'ÇEKME' RITUAL IN A VILLAGE OF BLACK SEA REGION IN TURKEY: BRIDE KIDNAPPING AS A CRITIQUE OF ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS OF MARRIAGE

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ABSTRACT

'ÇEKME' RITUAL
IN A VILLAGE OF BLACK SEA REGION IN TURKEY:
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SYSTEMS OF MARRIAGE

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This study aims to provide a criticism to the literature which explains bride kidnapping as an alternative marriage system through an ethnographic study conducted in a village of Black Sea Region. In this study, first of all, practice of *çekme* is defined as ritual on the basis of formal and repetitive action. Consensus of the public opinion and the ceremonial action are considered in the ritual conceptualization. In addition to that, how women try to cope with their marriages after the *çekme* practice will be put forward. In doing that, with the help of 'kaide atma' which is a tradition among women, how Karadeniz women define and value themselves in contrast to their popular portrayal of strong but passive in decision making mechanisms. This thesis, while trying to give meaning to bride kidnapping, which is a form of marriage, through the transmission of experiences of women; does that without ignoring the different experiences of women, without entering the hierarchical web of relations and in the light of the possibility of strong objectivity about womanhood in parallel to the aims of Feminist Standpoint Theory, which is used as epistemological and methodological ground.

Keywords: Çekme, Bride Kidnapping, Ritual, Feminist Standpoint Theory

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DE KARADENİZ BÖLGESİ'NİN BİR KÖYÜNDE 'ÇEKME' RİTÜELİ: ALTERNATİF EVLİLİK SİSTEMLERİNE BİR ELEŞTİRİ OLARAK KIZ KAÇIRMA

Beşir, Fethiye

Yüksek Lisans, Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Anabilim Dalı

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Bu çalışma kız kaçırmayı alternatif evlilik sistemi olarak tanımlayan literatüre, Karadeniz Bölgesi'nin bir köyünde yapılan etnografik bir alan araştırması ile eleştiri sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Böylece kız kaçırma bölgesel pratiklerin referansıyla yeniden tanımlanmaya çalışılacaktır. Bu çalışmada, öncelikle, çekme pratiği biçimlendirilmiş ve tekrara dayalı eylem zemininde ritüel olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Ritüel kavramsallaştırılmasında seremonyal eylem ve kamuoyu konsensüsü dikkate alınmıştır. Buna ek olarak, kadınların çekme pratiği sonrası evlilikleriyle nasıl mücadele ettikleri ortaya konulmaya çalışılacaktır. Bunu yaparken, kadınlar arasında bir gelenek olan "kaide atma" geleneği ile Karadeniz kadınlarının popüler kültürde resmedildiği şekliyle güçlü ama karar alma mekanizmalarındaki pasifliğine karşıt durarak kendilerini nasıl tanımladıkları ve değer atfettiklerine yer verilecektir. Bu tez, bir evlilik pratiği olan kız kaçırmayı kadınların deneyimlerinin aktarımıyla anlamlandırmaya çalışırken, bunu, epistemolojik ve metodolojik zemin olarak kullanılan Feminist Duruş Kuramı'nın amaç edindiği farklı kadınlık deneyimlerini göz ardı etmeden, hiyerarşik ilişkiler ağına girmeden ve kadınlara ve kadınlığa dair daha objektif bir bilginin imkanına ilişkin iddialarının ışığında yapmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çekme, Kız Kaçırma, Ritüel, Feminist Duruş Kuramı

in the name of ACADEMICS FOR PEACE,

"WE WILL NOT BE A PARTY TO THIS CRIME"

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FST	Feminist Standpoint Theory

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. The Initial Interest and Aims of the Study

The story of my grandmother's marriage has been known among the members of Besiroglu's family for a long time. She was one of the '*çekilmiş*' women in the central village of Araklı, Trabzon. The region has named the case of 'marriage by abduction/bride kidnapping/kidnapping as '*çekme*'. It basically refers to taking a girl away. So, the *çekme* will be used throughout the study in order to solve the naming problem and *çekilmiş* women refers to the women who were subjected to the act of *çekme*. Bride kidnapping, in this study, is defined the act itself without women's consent. It differs from the marriage practice with the consent of both actors. He mainly kidnaps the women who are wanted to marry and is withhold in another place.

Returning back to the story, nothing seems to me missing or misrepresent, at the time, and I did not question any details regarding the subject of the narrative. After several years, the story appeared again during an ordinary meeting in Ankara. Talking the origins of our families, my grandmother's marriage was on the table again, and the process was almost about to start. Some searches in sociology of marriage's literature showed me that kidnapping cases have never studied from the women's point of view. Particularly, my feminist standpoint and characterisation of my political commitment to Marxism was a ground of motivation to conduct the study from women's perspective.

The missing or misrepresentation part of the story is the experience of my grandmother. Her position in the story is a kind of property as an indicator of the power relations between women and men. A property belongs to someone else, it

does not act for the sake of its faith. In other words, labelling as a property is mainly identified with the objectification of something, in our case, it is the objectification of women. In this study, I am struggling with the description of women as property and emphasizing the strategies for the reinvigoration of their agencies.

In this sense, this study will analyse the *çekme* narratives as a critique of alternative systems of marriage. The conceptualization of kidnapping as an alternative system has been discussed the Symposium on Kidnapping and Elopement as Alternative Systems of Marriage, held at the 71st Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. The sum of the articles emphasized the importance of these two different marriage types which transformed the fixed structural bonds of societal institutions in a given society. My attempt is being opposed to the idea of alternativeness, instead I will focus on the bride kidnapping cases from the women's stands, and discuss how this type of marriage posited women as passive objects.

Within this regard, my main research question is the significance of the practice of *çekme* in the eyes of women. How do women experience cekme and how is it situated in historical context in women's lives? Could women become the subject of the knowledge of the *çekme*? Which certain kind of daily practices provides a growth of knowledge and also a space for political actions?

