AFFECTIVE-RELATIONAL BECOMINGS:
CONTESTATIONS OVER MUSLIM WOMEN’S IDENTITIES

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ABSTRACT

In this project, I suggest a Deleuzian ontological perspective to address the interconnected and relational constitution of Muslim women’s experiences and practices to illuminate the multiple-layers of their lives. Namely, I call into question the category “Islamist,” used for contemporary headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, and examine how this categorization erases contingency, specificity, and relationality of women’s experiences. For this purpose, I articulate the conception of body as a relational and affective multiplicity based on a Deleuzian ontology. According to this ontology, bodies are composed of an infinite number of smaller bodies through the confluence of relations and the creative capacity of affects, which are produced by this relational flux. Since the body is a relational and affective aggregate and a multiplicity within an assemblage, it is not a stable ontological essence or determined by overarching structures, but it is instead dynamic, continually changing, and always in a process of becoming. Since this Deleuzian approach problematizes the stability and singularity of identities, it offers a radical change for the framing of the question of Muslim women. This approach provides useful means to illuminate the experiences, desires, and practices of women in their contexts and through the particular characters of their relations and affects. Therefore, this project stresses the idea that we need analytical tools which allow us to attend to dynamic configurations of Muslim women without reducing them to existing categories or marginalities.
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GLOSSARY

**Affect**: Productions of relations between bodies and also source of further relations by augmenting or diminishing the capacities of relations.

**Assemblage**: A network of connections between bodies, always reassembling in different ways.

**Body**: Any component of life no matter how big or small, including biological and non-biological, material and immaterial or human and non-human bodies.

**Body-without-Organs (BwO)**: A form of body which is composed of an infinite number of other bodies/extensive parts in the course of its life.

**Deterritorialization**: Undoing the affect that has territorialized a body.

**Islamism**: A political ideology that strives to derive legitimacy from Islam.

**Kemalism**: The state ideology of Turkey built on ideals of founding fathers.

**Molar**: Forms of social formations, abstractions, categories and thought regimes that codify and regulate certain patterns of the world.

**Molecular**: Lines of relations that bypass the molar lines of thought and structures and produce change, re-organization, and transformation.

**Post-Humanism**: The ontology of Deleuze that decenters the human subject and stresses the co-construction of bodies.

**Territorialization**: Capture of a body by affect.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

While addressing the Muslim women question, one of the problematical issues is the centrality of “Islam” as a primary subject of inquiry. This perspective sees Islam as a single and frozen tradition that constitutes every detail of a Muslim woman’s life in an ahistorical context. The religion they embody is presumably a monolithic tradition without internal complexity and impervious to change. Muslim women, then, are deemed as the embodiment of this single tradition without the influence of historical factors, as women with no history. It is assumed that these women do not have other meaningful social relations than those they establish through religion, as if religion marks everything they do.

Although the idea of Muslims, particularly Muslim women, as a group that embodies a self-contained belief system, goes back to Orientalist assumptions (Lazreg 1988, 84), tendencies to see Muslim women as a singular category has increased in recent years. This monolithic idea of Islam and Muslim women has been promoted through the narratives of some post-Muslims, such as Irshad Manji and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who supposedly provide an authentic vision of Islam as “insiders.” These figures are brought to public attention by some Western institutions despite the conceptual, historical, cultural, and geographic inaccuracies in their narratives (Toor 2011, 2-7). Neocolonial policies of war and militarism in the Middle East are also justified in the name of liberating the so-called oppressed Muslim women (Zine 2002, 106). The increasing acts
of terrorism, which are almost always identified as “Islamic,” reinforces the significations and markers of the “Islamic other” as a homogenous group. The narratives of “Islamic” or “Islamist” terrorists once again erase the multiple facets of the issue, point the finger at “Islam” as the primary cause of terrorism, and lead to increasing discrimination, racial and religious profiling, and verbal and physical assaults (Hopkins; Kwan; Aitchison 2007, 1). Muslim women, especially those who wear a headscarf, become the primary target of these discriminations because of the headscarf’s signification as a marker of the imagined collective Muslim women identity.

To confront these reductionist perspectives that present a monolithic idea of Islam as the bedrock of all Muslim women’s lives, various studies by feminist scholars emphasize the necessity of a historical analysis. Mirriam Cooke calls into the question the idea of the collective identity of Muslim women by coining the term “The Muslimwoman” (2007, 139-153). She points out that this collective identity represents an essential embodiment of Islam by women and erases the traces of other factors in Muslim women’s lives, national, historical, social, political or material (Cooke 2007, 140). Sonbol also explains that instead of a wider perspective, in which religion is only one part of the picture, Muslim women are depicted based on religion which is supposed to be solely representing the realities of how women actually live in the present and lived in the past (Sonbol 2005, xix). As Lazreg (1988, 94) argues, despite all historical and spatial differences, this imagined collective identity overlays individuality and reinforces the category of Muslim women.
Chandra Mohanty and Lila Abu-Lughod have also addressed the importance of historical and relational approaches for the marginalized groups, such as “Third World,” “Muslim,” or “Middle Eastern” women. In *Under Western Eyes*, Mohanty emphasizes the importance of being attentive to the connection between the local and the global and draws attention to the material and socio-economic complexity (Mohanty 2003, 499-505). Abu-Lughod similarly illuminates how the historical specificities and the role of global politics are more pressing scholarly concerns than the “culture” and religious beliefs of women in order to understand the sufferings of Muslim women (Abu-Lughod 2002, 784).

Although these scholars have addressed the need to move the discussions away from an essentialist and ahistorical understanding, the enactments of these critiques in studies of Muslim women still need to be performed (Duchen 2011, 430-431). Saba Mahmood’s *Politics of Piety* is one of the few attempts to conceptualize the desires, subjectivities, and practices of Muslim women in their historicity. In her well-known ethnographic work of women in the Mosque movement in Egypt, Mahmood brilliantly rejects claims about the universality of liberal notions, such as freedom, resistance, and agency. She argues against the reductionist interpretation of dressing practices of Muslim women as an essential sign of women’s oppression and proposes an alternative theory of ethics to understand Muslim women’s practices (2005, 153-189). However, I argue, even this pioneering work needs to be more attentive to the relational and spatial constitutions of Muslim women in addition to their religious practices. Although she does not exclude the possibility of relational and historical constitutions of women’s lives, describing
practices of these women based on “Islam” invokes an idea of stable and isolated religious identity. For example, Mahmood compares two women in her ethnographic research. One is a secular-upper middle-class woman; the other is a religious woman who lives in a lower-middle income neighborhood. These two women are asked about their opinions regarding polygamy. The secular woman criticizes polygamy while the religious woman finds it acceptable. Mahmood wants to explain the ethical concerns behind the acceptance of polygamy within this particular context. However, since there is no mention of the whole array of socio-spatial factors leading to these opinions, the acceptance of polygamy by a religious woman is attributed to the religious tradition, while its rejection is conceived as the result of secular ethics. Although Mahmood tells us that these two women live in different socio-economic spheres, we are not told how these different conditions informed their opinions respectively. Instead, the ethical analysis of their choices is made based on the religious and secular frameworks they use. In turn, the centrality of Islam for the analysis of these women’s practices reinforces the image of a stable, fixed, and oppressive religious tradition, which are the very assumptions Mahmood wants to challenge (Mahmood 2005, 172-174).

To be attentive to the dynamic and complex configurations of Muslim women’s engagements with religion in relation to many other elements in their lives, we need to pay attention to relationality and ever-shifting characters of embodiments. For instance, the women I interviewed for this project at Capital City Women’s Platform, which is a women’s organization in Turkey, also confess their deep adherence to Islam, but they are living in a different socio-political and economic context than the religious woman in
Mahmood’s account. They do not consider polygamy as “Islamic” and they campaign against polygamy, which is something that even the secular woman in the Mahmood’s account is not able to do in her own context. In other words, both the woman in Mahmood’s account and the women in my interviews defend their views on polygamy based on “Islam” while one finds polygamy acceptable and the others strongly oppose it. Depending on various factors, such as personal and national history as well as socio-economic availabilities, their engagements with the religious traditions vary, even in the face the Qur’anic verses regarding polygamy. Therefore, unless we have analytical tools that would provide a clearer picture of continuous relational constitutions of women’s lives as well as religious practices, even the well-meaning attempts might fall back into the reductionist traps that prioritize so-called Islam as the constructive power in these women’s lives.

These reductionist attitudes might prevail also in non-Western, Muslim majority, contexts such as Turkey, which is the chief site of my research. As discussed in Chapter 2, when the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, the construction of new gender images was an important concern to display the “civilization” of the nation (Çınar 2008, 891-910). These images were inspired by Western modernity and Orientalism which saw Muslim women, particularly those who used head-covers, as pawns of Islam, an oppressive tradition (Lazreg 1988, 90-91). For the secular state of Turkey, the headscarf was the symbol of “women’s oppression” and Islam’s “backwardness,” therefore, needed to be completely removed from the public sphere (White 2003, 150; Gökariksel 2009, 660).
Therefore, the practice of head-covering has become a marker of a collective identity, once again, this time in a Muslim majority country. The act of covering and uncovering was turned into the index of modern/ traditional, religious/secular, emancipated/oppressed, etc. The president of the Association for Kemalist Thinking (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği), which is an association of devoted Kemalist women, expresses this Orientalism-inspired thinking:

If the style of covering the head...was the look of a modern individual, if it was the same as what we see when we look at the clothes of cagdas (modern) countries that have an advanced level of civilization, we too would say ‘yes’ to it.” (Akboğa 2014, 518)

Within this ideological standing, the headscarf has been positioned against everything modern and progressive (Çınar 2008, 891). As a result, the increasing presence of headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, especially that of headscarf-wearing university students, in the modern and secular education settings, in the 1980s, disrupted this Kemalist imagination which saw these women as a distinct group who were not capable of engaging with the “modern,” “civilized” and “educated” world.

Because of this disruptive power of the headscarf, the secularist and modernist sections of Turkey focused on its political implementations and considered the headscarf practices as a primarily political act. The women who wear the headscarf were called “Islamist” which turned into another form of the unifying categorization (Akboğa 2014, 620). This label affirmed why those women need to be seen as problematic, without being attention paid to the complexity of their embodiments. Whether these women had any interest in politics or not, all women who wore the headscarf, particularly the type
described in Chapter 3, were deemed as militant activists of “Islamism,” although these women themselves rejected this categorization (Özçetin 2009, 112). Moreover, this “Islamism” referred to a supposed global political project that wanted to take over Turkey and force everyone to live according to its “sharia,” which implies oppression and even violence (Bora 1998, 11-12). Consequently, this ideological imagination led to the ban on the headscarf that applied to elected officials, civil servants, and school and university students in a Muslim majority country, until 2013 (Scott 2007, 2).

Although the ban of the headscarf in Turkey was lifted in 2013 by the current government, led by the Justice and Development Party, headscarf-wearing women, which consist of more than 60 percent of women in the country, are not present in many visible positions except state institutions, which are currently governed by the same Justice and Development Party. For instance, a headscarf-wearing woman cannot be seen on Turkish TV series’ (except as appropriations of stereotypical depictions of maidservants and traditional Muslim women of a by-gone era), or in many private sector institutions such as banks and business corporations. In other words, the lifting of the ban is the result of the current government’s policies in favor of the headscarf rather than a transformation of the stereotypical depiction of these women in secular circles. This still makes the headscarf an issue of electoral campaigns, a tool of political gains for some, and prevents the normalization of headscarf-wearing women’s presence. Moreover, in a country such as Turkey where the political atmosphere is mercurial, current partial acceptance of headscarf-wearing women in public space is subject to abrupt change since the
categorizing gaze prevails. Therefore, despite the partial solution of the headscarf “problem” in the last few years, the stereotyping attitudes still need to be challenged.

To sum up, headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, who refused the imposed form of modernization and caused the failure of the secular inscription onto their bodies, challenged the hegemony of secular elites in the public sphere. The headscarf erased the diversity of the women once again as well as a variety of their religious inspirations (Gökarıksel 2009, 660). As Arat (1989, 123) puts it, the term “Islamist” subsumed the heterogeneous group of these women into a political ideology beginning with the headscarf ban in the 1980s. Categorization of these bodies by the Kemalist state ideology, some media organizations and scholars as “Islamist” justified the fight against the headscarf in the public sphere. This monolithic categorization made it easy to “know” these bodies, to find the right way for their “correction” and, more importantly, to justify the means of their correction, such as banning headscarves in many spaces of power in the public sphere.

Even a scholar such as Nilüfer Göle, who is the author of the pioneering work on modernism and headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, Forbidden Modern, identifies these women in a broad sense as “Islamist.” Although Göle offers a radical critique by accepting the headscarf-wearing women as an alternative type of “modern,” she continues to relegate these women to the category of “Islamist.” According to Göle, by bringing their religiosity into the secular-modern sphere, headscarf-wearing women claimed their own agency and identity and rejected homogenizing oppression. These
women appropriated a new form of modernity as an alternative to the Western modernity inscribed by Kemalism (Göle 1996, 1-18).

However, Göle (1996, 5) claims that in Turkey the new form of veiling is “not a smooth, gradual, continuous process growing out of tradition;” instead it is “the outcome of a new interpretation of Islamic religion by the recently urbanized and educated social groups who have broken away from traditional popular interpretations and practices and politicized religion as an assertion of their collective identity against modernity.” Furthermore, the traditional headscarf used to be passed down within the domestic circles. However, university students and professional women fought for the reappropriation of the headscarf in the hegemonic secular public sphere. Therefore, Göle believes, it is a political statement, rather than a reproduction of established traditions (Göle 1996, 4).

In seeing the headscarf as a political symbol, Göle is not alone. Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu (2008, 521) even claim that wearing a headscarf as part of a culture would not have constituted a social problem as long as it was not associated with “Islamism.” However, the number of women in Turkey who wore an “Islamic headscarf,” Saktanbar and Corbacioglu say, increased significantly. Therefore, the secular sections of the society had concerns about the headscarf when the headscarf became visible in the public sphere.³

Although these studies rightly allude to the shifts in headscarf practices and its political implications within the socio-political context of Turkey, the explanations of
these shifts based on “Islamist” politics is problematical. With the claims about the
disconnection of the contemporary headscarf practices from the tradition and its
historicity, the headscarf is rendered a mere political tool which is supposed to be
intentionally produced by Islamists and might be a threat to secularism. Then, each
woman who wears the headscarf is categorized as a member of this supposedly unified
and threatening group.⁴

This categorizing does not allow us to understand the reality that, as Lazreg
argues, “concrete women (like men) live in concrete societies and not in an ideologically
uniform space” (Lazreg 1988, 95). Even to understand the role of religion and politics in
the lives of Muslim women, particularly headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, attention
needs to be paid to the conditions (“assemblages” and “encounters” in Deleuzian terms)
through which religion and politics emerge as constructive factors. To understand how
religious practices and symbols, such as the headscarf, function, we need to understand
the ways in which these practices are produced, shifted and manipulated in everyday life.
The categorization of the headscarf as a political symbol obscures the dynamism and
complexity of the practice and supposes the existence of a unified ideological space
(Lazreg 1988, 95).

As Mohanty puts it, “the way we theorize experience, culture, and subjectivity in
relation to histories, institutional practice, and collective struggles determine the kind of
stories we tell” (2003, 524). The appropriation of a singular identity under the category of
Islamist colonizes their spatially-different experiences and reinforces the binary
categorizations, such as religious/secular. However, many studies on headscarf-wearing
women in Turkey prefer to approach Islam or “Islamism” as a singular entity that produces the everyday lives of these women, instead of looking into everyday issues in which their lives and practices are actually constituted. This dominant perspective erases the local for the sake of global, so that, even the understanding of the global remains problematical. Consequently, we imagine stable and determinate global structures which produce fixed and singular identities at the micro level.\(^5\)

Therefore, the inability to address the interconnected and relational formation of these women’s lives is still a relevant problem. The question then is how to develop an approach that illustrates the multiple layers of experiences. This is where I see an approach articulated below, I call “affective-relational,” derived from Deleuzian works, potentially useful. Although there are some works on Deleuze and religion (Bryden 2001, 14-21; Powell-Jones and Shults 2016, 15-40; Barber 2014, 1-25, Crockett 2002, 267-280; Hainge and Cullen 2011, 303-319), there is no a study using a Deleuzian perspective for Muslim women question. I argue that Deleuzian ontology can shift our attention toward the dynamism in the relationality of Muslim women’s lives. This conceptualization can connect material with discursive, local with global, social with psychological and secular with religious. Moreover, such a conceptualization can reveal that claimed discursive structures, such as Islam/Islamism or secularism, also do not exist as stable, timeless entities across time, but are constantly shifting through relations in which they are embedded. As such, I suggest an analysis that can be attentive to the multiplicity and complexity of these shifts.
Understanding of Deleuzian Ontology

In this project, I use various works that offer ontological resources inspired by the French thinker Gilles Deleuze. The philosophy of Deleuze stresses an idea of the social world as being composed of modifications of relations between multiple bodies. Instead of an idea of a sovereign subject acting upon the external world or a passive subject acted upon by the social and linguistic structures, dynamic relations compose bodies. To put it differently, rather than social or corporeal deterministic perspectives or oppositional (oppressive/subversive) positioning shaping the subject, for Deleuze, bodies are relational (Braidotti 1996, 307-310). As the result of this ontological stand, the study of human experience, subjectivity and social structures are transformed into a study of bodies’ relations (Duff 2010, 628).

This Deleuzian ontology sheds important light on the experience of the person in context. The analysis of the body’s relational investments in particular milieus provides a re-thinking of embodiment (Duff 2010, 624-630). Duff describes this conception of the body as “a product of connections and relations in the manifold encounters of an immanent experience” (Duff 2010, 628). According to this ontology, bodies are “a series of flows, energies, movements, capacities, a series of fragments or segments capable of being linked together” (Grosz 1993, 173), not an entity, essential quality, or fixed position. In contrast to the conceptualization of the body as a “blank screen” inscribed on by social forces beyond its control, this mode of the body is depicted as an elusive becoming (Shilling 2004, 12). The body is not a steady organism with a stable sense of self, but instead it is formed through temporary assemblages, a chaotic network of
connections, and always reassembling in different ways (Potts 2004, 19). The body is, in other words, heterogeneous, continual, and unfixed linkages between human bodies, objects, materialities, and structures, social, biological and psychological, which come together in conjunctions or break away through disjunctions.

This Deleuzian conception of the body is constituted by “assemblages” of diverse simple bodies, human or non-human, continually connecting and re-connecting during encounters. As one of the important notions for Deleuze, “assemblage” is neither a transcendent structure that determines how the components function, nor can it be understood as a pre-existing structure into which bodies are inserted (Currier 2003, 328). In this regard, the assemblage is different from context, since it is transitory and a contingent composition of elements. Deleuze and Guattari use the metaphor of “machine” to explain assemblage, a machine that produces bodies, subjectivities, thoughts, feelings, and social and institutional formations (Deleuze, G. and Guattari 1988, 191). The bodies produced by assemblages as a composition of multiple bodies are not stable, individual, self-contained entities prior to their connection with an assemblage (Coleman 2008, 107-108). Within an assemblage, a body does not meet another body. Instead, bodies articulate into each other, differ in nature, and become a new body to the extent that differentiations cannot be decomposed into original, unified, entities. In other words, bodies are coalescing flows into recognizable forms and functions within a particular assemblage. Even the material and chemical components, and electrical impulses of a body, do not have fixed or immutable essence. But, they are constantly in flux that re-
constructs their becomings within particular circumstances, discourses, and energies as temporary articulations (Currier 2003, 328; Adkins 2015, 24-25).^6

For instance, a human body consists of myriad relations of the material, the cultural and the biological, “a physical relation to gravity, a psychological relation to its parent, and a cultural relation to a nationality” (Fox 2011, 363). Each relation acts as a force in various degrees. Gravity constrains the physical movements of a body, the parent might psychologically act on behaviors and attitudes, and nationality provides the possibilities of an embodied sense of identity. Similarly, an eating assemblage includes physical resources, such as the digesting system and foods available to that person, particular preferences and tastes, traditional restrictions such as halal or kosher requirements, and ethical concerns such as those motivating a vegetarian diet. The consequences of these forces shape and limit the eating options of a body. Within the range of weight of these forces, the re-constitution of bodies occurs as a result of shifts in the balance of the forces. For example, a physical force might overcome a cultural force. Strong hunger can transfer a food, which is not a part of the habituate diet, into an eatable option (Fox 2011, 362).

Therefore, according to this ontology, life consists of assemblages, emerging in unpredictable ways around actions and events, at every level “sub-personal, interactional or macro-social levels” (Fox and Alldred 2015, 401). This conception of the body refuses identity or unity and focuses on shifts in relations between multiple elements and stresses the movement of linkage and connection. Unity, identity or logic of binarization are no longer organizing principles since bodies are seen as multiplicities (Currier 2003, 321-
337). For example, religious and secular, or modern and traditional, can no longer be explained in binary terms in which one is positioned against the other. Rather, each connects with, articulates into, and is part of the other in non-hierarchical terms. As such, it is impossible to definitively establish one as essentially superior and the other essentially inferior.

Within this conceptualization of the body based on multiplicity and relationality, the individuality of a body depends on the distinctive relations of small bodies which compose the complex body. Therefore, the constitution of relations holds a crucial place for an understanding of subjectivity. Relationality that constitutes bodies is spatial, consequently; subjectivation is a spatialized phenomenon. Neither dominant social structures, ways of thoughts, nor biological features are stable entities that determine the subject, but are themselves products of the relational process. Hence, rather than pre-figured features of the subject, Deleuzian thought focuses on experiences of individuals that are relational and processual. Since these experiences can and will be formed differently in the future, according to the relational forces at work at the time, relational subjectivity constantly emerges, shifts, and transforms.

To sum up, this relational ontology refuses the fixed identities and the existence of boundaries between individual entities. Within an assemblage, there is no distinction between object and subject (Williams 2010, 248-249). As Puar argues, the notion of assemblages de-privileges the human body as a distinct organic thing and rejects the human/non-human binary. Multiple forms of matter can be bodies, bodies of plants, chemicals, information, institutions, and so on (Puar 2012, 57). However, relationality of
bodies does not entail the connection of different elements which have their own features. Rather, each of these elements is produced through relations as multiple, with none having stable internal attributes, but instead they are spatially dependent products shaped and understood through their connection. In such an account, the social is not separable from the psychological, the internal from the external, the material from the immaterial or the religious from the secular (Blackman and Venn 2010, 10; Tucker 2011, 233-237). Thus, an individual cannot be thought or known without her relations.

Constitutive power of this relationality comes from the “affect” that the constant connecting and disconnecting of bodies produces. Bodies, human and non-human, are linked through the circulation of particular affective dynamics. Blackman and Venn explain (2010, 20) that “particular spatial configurations can amplify particular affective dynamics and modulate, augment or even destroy dynamics” that have been a part of bodies. Affects produced through relations act on bodies and alter their capacities (Duff 2010, 626). An affect may open up possibilities for what a body can do or how it connects with other bodies as well as reducing the capacities of the body to act and to affect (Fox 2013, 500). Therefore, affects and relations provide the means by which capacities are exchanged, activated, and transmitted within encounters between bodies. These relations and affects are inseparable, such that an analysis must provide the delineation of both affects and relations (Buchanan 1997, 79-80). Given this understanding of Deleuzian ontology, which is an affective and relational phenomenon, I call this approach “affective-relational” becoming.
Although this formulation stresses the relational and affective flux within assemblages that constitute bodies, I neither mean that this flux is free from dominant power structures, nor suppose an escape from oppressive relations of power. As Currier points out, Deleuze and Guattari are attentive to the operations of power and interested in knowing how power functions within an assemblage. In the Deleuzian understanding, power is operational across a range of configurations, but it is not a merely determined structure. Instead, power relations are elements of an assemblage; therefore, they gain specific forms in relation to other elements of the assemblage (Currier 2003, 335). To put it differently, power operates within a position of immanence in an assemblage rather than as a transcendent structure. Such a mapping must consider the relational forms and functions of power in order to see hierarchies of distribution within an assemblage (Currier 2003, 335-336). This formulation does not mean that we should deny constructing powers, but the social needs to be understood in dynamic terms (Ansell Pearson 2003, 220).

Territorialization, as one of Deleuze’s concept of analysis, is a useful mode of thinking to explore how power operates within assemblages. Each body, an object, an idea, a word or a relation, is “a territory fought over by affects within assemblages,” while affects flow in the assemblage by altering the capacities of bodies (Fox 2015, 307). Tucker defines the term territorialization as “the continuity of forces at play that comes to form activities and practices, capturing life in particular modes at specific points in time” (Tucker 2011, 235). In other words, territorialization refers to the capture of life through movements of relations and flows of affects. The notion of territorialization is
accompanied by “de-territorialization” and “re-territorialization” which refer to the cycle of changes in the constructive forces such as the stabilization, de-stabilization and re-stabilization of certain actions, practices, and identities. Some of the movements capture the flows of relations in certain directions and aggregate bodies (territorializations), while others disassemble the previous assemblages (deterritorialization) and create re-assemblages (reterritorialiation) (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 54).

At this point, Deleuze and Guattari’s two terms “molar” and “molecular” forces distinguish more structural territorializing forces from more nomadic ones within an assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 33-34). Deleuze and Guattari (2005, 41) define molar and molecular forces as two type of articulation “one type is supple, more molecular, and merely ordered; the other is more rigid, molar, and organized.” In other words, the molar divides, stabilizes and regulates through codifications, significations, and representations, usually creating oppositions between sexes, classes, and races. On the other hand, the molecular creates relations bypassing the molar lines of thought and structures and produces change, re-organization, and transformation (Grosz 1993, 176). The molar lines follow certain patterns of the habituated world, directing the flows of relations into particular thought regimes, rules, and normativities. Molecular lines also operate in relation to the patterns of the molar, but they are not solely determined by the molar lines (Potts 2004, 20).

Movements of molar and molecular forces within assemblages change the capacities of bodies, including human bodies, institutions, languages and material structures. In “Feminist Technological Futures,” Currier (2003, 336) stresses that “within
an assemblage, transformation is a matter of movement of differing and connection” which leads into new formations, things which are “different in kind.” Therefore, the transformation is neither under the power of any one element within an assemblage, nor it determined by a transcendent structure. Instead, it is produced by the power of linkages and connections. The relations of bodies within an assemblage, no matter how strong their constructive power is, do not function in a merely determinant status. Even though powerful bodies within an assemblage influence the formation of relations in particular ways as an element of the assemblage, molecular forces of the assemblage can always “forge new connections, draw on different capacities and do different things” (Currier 2003, 336). Even dominant bodies within the assemblage are open to change and transformation in shifting fields of relations; so, they are not stable or eternal.

