Feminist movement is still seen through the lens of a nationalist perspective. For this reason, many Kurdish women avoid being part of the Turkish feminist movement. Actually, the topic of discussion here is how feminism has changed conceptually, as well as how power works. In light of this, it is critical to identify the key concerns that must be raised within the Turkish and Kurdish women's movements. It is clear that the only way to keep the women's issue in Türkiye from becoming politicized is to adopt an intersectional viewpoint. However, there has been discussion about the problematic objectification of women, which is becoming political. Another significant feature in this context is the fact that women's movements are unable to function independently due to the male-dominated power structure. The Turkish women's movement attempts to transcend the country, nationalism, and the primary concern in this setting. The Turkish women's movement attempts to transcend the nation, nationalism, and the primary issue of Turkism in this setting, but it is unable to do so because of the masculine mindset that it is subjected to. Since women's primary job is to draw people from subjectivity to objectivity, the primary problem here is that women's struggle in the context of women's human rights is more of a propaganda tool for the country. For this reason, despite its name, the Turkish women's movement is unable to break free from a (Turkish) nationalist-statist orientation. Whether or not there is a monolithic Turkish women's movement is one of the most crucial concerns to be posed and explored in this context. Or is it possible to remove the male dominance from the lines that define the Turkish women's movements?

In conclusion, the chapter has attempted to demonstrate the degree of militarism and statism in the Kurdish and Turkish women's movements. While the Kurdish women's movement is rooted in a feminist movement that is militaristic, the Turkish women's movement is also rooted in the state-feminist component. The legitimacy of women's movements in Türkiye is severely damaged by this. The most crucial message to be delivered here is to demonstrate and talk about how women's movements may be

advantageous in areas where political interests are at their highest. Its purpose is to expose how states with a particular national consciousness or organizations with a particular alignment use the movement's independence. This political order also aims to demonstrate the politics that underlie the institutionalization of feminist movements. As a result, the majority of Türkiye's women's movement cycles take place inside preexisting political structures. How the essence of feminism might be reversed and what kinds of studies should be conducted in this setting are the primary topics of discussion. The roles that the male mentality constructs in defining the institutionalization process of feminism are significant in this situation. Thus, the most crucial tool for achieving true knowledge is to focus conversations on the autonomy and distinctiveness of the Kurdish and Turkish women's movements, which are consistent with militarist feminism and the state.

2.1. Rethinking the Turkish Women's Movement: The Interplay of State Feminism and Activism

A complicated interaction between grassroots activism and state-driven changes has shaped the Turkish women's movement. The Turkish case offers a distinctive historical trajectory in which state feminism was crucial in forming gender policy, in contrast to many feminist movements that began primarily as opposition to state power. The relationship between the state and feminist action has fluctuated between collaboration, co-optation, and confrontation since the early republican era and continues to this day. By examining how state feminism and autonomous feminist activity have crossed, diverged, and occasionally reinforced one another, it is also crucial to critically re-evaluate the Turkish women's movement. It covers a variety of historical eras, from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's early Republican reforms that gave women legal rights and access to education to the emergence of independent feminist activity in the 1980s and the current feminist scene. By examining pivotal events, ideological developments, and policy modifications, it is important to draw attention to the conflicts and opportunities between feminist action and state-led gender policies. It also looks at how Turkish feminist movements have fought for gender equality while navigating patriarchal systems, governmental power, and sociopolitical changes. It highlights the dynamic and changing character of feminist movements in Türkiye and advances a comprehensive view of the Turkish women's movement beyond the

dichotomy of resistance versus state control. Ultimately, to understand the relationship between the concepts of Turkish feminism and the state, it should be known that these notions are explicitly and deeply within the scope of analysis.

Even though arguing on the notion of state emerged with modernity, the international dynamics of the concept and all the mechanisms it produces are significant for understanding state feminism. Hence, the course of the relationship between the state and state feminism should be analyzed in the process of establishment and development of the Turkish Republic with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The early Republican era, when Atatürk's reforms aimed to modernize society by giving women certain legal rights, is where Turkish state feminism got its start. These changes, however, were top-down efforts that prioritized women's roles as contemporary citizens above independent political players. For this reason, Turkish women began to be a part of this state mechanism in terms of women's rights and feminism. So, important in this context is the concept of the state itself and the nationalism, nationalization, and national values it has produced. The notion of state, as discussed in *Power, Politics, and Society: An Introduction to Political Sociology* by Dobratz, Waldner, and Buzzell, drew attention to the discourses of Mann, Miliband, and Weber. The definition of the state is complex because of two conceptually distinct issues: what the state looks like and does and its institutional and functional dimensions. A state is a human community that claims the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a given territory, that makes and enforces laws, and that is administered by state bureaucrats. The state is a coercive association with a territorial basis that requires citizens to submit to its authority as long as they physically reside within its borders.⁶⁰ Given this, it may be claimed that the sphere that feminism served, which arose from Atatürk's interpretation of statism, was, in fact, a component of the newly created modern state. Actually, in terms of the rights accorded to women, establishing the groundwork for Turkish feminism helped to convert the Turkish state into a distinctive and more Westernized synthesizing structure. Similar to Foucault's idea of panopticism, the state's aim to control every aspect is the sole reason why women are given the title of "Turkish woman." In this sense, Turkish women's so-called subject

⁶⁰Betty A. Dobratz, Lisa K. Waldner, and Tim Buzzell, *Power, Politics, and Society: An Introduction to Political Sociology* (Boston, Mass.: Allyn & Bacon, 2012), 62-63.

position has merely been a component of the nationalist policies that they are subject to. Like in other contemporary governments, the discourse of the male sovereign has been the foundation for the development of state feminism. That is why the concept of feminism in Türkiye as an act should be argued. Hooks mentioned that feminism is about rights- about women gaining equal rights. When I talk about feminism, I know - up close and personal- they willingly listen, although when our conversations end, they are quick to tell me I am different, not like the "real" feminists who hate angry men. I assure them I am as real and as radical a feminist as one can be, and if they dare to come closer to feminism, they will see it is not how they have imagined it.” Recently, the problematization of the concept has been discussed around the world. In the bargain, after modernism, the reproduction of the feminist concept has been debated within the political interests. Hook stated that the vital point of feminism is the production of hate speech against men. It involves an organized movement, women's claims, and belief in large-scale social change. However, feminists do not necessarily accept basic social change. A more disciplined definition is needed, distinguishing between "women's rights" and "women's emancipation."⁶¹ As Hooks says, feminism, after modernization, began to serve for political purposes. As a conceptualization, the meaning of feminism could not have been understood in Türkiye. On the other hand, according to Bora, the limitations of dividing history into ten-year periods, such as the 80s and 90s, can lead to exaggerated differences and overlooking discontinuities. The ‘90s were a significant turning point in evaluating the feminist movement in Türkiye, as it marked a shift from ideological and political accumulation in the 1980s to confronting political and ideological problems and establishing permanent structures. Also, the 1990s were a "period of institutionalization" due to the decline of social opposition, empty streets, and a political agenda not set by the opposition. In the ‘90s, women who were not part of the feminist movement in the ‘80s developed feminist demands and organized around them about the Kurdish and Islamic movements. Kurdish women questioned the patriarchy of the nationalist movement and the "Turkishness" of feminism in Türkiye, while Muslim feminists challenged the elitist-oppressive attitude of the feminist movement. These issues, coded as "separatism" and "reaction," caused intense debates

⁶¹Bell Hooks, *FEMINISM IS FOR EVERYBODY Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, Canada: South End Press, 7 Brookline Street, 2000), Viii.

and ruptures among women.⁶² The problematization of Turkish feminism is mostly related to Turkishness and the division of women between the two sides in Türkiye. For this reason, the women who accepted this movement usually introduced themselves as Turkish, and the other ethnic groups did not accept this movement. They could not be a part of this nationalist movement. In this sense, the concept of the Turkish feminist movement has problems with women of other ethnic identities. Feminists in Türkiye theorize about the patriarchy of the state and the nation. Instead of resisting, they accept the doctrine of the nation-state. Mojab stated that the existence of “Kurdish women” was not possible in 1925, as the Turkish state system defined all women as Turkish in its policies. The Kemalist and nationalist perspective that the republican regime of 1925 imposed on the Turkish feminist movement also began to dominate Kurdish women. State feminism is confronted with 'republican patriarchy.' In this way, representation was taken away from Kurdish women and given to Turkish feminists. The subaltern Kurdish women were handed over to the power that produced knowledge.⁶³

Another pivotal issue is how we can rethink Turkish feminism in terms of intersectionality. For this reason, feminism did not emerge within societies by simply ensuring the equality of rights between women and men. Even feminism has theories of value; it also has a theory of power, which is controlled by the states. As Mackinnon stated, feminism and Marxism both have the theory of power and value, but Marxism focuses more on the state. Feminism has a theory of power but lacks a specific theory of the state form, while Marxism has a theory of value that becomes class analysis. Marx saw the state as a concentrated expression of economics and reflection of real action, while Engels analyzed women and the state together but assumed the origins of a state-like society. Marx used the term 'political' in a narrow sense, specifically to refer to the state and its legal structures. For him, 'political power' represented the formal or institutional expression of the deep-rooted conflicts—known as antagonisms—within civil society, such as the struggle between different social

⁶²Aksu Bora and Asena Günel, *90’Larda Türkiye’de Feminizm* (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), 8.

⁶³Shahzad Mojab et al., eds., *Devletsiz ulusun kadınları: Kürt kadını üzerine araştırmalar; feminist bir yaklaşım*, 1. baskı, Avesta Kürt araştırmaları, 192 2 (İstanbul: Avesta, 2005),21.

classes.⁶⁴ For this line, intersectionality as a theory has begun to be viewed recently. However, the position of intersectionality is a crucial point in Türkiye. As Cockburn explained, this intersectionality operates not only on an individual level but also at the macro level, shaping social structures, institutions, and relationships. These dimensions of power are deeply interwoven, collectively determining the opportunities and constraints experienced by individuals and groups.⁶⁵ Hence, the position of intersectionality cannot be considered without state- or power operation. Although feminism emerged in the 60s in all Western countries, it came to Türkiye later. Besides, feminism (by the state) can be seen in the middle class in Türkiye. The problem is how the feminist concept separated the process between before the 1980s and after the 1980s. As Güneş-Ayata mentioned, women are involved in the political process in Türkiye. She notes that there are two categories of political participation—individual and societal—and that women typically fall into both. She does, however, bring up individual freedom when voting in elections because everyone has the right to vote and be elected when discussing individual engagement. However, Güneş-Ayata highlights that masculinity alters decision-making processes. In addition, it demonstrates how women's political involvement functions as a societal symbol of the masculine mindset. It attempts to demonstrate how women actively participate in men's political decision-making processes. This demonstrates how much politics is. Women's low level of active participation before 1980 is indicative of the way the political movements of the era changed during that decade. The rise of independent women's organizations made women's participation more apparent, especially when they started to speak up for themselves in these ideological frameworks. However, within broader political parties, women's presence was typically acknowledged primarily in a symbolic or representative capacity rather than as equal participants. This illustrates how male-dominated power systems continue to exist even in environments that strive for equality. Instead of being seen as autonomous individuals with unique viewpoints and goals, women were frequently seen in this framework as

⁶⁴Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, 1. paperback ed., 5. [print.] (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Pr, 1991).