My main aim will not be replacing women as the passive objects of the village history. Contrarily, even if the women are seen as the guardians of the family institution, they have the capability to turn this into their advantage. Bride kidnapping, at first seems that a violent act against women without their permission about choosing her mate. However, the type of arranged marriage has also realised without the consent of youngsters. In this sense, my argumentation goes along with the idea that bride kidnapping as a reality experiences a group of women in a certain place and time and how it is meaningful by those women. My intention does not present the act itself with the negative connotations from the women's stand. The inclusion of violence, consent and silencing process has pacified women's act during the *çekme*, but still this does not change the reality of bride kidnapping as a marriage form. So, I am just an intermediary with those women who are kidnapped and the

reader. My aim is the experience of *çekilmiş* women and its details from their perspective. With respect to the FST, the act of *çekme* is only defined and valued with those women who are experienced it. For this purpose, I conducted a field research with *çekilmiş* women who are over the age of 65. The oldest interviewer is 99 years old, and the youngest one is 69. Because of the youngest one, my research includes a woman from the second generation. The others belong to the first and the same generation. The number of *çekilmiş* women is 14 in the village, but 2 of them did not talk about their story. 2 women out of 12 were dead, and 2 more had Alzheimer diseases, so their story was listened from their girls, sisters or daughter-in-law. And lastly, one of them lived abroad and her story was listened from her sister. The inclusion of other women in the study shows that the case of *çekme* has well-known stories and public acceptance, then I will describe the *çekme* narratives as a ritual.

In this study, the description of ritual is based on the conceptualisation of E. P. Thompson's precious book *Customs in Common* (1993). His definition emphasises the public acceptance and ceremonial act for a case to call it a ritual. The narratives showed the resemblances among the women. Even the story lines did not show any differences for some interviews. The similarity among the stories also supports the description, other women members of the family told their relatives about their narratives. Of course, it is one of the limitations for the study, but it still supports the idea of the *çekme* ritual. Furthermore, the ritual is a form which takes place at the very heart of society. Both similarities among the stories and the knowable characteristics of the narration have been the basis of the recognition of the ritual. Then, the analysis will continue with the process of after *çekme*. As a part of everyday life activities, women's daily life interactions show a kind of solidarity to survive the poor conditions of the village. *Çekilmiş* women have a distinctive relation within the extended families with other women's as relatives, and they have to deal with these problems in a certain extent to continue their life. Moreover, the interaction with the rest of the women also constitutes a solidarity to preserve both domestic chores and members of the families. Lastly, the analysis will finalise with the process of self-definition and self-valuation of the Black Sea women via their

abilities of singing a kind of folksong, which is named as *kaide*s. Via the tradition of *kaide*s, women share the instant feelings about their conditions of life, members of families or yearning of their youth. The expression of emotions makes women's voice possible to be heard thinking about their lives, and this voice is a kind of an emancipatory act during everyday life.

As a theoretical and methodological stand, feminist standpoint theory and methodology is the main factory to build this study from the position of women in the *çekme* narratives. In the case of *çekme,* those women have marginalised positions that .This ethnographic study was conducted with the mixed methods that are the participant observation and technique of oral history, specifically life histories of the *çekilmiş* women. During the interviews, I tried to focus on three stages of life histories which includes family life before the *çekme*, the narration of *çekme*, and the constitution of new household. The partition of one's story aims to see how women's position changes within the ritual of *çekme*, and also in the new household. What prompted me to divide three stages mainly is the methodological approach of this thesis study. Feminist standpoint theory will provide an essential ground for the analysis of *çekme* narrations. It emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a critical discussion within both the paradigm of modernism and post-modernism about the relations both in the process of knowledge production and practices of power. The crucial point regarding feminist standpoint in this thesis study is that the empowerment of oppressed groups which have the marginalised position providing a better account of reality, while focusing on their experiences as a kind of alternative history writing from the below. For this purpose, feminist standpoint theory will be operationalised within the scope of oral history.

Mainly, the aim will be opening up a new space for marginalised group of people, in other words trying to understand the conditions of their lives. Here, the meaning of a *standpoint* is being able to produce the best current understanding of knowledge of gender is interrelated with women's experiences and the realities of gender (Ramazonoğlu & Holland, 2002, p. 61). And, the division of three stages in life histories will provide to see the tension between the location of women between their

family and in-law family. Furthermore, this situatedness will give some clues about the women's position and the importance of their circulation among families in the village, in general. Therefore, feminist standpoint theory counts as a better account of knowledge from the perspectives of women.

1.2. Expected Potential Contribution of the Study

In the literature, bride kidnapping as a marriage system takes a limited place from women's positions. Already established literature mainly focuses on the understanding of bride kidnapping and its impact on the families and the village in a larger extent, not the agents at all. Throughout the deeper readings on marginality and its epistemic priority in the knowledge production will base on a completely new dimension to the understanding of bride kidnapping as a marriage ritual and the investigation of the position of the women. Moreover, after *çekme* process, women's daily life interaction will serve a solidarity among women, and their acts of self-definition and self-valuation process produce a new, different and more closer to the reality. Additionally, using feminist standpoint theory both as theoretical stand and methodology will contribute both to the improvement of the theory and to the enrichment of the subject matter of bride kidnapping.

1.3. Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. The introduction chapter is a brief inception regarding the scope of the topic and the study, a short summary of kidnapping and its placement in the marriage literature, aims and objectives of the study, theoretical and methodological stand of the study are introduced here.

The second chapter is the theoretical foundation where the key features of FST and their connections with the case of kidnapping in the light of my topic are taken place; the definitions of the concepts such as situated and partial knowledge, epistemic privilege, strong objectivity outsider within, are elaborated in this chapter.

The third chapter is where I have made a literature review about the history of kidnapping in the marriage both in general and in Turkey. With reference to the

ethnographic studies, I will present the definition of ritual for a new way conceptualisation of the act of *çekme*, bride kidnapping in general.

The fourth chapter is my methodology and the feminist standpoint methodology is situated in the ethnographic field study and it is enriched with the method of highlighting oral history; and I give detailed information about my field work and its preparation process.

In the fifth chapter, I will present the analysis of my data. This chapter consists of two sections. The first part is the conceptualisation of *çekme* as a ritual, under the two sub-sections that are *çekme* ceremonies and public acceptance. I continue, then, with the struggles of women after *çekme* in the making of the new form of life both the relations among women in the extended household, or between the couple. I specifically focus on daily life solidarity as a political base among the *çekilmiş* women. Finally, I will end with the self-definition and self-valuation of Black Sea women, with reference to a kind of folksongs of women.

In the sixth and last chapter, I conclude with the findings of the study; theoretical, methodological and practical contributions; theoretical and methodological limitations of the study; and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

"Science is politics by other means..." (Harding, p. 10)

The aim of this chapter is to present Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) as an essential framework for this study. Throughout the chapter, main characterisation and key figures of FST will be explored with reference to the social theory in a broad sense and then, my position within FST will be clearly elaborated on in this study. From my standpoint of the configuration of FST, *standpoint of the marginalised, situated knowledge, partiality, epistemic privilege, strong objectivity, collective consciousness* and later *outsider within* (the position of self) will be the main components of the foundation of this thesis.