In other words, each body is constituted through complex relations and multiple affects. Although some of these relations and affects have a tendency to stabilize and restrain, the constant connecting and re-connecting of bodies provides a possibility for new becomings. For example, De Landa (2006, 50) argues that the new skills might have deterritorializing affects to the extent that they enable the person to break with the past routine or to inhabit a new space as in the case of a child who learns to swim or to ride a bicycle that leads to new capacities. Despite molar forces and our tendencies to sustain our habitual patterns, new connections with other bodies, things, and ideas are always possible through reconfigurations of relations (Lorraine 2008, 277). These ever-shifting relationships produce new affects, and, so, a possibility for the de-territorialization of existing bodies (Grosz 1993, 176).
This formulation of the body also brings a new conceptualization of agency and freedom without restricting these capacities to ideas of free-will and resistance. Liberal feminist thought frames agency as belonging to individual women and as stably existing across individuals and over time. However, the relational approach to agency suggests that this power does not exist as a universal essence within individuals, and as such does not provide the foundation for resistance. Rather, agency is produced through the relationship between different elements within the assemblage as part of a multiplicity, as discussed in Chapter 5. Since agency is defined through things associating with other things, the main focus turns away from the thing itself toward the nature of its relations, toward flows of affect and relational multiplicities as the forces that shape and transform things, humans, social constructions and abstractions, and the world (Currier 2003, 336; Fox, and Pam 2013, 769-770).

The relations that a human body has with its surrounding bodies enable it to have particular catalyst forces to affect and to be affected. These forces, which Fox calls desire, in turn, are “active, experimenting, engaged and engaging agency, supply the body with the capacity and motivation to form new relations” (Fox 2011, 360). Therefore, capacities, dispositions, and powers of the human body emerge in the unfolding milieus rather than being innate properties.

A body in the assemblage (whether an animal, a book, a song, an idea, a virus, a cell or a tissue) has an infinite possibility of capacities to affect and to be affected through constant connecting and disconnecting. Clough (2005, 15) argues that the task of the scholar therefore is to elucidate the multiple forces on bodies “in the affective switching
of bodies from one mode to another in terms of attention, arousal, interest, receptivity, stimulation, attentiveness, action, reaction, and inaction.” Therefore, the main question of Deleuzian ontology is not “what a body is,” but “what a body can do.” Encounters throughout the life-course of a body shape what a body can do, the possibilities of actions and desires as well as potentialities of creativity and transformation (Marrati 2006, 319).

Assemblages of physical, technological, psychological and social elements provide resources of subjectivities, cultural products, material tools, symbolic representations of bodies, theories, abstractions, social organizations and institutions. These physical, technological, material and social resources which are available to a person might enhance or limit what a person can do. Similarly, psychological, information and cultural resources might extend possibilities, while social disadvantages, lack of material resources and psychological drawbacks can limit opportunities for what else a body can do (Fox and Ward 2008, 1010).

To sum up, as the result of this affective-relational definition of the bodily roots of subjectivity, the re-evaluation of the feminist subject becomes necessary (Braidotti 2003, 44). Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of the body as discontinuous, unfixed, flows of relations, corporeal substances, incorporeal events, and intensities might provide a useful tool to feminist studies in an attempt to overcome binary positioning of the body by the mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object, interior/exterior and religious/secular oppositions. To put it differently, this ontology points out the relational configurations of the body’s linking biological and psychological processes to material objects and social structures while refusing to subordinate the body to a unity provided either by
consciousness, biological organism or social structures (Grosz 1993, 171). With this analytical framework, feminist thinking might attend to a fragmented and situated analysis (Currier 2003, 335), as well as a world-view, that has not been governed by a repressive/subversive dichotomy (Hemmings 2005, 550). The traditional dualism renders certain bodies as agent and others as passive objects. These “others” can be women, as well as various others who are sometimes marginalized because of difference, such as Muslims (Gatens 1996, 95). However, in this Deleuzian understanding, a body neither has full control of new assemblages, nor is it a passive dolls. Consequently, this conceptualization of the body is useful to dissolve these monolithic categories and to provide particular configurations of the body in relation to surrounding bodies within different assemblages.

Case and Method

To implement the “affective-relational” approach, derived from Deleuzian theory, I interrogate headscarf contestations in Turkey. My project aims to call into question the category “Islamist” used for headscarf-wearing women in Turkey and to show that this label erases the contingency, the specificity, and the relationality of women’s experiences. I argue that a primary focus on certain macrostructures, such as religion and politics, prevents the researcher from seeing these women’s experiences and practices in relation to multiple factors in their lives, reinforces the categorizing gaze and creates an image of an isolated group. On the other hand, taking relationality into consideration when studying Muslim women, particularly the headscarf-wearing women in my research, means accepting their lives’ historical and spatial foundations. It is
acknowledged that their lives and practices, like everyone else’s, are affected by economic, political, historical, and material resources throughout personal journeys unique to their positions.

This project involves nine interviews conducted in two women’s organizations in Turkey, Capital City Women’s Platform (Baskent Kadin Platformu) and Hazar, between August 2017 and January 2018. All interviews were taped with consent and transcribed by the author. Seven participants have been given pseudonyms in order to protect their confidentiality, while the other two, Hidayet Tuksal and Ayla Kerimoglu, who publicly speak about issues in our interviews, preferred to use their names. All of the participant women are at least college graduates, in their 40s and 50s, and living in Ankara and Istanbul.

Although I began my research in five women’s organizations, including two Sufi groups, in order to use a comparative approach, because of the intensity of the material substantive matter under consideration, I decided to narrow it down to just two organizations. These two organizations were deliberately selected because of their experiences with the ban on the headscarf, both among practitioners of the headscarf and activists against the ban. The Capital City Women’s Platform (CCWP) was established in 1995 by a group of women who defined themselves as religious to engage with the larger body of the women’s movement in Turkey. They define their goal as “solving women’s problem, that derive from both traditional gender roles in religion and the discrimination of religious women in modern spheres.”9 Since the headscarf ban intensified with the 1997 military coup, two years after CCWP’s launch, their activities mostly focused on
the liberation of the headscarf in their early years. Also, CCWP was the first women’s organization to consist of women who defined themselves as religious and aimed to connect with secular women’s organizations which had a much longer history in Turkey. Through this interaction, they employed a nomenclature adopted from the legacy of feminism worldwide. The members of CCWP who I interviewed define themselves as religious feminists.

The other organization in my research, Hazar, was initiated as an informal reading group by a number of women who were uncomfortable with the post-military coup atmosphere in the 1990s that targeted headscarf-wearing women. Being primarily interested in the education of “religious women,” they organized reading programs, that incorporates various areas such as Marxism and feminism to early Islamic texts. In 2006, this group turned into an association. Although they continue with their educational endeavors, such as hosting academic panels, they also aim to contribute to social change in their programs combatting against under-age marriages and drug addiction. Although all members of this group I interviewed stated that they engaged with, and benefited from, the legacy of feminism as a shared experience of women, they do not define themselves as “feminists,” unlike the members of CCWP. Instead, they prefer a religious framework for their activism. Another difference between Hazar and CCWP is that the members of Hazar are more aligned with the policies of Turkey’s Islamist political parties, the Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) and Justice and Development Party, despite their awareness of the unequal status of women within these parties. On the other hand,
CCWP takes a more critical stand against these political parties, although there is no homogeneity among its members.

I am aware that there are methodological challenges moving beyond the narratives of interviewees, who may have an only limited awareness of the relations and affects that produce their experiences, desires, and actions. Also, the use of interviews as the sole resources of data falls back into a humanist perspective that this project aims to challenge. Therefore, in addition to my interviews in these two women’s organizations, I draw upon various sources, such as ethnographic observations, auto-biographies, video records of events in the past, material culture and women’s magazines. Like Fox and Alldred (2013, 778), I believe that any type of data that helps to examine the relationality of bodies can be appropriated for this Deleuzian inquiry. The analysis of multiple resources is potentially useful to show how various bodies co-construct the experiences, agencies, and embodiments of women in my research. However, as with any interpretative approach, this analytical process also has a constructive affect, as well as being limited by the impossibility of attending to exact moments and directions of interactions between bodies. Therefore, I do not claim that I attend to the assemblage of a body nor can I trace the affective flow of a body. Instead, I point out some of the possible relevant relations and affects in order to open a space to talk about an affective-relational understanding of Muslim women’s experiences and embodiments. Although such an analysis is an incomplete endeavor concerning the performance of the ontology outlined in this project, I find it helpful to point out certain possibilities of patterns and interactions among multiple bodies that produce women’s lives.
This dissertation is organized as follow: Chapter 2 lays out the historical and political background that produced the stereotypical images of Muslim women, particularly headscarf-wearing women in Turkey. In Chapter 3, I aim to articulate the affective-relational ontology of bodies based on the transmission and changes of headscarf practices in relation to various material elements, such as material availabilities, socio-economic policies, and traces of intimate relationships. In Chapter 4, in order to underscore how the production of these women’s bodies is not free from dominations of power, I focus on how power affectively operates within and through multiple elements and manipulates the production of certain subjectivities, categories and policies. In the last chapter, Chapter 5, I explore a Deleuzian understanding of liberal issues such as agency, desire, and freedom that occupy the agenda of many scholars of Muslim women, than applying this conceptualization to the contestations of headscarf and gender perceptions in Turkey.
NOTES


2 Kemalism is the ideology that claims to be based on the founding ideals of the Republic of Turkey.

3 Even those women who criticize Islamism cannot escape the label of “Islamist” because of the widespread categorization of the headscarf as a political symbol. Although headscarf-wearing women reject the identification as “Islamist” and assert that it is not a political symbol, but a religious practice, they therefore prefer to be called religious Muslim women which differentiate them from secular Muslims and Islamist political movements; nonetheless, usually they are still labeled “Islamist” (Özçetin 2009, 112).

4 The main Kemalist argument in Turkey against the headscarf is that the headscarf is not an issue of freedom but a political tool of Islamists, and therefore a threat to secular life.

5 My aim is not to deny the effects of global social structures on everyday life. Instead, I suggest that scholars need to pay attention to complex and intertwined connection of the local and global.
An individual is always composed of assemblages and always fragmented. This composition is continuously re-composed while passing through different positions and encounters in life. Therefore, it has a temporary wholeness, a temporary identity. However, social identities as assemblages might produce their own affects and turn their temporary wholeness into more durable forms. Then, identity becomes a resource to be invested and a source of further affects. As the result, people are invited to invest in their social identities.

This does not mean that assemblages are egalitarian and accidental. On the contrary, power relations are at play within assemblages as well. However, they operate in an immanent way and do not have a transcendent force through which the component elements of an assemblage are coded (Currier 2003, 328).

Duff articulates Spinoza’s terms -affectio and affectus- which informed Deleuze’s philosophy as the capture of the configuration of bodies. Duff argues that Spinoza describes affect as both “the particular state of a body at any specific moment, as well as its passage or transition from one affective state to another, and thus from one quantum of power to another” (Duff 2010, 627). “Affectio” indicates “a state of the affected body and implies the presence of the affecting body” (Duff 2010, 627), while the “affectus” points to “the passage from one state to another, taking into account the correlative variations of the affecting bodies” (Duff 2010, 627). Duff interprets “affectio” as something that captures the lived experience of affect as temporal feeling states produced by encounters. On the other hand, the notion “affectus” refers to transitions of
the body’s power and capacities. In this sense, affectus produces potential for action and transition of dispositions (Duff 2010, 627).


10 For detailed information about the activities of Hazar, see “Calismanlarımız” http://www.hazardernegi.org/calismanlarimiz/, accessed as of March 17, 2018).
CHAPTER 2

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE OF MUSLIM WOMAN

In her essay about the role of representation in constructing knowledge and experience, Cindi Katz (1992, 495) explores how the same objects exhibited in different settings in the Center for African Art in New York City took on a different look in each setting. The relationship between the context of presentation and the viewer’s experiences of objects reveals the role of representation. This brilliant analysis shows how macro forces help to structure our experiences, whether political, academic, artistic or social, and even in seemingly neutral interactions with objects of art. As an artist who exhibits objects, academics and intellectuals might also produce certain representations of their “objects” in accordance with the dominant epistemologies that guide the academic world. Through the means of “social science” (Katz 1992, 500), their works can construct and re-construct a subject as marginal, exotic, and primitive, or civilized and enlightened.

Katz’s work is only one of the post-structural feminist studies that reveal the role of situated actors who engaged in the production of knowledge and political representation. In the article “Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of the Partial Perspectives,” Haraway (1988) also stresses the situated construction of knowledge in forms of “science.” According to this social constructionist perspective, Haraway says, “science is rhetoric, a series of efforts to persuade relevant social actors that one’s manufactured knowledge is a route to the desired form of very objective power” (Haraway 1988, 577) In the natural, social and human sciences, a
dominant, imperial, hegemonic “scientific” language may construct the representations of its “object” as the standard authority (Zine 2008, 111-112).

In order to explore how imperial power stratifies and appropriates the experiences and knowledge of indigenous people, Chandra Mohanty (2003, 512) cites Rebecca Gordon and Bob Wing’s article “Global Brahmanism: The Meaning of the WTO Protest.” The article reveals the ways in which ancestral knowledge of Indian peasants has been “patented” as the invention of U.S. corporations and U.S. scientists. The underlying reason why something like that can work, Mohanty says, is a racist assumption that “the knowledge of the Third World and the knowledge of people of color is not knowledge” until this knowledge is appropriated by white men (Shiva, Vandana, Rebecca Gordon 2000, 32). Indigenous knowledge, which is generated and shared among peasants for public use, becomes a subject for a Western scientific paradigm that privatizes property rights via corporate power. Collective experiences and innovations, which had emerged over time in farms and forests, becomes the private property of corporations. Through such appropriation of common knowledge, tribal and peasant people are excluded from ownership as well as being denied the authority to produce knowledge (Mohanty 2003, 512).

The West-centric production of knowledge shapes the image of “the other” through its own linguistic, institutional and authoritative tools; “the West is the source of theory and knowledge and the rest of the world needs to be studied, analyzed and theorized” (Mills and Gökarıksel 2014, 906). The representation of Muslim women is one of the examples that Western academics, writers, politicians, and activists hold the
authority to define, name and label Muslim women’s experiences as “experts” (Zine 2008, 111). The category “Muslim Woman” has been constructed by these authorities, whether they are Orientalist, imperial, liberal, post-structural, progressive, feminist, etc. Each of these attempts interpellates Muslim women into a new ontological status by projecting particular meanings and significations onto their bodies. As the result of these representations, the lived experiences of Muslim women fade away into the meanings associated with their bodies. To put it differently, Muslim women are situated within multiple, mutable and complex flows of relations that constantly re-form them and the fragments of their various social identities. However, this complexity and multiplicity are reduced into certain significations and representations by authoritative discourses that demarcate “who Muslim women are.”

Before beginning the discussion of the affective-relational approach that I employ in this dissertation, in this chapter I give a glimpse of how Muslim women are represented by certain hegemonic discourses. In doing so, I hope to point out that the authority that produces the discourse produces the knowledge about Muslim women according to imaginations, biases, or interests, rather than being based on women’s realities. Then, in the following chapters, I suggest shifting the attention toward the intertwined nature of life in a way that explores the co-construction of the material and the discursive, the local and the global, the social and the personal, based on an affective-relational ontology.

Since this chapter is designed as an overview of the image of Muslim women produced by the dominant authoritative tools, I first look into the ways in which
knowledge about Muslim women has been historically produced by Euro-centric, Orientalist, and “feminist” authorities. Then, I examine the case of Turkey in order to explore the role of these authorities for the construction of the image of Muslim women even in Muslim majority contexts. Therefore, I give a brief history of the modern Turkish state and its relationship with the “Muslim women question” before beginning the affective-relational analysis of Muslim women in Turkey.

Orientalism as a Constructive Power

With the encounter of the East and the West in a historical context, the particular representations of the East and the West were produced in a particular line of thought, called Orientalism, which has constructive power. Following Said, Abu-Lughod argues that “the power of Orientalism comes from its power to construct the very object it speaks about and from its power to produce a regime of truth about the other and thereby establish the identity and the power of the subject that speaks about it” (Abu-Lughod 2001, 105). As Said points out, the production of knowledge about the Orient, the “other,” serves particular interests. Since the West looks at the Orient through lenses that distort the image of those places and people, the knowledge produced through these lenses is the reflection of particular interests and imaginaries, rather than an objective observation (Said 1979, 4-9). These lenses show the “Orient” as devalued, and the West as superior, and help to carve out certain images of a complicated “object.”

The Orientalism was interested in knowing the “culture” or “religion” of the East instead of exploring the multiple contributions to problems in the region, including
imperialist political and economic policies. Therefore, Orientalists used an essentialist language to reduce the complexity of the “object.” As Ernest Renan, quoted by Kerboua, puts it, “Islam, in order to be best understood should be reduced to tent and tribe” (Kerboua 2016, 11-12). Through such reductionism, Orientalist specialists educate the Western world about barbaric and primitive traits of “Arabs,” “Moslems,” and “Muhammedans” (Kerboua 2016, 19). Abu Lughod argues that such cultural/religious framing overlaid the serious exploration of the roots and nature of suffering in “other” parts of the world. Instead of political and historical explorations that might reveal global interconnections, “experts” worked on artificial divisions based on religio-cultural explanations. This imaginative separation created binary positioning of the West versus the East, “civilized” versus “primitive” (Abu-Lughod 2002, 784).

The “woman question” was one of the main tools of the Orientalists to reinforce these binary depictions. Many scholarly works have revealed how the colonizers used colonized women as a symbol of the opposing characteristics between the Western world and the Muslim world to justify colonial rule. When Western colonial powers conquered Muslim lands, they claimed that it was part of their “civilizing mission.” Orientalist writers, travelers, focused on Muslim women and depicted them as miserable, segregated, ignorant, and hyper-sexualized, and sought to liberate them (Haddad 2005, 111). Even when women did not have equal status in Western society, colonial powers used the treatment of women as an “index of civilization” in order to justify their conquests.

For instance, as works on colonialism in North Africa and the Middle East have pointed out, even before French women won the vote; colonial power stressed the
superiority of French to Arab gender relations in North Africa. The colonial rule that opposed women’s suffrage back home, in England or France, campaigned against the veil in the Muslim world to save women from the oppression of their men and their traditions. The ceremony of May 16, 1958, organized by French generals in Algeria, is one example of how colonial rule used the woman question to justify its authority. In this ceremony, a few Muslim women were unveiled by French women to demonstrate France’s civilizing mission in Algeria (Abu-Lughod 2002, 784). Colonial rulers assigned an important task to French women as well: the liberation and Frenchification of Algerian women. Lazreg (1988, 90) cites Auclert, “upon entering tents and bolted doors, they (French Women) would familiarize Muslim women with our lifestyle and ways of thinking.” Algerian women were capable of becoming like French women because Algerian women were at heart “the daughters of the free-thinking women of pre-Islamic Arabia” (Lazreg 1988, 90). Through the elimination of Islam, which oppressed the pre-Islamic female characteristics, French women could save Algerian women.

Unfortunately, the Orientalist depictions did not end with colonialism, and its different versions have survived in the post-colonial era as well. Kerboua calls one of them neo-Orientalism, which constructs Islam and the Muslim world as a social and existential threat to the “West,” and sweeps this image through media, politics, and academics. This neo-Orientalism would manifest itself in different forms, such as the emergence of a social phenomenon called Islamophobia (Kerboua 2016, 20). Kerboua describes Islamophobia as the irrational fear of Islam and Muslims produced especially in the aftermath of 9/11. This phobia can be expressed in various forms, such as “the
apprehension, fear, rejection, contempt, and hatred of Islam and Muslims” (Kerboua 2016, 23).

Like its earlier version, neo-Orientalism also uses the binary depictions of the West and Muslims and still uses the images of women to reinforce its depictions of Islam and Muslims. In her article “American Vision of Houri,” Rustomji tries to uncover the ways in which the belief about the houri has been imparted to the American public and, more importantly, how the figure of houri shapes American visions of Islam (2007). She surveys images of houri in the American media and illustrates how Americans use the houri as a means to understand the “real Islam” and the nature of Muslim societies. The article argues that the discourse which accompanies the houri reveals perceptions of Islam in the American imagination as “a system of belief with an inherent sensual, violent, and irrational character” (Rustomji 2007, 80). The narrative specifically refers to how the houri is a motivation for people committing violent terrorist acts and how it has been employed to “prove” the inherent hyper-sexualized and violent character of Islam and Muslims.5

Moreover, these new forms of Orientalism designate how the West perceives and treats Muslims, especially their own Muslim communities. For instance, in the United States, public opinion about Muslim societies has resemblances to colonial perceptions.6 In the case of France, Islam and Muslims are still the “other” against which Frenchness has been constructed. In other words, France’s Enlightenment ideals are set against Muslims not only in colonial Algeria, but also in twenty-first century France. As Scott argues, the difference between French and Muslim cultures is considered the cause of the
unbridgeable gap between France and its Muslim population. The oppositional positioning of Frenchness and Muslimness creates a “reality,” once again, in which the enlightened France is placed in the superior position over its Muslim subjects, especially headscarf-wearing women (Scott 2007, 7).

Whose Feminism?

As mentioned before, the Orientalist narratives employed for justification of the colonial interventions deployed Islam as barbaric, backward and the cause of women’s suffering. According to Leila Ahmed, the adaptation of this Orientalist discourse for the liberation of women created “colonial feminism” (Ahmed 1992, 244). As I briefly discussed earlier in the case of Algeria and will revisit in the context of Turkey, Western women and various forms of feminism also partook in the “civilizing mission” for Muslim women as framed by Orientalist narratives. Such feminist works reproduced some Orientalist paradigms, such as binary depictions, religious/secular, veiled/unveiled etc. (Lazreg 1988, 85). With the rise of the critiques of Orientalism, feminist works also engaged with the critique of the earlier feminist perspectives. However, studies of Muslim women are still mostly based on West-centric paradigms. Muslim women are analyzed through tools, methodologies, and discourses delivered from Western contexts. In other words, West-centric feminist works might decide the meanings of Muslim women’s experiences and the ways in which proper emancipation strategies should be enacted.
In her book *Under the Western Eyes*, Mohanty explores a critique of “Western feminism on Third World women,” which is formed around Eurocentric ideas. She also explores the “power-knowledge” nexus of cross-cultural feminist scholarship expressed through Eurocentric interests (Mohanty 2003, 501). This Eurocentricism treats the “Third world,” Middle East or North Africa as a sort of “intellectual ghetto,” depicted by theories and methodologies of the mainstream social science as the “other” which is never capable to reach the “universality” and “normalcy” of the master, the West. For instance, a Western woman is capable for talk of self-knowledge, but it would be only “local knowledge” or “native’s point of view” in the case of a Third World woman (Lazreg 1988, 84).

One of the most problematic issues shared by Orientalism and some feminist works is the centrality of Islam as a primary subject of inquiry, as if Islam, as some monolithic and static tradition, shapes every detail of a Muslim woman’s life in a non-historical context. Since Muslim women are categorized under “Islam,” which is presented in fundamental terms, they are seen as the embodiment of this single tradition without the influence of historical factors, or as women with no history. Even many well-meaning attempts of scholars writing about Muslim women, such as Mahmood’s *Politics of Piety*, briefly discussed in the introduction, might fall into the traps of prioritizing Islam as the single constructive power in these women’s lives.

Lazreg (1988, 84) identifies the underlying assumptions of these studies as an idea of Islam that is a “self-contained and flawed belief system impervious to change,” rooted in Orientalist assumptions. As the result of such assumptions that deem Islam as
an unchangeable and inherently oppressive belief system, the attempts of Muslim women
to articulate their own feminist frameworks are seen as hopeless. Lazreg (1988, 90-91)
discusses the ways in which Algerian women were represented by the colonial discourse.
She rightly notes how Arab women are deemed unable to engage with any form of
feminism unless they reject Islamic traditions. Unless they completely distance
themselves from this tradition and engage with the Western frameworks, they are mostly
accused of being “pawns” of an oppressive tradition or of not being conscious enough to
liberate themselves. Ahmad discusses the classroom experiences of her students with
young headscarf-wearing Muslim women in her classrooms in the United States. She
points out that non-Muslim students can understand and sympathize with the
discrimination headscarf-wearing Muslim women face as long as the issue is framed in
terms of personal choice, minority discrimination, or empowerment. In such framings,
the headscarf is presented as the marker of Western ideals, such as freedom, personal
choice, and resistance. However, when headscarf-wearing students project a sense of
moral sign, they usually lose the argument (Ahmad 2008, 99-100).

Put differently, Muslim women must completely abandon their traditional
practices and ways of life, which is supposedly based on a single entity called Islam, if
they want to be free, liberated and enlightened as their Western counterparts are. For this
purpose, Western frameworks, methodologies, points of view, and even military and
political interventions can be offered to Muslim women to be able to produce
“acceptable” forms of feminism and liberation.
Western feminists might reconcile Christianity and feminism or Judaism and feminism, but Islam is deemed essentially anti-feminist and misogynistic. This logic implies that Muslim women need to be held accountable to external standards (Lazreg 1988, 81-85). Any claim or connection of women to Muslim traditions might put these women under the category of “Islamist.” Even when they want to engage with a feminist framework, they become “Islamist feminists,” not “Muslim feminists,” unlike Christian and Jewish women who are called “Christian”/“Jewish” feminists. Through this labeling, they are associated with everything subsumed under the loose category of “Islamist,” including terrorism, radicalism, militancy, submissiveness etc. ISIS (enslaves women), the Saudi state (restricts even the basic rights of women), a patriarchal political movement (deny women’s agency in the political sphere) and a Muslim woman, who associates with Islamic scripture or Muslim tradition in a woman inclusive way, can all be labeled as “Islamist.” Hence, what “Islamist” woman or feminist means is left to the imagination of the reader. The label, moreover, underscores that those women need to be seen as problematic without any attention being paid to the historical conditions in which they live and the ways in which they engage with the tradition.

As a result of perceiving the religion as the “bedrock” of all Muslim women, Islam is deemed as the main, if not only, cause of gender inequality and underdevelopment, as well as a trigger of social and political problems. Additionally, Muslim women are reduced to particular traditions or a few chapters in the Qur’an, such as those related to gender hierarchy (Lazreg 1988, 87). Therefore, women’s struggles and oppression, which are in reality situated within complex historical conditions, are reduced
to religion or culture. Because of this Mohanty rightly stress the urgency for historical analysis. She emphasizes the importance of the connection between the local and the global, and draws attention to the material complexity, reality, and agency of Third World women who are usually left out of feminist theorizing. In her critique of Eurocentric, universalizing, masculinist assumptions, Mohanty stresses the urgent need of decolonizing feminist frameworks in favor of a larger, “cross-border” feminist project. For this purpose, she believes, a more inclusive feminist community and feminist discourse require equal power relations among feminists (Mohanty 2003, 499-505).

Although feminist scholars, such as Mohanty, point out the need for de-colonized feminist frameworks, equal participation of non-Western women to feminist theorizing is still problematic. As Duchen (2011, 430-431) puts is, the critique of Orientalist narratives has focused on moving the discussion on gender in the Muslim world from an essentialist and ahistorical understanding. However, scholars of gender have yet to find a way to move beyond Orientalism.

As long as Western sovereignty, lifestyle, academic tradition and social structure remain central in the analyses of the subject, Muslim women’s experiences that do not suit them are made invisible. Without assessing women’s positions within social and material conditions, studies on Muslim women only reproduce the tired Orientalist and Eurocentric assumptions. Once the historical positionalities of Muslim women are acknowledged, however, the stereotypical portrayals get eliminated and vibrant forces of gender construction in the Muslim world become visible. Otherwise, the phrase “Muslim
women” remains as the expression of a collective identity inherited from the Orientalist thinking, rather than Muslim women themselves.