⁶⁵Cynthia Cockburn, "Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War: A Feminist Standpoint," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12, no. 2 (June 2010): 150, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616741003665169>.

an extension of the greater political fight.⁶⁶ To put it another way, women have once again fallen short of their full potential. In the political debate, women have attempted to establish a position for themselves. Feminist movements have placed a higher priority on women's complete political representation, even though all of these attempts to highlight the intersectionality of Turkish women. They have thus been split along numerous lines, including identity issues, language issues, Muslim women in the Turkish women's movement, Turkish (Atatürkist) women, Turkish-leftist women, and LGBT issues. Kurdish women attempted to survive in this segment of the Turkish women's movement, but the Turkish-Kurdish conflict put an end to them.

Overall, a complicated interaction between grassroots activity and state feminism has defined the Turkish women's movement, alternating between empowerment and restriction. Despite giving women legal rights, early Republican laws largely benefited the nationalist agenda rather than promoting autonomous feminist agency. State control, nationalism, and internal conflicts have hampered Turkish feminism over the years, especially in relation to the identities of Kurdish and Muslim women. Although the movement's development reflects larger social changes, the power structures it aims to overthrow continue to place restrictions on it. Real progress necessitates addressing intersectionality and recognizing the various struggles that all women face outside of the nationalist framework of the Turkish state.

2.2. Rethinking the Kurdish Women's Movement: Jineology Through a Militarist Lens

The Kurdish women's movement is a struggle for self-determination and a fundamental rethinking of power, not merely for gender equality. Kurdish women's activism has developed in a setting of statelessness, armed conflict, and entrenched sexism, in contrast to many feminist movements that started as protests against state structures. "Jineology," a revolutionary feminist framework that questions prevailing knowledge systems and provides a fresh perspective on women's emancipation, is at the core of this movement. However, this movement is experienced, fought for, and

⁶⁶Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "Türkiye'de Kadının Siyasete Katılımı," *Kadın Bakış Açısından 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın*, der. Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), 293-295.

frequently militarized; it is not only theoretical. The complicated link between feminism and militarization in the Kurdish struggle should be examined, with the question of whether armed resistance serves as a means of empowering the movement or as a barrier to its feminist potential. It seeks to understand the conflicts, inconsistencies, and radical possibilities that characterize this particular feminist movement by following the ideological and historical development of Kurdish women's activity in terms of militarism. In this context, the terms militarism and Kurdish women's movement should be understood within military-nation-gender.

The most significant question within Türkiye is how the Kurdish nationalist mindset has developed during the historical process. Particularly, it can be said that the development of Kurdish nationalism also depended on Turkish nationalism between 1919 and 1925. The modernist-oriented Kurdish urban elite had strong nationalist emotions during 1919 and 1921 when the state was ineffectual in establishing its authority and in controlling the nation's events. The traditional Kurdish elite, on the other hand, decided to stay out of the burgeoning nationalist movement due to its limited regional power and constituency. The aspiration for national self-determination, which was quickly gaining support among the urban intellectual elites, was primarily rejected by this set of elites at the same time. After the Turkish Republic was established in 1923 and the caliphate was abolished in 1924, this course underwent a significant alteration. Traditional Kurdish elites were the main component of Kurdish resistance to the Kemalist state as a result of these changes, which brought them to the fore of nationalist politics.⁶⁷ In this line, the growth of the Kurdish nationalist mindset led to the revelation of the militarist movement within the whole mechanism, mainly against women. To begin with, the militaristic movement in the Kurdish organization can be seen explicitly in the role of women as a fighter. The main role of Kurdish women is mostly known as they fight for their emancipation; however, their priority is to fight for their identity in the PKK organization. At this point, the main issue is how the doctrine of masculinity makes women objects in their political gains in a way of militarism. The politics of the word demonstrates that the struggle for land, identity, and nation usually sees women as an apparatus. This mentality is related to the management system of masculinity and its division throughout the world, especially

⁶⁷ Abbas Vali et al., *Kürt milliyetçiliğinin kökenleri üzerine çalışmalar* (Istanbul: Avesta, 2005), 24.

over women. Additionally, the struggle of women in the Kurdish communities has emerged in terms of militarism. Even though the Kurdish movement does not recognize itself within the framework of militarism, its struggle and efforts for Kurdish women are shown explicitly. Hence, the Kurdish women's movement has been transformed by militarism. It can be clearly said that the geography of Kurds and their respective cultural dynamic, which is mostly androcentric, has inspired the Kurdish movement in the context of male domination. The spirit of the women's movement and feminism as a theory followed the path of the Kurdish movement. Namely, the Kurdish women want to prove their existence within the Kurdish struggle. Besides, Kurdish women have started to pursue a manly battle in their society because they want the power that comes from being like men. They merely fell prey to the understanding of being a man or being like a guy, as well as the desire for power. Kurdish women have been imbued with the belief that the Kurdish fight will bring about their conception of freedom. With the establishment of the PKK's women's organization, this began to take shape and spread throughout society. Historically, the Kurdish women's movement began in the 1990s as a theoretical. According to Dirik, women were identified as "struggling women" who wanted freedom from patriarchal definitions, and they formed a doctrine of revolutionary women's militancy. This gave rise to the 'Women's Liberation Ideology' of the 1990s, which emphasized the role of ideology in keeping women from being subjugated into liberal or conservative ideologies or frameworks. Dirik has mentioned five main elements. The five main tenets of the Women's Liberation Ideology are love for the motherland, organization, struggle, free mind and will, and ethics and aesthetics. 'Loving and protecting one's homeland' is the Kurdish expression *welatparêzî*, which signifies a dedication to liberating territories from militarism, colonization, and occupation. This philosophy promotes love for all people and the earth, opposing ideas of boundaries, nations, and states that men govern. To explore democratic values in their local surroundings, the movement pushes internationalists to detach their social history from the government and governing classes. The third tenet, *rêxistinî*, which means "organizedness" or "organization," is what keeps women's battles safe. A dedication to ongoing struggle that fosters adaptability, flexibility, and transformation should serve as the foundation for both organization and ideas. Aesthetics, the fifth principle, promotes women's liberation from patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial standards. Beauty transcends physicality, relating to ethics and self-determination. Aesthetics should be informed by justice, autonomy, truth, and liberation. Additionally, a new concept called the

Women's Liberation Ideology is taught to male cadres to address the dominance and violence of patriarchy. It encourages free coexistence, self-defense, and equal relationships. This ideology applies to women everywhere, including Kurdish women's movements and other situations. It assists in coordinating militancy and defining social relations for the global community, Kurdish and Middle Eastern society, and the fighter realm.⁶⁸ The formation of the Kurdish women's movement on the axis of militarism, which Dirik also mentions but fails to fully address, is evident in the theory and current practices. In this case, Jinêoloji (womanology), which is used on behalf of the Kurdish Women Movement, has been created around the Kurdish-National movement. The main question in this context is whether the Kurdish women's movement has been able to represent all Kurdish women with its current ideology. If so, how does it address the lack of emancipation of Kurdish women in their societies or their lack of resistance against male domination?

There is a woman who has been a member of the Dem Party for a long time and struggled in Yûksekova stated that

Even though I struggled in the Dem Party for over 20 years, it can be said that we still lack in women's studies. When it comes to the Kurdish women's movement, it is still possible to see the male-dominated pressure on the women's movement. The Kurdish women's movement (TJA) has often acted differently in practice from jinêoloji, which it sees as a pioneer in its formation and accepts as a science. The Kurdish women's movement has become invisible within the Kurdish movement. The theme of the problems is integrated within the Kurdish movement and Kurdish identity. Kurdish women have often become imitations of the men in the movement, and the principle of masculinity has been imposed on women. Women's dress, behavior, and sitting posture were questioned as a result of the dominance of men in the party. As a result, the TJA movement and the discipline of gynecology are overshadowed, and the Kurdish women's movement has yet to reach the local population beyond the boundaries of women in the Kurdish struggle; many women in the Kurdish regions are still unaware of TJA and jinêoloji, and in Yûksekova, in particular, they still perceive TJA as an armed group similar to the PKK. The party formed the committee, which is primarily composed of men and tribesmen who are relatives of women who have problems. Therefore, I can say that TJA and jineology cannot fully represent Kurdish women. I believe that the real solution to this is to reach all Kurdish women with an understanding that is free from nationalist lines and masculine imposition.

It draws attention to a crucial contradiction in the Kurdish women's movement: although it strives for women's liberation, it is nevertheless involved in the larger nationalist and military conflict, frequently strengthening the very institutions it is trying to overthrow. Kurdish women are frequently asked to adhere to male-defined

⁶⁸Dilar Dirik, *The Kurdish Women's Movement: History, Theory, Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 2022). 82-83.

standards of resistance, demonstrating the movement's dominance of masculinity in both philosophy and practice. However, the Dem Party member's statement highlights the movement's shortcomings even more, especially in its fight to overcome male-dominated decision-making processes. Many Kurdish women are still unaware of or disengaged from groups like TJA, making representation a critical issue. This implies that ingrained patriarchal standards continue to impede the actual application of Jineology's conceptual suggestions. The Kurdish women's movement needs to establish an independent arena where women's voices, experiences, and resistance strategies are valued in order to genuinely achieve independence. Namely, it cannot just copy masculine modes of struggle. This entails tackling both the internal constraints imposed by male-dominated systems within the movement as well as the external persecution Kurdish women experience.

To sum up, the Kurdish women's movement is situated at a complicated juncture where militarization and liberation meet, and it continues to function under patriarchal and masculine systems. The Kurdish women's movement is directly intersected by the militarist line of the movement within the framework of militarist feminism, even though the line of the women's movement that it attempts to construct in the theoretical context is founded on feminist ideas. Within the Kurdish women's movement, this exposes the classism among women. Unresolved is the conflict between pursuing female emancipation and becoming enmeshed in a male-dominated movement. Kurdish women cannot be truly represented if the movement is limited to nationalist and militaristic ideologies. To reach its full emancipatory potential, the Kurdish women's movement must reject the push to adopt male-centered modes of resistance and establish a forum where women's needs, struggles, and experiences guide the movement. This entails eliminating internal hierarchies that still restrict Kurdish women's autonomy in addition to combating exterior persecution. The movement's ability to reach out to all Kurdish women and transcend its existing limitations will ultimately determine its actual success. This will ensure that its ideology is not merely a theoretical debate but rather a lived reality of empowerment and self-determination.