2.1. Feminist Standpoint Theory

To begin with its emergence, Feminist Standpoint Theory has occurred "as a critical discussion within both the paradigm of modernism and post-modernism about the relations between the production of knowledge and practices of power" in the 1970s and 1980s. (Harding, 2004, p. 1). It is an epistemology, a distinctive formation and integration of Feminism and Marxism, and also a methodology, which provides strategies of political action within collectivities in the process of knowledge production. It has proposed both an explanatory and prescriptive theory and a method for guiding feminist research (Harding, 2004, p. 1). In this sense, standpoint theory has brought a fruitful and fresh argument against the conventional feminist thought. The conventional feminist thought, not as a theory but as a practical way of thinking, has limited its potential to the normative claims of modernity which are basically universalism, essentialism and rationalism. Moreover, the objective science claims

have been dominated by the male presence both in every process of scientific research. This androcentric biases in science have both epistemological and moral/political issues (Harding, 1991, p. 41). Until the emergence of FST, feminist thought has not explicitly separated itself from the androcentric science. The critics were based on the notion of "bad science" (Harding, 1991, p. 111). According to the conventional feminist thought, good science is only possible where the interests of politics are not involved in the process of knowledge production. FST was for the first time located women's stands in the new feminist research. Being an epistemological stand in the research directly attributes the research to a moral and political meaning. So, the notion of knowledge and power goes hand-in-hand in the conceptualisation of FST.

What is special for standpoint theorists is that the empowerment of oppressed group underlies inherently their daily life experiences which also refers to a kind of alternative history writing from the below. For standpoint theorists, the representation of historically under-represented social groups has the certain socio-context of the experiences which is epistemically beneficial. In other words, the aim is to open up a new space for marginalised groups of people, to take a standpoint. The dominant ideology has a serious problem with reference to the notion of objectivity in which to the unidimensional interpretation of reality. In this sense, the lived experiences and specificities of marginalised group of people were excluded from both the process of knowledge production and the articulation of political resistance. The meaning of a *standpoint* is being able to produce the best current understanding of knowledge of gender which is interrelated with women's experiences and the realities of gender (Ramazonoğlu & Holland, 2002, p. 61). A standpoint is not a perspective or a kind of view that one defends for their progress rather it directly refers to occupying a social location in a political struggle to transform the current conditions. It is derived from the life activities and also achieved in the life activities as well. That's why, it is an achievement that is "struggled for" (Potter, 2006, p. 132). A standpoint is "potentially the foundation of oppositional and revolutionary movement" (Cockburn, 2010, p. 140). This

contestation of standpoint, according to Harding lies in Hegel's dialectic of master/servant:

> Hegel's reflection on what can be known about the master/slave relationship from the standpoint of the slave's life in contrast to the far more distorted understanding of it available from the perspective of the master's life. From the perspective of the master's activities, everything the slave does appears to be the consequence either of the master's will or of the slave's lazy and brutish nature. The slave does not appear fully human. However, from the standpoint of the slave's activities, one can see her smiling at the master when see in fact wishes to kill, playing lazy as the only form of resistance she can get away with, and scheming with the slave community to escape. The slave can be seen as fully human. (Harding, 1998 , p. 149)

Following the argumentation of Harding, the slave, whatever her condition is, "is conscious of her resistance and thinks about the social relationship she is trapped in she might accept this view, this "ideology", of herself." (Potter, 2006, p. 135). Later, the distinctive conceptualisation of 'standpoint' has elucidated in György Lukács's work, *History and Class Consciousness*, in which the privilege position of the working class is defined as "the identical subject of history" which means that one particular group of people or class has an *epistemological priority* for the analysis of social (Jameson, 2004, p. 143-45). He puts it,

> ... the special position of the proletariat in society and in history, and the standpoint from which it can function as the identical subject-object of the social and historical process of evolution (Lukács, 196, p. 149).

The emergence of a distinctive proletarian standpoint, or in Cockburn's words (Cockburn, 2015, p. 333), a proletarian 'take' on life is capable of tearing down 'the propaganda of the victors' and hence, to recover an alternative history often involves a polemic against an established ideology (Thompson, 1976, p. 6). In the adaptation of this to my subject matter, bride kidnapping has been recognised as an alternative systems of marriage without touching any structural boundaries and relations. In this sense, the concept of standpoint provides me with a better account of knowledge from the marginalised group of people, *çekilmiş* women in this case. At first, bride kidnapping has a marginalised position in the systems of marriage. The attribution of alternativeness to the bride kidnapping in the marriage literature, is explicitly a reflection of the essentialist understanding of modernist paradigm. The only position

of bride kidnapping is being limited to be the 'object' of knowledge, the actor of the practice is always shown with numbers without touching their experiences, lives and so on. However, in FST the actors of bride kidnapping are not only an object; but it is also the subject who has its own voice, and is not silent at all. It is at the very actualities of the everyday life. The agents of this act are also marginalised through their lived marriage experiences. Their experiences are a whole new source of knowledge regarding both oppressive processes and strategies for resistance (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 47). Here, the *çekilmiş* women can make a self-definition which "involves challenging the political knowledge-validation process that has resulted in externally-defined, stereo-typical images" (Collins, 2004, p. 106). As Wylie states that "a standpoint is a critical consciousness about the nature of our social location and the difference it makes epistemically (Wylie, 2004, p. 344). So, the narratives of *çekilmiş* women turns the whole story upside-down with respect to their unique experiences which is created a ground for critical consciousness and the writing an alternative history has become possible from women's stands on that position.

Beside the critical insights of the Marxist theory, Lukács celebrating the proletarian achievement from the point of male workers say:

> From this standpoint alone does history really become a history of mankind. For it contains nothing that does not lead back ultimately to men and to the relations between men. (1968, p. 186)

In this statement, the proletarian standpoint is defined "as disinterested, objective, having no point of view, no cultural identity; it is the unitary, universal knower equivalent to 'rational man'" in conventional social theory (Potter, 2006, p. 135). This is what FST exactly criticised for. Taking a standpoint as a collective subject is not reduced to the differences among the group, rather the specific characteristics of the marginalised is always celebrated for a more reliable account of the world. Furthermore, women stands do not involve the Marxian analysis in terms of capitalist mode of production and future aspects of the dissolution of the given system. The critique of Marxist analysis of capitalism has very well pointed out in Iris Young's argumentation:

> ... accepts the traditional Marxian theory of production relations, historical change, and analysis of the structure of capitalism in basically unchanged form. It rightly criticizes that theory for being essentially gender- blind, and hence seeks to supplement Marxist theory of capitalism with feminist theory of a system of male domination. Taking this route, however, tacitly endorses the traditional Marxian position that "the woman question" is auxiliary to the central questions of a Marxian theory of society." (1980, p. 180)

Following the critique of Marxian meta-theory and the celebration of the standpoint of proletarians, women's lives provide a privileged vantage point on patriarchal domination to understand the deepest meaning of structured institutions surrounding them, and also a vantage point to develop strategies for challenging those institutions and built an ideology of more humane social relations (Hartsock, 2004, p. 36).