In order to illuminate the idea of collective identity, Cooke (2007, 140) coined the term “The Muslimwoman” which is “not a description of a reality; it is the ascription of a label that reduces all diversity to a single image” (Cooke 2007, 140). Through this single identification, all factors in Muslim women’s lives, national, historical, social, or political, get erased. The image of the Muslimwoman erases all diversity among Muslim women and represents an essential embodiment of Islam. As Lazreg puts it, they “have no existence outside these categories: they have no individuality. What is true of one is true of all” (Lazreg 1988, 94). Despite all historical and spatial differences, the Muslimwoman represents everything wrong with Islam and Muslims. Some, supposed, “insiders,” such as Somali-born Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Canadian Irshad Manji, reinforces the Muslimwoman label by exposing the “dark” face of Muslim women’s lives to the outside world. By doing this, they prove the rule: “I am a Muslim woman, therefore I know the Muslimwoman” (Cooke 2008, 94).

Cooke relates the emergence of the Muslimwoman identity with post 9/11 Islamophobia in the U.S. (Cooke 2007, 150). Badran also explains that beyond the West, there is no homegrown Islamophobia, therefore, there has not been the same need to defend the Muslimwoman (Badran 2008, 104). However, elsewhere in the world, such as Turkey, the image of Muslimwoman had been employed for various political goals well before 9/11. It is more likely that the creation of the Muslimwoman image goes back to the Orientalist depictions of the East and its women. The case of Turkey is an example of
a homegrown Orientalism in a Muslim majority context. This domestic Orientalism adopted from the Western Orientalism also urges women to defend the Muslimwoman image mostly based on wearing a headscarf that has been the most important marker of the Muslimwoman, and that draws a boundary between “us” and “them,” “emancipated” and “oppressed.”

The Turkish Case

Most presented-day countries of the Muslim world were colonies of Europe, and even those such as Turkey, that were not under direct colonial rule have been subjected to European influence and to Orientalist thinking. The Orientalist narratives of Islam and Muslim women got adopted by the local intellectual and politics, and provided the basis of newly emerging national identities (Ahmed 1992, 147-148). One result of this was the desire of the secular Turkish state, established in 1923, to align with Europe by distancing itself from “backward” Muslims and the Ottoman legacy. In Turkey, the Orientalist views about Muslims, specifically Muslim women, were not only internalized by the intelligentsia, but also became official state policy (Çinar 2008, 900).

When the state was established, the construction of new gender images was an important means to display the image of the new Turkey (White 2003, 150; Gökarıksel 2009, 660; Çınar 2008, 891-910). In 1925, two years after the rise of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkey, introduced a bill known as the “Hat Law” that outlawed the Ottoman fez and made a top hat mandatory for men. When he introduced the hat, he said:
Gentlemen, the Turkish people who founded the Turkish Republic are civilized; they are civilized in history and in reality. But I tell you as your own brother, as your friend, as your father, that the people of the Turkish Republic, who claim to be civilized, must show and prove that they are civilized, by their ideas and their mentality, by their family life and their way of living...My friends, the international dress is worthy and appropriate for our nation, and we will wear it. (Çınar 2008, 898)

Ataturk was not alone in advocating for the new citizen type. Those secular elites around him also embraced on the civilizing mission and became model citizens: Westernized, modern, secular, and nationalist. To reinforce this image, they dressed in European style-clothing, appeared in coffeehouses and restaurants that served European dishes and socialized in Western-style activities such as horseback riding and playing golf (Çınar 2008, 899). Forms of manner, lifestyle, dressing, and social activity associated with the Ottoman past became “backward” and an embarrassment to newly civilized Turkish citizens.

The promotion of the “civilized” dress for women was also an important part of the narrative of the new Turkish state. Ever since the foundation of the secular state in 1923, women’s bodies had been the most crucial entities of political actors on both sides of the spectrum, secular and Islamist. Therefore, what women could wear was central to the construction of political discourse as well as the construction of the nation as a whole. For the founding fathers and secular elites, who adopted the Orientalist view about their own nation, the headscarf was the symbol of “women’s oppression” and of “Islam’s backwardness,” and therefore it needed to be completely removed from the public scene (White 2003, 150; Gökarıksel 2009, 660).
Erasure of the veil from the body was the most important indicator of a modern and civilized Turkish woman and the nation. Since the founders aimed to convince Europe about the new identity of the Turkish nation, they enforced European measure of modernity and enlightenment, especially for women. The images of Turkish women, now emancipated from the confines of the veils, engaging in modern activities such as dancing, dressed in Western clothing, were effective ways to present the “civilization” of the nation to the wider world (Çınar 2008, 899). The founders encouraged women to become pilots, athletes, teachers, and lawyers, as long as they appeared in Western clothes. In other words, the secular state worked hard to transform its women into a “presentable” form in order to earn the approval of the “modern” world. To convince Europe about the “new civilized Turkish nation,” these images of women, who were unveiled and engaged in various professions, were distributed in Europe as well (Çınar 2008, 899). Libal quotes a Greek observer who reflects the fascination with the new image and emancipation of the Turkish women in the 1930s:

Who would have guessed? If you had said this to someone fifteen years ago, who wouldn’t have died of laughter? The Turkish woman, who had been imprisoned in harem life, mysterious and unapproachable, now she is holding the “crown of world feminism.” Among those of her sex, the Turkish woman is the first one to escape from guardianship and advance the cause of women’s laws (rights). (Libal 2014, 31)

The Greek writer was astonished by Turkish women, who had been presumably among the most oppressed in the world, but then, again civil rights had yet to be realized in many European countries. One of Turkey’s most popular newspapers at the time,
Cumhuriyet, also reprinted the article to herald international acclaim for the new Turkish woman as well as the new Turkish state (Libal 2014, 32).

Change to the dress code was not the only reform related to women’s issues. To be able to be included within the civilized world, the state generously extended women’s rights. Similar to what Leila Ahmed (1992, 151, 244) calls “colonial feminism,” this created “state feminism” in Turkey (White 2003, 145), based on Orientalist views of Muslim women. However, since this series of reformations was a political strategy to advertise the new image of the nation, as many feminists have noted, they aimed to promote the official ideology rather than contributing to the well-being and emancipation of women (Arat 2000, 106-107). The public visibility and social engagement of women encouraged by the official ideology had not afforded women autonomous agency. Instead, women’s visibility in the public sphere was consolidated as the new image of the state, which was the only agent shaping the institutional and social forms of the nation (Çınar 2008, 902). In other words, the secular state constructed the ways in which women could be visible actors and encouraged them to embody the roles already provided by men of the state. More interestingly, this position has been labeled with feminist mottos such as liberation or emancipation of women.

Kemalists, including Kemalist feminists, claim that the secular Turkish Republic granted emancipation and liberation to Turkish women was unimaginable under the rule of the Muslim Ottoman Empire. Until the 1980s, when other feminist groups challenged this claim with the access to the Ottoman and early Republican period documents, this was the only narrative available to the national and international communities. Although
women did not have the rights under the Ottoman rule, given by the newly established Republic, Muslim women had demanded and struggled for women’s education and participation in civic life. Ottoman women’s magazines revealed how Ottoman women approached women’s issues, meanwhile and how the Kemalist regime used, shaped and limited women’s activism to create the new Turkey. Öztürkmen argues that the first wave of the women’s movement in the Ottoman Empire had more extensive demands than the Republican regime had granted. Mudafaa-i Hukuk-i Nisvan Cemiyeti (Association to Defend Women’s Legal Issues) was one of the feminists’ key platforms, advocating women’s integration in professional life and education, and the struggle against inequality and oppressive traditions. It expressed women’s disappointment with the era of reformations and demanded a fuller participation of women in civic life (Öztürkmen 2013, 256-257).

Another relevant effort, even before the establishment of the Republic, was to start a women’s political party, Kadinlar Halk Firkası (Women’s Social Party) in July 1923 (Öztürkmen 2013, 258-259). The head of this effort was Nezihe Muhiddin, who was a devoted feminist who advocated for an independent women’s voice. However, her party was immediately shot down in the newly established Republic. Then, the party initiative formed Türk Kadınlar Birliği (Turkish Women’s Union) and Nezihe Muhiddin was replaced with a moderate activist (Zihnioğlu 2009, 5). The Turkish Women’s Union hosted the twelfth congress of International Association of Women (IAW) in Istanbul in 1935, which played an instrumental role, both nationally and internationally, in portraying the Istanbul Congress as a sign of the modern world’s endorsement of the new
Turkish state and its reforms related to women’s rights. These portrayals again relied upon Orientalist stereotypes of Ottoman or Muslim women to prove “Turkish progress” (Libal 2014, 31).

Despite national and international accolades, the Turkish Women Union (TWU) faced governmental pressure because it represented a challenge to the state. Once the Istanbul Congress was over, founding fathers sought to eliminate the TWU in order to solidify the Kemalist regime. Even TWU’s status as the first “Muslim” and non-Western national organization to host a major IAW congress could not save them (Libal 2014, 32-33). The association dissolved itself in 1935, putatively because there was no longer any need to struggle for women’s emancipation in Turkey since equality had already been achieved (Coşar and Onbaşı 2008, 329). The state, which now extended certain rights to women for its own advertisement, had had it with this process and clamped down on women’s activism. More interestingly, all this was done under the claim of the “liberation of women” by the secular state. Once again, an authority constructed the ways in which women needed to be liberated and saved under the guise of “feminist” concerns. When the federation was dismantled, Turkey was left without any association for women until after World War II (Libal 2014, 46).

Modernization of a Nation

Göle argues that those societies left on the periphery of the West have been excluded from the sphere of history and knowledge; therefore, they were not able to participate any longer in the course of change to such an extent that they experienced a
sense of “cultural schizophrenia” (Göle 1996, 28). Citing Iranian Philosopher Shayegan, Göle (1996, 67) continues, “the East oriented its reformations in light of Western standards to the extent that their consciousness is wounded.” Therefore, those societies that “cannot recognize themselves in their own history are alienated not only from their own praxis but from the ‘present time’ as well” (Göle 1996, 51). The more those societies recognized the superiority of the West, the more they lost confidence in their own identity. As the result of the presumed superiority of the West, the word modernity refers to “becoming” like the West, which Göle calls “the fetishistic idea of progress” (Göle 1996, 51). Turkish modernization is one example of this form of modernization.

The modernization process in Turkey goes back to the early nineteen century, the late Ottoman period. Ottoman elites argued about the ways in which the modernization project should transform the Ottoman society. One party advocated for the complete adaptation of Western/European modernity as a “universal” way of life. The other party wanted to build modernity based on the Ottoman traditions, mainly connected with Islamic traditions, by combining them with the recent changes in the West. With the foundation of the secular Republic of Turkey in 1923, the modernization endeavor was accelerated. The elites leading the modernization movement, Özçetin says, tried to “invent a new nation” that broke its bonds with the Ottoman Empire, Islam, and the East, and then aligned with the “civilized” and modern West (Özçetin 2009, 107). This transformation process of the nation was shaped by the principles of Kemalism (the state ideology built on ideals of founding fathers).
The word “modern” is used in Turkish with its particular connotations in Turkish history, which are mainly related to a political will to become “modern” (Göle 1996, 76). The elite adherents of Turkish modernization planned a homogenous society such that all differentiations in terms of religion, ethnicity, and language were antithetical to the ideal nation. This Turkish modernization aimed at the transformation of society regardless of the will of the people. As Göle argues, Turkish modernism was based on state authoritarianism to forge the “ideal citizen” and refused to recognize autonomous spheres; therefore, Turkish modernists feared any form of liberalism or pluralism (Göle 1996, 88-97). In other words, Turkish modernism was not built on the initiatives of local people. Instead, it was exported from Europe as a statist project that aimed to erase traditional and local values, patterns and differences in the society. Consequently, this elitist state project created its “others,” which were the majority of the nation, and forced them to become like the Westernized ideal citizens in every manner of their lives.

As Göle (1996, 132) explains, with allusion to Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of “habitus,” modern ways of living “operated beneath the level of consciousness and language and functioned outside one’s own will yet determine one’s manner of eating, acting, speaking, and so on.” Compared to rural people living in small towns or villages, middle class and urban residents were more intensely exposed to the modernization apparatuses. Therefore, the manners of modernity were infused into the life of these people more so than those in rural communities. Those who came out of their rural and local environments into the modern-secular sphere later, especially after the 1950s, when authoritarian state apparatuses began to weaken because of the gradual increasing of
liberalism, carried traditional and “Islamic” behaviors, dressing, and manners into the public sphere once again. While until the 1980s only republican elites could relate to the system of modernization (Akboğa 2014, 619), with the rise of different social groups, new actors claimed agency in the public sphere. This new urban population, especially headscarf-wearing university students, began to challenge the meaning of modernity in the imaginary of Kemalist secularism by ways of their actions in the educational field. Their increasing visibility at the universities contested the Kemalist sense of modernity challenging the connotation of modernity as “Western,” and re-appropriating the mode of modernism by associating “Muslim” with “modern” (Göle 1996, 98-108).

This upwardly mobile and urbanized social group has affected the direction of social change in Turkey. The Kemalist modernization project designed a “civilized” citizen model, which was a mere embodiment of a Western way of life. However, this elitist project failed to provide a satisfying experience of modernization in a society that had to use dictatorial means to keep the society on the “modern” path. With the rise of new social actors, the course of modernity strayed from the path of the Kemalist project. These actors revived the Muslim identity, which had been erased from the secular-modern sphere by state authorities, and turned it into a social actor. Therefore, they were labeled as “Islamist,” which is associated with anti-modernity, tradition, and backwardness. Regardless of their political engagements, these, who believe, act, dress, or socialize in a way that revived the buried tradition, have been subsumed under the label “Islamist.”
Although these new actors engaged with and adopted the modern lifestyle and education system to various degrees, they, especially the headscarf-wearing women, have never been accepted as a part of the “modern” nation, but marginalized. Özçetin quotes from a letter written by Canan Aritman, a member of the main opposition party, Republican People’s party, to Emine Erdoğan, headscarf-wearing wife of president Erdoğan; since Mrs. Erdoğan goes abroad for official visits and still wears a headscarf, Canan Aritman expresses her disappointment:

Your dress style injures the image of Turkish women. Your personal choices cause an incorrect image of Turkish women abroad. If you will not change, stay at home... I respect your personal choices. But modern Turkish Republican women are not wearing headscarves, and have adopted the Western, civilized dress code. (Özçetin 2009, 106)

Although more than 60% of women in Turkey wear a headscarf, they are not deemed capable of representing the “correct” image of Turkish women since they do not fit into the imagery of the “modern” as borrowed from the Orientalist view. Regardless of their education level, profession, or social status, they are still “backward” Muslim women. Therefore, they have no right to show up in public. Since the secular is naturally associated with civilization, enlightenment, and emancipation, the secular hegemony decides who can represent whom as the civilized actor in the play.

The transformation of how women’s bodies look and act has been a crucial concern for the Turkish modernization project as the marker of transition from an Islamic empire to a secular nation-state. The rising visibility of headscarf-wearing women stoked these concerns once again, and the state wanted to re-discipline the nation by disciplining women’s bodies through a strict ban on the headscarf.
The Ban on the Headscarf

The noticeable visibility of headscarves on university campuses in Turkey, beginning in the 1980s, disturbed the hegemony of Kemalist secularism and modernism and blurred the binary lines: modern/backward, emancipated/oppressed, and secular/religious. As the result of headscarf-wearing women’s presence in the public sphere, secularist circles and institutions reacted with outrage to the extent that headscarf-wearing women were completely banned from all levels of schools, universities, state institutions, and indirectly, from workplaces until 2013.

The state, NGOs, and feminist groups that share the various combinations of the Kemalist and Orientalist views of secularism and modernity, supported the ban on the headscarf since they viewed the headscarf as a form of defiance that would jeopardize the official ideology and secularism. In 1999, when Merve Kavakci, who was the first headscarf wearing deputy, walked into the assembly, Bülent Ecevit, the prime minister of the time, delivered his historic speech calling the assembly for duty. He said: “bring her into line since the assembly is not a place in which anyone would dare to ‘defy’ the state” (“2 Mayis 1999 TBMM Oturumu” 1999). With these words, her deputyship was canceled. This ideology perceived of headscarf-wearing women as agents of a greater Islamist project since these women reminded people of a Muslim past that reencountered the Kemalist project. Even when men in the so-called Islamist party kept their presence in the assembly, a headscarf-wearing woman was an intolerable threat to the secular state because of the significations of the headscarf in the Orientalist imagery.
The modernist ideology has assumed that if women get educated, they would liberate themselves from the chains of religion, unlike undereducated women. However, these women have continued to practice Islam while engaging with modern life in their own ways, instead of adopting the Orientalist-Kemalist way of being “modern” that reminded them of the state hegemony, Western imperialism, and exclusion.

In order to label these women “Islamist,” the state ideology re-constructed the meaning of the headscarf by making a distinction between headscarves worn by rural women and headscarves (they named it “türban”) worn by university students and professional women (this distinction is discussed further in Chapter 3). The former is innocent, as long as these women stay in their rural community since they are not capable of challenging modernist assumptions in their private spheres. However, the latter was regarded as a threat to the state project of secularization and modernization.

Although the veiling practices, including ones that cover the whole body in various ways, have a much longer history in Anatolia than the secular state, the modernist ideology framed it as if an innovation of political Islam and the name “türban” became the label of this arbitrary framing. Defining the headscarf as the symbol of political Islam was used to overlay the discrimination caused by the ban.9

Sema Akboğa (2014, 610-633) conducted a research with some women’s organizations in Turkey and asked about the organizations’ stands on the ban on headscarves. Examining the discourses employed both by religious Muslim women’s organizations and Kemalist secular women’s organizations regarding the headscarf issue.
Some of her interviewees are members of Ak-der (The Women’s Rights Organization against Discrimination), Özgür-Der (The Association for the Freedom of Thought and Educational Rights), ADD (The Association for Kemalist Thinking) and CKD (The Association of Women of Republic). The first two are generally grouped as “Islamist,” and the latter two are considered as Kemalist.

Akboğa (2014, 622) quotes the president of ADD as stating the following:

A woman would not have a democratic right to cover her hair while working as a doctor or a lawyer in the state institutions. A female doctor who wears the headscarf can believe that she does not have to examine a male patient because of her religious beliefs, which would violate the male patient’s right to live.

Akboğa (2014, 620) provides another citation from the president of CKD (Association of Women of Republic) with similar claims:

From the perspective of teachers who wear the headscarf, a student who does not wear the headscarf would not be equal to a student who wears it. Therefore, for her, the headscarf is not a democratic right because it could negatively affect the rights and freedoms of other women.

Only a hypothetical situation has been enough for the justification of the ban and erasure of the real incidents of discrimination that the headscarf-wearing women experienced. As seen in these examples, Kemalist feminism justified the ban on headscarves usually based on imaginary fears, since most “already” knew, thanks to the Orientalist depictions, that these women would not act otherwise. While many teachers and professors in the country, verbally and physically harassed, and threw the headscarf-wearing students out of classrooms, these real incidents were not deemed discriminatory towards women but instead as liberating them. These incidents were even shown on TV.
during prime time in order to prove how dedicated the state was to liberate its women. University of Republic’s (Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi) graduation ceremony in 1995 is one of the examples broadcasted repeatedly (“Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi - 1995 Mezuniyet” 2016). Three headscarf-wearing students, including the highest ranked student at the school, were not allowed to join in the graduation ceremony of the Nursing School in 1995. One of them tried to approach to dais and say “I am not allowed to join in the ceremony although I am the highest scored student.” But, her mouth was quickly muzzled and she was brutally dragged away by her headscarf. Then, the school director professor shouted: “I give the order right here, these three will never get certified in this school” (“Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi - 1995 Mezuniyet” 2016).

The underlying assumption of such a liberationist discourse is the natural association of the secular, modern and Western with liberation and emancipation, and of religion with oppression. Since the state ideology, backed by Western Orientalist discourses, held the authority to decide who counts as an oppressor, the image of Muslim women has been easily associated with oppression. In this imagery, because headscarf-wearing women are “religious,” they are either oppressed or would themselves oppress others. On the other hand, men and “unveiled” women of the secular world are essentially egalitarian regardless of what they do since they subscribe to “secularism” “modernity,” and “liberation.” Even when they must use some oppressive, maybe brutal, means, this is not really oppression, indeed, but the “liberation” of those who are not capable of liberating themselves.
Two anthologies, *Secularisms* by Janet R. Jakobsen & Ann Pellegrini (2008), and *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference* by Linell E. Cady & Tracy Fessenden (2013), call into question this narrative of secularism that poses religion as its anti-thesis that which brings dogmatism, fundamentalism and violence. In this narrative, secularism is positioned against religion as a promise of liberation, freedom, emancipation, and progress. Those who insist in the observance of religious law are regarded, from the secularist perspective, as a threat to the gains made by secularization. Both of these volumes call for different ways of thinking about the divisions of modern and traditional, religious and secular, private and public, freedom and submission etc.

Particularly, Scott’s essay in *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference* discusses that differences between secular and religious societies in their treatment of women are not always as sharp as assumed, but the assumption of sharp distinction works to obscure the reality of problems by attributing all negatives to religion, and by creating a single emancipatory discourse for all (Scott 2013, 25-46). By a closer reading of secularism through the prism of gender and sexuality in a variety of contexts, she articulates the idea that advances in women right is not an inevitable result of the secularization process.

In this chapter, I summarize how the representations of Muslim women have been constructed by Orientalist, Kemalist and Euro-centric discourses in order to give an overview of Muslim women’s representations and point out the constructive power of certain discourses. However, I will be employing the affective-relational approach in the
following chapters in order to shift the attention toward the relational nature of life that connects material with discursive, local with global, and social with psychological.
NOTES

1 Katz lists how objects are represented in different settings. For example, in the “gallery” artifacts were displayed as commodities, abstracted from time and space, while in the “art museum” the objects were aestheticized and defined only by the material used, with no relationship between the artifacts and the social or political-economic realms within which they were situated. In the “curiosity room” the artifacts were displayed as a cluster of objects regardless to historical or spatial origin that gave a sense of salvage, while in the “museum of natural history” their functional forms were displayed, fixing them in an “other” time and space (Katz 1992, 500).

2 See, for example, (Thompson 2000; Clancy-Smith and Gouda 1998).

3 Such terms as racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are complicated terms since there is no or little consensus on their meanings. For the term “Islamophobia,” there is a great deal of debate over its definition.

4 The houri is supposedly feminine beings of paradise. By pointing Muhammad Atta who promised houris to the hijackers of the World Trade Center, news organizations reconstruct the image of Muslims.

5 Although, there are articles that point different understanding of houri (such as a German scholar who argues that the houri is a symbol), the houri as hyper-sexualized virgins has been used for the critique of Islam (Rustomji 2007).

6 See (Fernea and Bazirgan 1977; Nelson 1974; Dorsky 1985).
This form of secularism in Turkey has been adopted from the French *laïcité* which means the state’s protection of individuals from the claims of religion in contrast to the secularism in the United States that connotes the protection of religion from the state’s interference (Scott 2007, 15).

Eleven years after the successor of the Islamist Refah Party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party came to power, for the first time in the nation’s history, headscarf is allowed in schools and university campuses despite long controversial debates.

In the next chapter, I will discuss further how the headscarf turned into the “türban.” Here, I only provide some examples of the ways in which this discrimination was justified and the views of women’s organizations in the exclusion of the “other” women.
CHAPTER 3

AFFECTIVE-RELATIONAL BECOMINGS OF HEADSCARF-WEARING BODIES

In the previous chapter, I examined how certain discourses and power structures construct particular images of Muslim women. In this chapter, I aim to challenge some of these constructions, particularly ones about headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, through Deleuzian ontology that illuminates the situatedness of these women’s embodiments and practices. As Vila discusses regarding identity construction on the U.S.-Mexico border, embodiments, practices, and events gain certain meanings when narrated within particular plots (Vila, n.d., 9); similarly embodiments of headscarf-wearing women in Turkey are narrated based on “Islamism” and inscribed with political meaning. Although the possibilities of framing a practice or an event into a story are endless (Vila, n.d., 7), the discourses and plots chosen for the framing determine the kinds of stories we tell. To challenge the framing of the headscarf in Turkey as Islamism based on political plots, I call attention to multiple elements that shape the headscarf practices beyond its political implications. Based on the Deleuzian understanding of the body, I stress the shifting, multiple and elusive nature of the headscarf-wearing women’s embodiments.

In Deleuzian theory, which is articulated in my introduction, the body is not a stable ontological essence, but a relational and affective aggregate and a multiplicity within an assemblage.¹ This includes human and non-human bodies, material bodies as well as immaterial structures (Deleuze 1978, n.p.; Grosz 1993, 173-176; Blackman 2008, 38-39; Buchanan, 1997, 79-80; Currier 2003, 328; Fox 2011, 363; Duff 2010, 628; Potts
According to this ontology, the body within an assemblage, human or non-human, emerges in a series of affective and relational becomings, which Deleuze (1988, 125) calls ethology. The body is an “ever modulating ensemble of simple parts” and “connected in distinctive relational patterns” through assemblages (Duff 2010, 625).

For Deleuze, bodies are always composed of an infinite number of extensive parts, which are themselves bodies, no matter how small. An individual body connects with other bodies and becomes a part of a different body. The Deleuzian term “body-without-organs,” shortened to BwO, refers to this continuous becoming of bodies that began from the moment of conception for a human body. In other words, the BwO expresses a body formed by the confluence of relations and creative capacities in the course of its life (Adkins 2015, 96-108).

Deleuze’s body is constituted through the relations of multiple bodies, therefore are dynamic, continually changing, always in a process of becoming, and not determined by overarching social structures. The individuality of a body depends on the distinctive relations of small bodies which compose of the complex body, not some essential characteristics (Marrati 2006, 315). From this perspective, social structures, such as religious traditions, are also not wholes or contexts which function in a definitive way that determines how component parts, human and non-human bodies, act. Rather, the wholes are the amalgamation of the bodies. The characteristics of connections and compositions between the bodies shape the immanent characteristics of the whole and the part, the social and the human body (Duff 2010, 628). Therefore, both the social context
and human body are constituted through the process of assembling and re-assembling. Both derive their meanings and function entirely within assemblages (Blackman and Venn 2010, 10). In this way, neither of them comes first and acts upon other. Instead, they shape each other and act in relation to each other (Currier 2003, 328). This Deleuzian ontology is attentive to micro-politics that extend the concerns of analysis beyond macro structures, such as Islamism, and shifts our attention toward the ways in which desires, practices, and meanings are produced within assemblages of heterogeneous elements.