CHAPTER III

KURDISH WOMEN IN THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT (IN TÜRKIYE)

The emerging feminist movement in the world, especially in Türkiye, has been viewed from both a masculine-nationalist and political perspective. Before explaining the feminist movement, we should clarify the concept of *feminism* in context. Feminism is a widely used term that advocates for social and political rights for women equal to men. However, as Kandiyoti says in their book, “Feminism is centered on a critique of patriarchy; it makes visible and seeks to transform the subordinate positions to which women have been subjected throughout history.”⁶⁹ That is why the conceptualization of feminism should be debated in terms of androcentric and nationalist perspectives in this context. On the other hand, Butler mentioned that “Feminist theory argues that gender is socially constructed and that the mechanisms that reproduce masculine power structures need to be challenged as this is constructed.”⁷⁰ In this sense, even though feminism and its construction are mostly based on being against patriarchal and masculine perspectives, the pattern of concept seems within the framework of them, particularly in practices.

If the concept of feminism is considered in the world, the historical process should be principally considered as well because of the comprehension that it occurs in societies. The world’s feminist movement demonstrates that the movement of women has been coming from the struggle and violation of women’s rights in the world. As Gago mentioned about feminism and its struggle, theorizing class through subalternity, coloniality, and difference challenges Marxist history's focus on homogeneity and unity. Feminisms, through strikes, challenge labor boundaries, exposing historically exclusionary meanings. Strikes broaden feminist experiences, involving spaces,

⁶⁹Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 274.

⁷⁰Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990),27.

generations, and bodies not included in earlier feminist practices, and challenge the "patriarchy of the wage." Also, Feminism's roots, communitarian reinvention, and geographic imagination contribute to an expanding cartography. That is why the waves of women's movements have followed their lack of existence and their struggle for proof of their existence in the world. However, it has occurred on the axis of the patriarchal political process, which was the colonial, neocolonial, class, and labor attacks in the world. First, the colonial system in the world, particularly the Western patriarchal system, wanted to attain all inferior territories, such as black people. That is why the easiest way to get their land is to use their women. Even white women have never accepted black women as equals in their lives. It is not just linked to racist discrimination, but also it is related to religion or political conflict. The Western perspective has created feminism with the classification of women. As Hooks mentioned, privileged-class white women declared their ownership of the women's movement, placing working-class, poor whites and all women of color as followers. This led to the overshadowing of race, nation, and gender issues in contemporary neocolonialism. Feminism did not remain aloof from this dynamic, as class relations have overshadowed these issues.⁷¹ It can be clearly said that before feminism as a concept, the classification of women on the side of racism was born in the West. How were the women's movements in Türkiye and Kurdish?

Yuval-Davis mentioned that women are frequently portrayed as national symbols, with their bodies serving as representations of the moral character and general well-being of the populace. Women's liberation is often used as a means of achieving larger national objectives by nationalist groups, including ones who profess to promote gender equality. As a result, the political fight for national liberation takes precedence over the fight for gender equality, and women's interests are subordinated within the broader nationalist agenda.⁷² The predicament faced by Kurdish women in Türkiye's feminist movement illustrates how sexism and nationalism coexist. Kurdish women have long been left out of Turkish feminism, which was primarily influenced by middle-class, heteronormative women and prioritized national interests over gender equality. Kurdish women's identities have been influenced by both governmental

⁷¹Bell Hooks, *Feminism is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, Canada: South End Press, 7 Brookline Street, 2000), 44.

⁷²Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 45.

policies and nationalist ideology, and they are frequently viewed through a nationalist rather than a feminist lens. Women were included as militants in Kurdish nationalist movements, particularly inside organizations like the PKK, although their agency and expression were frequently restricted by traditional gender roles. Abdullah Öcalan's introduction of the idea of Jineology (Kurdish Women's Science) aims to offer Kurdish women a voice; however, it still has issues because it was developed by a man. Despite being intended to alleviate women's oppression, this top-down strategy still keeps them under the patriarchal framework of nationalist movements. Kurdish women in the feminist movement often subordinate their gender issues to more general political objectives, making it difficult to strike a balance between their fight for gender equality and their dedication to national freedom. In order to empower women to identify their own identities and battles, the feminist movement in the Kurdish context must transcend nationalist goals. TJA's main slogan is "As women are liberated, society is liberated." It is also a representation that does not accept life without organization. Their women's struggle prioritizes the socialization of the ideology of freedom, the construction of democratic life, and the development of democratic communal life. They adopt the principle of Jineology in its basic meaning. It adopts the understanding of the struggle against the history of women's slavery, against economic, social, political, cultural, and mental exploitation.⁷³

If you ask if TJA represents me today, no, it does not. So many women were punished, tortured, and killed. They were all Kurdish. TJA is a women's guerrilla movement. Kurdish women have not yet formed a social practice of struggle against violations of their rights.

Said a Kurdish woman who had suffered pain from the political system. As Spivak has stated, it also might criticize the power from the side of the intellectual's role in the subaltern's cultural and political movement against hegemony. Considering the part of the Kurdish political movement's proposition over the Jineology. It can be claimed that the imperialist agenda that a group of intellectuals who might be referred to as the subaltern studies group are facing complicates the growth of the subaltern. All these discussions have led us to consider the following: Who speaks for the subaltern Kurdish women? and Can the Subaltern Speak?⁷⁴ Another important consideration is

⁷³<https://www.tevgerajinenazad.com/biz-kimiz/>

⁷⁴Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" içinde *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, der. Cary Nelson ve Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 3.

who and why the subaltern studies serve. When the problem of Kurdish women exists in this state, it can be said that the concept of Jineology did not work in the Kurdish communities because the idea did not represent the women during this process. Even though the concept of Jineology and its representatives demonstrate themselves as a defender of Kurdish women's liberation in their daily lives, the concept shows that it is not a feminist perspective or defender of women's rights but should be considered part of a nationalist movement for their political interests. Therefore, the Turkish women's movement has not been able to represent Kurdish women, and the Kurdish women's movement has not been able to grow within a feminist framework. Furthermore, by departing from a more militaristic stance, the Kurdish women's movement has become a target of nationalist politics. In the sociopolitical context, it has also caused division among Kurdish women and has emerged with the image of the warrior woman, the woman who resists. Because it was unable to obtain its fundamental principles from the masculine political line, the Kurdish women's movement, like all the women's groups that were influenced by it, succumbed to politics. Consequently, Kurdish women started to be perceived as part of a certain community. Party women, partisan women, warrior women, Muslim Kurdish women, white Kurdish women, etc. This implies Kurdish women's representational component. It also challenges the Kurdish women's movement's failure to bring Kurdish women together using an intersectional perspective. The Turkish women's movement has a similar phenomenon. Consequently, is it feasible to come together in a structure at this time without distinguishing? Can a true intersectional space be constructed? The unification of women as women within the existing dynamics is the only way to create a framework free from masculine politics, which is the necessary foundation for the development of intersectionalism.

In conclusion, in Türkiye, the portrayal of Kurdish women in the mainstream feminist movement is still a hotly debated topic influenced by politics, nationalism, and past exclusions. Although the fundamental goal of feminism is to promote the rights and emancipation of all women, dominant power structures have frequently influenced its course by elevating some narratives while undermining others. Due to the historical influence of nationalist ideology, the Turkish feminist movement has found it difficult to properly recognize and include Kurdish women's views. However, the creation of an autonomous feminist framework that places the unique experiences of Kurdish

women at the center has been impeded by the Kurdish women's movement's frequent subordination to the larger objectives of Kurdish nationalism. However, its development within a male-dominated political structure raises important questions about agency, representation, and the true potential of such a movement to achieve feminist liberation beyond nationalist interests. The complex relationship between gender, ethnicity, and political ideology has further fragmented the Kurdish women's struggle, classifying them into different identities rather than fostering a unified feminist front. At the same time, the Kurdish women's movement has frequently been subordinated to the broader goals of Kurdish nationalism, making it impossible to develop an independent feminist framework that centers on the unique experiences of Kurdish women. Kurdish and Turkish women can only unite in solidarity by overcoming imposed identities and political constraints, establishing a feminist movement that is truly inclusive, emancipatory, and rooted in the lived experiences of all women. Therefore, the larger challenge is not only about acknowledging the historical and political struggles of Kurdish women but also about creating a truly intersectional feminist space—one that transcends nationalist frameworks and masculine politics. To achieve this, feminist movements must be radicalized in order to ensure that women's voices are not merely used as a tool for larger political agendas but are centered in their own right.

3.1. Alliance of Kurdish Policies with ‘Militarist Feminism’ Considered in Kurdish Women Fighters and Their Bodies’ Performance

Even though the emergence of feminism seems to have erupted on the political scene, as Sirman mentioned, in the half of the 19th 80s, as Mojab mentioned, the entry of feminism into Turkish politics took place right after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Historically, if even being militant and producing militarist-feminism knowledge is a significant statement, it is also important to produce Kurdish-Nationalist knowledge in the Kurdish political organization. That is why there should be a comprehension of militarist feminism practices in terms of being women fighters. After participating in the PKK organization, the perspective of Kurdish women and their liberation began to shape within the scope of the Kurdish-nationalist line. Although their aim was self-determination, their early beginnings were motivated by the idea of communism. The party has changed a lot, and now it emphasizes gender

equality. Although women have participated in the party from its inception, following the 1980 coup d'état, their involvement started to shift. In the early 1990s, women made up one-third of PKK members, drawing in members from the Kurdish diaspora, metropolitan university youth, and underprivileged communities. As women's engagement in resistance expanded from rural to urban regions, they also gained prominence.⁷⁵ Within the framework of the Kurdish women's movement, participation in the Kurdish organization seems to be a priority for the emancipation of women; however, the main issue is the path they have followed. Therefore, resistance gives power to Kurdish women, who are organized by the male political side. Another reason for following this path is that it is directly related to the Turkish women's movement because this movement did not give any space to Kurdish women in the context of the identity issue.