Dorothy Smith, in her major work *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987) describes the 'brutal history of women's silencing' by patriarchal order. Smith carefully elaborates on the lack of sociology in which women would take a position and talk back to power from the perspective of their everyday experience. Here, the lack is by creating "a way of seeing, from where we actually live, into the powers, processes, and relations that organize and determine the everyday context of that seeing" (Smith, 1987, p. 4; quoted from; Cockburn, 2015, p. 334). The ontological assumption of Smith's standpoint theory is basically derived from the actual activities in a local historical process (Smith, 1987, p. 135). As a second step of the conceptualisation o FST, knowledge is always *socially situated* that is embodied, localised; "objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment, and definitely not about the false vision of promising transcendence of all limits of responsibility" (Haraway, 2004, p. 87). Smith argues that the first step is return to the original texts with the explicit aim to problematise the current interpretations. To illustrate her argument, she reanalyses Marx's *German Ideology* from the standpoint of her own experience as a woman and a Marxist scholar. Smith adds her experience into the readings of Marxism:

> We did a critical review of some of the major contemporary theorists of class, Olin Wright, Poulantzas, Carchedi and so forth. Then we read Marx and Engels' The *Communist* Manifesto. There was a startling difference. The latter locates the reader in the movement of history;-classes are not mapped out as a structure consistiilg of categories of persons or positions; the reading

> subject is located at a moment between a past, in which classes have arisen and that subjected society to their conditions of appropriation, and a future, in which the proletariat abolishes previous conditions of appropriation and thereby appropriation itself. Readers are placed pronominally; the bourgeoisie is directly addressed as an other, in opposition to the "we" situated on this side of the struggle, our side. "You are horrified," Marx and Engels write to that other subject, "at our intending to do away with private property." "You reproach us with intending to do away with property" and "that is what we intend." The irony is heavy here. The "you" and "yours" are the bourgeoisie, addressed directly. "We" are the communists whose position is stated in the *Manifesto* by the communist authors; "we" creates a position for the subject in the text that is home for whoever takes our side; "we" are placed by this textual act *in* the class struggle. (1989, p. 44)

In this argumentation, Smith locates herself in the readings of Marxism as a woman, at first. In other words, one can speak their experience in a formal discourse of knowledge, but in so doing she will speak from the actualities of her life. One can always embodied to a particular time, place and situation in her experiences. In this thesis, the narratives of *çekilmiş* women positioned themselves in the practice of *çekme*, and bride kidnapping in general. Acknowledging the situated-knowledge, the local usage of bride kidnapping is a new perspective to understand the practice by the villagers. Bride kidnapping as a marriage form, is part of 'the social' which refers to "a complex socio-economic and cultural formation, brought to life through myriad finite and specific social and historical organizations and institutions" in Marxian understanding (Bannerji, 2015, p. 105). It is both a combination of living and conscious human agents and in Marx's words 'sensuous human activity and practice' (Marx, 1976 ; quoted from; Bannerji, p. 105). Here, every consciously act of human agents is a part of the social. What differs an act from its totalised, abstract notion is basically the soci-historical conditions of the practice itself. In FST, the experience of marginalised groups is meaningful where it is practised and understood. The thesis of socially-situated knowledge utters the definition of specific experience and its valuation with the lived experience from a particular and privileged vantage point. In the village, bride kidnapping has a special naming that basically differs itself from the general meaning which is called '*çekme*'. It is a whole new understanding from the illegal act of women abduction, it is a 'cultural' thing and it is meaningful in the village as a marriage form. This differentiation of two acts attributes a new

explanation to bride kidnapping as a social phenomenon. On the one hand, the *çekilmiş* women have a special subjugated position in the knowledge of *çekme* as a particular form of bride kidnapping. On the other hand, the act of *çekme* is eventually a marriage form that is accepted by the actors of the practice and the villagers. So, the experience of çekme has marginalised those women in the marriage practices and this subjugated position happens to share a certain stand. To put it differently, the act of *çekme* has its own particularity, all the while being part and parcel of the inner dynamics of bride kidnapping and uppermost in the marriage system. In this sense, the approaches of 'taking everyday life as problematic' and 'starting thought from marginalised lives' provide a fundamental map in order to take the FST a step further. Here, the new step is addressing the multiplicity and diversity of women and their life activities, in Haraway's words "feminist objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges*." (Haraway, 2004, p. 86). The multiplicity of knowledges is because "agents *as knowers* 'embodied', having specific gender, racial, class, historical and cultural locations that shape the content of their thought" (Potter, 2006, p. 136). Moreover, these agents as knowers hold their hands in the potentiality of a political transformation which is not the individual level. In contrast to the conventional empiricist thought in which the unit of analysis is individual, communities, not individuals produce knowledge in the FST.

> ... the situated-knowledge thesis amounts to the claim that knowledge is achieved by epistemic communities whose members share a normative commitment to the aims of inquiry and develop a critical consciousness of how their individual experiences, in virtue of their social positions, bear on the formulation of research questions, the selection of methodologies, as well as the evaluation of hypotheses, background assumptions, and interpretations of data (Intemann, 2010, s. 786-787).

A collective subject, a group or a community as the primary agents of FST are also multiple, and obviously heterogeneous (Potter, 2006, p. 138). To put it differently, recognising more than one stands has a decent chance to escape from the universalised, totalised and abstract form of the world, and it makes it possible to see the specificities of subjectivities and its particular meanings derives from them. It is a total criticism of modernity, while the notion of multiplicity strengthens the FST from postmodern paradigm. In Wylie's words:

> ... social location systematically shapes and limits what we know, including tacit, experiential knowledge as well as explicit understanding what we take knowledge to be as well as specific epistemic content. What counts as a "social location" is structurally defined. What individuals experience and understand is shaped by their location in a hierarchically structured system of power relations: by the material conditions of their lives, by the relations of production and reproduction that structure their social interactions, and by the conceptual resources they have to represent and interpret these relations. (2004, p. 343)