In order to illuminate the Deleuzian ontology of becoming, Moira Gatens, a feminist philosopher, employs Michel Tournier’s novel *Friday*, which is a reprise of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. This narrative reflects the idea that individuals are never separable from their environment and their relations. In *Friday*, there is a single survivor of a shipwreck, whose name is also Robinson. He tries to establish human order and even industry in his isolation. Unlike Defoe's Robinson, who vindicates Eurocentric norms of human rationality and industriousness, Tournier wants to experiment with the idea of “what becomes of a man in a context where he is completely cut off from both his typical relations with others and his typical pleasures, powers and capacities” (Gatens 1996, 172). Gatens argues that in the absence of human society, Robinson’s “humanity” cannot be indefinitely maintained. He eventually becomes something other than “human.” This narrative exemplifies the post-human ontology that does not recognize any form, substance or essence underlying “humanity.” Rather, the individual human body maintains itself only in extensive interrelations within a human society. By the end of the
novel, Robinson has undergone a complete metamorphosis. His attempts to ‘civilize’ the island completely cease and he even refuses the option of returning to the human society when it is presented to him by the only ship that comes to the island after twenty-eight years. In the course of the narrative, he becomes something different than that which he was, since he becomes part of very different assemblages and relations (Gatens 1996, 95, 171-176).

Robinson’s disengagement from his culture and norms causes the gradual unfolding and undoing of his relationships and the “decomposition of his past ‘self’” in the absence of a human society. The change of bodies that Robinson has related leads to the transformation of Robinson’s habituated human world and opens his body to other possible worlds (Gatens 1996, 95, 171-175).

Through this account, Gatens aims to discuss the constitution and transformation of the body according to its relations. In post-humanism, the human subject is only one of the bodies in an assemblage that relationally interacts, so that it is not separable from its surroundings. The bodies in an assemblage can be objects, structures, ideas, language, or institutions, as well as a human body, which are all interconnected formations.

Constitutive power of this relationality comes from in various forms of “affect” that the constant connecting and disconnecting of bodies produce (Deleuze 1978, n.p.). While affect moves between bodies, human and non-human (Pellegrini 2011, 69), it also exceeds both the subject and the relations by which it is produced (Thrift 2008, 85; Williams 2010, 246-247). Nick Fox, who applies the Deleuzian ontology in
neuropsychology, gives an example of “eating-assemblage.” For example, if “John” is hungry, he can relate to the apple since he is affected by the apple’s nutritional capabilities because of the digestive capacity produced by his hunger. As a result of the “eating-assemblage,” capacities and affects of bodies, both John and the apple change. On the other hand, if John has just consumed a three-course meal, the apple may not have any capacity to affect and to be affected, and eating-assemblage cannot accrete because of lack of affect (Fox 2015, 306). Put differently, the capacities for actions and changes are produced by affective relationships between elements of an assemblage.

This Deleuzian approach of becoming provides a means to illuminate the experiences, desires, and practices of women in their context and through the particular characters of relations and affects. Therefore, I find Deleuzian understanding of the body, the becoming, useful to problematize the perceptions about Muslim women, particularly headscarf-wearing women in Turkey. Since this Deleuzian approach problematizes the stability and singularity of identities, it offers a radical challenge to the framing of the question of Muslim women. Through this framing, the study of Muslim women’s experiences and subjectivities are transformed into the studies of their bodies’ encounters, relations, and affects. This perspective invites us to re-think Muslim women’s relational investments and embodiments and reveals that those women affect and are affected by other bodies surrounding them, human or non-human. They resist, reproduce, transform and adjust to these bodies. They are also limited, extended, and shaped by them.

Therefore, Muslim women’s practices are contingently produced through spatial relations and affects. While their bodies move through different places, particular
experiences, discursive regimes and normative spaces, their practices of religion also continually shift. Even the ways in which the headscarf, which is considered as the marker of stereotypical identity, functions shift depending on spatial and historical conditions, to the extent that these ways might even be contradictory (Duchen 2011, 430).

Given the Deleuzian understanding of the body, my arguments stress the relationality of Muslim women’s embodiments and practices by privileging the role of assemblages instead of representations. I aim to explore the ways in which the beings of Muslim women, Islamist women or headscarf-wearing women have been produced within and through relations of materiality, corporeality, socio-economic availabilities, political context and discursive regimes, and look specifically at these enactments of headscarf-wearing women in Turkey. This approach refuses to place the categorizing gaze at the center of an analysis in which the specificity and authenticity of those women are silenced. Instead, I suggest that examination of their affective-relational becomings is crucial to understand their practices, embodiments, and desires as well as the ways in which these women’s inclusions and exclusions are produced.

According to this ontology, which I call affective-relational, a place, a practice, a narrative, a human body or a perception might co-constitute one or more of the other elements. A material object, a religious belief, a memory of trauma or a longing contribute to the constitution of who a Muslim woman or a headscarf-wearing woman is. In another optic, territorializing categories s such as race, class or gender may limit or re-direct the process of this constitution. Therefore, I suggest reconsidering the relationalities of these women’s lives instead of engaging in the marginalization of the group under the
discussion of Islamism. However, my aim is not to reveal the unmediated reality of these women’s lives. Rather, I hope to problematize the categorizing, stereotyping perspectives and open a space for new possibilities of analysis.

I propose that affective-relationality enables us to ground the knowledge we produce within the historicity and materiality as well as revealing the ways in which constructive powers function. It reveals how the micro and macro, local and global, material and discursive, secular and religious articulate into each other to the extent that a discrete distinction is impossible. Thus, webs of differential relations make the fixation of these women’s identities impossible.

I continue this chapter with some experiments on affective-relational becomings of headscarf-wearing women’s bodies in Turkey, specifically those in the women’s organizations whose members I interviewed. Based on the “affective-relational” approach I propose, I come up with two focuses in these experiments; one is affective registers in bodies, the other is the relationality of bodies as well as affects. Although affects are intrinsically relational, and relations produce affects, so that affects and relations are not two distinct things, I call my approach “affective-relational” to stress both, affective and relational, characteristics of becoming. To attend to the affective registers that connect the body of the headscarf and the body of a woman, I aim to find out the ways in which these women got attached to the headscarf. Although it is not possible to extract the exact assemblage or to reach to the unmediated affects, through the memories of women I interviewed, I look into the ways in which certain affects are registered in their bodies in order to elucidate about possible assemblages and affects. For my second focus, to
provide some examples of the relationality of practices, I pay attention to the relationship of the transformation of headscarf practices to the transformation of socio-economic, material and historical contexts that join the assemblage in which a headscarf and a female body get connected. I particularly look into implications of secularist policies in public spaces and the material availability produced by various social, economic and political factors in Turkey.

Affective Registers in Bodies of Headscarf-Wearing Women

While I apply the ontology derived from Deleuzian works to the contestations over women’s headscarves in Turkey, particularly, I ask: what were the affects that produced their desire for a headscarf? Why did these women engage with the practicing of the headscarf in the midst of an extensive ban on the headscarf in Turkey? Why did they reject the “emancipatory” offers of secularism and hold on to the practice at the cost of being socially marginalized? Is the Islamist political movement the source of desires and affective connections for the headscarf?

First of all, in contrast to common assumptions that perceive the headscarf practices as an embodiment of Islamist politics in Turkey, disconnected from the long history of the headscarf, the interviews I conducted show that these women already knew, adopted or used the various forms of headscarves within their small communities with religious concerns before encountering Islamist politics in modern places. Six of the nine women in this research said that they had begun to use a headscarf and adopted the different form of modest dressing in the 1970s and 1980s, even before they went to
college, a place which is considered as a hotbed for Islamism. By this, I do not mean to provide any statistic about how many women began to wear the headscarf before their connection with the modern sphere and the movement of Islamism, as my sample is much too small to be statistically significant. Instead, I claim that headscarf practices were very common among these women even on the outside of the Islamist/secular contestations.

Ayse, from Capital City Women’s Platform, CCWP, is one of my interviewees who referred to an early period of her life as the time she first encountered the headscarf (Interview 3). She said that she was already using the headscarf in the late 70s and early 80s when she was in high school in a small district of the city of Giresun. As the first college graduate in her extended family and as the result of her living in the countryside, she did not have any connection with the Islamist movements which flourished in modern spaces in bigger cities. Although it was not allowed in the school, as soon as she left the school’s property, she wore the headscarf. Since the headscarf she wore was small and tied under the chin, some parts of her neck were visible. But, Ayse says, she knew that covering the neck was religiously appropriate, and so, she tried to cover her neck as much as possible. The majority of my interviewees also stated that their mothers and grandmothers used to wear a headscarf (its traditional versions).

But questions of how and why these women connected to headscarf need to be answered. Given my use of Deleuzian theory, I look for affective capacities and desires that urged these women to make the connection with the headscarf. To find out about the desire for and connection with headscarf practices, I want to go back to the moments
when these women decided to wear a headscarf in the first place. However, since these affects emerged in the past, it is not possible to attend to the moment of affects or to extract the exact assemblage in which these affects emerged. I have to rely on memories narrated by my interviewees and this poses methodological limitations. Therefore, when I talk about affects regarding headscarf practices, my aim is neither to reveal of the elements that contributed to the production of these affects nor how exactly these affects function. Instead, I speculate about some “possible” affects and elements of assemblages in order to call attention to the importance of relations and affects for becomings of these women. In other words, although it is not possible to attend to the moment of affect and to seize the affect in a singular direction, I find the narratives of interviewees helpful to be able to talk about the “possibilities” of affects. I do not claim to know affects which led to their veiling. Neither do I believe that such a task is possible. Rather, I am concerned with providing some examples, only some possible elements within assemblages, to be able to point the affective-relational becomings of women.

For example, I asked Hidayet Tuksal how and when she decided to wear a headscarf. Tuksal is considered one of the first religious Muslim women in Turkey who publicly confessed her engagement with feminist legacies and one of the women who initiated the Capital City Women’s Platform. Tuksal invoked the memory of a grandmother, who was known for her piety and courage. She described her grandmother as “a person who taught the Qur’an even in the period that the Qur’an was banned. She was also very careful about her veiling” (Interview 4). Although most likely there was a series of affects and assemblages that connected Tuksal with the headscarf, she narrated a
dream, when I asked her how she decided to wear a headscarf. This dream is the assemblage available to me to talk about some possible elements of a more inclusive assemblage, including the dream itself, that produced Tuksal’s connection with the headscarf. Tuksal recalls a moment from when she was 15 before she began to wear a headscarf:

When I was fifteen, one night I dreamed about my age of 30 and wrote it down. She [Hidayet at age 30] was “modern” such like having long polished nails, I used to love nail polishes, and like having a career. Then, I forced myself to imagine someone who reads the Qur’an covering her hair. The former [modern version] seemed much more possible and familiar. But, I prayed. I said, God please make me like the second one. I do not know, maybe it was my grandmother [she cried]. (Interview 4)

Then, in few years, when she was still in high school, Tuksal began to wear a headscarf, recalling a desire to become like her grandmother, to connect with a lifestyle represented by her, then, getting pulled toward the models of this life, a headscarf-wearing woman who reads the Qur’an. Tuksal called attention to how courageous her grandmother was against the ban, the ban of the Arabic text of the Qur’an, so that she performed her belief without reservation even in the face of the oppression. She was well respected within her community because of her piety and bold embracement of the Qur’an. The image of her grandmother invoked a figure that displayed a pious self and claimed her dignity. This image was represented by the headscarf she carefully wore and by the Qur’an she boldly embraced. Her grandmother was also an important person in the familial relationships who came up during our interview more than any other family member. Memories with her grandmother even brought tears to Tuksal’s eyes.
A loved one (the grandmother), feelings of intimacy (produced by familial relations), objects (the headscarf and the Qur’an), ideas of the ideal self (pious and courageous), and social approval (of her grandmother’s embodiments) contributed to assemblages that produced Tuksal’s body, and so, her desire for the headscarf. Put differently, these elements contributed to the production of a sense of intimacy and an ideal self and connected this sense with the objects, the headscarf, and the Qur’an. When Tuksal wanted to embody the ideals embodied by her grandmother, she wanted to wear a headscarf and read the Qur’an, as her grandmother had.

It was not her relationship with the Islamist movement, but Tuksal’s relationship with her grandmother, who wore a headscarf in her local and rural community, that produced Tuksal’s first connection with the headscarf. The affect of this relationship circulated through her body, at the level of consciousness and non-consciousness, and effected the directions of her future movements, urging her to make further connections to become like her grandmother, such as wearing a headscarf.

Selin, a member of Hazar, also describes a moment in which she decided to wear a headscarf:

One day, we were with our cousins. We were discussing Islam and belief. My older brother was usually explaining what the religion of Islam is… He did not talk about headscarf at all. But I thought that a Muslim woman should wear a headscarf… Actually, I did not know much about Islam. But, I said, I will begin to wear a headscarf. (Interview 7)

Selin also acted upon the affect of an assemblage, possibly enthusiasm at a meeting with her peers, the charisma of her brother at the moment, the energy of the atmosphere or even past perceptions about the headscarf and what it means to be a good
Muslims. She was urged by the affects of these relations and acted upon this new desire produced by the affects of the relations.

Here, I do not claim to identify the exact reasons for these women donning the headscarf, but rather I problematize the single-cause explanations, usually based on political symbolism. I do neither mean that irrational religious superstitions diminished Tuksal and Selin’s rational capacities and pulled them at the sub-conscious level. Instead, I try to open up a space to talk about relational and affective forms of becomings to the extent that we cannot think of a body without these affects and relations. In Deleuzian ontology, affects are what makes an individual. As Supp-Montgomeris puts it, “affect calls us into being, marks our dissolution, link us, and separates us” (Supp-Montgomeris 2015, 337). In other words, affects shape the producing of the body as well as the shaping of the future and directions of its actions.

As expressed through the Deleuzian concept of body-without-organs, from the moment of conception, a body continues to become through the confluences of relations. The BwO of an infant might be limited by few desires such as a drive for food, comfort, and warmth. However, over the course of life, maturation and variety of experiences provide the multiplication of relations. As Fox puts it, “the discipline of the nursery and the school-room, the gendering and sexualization of adolescence, the routine of work and the growth and disillusionment of aging progressively create the relations that establish the limits of the body” (Fox 2011, 361). These relations produce the extended parts of the body and become a part of the body.
From this perspective of becoming, headscarf practices joined the becomings of headscarf-wearing women’s bodies through the affects of their relationships. However, these affects and relations in headscarf-wearing women’s bodies were neither single nor stable. When they entered into various spaces, the past affects continued to shift and get complicated. For instance, when they entered into modern and secular spaces in Turkey, at different paces and in different circumstances, these new spaces, new assemblages, also contributed to affects regarding the headscarf.

When the secular state applied oppressive means to promote some supposedly essential and universal ideals for its populations, such as rationality and a desire for freedom and progress (in a Western sense), they assumed that they could reach a body possessing these “essential” desires. However, the affective-relational histories in the repertoires of these women’s bodies interacted with the hegemonies in secular and modern spaces and produced further affects, affects which were not expected by the state. Then, because of the complication of affects, the connection of these women with the headscarf also became more complicated.

In the cases of women connected to the practices of the headscarf, the denial of these relations and affects in secular spaces created the feeling of loss, or of losing a part of the body, a part which is forcefully and painfully taken away. These women were forced to cut off the “unacceptable” parts of their bodies. They were constantly reminded that they are “different,” not welcomed to the modern sphere unless they fix themselves. They were not allowed to work at any state-affiliated institutions or at the visible
positions of the private sector. At schools, the experience of discrimination and the traumas of exclusion were a daily routine. Berna describes this experience:

Even before the ban, professors were treating headscarf-wearing students as if a tea maker came and was listening to the lecture [tea-maker reflects being despised in Turkish]. They did not accept headscarf-wearing students as students. They wanted to ignore us. (Interview 1)

In Ayse’s words, “the professors did not even want to have eye contact with us, as if we were not there” (Interview 3). When the headscarf-wearing women wanted to participate in civic life, they were not welcomed there either. Ayla Kerimoglu, the president of Hazar, also shares her experience about the efforts of being a part of the social service. She says:

Even after the Welfare Party (called Islamist) came to the local government of Istanbul, when we needed to reserve a place for our events, they said that we need to go to the city hall with some other women who do not wear a headscarf. (Interview 6)

To put it differently, the modern and secular spaces denied and wanted to take away some parts of these women’s bodies, which means the desires registered in their bodies, traces of the relationships in their intimate circles, concerns about the cultivation of an ideal self, etc. However, in contrast to the expectations of the secularist ideology, which presupposed a one-way flow of social influence, from the hegemonic structures onto the human body, the assemblages of multiple elements created multi-faced affects. While it was assumed that these women would be turned into ideal secular citizens through the hegemonic-secular policies, the pressure of authoritative tools led to the formation of new religiosities.
As already indicated, affective registers in these women’s bodies produced by their past relations get more complicated when they entered into the secular spaces of Turkey. It is important to show that spaces, as a body within an assemblage, also effect the production of subjectivities, desires, and practices of bodies that occupy that space. In a Deleuzian sense, space is created through fluid processes and formed through practices and bodies which pass through it. In other words, space does not just exist, but it is made. Tucker gives the example of the noisy bustle of a children’s playground that becomes an intimidating place when occupied by young people’s gangs at night, drinking and doing drugs. A place of fun in the daytime becomes a place of fear-inducing gang culture at night (Tucker 2011, 231-232).

As discussed in chapter 2, when the Republic of Turkey was established, the control of public space was an important concern for those wanting to keep it secular. The founding fathers believed that if ideal spaces, which were modern and secular, were provided, the subjects, who inhabited these places, would be formed with these pre-given qualities of the spaces. Secular places, they believed, would create enlightened and Westernized citizens, because these emancipated places would transmit their characteristics onto their subjects.

However, when we look at the space from a Deleuzian perspective, since a place and its affects are constructed through the relations between bodies, including space itself, the idea of invading the bodies through controlling of the space fails. It failed in the Turkish context because the relations and encounters within these places created “unexpected” affects, and contributed to unexpected religiosities. For instance, schools,
university campuses, and dormitories were supposed to be the avenues through which new generations would be secularized through a strictly secular curriculum and total erasure of religion from the public sphere. However, the subjects who were supposed to be invaded by the space challenged, even re-shaped and re-imagined the space.

The memories narrated by my interviewees reveal some of these unexpected affects, such as their religious sensitivities, traumas of exclusion, discrimination, and loss. Meryem’s account is typical in this regard. When she was studying law in Istanbul, she was not able to go to school because of the headscarf ban. Since attendance was not mandatory in her program, she was going to the school only for the exams. She narrates her memory about the dormitory she stayed in:

My roommate in the dormitory was going to the school every day. Every morning, she dressed up, did her hair and went to the school. I was sitting alone in that room all day. I was trying to study but I could not. I went to the library, but I could not understand what I read. I tried to entertain myself, but could not. That year, I was very sad. I still remember the perfume my roommate sprayed every morning. When I smell that perfume, I still get a headache. I cannot forget. I could not experience being in a classroom. I could not make friends in my school. (Interview 8)

Every single day, various elements such as the dormitory room, the roommate and the smell of perfume reminded these women, who had the desire to carry the elements of their past into the present, that they do not belong to this space. This reminder produced further affects, which were added to the repertoire of their bodies. For instance, the desire for and the relationship with the headscarf, which had been already registered in their bodies, got stronger with the flows of these new affects. Their desires to present their headscarf-wearing bodies in the public spaces were also intensified.
Kerimoglu’s story reveals how at early ages the complication of affects regarding the headscarf in secular spaces began. The middle school and high school students who did not want to take off their headscarf preferred a distance education system (Acık Öğretim Okulu/Lisesi), similar to homeschooling in the U.S. They needed to go to the school only for exams. She describes the time:

When we went to the school for the exam, the teachers would hide us from the education inspectors. Think about it, you are a kid, go to the exam, but you take your exam with the fear of getting caught up and kicked out. We were used to being locked in a classroom. When the inspector left, the danger was over, then they let us go. (Interview 6)

To sum up, when the elites of the country wanted to create secular and “modern” spaces, they assumed that a secular space would produce further secularization and secular bodies. However, these spaces were made and re-made differently, prompting changes in the patterns and arrangements of bodies and activities within them. Namely, when women entered into these spaces with an existing repertoire of affects regarding headscarf practices, hegemonic policies of the state intensified their desires for the headscarf. As a result, the hegemonically secularized spaces produced more desire for religious representations and complicated these representations. In other words, unexpected affects of these secular spaces, which were made possible by many factors, contributed to the creation of alternative subjectivities and representations of religious women that have been simply categorized as Islamist by the very same secularist ideology.
Relationality of Headscarf Practices

In the previous section, I stressed the affective character of the constitution of headscarf-wearing bodies which reflects one part of the ontology I call the affective-relational. In this section, I focus on the relationality of these practices to be attentive to the other side of the coin, relationality. In order to emphasize the relational transformation of headscarf practices along with the affective nature of such practices, I pay attention to the ways in which embodiments of religion got produced, transformed and complicated in relation to the material and socio-economic availabilities.

I find transformations of materiality in headscarf-practices important because over the contestations of secular vs. Islamist, the secularist ideology mostly pointed to these transformations to prove their claims. More specifically, the transformation of headscarf styles produced by multiple factors was attributed to these women’s supposed Islamism. In order to examine the relational shifts of materiality, I look into some socio-economic factors and commodities that contributed to the shifts in the practices. I ask how and through which relations did the transformation of the styles and types of headscarves occur? What were the bodies that enabled the material shifts in these practices which were attributed to the political ideology of Islamism?

Moreover, from a Deleuzian perspective, everyday connections and resources are important as a social substance of a body (Gatens 1996, 61). With the Deleuzian ontology in my mind, to pay attention to the becomings of headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, I consider the quotidian physical, material, and social resources of my interviews, toward
elucidating the affects of relations between a female body and the commodities produced by multiple socio-economic and political factors.

To sum up the historical background, since, up until the 1980s, the Turkish economy was governed by statist and socialist economic policies and closed to free market economy, production mostly depended on the state-led companies such as Sumer Bank in the textile sector (Kandiyoti 2012, 521). What was produced and consumed in the country was shaped by state policies. Since the secular state already ignored its religious population, while reform was sought in the manifold production sector, the needs of religious life such as religious clothing were left untouched. As reflected in, my interviewees’ narratives, women who wanted to cover their heads, out of religious and traditional concerns, either continued to use traditional methods for the production of the material or tried to adopt the clothes which were not produced according to their needs.

During this period of time, rural Turkish women continued their traditional methods and habits and tailored their own clothes. Since they did not leave their traditional environments, their dressing practices were not challenged; therefore, they were not compelled to make new connections. They did not feel the need of transformation. However, women who had recently joined the urban life and secular space, and so become part of new assemblages, were urged by their new relations (with discourses of modernity and secularism, urban settings, new forms of community life, etc.) to reform their dressing styles and materials (Özçetin 2009, 109-110).
As already discussed in Chapter 3, traditional Turkish Muslim clothing, especially head covers, had been stigmatized as the sign of backwardness and under-education by the secular elites of the country. This stigmatization contributed to the production of desire for a “reformation” in dressing style. Women who lived within the modern domain wanted to distance themselves from this stigmatization without abandoning the headscarf practices. Zehra expresses this concern by saying: “when I decided to wear a headscarf, I said that my headscarf must be modern, not like everyone else’s” (Interview 5).

According to the narratives in my interviews, for the production of the new style, which is a new body in itself, the clothes produced for “Western” and “civilized” women were the most conveniently available, not only because of their styles and quality but also because of the meanings associated with these clothes, “modern” and “civilized.” Therefore, the first disconnection for these women’s bodies occurred with the traditional style of dressing. However, the meaning of the traditional/religious dressing survived and was transmitted into the future. Although these women did not want to use the traditional pieces, they wanted to practice modesty as a religious requirement. To create a sense of modesty, for instance, they used trench coats produced for Western women’s need in chilly and rainy weathers, since these coats gave the sense of modesty as an outdoor garment. On the other hand, because these coats were produced usually as a knee level garment, within this new assemblage, the boundaries of veiling were adjusted to the level of the knee, unlike the traditional long skirts or salvars. Berna’s account exemplifies how the perception of veiling, for practitioners embedded within particular relations, shifted:
When I began to wear a headscarf, there were no long skirts. They were right under the level of the knee. But, I did not feel weird within them. Now, when I look at my old photographs, I say, did I use a knee level skirt to practice veiling? (Interview 1)

Within the encounter with the secular-modern, headscarves were also re-shaped through the material availabilities and discourses of the social environment. As a head cover, the first generation urban women used square foulards or small scarves which gave the sense of modern, produced usually by prestigious brands such as Vakko and Pierre Cardin.

Vakko was created by a Turkish-Jewish entrepreneur, Vitali Hakko, who realized Turkish women’s needs for headscarves. In his book Hayatim Vakko, Hakko recounts his journey toward producing “modern” headscarves (1997). According to his autobiography, after the Hat Law in 1925 (discussed in Chapter 2), Hakko first made hats for women. Then, he realized that Turkish women did not wear hats in daily life despite the political campaigns encouraging them to do so. Instead, Turkish women demanded headscarves that they had already used in different forms. He thus began making Vakko headscarves with modern styles and fabrics, and called the item “eşarp” (a new name for the headscarf with no meaning in Turkish) instead of “başörtüsü” (headscarf) to give the sense of “modern.” These Vakko scarves, which turned into an expensive and prestigious item, were sought by conservative and middle-class women (Hakko 1997, 102-104).

Since this type of scarf was mostly made of silk or silk-like material, it had a more stylish and “modern” look, which helped urban-headscarf-wearing women distance themselves from the stigmatization of traditional headscarves and get oriented into the
modern sphere. Therefore, those interested in the headscarf, the first-generation in modern spaces and urban life of the secular Republic, turned to this “modern” type of the headscarf that only covered the hair, or some part of it, usually tied under the chin and combined the headscarf with a knee-level skirt or coat. These new headscarves were different than the traditional headscarves used in the countryside in terms of materiality. They were also different than the clothing that had been traditionally used by urban women because they changed the boundaries of veiling by leaving the neck and shoulders open, unlike “çarşaf” (a garment similar to burqa) and “poşu” (similar to keffiyeh) worn by urban women which provided a loose cover for the whole body.

This new materiality shaped and imposed certain types of veiling, especially in urban and secular spaces. Even when these women demanded other options, the material pieces did not allow for much difference, unless they continued to use traditional items. Berna recalls how she felt the lack of materiality when she began to wear a headscarf, saying, “at that time, scarves on the market were very small and too expansive.” Ayse also shares this disappointment, saying, “when I was in high schools, our scarves were really small. I wanted to cover my neck, but no matter how hard I tried it was not big enough” (Interview 3).

These types of headscarves and forms of modesty, the first version of “modern” modesty, shifted anew, especially after the 1980s because of changes in commodities and market policies. In other words, the transformation of economic policies and the actors in the market in the 1980s and 1990s brought along the transformation of headscarf
practices once again, including the adoption of new fabrics and new ways the headscarf was set on the head which I call the second generation “modern” headscarf.