On the other hand, in the world, all battles revolved around women and their body politic. The body politic is involved as a useful apparatus for national-mindset politics. When it comes to the Kurdish issue in Türkiye, the body of Kurdish women becomes integrated with the land and their identity. For this reason, the notion of land and identity began to gain surplus value by integrating it with the female body. It has made its place in world history as a path of fighting for freedom. But, the practices of Kurdish women are reflected from the past to the present day as an unwitting copy of Kurdish fighting men. At this point, the relationship between body politics and the building of militarist feminism is crucial in this context. Besides that, it is important in this line how the feminist thoughts of Kurdish women, who consider that they have achieved freedom within the Kurdish movement, have been militarized by masculine policies. The phrase "feminist perspectives" is as simple to use as it is to develop. To study, explain, and critique the political functioning of masculinities and femininities in war zones, military institutions, and militarized cultures in pre-war, wartime, and post-war periods, Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via discuss how they deliberately create a feminist perspective. They highlight how the true subject is objectified and how the feminist is transformed within militarism.⁷⁶ In other respects, how the male domination creates a *docile body* for women. As a connection with the *docile body* from Foucault, the

⁷⁵Handan Çağlayan, *Women in the Kurdish Movement: Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses*, trans. Simten Coşar, 1. ed (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 59-60.

⁷⁶Colleen Burke, *Women and Militarism* (San Francisco: People's Press, 1983), 2-3.

concept addressed how bodies are subjected, trained, and regulated through various practices in societies. It makes them (Kurdish women) obedient, useful, and efficient within the societal structures and political benefits within the scope of the nationalist mindset. *Docile bodies* controlled Kurdish women's bodies in pursuit of certain interests, such as ideology. As Foucault mentioned in *Discipline and Punish*, in the early seventeenth century, soldiers were seen as recognizable figures with natural signs of strength, courage, and pride. Their body was considered a blazon of strength and valor, and movements like marching and head bearing were part of a bodily rhetoric of honor. Recruits were taught to hold their heads high, stand upright, and maintain a taut stomach, broad shoulders, long arms, strong fingers, and a small belly. Additionally, the classical age discovered the body as an object and target of power, with the body being manipulated, shaped, trained, and obeyed. The great book of Man-the-Machine was written on two registers: the anatomical-metaphysical register, which was written by Descartes, and the technical-political register, which was constituted by regulations and empirical methods for controlling or correcting the operations of the body. Moreover, La Mettrie's *L'Homme-machine* is both a materialist reduction of the soul and a general theory of dressage, with the notion of 'docility' joining the analyzable body to the manipulable body. Automata were not only a way of illustrating an organism but also political puppets, with Frederick II being obsessed with them. The eighteenth century was interested in these projects of docility, as they were new in their ability to demonstrate power and adapt to changing circumstances. The historical moment of disciplines saw the birth of an art of the human body aimed at growth, intensification, and forming a relation that makes it more obedient and useful. This led to a policy of coercion and calculated manipulation of the body, creating a 'political anatomy' and 'mechanics of power.' Discipline produced subjected and practiced 'docile' bodies, defining how one can control others' bodies.⁷⁷ Kurdish women's power and liberation through masculinization can also be viewed as the masculinization of PKK women's views, habits, and fighting techniques. The dominance of male authority is evident in women's postures, attire, and behavior, not only within the PKK but also in Kurdish political platforms. This also highlights the

⁷⁷Michel Foucault and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 104-107.

disparity in social status between Kurdish women who are fighting and other women. The interviewee, who highlighted the classism of Kurdish women, claims that:

Being a Kurdish woman in society is not the same as being a woman at a party. Due to the identity we carry when we visit as Dem Party women, for instance, we are allowed to enter the mosque areas where men are present with their heads uncovered and pray with the deceased person during the condolences in our region (Yüksekova), where men and women are segregated. We act in this way because of our party identification. Furthermore, our dress code is a crucial aspect of the celebration. Some males in the group frequently disapprove of wearing clothing that is accessible to men. These are minor instances that are rarely discussed, yet they demonstrate how our bodies are in control. Kurdish women can safeguard their freedom within the struggle.

The quotation draws attention to Kurdish women's contradictory status in social and political spheres, especially inside the DEM Party. It draws attention to the conflict that exists between the autonomy that women are afforded through political struggle and the continued control over their bodies, especially in environments that are dedicated to gender freedom. However, because their bodies serve as both locations of control and release, their autonomy is still disputed in political arenas such as the DEM Party.

Even the *Jinêoloji* stems from a socialist-revolutionary conscience; the root of masculinity and feudalism is never left to men. The mainstream issue is that the Kurdish women, who particularly struggle in the DEM Party, turned down the physical vision. They have created instrumentalization of their bodies. Nevertheless, the huge problem consists of patriarchal views and their conveying knowledge from generation to generation, particularly to women. Additionally, his idea reminds us of the notion of intersectionality, which is focused on the role of masculinity in the communities of Cockburn. Intersectionality considers that institutions like families, corporations, or religious organizations cannot be isolated to a single domain (e.g., gender, economy, or ethnicity). These structures simultaneously operate across multiple dimensions of power, including economic, ethnic, and gender hierarchies. To illustrate, corporations often privilege men in leadership, religious institutions mobilize wealth while reinforcing male dominance, and nationalist ideologies emphasize the reproductive role of patriarchal families. These dimensions, though distinct, are interdependent and

intersectional, shaping societal structures and relations collectively.⁷⁸ It means that the influence of masculine culture domination can be seen clearly in the framework of masculinity and its role in Kurdish societies.

Furthermore, the feminist militarist approach should be considered with nationalist practices on the Kurdish side and the feminist concept in relation to the liberal and anti-liberalism contexts. The military aims to conquer a territory of itself and its folk to alter the power's interests, such as their nation, culture, and language. Besides that, the superiority of militarism has tried to wipe out what they know about themselves. The point is that they manage to control each nationalist system. For these reasons, the supremacists use their power and heteropatriarchy against the women in the territory. In this context, the relationship between the body and the politics of women is the most vital point in creating wrong-liberal feminism for women's vindication and militarist feminism in all war or political conflict territories. This mentality of the body politic aim is also to create subordination and domestication of women for their land, beliefs, and politics. Despite that, liberal feminism wants women to take their rights and attain their rights, still under the patriarchal system. In these scenes, subjugation or reification of women will be easy for heteropatriarchy. Mies's study explores the connection between patriarchy and global accumulation, highlighting the subjugation of women, nature, and colonies. The feminist movement traces this connection, highlighting the need for practices to depatriarchalize and decolonize from an internationalist perspective.⁷⁹ According to Swampa, the notion of *neo-extractivism* has become an important lens through which to explore the convergence of environmental exploitation and the commodification of bodies, particularly in postcolonial contexts. Neo-extractivist refers to the increasing emphasis on resource extraction in global capitalist economies, frequently at the expense of indigenous lands, people, and labor. In this perspective, the body is viewed as a resource that is vulnerable to both environmental deterioration and economic exploitation, in addition to being a location of cultural or personal identity. The bodies of women, particularly those of marginalized and indigenous groups, are often subjected to two processes of

⁷⁸Cynthia Cockburn, "Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War: A Feminist Standpoint," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12, no. 2 (June 2010): 151, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616741003665169>.

⁷⁹Veronica Gago, *Feminist International: How to Change Everything* (London, UK: Verso, 2020), 82

extraction: first, their labor is exploited in industries that support neo-extractivist economies, and second, patriarchal, environmental, and economic systems use their physical presence as a tool of control. Because it forces us to think about how bodies are both objects of capitalist appropriation and symbols of resistance against the structures that aim to control both land and life, the intersection of both types of extraction challenges feminist rhetoric.⁸⁰

First, though, the Kurdish women who participated in PKK initially took their identity, and then they started to consider their rights, which were suppressed by Öcalan in the 1990s. Çağlayan mentioned that in the early 1990s, women's autonomous organizing within the PKK, including the Women's Army and Women's Party, was intertwined with the movement's gender-egalitarian approach.⁸¹ This process continued with the entry into political parties in 1980 and afterward, and at the same time, the liberal rights granted to women led to the commodification of women, whether consciously or unconsciously. Women's active struggle for rights, that is, the women's movement, has caused turmoil within the stronger Kurdish identity. In this context, it proposes that Kurdish women consider *militarized femininity*, which has not been considered, and Kurdish women tend to participate as fighters. Producing violence is not just domesticated by patriarchy but also domesticated by the femininity view implicitly. Even though it demonstrates that the resistance is such a feminist movement, there can be a frankly nationalist struggle.

That is to say that even though the concept of *militarized femininity* has not been common in the Kurdish Women's Movement, it ought to be debated and revised against the Kurdish women's struggle against both other feminist and Turkish nationalist perspectives. First, a conceptualization of the military should be explained in the gender subject. Cockburn has stated that the social sciences have considered militarism, militarization, armies, and weapons technologies as both an effect and a cause of war. Militarization refers to the process of preparation and the resulting state of preparedness of society for war, while militarism is a mindset or ideology that

⁸⁰Maristella Svampa, *Neo-extractivism in Latin America: The Environmental and Social Consequences of Contemporary Capitalism* (London: Zed Books, 2019), 42-45.

⁸¹Handan Çağlayan and Simten Coşar, *Women in the Kurdish Movement: Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 61.

accords high value to military qualities. However, there is a significant slippage between the terms, and "militarism" is often used to describe not just a body of ideas but also the practical influence of military organization and values on social structure and national policies. Charles Tilly has enlisted the concept of "coercion" from a historical perspective, defining it as the concerted application of action that commonly causes loss or damage to individuals or groups. Feminist social scientists have produced a substantial body of work on the theme of militarism and war, introducing a fresh and complementary analysis of gender relations.⁸² However, the mainstream problem is how feminist social scientists have envisioned the women's movement within the existing fighter cadres. In addition, on the side of the Kurdish Women's Movement, is it necessary to include in the fighter cadres for taking Kurdish Women's freedom? Even if it is necessary, can it be in the patriarchal fighter system? Because of that, this perspective also makes men misogynistic toward women. Replacing gender roles can also be a factor that is not recognized by male fighters. Further, men do not want to lose their authority and masculine power in the fighter system, as the interviewee's account and the contradiction of theory and practices itself show in this line.

Overall, the Kurdish women's involvement in militant movements and the broader struggle for gender equality reveals both the transformative power and inherent contradictions of militarist feminism. While Kurdish women have redefined traditional gender roles through their active participation in the movement, their bodies continue to be sites of political control and ideological contestation. This tension underscores the challenge of achieving true liberation within a framework deeply influenced by masculinist structures, even when advocating for gender equality. The concept of "militarized femininity" provides a valuable lens for understanding gendered power dynamics. The militarization of Kurdish women has created new forms of agency, but it has also subjected them to a different kind of subjugation, one that demands conformity to both nationalist and patriarchal frameworks. The struggle of Kurdish women cannot be fully understood without considering the broader systems of colonialism, nationalism, and capitalist exploitation that shape their lived realities. A

⁸²Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis* (London: Zed books, 2007), 266-277.

comprehensive feminist resistance requires dismantling not only state oppression but also the deeply ingrained patriarchal norms within the Kurdish movement itself. This necessitates a re-evaluation of the role of militarism in gender liberation and a shift toward an approach that fosters a genuinely egalitarian and autonomous vision for Kurdish women's struggle.