The normative systems of marriage have been surrounded by the knowledge of the arranged marriages, and the narratives of bride kidnapping for the first time has been understood from women's situation, in the rural context of Turkey. 12 narratives of women have certain common points in the act of *çekme*. This experience itself creates a ground for a standpoint. In other words, the standpoint of *çekilmiş* women emerges from the common experiences of the marginalised practice itself. However, there are still specificities of *çekilmiş* women from where they are positioned with relation to the socio-cultural and historical context of village. For instance, one of the women was in the second generation and her experiences of *çekme* have been transformed in a smooth way. The marginalisation of that woman differs the uniqueness of experience both in a subjective stand and in a macro level. In other words, the experience of bride kidnapping is considered through a situated approach because it is both in the level of individual and of local differentiated. On the one hand, it is a well recognised form of marriage in the sociology literature, and in the end, bride kidnapping is a certain type of marriage. This articulation process of the bride kidnapping experiences provides a certain standpoint for those who are have practised. On the other hand, it is considered on the level of different experiences of *çekilmiş* women who are particularly marginalised during the act, and because of the position of the act. In this sense, the *partiality* of the truth has a critical stand for almost all assumptions of modernity. However, the first thing in the notion of partiality is the differentiation from the relativist approach. Relativism basically refers to the notion that one's claim is valid in every condition and everywhere. In other words, it means that anything goes in every circumstance. Here, the claim of partial perceptions in FST grounds on the multiplicity of socially-situated

knowledges can never be adapted the totalised, universalised structure in order to not to melt away the specificities of the subjectivities. In Haraway's words:

> The alternative to relativism is partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology. Relativism is the way of bing nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally. The "equality" of positioning is a denial of responsibility and critical enquiry. Relativism is the perfect mirror twin of totalization in the ideologies of objectivity; both deny the stakes in location, embodiment, and partial perspective; both make it impossible to see well. … But it is precisely in the politics and epistemology of partial perspectives that the possibility of sustained, rational, objective enquiry rests. (2004, p. 89)

The notion of partial knowledge is an explicit critique of universalistic approach of modernity. The truth can never be understood and interpreted in a fullest version. For this, it can never be generalised and abstracted from its social contexts, it is always open to be determined by other people and of course other circumstances. The universalistic claims of modernity also have a holistic point of view which ignores the differences among subjects. It constructs a totality of a body of knowledge as a unified understanding of the truth. In this way, it is also a criticism of essentialism, as well. Partial knowledge attributes a certain amount of values to experiences, feelings and actions of the subjects. It can never be reduced to a unified body of the subject which is based on rational action and those values like experiences, feeling and so on can never be ignored. Harding attributes the notion of weakness to the conventional social research methods, focusing on the elimination of specificities of particular experiences. In the modernist understanding, it is directly a critique of essentialism, in an abstract sense:

> ... value-free, impartial, dispassionate research has been operationalized to identify and eliminate only those social values and interests that differ among the researchers and critics who are regarded by the scientific community as component to make such judgments. If this community of "qualified" researchers and critics systematically excludes, for example, all African-Americans and women of all races and if the larger culture is stratified by race and gender and lacks powerful critiques of this stratification, it is not plausible to imagine that racist and sexist interests and values would be identified within a community of scientists composed entirely of people who benefit ─ intentionally or not ─ from institutionalized racism and sexism. (Harding, 1993, p. 70)

In addition to the critics of relativism and essentialism, the attribution of value to the experience of the marginalised in contrast to the dominant one, the knowledge of women, and of the marginalised groups of people in general, experience the world with the position of the *outsider-within status* (Collins, 2004). The outsider-within status has a way of experiencing the life from a marginalised position within a world that is constructed by the experiences of the dominant. The outsider-within position is another criticism of modernity that directly refers to the dichotomic analysis of social research. Patricia Hill Collins states that the dichotomous understanding has three characteristics:

> Either/or dualistic thinking, or what I will refer to as the construct of dichotomous oppositional difference, may be a philosophical lynchpin in systems of race, class, and gender oppression. One fundamental characteristic of this construct is the categorization of people, things, and ideas in terms of their difference from one another. For example, the terms in dichotomies such as black/white, male/female, reason/emotion, fact/opinion, and subject/object gain their meaning only in *relation* to their difference from their oppositional counterparts. Another fundamental characteristic of this construct is that difference is not complementary in that the halves are different and inherently opposed to one another. (2004, p. 110)

Here, according to FST, this special position of outsider-within turns the hierarchical relation into an intersubjective characteristic. The subjectivities of the marginalised position are multiple and each one has their own specific subjectivities. To put it in a different way, each subjectivity generates its own unique meaning and it cannot be abstracted or generalised within the dominant. In this thesis, bride kidnapping is defined as an exceptional or an alternative form of marriage in the literature. Basically, it is in the margins of the marriage system. In the literature, they called it the alternative system (Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974). The notion of alternative does not say about the agents of the act. It represents a reaction to the dilemmas of the normative system. Nonetheless, bride kidnapping is still a marriage form with a huge public acceptance. The subjects of the bride kidnapping knowledge have a unique marriage experience that differs from the normal one. The marginalised position of the *çekilmiş* women comes from the marginalised institution of bride kidnapping. This unique experience of the *çekilmiş* women shows itself a critical stands to

objectified, rationalised and universalised understanding of marriage, but still it is a part of the marriage system.

The critique of essentialism has been a ground for the appreciation of the experiences of marginalised group of people. "Starting off thought" from women's everyday lives will generate a less partial and distorted reality than the view from male dominant discourse. The knowledge of women who are the marginalised social groups in a patriarchal society is estimated more epistemically reliable, privileged or advantaged than the dominants. Their unique stand of "double vision" attributes women's knowledge as a meaning of *epistemic privilege* (Narayan, 2004, p. 221). The marginalised groups of people have the knowledge of the context of theirs and those of their oppressors. The operationalisation of the feature of epistemic privilege has two sets of practices and in two different contexts. Haraway emphasises that "there is good reason to believe vision is better from below the brilliant space platforms of the powerful", and at the same time she previses that "the positioning of the subjugated are not exempt from critical re-examination, decoding, deconstruction and interpretation" (Haraway, 2004, p. 88). That's why, she clearly states that, "the standpoints of the subjugated are not 'innocent' positions" (Haraway, 2004, p. 88). Here, it should not be forgotten that the different groups of women have not epistemic privilege, contrarily epistemic privilege arises from those women's distinctive understanding of the world. In other words, the particular standpoint of those women is a ground for the notion of epistemic privilege. Furthermore, this distinctive understanding of the world contributes to make the process of knowledge production less false. The appreciation of the epistemological prior position of women's knowledge also grounds for "the social situatedness of subjects of knowledge systematically as a resource for maximising objectivity" that is called *strong objectivity* (Harding, 1993, p. 136). According to Harding, the objectivity of science is weak because its concerns lie on the notion of neutrality that ignores the contribution of the subjugated standpoints which can expand scientific knowledge by defining and critically analysing culture-wide assumptions (Harding, 1995, p. 21). Harding emphasises that:

> science never gets us truth... Scientific procedures are supposed to get us claims that are less false than those ─ and only those ─ against which they have been tested... Thus, scientific claims are supposed to be held not as true but, only provisionally as "least false" unless counterevidence or a new conceptual framework no longer provides them with the status of "less false". (2004, p. 260)

However, marginalised group of people's experiences are central sources for socially situated knowledge and a source of maximizing objectivity. A key element of the notion of strong objectivity is *strong reflexivity* which directly refers to the cultural codes which are included at every stage of scientific research. This basically means that any research cannot be separated from the researcher's socio-cultural background and her beliefs in general, so strong objectivity requires that "scientists and their communities be integrated into democracy-advancing projects for scientific and epistemological reasons as well as moral and political ones" (Harding, 1993, p. 136). In this sense, the notion of value-free, impartial science is impossible from the perspective of standpoint theorists. Objectivity lies on these notions to eliminate the effects of social values and interests during the research process and the results of the research. Hardings emphasizes:

> ... the conventional notion of objectivity institutionalizes a certain kind of lawlessness at the heart of science, we could say, by refusing to theorize any criteria internal to scientific goals for distinguishing between scientific methos, on the one hand, and such morally repugnant acts as torture or ecological destruction, on the other. (1993, p. 138)

This dispassionate character of conventional scientific approach makes objectivity too narrow in definition. Because, the inclusiveness of social values and interests may serve to support the social research problematics and practices. Individuals are not the only ones who are determined by the social structures, they at the same time relationally determine the structure itself. In other words, individual are not simply socially-constructed by structural forces, but they are constituted as active agencies in relation to the socially determined structures. Thus, the interpretation of a social notion from an objective stand is simply a delusion. Haraway calls this delusion a "God-trick" which means "seeing everything from nowhere" (2004, p. 86). The solution for this delusion is basically to involve the socially-situated knowledges in to center of the analysis. The multiplication of the socially-situated knowledges

provides an embodied objectivity that resides in the agent of the experience and the researcher who are included in the analysis of the experience with its critical standards in feminist research and politics. In this thesis, the *çekilmiş* women are a small group of people who experienced the unique practices. Their privileged position comes from the marginalised act of bride kidnapping in the marriage system. Arranged marriages are the dominant form of the marriage practices, thus bride kidnapping is outside the norm. The act itself is marginalised. The subjects of the act are both the subject of knowledge as well as the object of knowledge. Being the subject of knowledge and also their position in the historically-located village community have both include the analysis with their socio-cultural values, beliefs and interests. They are the practising bride kidnapping, no one can ever attribute a meaning for their experience. In this sense, the standpoint of the *çekilmiş* women has *de facto* reflexivity which means they are both experiencing and interpreting it. The standards of maximising objectivity, here have situated the *çekilmiş* women into the centre of the analysis. In this way, the analysis of bride kidnapping as a marriage form gains a more critical, causal and social explanations (Harding, 1993, p. 137). This particularity of this local event always arises in translocal context of socio-economic and cultural relations (Bannerji, 2005, p. 145). Here, bride kidnapping is still a marriage form, and its analysis with the subjects of that knowledge is maximising the objective approaches in the literature of marriage. In other words, the subjects of the bride kidnapping have a potential to gain less partial and perverse standpoint in its knowledge and to achieve greater objectivity with the help of the experience of the *çekilmiş* women who have both practised the act and they are defined and valued both the act and themselves through this particular experience.

The integration of social values and interest mainly builds a ground for the possibilities of politics. The elimination of value-free, objective science brings the moral and political conditions in to the framework of social research. Politics where the achievement of standpoint emerges it also transforms the consciousness itself. The notion of *collective consciousness* is created by the political engagement of a standpoint through a shared agenda. In this way, self-definition and self-valuation of the marginalised becomes possible. This political site of marginalised is the site of

resistance (hooks, 2004, p. 159). Harding emphasises the need of women's collective, group consciousness:

> ... that would enable women's groups to design, and to value and engage in, the kinds of research that could enable women to transform their consciousness into an oppositional one and to begin see the possibility of ending their oppression. (2004, p. 6)

The constitution of the collective subject consciousness is not reduced to a single formulation, rather it is always open the de-constitution and re-constitution process with the articulation or the disarticulation of the new agents. In the case of *çekme* collective consciousness functionalises in the women of a certain family. The 4 of the 12 narratives of women were told by the daughters, sister and also daughter-in-law. It shows the popularity of a unique experience of *çekme*. The narratives are also known by the village people, that's why I easily used the snowball technique in order to reach those women. However, the focus is here, *çekilmiş* women shared their story with the same sex relatives, not their son for instance. It is "the consequence of forming one's own sense of what one's contribution may be while still feeling oneself to be a part of a "collective" (Thompson, 1976, p. 25). Within these narratives, the village women gain a perspective regarding the experience of *çekilmiş* women and others. The deconstruction and reconstruction of these life histories also contribute to a political transformation for the rest of the next generations of the village in terms of the realisation of the *çekme*. In this sense, Harding states that "if feminism is to be emancipatory for marginalized women but also if it is to be maximally scientific for dominant group women about their situation" (Harding, 1991, p. 285). In other words, the marginalised position of *çekilmiş* women produces a distinctive kind of knowledge about marriage, and its transfer to the younger generations provides a critical insights to take a stand regarding their preferences of marriage in a larger extent. They have an impression both the act of *çekme* and marriage in general and how this instance affects women throughout their life. So, the notion of collective consciousness here, contributes to the understanding of marriage practices in the region among younger women. It derives a political transformation in a particular social phenomena of the village.

In conclusion, to sum up the main features of FST :

> Standpoint theory's focus on the historical and social locatedness of knowledge projects and on the way collective political and intellectual work can transform a source of oppression into a source of knowledge and potential liberation, makes a distinctive contribution to social justice projects as well as to our understanding of preconditions for the production of knowledge. (Harding, 2004, p. 10)

At this point, FST strictly differs from the previous gender-based and gender-biased feminist thought. Firstly, gender-based thought of feminisms takes the category of woman as a unified, homogenous and essentialist form. The multiplicity of women does not include the social research and the difference among women is the central problem of that theoretical framework. Secondly, gender-biased analysis takes the critics one step forward, but still it is limited to critical analysis of dichotomous understanding of modernity. FST is somewhere in between the modernist and postmodernist paradigm. While it directs the harsh critics to the modernity, at the same time it will never reject it. Similarly, FST effects critical notion of postmodernity, it will never locate its stand in that paradigm. The appreciation of FST lies in the feature of the subjectivity notion in relation to the partial and situated knowledge claims in which it makes possible to the actualities of the marginalised groups people in a epistemically more reliable and politically more democratic.