This second generation “modern” headscarves were also made possible by various factors. For instance, although the oppressive secularist ideology in Turkey “aggressively secularized and Westernized many aspects of society, including dress, Sunni Islam remained the core key identifier for Turkish identity” (Mills and Gökariksel 2014, 909). Up until the 1980s, the public space was under the hegemonic surveillance of the secular state. The secularization project of the state was successful at the elite level, but the majority maintained their adherence to Islamic tradition (Özçetin 2009, 109). Despite all attempts to secularize every manner of life, these attempts failed to reach wide sectors of society, especially in villages, small towns and ghettos of metropolitan cities that were beyond the reach of the state. Islam continued to hold a place in these people’s lives in different extents. Especially, the informal religious groups that lost their legitimacy after such orders were outlawed maintained a low profile. Despite strict surveillance by the secular state, these informal orders survived through personal networks (Çınar 2008, 904).

Within the conjuncture of the 1980 coup and the military regime that ensued, the junta saw socialism and communism as the biggest threat in Turkey, therefore, nationalism and religion were more welcomed to the public sphere (Kandiyoti 2012, 521). As a result of this counter-communist strategy, the secular-Kemalist military set the stage for the proliferation of Islamic civic activities, including the promotion of Islamic vocational schools. This strategy unintentionally opened the space to economy, culture,
and representations produced by the excluded population that maintained their religious adherance (Özçetin 2009, 109). In addition, in the aftermath of the military coup, the liberal economic policies of Turgut Özal’s government paved the ground for the reshaping of the public sphere. Previously, the state had a monopoly on economic life and the state patronage supported the secular owners of capital. After the 1980s, liberal economic policies opened the possibility for local-religious entrepreneurs who had previously lacked the access to capital and political support. Kandiyoti states that “the shift from state-led development to an export-oriented market economy provided an environment conducive to the development of medium-scale provincial enterprises which developed their own organizations and modes of representations” (Kandiyoti 2012, 521). This was a time when local entrepreneurship of excluded religious population joined in the social and economic sphere.

Thus did entrepreneurs engage the global economy and provide the means for those who were concerned about performing their religious identities in public sphere from which they had been violently excluded. Their businesses thus began to contribute economic production, political activism, civil society, new patterns of consumption and religious embodiment (Özçetin 2009, 109). For example, the scarves used by the first generation urban women were not big enough to cover the hair and shoulders. The new actors of the market, enabled by the free market economy, offered larger versions of these silk scarves and Western-style coats after the 1980s. These scarves now were enabling women to cover their neck and shoulders as they wanted. Just as Hakko had noticed the demand for modern-look scarves in the 1930s, the new actors on the market noticed the
demand for larger versions of “modern” scarves and coats. These new commodities were produced by local entrepreneurs and did not carry prestigious labels. They were cheaper and more broadly available for middle and lower-middle class women, therefore, reached to a wide population.

With the change of materiality, the way a headscarf was set on the head also needed a transformation. Ayse describes her journey towards discovering the new style by saying “I was trying to find a comfortable way” (Interview 3). According to her account, after the small scarves, for larger scarves, some women first used a tie wrapped around the neck to hold the scarf steady. Then, they discovered that a safety pin, later on, a straight pin, would be more comfortable than a tie tightly wrapped around the neck. She explains why she began to use a pin:

I realized a more comfortable way to use something (headscarf) that I have been using since my childhood. We realized that a pin keeps the headscarf fixed and this makes you feel more comfortable. We discovered the comfort. If I cover my head, I would like it to stay nice. You know it was slipping. Yes, I saw some people were using the pin but I realized that I need to use it to keep my headscarf stable. (Interview 3)

Although these pins were a comforting and complementary tool according to Ayse’s account, they, along with the transformation in the materiality of headscarves, turned into the marker of whether a headscarf-wearing woman was Islamist or not for the secularist imagination in Turkey. The secularist circles referred to the pins to prove the Islamism of these women. Referring to the way that pin helped to set these new versions of the headscarf, the sentence “this is not the same as the traditional headscarf of Anatolian women” became the motto for the expression of this imagination. Although
this claim was right in terms of pointing out the material shifts in headscarf practices, explaining these shifts as a mere embodiment of a political ideology was problematic. As other people who transform their clothing choices according to needs and availabilities, these women also adopted new forms of dressing based on socio-economic changes. However, the secularist ideology linked these transformations with a global political movement called “Islamism,” even when these women did not have any intention to wear the scarf on account of political concerns, statements, and agendas.

Many traditional Anatolian women, especially urban women, also used to cover their heads and shoulders with different styles and pieces of clothing. Therefore, in terms of materiality, the new scarf was the new commodity, and the way of setting it in place with a pin was what secular circles referred to in order to label these women “Islamist” and to justify trying to expel religion from secular spheres beginning in the 1980s. The new body, the pin, within the new assemblage of headscarf practices, was attributed to “Islamism,” although the emergence of this new body was produced by various socio-economic factors in a historical process. Then, the pin was used to prove the singular category “Islamist” which already existed in the minds of those subscribing to the secularist ideology.

The women who wore this new style of headscarves, produced by various factors, were called “Islamists,” even at the times they denied any association with or interest in politics (Özçetin 2009, 112). This type of the headscarf got adopted by women in different social groups such as professional women, students, women who lived in underserved neighborhoods of cities and even the young generation in the countryside, so
that it became the most common type of head-cover in the country. Even those who were not a part of the “Islamist movement” were considered agents of global Islamist political plans since they wore the new type of the headscarf. Although these women saw this new type simply as a religious and contemporary form of dress for modesty and piety or a more comfortable way of applying headscarf practices, they could not escape the categorization Islamist.⁷

The transformation of headscarf practices has also continued after the 2000s and has been affected by changes in the society. The second versions of the headscarf were produced by local entrepreneurs, who were concerned to provide the material tool for the appropriate form of veiling demanded by concerns in Turkey. Therefore, these scarves were simple, solid-colored and usually very large. After the encounter of conservative entrepreneurs with the opportunities of capitalism and the neo-liberal economy, especially after the mid-1990s, “modest” brands such as “Tekbir” emerged. This third generation of headscarves provides vastly diverse options of modest dressing and reflects traces of neo-liberal market policies which constitute the contemporary context of these women’s lives (Gokarıksal & Secor, Anna 2010, 143-145; Yeniaras 2016, 242-243). Contrary to its earlier versions, the third generation modern headscarves are very colorful and stylish and reflect the contemporary headscarf-wearing women’s engagement with the neo-liberal lifestyle which is extensively spreading in the society in which they live (Gökarıksel 2009, 662).

Today, many headscarf-wearing women in Turkey have come under the sway of neo-liberal appetites that have spread widely in the society, especially after the eager
embracement of neo-liberal economic policies by the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), which is an “Islamist” party, in the last two decades. While consumer desires replete with techno-scientific benefits rise in the country, Muslim women have connected with these new opportunities, in some cases advertised as “Islamic” (Yeniaras 2016). Within these new assemblages, practices of the headscarf, including styles and types of scarves and other complementary pieces of clothing, have become inseparable from a consumption and commodity culture which is stimulated by global and local trends (İlknur Meşe 2015, 146-158). Following these trends, headscarf-wearing women have created their own fashion magazines, catwalk shows and fashion designs, which would not have been seen as appropriate two decades earlier. Esra Sezis Kigili is one of the public figures who markets herself as the “first modest-designer” of Turkey. With her collaborators from the international networks, she co-organizes fashion shows/weeks at the hearts of the fashion world in Istanbul, Paris, New York, Dubai, and inspires young headscarf-wearing women to create their own unique styles (“Devler Paris Moda Haftasında Podyuma Cikiyor” n.d.). Through her social media accounts, she offers advice about combinations of clothing pieces, tips on street fashion, inspiration from French women’s fashion journeys, and rising trends of the season and hints of a feminine, stylish and modest look. While affects of the new lifestyle spread by figures such as Kigili travel on social media, individual headscarf-wearing woman relate to the atmosphere and contribute to its continuation and embodiment at micro levels as well as macro levels, such as social media.
On the one hand, these women reclaim the public sphere and empower the return of Muslim women by re-interpreting the aesthetics and modernized lifestyle which had previously belonged to secular elites in an exclusive way. On the other hand, headscarf-wearing Muslim women are hooked on appetites for neo-liberal and consumerist lifestyles. As a result, the practices of veiling continue to shift, adjust and twist through the encounters with new elements. Within the material and immaterial availabilities, the circulation of particular affective dynamics creates the re-configurations, modulations, or even destructions of existing styles and perceptions of the headscarf.

In this chapter, I provided some examples about the complexity of headscarf practices in Turkey in order to indicate how the category of “Islamist” erased the complexity behind the transformations of the population and its embodiments. With attention to the multiple, relational and affective factors in the production of bodies in this chapter, I aim to lay the basis for the next chapter, for my discussion of how territorializing forces affectively erase the multiplicity and create the category of Islamist women in Turkey. In the next chapter, I discuss the ways in which this complexity was reduced to an ideology, and how the processes of reductionism and categorization were affectively manipulated.
NOTES

1 For detailed discussions on assemblage, see Nail 2017.

2 In Deleuzian terminology, molar forces refer to “stable forms, unifying, structuring and proceeding by means of large heavy aggregates…organizing the crowds” (Fox 2012, 500). These molar forces include systems of thought, rules, categorizations and codifications, and impose order, certain capacities, and desires upon bodies. I discuss this further in chapter 4.

3 Unlike many Muslim societies, in Turkey nail polish is considered inappropriate for headscarf-wearing women.

4 At the time when the reading or teaching the Qur’an in the original Arabic text was banned before the 1950s, there was no Islamist movement yet, but individual fights against the secularist policies of the state. Her grandmother is an example of these individual efforts.

5 Her relationship with her grandmother was most likely only one of many other elements within assemblages that connected Tuksal with headscarf practices, but it was the only element available to me to talk about possible affects for now.

6 While rural women historically used small headscarves which partially covered their heads, urban women generally used to wear larger types of dresses and scarves, including the “çarşaf,” which is a black dress covering the whole body.
Although I do not deny that the headscarf gained a political meaning within a particular socio-political context, I refuse to identify the practice as an embodiment of Islamist politics. I discuss the ways in which the image of Islamist was constituted in Turkey further in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 4

CONSTITUTION OF IDENTITIES: TERRITORIALIZATION OF MULTIPLICITIES INTO CATEGORIES

In the previous chapter, I argued that a Deleuzian understanding of the body would better inform the study of Muslim women, particularly headscarf-wearing Muslim women in Turkey, and invited us to see the issue within the relationality of social negotiations, materialities, and corporeal histories, rather than as a being merely embodiment of some overarching social structures, whether these structures are religious, historical or political. However, I do not mean that these women are not affected by discursive regimes and power structures. Instead, I want to emphasize the ways in which power affectively and relationally articulates into the bodies of women in question and mediates their lives, although these constructions of power are neither singular nor determinant forces for what these women become.

Some Deleuzian scholars, such as Brain Massumi (2016, 115-125) and Nigel Thrift (2004, 59-64) see affect as a force beyond representations and significations. However, others, particularly Ben Anderson (2014, 23-50) and Nick Fox (2015, 308), argue that the work of Deleuze and Guattari is not outside of culture, history and discursive regimes. Anderson states that although some affect theorists promote an idea of unmediated life, affective life is “always-already mediated” by discursive and power structures (Anderson 2014, 13). Anderson argues that the relation of power and affect is not a new discovery. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault also discusses the relationship
between the ceremony of punishment and sovereign power. Public executions and tortures in ancient societies produced feelings of terror amongst the public who witnessed the scene, and so, “affectively” disciplined the society. Although the techniques of punishment have changed in modern societies, they can still “affectively” work. Unlike ancient forms of punishment that produced the affective disciplining through the “visible intensity” and “horrifying spectacle” itself, modern societies, for instance, are affectively disciplined through the “inevitability” and “certainty of being punished” among other technologies of disciplining (Anderson 2014, 29-30)

Whether the Foucauldian term of apparatuses or the Deleuzian concept of territorialization is used for analysis, life is affectively mediated in various ways. Therefore, any analysis of becomings should not be inattentive to mediators, but instead must explore the ways in which mediations affectively and relationally function. The Deleuzian concept of territorialization provides a tool to illuminate the ways in which various forces capture, manipulate and constrain the multiplicity and intensity of bodies. The concept of territorialization provides a political dimension for this post-humanist ontology which otherwise might be dominated by indeterminacy and open-endness, as Fox suggests (Fox 2012, 500).

Each body, object, idea, or word relation is “a territory fought over by affects within assemblages” (Fox 2015, 307). While flows of affects produced by relations of bodies travel within an assemblage, the affects territorialize the bodies within that assemblage: affects attach to bodies, transform the existing bodies and produce new becomings. Some of these affects capture the flows of relations in certain directions and
aggregate bodies (territorialization), while others disassemble the previous assemblages and enable the formation of re-assemblages (deterritorialization).

At this point, Deleuze and Guattari’s two terms “molar” and “molecular” forces distinguish more structural affective forces from more nomadic ones that produce bodies. Molecular forces refer to the combinations of relations in ways that “represent nothing, signify nothing, mean nothing other than the desire they produce” and the molar forces stand for “stable forms, unifying, structuring and proceeding by means of large heavy aggregates…organizing the crowds” (Fox 2013, 500). Deleuze and Guattari define these as two types of articulation: one type is supple, more molecular, and merely ordered; the other is more rigid, molar, and organized (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 41). Molar forces attempt to territorialize, stabilize “an identity, a fixity, a system…sealing in its energies” (Grosz 1993, 176). These territorializing forces include systems of thought, rules, categorizations, and codifications, and impose order, certain capacities, and desires upon bodies² (Potts 2004, 20). Although each body might have a territorializing affect, molar bodies, such as representations, discourses, power structures or somatic memories within the assemblage of a body have more stabilizing and constraining affects.

As Fox argues, the concept of “territorialization” opens a new space to understand categorizations and stratifications. According to the Deleuzian ontology, the world is multiplicity, intensity and fractured (Buchanan 1997, 79-80; Clough 2008, 15).

Categorizations such as class, gender, race, and ideology are aggregations of these multiplicities and fluidity (Fox 2015, 308), into the specific fixations according to a range of ascribed characteristics such as income, education, and employment, or dressing
codes. These categorizations are achieved by repressing the complexity and multiplicity that compose any being (Saldanha 2013, 9-11). Therefore, these categories are used not only to understand the world, but also to govern the world (Ferree 2009, 88).

In some cases, these characteristics express a sense of social abjection (Tyler 2013, 4) and their differences refer to inferiority regarding who gets categorized as the “other” (Braidotti 2013, 2). Goffman argues that categorizations might function as a stigma. For example, when a stranger is present before us with some attributes that make her different from others, we can deal with this person according to established structures without special attention or thought. The first appearances most likely lead us to anticipate her category based on attributes of her body. Thus, this person is “reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted one” (Goffman 1963, 12). In extreme cases, we can believe that the person stigmatized (categorized with inferiority) is not quite human or even invokes a feeling of danger (Goffman 1963, 14).

Therefore, the Deleuzian approach suggests seeing categorizations as territorializations that capture and aggregate the intensity, multiplicity, and fractures of bodies into specific fixations. The multiplicity and intensity express constant possibilities of alternative compositions. However, the organization and classification of any identity are selected from these multiple possibilities of becoming and attempt to pass this selection as actual or the only possible actual (Gatens 1996, 95). Therefore, as Fox proposes, through a Deleuzian analysis, “the task of the social theorist is not to explore differences between class, gender and race strata, but to assess how these
territorializations came about,” and so disrupt the habituated perceptions that sustain classifications (Fox 2015, 308).

To understand how affective life is territorialized by molar forces, and how categorizations are produced, the understanding of how molar forces affectively and relationally function and mediate life is critical. When a molar force joins the assemblage, it mediates affects produced within that assemblage. Then, this mediated affect mediates the formation of bodies in that assemblage. In this chapter, I explore some territorializing forces that affectively mediate the becomings of women in my research. I aim to problematize the category of Islamist women in Turkey by stressing some of the ways in which molar forces affectively form this category and reduce headscarf-wearing women’s heterogeneous and ever-changing experiences to a fixed, even stigmatized, category. I address four groups of molar forces that mediate the affects, and so, the becomings of their bodies. I do not claim that these molar forces and how they function apply to all times and cases. Instead, I stress some types of mediating forces that I see relevant to my research, including (1) language, (2) affective interventions, (3) past registrations in bodies, and (4) relations of bodies.

Given these four types of territorializing forces, in the next sections, I aim to provide some examples of how mediations of affects and becomings through territorializing forces within assemblages shape headscarf-wearing women’s bodies in Turkey, especially to make them “Islamist” women. Particularly, I look into types of mediations: the labels to define these women, affectively carrying these labels throughout society, past registers in bodies and privileges of certain relationships. However, I do not
mean that these four types of mediation function in distinct ways; rather, they are intertwined. For example, language can be used for affective interventions, or past registers might have been produced through language and certain relationships. When I analyze these four lines of territorialization, I intend to stress multiple facets of mediation rather than listing four different and distinct processes.

Language: Making the Possible Actual

Language, in it myriad forms, organizes our perceptions of the world in certain ways. In other words, the expressed world is extracted from the multiplicities and intensities of the world through that which expresses it. Then, this extracted world is perceived as the actual, or the only possible actual, world and its multiplicity and complexity fade away. As Deleuze puts it, this “possible world certainly exists, but it does not exist outside of that which expresses it” (Deleuze 1990, 307). Specific utterances capture or transmit affects and introduce new configurations of bodies (Gate 1996, 180). Forms of statements, discourses or frameworks “capture affects into stable, habituated patterns of compliance and predictability” (Gate 1996, 69). Then, this world captured by a discourse, a norm, or an ideology through the arrestment of movement and multiplicity is understood as the actual world through “investments in particular significations that grant them the claim to represent the world” (Anderson 2016, 737).

In other words, language as a molar force orders affects in certain ways and imposes presuppositions and intelligible narratives upon bodies (Gate 1996, 180). Therefore, statements, notions, and frameworks are not primarily about communication,
but also, they produce subjectivities. Through the aggregative power of meaning-making and naming: “the moment that we ‘make sense’ of a state of … becoming, we freeze it, evacuating it of the very intensity that offered the capacity for change” (Hemmings 2005, 562).

Hence, the act of naming or labeling is an act of expressing the world, and, so, an act of seizing the multiplicity and intensity of life in certain ways. In terms of headscarf-wearing women in Turkey labeled “Islamist,” attention needs to be given to the ways in which this label seizes the multiplicity of their experiences within a certain category by attributing certain features to particular embodiments and materials. More specifically, the headscarf as a material object produced through complex socio-economic and historical processes is associated with certain pejorative characteristics and political interests. Naming this materiality and embodiment as “Islamist” helps create an imaginary collective and homogeneous identity based on these characteristics.

Although the whole process cannot be reduced to expressions, the act of naming contributes to the production of the category. For instance, the Turkish state played with the definitions of the words “türban” (turban) and “başörtüsü” (headscarf) to shape and manipulate the meanings associated with head covering practices. When headscarf-wearing women began to be visible on university campuses, the Council of Higher Education (Yuksek Ogretim Kurumu), which oversees all universities in Turkey, introduced a new term into the political discourse (Özçetin 2009, 110). They passed a decree that a “türban,” (turban) which covers hairs but not neck and shoulder, is not Islamic but a piece of modern clothing, so it could be worn on university campuses,
unlike the “başörtüsü” (headscarf), which has an Islamic connotation. They aimed to create a new form of headcovering which is “modern,” not religious. However, mostly because of restrictions on the headscarf, women adopted the type of headcovering called the türban as a new method to cover their heads out of religious concerns. For instance, students used the türban on university campuses and the headscarf off campuses. When the Council saw that this differentiation did not stem religious headcovering practices, they passed another decree stating that türban had actually replaced the headscarf, and this came to symbolize certain ideological orientations (Özçetin 2009, 110). Since then, the term türban became the word to label headcoverings of women worn in public spaces as political (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu 2008, 520). In other words, the secularist ideology created a new word to name headcover practices, türban. Then, each woman who wore a türban (according to the secularist gaze) was named “Islamist.”

In the discussion of the issue, opponents of the headscarf carefully avoid using the word başörtüsü (headscarf) and prefer türban to name the practice in order to carry the desired affect which makes these women “Islamist” (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu 2008). This act of naming is one example of how the actors of a secularist ideology have taken an active role in the construction of the image of “Islamist” through the namings of practices and materials. The secularist actors tried to create the acceptable forms of headcovering, to create new names for the practice and to make differentiations in order to repel religion from the public sphere. When these tactics failed, they blamed practitioners for the naming and meaning of the practice created by the secular actors:
“you wear a turban not a headscarf,” therefore, “you are Islamist,” although practitioners reject both the name “turban” and its supposed political symbolism (Akboğa 2014, 620).

Through these new names, proponents of secularism have attempted to confine headcovering practices, which have evolved within assemblages of multiple bodies, socio-economic, material, political, as well as personal histories, to one particular meaning: that of being a political tool. Until the 1980s, secularist ideology held a hegemonic status in the public space and so enjoyed privileged, unmarked status, while Islam was marked as “the backward, the uncultured and uneducated, the rural, the traditional, the particular, the lower class” (Çınar 2008, 897). Since headscarf practices disrupted and unsettled the unmarked status of secularism in the public space, these practices were deprived of other possible meanings and categorized as political.

Because the hegemonic secularist ideology in Turkey could not stand any other actor within the secular space and wanted to keep it under the monopoly of the state, the presence of religious bodies and actions in the public sphere were perceived as if intending a political confrontation. Even when these religious bodies only silently resisted through their presence in public spaces, they were considered as a part of a violent Islamist project that supposedly wanted to take over the country and to force everyone to live according to “sharia” (Akin 1998, 11-12). The headscarf, an object which was a part of religious and traditional embodiments, was considered as a symbol of this political agenda.
However, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, forms of human expression are not reducible to words but to a set of statements arising from a “regime of signs,” which is a complex state of things, material or immaterial, as a formative power (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 66-67). To put it simply, creating new expressions for certain practices is not a simple or singular act. Relating these expressions to other bodies, material or immaterial, are a crucial part of the formations of expressions, especially for the desired affects of the expressions. For instance, two other elements within the assemblage of discourse on Islamist women in the 1980s and 1990s were the image of “Iranist” and the resultant feeling of threat. In an article in Kaktus, a socialist feminist magazine in Turkey, Sedef Ozturk (1988, 38-43) argues that headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, called “Islamist,” are not capable of engaging with real feminist concerns unless they abandon Islam. The article begins with a photograph showing veiled women holding a poster of the Ayatollah Khomeini ends with another image of women all in black burqas [or Arabic transliteration: burqu] holding assault rifles. It is not explained where these photographs were taken or how they were related to the women discussed in the article who wanted to wear a headscarf and provide a women-inclusive interpretation of Islam in Turkey. There is nothing in the wording of the article about these women’s relation to violence or Iran, but the article is accompanied by these images. The only commonality between women in the article and women in the photographs is that both are called “Islamist.” Thus, the article tells us that they are all are the same: those who wanted to govern the world according to their barbaric and violent sharia.
Connecting headscarf-wearing women in Turkey to Iran was a part of the production of Islamist women image by the secularist power structures (molar forces in a Deleuzian sense). According to Ayse’s narrative, at that time of increasing attacks on the headscarf in Turkey, women who wore large coats and scarves were called “Iranist.” Ayse says that:

They were asking us if we took money from someone (Iran). We could not grasp it. We did not even know much about Iran. I was also afraid of Iran because of the way it was introduced in Turkey. When I was called “Iranist” I was afraid… When someone asked me if I received money, I was shocked; I could not understand how they could think of this. (Interview 3)

Even if some people in Turkey were supposedly inspired by the Islamist revolution in Iran in 1979, associating every single woman who wore the headscarf or a style of headscarf (specifically the one that emerged out of complex socio-economic and religious contexts as I discussed in the previous chapter) with being Iranist is not a useful way to understand this controversial issue. However, no matter how many women, if any, subscribed to the spirit of the Iranian revolution, the narrative of being Iranist affectively circulated in society and was helpful in relating certain meanings to certain practices: wearing a headscarf in public space meant being Islamist. Since wearing a headscarf did not only mean being Islamist but also Iranist, which implies “danger” and “horror” within the secular discourse of Turkey, the label Iranist linked the headscarf with feelings of threat. With the relation of multiple putative menaces, such as the labels of Iranist and Islamist, images of veiled women, assault rifles, and narratives of paid spies, a collective affect emerged in secular Turkey and attached to the headscarf. Through these territorializing molar forces, headscarf practices were reduced to a category, even a stigma,
which polished the political connotations of the practice in relation to fear. This categorization disclosed the other possible meanings of the headscarf and enveloped the practice within the discussions of a certain political symbolism, a threatening one, although veiling women in Turkey loudly and repeatedly rejected the assertion that they were carrying a political symbol.

Affective Interventions

As Anderson argues, collective affects, such as collective fear, is one of territorializing molar forces (Anderson 2014, 168). This makes collective affects a target of affective interventions and affective governmental techniques. Although in the previous section I briefly explained how the collective fear about “Iranists” contributed to the formation of the image of “Islamist” women, I want to articulate further how these types of collective affect are intentionally produced for political interventions through the relations of multiple bodies, including material, technological, emotional and preformative.

Anderson gives the example of the use of radio for rumour generation as a method of affective intervention. He explains that the Office of Strategic Services Planning Group (OSSPG) in the United States during the Second World War used rumour formation as a technique for “moral operations.” For instance, rumours designed by OSSPG aim to affectively govern the population and maintain the public support for the war (WWII); “to spread confusion and distrust, stimulate feelings of resentment and generate panic” (Anderson 2014, 47). Anderson cites an OSSPG brief from 1943 that established the
“Doctrine Regarding Rumour,” which includes discussions about what a rumour is, how it works in a population through propagating, how to enable a rumour to spread, and how to keep its original content. If a successful rumour is designed, it can affectively travel among the population in three ways, as Anderson quoted from the OSSPG:

1: Exploit and increase fear and anxiety amongst those who have begun to lose confidence in military sources. 2: To exploit temporary over-confidence which will lead to disillusionment. 3: Lead civilian population to precipitate financial and other crises through their own panicky reactions to events. (Anderson 2014, 47)

In Anderson’s example, radio and rumour act affectively and relationally sustain the population’s support for the war. This is only one example of how forms of power and knowledge might use multiple investigative and communicative elements, such as surveys, speculation, and radio waves, to manipulate affects (Anderson 2014, 49-50). Anderson argues that this case enables us to see the relation between apparatuses and affects: what happens when affective life is rendered actionable through forms of knowledge and is subject to intervention⁵ (Anderson 2014, 50). Although these interventions can be analyzed through different genres, such as discourse analysis or literature on propaganda, I find a Deleuzian analysis particularly useful here because it enables us to attend to the specificities of interventions through manipulations of multiple and relational bodies. Since life can be targeted at the level of affective becoming by power structures, the understanding of ways in which complex-spatial formations are channeled into the specific combinations through the manipulation of relations and affects demands scholarly attention.
In the creation of the category Islamist women in Turkey, a similar “affective intervention” of molar forces also joined the assemblage of headscarf-wearing women’s bodies. As in the example of Anderson about the use of radio for rumour generation as a method of “moral operation,” collective affects were used in Turkey for the manipulation of affects regarding headscarf-wearing women. My intention is not to find an institution similar to OSSPG that orchestrated these collective affects. Instead, I would like to look into how these collective affects registered on the bodies of women who wore a headscarf.