3.2. Alliance of Turkish Policies with ‘Militarist Feminism’ in Kurdish Women Bodies’ Politics Consider Being Village Guard

The intersection of nationalist mindset, militarism, and gender politics in Türkiye has produced complex dynamics, specifically when considered via the lens of Kurdish women's bodies. This relationship is especially evident in the positions that are given to Kurdish women as representatives of the state and in the hiring of females for the village watch program. This study explores how militarist and nationalist policies simultaneously suppress and use the bodies and identities of Kurdish women as battlegrounds. This illustrates how women are masculinized in the context of gender and how their authenticity is regulated in the public space produced, implying the contradictions behind the alleged freedom offered to Kurdish women under the guise of female guardianship.

The position of Kurdish women in Turkish policies includes a variety of aims, like Turkish women. The main differences between Turkish and Kurdish women are that while Turkish women depend on their nationality and ideology, Kurdish women depend mostly on their own identity and their culture. That is why the roles of Kurdish women in Turkish policies have been given by both Turkish women and Turkish policies. The crucial point is that the problem of women and gender trouble should be evaluated in the context of historical processes and feminist history to comprehend the inequality of gender roles between females and males in Türkiye. In this line, the effects of both Turkish policies and their historical spillovers on the Turkish feminist movement on Kurdish women should be debated. Historically, the position of women to write history has not been seen as possible; however, the profits of policies have led women to be subject to their nationalist ideology. As Berktaç stated, throughout history, it is a very familiar phenomenon that both men and women have been banned from the historical tradition because of their class, race, religious community, etc., but

no man has ever been excluded only because of his gender. However, this is not the case for women; they are distinguished against simply based on their gender, regardless of their collaboration, and are excluded from the writing and interpretation of history, and more generally from the process of symbol-making, and are prevented from knowing their history, even though they are subjects who actively participate in the making of history.⁸³ For this reason, how women participate in Turkish history might be asked. It can be said that inclusion in history began with the development of feminist theory and feminist historiography. Berktaş mentioned the importance of feminist historiography; in considering the depth and scope of feminist historiography's analysis, the relationship between feminism as a social movement and historiography should not be forgotten. A social movement is generally described as a conscious and collective activity undertaken to bring about social change. Additionally, feminist theorists have seriously criticized the established norms, methods, and approaches of the sciences and asked substantial questions. The first purpose of feminist research was to reveal sexism and one-sidedness in the process of knowledge production, that is, to demonstrate that normal science operates not as science but as ideology in relation to women. The natural consequence of this effort was to make women "visible" in all fields. As a result of this effort, which was notably obvious in the field of history, feminist historians have contributed to the widening and deepening of historical questioning, and the resulting picture becoming much more comprehensive, diverse, and colorful. In this process, feminist historiography also went through various stages. Efforts in this field aimed to make "visible" the women rendered invisible by traditional historiography and to give women back their past.⁸⁴ The visibility of women in history produced the nationalist perspective on Kurdish women; because of that, the Turkish women and their movement have begun to see Kurdish women as a nationalist side. Indeed, the political policies make women distinguish between the Kurdish and Turkish women on each side. That is why Kurdish women began to be seen as "other," but Kurdish women should have had a role in Turkish history. The role has been seen as nationalist acts as a representation of their history. Berktaş says that representing the homeland as a female body, this discourse creates a national identity based on the unity and solidarity of men in a nation of

⁸³Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin cinsiyeti*, 1. basım (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Metis, 2003), 22.

⁸⁴Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin cinsiyeti*, 1. basım (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Metis, 2003), 26-29.

brothers. At the same time, the project of the nation-state, as an indication of the transition from the old-status society to the new contract society, is to ensure that the conventional roles attributed to women are maintained under modern forms. It is no longer religion or tradition that determines the right behavioral patterns for women, but the nation-state itself.⁸⁵

Considering the role of being a village guard in Kurdish districts, it appears that the position is offered to Kurdish women as a kind of reward. Although the Turkish nationalist mindset and its ideology claim to view women as subject to their rights, there is a systematic mechanism at play that seeks to control them, using Kurdish women to serve its profits. In the Kurdish district, the village guard system initially began with men from the local villages chosen for their knowledge of the Kurdish language and culture. A new system called the Village Guard System was created by borrowing from the Village Law and Forest Guard Laws. Therefore, members of some tribes in the Kurdish region were given weapons and authorization and made public security officers. Originally, tribe members, however, later non-tribal villagers were also recruited and armed against threats within the country. It was emphasized that this prevented the PKK from gaining the support of the people of the region. The village guard system was established in 1985 and recruited many men.⁸⁶ On the other hand, Özar, Uçarlar, and Aytar mentioned in relation to being forced to become a village guard, Kurdish tribes, which have existed since the Ottoman Empire, have benefited from the “pro-state” and “anti-state” status of the Kurdish tribes, just like in the creation of the Hamidiye Alayları (Regiments), tribes with a heavy list of crimes were preferred. Therefore, the Jirki tribe was the first to accept the position of village guard. The Jirki tribe, known as a tribe with a long list of crimes ranging from kidnapping girls to murder and land grabbing, was thus the first to participate.⁸⁷ After that, in 2016, Kurdish women began to participate in the army system as village guards. If that was seen as an economic right or status given to women, why were only Kurdish women included in the army system? The deeper issue lies in how women are positioned as subjects to be civilized and liberated while being constrained within the boundaries of

⁸⁵Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin cinsiyeti*, 1. basım (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Metis, 2003), 154.

⁸⁶Mehmet Seyman Önder, *Devlet ve PKK ikileminde korucular*, 1. baskı, İletişim yayınları Araştırma, inceleme dizisi, 2164 359 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), 13-14.

⁸⁷Şemsa Özar, Nesrin Uçarlar, and Osman Aytar, *Geçmişten günümüze Türkiye’de paramiliter bir yapılanma: köy koruculuğu sistemi* (Diyarbakır: DİSA Yayınları, 2013), 136-137.

the nationalist mindset; therefore, this dynamic has not been sufficiently examined. In this line, the role of village guards involves two crucial key dynamics: the objectification of Kurdish women and the weaponization of their bodies. In Yüксеkeova, there is a 23-year-old young woman who becomes a village guard out of necessity, and even though it is forbidden to work in another place except for the military, she works a Cafe cited her process as follows:

I have been working in the Turkish army system as a village guard for 5 years. I began to work when I was 18 years old. I had to work there because the salary was minimum wage. I just go on a 24-hour shift one day a week. I do not work in the military, but our economic condition is very bad, which is why I must work there to help my family. I have a boyfriend; he does want me to work there. We always fight about this issue because in Kurdish societies, as you know, they look like a betrayed person. My brother is studying at university, and for this reason, I must help my family and him. Unfortunately, Yüксеkova has many problems finding a good job, at least with minimum wage, and the conditions of working here are very hard. You work each day for around 10-12 hours. It is too much for me to work on something like a job. As a person in the military, you cannot work anywhere, but I am working an extra job as a server at a Cafe. Of course, my family has ostracized me for doing this job. The military system is too complex. I want to leave my job as soon as possible. I do not want to be alone in the military, particularly on the night shift. If they know I am working at Cafe as an extra, they will terminate my employment, and they may accuse me of other things. They should not have known where I was working for now until I left. If you're not tough like a man, you can't do anything in the military. Therefore, anything that is associated with men wearing uniforms is also true for women. I feel more powerful when I act like a man. Even if you are involuntarily wearing a uniform, you forget that you are a lady at that precise moment. You only need to adopt the assigned identity there. You become stronger and are protected as a result.

The testimony emphasizes how her experience reveals the contradictions of militarized femininity—she must adopt masculine-coded behaviors to survive in a male-dominated system, losing her gender identity while gaining a fragile sense of strength. Kurdish society stigmatizes her role, viewing it as betrayal, further demonstrating how Kurdish women's bodies are politicized by both the state and their communities.

There is another woman who is a village guard in Hakkari, Şemdinli, who explained her work and position in the army.

For six months, I have been employed by the military system as a village guard. I'm pleased with my work. I don't have many working hours. In any case, I have little involvement with the military establishment. When they require a paper or have a meeting, they call my husband. I don't interact with military personnel too often. We have been given a good economic space. I always go to meetings with my husband; I never go alone. It's easy for women to serve in the military. Your work isn't that heavy. My authority as a female ranger can sometimes make me appear unworthy in society for pursuing this line of work, but it can also occasionally boost my respectability.

In the Turkish military system, where the position of a village guard offers financial security with little direct involvement in military actions, this testimony represents a different experience of militarist feminism. The speaker's dependence on her husband for administrative tasks emphasizes how patriarchal systems still exist, even in militaristic environments. Because she balances societal stigma with empowerment, her sense of ease in the job stands in contrast to the wider militarization of Kurdish women's bodies. Although her position gives her some control, it also limits her autonomy and agency inside the military hierarchy, reinforcing traditional gender norms. This illustrates how militarist feminism may preserve male domination while selectively integrating women into state structures.

To sum up, incorporating Kurdish women into the Turkish military as village guards is an example of how militarist feminism functions as both a tool of control and a tool of conditional empowerment; although these jobs offer economic assistance and a sense of authority, they ultimately serve the nationalist agenda by integrating Kurdish women into the state's militarized framework; their experiences highlight the paradoxes of militarized femininity—where embracing masculine-coded behaviors is essential for survival, but their roles are still limited by patriarchal and nationalist structures; additionally, their bodies become politicized battlefields, caught between state policies that aim to weaponize them and Kurdish social norms that view them as traitors. This dynamic highlights the larger reality of Turkish state feminism, which reinforces gendered and ethnic inequalities while purposefully integrating Kurdish women into militaristic policies rather than providing true liberty. The experiences examined here demonstrate the pressing need to reconsider feminist rhetoric outside of state-controlled narratives and to support a framework that places Kurdish women's autonomy and agency above militaristic positions.

CHAPTER IV

IS THE CONCEPT OF JINEOLOGY POSSIBLE AS A REPRESENTATION OF KURDISH WOMEN?