Within this theoretical foundation, *çekme* as a form of bride kidnapping situates a marginalised position in the systems of marriage due to its unusual practices and the positions of the agents. The position of marginalised marriage system provides a whole new perception about the constitution of a marriage between two people. The *çekilmiş* women's point of view resides on a distinct stand where the notion of consent will be questioned throughout the thesis. The complex web of relations in the instances of *çekme* contributes to the conceptualisation of ritual. In this thesis, defining *çekme* as a ritual is a way of showing the particular nuances of bride kidnapping in a socio-cultural specific of a region. While the marginalised position of *çekme* institution provides a new kind of production, this marginalisation also situates the *çekme* in the marriage system as a ritual form. The formation of ritual may seem as the totalised version of some patterns in a certain act. However, the

particularities of the specific experiences are also included the analysis. It is because, the differences among the same experiences still lie on the standpoint of the *çekilmiş* women where the distinctive points are meaningful. Those distinctive points also contribute to definition and valuation of themselves through a kind of folk song. This thesis interrelates marginalization of *çekme* narratives with partial and situated knowledge claims of FST, and it also makes a connection between the relationship of outsider-within position of *çekilmiş* women in the agents of marriage system and their self-definition and self-valuation process with the aids of epistemic privilege and strong objectivity. Thereby, my central question to this thesis is: How is the act of *çekme* practiced and situated in the historical context of the women's lives? My sub-questions are: To what extent does the conceptualisation of *çekme* as a ritual overlap the marginalised position of bride kidnapping in the marriage system? Which certain kind of daily practices is a growth of knowledge and also a space for political actions? How does the outsider-within position of *çekilmiş* women provide self-definition and self-valuation of themselves?

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will elaborate on the forms of bride kidnapping act in the marriage system. In the first stance, I will elucidate the conceptualisation of marriage and family in the sociology literature throughout the changes and constraints in the definitions. Then I will focus on the understanding of marriage in urban and rural Turkey. Then, the discussion of bride kidnapping as an alternative system of marriage will be criticised the notion of alternativeness, and the practising of bride kidnapping will be a sign of its historical situatedness. In my study, bride kidnapping has been named as *çekme* and it has been conceptualised as ritual. However, there is a limited archive on bride kidnapping practices in Turkey so this chapter will start to look at the cases around the world, specifically in the Central Asia and Africa.

3.1. The Understanding of Marriage in the Family Theories

One sociologist has defined the family as a "haven in a heartless world" (Lasch, 1977, p. 8). I am not sure on what extent the family institution can be blessed such a holistic way, but still it is one of the constitutive units in any society. This constitutive part of the society has been theorised in a variety of manner which refers to its role and functions in social arrangements. In the first approach, *structural functionalist theory* analyses the family as a contributor of the society and its conditions and possibilities. It examines how "a society's interdependent parts work together to ensure its survival" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 31). The roles of the family have been divided for partners. The husband as a breadwinner, has the instrumental roles that are basically composed of providing the need of survival both in moral and material. Contrarily, the wife as a homemaker, has the expressive role that includes sustaining the family unit with her emotional support. The roles that are attributed to the partners show the functional meaning of family which means that they create an order and then preserve their stability. It seems a mechanical structure that serves the continuity of society. Still, the family institutions have been interrelated with other

institutions such as politics, law and of course the economy as the society has a mechanical role to survive and those parts should work together with an order. The notion of preserving the stability means ignoring the social change over time. Moreover, this dual role of the parts of the family has reproduced the gendered division of labour in this unit. It strengthens the ideology of patriarchal society with this burden of gender. Here, the conservative idea of family has dominated in the years of 1950s and 1960s with respect to the Parsons and Bales (1955).

Another family theory, *the conflict theory* which has been popularised by the challenges of African Americans' and feminists' argumentations on family against structuralist functionalist theory. It has raised in the late 1960s in order to criticise the dominant ideology of family and marriage. Conflict theory examines how "groups disagree, struggle for power, and compete for scarce resources such as wealth and power" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 33). According to the theory, families are maintained and reproduced social stratification. In contrast to the structuralist functionalists, conflict theorists see society not as a stable level or cooperative roles for the parts of the whole. It is a system of widespread societal inequality rather than individual outcomes. In this sense, conflict theories have composed of the tension of minority groups' issues and concerns against white, middle-aged, wealthy people but specifically males. However, the conflict theory does not focus on the practical solution regarding the issues around familial structure. Its attribution of negative human nature and its selfish desires neglect the bond of love and the sacred unity of family. Focusing on the issues in macro level does not answer the challenges of personal level in everyday life.

Third theory is *the family development perspective* is emerged out of the model of family life cycle (Duvall, 1957). The family life cycle involves "the transitions that a family makes as it moves through a series of stages and events" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 36). According to the model, family life cycle begins with marriage, then continues with child rearing, children leaving the family unit, retirement and lastly the death of one or both spouses. Family development examines "changes that families experience over their life spans" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 36). This theory is

the only one that emerges out of the specific interest of family and continues on the issue of family. Throughout the changes in an individual level, it certainly motivates to improve the developmental stages, such as "single-parent families, stepfamilies, childless couples and grandparent-grandchild families" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 37). However, family life cycle stages do not realise in the same line for every undestanding of family. It is an explicitly limited unit of analysis that is nuclear, heterosexual on the basis of traditional family. Another point here is that the quality of the analysis is mainly descriptive, rather than explanatory. It does not go beyond the definition of the stages and its dynamics in a particular historical situation. That's why, we can easily say that the perspective of family development deals with the micro parts of the familial relations and its instutional links.

As a forth perspective, *the symbolic interactionism* has a micro level analysis in which includes the analysis of individuals' everyday behaviour. Family as a part of our everyday life, it is a crucial role to examine. The symbolic interactionism observe "subjective, interpersonal meanings and how we communicate them using *symbols*: words, gestures or pictures that stand for something" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 38). According to the theory, each family member has more than one role. A father may be husband, and at the same time an uncle, or a brother. These roles are obviously relational and also complementary with other relations. It also includes reciprocal rights and duties to each member. In this sense, the unit of analysis has always been a micro basis, so it ignores the other structural problems in a macro-level, such as poverty, unemployment or being a single-parent. It ends up with the analysis of familial relations in an isolated place that causes to miss the other important factors in the study of family.