The political atmosphere of Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s that created the image of “Islamist” women was also “affectively” intervened in ways reminiscent of the OSSPC program. For instance, leading up to the February 28, 1997 military coup that especially targeted the religious population (Çınar 2008, 906), stories of sexual predators and headscarf-wearing victims were circulated on television almost every single day. One of these stories first appeared on December 28, 1996, with a night raid that included TV cameras broadcasting the capture of Muslum Gunduz, the founder of a radical sect, Aczmendi, and Fadime Sahin, who was a young headscarf-wearing woman (“Muslum Gunduz ve Fadime Sahinin Basilma Ani” 1996). With his long beard and flowing robe, Muslum Gunduz represented a “real” Muslim man, although he was an unusual type for the streets of Turkey. For the intensification of affect, the graphic video of that night showed him almost naked, zoomed to the details in the bedroom and bathroom, while Fadime Sahin was humiliated by police at the corner of that room. According to the narrative, a religious Muslim man abused a deluded young lady who wore a headscarf, the sign of delusion. For months, the same video and story circulated on TV. Sahin was repeatedly hosted by the
most popular anchormen. She broke into tears during every TV show and told the stories of multiple cases of abuse and rape by “religious men.” She explained how she began wearing a headscarf because of her religious sensitivities, but, then, these same sensitivities made her the victim of sexual abuse. After months of displays of similar scenes, the tears of the lady in the headscarf became unforgettable.⁶

In other words, affects underlying veiling in contemporary Turkey were not only mediated by acts of naming and uttering, but also through visual bodies, images, displays, and performances. Through these performative acts and speeches, and visual displays, an ongoing marking and categorizing of headscarf-wearing bodies occurred (Çınar 2008, 895-896). The affects manipulated by this and many similar narratives and visualities beamed into homes during prime time and affected the meanings about the headscarf, ironically in a country where more than 60% of women wear a headscarf. The headscarf practice was affectively shaped as the sign and cause of abuse. Once again, the possible meanings that could attach to the headscarf were reduced to one meaning which is abuse. Then, this meaning attached to the body of every woman who wore it through the affective atmosphere which then permeated Turkey. The point is that subjects were targeted with bodily affects and manipulated through affective governmental techniques. State power targeted headscarf-wearing women and the whole country as affective beings and manipulated them affectively to produce the desired category of “Islamist.”
In addition to the aforementioned language and affective intervention techniques, another type of molar force that territorializes bodies and aggregates certain representations of headscarf-wearing bodies is past encounters and registers in repertoires of bodies. The past registers in the bodies, such as somatic memories, past significations, and representations from past encounters and relations, and repeats “in the habits, repertories, and dispositions of bodies” (Anderson 2014, 85). As Anderson puts it, “encounters are made through repetitions. Something of the past persists in an encounter, any encounter contains references to past encounters, and encounters are made through accumulated relations, dispositions and habits” (Anderson 2014, 82). To put it simply, an encounter in which new relations get composed consists of elements that come beyond the time and the space of that particular encounter.

Frantz Fanon’s well-known description of an encounter on a train illustrates how racism inflicts itself on living bodies at a psychic and somatic level through the accumulation of racial schemes from the past. When the boy on the train saw Fanon, a black man, he says:

"Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" Fanon describes how colonialism mediated his encounter with a little boy on the train:

"Look, a Negro!" It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile.

"Look, a Negro!" It was true. It amused me.

"Look, a Negro!" The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement.
"Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. (Fanon quoted by Anderson 2014, 81)

Fanon’s encounter was mediated through historicity, colonialism and racial schemes, as inscribed in his black body. The historical schemes attached to black bodies extended the encounter beyond the site of this particular encounter. Affects produced through encounters between colonizers and colonized in other places and other times were carried into and mediated the affect of his encounter on the train. His black body became something frightening for the little boy on the train (Anderson 2014, 82-89). He could not escape from the representations attached to a black body. Fanon’s example, Anderson argues, demonstrates that “encounters do not float free from spatially/temporally extended relations, nor are they immediate… Elements from elsewhere and elsewhen will be active participants in how encounters happen” (Anderson 2014, 89). Bodies affected by categorizing schemes carry their past into new assemblages, environments, relationships, and their encounters are mediated by somatic registers, stereotypes, and significations. Then, what these bodies can do and cannot do is also constituted through these mediators.

For instance, when headscarf-wearing women in Turkey wanted to engage with the discourse on rights, freedom or democracy, they were not free from the affects of the past.7 Because significations and representations from the past repeat in new encounters and relations, affects were mediated through past registers. Within the hegemonic political imagination in Turkey, the headscarf represented backwardness and oppression. Therefore, if a woman wore a headscarf, her body could not engage with freedom and she could not think for herself. She had to carry representations produced somewhere else,
most likely by someone else. When headscarf-wearing women were seen as subjects who could not act for themselves, who could not take responsibility for themselves, and who had no voice of their own, their bodies were inflicted by orientalist schemes, Kemalist images and the secularist-modernist ideology of the Turkish state. A significant figure within the Kemalist women’s movement, Professor Necla Arat, puts it very clearly: “[Veiled women] cannot and do not want to break away from the backwardness of the past. They sustain the traditional, submissive image of women, and try to abolish women’s rights that the Republic granted them (supposedly demanding sharia)...” (Keskin-Kozat 2003, 193).

Professor Arat reflects the stereotypical views on Muslim women in Turkey, particularly headscarf-wearing women: they are backward and against every form of “progress.” This perspective was shared by the second wave feminism in Turkey in the 1980s which Badran describes as “the daughters of the elite Kemalist women whose identity and feminism had been largely designated and delivered by the state” (Badran 2009, 227). These new feminists, Badran argues, were cut off from their Islamic heritage, and so, from the Turkish majority, and then embraced a “so-called progressive Western veneer” (Badran 2009, 227). Even though some of these feminist groups rejected the Kemalist legacy, the Orientalist-Kemalist understanding of modernity that saw the headscarf as the sign of backwardness and oppression influenced the feminist movement in Turkey in 1980s and 1990s.
Although headscarf-wearing women did not obtain a favorable reaction from the feminist movement in Turkey, they wanted to engage with the legacy of feminism as a shared experience of women around the world. The Capital City Women’s Platform, the CCWP (*Baskent Kadin Platformu*), formed by a group of women who were kicked out of their schools and jobs in the 1990s because they wore a headscarf, was one of the first attempts that religious Muslim women made to engage with women’s movement in Turkey. One of the initiators of the group, Hidayet Tuksal, considered one of the first religious women who publicly confessed her feminist engagements in Turkey, describes its first experiences as:

“They just wanted to ignore us as if we were not there...you are always a defendant, a suspect, in their eyes. (Interview 4)”

Nazli, another member of the CCWP initiative, also describes their first experiences when they wanted to engage with the feminist movement in Turkey in the 1990s:

“They assumed that our only concern was to lift the ban on the headscarf and as long as we wanted to wear a headscarf we could not think and act for ourselves....I always left CEDAW meetings [the regional meetings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a UN organization] with a headache because we were facing a constant attitude of othering and second-guessing. A group that compels you constantly to prove yourself. (Interview 2)”

When these women wanted to join the feminist movement, their veiled bodies never had an equal status in terms of advocating against discrimination or for freedom. Since their bodies had already been classified by the modernist ideology, their place
within the encounter with feminist groups was territorialized by this designation. Such classification drew the boundaries of what their bodies were capable of or incapable of. A veiled body could speak as the pawn of Islamism, but could not speak for herself. Therefore, when these women wanted to engage with the feminist movement in Turkey, even their immediate encounters were mediated through the historical designations, mental codes of “feminist” bodies and the legal status of the headscarf. Nazli’s account is an ironic example of such encounters. In one of the meetings, Nazli says:

It was a very hot day and we were with women only. Hidayet took down her headscarf onto her shoulders. One from the group said that I cannot believe how smart you are Hidayet. I could not listen to you before. I realized how smart your suggestions are after I saw you without a headscarf. (Interview 2)

As Fanon’s black body was territorialized by the racial schemes of colonialism and became frightening, Hidayet’s veiled body was affected by the schemes of Orientalism and Western modernity and imagined as a “passive doll” acted upon by Islamism. The headscarf, a material object, interrupted the patterns of the relationship between a female body and “feminism.” Within the encounter of a veiled body with “feminist” bodies, the headscarf stood out and imposed its putative meanings onto the relationship. Then, the movement of the headscarf from head to the shoulders re-arranged the dispositions of bodies, and her feminist friend was now able to see Hidayet’s smartness. In other words, when these headscarf-wearing women wanted to relate to the feminist movement, they had to deal with the already designated schemes that were infused into the room, into the country, into the perceptions of “feminist” bodies, and so on. Their bodies were territorialized by these historical designations that contributed to
the formation of the image of “Islamist” women: a veiled (so Islamist) female body must be a passive doll. Therefore, headscarf-wearing women, or those who supported their rights to wear a headscarf, had to answer to the majority within the feminist movement in Turkey.⁹

Mediation by Relationships or Lack of Relationships

According to Deleuzian ontology, all types of territorializations, some of them discussed above, relationally operate. Therefore, the attention to the relationality of operations of power is crucial. Like other concepts in the affect theory, territorialization also stresses movement and relationality and refers to the capture of life through the constant movements of relations (Fox 2015, 307). Tucker defines the Deleuzian concept “territorialization” as the continuity of relationships that shape activities and practices in particular forms (Tucker 2011, 235). Therefore, the concept of territorialization invites us to see the constitution of certain bodies, including identities, categories, and representations, as the products of certain relations. Since affects are produced through relations of bodies with other bodies within an assemblage, a relationship or lack of a relationship can mediate affects of that assemblage. When an affect territorializes a body, it shapes the desires and capacities of that body, thereby shaping the becoming of that body. As a result, what a body can do and cannot do are mediated through relationships that the body has or has not (Duff 2010, 629).

In other words, relations of heterogeneous elements within assemblages mediate affects (as indicated earlier), and so, they determine what a body can do and confine the
ways in which new affects and capacities might be produced. Therefore, what a body can do is inseparable from the ongoing, and never completed, organizations of relationships (Anderson 2014, 90). In this sense, affects are mediated by relations of participants in interpersonal encounters (Anderson 2014, 85).

These participants might include material and immaterial elements. In Turkey, material possessions and access to networks and funding have long affected who can be “feminist,” and “free” or who can speak for whom. Zehra’s account from her time at Middle East Technical University, METU, (Ortadogu Teknik Universitesi), one of the most prestigious universities in Turkey, provides an example of how the privilege of access to larger networks and relationships enabled certain actors to manipulate certain categories. At a time when the headscarf was banned, according to Zehra’s account, there was an international conference at METU. When she entered the conference room with her headscarf, the professors of METU were very uncomfortable. Then, one of them came and told her “either take off the thing on your head or leave the room”. As Zehra recounts:

I stood up. A professor at Oxford University was giving his presentation. I said: I am sorry for interrupting but can I ask a question? Since I wear a headscarf, they force me to leave the conference. They won’t allow me to listen to you. What do you think about this? He paused, then, said: everyone told me that METU is a democratic place. Then, my professors panicked and were making hand gestures to make me sit. I was able to stay in that conference, but later on, of course, I got dismissed from the college because of the headscarf. (Interview 5)

The privilege of relationships of professors at METU with international organizations allowed them to define their ideology as liberating and democratic until
Zehra’s body joined the assemblage and disrupted the existing relationships. The situation does not seem different as that manifest in leading women’s organizations in Turkey (Ozçetin 2009, 116). According to the account in my interviews, headscarf-wearing women were kept away from the resources of social activism as well as feminist organizations for a long time because they were not seen capable of engaging with “progressive” and “liberating” feminist goals. Ayla Kerimoglu, the president of Hazar, describes how unreachable the networks of social or feminist activism were for these women who came from a traditional or conservative background:

For a long time, we were not able to engage with these networks. They were inaccessible to us because we were totally denied. We were not even aware of them, we were not even curious about them because we did not know anything about them. (Interview 6)

When these women struggled against the ban on the headscarf, they discovered that, in Tuksal’s words, “there are certain organizations in the world working for women’s rights, international declarations. There is a language used, certain accomplishments” (Interview 4). After learning about these groups, these women wanted to engage and to get recognized by these networks. The headscarf contestations were carried to the international arena first through the European Court of Human Rights by individual women from Turkey. The court’s decision was that prohibiting the headscarf in schools is within the rights of governments. The CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) of the UN was another international organization that these women sought support from. In 2005, the CEDAW expressed
concerns about the ban on the headscarf as a cause of discrimination of women’s access to schools and universities (Scott 2007, 2-3).

In other words, within the prevailing perceptions, the signification of the headscarf was that the cause of restrictions on women has been produced by their relationships with an Islamic past and an Islamist present. Other limitations known to be imposed on those women as the result of relationships between institutions, knowledge and networks faded away from attention being paid to them, in turn reinforcing the categorization that sees these women as the pawns of “Islamism.” However, according to the accounts of members of the CCWP, which was the first religious women’s organization in Turkey that wanted to reach out to the UN, particularly the CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), secular structures in Turkey were more limiting for headscarf-wearing women.

In the case of headscarf-wearing women, keeping these women away from international networks by the modernist and secularist ideology restrained their capacities to act against existing lines of power in the country. The relationship between international organizations and secularist feminist groups in Turkey, as the spokespeople of all women in Turkey, created an atmosphere that contributed to the exclusion of the headscarf-wearing women. According to Zehra’s recollection, the women’s organizations in Turkey avoided mentioning the ban on the headscarf in the shadow reports to the CEDAW, such as the discrimination in terms of access to the job market caused by the headscarf ban. For example, the shadow reports of Turkey prepared by women’s organizations in Turkey for CEDAW in 1996, 2003, and 2010, which cover the period
when the ban on the headscarf intensified, lists the discriminations of women in educations and employment in Turkey, but there is no mention of women who were thrown out of their schools and jobs because they wore a headscarf. In other words, the report prepared by women’s organizations in Turkey for CEDAW ignored, thereby contributed to the exclusion of the population of the headscarf-wearing women in Turkey, since this ban was not seen as discrimination but a part of “emancipation” project of the state.

Furthermore, the “feminism” introduced to Turkey by secular groups, and the “Islamist” women introduced to the international organizations by the very same groups, perpetuated the discrimination in favor of secularist-modernist ideology and a hegemonic definition of feminism that excluded the headscarf-wearing women in Turkey. For a long time, the affects of these relationships dominated and territorialized the categorizations of who counts as “feminist,” “Islamist,” “democratic” or “Oppressed.”

In contrast to the assumptions that see Islamism as a restraining force upon women, relationships of multiple organizations, lack of privileges and resources limited their engagement with other women’s organization and their capacity to speak for themselves. However, CCWP’s members were able to enter into new relationships such as the one with the CEDAW. On the one hand, these new relations were an opportunity to express their concerns or to demand the right to their religious practices and enactments. On the other hand, these relationships produced further affects that got the headscarf-wearing women engaged with other problems of women, although they began with the ban on the headscarf, which was the most driving force in their particular context. These
women also got engaged with the legacies of feminism in various ways. Through the movement of relationships, their bodies became something entirely different, another composition. As a Deleuzian approach would have it, each body became different from its former self within the movements of relations, so that the headscarf-wearing women became different from their former selves as well as earlier generations of religious women in a process of open-ended transformation.

While they have had changing relations with feminist or international groups, their relationship with the Islamist movement or the Islamic tradition was also transformed, most likely in relation to each other within the same assemblages, assemblages of headscarf-wearing bodies. Although these women were connected to a religious past, this past was neither deterministic nor the sole power for the formation of their practices. Rather, they had shifting relationships with the legacy of this past as well as the body of Islamist politics. For instance, according to their accounts, at some points, the Islamist or religious Muslim men could also subscribe to the secular discourse on the headscarf to stay away from the drawbacks of the headscarf within the secularism of Turkey. Kerimoglu shares a memory of when she and her friends in Hazar went to the city government of Istanbul to request a place for their event. At the time, the Islamist Welfare Party ran the local government of Istanbul, therefore, the men who were in charge were supposedly “Islamist”:

With the same Kemalist mentality of the day, one of these men asked us why all of us wear the same style headscarf. There were three men in the room. Then, I asked them why you wear same style suits. Why do not wear a suit with furbelow? In how many different ways could we tie a 90
cm2 fabric? There were few possible ways and we were doing them all. Of course, we could not get the place. (Interview 6)

This Islamist man referred to the Kemalist claims that wearing the headscarf in the style (the one I described in chapter 3) is a reflection of its political symbolism, as he was concerned about staying free from the troubles that engaging with the headscarf-wearing women would get him into in secular circles. While these women were struggling for recognition within secular space, the Islamist men, supposedly partners of the headscarf-wearing women in terms of Islamism, did not provide support either, although a rhetoric that demanded freedom for the headscarf was used by these men for political gains, especially during the election campaigns\textsuperscript{11} (Arat 2016, 135).

In this regard, the struggles, as well as transformations, of these women, were produced through their complex relationships in secular as well as Islamist circles. It seems that neither of these constructive powers dominated their actions. Instead, the complexity of linkages created possibilities for change and action in the shifting field of relations. Their practices, desires or embodiments were never stable despite multiple structures that wanted to dominate them. Although these hegemonies wanted to impose certain representations onto the bodies of women, veiled women in Turkey were able to forge new connections, and so, different capacities.

Therefore, I reject the idea of Islamism, all-powerfully constructivist Islamism as an aberration. Although it has certainly influenced the bodies of religious women, Islamism does not control the flows of their relations with the other bodies surrounding them. Veiled women and the thing called Islamism need to be understood in dynamic
terms in a way that exceeds all master constructions, although this does not mean that molar forces are inconsequential. The mediation of affects does not mean that molar forces determine the formations of bodies to some degrees. Although certain aggregative structures, apparatuses, and techniques can create certain affects, they never guarantee the intended results because these affects act within the multiple elements of assemblages that produce subjectivities, desires, identities, societies and so on. In other words, although certain affects can be mediated, and even manipulated, how these affects will act on bodies cannot be predetermined.
NOTES

1 Since Deleuze stresses the co-construction of bodies, human and non-human, this ontology is called post-humanist or anti-humanist that decenters the human subject.

2 Molecular forces also, Potts says, “operate according to relatively predetermined patterns and regimes connected to the molar, but they are not as structured or rigid” (Potts 2004, 20).

3 The way sharia is perceived here is similar to how it is seen in some Western media and politics as “as a medieval system that oppresses women, stifles human rights, and imposes harsh punishments like stoning and amputation.” For detailed discussions, see (Esposito and Bas 2018, 7-30).

4 According to the official website of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Office of Strategic Services was forerunner of CIA, “America’s first centralized intelligence and special operation agency,” especially throughout WWII (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/intelligence-history/oss/art03.htm, accessed as of May 9, 2018).

5 Despite the tendencies that consider the discussion of mechanisms as reduction of the excess of affect through capture or control, as Anderson argues, these efforts result in knowing and acting on affects as “collective phenomena.” However, it does not mean that we can know what a body can do as well as what apparatuses and interventions can do.
I do not mean to deny the possibility of such abuses. What I want to do is to stress how certain stories are intentionally circulated at certain times to establish certain affects.

My interviewees pointed out some of the reasons in the shift of discourse toward the language of freedom and human rights among headscarf-wearing women. For example, Kerimoglu and Zehra pointed out that, in the aftermath of the 1997 military coup, the discussion programs on TV, such as “Ates Hatti” and “32.Gun” functioned as a part of the propaganda machine. In these programs, people from various backgrounds, even with no knowledge of the Islamic texts, obsessively discussed and tried to prove that the Qur’an does not dictate the practice of veiling. Therefore, with the elimination of religious meaning of the headscarf, they wanted to prove that women observing it must have been fooled by the Islamist movement. Referring to these discussions with a sense of humor, Zehra says “it was a time when everyone was expecting God to reveal a clear verse about the headscarf.” Zehra recalls some of the reactions given by headscarf-wearing women to this manipulated affective atmosphere. As a result of these endless discussions on TV about whether the Qur’an prescribes the headscarf for women, Zehra points out the change in the frameworks among the women in the CCWP, saying, “We realized that if we want to cover our heads, no one has a right to intervene. We realized that we should continue with human rights discussions.” In other words, while the secularist state ideology tried to hijack the religious meaning of the headscarf, the pressure they caused urged the headscarf-wearing women to explore a more powerful framework within the Turkish political context to defend headscarf practices: rights and freedom.
I asked my interviewees, who are also categorized as Islamist based on their headscarves, about their opinions regarding “sharia” since it was claimed that these headscarf-wearing women demand sharia (I use sharia in a very broad sense as the classical Sunni Islamic law). Hatice said “we feel more protected under the current civil code [which is a secular code adopted from Switzerland]. The traditional Islamic law needs to be updated” (Interview 9). Berna stated “the thing called sharia is a historical legal system and reflects the mentality of the past...the current civil code is more compatible with ‘Islam’” (Interview 1). I asked Meryem, who is a lawyer handling divorce cases, whether her religious female clients demand a sharia system. She answered “I have not seen any woman who wanted to turn down the rights she has” (Interview 8).

However, since their headscarves had already been designated as the symbol of everything against progress, secularism, and liberalism and then named as sharia, the secular gaze assumed that their real intention is to bring a sharia system (a barbaric one) to the country. Even when they rejected these claims, it must be seen as a temporary tactic to deceive the secular group.

Although most women’s organizations ignored the headscarf-wearing women, a few feminist organizations wanted to provide a more inclusive space. For example, the feminist journal Pazartesi gave some voice to religious Muslim women. However, this attempt was attacked by most secular and Kemalist women. Then, the journal had to issue an editorial clarifying that they believe in a more inclusive feminist standing (Özçetin 2009, 116).
For the fourth and fifth combined, and sixth shadow reports of NGO in Turkey to CEDAW, see: (CEDAW NGO Working Group 2005) and (CEDAW 2010).

Islamist and/or religious men were indifferent to the headscarf-wearing women in the job market as well. According to the account of Meryem, one of my interviews, who is a lawyer, many religious men had law companies but they did not want to hire a headscarf-wearing woman since they did not want to damage their image within the secular context of Turkey. Even when one of them hired Meryem, although she was assigned duties which were above of her job description, she was carefully kept invisible in public activities and paid much less than her peers who did not wear a headscarf.
CHAPTER 5

ISSUES OF FREEDOM AND AGENCY

Within the liberal/neo-liberal frameworks, individuals are conceived as autonomous, rational and self-regulating beings that bear full responsibility for their lives. These frameworks require narration of life as the outcome of deliberative choices, unconstrained and freely chosen. Regardless of the conditions in which they live, subjects are expected to exercise their free-will and agency over external structures. Feminist projects within this framework focus on the moments of resistance and subversion in women’s lives which are expected to reflect the free and deliberate choices. In the last few decades, we have seen scholarly inquiries that use these liberal conceptions to examine Muslim women’s lives—a group which has been historically portrayed as submissive and shackled by the structures of an oppressive tradition. The focus of this scholarship on the conceptualizations of freedom, agency and resistance, such as the works of Afsane Najmabadi on Iranian women, has challenged the claims about Muslim women as passive beings and portrays these women as active agents (Najmabadi 2000, 39-53; Abu-Lughod 2002, 783-789; Badran 2008, 101-106; Kandiyoti 1988, 274-286). This approach refuses the explanation of Muslim women’s participation in male-defined spheres in terms of false consciousness or the internalization of patriarchal norms. This scholarship strives to understand the ways in which women resist, subvert and re-adopt dominant male order by redeploying them for their own interests and argues that there is not a sharp divide between resistance and compliance because any real action always
mixes both. The task undertaken by these works is to explore potential resources in religious traditions for the re-coding of women’s own interests as the site of women’s agency.

Within the legacy of this scholarship, Saba Mahmood calls into question the notions of liberal feminism such as agency, resistance, and desire, which are considered as components of liberation projects in Muslim women’s lives. Mahmood argues that in these analyses, there is a tendency to look for moments of resistance and expressions of agency as the capacity to realize the inner desires against the constraints of custom, tradition or social structures (Mahmood 2001, 206). Mahmood’s ethnographic research with the members of the Mosque movement in Cairo is informed by Butler’s work on subjectivity, which question the voluntarism of subjects. Through a post-structuralist understanding of subjectivation, Butler conceives the subject as being constituted by social structures and norms. Power as a set of relations produces both the subject and the means by which the subject becomes a self-conscious agent. In other words, desires and capacities do not reside in the subject prior to the operations of power, rather they are produced by relations of power. Therefore, as Butler puts it, “a subject does not exist who then confronts an ethical law and seeks to make itself compliant with that law” (Butler & Connolly 2000, 7). Rather, an ethical subject is cultivated by the norm by which the subject recognizes itself. Therefore, agency, as well as desire, is understood as a historical construction enabled by relations of subordination.

Building on Butler’s theory of subjectivation and performativity, Mahmood rightly points out that if desire and agency are socially constructed, then we need to
interrogate the conditions under which different forms of desires and agencies are produced, rather than exclusive attention to the moments of resistance (Mahmood 2001, 207). As Mahmood further explains:

If the desire for freedom and/or subversion of norms is not an innate desire that motivates all beings at all times, regardless of their pursuits, projects, cultural and historical conditions, but is profoundly mediated by other capacities and desires, then the question arises how do we analyze operations of power that construct different kinds of desires, capacities, and virtues that are historically and culturally specific, and whose trajectory does not follow the entelechy of liberatory politics. (Mahmood 2001, 211-212)

Mahmood argues that such a conceptualization of power and subject invite us to conceive agency “as a capacity for action that specific relations of subordination create and enable” (Mahmood 2001, 210). If forms of agency are historically and culturally specific, then “its meaning and sense cannot be fixed a priori” but emerge through “the particular networks of concepts that enable specific modes of being, responsibility and effectivity” (Mahmood 2001, 212). What is seen as passivity and docility from a progressivist perspective might be a form of agency that needs to be explored in the context of subordination that creates the conditions of its enactment (Mahmood 2001, 212). In Mahmood’s formulation, the body is the means through which particular forms of being are cultivated (Mahmood 2001, 216). Practices such as veiling are not simply control of the feminine body by male authorities, “but also the very concepts through which the mind and the body are articulated in shaping the disciplined self” (Mahmood 2001, 217).
Mahmood brilliantly addresses the necessity for historical analysis of forms of agency pointing to the historicity of subjectivation. However, her work is not attentive to the multiplicity and dynamism of these historical factors, instead relying on certain subordinating structures to explain the source of agency. For instance, according to Mahmood’s account, the agency of veiled women, whose subjectivation is produced by Islamic norms, is exclusively delivered by the ethics of this subordinating tradition, since she sees this tradition as the primary source of their subjectivation. Although I do not reject influences of normative traditions, I see conceptualization of women’s experiences and agencies as primarily based on the religious traditions in this formulation, giving a sense of an isolated group within an imagined religious space. To articulate the dynamic, ever-shifting and fractured character of Muslim women’s practices and agencies beyond the dichotomies of religious/secular, I propose a Deleuzian understanding of body, desire, agency, and freedom. Particularly, I aim to exercise this theoretical standing in my case in contestations of the headscarf in Turkey.