As the concept of Jineology is debated in the context of the feminist movement, the representation of Kurdish women must be examined within the specific framework of Kurdish women themselves. This raises the question: What does it truly mean to represent Kurdish women, both within their community and in Kurdish politics? Additionally, is Jineology an accurate reflection of Kurdish women's experiences? To analyze these questions, several key aspects must be considered, including honor, activism, politics, the roles of housewives and mothers, religion, and being part of Kurdish tribal structures. When discussing Jineology and its representation of Kurdish women, it is insufficient to focus solely on this concept, as Kurdish women are represented by various figures in their lives, such as their husbands, fathers, brothers, tribes, political parties, and religion. For instance, in terms of honor, who truly represents Kurdish women from a cultural perspective? While the feminist concept is widely understood globally, its relevance and application in the Kurdish region raises significant questions. As Çağlayan mentioned, the concept of "feminism" was viewed as "Western" and culturally unfit for Kurdish women's struggle for gender equality. Kurdish women's rights were limited to discussions on sexual violence and honor killing without addressing patriarchy, masculinity, nationalist mindset, or capitalist imperialism. Cultural relativism justified violence against women as a cultural practice.⁸⁸ So far, Jineology could not represent most Kurdish women in their townhomes in terms of honor problems. Initially, the honor issue has been seen by their husbands, brothers, fathers, and even their in-law family members and their tribes. That is why the representation of Jineology for Kurdish women started after the terminology of Jineology had occurred in this community. So, before the Jineology,

⁸⁸Handan Çağlayan and Simten Coşar, *Women in the Kurdish Movement: Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), XIX.

what happened, and after the Jineology concepts were birthed in the Kurdish community, what happened? It should be re-analyzed on this process, as a historical.

While the mainstream principle of PKK about women has been giving emancipation to Kurdish women theoretically, what about the reality of practice, especially in the Kurdish community? How many Kurdish women know about the Jineology concept and their responsibility to themselves? There are too many contradictions in this ideology. As representatives of women by the Jineology concept, there should have been announced to every Kurdish woman, such as a Kurdish woman who lives in the village, who works on a farm, who is a housewife, and who is not educated. The interesting point is that the meaning of the Jineology and its representation has only been known by Kurdish women, who are members of the Kurdish party, educated people, politicians, etc. In this line, the Kurdish women's movement and its representation lack practices that should have been discussed to improve as a hypothesis. The main aim of the representation of Kurdish women is probably with the strategy of the Kurdish military perspective. Because of that, the representation of Kurdish women's freedom, economic needs, and other stuff is based on the superiority of patriarchal men. As Cockburn has mentioned, Feminist social scientists have contributed significantly to the understanding of militarism and war, focusing on gender relations as a key factor in the perpetuation of war. They have provided empirical evidence of women's gender-specific experiences in various war zones, highlighting their unique lives, experiences, and deaths. Some studies have focused on regional regions like Africa or compared women's positions in conflict zones like Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslavia. Some studies have also examined the transition from war to uneasy peace, highlighting the ongoing violence experienced by women.⁸⁹ Particularly, there are no specific academic studies about Kurdish women's representation of struggles and their dynamics in Türkiye. All examples have been given to the West or other countries. As a third-world country, the Kurdish women and their facts should have been recognized by the social sciences. Even PKK has demonstrated that the Kurdish women have participated in the Fighting cadres system to have their emancipation, and the main idea frankly has been advocated by Ocalan;

⁸⁹Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis* (London: Zed books, 2007), 277.

however, Kurdish women have also resisted many of the things in PKK in the framework of inequality between females and males. Jongerden has stated that Abdullah Öcalan's decision to make him a symbolic leader and subordinate the women's movement to the PKK's presidential council was contested by the women's movement. They argued that Öcalan should not have the responsibility to direct the movement and defend their independence and autonomy. This was not the first time women contested decisions within the PKK. In the 1990s, women resisted Osman Öcalan's order to cover their hair but instead created a new opening for a women's party.⁹⁰

Even though Kurdish women have been given their representation, theoretical practices show that this is a pseudo-representation. So much so that jineology has been controlled by a masculine and super-hierarchical system rather than being a movement that is representative of women; this is where the crippled representation comes from; while Kurdish women fighters are represented and controlled by Kurdish male fighters, Kurdish women who live their daily lives normally continue to be managed and represented by their husbands, fathers, brothers, and tribesmen in a super patriarchal system, ignorant of jineology. Throughout the History of jineology, there are many definitions of it and a definition which has been mentioned by Al-Ali and Käser in their article; Jineology presents a new epistemology, arguing that it aligns with feminist standpoint theory and transnational and decolonial feminism. It highlights that Jineology provides Kurdish women activists with the ideological and political tools to challenge male dominance within the Kurdish political movement. The article provides historical and empirical context for the concept, focusing on the Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement's understanding of the prevailing social science paradigm and the way it challenges positivist, androcentric, and colonial knowledge production. The article also discusses three themes: Jineology versus feminism, challenging masculinity, and rethinking sexuality. It contests feminist epistemologies and politics while recognizing the contributions of Kurdish women's rights activism. They discussed in their article Kurdish women activists' attitudes towards and conceptualizations of sexuality, which are fundamental to the reimagining of

⁹⁰Joost Jongerden, "Gender Equality and Radical Democracy: Contractions and Conflicts in Relation to the 'New Paradigm' within the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," *Anatoli*, no. 8 (October 1, 2017): 233–56, <https://doi.org/10.4000/anatoli.618>, 245.

femininities and ideas of liberation and freedom. Kurdish scholars and activists are advocating for Jineology, a social science approach that opposes Western-focused, positivist, and androcentric knowledge production. Their call for women's experiences and decolonization aligns with feminist standpoint theory and transnational feminist methodologies. Jineology, a Kurdish concept, is opposed to the Western-focused, positivist, and androcentric social science paradigm. Kurdish scholars and activists argue that Jineology should focus on women's experiences and decolonize knowledge, aligning with feminist standpoint theory and transnational feminist methodologies. Women in political and armed spheres have established their organizations, such as the first women's army in 1993 and the Kurdistan Women's Workers Party in 1999. Despite being contested by male members of the PKK, women continue to demand equal representation.⁹¹ Even though the jineology has been trying to avoid the Western-focused, positivist, and androcentric discourse, the concept of jineology has been produced by an androcentric perspective by Ocalan.

The other critical fact is the relationship between TJA (*Tevgera Jinen Azad/ Free Women Movement*) and jineology. Even though jineology has been seen at the top of the TJA, there is another aspect of the representation issue in terms of them. The strong bond relationship between the TJA and jineology is that there are philosophical and ideological perspectives within these two significant notions. Jineology generally criticizes the structure of patriarchal communities that exclude women in scientific production and knowledge systems; however, the TJA, by adapting this framework, advocates for a more active role for women in knowledge production, social organization, and the struggle for freedom. Before the creation of TJA, there was a KJA (*Kongreya Jinên Azad - Özgür Kadın Kongresi- Free Women's Congress*). To comprehend these two main organizations' structures within the historical process, Käser mentioned in her PhD thesis that the Kurdish women's movement (KJA) in urban Türkiye had built a complex, multi-layered, and intertwined structure before the attempted coup in 2016. The women have influenced policy-making, educated women and youth, organized conferences and campaigns, and marched at the head of protests. They have fought hard to get women's equality enshrined in the written ideology and

⁹¹Nadje Al-Ali and Isabel Käser, "Beyond Feminism? Jineology and the Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement," *Politics & Gender* 18, no. 1 (March 2022): 212–43, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X20000501>, 10-12.

translated into actual political mechanisms. By 2016, there were few men from within the movement who could sabotage the women. After the attempted coup in July 2016, most HDP politicians were arrested and faced lengthy prison sentences. The women's movement proved to be resilient, re-emerging as the Movement of the Free Women (TJA) in Diyarbakir. During their glory days, these women reinvented politics and created new imaginaries of gender-based equality and justice.⁹² It can be said that KJA and TJA were created between the years 2015-2016. Mainly, TJA has been considered a continuation of KJA as a movement of jineology. Even though the structure and operation of TJA and its main ideology of jineology have been seen as crucial points for Kurdish women and communities, the problem is the representation of women. Even though, as ideological, the conceptualization of TJA and jineology explains, as a practical matter, there can be many contradictions. These contradictions asked many questions: If the Kurdish woman does not want to be a participant in any ideology or organization, who defends or represents these women for violation? Additionally, giving the rights for Kurdish women to struggle, such as political parties enough to represent the whole Kurdish women? Even though the Kurdish struggle and its policies within the field give visible representation, there is another fact: the invisible representation of the other Kurdish women. To illustrate, the Kurdish women's movement has traditionally brought together women from different segments of Kurdish communities. However, many of the Kurdish women who have risen to leadership positions or distinction in the political arena might be better educated or have been involved in the party for a long time. That is why the risks reflect a more "middle-class" representation of the movement. The movement of Kurdish women within the party into leadership may not fully reflect the movement. From the point of view of political theory, only giving a role to Kurdish women in the party can be perceived as a liberal perspective. Liberal politics usually highlights the recognition of individual rights and emancipation and focuses less on structural problems. The structural problem is more extensive in this framework; for example, in the Kurdish communities, women have a variety of perspectives, such as being a mother, having different beliefs, having gender problems, being a person in the LGBT community, being uneducated, or being in politics. Despite all these structural differences, is

⁹²Isabel Käser, *The Kurdistan Women's Liberation: Movement Between Violence and Resistance* (PhD diss., SOAS, University of London, 2019), <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/32799>, 102-103.

representation realized by the Kurdish women's movement? Thus, the TJA and its main ideology, jineology, represent the Kurdish women who should struggle and realize the Kurdish problem. What about the "others"? Will they not become the "other" in their communities, which are marginalized nations?

On the other hand, even though jineology, as a representation of Kurdish women, defends women who have been violated of their rights, particularly related to identity and national problems, it focuses on it. The problem is how the remaining women act on the violence they have experienced in their daily lives. Considering the Kurdish women's issue in Hakkari, the women who are complaining about being solely said that

We were alone here. No one came here and asked us. We might have been killed. Maybe our husbands beat us? No one tries to talk to us. Many groups came here, but they talked with the tribes, not the women. Even though the party (she mentioned the DEM Party) came, they talked to our husbands, brothers, and tribes, not with us.

The other woman said that

If someone wants to talk to us, even if they have power, they could have come here and could have talked with us. Our exaptation is not from the Turkish state and their organization, but we thought that party never left us here lonely.

To conclude, the debate covering Jineology and the representation of Kurdish women within their community and political sphere indicates in-depth complexities and contradictions. While Jineology aims to construct a feminist framework within the Kurdish liberation movement, it does not fully capture the various experiences of Kurdish women. Representation within the movement, while symbolically important, seems to be limited to those within political organizations, mainly those tied to the PKK, leaving many women, particularly in rural and unpoliticized areas, without a voice in this new narrative of emancipation. Additionally, the question remains whether Jineology, as conceptualized by Öcalan, is frankly representative of Kurdish women across different socio-economic backgrounds or if it mainly reflects the experiences of women in the political struggle. There is a risk of perpetuating a form of middle-class liberal representation that might not address the deeper structural imbalances and the needs of all Kurdish women, significantly those not directly involved in political activism. Moreover, the Kurdish women's movement must

negotiate its vision for liberation with the reality of patriarchal norms that still dominate daily life. While the movement has made notable strides in challenging male authority and creating space for women in the struggle, it must also ensure that these gains translate into meaningful representation for all Kurdish women, regardless of their role in the community. The stories of women encountering issues such as honor, prostitution, and violence in their homes and communities display the urgent need for more comprehensive actions beyond the political and military spheres. In essence, the Kurdish women's movement, including its theoretical and practical constructs like Jineology, must continually develop to handle these contradictions, ensuring that it not only expresses a select few but represents the full scope of Kurdish women's experiences and struggles.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

By analyzing how Kurdish women's activism intersects with the larger Turkish and Kurdish feminist movements, this study has illuminated how patriarchal political frameworks have influenced their roles. The study has shown how the Kurdish and Turkish women's groups have occasionally used women's bodies for political ends, strengthening rather than weakening gender roles. Kurdish women have frequently been stuck between state feminism and nationalist struggles, traversing a difficult zone of marginalization and co-optation despite being positioned as active players in the struggle.

As Natasa mentioned, Feminism's preponderance of female subjects and agents, as well as its emphasis on experience as a meaningful form of cognition, make it epistemic dirt. The usefulness of feminist epistemology in conventional epistemologies is hampered by its marginalization. Subjective experiences that makeup subjugated knowledge might be in opposition to formal, scientific, and unitary discourses. Compared to men's objective experience, women's subjective experience lacks symbolic strength, which results in a more benign or subconsciously motivated epistemic mistrust.⁹³ It means that given its foundation in embodied and subjective experience and its affiliation with women as both subjects and knowledge providers, feminist epistemology—which is frequently written off as epistemological "dirt"—becomes particularly marginalized in settings influenced by rival nationalist ideologies. This marginalization of Kurdish women, whose bodies are simultaneously gendered, racialized, and politicized, occurs both within Kurdish nationalist frameworks and through state-centric discourses rooted in Turkish nationalism. On the one hand, the Kurdish woman's body can be used as a symbolic tool of resistance

⁹³Nataša Pivec, "Feminist Thought(s) as Dirty Intellectuality: The Case of Andrea Dworkin," *GENDER- Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft* 7, no. 3 (2015): 31–43, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-461236>, 35.

when she is portrayed as a fighter, which is frequently romanticized in nationalist narratives. However, this may obscure the nuanced, lived experiences. However, the Turkish state's apparatus's placement of Kurdish women as village guards places them into a system that prioritizes survival, security, and nation-state loyalty—often at the price of gendered or community solidarity. Kurdish women's bodies are marked with political meaning in different but simultaneous ways through their roles as village guards and fighters. In this sense, their embodied knowledge—which has been influenced by structural ambiguity, displacement, and militarization—makes up what Foucault refers to as "subjugated knowledge"—forms of knowledge that continue to exist on the periphery of prevailing epistemologies that value neutrality, objectivity, and universality. Thus, dominant state narratives not only conceal the symbolic power previously denied to women's experiences, but liberationist discourses also shape, limit, or idealize it. As a result, frameworks that rarely focus on the Kurdish woman as an independent knower but rather as a body that projects political meanings constantly contest her epistemic potential.

Analyzing the experiences (performativity) of Kurdish women in Kurdish communities, particularly in Hakkari, demonstrates that being in a politically conflictive region gave women many roles: warriors and village guards. Considering being a village guard and the function of the village guard in Hakkari. In particular, the dilemma of being a village guard between the state and the PKK is the most important point in this context. Additionally, being a woman village guard has many contradictions in it. I realized in my work most Kurdish people in Hakkari consider being village guards for both females and males as “xayîn” hain/traitors. According to my interviewees, being a village guard creates the “*brakuji*,” which I mentioned above, fratricide/kardeş katili between the Kurds. As you see, the notion of *brakuji* itself is a male invention, as Kırbıyık mentioned in his master's thesis⁹⁴. On the other hand, the fieldwork demonstrated the reason for being a village guard both by forcing the state and the economic condition. In addition, for Kurdish women, being a village guard is both such an opportunity and dangerous for them. My work focused on demonstrating women's experiences in the Turkish army system.

⁹⁴Özcan Kırbıyık, Modern Kürt Siyasal Hayatında Birakuji (Kardeş Katli) Olgusu: Şemdinli Örneği (1978 ve Sonrası) (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2023),35.

I have also analyzed the Turkish feminist women's movement and Kurdish women's movement in the context of Kurdish women's body issues. As I see in the fieldwork, the representation of both these movements involves the militarist and state-feminist approach to Kurdish women. The notion of feminism should be reconsidered without the nation under the intersectionality disciplines. Here, I present a work that goes beyond feminist boundaries. The argument over what it means to be a woman is beyond feminist boundaries. Beauvoir mentioned that it demonstrates how feminism's conceptuality and semantics have been lost in practice. It highlights the differences within feminism's internal dynamics. Without making any distinctions based on a woman's identity, religion, race, beliefs, culture, or language, it aims to highlight the lack of feminist literature. Therefore, the author challenges the existence of women and their role in the world by claiming that they are unique persons with distinctive qualities, as stated by Simone de Beauvoir. Though conceptualism has lost ground, femininity is still regarded as a mysterious reality. Anti-feminists have demonstrated that women are not men, and many American women feel that there is no place for women in general. The two sexes have a complicated connection despite the symmetrical usage of the masculine and feminine labels. Since being a man is not a uniqueness, males frequently criticize women for thinking differently just because they are female. However, this is a defensive tactic.⁹⁵ That is why the problem is being a woman in Hakkari in the context of their roles in political interest. When it comes to the Kurdish women's movement, which I mentioned above, *jineology* has many contradictions. Even though the notion of *jineology* is seen as a science and beyond feminism, its performance demonstrates the militarist role. I also analyzed the term *jineology*; many Kurdish women do not know anything about it, and the representation of this notion involves Kurdish fighters. That is why it can be argued that the *jineology* represents mostly fighter women and their struggle from a political perspective and emancipation.

On the other hand, I tried to demonstrate the men in Kurdish communities and their domination of Kurdish women. Even though the ideology of the Kurdish nationalist mindset/Kurdish independence defends Kurdish women's human rights, their

⁹⁵Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 13-15.

practices demonstrate that they still have cultural domination. So, their ideology and practice are not equal in the scope of women's violence. Even their representation of the political party (DEM party) still has masculine performances over Kurdish women. One of the interviewees' self-criticism of being men issues in the Kurdish community demonstrated that. Learning gender roles is given to a person by their cultural norm in Kurdish societies. Moreover, the main problem is that they see Kurdish women as fighters. It means that there is no recognition of women as a sex/ being an only woman. Kurdish women, as women of a stateless nation, are attempting to be desexualized between the Kurdish and Turkish conflicts.

Furthermore, this study's main contention is that women's identities and bodies have been routinely used for nationalist and militaristic ends in these movements. Kurdish women are in a liminal position, whether it is inside the Turkish feminist movement, where the state's idea of "acceptable" feminism fits with its political agenda, or within the Kurdish movement, where women's roles are frequently interpreted through the prism of the national fight. Kurdish women must continually negotiate their agency within movements that, despite their language of emancipation, are nonetheless entangled in male-dominated power structures, making this liminality not just a geographical or ethnic posture but also an intellectual and political one. The patriarchal mindset has been used to evaluate the link between the Turkish women's movement and state feminism. This has led to an observation of how state feminism manipulates women. Under the supervision of the nation-state and with a nationalist mindset perspective, women's movements have also been controlled, and once more, patriarchal authority has protected them. The concept of state feminism, described by Anunziato, is how state-based organizations, such as women's policy agencies, can have an impact on women's movements outside of the state. With their high levels of national wealth, sizable service sectors, stable nation-states, and representative democratic institutions, post-industrial nations are especially pertinent to this idea. State feminism contends that individuals and state actors can advocate for a "women-friendly" approach and that governments can implement feminist policies. Numerous organizations that take part in gender-specific governmental initiatives have been discovered by researchers, including women's policy machinery, gender equality offices, and women's rights agencies. State feminism, on the other hand, is the process of implementing feminist policies within state apparatuses; yet, it does not always act

to further women's rights; occasionally, it modifies feminist demands to suit state interests, thereby averting radical change.⁹⁶ The study looks at the connection between state feminism and Kurdish women, particularly concerning Türkiye's village guard system. In the Turkish feminist movement, Kurdish women are frequently ignored, while in the Kurdish nationalist movement, they are restricted to patriotic objectives. Women's roles and bodies are manipulated by the state-led village guard system, which is frequently forced onto them with promises of safety or financial stability. According to Anunziato, a state-based organization that influences women's movements outside of the state is known as state feminism. Women's agency is restricted and controlled inside the village guard system to preserve authority over their identities and bodies. This demonstrates how state feminism, despite its claims of protection or empowerment, can be appropriated and utilized to oppress women.

As a connection with the *pure body* from Foucault, the concept addressed how bodies are subjected, trained, and regulated through various practices in societies. This perspective should be considered in terms of gender roles and the nationalist mindset movement. It makes them (Kurdish women) obedient, useful, and efficient within the societal structures and political benefits within the scope of the women's movements. *Pure bodies* controlled Kurdish women's bodies in pursuit of certain interests, such as ideology. According to Foucault's idea of the "pure body" in *Discipline and Punish*, the body is an object that is fashioned, managed, and influenced by a variety of power structures in addition to being a biological entity. This method sharpens the focus on Kurdish women's bodies, especially in the context of militarism. The state, along with other societal systems, shapes, controls, and manipulates the bodily practices of Kurdish women. These women's bodies, as "pure bodies," are formed politically and socially through positions like village guards and soldiers. As Foucault explained, Kurdish women's bodies in this situation become more than just biological beings; they become tools for cultural and political manipulation. The militarist framework manipulates these women's bodies in a way that makes them "obedient" and "useful" through emotional and physical manipulation. Because of this, Kurdish women's bodies end up being "pure bodies," molded within power dynamics and continuously

⁹⁶Luis Anunziato, *Feminism's Misguided Path: The State of Feminism in Argentina*, 1901, 5-7.

managed and influenced to suit the needs of the PKK and the Turkish government.⁹⁷ Foucault's concept of the "pure body" goes beyond the body's basic regulation. The intrusion of the state and other power structures in the body, which is molded by cultural and societal standards, is another aspect of it. Kurdish women's bodies become both a location of resistance and compliance as they are sculpted in accordance with political and ideological demands. These women utilize their bodies as weapons of cultural resistance in addition to being warriors in a militaristic setting. But because of the way these bodies are shaped, frequently from a male-dominated viewpoint, these women are mostly identified with their "warrior" identities, with little attention paid to their femininity. Kurdish women's bodies are thus continuously changed in power dynamics, becoming both "manipulated" and "pure" things. It means that Kurdish women's bodies are controlled by state feminism and militarist feminism, as explained by Foucault's idea of the submissive body. While militarist feminism integrates Kurdish women into political and military conflicts, state feminism requires them to adhere to nationalist values. Strategic considerations take precedence over true gender emancipation in these institutions. Although the bodies of Kurdish women are utilized as symbols of resistance, their personal autonomy is frequently disregarded. The historical tendency to use gendered themes to further political and national goals is reflected in this methodical approach. Rather than encouraging independent feminist opposition, state feminism, and militarist feminism both employ disciplinary methods to mold Kurdish women's roles in order to support larger power systems.