Within the Deleuzian ontology proposed in this project, human beings are not governed by dichotomies such as repressive/subversive, innate/imposed or religious/secular. Instead, they are connected and relational modes of becoming, “the unexpected, the singular, or indeed the quirky, over the generally applicable” (Hemmings 2005, 550). As the result of this dynamic and continuous becoming of the body, unlike the dualistic and fixed body, human identity can never be seen as “a final or finished entity.” Rather, “bodies are always being “undone” and re-made in the context of “actual occasions” (Blackman and Venn 2010, 21).
In terms of its implementation for feminist projects, this approach also challenges the Oedipal vision of femininity which sees a woman as the complementary other of the masculine. Instead, it conceptualizes woman as being in a constant process of becoming. The emphasis is put on the need to disengage the discussion from both identity issues and all dualistic oppositions (Braidotti 2017, 37). Given this post-humanist ontology, the subject is not the single origin of an action or a desire; “our passions are not born with us but rather are constituted through a variable configuration and confluence of the bodily constitution” (Frost 2010, 162). Feminists scholars inspired by this Deleuzian ontology, such as Elizabeth Grosz, want to develop a concept of freedom which is not understood primarily as the elimination of constraints within the dichotomy of repressive/subversive, but rather as a capacity for action (Grosz 2010, 140). This understanding of freedom is not primarily linked to the question of choice, or the independent selection of options available to women. Neither has it referred to an intimate connection between freedom and a pre-given will (Grosz 2010, 147).

I am aware that there are some feminist reservations regarding the implications of Deleuzian ontology for feminist endeavors. For instance, Kath Woodward and Sophie Woodward criticize undermining the category of women since this would make feminist projects impossible. They consider a collective group vital for political projects of feminism, although uniting a diverse group would be a problem: “abandonment of a category of women who could speak as a collective ‘we’ at any point would subvert and destroy the politics of feminism” (Woodward & Woodward 2009, 48). Grosz summarizes some of the similar concerns saying some feminist scholars see the concept of
becoming—in the Deleuzian ontology—as a male appropriation of the struggles of women. This critical standing argues that the Deleuzian concept of becoming woman prevent the political struggles because of the erasure of identity and self-determination (Grosz 1993, 168). Citing Luce Irigaray, Braidotti also points out some of these reservations against a Deleuzian project: “fluidity, non-being, liminality, and marginality, as well as a condition of symbolic exile, are part and parcel of women’s history of oppression” (Braidotti 1996, 310). De-essentialization of identities does not take into consideration the dissymmetrical relations between sexes, “only a subject who historically had profited from the entitlements of subjectivity and the rights of citizenship can afford to put his ‘solidarity’ into question” (Braidotti 1996, 310). Marginal subjectivities, such as woman, “cannot easily relinquish boundaries and rights which they have hardly gained as yet” (Braidotti 1996, 310).

Although these objections rightly point out how demassifying approaches would make formations of feminist projects difficult, like Grosz and Braidotti I see the urgency for decentralization of binary logic and the de-essentialization of categorical gazes which have also been parts of women’s oppression, especially of marginalized women such as my own subjects. I find some concepts of Deleuzian scholarship relevant and potentially useful in terms of unhinging the Orientalist, modernist and essentialist visions of Muslim women. I argue that a Deleuzian perspective would provide analytical tools and methods for the investigation of different forms of oppression on women, particularly in my research group.
In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari refuse the centrality of the subject which has been long privileged in social theory and see the body in provisional alignment with other bodies. Given that dichotomous thought is commonly used in regimes of oppression and subordination, Grosz argues that problematization of this logic would be useful for feminist inquiries (Grosz 1993, 169). In this sense, Deleuze stands with feminists in terms of deconstructing the legacy of humanism and the foundationalist thought (Braidotti 1996, 307-308). Deleuzian philosophy renders the body as a “discontinuous, non-totalized series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, intensities, durations” (Grosz 1993, 170). This Deleuzian approach is of great relevance to dissolution of binarization imposed on women such as the mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object, interior/exterior, domination/resistance and religious/secular.

Refusing the unification of the body by any structures, Deleuze and Guattari provide an understanding of the body linked to human and non-human bodies, biological process, material objects and social practices. In contrast to the conceptualization of the body as a “blank screen” inscribed on and fixed by social forces beyond its control, Deleuze and Guattari provide an alternative mode of the body as an elusive becoming (Shilling 2004, 12). This requires refusing “everything that assigns us to a determinate and fixed place in the order of beings and things” (Marrati 2006, 319). Then, the task is to conceptualize a “becoming that traverses all fixed identities” whether this fixity is constituted by the rigidity of biological forms or social structures and norms that separate classes, sexes, and ages.
Since bodies continually travel within a flux of relations and affect, an individual body is in a continuous process of becoming within its myriad assemblages with other bodies. These assemblages might include both the material components as well as immaterial elements such as habitual dispositions, discourses, perceptions, and ideas. Assemblages are crucial transmitters of affects which produce bodies’ desires and power of acting. In this regard, “affects and relations constitute the basic mechanism by which capacities and orientations are exchanged or transmitted” between bodies (Duff 2010, 629). In his work on human development, Cameron Duff argues that capabilities and capacities of a body develop through a “transition in the body’s affective sensitivities and relational repertories” (Duff 2010, 629). Through affective and relational engagements, capacities of the body to act, to feel and to desire are produced and attach to the body’s extensive parts. Therefore, in this ontology, capacities or desires of a body can only be known on the basis of their relations and affects, which are multiple and ever-shifting. A body is assessed based on “what it can do, the things it can perform, the linkage it establishes, the transformations it undergoes and the mechanic connections it forms with other bodies, what it can link, how it can proliferate its capacities” (Grosz 1993, 171).

This ontology shifts the focus from a human agent toward examining relational assemblages of human and non-human elements and impersonal affective flows within assemblages (Fox & Alldred 2015, 399; Fox & Pam 2013, 778). Not only human bodies, but also all matter has an “agential” capacity rather than being molded by human agency and consciousness (Fox & Alldred 2017, 3). In other words, the agency is decentered from individual human agents toward the affective relations between human and non-
human bodies. As Currier argues, Deleuze and Guattari efface the role of the individual as the sole agent of actions. An individual human body as an element of the assemblage can have an impact on the formation of its connection with other bodies only within that assemblage (although becomings of these connections cannot be determined in advance) (Currier 2003, 336). Therefore, acts and agency of individuals do not emerge out of an independent agential capacity, but rather they are enabled by the multiple and heterogeneous relations and affects of the body.

In this formulation, the concept of agency is replaced by affect (the capacity to affect and be affected) that produces and transforms the world. Since bodies constantly become through the flows of affects and relations, capacities of bodies physically, psychologically, emotionally and socially change in the process of constant becoming. Fox describes this affective flow as “the single means by which lives, societies, and history unfold by adding capacities through interaction” (Fox 2012, 499). These affective flows connect and territorialize bodies, things, social and material constructs as well as abstractions. Consequently, capacities of bodies “to do, desire and feel” change (Fox & Alldred 2013, 773).

Ahearn states that this form of agency is not a synonym for either free will or resistance, but a “socio-culturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn 2013, 240). This does not give precedence to individuals over contexts or to social structures over human bodies. Hence, human bodies are neither attributed to an intrinsic capacity for free-will nor invaded by particular external structures. Instead, there are dynamic and transformative relationships between human and non-human bodies that produce agential
capacities of bodies (forces to desire and act). In this sense, agency of the individual human body is made possible through relations in which the body meshes with people, events, abstractions, and materiality. Therefore, human agencies are produced interactively and can only work within their webs of relations.

In his discussions of creativity, Fox gives an example of affective agency that does not privilege the human body. Rather, all bodies can be creative (agent) through the flows of affect. For example, human endeavor for creativity is produced by complex assemblages. The creativity of a painter is produced by the assemblage of canvas, an artistic style, past experiences, relationships with family, colleagues, peers, and other artists, ideas, concepts, social institutions, and socio-economic relations. This assemblage affects the capacity of the artist’s body to produce the painting. Moreover, creativity is not the outcome of a moment when a painter produces an artwork. Rather, the flow of affect goes way back and will continue to go into the future as the art piece affects audiences (Fox 2012, 501).

This post-humanist ontology does not only suggest a new understanding of agency but also an alternative conception of desire as a form of affect. Unlike the concept of desire as a gap or lack waiting to be filled by the acquisition of the desired object, it proposes a form of desire as a productive power (Gorton 2018, 18). The emphasis is put on the productivity of desire as the power of action, ideas and relating to other bodies. This productive power creates a capacity of a body to act and to feel, simply meaning “what a body can do” and how agential capacities of the body function (Fox & Pam 2013, 773). In this conceptualization, desire is not a yearning, but “an actualization, a
series of practices, action, production, bringing together components, making machines, making reality” (Grosz 1993, 171). In line of this thinking, our desire, our passions, do not originate from our inherent self-conscious or rationality. Neither are they simple results of some passive absorption and transmission of external forces (Frost 2010, 162). Rather, our desires are a “composite of sensory percepts and memories that arise and resound as the body ages, moves, and encounters and respond to the context of its action” (Frost 2010, 162). This productive desire is the incentive for all human actions “from getting up in the morning to studying, cooking, going to war or humming a tune” (Fox 2012, 499). As Grosz states, desire is primary, not lack; it is not produced by an ontological lack, but primitive; it is not opposed to reality, rather it produces the reality (Grosz 1993, 175).

While affective flows can generate productive capacity such as desire, they can also have restraining impacts on bodies. In other words, some affects restrain, stabilize and fix the capacities of bodies through territorialization, while others would break through and destabilize the existing habitus, dispositions, and subjectivities, and thereby produce new becomings through de-territorialization (Lorraine 2008, 277). Deleuze uses the concept of “lines of flight” for the later to refer to opening up new becomings through the destabilization of representations, subjectivities and practices (Youdell & Armstrong 2011, 145). This concept explains how stable units, identities, and constraining structures are challenged and new paths are created (Grosz 1993, 176). The lines of flights generate reorganizations and new becomings beyond the rigidity of constraining forces through re-configuration of relations between bodies. They demassify molar structures, crack
habitual patterns and create possibilities of change, new connections with other bodies, things, and ideas. In this formulation, change does not occur with the subversion of some given structures by an autonomous subject, instead, through the continuous connecting and re-connecting of bodies with a possibility of new becoming (Marrati 2006, 319). These ever-shifting relationships of bodies produce new affects, and so new capacities and desires for action².

Through her reading of Bergson, Grosz wants to develop a concept of freedom that I see in alignment with these concepts of Deleuzian ontology, which is not understood primarily as the elimination of constraint, but rather as the ability to perform the capacity of the body for action (Grosz 2010, 140). This understanding of freedom, which Grosz calls positive freedom, is not primarily linked to the question of choice, or the independent selection of options available to an individual. Neither has it referred to an intimate connection between freedom and a pre-given right, instead it is “a process, an action, a movement” (Grosz 2010, 147). In this regard, freedom is not a transcendent quality inherently possessed by the subject, but rather it is immanent in the relations that the living have with the surrounding bodies (Grosz 2010, 148). Freedom is “not a state one is in or a quality that one has, but it resides in the activities one undertakes” (Grosz 2010, 152). The question then is not whether an individual human body is free or not free, but rather whether the body is able to act according to relations and affects in its repertoires, desires, dispositions, and forces produced by its on-going relations with multiple bodies.
Therefore, Deleuze asks what we are capable of, what’s in our power instead of asking what we must do since for Deleuze ethics is a problem of power. In this ethics, the attention is given to good and bad affects, increases, and diminutions of power to act (Deleuze 1978, n.p). Good affects increase the power of a body and bring joy while bad affects diminish the power of a body to act and cause sadness (Thrift 2004, 62). Good affects are compatible with the history of the body, and so bring the body closer to its power of existing while bad affects detach it from its power of being. Therefore, free acts emerge out of the assemblage of the body; come from the history and continuity of the subject, and express desires, dispositions, and habitus of the subject, which some of them come from the subjectivation of body by molar forces. As Grosz puts, we are free when our acts spring from our whole being (Grosz 2010, 146). In other words, acts are free insofar as they express the subject, even if some of these acts are produced by molar forces.

Although this formulation stresses the performance of the body’s existing repertoire, it does not confine the body within stable and fixed histories, since freedom of the body to act her own repertoire harbors the possibilities for transformation of the body and for increases in capacities of the body. While the subject “becomes through” its acts (Grosz 2010, 146), the body is transformed by, and morphs with, every new relation. While the subject enacts herself, her history, she never remains the same, but continually becomes other than what her previous self was because of changes in her relations with other bodies. These ever-shifting relations produce indetermination, uncertainty, and openness to change. This dynamic relationality generates the possibilities of becoming
something else. Some of these changes might also produce unpredictable changes including the possibility of different oppressions and exclusions as well as the possibility of liberating configurations (Currier 2003, 336). Therefore, free acts transform the subject, express the forces that territorialized the subject and get incorporated into the becoming of the subject\(^3\) (Grosz 2010, 146).

I find the concepts of freedom, agency, and desire described above useful to demassify the category Islamist women in my work. I suggest an analysis that is attentive to the specificities of instantiations and constituent elements and becomes a much more fragmented and relational as many feminists, such as Abu-Lughod, Mohanty and Haraway have long suggested. In the case of women I interviewed, the category Islamist erases the multiplicity, fragmentation and dynamism to sustain the perception of a homogenous group, which, in turn, leads to the marginalization of these women. However, the Deleuzian approach proposed here problematizes this steady category and enables a radical transformation for the theorization of issues such as freedom, agency, and desire. Through this perspective, I want to explore what is unseen or left out in terms of understanding dynamic and heterogeneous experiences of women in my research.

Relational Ways of Becoming Feminist

As already noted, in Deleuzian ontology, bodies are understood as being constituted out of confluences of relations from infancy. The variety of elements in the course of life joins with the assemblages of the body and generates the multiplication of relations. The body of an adult, in a particular event, is the contextual and relational
instantiation of a particular assemblage. From this relational perspective, the bodies of Muslim women are also complex assemblages produced through flows of relations, not an embodiment of a particular religious ideal or a political standing. The capabilities and constraints of their bodies are generated through affective and relational engagements with various elements, and a religious embodiment might be one, but only one, among them. In other words, the acquisitions of their bodies, the forces of their existence, emerge out of multiple relations with surrounding bodies, human or non-human, religious or secular. As a result, their bodies and the different forms of their agency (what their bodies can do), are always being remade through a continuous connecting and disconnecting with these various elements.

Although I have addressed the affective-relational ontology throughout this project, I want to provide one more example to articulate the relational constitution of actions, desires and agencies of the women in my research. For this purpose, I use Berna’s recollection of her journey to the Capital City Women’s Platform (CCWP). The women I interviewed at CCWP define themselves as religious feminists and Berna is one of them. I aim to explore the series of relations that has brought her to the point that she is now a self-identified feminist. To highlight some elements in her journey, Berna experienced the ban on the headscarf while she was working in the 1990s. After a long personal struggle, she decided to take off the headscarf, until the day when she retired. She said “I took my headscarf with me when I went to sign off the documents for my retirement and I left that building wearing my headscarf” (Interview 1). According to Berna’s narrative, she has lost 60% of her sight. She used to wear a type of glass called
“telescopic,” which was worn on regular glasses, but these glasses were so troublesome for her that she had to quit her graduate studies. After she retired, her doctor informed her about a type of eyewear then available in Turkey that would much improve her vision. At this point in time, she and her husband also bought for their children a computer which was then a newly flourishing technology in Turkey, in the 1990s. She narrates her journey as follows:

These glasses are so comfortable compared to the earlier version. After I wore it, look I could read…. I was able to read a lot of things on that computer, online newspapers. It was so beautiful. I was sitting in front of the computer the whole day, without giving a chance to the kids. It was a real blessing, gave me a lot of confidence. (Interview 1)

Berna, who had suffered from her inability to have a comfortable reading experience, encountered better medical and information technologies. New glasses, a monitor, internet, online press as well as longing for a comfortable reading experience produced in her the desire and capacity to read. This intense reading period connected her body with a large body of information in cyberspace. The traces of the headscarf ban in her body influenced the type of information she sought to connect with, such as issues of freedom, democracy and Islamic ideals which were on the front burner for headscarf-wearing women in Turkey in the 1990s. These material and immaterial elements joined her body and re-constituted new desires, understandings and ideals. While looking for opportunities of social activism to perform her newly formed desires and capacities, she encountered Hidayet Tuksal, who has publicly talked on issues regarding women and Islam, on a TV program:
I said, O God, what she said was the things in my mind. I googled her right away and found the CCWP’s website. When I read their website, I was like, yes I agree with this, yes this is also for me. Then, I gave them a call and said can I come? (Interview 1)

The appearance of Hidayet Tuksal on TV, who both challenged the headscarf ban and male-centered religious tradition, affected Berna’s body because of her existing inclinations as enabled by other multiple elements. This new encounter enabled Berna to connect with CCWP and the feminist language adopted by it. While her experience of the ban on the headscarf was the first motivation for her to fight for women’s rights to wear a headscarf, she became engaged in women’s advocacy from a wider perspective in CCWP. She describes how CCWP affected her as “I became much more aware of problems experienced by different women” (Interview 1).

Therefore, what produced Berna’s self-confessed feminist body were multiple elements from products of technology to longing for reading and to questions on her religious embodiments. Assemblages of these bodies generated Berna’s desires and capacities for further actions. A humanistic or essentialist gaze would read this case as the performance of an innate desire for freedom after social and material constraints had been eliminated or were successfully “interpellated” by some hegemonic discourse, discourse of feminism. However, I argue that her desire and capacity to act against the hegemonies both in religious and secular domains were produced through the very relationships with these multiple elements. Although most likely many women watched Tuksal that day, it was Berna who was urged to reach out to CCWP because of particular registers in her body. When she began to wear new glasses or bought a computer, she did not intend to be a “feminist” or to act against male dominance. However, through a series
of relations and affects, her journey ended in CCWP as an activist against the discrimination that women in Turkey experience.

As Fox argues, in a Deleuzian formulation, assemblages, and desires co-emerge: desire coalesces in assemblage and assemblage produces desire, no matter how embryonic (Fox 2011, 361). Therefore, Berna’s body is “not the original and singular source of the will that is the motive force in” (Frost 2010, 162), rather it has a complex casual history. From this post-humanist perspective, the source of desires and actions is affective flows; therefore, desire is a productive power, not an intrinsic capacity resisting social structures. The question then is not about distinct lines of constraints in women’s lives, such as Islamist politics, lack of material availabilities, national politics or religious discourses; but the ways in which the co-constitution of restrictions and capabilities by all these elements occurs. For instance, in the example of “chemical compound” which acts in relation to a “body-tissue, and whether it is a ‘medicine’ or a ‘poison’ depends upon how the tissue is affected” (Adkins 2015; Fox & Pam 2013). Poisoning or recovery depends on new “becomings” by which relationality of tissue and medicine in certain ways has been produced, and this new becoming exceeds the initial bodies.

To put it differently, unlike anthropocentric ontology, which explores the actions of sense-making human agents, post-humanist Deleuzian ontology focuses on impersonal relations and affective flows within assemblages (Fox & Pam 2013, 774). “Affect” occupies the role of “agency” in this ontology. Any element in the assemblage has the virtual capacity of affecting and being affected, i.e., of being “agential.” Then the assemblage itself produces effects; i.e., is agential.
Looking for an essential desire or agential capacity residing within the human body oversimplifies the complex and multiple forces at play. In the case of Berna, her agency (her capacity to affect and to be affected) was made possible by changing relations of bodies and forms of power linked to the assemblages she was participating in throughout her journey. Each body that Berna encountered exercised certain capacities on her and affected her body as well as the way her relations with other bodies unfolded. In this sense, unlike any notion of agency that relies on an autonomous and individualistic actor confronted with stable social structures, such as Islamic traditions or politics, Berna’s agency was interactively produced by multiple relations in which she enmeshed with materiality, technologies, online media, the ban on the headscarf, and the legacy of feminism. Her body was able to act only within the webs of these relations that produced her desires, intentions, and capabilities.

In Berna’s case, the challenge of gendered lines occurred through the series of relations that finally connected her body to a legacy of feminist thinking. Without an intentional reference to languages of freedom or liberation, movements of multiple bodies might destabilize existing structures. By saying this, I do not reject the need for policies and organizations to challenge oppressive structures. Rather, I want to emphasize that liberation, as well as oppression, are produced by multiple factors. Any project and endeavor of liberation should be attentive to this multiplicity beyond the promotion of certain forms of acts such as intentionally produced subversive acts.

For instance, during my field research, I visited a historically important mosque in Istanbul, Sehzade Camii, which is a huge building. As with other historical mosques
governed by the Department of Religious Affairs in Turkey, in this mosque there was a very small women’s section located at the back corner of an extensive space for men. I was really annoyed with this tiny women’s section separated by thick curtains within the gorgeous main space. My mind, which got connected with feminist thinking during my graduate education in the United States, urged me to protest. I walked into the main space and sat in the middle to trespass the gender line. I was proud of myself because I was conscious of this discriminatory geography and courageous enough to trespass into space from which I was forbidden. After a while, a group of four women in their 40s and 50s, whose types of coats bespoke an urban underclass identity, walked in and came to the central point of the building where I performed my protest. Without noticing my protest, they began taking pictures and selfies under the huge shiny lamps. They were excitedly showing the pictures to each other. Two from the group posted them on their social media accounts while commenting on the pictures taken. We enjoyed this experience until the security guard came and walked us all out.

I assume that as many people who live in the poor neighborhoods of Istanbul, this visit was one of the rare moments they would have been at the central and touristic places of Istanbul. Unlike my body, which was motivated by egalitarian thinking gained in Western educational settings, they challenged the gender line by acting on a desire to post their presence in a landmark in cyberspace. This scene reminded me of the times when I was a little child and my grandmother took me to mosque during Ramadan in a central Anatolian city in Turkey, Konya. The women’s section then, too, was carefully separated, located on the mezzanine and shrouded by black curtains. Every time I curiously
attempted to lift the curtain, I was warned by aunties that it was not appropriate. After the prayers, the women used to wait for the men to depart, standing on the stairs to make sure that there was no man left, before the women came out, thereby rendering their bodies invisible to a masculine gaze.

Now, twenty years later, women who wear long dresses and headscarves in Turkey, as did women in Konya, do not hesitate to make their bodies visible, not only within the physical space of the mosque but also in cyberspace, through social media platforms which are open to more gazes. Their encounters with smartphones and social media culture have re-produced their dispositions. What motivated their actions against the gender line was not a desire to open a space for women in the mosque, but the desire to present a self and to be known on social media.

To sum up, the transformation of gendered structures in religious spheres might come out of the encounters of women with non-religious bodies, such as smartphones and social media culture, without any intentional effort, as well as organized resistance such as the campaign “Kadinlar Camilerde” (a group that organizes a meeting in a different mosque in Istanbul each week through social media platforms and occupies the men section to demand more space for women in mosques). Although mosques in Turkey are not women-friendly yet, and though many women still go into the women’s section without showing any opposition, perceptions of women and their spatial and politico-cultural boundaries in Turkey have significantly changed of late. This transformation, enabled by multiple bodies, has risen to challenge the ways in which women can be present in the mosque as well as other spaces of social life and online platforms.
Therefore, I assert that scholars need to focus greater attention on the ways in which the capabilities and the desires of women’s bodies, particularly those who wear a headscarf, are re-constituted by way of their encounters of multiple bodies. While women I saw in a mosque in Konya twenty years ago displayed a keen desire to completely hide their bodies, women in Istanbul in 2018 demanded more visibility in mosques or wanted to provide an ideal presentation of their bodies in cyberspace. To put it differently, although both wear long dresses and headscarves, the capabilities and constraints of their bodies do not remain the same.  

As it is clear so far, according to the ontological standing I propose, neither bodies nor their capacities are stable. Rather, as a web of relations, bodies are always susceptible to uncertainty, evolvement, and re-connections that often destabilize existing structures. In other words, the transformation of bodies, subjectivities, practices, and habituses as well as macro power structures, is possible because of new affects and new relations that re-make the agency of each body. Since each body contains the possibility of becoming otherwise through flows of affects and relations, this potentiality generates changes. It is ever-shifting connections between bodies, which are conceptual, material and temporal, that produce the power and capability for the agency, therefore, change.

Does the Headscarf Liberate or Oppress?

Most studies on headscarf-wearing women focus on questions such as whether these women are modern or traditional or whether they have agency or they serve the interests of their men. Some claim that the headscarf practices oppress women, or that
they compromise the agency of those who veil (Çınar 2008, 907). Others argue that veiling should not be confused with lack of agency. It is freely practiced by women, so it does not oppress and instead liberates its wearers (Abu-Lughod 2002, 786). While these discussions continue in academia, countries, such as France and Turkey, have imposed various bans on the headscarf to “liberate” headscarf-wearing women. However, the ban on the headscarf in Turkey did not win Muslim women to secularism either, even leading to an increase in the number of women who wore it. While women had to take off the headscarf in schools and workplaces, they put it back at the end of the day. In other words, secular actors in Turkey assumed that if they restricted the usage of the headscarves, they would help women realize how oppressive wearing a headscarf is. However, women’s bodies did not feel liberated by this ban and, perhaps more surprisingly, women fought back against the ban.

I argue that a Deleuzian conceptualization of freedom might illuminate the question of the headscarf and its ban. According to this understanding, as stated, freedom is the enactment of one’s own desire, produced by the accumulation of past and present relations of the body, including desires produced by molar forces. Desire is not imposable on to the subject, such as acting or dressing in certain ways. Instead, desire is produced through relations and affects of the body within its assemblages. A relationship or an affect can liberate or oppress depending on whether the capacities of the body, to act, to express itself and to make new connections, increase or decrease. Therefore, the headscarf is neither oppressive nor liberating. Instead, depending on how it affects a
woman’s body within the different assemblages she is participating in, wearing it would act as oppressive or liberating.

For instance, the ban on the headscarf decreased the ability of some women, particularly women in my research, who wanted to act out their history and asserted themselves through bodily performance; therefore, they fought back performatively by veiling whenever possible. An imagined liberating act, taking off the headscarf, was imposed onto their bodies. However, this ban acted against the repertoires of these women’s bodies, and so, decreased the existing capacities to act on their desires and act upon their dispositions. Consequently, it created a feeling of oppression, not liberation, for those who had the desire to wear a headscarf. The daily routine of taking off the headscarf intensified the inability of their bodies to act as they desired, and so, the desire to fight back against the ban arose. They fought back to be able to act according to their true selves as they had been constituted by flows of multiple relations, some of them addressed in the previous chapters. Therefore, the struggle of these women was not between an intrinsic will to take off the headscarf to be free and a suppressive moral order that forces them to wear it, consciously or non-consciously. Instead, their struggle was to act out their desires and capacities, the relations and affects already registered in their bodies.