In addition to this, in Türkiye, all women's rights-centered structures are based on masculine political power dynamics. Even though Turkish feminism, with its national practices, used women for their profit. For this reason, the power of women has never been seen in their societies; however, their power has existed under masculinity. As Yuvas-Davis asserted, women are not only biological reproducers of the nation but also ideological reproducers, shaping national culture and identity through education, traditions, and moral codes.⁹⁸ This viewpoint emphasizes how women's roles go beyond reproductive duties to include forming and upholding ideological and national institutions. Kurdish women's identities have been exploited within state feminism as

⁹⁷Michel Foucault and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 135-138.

⁹⁸Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997), 45.

a means of advancing a nationalist agenda that puts the interests of the nation-state first. Their struggles have either been forgotten or reframed. Kurdish women have thus been the targets of an ideological framework that aims to incorporate them into a national identity that fails to adequately acknowledge their unique resistance and struggles. Kurdish women's involvement in military conflicts has also placed them as ideological reproducers of a different sort under militarist feminism, where their tasks go beyond moral instruction and nurture to include representing resistance. But this is not always the same as true emancipation. Rather, it shows how women's bodies and identities are strategically used to further militaristic and nationalist goals. As an example of how Kurdish women's ideological role is altered within the context of armed nationalism, they are required to embrace masculinized practices, such as fighting, dressing, and speaking like males. Although their participation in resistance movements strengthens national identity and mobilization, their personal agency and feminist awareness frequently take a backseat to more general political objectives. The way that Kurdish women have been positioned as ideological instruments inside various nationalist agendas rather than as independent political actors makes Yuval-Davis's thesis especially pertinent. Kurdish women's roles have been deliberately modified to fulfill nationalist imperatives, whether through militarist feminism, which mobilizes them as symbols of resistance, or state feminism, which aims to incorporate them into a homogenized national identity. According to what you said, true feminist freedom necessitates eschewing these ideological frameworks and establishing forums where women may oppose the masculinized expectations of militarist feminism as well as the assimilationist demands of state feminism. Kurdish women can only recover their own narratives and political agency outside of their designated roles within nationalist initiatives by opposing the intellectual replication of nationalist objectives. With this statement, the main issue seen within the framework of state feminism and militarist feminism is how the Kurdish women's bodies are used as village guards and Kurdish fighters, both for Turkish and Kurdish political interests. Thus, Kurdish women are oppressed by male political interests.

In their book *From Gender to Nation*, Rada Ivekovic and Julie Mostov make the case that a framework of contradiction should be used to analyze the relationship between women and nationalist initiatives. Even though women contributed in different ways to preserving the nation's continuity and purity, they were not given the same political

subjectivity as men during and after the establishment of the nation-state.⁹⁹ This viewpoint emphasizes how women's roles go beyond reproductive duties to include forming and upholding ideological and national institutions. The hierarchical structures that nationalism creates with regard to gender and class are more apparent when the complex political positioning of Kurdish women is examined within the framework of state feminism and militarist feminism. One component of state feminism that reproduces gender in an authoritarian way is the practice of female village guards, which was developed within the framework of the state's security-centered programs.¹⁰⁰ This paradigm constructs women as "loyal citizens" by making them a passive component of the security system while also casting them in roles such as motherhood, chastity, and loyalty in accordance with patriarchal local rules.¹⁰¹ This suggests that state-based initiatives aimed at "saving" women really serve to maintain existing power dynamics, as Lila Abu-Lughod notes.¹⁰² However, despite their discourses aimed at changing patriarchal social roles, women warriors who are assessed within the framework of militarist feminism are part of a subjectification process shaped by male-dominated norms such as discipline, self-sacrifice, and obedience within militarism.¹⁰³ According to Cynthia Enloe, militarism presents women as suppliers of emotional, ideological, and symbolic work in addition to being warriors.¹⁰⁴ Women's political subjectivity is shaped within the confines of nationalism in both of these acts, and their class position is a determining factor. While working-class, poor, or rural women are represented in more instrumental and subordinate positions by both state policies and the ideological arrangements of armed structures, nationalist, religious, or middle-class women are more visibly and legitimately integrated into political structures. Women's experiences should, therefore, be discussed without homogenizing them and interpreted alongside the gendered class

⁹⁹Julie Mostov, "Sexing the Nation/Desexing the Body: Politics of National Identity in the Former Yugoslavia," in *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, ed. Tamar Mayer (New York: Routledge, 2000), 14.

¹⁰⁰Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case," *Feminist Studies* 13, no. 2 (1987): 323–325.

¹⁰¹Yeşim Arat, *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), 112–114.

¹⁰²Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 32–35.

¹⁰³Miranda Alison, "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 4 (2004): 450–452.

¹⁰⁴Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 291–294.

dynamics of nationalism within this framework where gender, class, and ethnicity converge.

Moreover, the representation of Kurdish women within the framework of Turkish feminism and the Kurdish women's movement is inherently limited, especially in regions such as Hakkari. This limitation raises critical questions about the meaning of representation itself, particularly in relation to women. In Hakkari, while there are a few women's rights organizations, their functionality is often shaped by their integration with either state power or a particular political ideology. This duality means that the right to representation is not inherently granted to Kurdish women's voices but is mediated through power structures that use representation as a means of control. Thus, representation continues to operate within a restrictive framework dictated by external forces rather than Kurdish women's own agency. Ultimately, women's representation in these contexts is shaped by "others," primarily under the dominance of patriarchal structures. For this reason, their position always seems to be that of a "subaltern" in this context. The women sometimes want to talk on their behalf; however, if they cannot, they want someone to talk indirectly instead of on their behalf. Consequently, one cannot really speak for women because of many obstacles. As Spivak stated, contrary to what interpretations with psychoanalytic overtones may imply, representation is not only a poor inscription of reality; rather, it is framed by an aporia in which the subaltern woman lives in an unsettled relationship between subject and object status.¹⁰⁵ This contradiction of subalternity is embodied by Kurdish women, especially under state feminism and military feminism. This is not because they are mute but rather because patriarchal, nationalist, and transnational power structures systematically mediate, transform, and appropriate their voices. There is little room for their independent subjectivities to manifest since their representation is frequently expressed within the frameworks of resistance or state security. In this sense, the subaltern status of Kurdish women must be viewed as a structural condition of power that continuously reconfigures the boundaries of what can be spoken and by whom rather than something that can be "overcome" by representational heroics. That is why

¹⁰⁵Rosalind C. Morris and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*(New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 19.

the patriarchal policies of their societies have victimized Kurdish women's representation.

In addition to this, the main question is how the concept of feminism is converted within the framework of deconstruction. Namely, the concept of feminism is also seen as an apparatus within male-dominated political profits. As Derrida mentioned in *Of Grammatology*, deconstruction is a process that rearranges the sequence of discourse and adds novel notions, enabling writing to manifest inside the speech. Although it can reassemble text, it could also lose control and authority. According to Derrida, deconstruction may masterfully reappropriate language, exposing its ignorance and providing a path out of knowledge closure.¹⁰⁶ According to Derrida, deconstruction exposes underlying presumptions and power dynamics in language and meaning-making, upending hierarchical dichotomies like speech over writing or presence over absence. Deconstruction reveals how these prevailing narratives mold, restrict and instrumentalize Kurdish women's agency when applied to feminism, especially in the context of Kurdish women under the frameworks of state feminism and militarist feminism.

Presenting itself as a tool for women's rights, state feminism—which frequently functions as a nationalist project—operates ultimately within the intellectual and political bounds of the nation-state. In this framework, Kurdish women are only represented to the extent that they align with the state's gender emancipation vision, which upholds rather than challenges state power. Deconstruction enables us to examine if these depictions actually advance women's emancipation or if they only serve to re-establish state power under the pretense of advancement. Instead of promoting true empowerment, state feminism's promise of inclusiveness turns into a means of containment. Similarly, by incorporating women into the military and armed conflict, militarist feminism seems to challenge conventional gender norms by portraying Kurdish women as fighters and symbols of resistance. Deconstruction, on the other hand, shows how this framework also functions within patriarchal hierarchies, as Kurdish women's bodies are transformed from independent political

¹⁰⁶Jacques Derrida, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Corrected ed (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1997), xxvii.

objects into arenas of ideological conflict. The Kurdish woman fighter's image challenges the idea of passive femininity, but it also runs the risk of reinforcing masculinist conceptions of resistance and power, where legitimacy is only attained by engaging in armed conflict rather than other forms of feminist activism.

In this context, Derrida's assertion that deconstruction "reverses the order of speech and introduces new concepts" can be used critically to examine the rhetoric of state feminism and militarist feminism, which both assert Kurdish women's empowerment while ultimately situating them within systems that support nationalist or militaristic objectives. Therefore, the challenge is to understand these narratives in a deconstructive way that rethinks representation whole rather than just flipping binary concepts (for example, rejecting state feminism in favor of militarist feminism). By doing this, Kurdish feminist groups can look for a path away from instrumentalization and co-optation and establish forums where their struggles are discussed according to their own terms rather than those set forward by militaristic or nationalist ideologies.

Overall, the study examines how Turkish and Kurdish feminist movements intersect with the activity of Kurdish women, exposing how patriarchal political structures influence their positions. It exposes the political use of women's bodies, which upholds rather than challenges gender norms. Kurdish women frequently face marginalization as they negotiate a delicate balance between nationalist movements and state feminism. The study demonstrates how Kurdish women's bodies are governed by state and militarist feminism by drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's theories of desire as well as Foucault's idea of the obedient body. According to the study, emancipating oneself from both feminism and militarist feminism is necessary for authentic feminist liberty.

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