While they have moved through and between assemblages of bodies including national politics, material availabilities, flourishing technologies and the legacies of feminism, the ways in which the headscarf affected their bodies did not remain the same. Their embodiment of veiling has been transformed with every new relation and became
different than it was. Some of them, such as Nazli, decided to take off the headscarf, while others embraced it as a part of their identity beyond the enactment of a religious embodiment. Some others continued to see it as a matter of modesty.

Therefore, our focus should be on whether a woman is free to act out her own body (the particular repertoire in her body) when she decides to wear or not wear a headscarf. While she performs affects of relations registered in her body, every performance contains the possibility of change. In other words, the ability to perform her own collection of relations lays the groundwork for a challenge to existing social structures. These performances provide possibilities for deterritorializing existing connections and affects, although it does not mean that all performances constitute deterritorialization. Therefore, the focus should neither be on a stable religious embodiment that dominates women’s lives nor on certain subversive acts to rebuke this domination. Instead, the attention needs to be given to whether women are capable to act on assemblages of their own bodies and what affects and relations increase their capacity for the expression of their repertoires. Within this formulation, those bodies, policies, and structures that limit their capacities, are oppressive while those that increase their ability to perform on the full repertoire of the body are subversive.

When I stress the ability to perform the full repertoire of the body, I do not mean that we should accept whatever they have as their body in a similar vein to the cultural relativism. Rather, I suggest grounded feminist projects, which are attentive to situatedness of their practices. What I am proposing is to recognize the situatedness of bodies, experiences, and desires as a product of dynamic and shifting interplays between
multiple elements. Then, the task of the analyst is not to fit Muslim women or headscarf-wearing women into already designated forms of liberation that would turn into another form of oppression since their situatedness is ignored, but instead, we should explore intertwined forms of oppression and liberation. Since connections with and desire for the headscarf are far from being unchanging, women’s aspirations for the headscarf are also a historically situated desire within multiple, ever-changing relations. Mutilation of these aspirations generates a feeling of oppression, not liberation.

What I am suggesting is not to be blind to dominant discourses, norms or policies. As Parker and Dales put it, “these dominant forces do not just trickle down to the level of the individual and determine her social relations” (Parker & Dales 2014. 165). Therefore, what I oppose is the idea of macro power structures as the prior or singular source of subjectivation. Instead, I aim to explore an analytical framework which demonstrates the interplay between macro and microbodies. I do not reject all forms of commonalities, but stress a multilayered and contextual analysis without prioritizing the universal to the extent that it erases the particular configurations. My purpose is to stress the multiplicity, the constant co-construction, and re-construction of bodies and experiences over categorizing and marginalizing identities. Through this Deleuzian ontology, I depict a concept of the body which is never complete, but I also emphasize the ways in which stabilizing macro structures affect micro bodies through the concept of territorialization. I insist that we need tools which allow us to locate dynamic configurations without reducing them to existing categories or marginalities. Such an analysis needs to be
attentive to the mix of relations and affects that produce subjects and their agencies, and to examine the capacities and desires produced by these relations.
NOTES

1 For the detailed discussion, see (Butler 1997; 1990).

2 For Deleuze lines of flight can be also divided into lines of relative
deterritorialization as well as lines of absolute deterritorialization.

3 Indetermination in life is the condition for freedom, Grosz argues. The ways in
which bodies act cannot be determined or known in advance. Bodies “act not simply or
mainly through deliberation or conscious decision but through indetermination” (Grosz
2010, 149). The growing complications in life generate a “reservoir of indetermination”
so that “it returns to the inorganic universe to expand it and make it amenable to, and the
resource for, life in its multiple becomings; and matter in turn, while providing the
resources and objects of living activity, is also the internal condition of freedom as well
as its external limit or constraint” (Grosz 2010, 150).

4 Anderson gives the example of greed, an element in capitalism. On one hand,
greed is an affect produced by capitalism; on the other hand, it is an element within the
capitalism-assemblage which produced further affects. Greed as a collective mood
produces the desire for the accumulation of capital which is integral to capitalist
construction (Anderson 2014, 11).

5 Later, in our brief conversation, I learned that they live in Gaziosman Pasa, a
neighborhood in Istanbul where mostly recent immigrants from Anatolian cities live.

6 For the website of the group, see (“Hakkimizda” n.d.).
Secor argues for the situatedness of religious embodiments based on veiling practices in Istanbul. In the case of migrant women in Istanbul, Secor examines their embodiments within the encounters of urban life, gender roles, class relations, and class and ethnicity. Through their movement in urban spaces, these women negotiate different regimes of veiling in the city. She looks into “how Islamic knowledge, veiling choices and urban space are mutually constituted through the lived experiences of migrant women in Istanbul” (Secor 2002, 19).
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This project aims to call into question the centrality of religion, which is usually understood in monolithic terms, for the analysis of Muslim women’s lives. Following many feminist scholars (e.g. Mirriam, Lazreg, Abu-Lughod, Mohanty, Mahmood, and Gökarıksel), I stress the urgency of a historical analysis to challenge the idea of the collective identity of Muslim women. I suggest that to be attentive to the dynamic and complex configurations of Muslim women’s engagements with legacies of an Islamic past in relation to many other elements in their lives, we need to pay attention to relationality and ever-shifting character of their embodiments within historical situatedness.

I particularly examine the Turkish type of modernity and secularism that adopted certain depictions of Muslim women, especially headscarf-wearing women, inspired by Orientalism and Western modernity, such as being “backward” and “uneducated.” Within the political context, after the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, the practice of head-covering has become a marker of a collective identity, while the act of uncovering turned into the sign of progress, secular and emancipated. Then, the bodies of headscarf-wearing women in secular spaces, which caused the disruption of the state ideology, were positioned against modernity. Because of this disruptive power of the headscarf, the secularist circles in the country focused on its political implementations and considered the headscarf practices as a primarily political confrontation.
The increasing visibility of headscarf-wearing students on university campuses in the 1980s produced a feeling of a threat since their bodies resisted the form of modernity hegemonically imposed by the state. Women who wore the contemporary type of the headscarf, examined in Chapter 3, have been labeled as “Islamists” who subsumed multi-layered experience within an imagined political unity. From this perspective, the headscarf has been perceived of as a political symbol that presumably stands against everything secular and progressive. These contemporary headscarf practices are not seen as a continuation of the tradition, but the headscarf itself has been reduced to a mere political tool allegedly manipulated by Islamists against secularism. Each woman who wears this type of the headscarf, a practice that rapidly spread to many sectors of the society, has been categorized as a member of this supposedly unified and threatening ideology.

The appropriation of the singular category “Islamist” colonizes these women’s spatially-different experiences and erases multiple facets of their embodiments. There is an imagination of stable and determinate global structures, such as Islamism, that produce fixed and singular identities at the micro level. However, I argue that in order to understand the ways in which certain embodiments, such as wearing a headscarf, emerge and function, we need to understand how these practices are produced, shifted and manipulated in everyday life.

This is where I see the “affective-relational” approach derived from Deleuzian theory especially useful. I thus suggest a Deleuzian ontological perspective to address the interconnected and relational formation of these women’s experiences and practices.
Namely, I call into question the category “Islamist” as used for contemporary headscarf-wearing women in Turkey and address how this categorization erases contingency, specificity and relationality of women’s experiences. This idea of relationality runs counter to the logic of binarization and categorization, and connects the material with the discursive, the local with the global, the social with the psychological and the secular with the religious.

For this purpose, I articulate the conception of body, human or non-human, as a relational and affective multiplicity something that Deleuze calls “ethology” (Deleuze 1988, 125). According to this ontology, bodies are always composed of an infinite number of smaller bodies through the confluence of relations and creative capacity of affects, which are produced by this relational flux. The constitutive power of this relationality comes from the “affect” that the constant connecting and disconnecting of bodies produce. Since the body is a relational and affective aggregate and a multiplicity within an assemblage, it is not a stable ontological essence nor is it determined by overarching social structures, but is dynamic, continually changing, and always in a process of becoming.

In this formulation, both the social context and human body are constituted through the process of connecting and reconnecting. Neither social structures nor human bodies come first and act upon the other, but they shape each other and act in relation to each other. The individuality of a body depends on its distinctive relations with surrounding bodies, not some essential characteristics. Therefore, the constitution and transformation of bodies, whether they are objects, structures, ideas, language,
institutions or human bodies, need to be examined according to their relations. Because of the attention to the relationality, this ontology extends the concerns of analysis beyond macro structures and shifts our attention toward the ways in which desires, practices, and meanings are produced within heterogeneous relations.

Since this Deleuzian approach problematizes the stability and singularity of identities, it offers a radical change for the framing of the question of Muslim women, particularly headscarf-wearing women in Turkey. This approach provides the means to illuminate the experiences, desires, and practices of women in their own social context and through the particular characters of the relations and affects comprise their bodies. Through this framing, the study of Muslim women’s experiences and subjectivities are transformed into the studies of their bodies’ encounters, relations, and affects. I argue that while their bodies move through different places, particular experiences, discursive regimes and normative spaces, their embodiments continually shift. Even the ways in which the headscarf, which is considered the marker of their stereotypical identity, has its functions shift within assemblages of multiple elements. This perspective invites us to re-think Muslim women’s relational investments and embodiments and reveals that those women affect and are affected by other bodies surrounding them, human or non-human. They resist, reproduce, transform and adjust to these bodies. These women are also limited, extended, and shaped by them.

Therefore, my arguments stress the relationality of Muslim women’s embodiments and practices by privileging the role of assemblages instead of representations. This approach refuses to place the categorizing gaze at the center of an
analysis in which the specificity and authenticity of those women are silenced. Instead, I aim to explore the ways in which the bodies of Muslim women, Islamist women or headscarf-wearing women, have been produced within and through relations of materiality, corporeality, socio-economic availabilities, political context and discursive regimes. According to the affective-relational approach I propose, a place, a practice, a narrative, a human body or a perception might co-constitute one or more of the other elements. A material object, a religious belief, a memory of trauma, or a longing all contribute to the constitution of who a Muslim woman or a headscarf-wearing woman is. Other times, territorializing categories, such as race, class or gender may limit or re-direct the process of this constitution.

In the case of the women in my research, various bodies, a loved one, feelings of intimacy, ideas of ideal self, material objects and settings, and collective affects all contributed to the production of relations between women’s bodies and a headscarf. The affects of relationships with these multiple bodies registered in the bodies of women and might have urged them to act in certain ways, such as wearing a headscarf. In other words, beyond the Islamist movement in Turkey, these women had a complex and continuous connection with headscarf-practices within multiple spatial conditions.

Some of the affect and relations that connected these women with the headscarf were produced within their familial or intimate circles, while others attached to their bodies while they moved through public spaces. Moreover, the affects and relations of small communities and national atmosphere simultaneously articulated into each other and complicated the existing registers in bodies of women. For instance, when these
women entered into modern and secular spaces, through the ban on the headscarf, the dominant ideology demanded the mutilation of their desires for and connection with the headscarf, which had already been registered in their bodies throughout their personal journeys. Schools, university campuses, and dormitories were supposed to be the avenues that new generations got secularized through a strictly secular curriculum and through total erasure of religion from the public sphere. However, the pressure of authoritative tools led to the formation of new religiosities since they unexpectedly complicated the existing repertoires of women’s bodies. The subjects who were supposed to be secularized in these spaces became more interested in their religious embodiments in secular spaces as in the case of increasing veiling practices.

In other words, every single day, each element in daily life, such a classroom, unfriendly attitude of a professor, a dormitory room or a piece of clothing reminded these women, who had the desire to carry the elements of their past into the present, that they did not belong in certain public spaces. These reminders produced more desire for religious representations and subjectivities, complicated the existing ones and created new representations and subjectivities that have been simply categorized as Islamist, as if an embodiment of an isolated ideological unity.

While the new assemblages in the secular Turkish state connected and re-connected women’s bodies to the headscarf, the types of the headscarf in terms of materiality did not remain stable. For example, traditional urban women used to cover their bodies with clothes such as the poşu and çarşaf, which were large garments covering the whole body except the face and hands. Traditional rural women used to
wear smaller-traditional headscarves that left some part of the hair and neck uncovered. The new generation of urban women who encountered the secular and modern spheres re-shaped these types of veiling. To escape from the stigmatization of the headscarf, as the sign of backwardness and lack of education, conservative urban women searched for “modern” forms of covering after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, as discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Although these women did not want to use the traditional pieces, they wanted to wear the headscarf out of different concerns, such as modesty, religious obligation or traditional dress codes.

This transformation was also effected by socio-economic and material availabilities besides interaction, with modernist and secularist ideology. The first generation of modern urban women used square foulards, or small scarves produced by prestigious brands, which evoked modernity. Since this type of modern scarf is mostly made of silk or silk-like material, they had a more stylish and “modern” look, which helped urban-headscarf-wearing women distance themselves from the stigmatization of traditional headscarves and became oriented to modernity, while maintaining a sense of modesty. This new type of the headscarf only covered the hair, or some part of it, usually tied under the chin and combined the headscarf with a knee-level skirt or coat. Therefore, this was not only the transformation of materiality but also the boundaries of covering of the traditional urban women.

Although some women wanted to cover the shoulders and the neck, as they had done in traditional religious circles, lack of material availability did not allow it, unless they continued to use traditional pieces of clothing. However, after the 1980s, previously
excluded local entrepreneurs joined the economic market, and contributed new types of headscarves, thus fomenting new patterns of consumption and religious embodiments. These new actors in the market offered the larger versions of these silk scarves and Western-style coats after the 1980s. With such material changes, the ways the headscarf was set on the head also transformed. With the help of a pin, these larger headscarves were set on the head in a way that covered the shoulders and the neck, making them unlike the smaller scarves in the earlier generation of modern headscarves. Since these new commodities were cheaper and more broadly available than the first generation of modern materials, they reached a larger sector of society, which included university students, professional women, recently urbanized women and even the young generation in the countryside.

For the secularist gaze that presumed an ideological unity among veiled women in Turkey, the transformation of headscarf practices in terms of materiality and the ways in which the headscarf were worn became a focal point of national discussions. Although new forms of headscarves have been produced by complex material and socio-economic availabilities, this transformation was reduced to a political ideology. This new type of headscarf turned into the marker of whether a headscarf-wearing woman was Islamist or not. The pin was pointed to in order to prove the Islamism of these women, identifying this headscarf as different from the traditional headscarf. Although this claim was correct in terms of pointing out the material shifts in headscarf practices, explaining these shifts as a mere embodiment of a political ideology created an imagined collective identity. Then, each headscarf-wearing woman was assumed to be a member of this supposedly
global Islamist ideology that presumably threatens all achievements of Turkish secularism and progress, although these women denied the claim that they wore the scarf on account of political concerns and agendas.

This secularist and modernist gaze (molar forces, in Deleuzian terminology) erased the multiplicity and historicity that produced this new type of headscarf. In order to address some of the ways in which this reductionist assumption functions, I have pointed out how relations of power operate within affective flux through the concepts of Deleuzian ontology. Although Deleuzian ontology stresses the immanence of relations, it does not mean that the flux of relations is free from dominations of power. Therefore, understanding the ways in which complex-spatial relations are channeled into the specific combinations through territorializing forces is a crucial task.

In the case of my subjects, various territorializing forces reduced the transformation of the headscarf to an ideological embodiment, as discussed in chapter 4. For instance, the act of naming the new type of headscarf as “türkân” which is supposedly a sign of Islamism turned into a tool to aggregate an image from the multiplicity of these women’s experiences and practices. Namely, the label “Islamist” women for those who wore the contemporary type of headscarf created an image of a mere ideological embodiment.

These acts of naming were performed multiple times, such as when creating a new word for the headscarf, “türkân,” or uttering the word “Iranist” for headscarf-wearing women. In the discussion of the headscarf in Turkey, opponents of the headscarf carefully avoid using the word “başörtüsü” (headscarf) and prefer “türkân” (turban) to
name the practice in order to carry the desired affect which makes these women “Islamist.” Women who wore the contemporary type of headscarf that emerged out of complex socio-economic and religious contexts, as discussed in Chapter 3 were also called “Iranist.” The narratives of being Iranist affectively circulated in society through various channels as in the case of the publication of feminist magazines, \textit{Kaktus}. These narratives linked the headscarf with being Iranist in ways that invoked a feeling of threat within the secular discourse of Turkey. Through all these acts of naming, headscarf practices were reduced to a category, even a stigma, which polished the political connotations of the practice in relation to fear. This categorization disclosed the other possible meanings of the headscarf and enveloped the practice within the discussions of political symbolism, a threatening symbolism, although veiled women loudly and repeatedly rejected the assertions of using the headscarf as a political symbol.

The secularist constitution of the image of Islamist women was also reinforced through visual bodies: images, displays, and performances, such as in the case of Fadime Sahin and Muslim Gunduz, which associated the headscarf with sexual abuse. These affects, political connotations, fears, and abuses, which attached to the headscarf also attached to the body of every woman who wore the headscarf. The point is that subjects were targeted with bodily affects and manipulated through affective governmental techniques of the secular ideology. Power targeted headscarf-wearing women and the whole country as affective beings and manipulated them affectively to produce the desired category of “Islamist.”
To put it differently, through these molar forces, headcover practices, which evolved within assemblages of multiple bodies, socio-economic, material, political, religious, as well as personal histories, were confined within particular meanings which exuded a sense of threat to the progress of the secularist state. This reached the point where even when Islamist men who openly expressed their political interest could be present in all public places, including the national assembly, whereas headscarf-wearing women were categorically banned.

Even when these headscarf-wearing women wanted to engage with the feminist movement in Turkey, or when they wanted to speak for themselves, they had to carry these already designated affects. More specifically, as Fanon’s black body was afflicted by the racial schemes of colonialism and became frightening, these women’s veiled bodies were affected by the schemes of Orientalism and Western modernity and imagined as “passive dolls” acted upon by Islamism. The headscarf, a material object, carried these affects that made the headscarf “threatening,” “abusive” and “oppressive,” which have been produced in a long historical period beginning with Orientalism into the encounter of headscarf-wearing women with the modernist language of freedom and equality. It was assumed that these women were not capable of thinking for themselves, but they instead must have been pawns of Islamist men so long as they did not take off the headscarf.

Since these women were not seen as capable of speaking for themselves, they were kept away not only from national policy-making networks, but also from international networks. In turn, their lack of connection with international institutions and
actors also weakened their capacities to act against hegemonic structures in Turkey. For instance, the relationship between international organizations and secularist feminist groups in Turkey, as the spokespeople of all women in Turkey, created an atmosphere that contributed to the socio-political exclusion of the headscarf-wearing women in Turkey. The “feminism” introduced to Turkey by secular groups, and the “Islamist” women introduced to the international organizations by the very same groups, perpetuated the discrimination of secularist-modernist ideology and the hegemonic definition of feminism as well as Islamism. Affects of the relationship of secular women’s groups in Turkey to international women’s organizations have dominated categorizations of who counts as “feminist,” “Islamist,” “democratic” and “oppressed.” These categorizations presented the religious practices and political interests of Islamist politics as the primary restraining force for headscarf-wearing women, thereby effacing the role of the privilege of the secularist circles produced by their exclusive relationships with international organizations, networks, discourses and donors.

Although these veiled women are connected to a religious past which needs to be analyzed, this past is neither determinist nor the sole power for the formation of their practices. In this regard, the struggles, as well as transformations of these women, are produced through their complex relationships to secular as well as Islamist circles. It seems that neither of these constructive powers dominates their actions. Instead, the complexity of linkages creates possibilities for change and action in the shifting field of interpersonal relations. Their practices, desires and embodiments are never stable despite multiple structures that seek to dominate them. Although these hegemonies want to
impose certain representations onto the bodies of women, these women are able to forge new connections, and so, different capacities. Therefore, I refuse the idea of Islamism as a master constructive power. Although it has certainly influenced the bodies of religious women, it does not control the flows of their relations with the other bodies surrounding them. These women and the thing called Islamism need to be understood in dynamic terms in a way that the relational character of life transcends all master constructions, although this does not mean that territorializing powers are deniable.

This relational ontology is also helpful to providing a new concept of agency of Muslim women, particularly the headscarf-wearing women in my research, which is not confined within the repressive-subversive dichotomy. By refusing the unification of the body by any structures, the Deleuzian conceptualization of the body links human bodies to non-human bodies, biological processes, material objects and social practices. Then, the focus shifts from a human agent toward examining relational assemblages of human and non-human elements and impersonal affective flows within assemblages. In other words, the role of the individual as the sole agent of actions is eliminated and the agency is decentered from individual human agents toward the affective relations between human and non-human bodies. In this formulation, the concept of agency is replaced by the capacity to affect and be affected that produces and transforms the world. Since bodies constantly become through the flows of affects and relations, capacities of bodies physically, psychologically, emotionally and socially change in the process of constant becoming.
Although some bodies within assemblages might have restraining impacts on other bodies, stabilizing and fixing their capacities, the ever-shifting nature of relationality always creates possibilities of changes by destabilizing the existing habitus, dispositions, and structures. Therefore, new becomings are always possible. This concept explains how religious practices and embodiments of headscarf-wearing women are challenged and new forms are created. In this formulation, changes to practices and embodiments do not occur by way of any subversion of some given structures by an autonomous subject, but rather, ever-shifting relationships of bodies produce new affects, and so new capacities and desires for action.

In this sense, looking for an essential desire or agential capacity of headscarf wearing women oversimplifies the complex forces that are actually at work. The desires, intentions, and capabilities of these women are made possible by changing relations of bodies, such as materiality, technologies, online press, the ban on the headscarf, the legacy of feminism, corporeal registers and intimate relationships. Their agency is transformed according to forms of power at their disposal throughout their journey. According to this understanding, desire is not imposable on the subject, such as forcing them to act or to dress in certain ways; rather desire is produced through relations and affects of the body. Consequently, freedom is the enactment of one’s own desire, produced by the accumulation of past and present relations of the body. In this formulation, the headscarf is neither inherently oppressing nor always liberating; rather depending on how it affects a woman’s body within the assemblage of the body, wearing it can act as oppressing or liberating.
To sum up, I argue that the affective-relationality approach enables us to ground the knowledge we produce about Muslim women within the historicity and materiality as well as revealing the ways in which stereotypical depictions are produced. It reveals how the micro and the macro, the local and the global, the familial and the national, the material and the discursive, the secular and the religious co-constitute bodies of women, as with those in my research. Webs of differential relations make the fixation of their identities impossible. Therefore, I suggest reconsidering the relationalities of these women’s lives instead of engaging in the marginalization of the group as Islamist. This relational approach provides an alternative to the questions of binary logic: are Muslim women liberated/oppressed, modern/traditional, religious/secular, etc.?
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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS

Introduction

1. Could you tell me about what your religion means to you?
   a. What are the most important religious practices in your daily life?
   b. How do these religious practices influence your social life?

2. If you want to explain an outsider what Islam means, how would you describe it shortly?
   a. What are the most important sources you learn about your religion?
   b. Are there certain scholars/teachers of Islam who inspire you?

3. Could you tell me a short history of your religious background/education?
   a. Did you get a formal religious education?
   b. Were you raised in a religious family/community? Could you describe this environement?
   c. Is there a certain period of your life that Islam began occupying more place, more than it did before? Are there certain incidents that caused this?
      (ask details)

4. Did you have any shift in your understanding or practicing of Islam throughout your life?
   a. Could you give specific examples and explain a bit how this happened?
   b. How did your social environments, friends, co-workers effect you in this period?
History of Religious Life in the Country

5. Do you think that the particular history of the country influenced how Islam has been understood and practiced in Turkey?
   a. Are there contributions that modern Turkish state made to lives of religious Muslim women?
   b. How did mass education brought by modern Turkish state influence girls?

6. Do you see differences between gender roles/norms of Islam and secular Turkish state?
   a. How did these two entities effect each other?
   b. Did you feel the influence of secular state policies in your religious life?
      Could you give specific examples for negative and positive influences?

Social Life and Community

7. Could you tell me about your social life?
   a. Social activities, services, associations that you participate?
   b. How your religion and social environment inform each other?
   c. Do you promote the understanding and practices of Islam in your social communities?

8. If you were born in a different family, living in a different social class or historical time, do you think that your engagement with Islam would be different?
   How so?
9. What are the most important challenges and problems women, specifically religious women, face in Turkey?
   a. Does Islam or people’s understanding of Islam cause to these problems in any way?
   b. Does Islam provide any tool to tackle with these problems?
   c. How are these tools used or not used by religious women?

10. Does your institution have any project for broader social issues? Could you explain?
    a. How do you connect these projects with your religious concerns?

11. In your opinion, what roles, if any, does Islam play in the lives of people who define themselves as ‘religious’ or ‘conservative’ in Turkey?

Focus on Youth

12. Do you see generational differences among Muslim women?
    a. How does youth differentiate from older generations?
    b. What are the causes of these differences?
    c. Could you give a specific example about issues that young Muslim women are facing in a different way than older generations did?
    d. Do older generations provide support or mentorship to youth about new challenges they face?
    e. Does your institution, you specifically, have any programs specifically designed to cultivate youth as future leaders?
Transnationale Connections

13. Are they individuals or institutions abroad that you cooperate with or inspired you?
   a. If so, could you explain the nature of your relationship?
   b. In which countries you are active?
   c. Are there specific issues that you work on with international partners?

Individual Specific Questions (Prepare as addendum before interview)
- Here please ask any questions that are specific to the individual under study and not specifically asked in the rest of the protocol.

Final and Loose Ends

1. During our conversation you have mentioned several people whom it would be very important to contact. Could I get their contact information now?
2. Are there other people in your circle whom we should contact as well for an interview, people who might offer a variety of viewpoints on the subjects we’ve covered?

Demographics of Interviewee

1. Would you mind telling me your age and how you identify ethnically?
2. What kind of work do you do [include homemaker if appropriate]?
3. What is the highest grade or degree you finished in school?
APPENDIX B

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Interview 1:

Pseudonym: Berna

Place: Capital City Women’s Platform, Ankara, Turkey

Date and Time: 10/14/2017, 12:25 PM

Interview 2:

Pseudonym: Nazli

Place: Capital City Women’s Platform, Ankara, Turkey

Date and Time: 1/8/2017, 11:40 AM

Interview 3:

Pseudonym: Ayse

Place: Capital City Women’s Platform, Ankara, Turkey

Date and Time: 10/14/2017, 10:44 AM

Interview 4:

Name: Hidayet Tuksal

Place: Capital City Women’s Platform, Ankara, Turkey

Date and Time: 2/8/2017, 3:34 PM

Interview 5:

Pseudonym: Zehra

Place: Capital City Women’s Platform, Ankara, Turkey

Date and Time: 10/14/2017, 3:50 PM
Interview 6:

Name: Ayla Kerimoglu
Place: Hazar, Istanbul, Turkey
Date and Time: 22/8/2017, 6:59 PM

Interview 7:

Pseudonym: Selin
Place: Hazar, Istanbul, Turkey
Date and Time: 23/8/2017, 4:07 PM

Interview 8:

Pseudonym: Meryem
Place: Hazar, Istanbul, Turkey
Date and Time: 22/8/2017, 8:51 PM

Interview 9:

Pseudonym: Hatice
Place: Hazar, Istanbul, Turkey
Date and Time: 23/8/2017, 5:22 PM