The fifth one is *the social exchange theory* which claims that "people seek through their interactions with others to maximise their rewards and minimise their costs" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 39). It is based on the pragmatic relations that will continue as long as it provides the benefits. Cost-reward relation may always consider the possibility of divorce. If the cost of marriage has been a considerable issue, the divorce may be the best solution in that situation. Still, when the other factors are

involved in, like having children in the marriage; spouses may decide to continue their marriage on behalf of their children. The risks here is that the decisions are on the basis of a rational thinking. However, familial relations includes a certain amount of love-bond and also emotional labour, even in the constitute of that family. In this sense, the limitation of cost-reward relation causes to lose the moral and emotional meaning of family.

In *the family systems theory* analysis the family is taken as a "functioning unit that solves problems, makes decisions, and achieves collective goals" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 40). This micro-level analysis also analyses the family members' relation with each other and within the family system. However, this theory firstly emerges for the analysis of dysfunctional family, so the study may not extend in larger healthy families. That's why, this research based theory is limited to the specific groups of families (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 40).

These six theories of family in the sociology literature have been dealing with the functions, roles, responsibilities of the family and its members. However, they do not focus on the ways of being a family and its forms. In this sense, I will now look at the feminist theories and their insights of family and then their relations to the forms of marriage that is on the basis of being a family in a traditional understanding. Feminist theory as an umbrella term, analyses the unit of family in a variety of distinct perspectives. Despite the varieties of feminism, their main concern is related to domestic labour and its burden over women in the understanding of nuclear family. The basis of feminist critiques on family has begun with the Betty Friedan's *Femininie Mystique* (Friedan, 1963). Friedan emphasizes the emptiness of women's feeling in relation to their status of housewives. After a short time, Juliet Mitchell publishes an article named "Women: the longest revolution", in which she states that the "true" woman and the "true" family "may both be sites of violence and despair..." (Mitchell, 1966, p. 19). However, these explanation consists of the women's burden focusing on a particular issue, like gender equality, family diversity and social changes in general.

The emergence of feminist sociology in a radical critical perspective mainly puts women as the actors of any particular unit. For example, Barbara Dubois states that the "actual experience and language of women is the central agenda for feminist social science and scholarship" (Dubois, 1983, p. 108). The central aim is to define women as social actors of their experiences and capable of attributing a meaning to it. This explanation is a valuable critique to the conventional feminist thought on family theories. They are only victimised women in the structure of family and also ignore the multiple voices of women that may interpret the family institution in a varied understanding. In this sense, my theoretical position consolidates with its critiques on family theories in general. Contrary to the attribution of mechanical roles on partners in families, feminist standpoint theory analyses any structure with its agencies who are the capable of being an influencer of the structure. In this sense, bride kidnapping as a form of marriage will be understood with its agencies, here the kidnapped women. In general, marriage is a socially recognised mating relationship that "people expect to be stable and enduring, is also universal" (Benokraitis, 2015, p. 7). Those qualities of marriage include certain contradictions with this study. Firstly, the universal understanding of mating relations has been shaken with the practice of bride kidnapping. The stability has never been same for each partners, they have always been open to change, distortion or termination. That's why, the particularity of the kidnapped women should be analysed outside of the family theories. My focus is the standpoint of knowers not as the victimised of the circumstance, but as the agency of that instance.

Now, I can continue with the works on bride kidnapping in the marriage literature both in world and Turkish context.

3.2. Bride Kidnapping as a Marriage System in the World Literature

To begin with the understanding of marriage system, it is an institution that is a "system of social relations, economic arrangements, political arrangements, political processes, cultural categories, norms, values, ideals, emotional patterns, and so on and on." (Borbieva, 2012, p. 141; Ayres, 1974). A marriage produces social and economic ties between parties and it can always be considered as the 'ideal', so bride

kidnapping and also elopement are regarded as "a deviation from the norm" or as the conceptualisation of Bates, Conant and Kudat (1974) an alternative forms of marriage (Martinez-Alier, 1972, p. 91). Before getting into the discussions regarding on the issue, I shall begin the definition of bride kidnapping and how it is practiced throughout the world. Specifically, bride kidnapping may seem a solution where the negotiations of arranged marriage fails between two families:

> (Kidnapping) is a quite dangerous for those involved and will require a measure of cunning and organization as well. It is too difficult to be performed alone, so the boy enlist the assistance of his best and most able to friend who will commit themselves to the cause. The girl must be constantly watched in order to find best moment for kidnapping (Kudat Sertel, 1965, s. 100).

In other words, it is basically an act of taking away a woman without her consent. Throughout the literature, the naming has been a crucial problem to define the act itself. The naming of this act has been documented as bride 'abduction', 'theft', or 'capture' throughout recorded history (Amsler & Kleinbach, 1999 ; Ayres, 1974; Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974; McLaren, 2001).

In the very first stance, the book named as *The History of Human Marriage* (Westermarck, 1891) has discussed the act of bride kidnapping under the title of "Marriage by Capture". The book is a collecting study in various part of the world from:

> In Tasmania, the capture of women for wives from hostile and alien tribes was generally prevalent. Among the Maoris, the ancient and most general way of obtaining a wife was for the man to get together a party of his friends and carry off the woman by force, apparent or actual. A similar practice occurs on the larger islands of the Fiji Group, in Samoa, Tukopia, New Guinea, and extremely frequently in the Indian Archipelago, and among the wild tribes of India. Among the Arabs, Tartars, and other peoples of Central Asia, as also in European Russia, traces of capture occur in the marriage ceremony, whilst the Tangutans, Samoyedes, Votyaks, ... are still in the habit of stealing wives, or elope with their sweethearts, if the bridegroom cannot afford to pay the fixed purchase-sum. Among the Laplanders, Esthonians, and Finns, marriage by capture occurred in former days, and in some parts of Finland symbolical traces of it in the marriage ceremony have been found in modern times (Westermarck, 1891, pp. 385-386).

Westermarck insisted on the practice of capturing wives is a thing of the past. It is an act of performing uncivilised people and he explicitly explained the main reason of this kind of 'barbaric' act is escaping from the bride wealth. Later, he emphasized that the marriage by capture transformed marriage by purchase by adding the compensation of bride.

In the year of 1972, there was a symposium named *Kidnapping and Elopement as Alternative Systems of Marriage* held at the 71st Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974), in order to discuss the alternative marriage systems and also to revive the marriage studies from the 19th century anthropologists. Later, the papers in this symposium have been collected in a special issue of Anthropological Quarterly. The aim of these papers was to contribute to have a better understanding of structural and social-psychological properties of systems of kinship and marriage (Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974, p. 233). These papers are composed from a worldwide examples such as Bosnian Moslems (Lockwood, 1974), Yörük nomads and peasants in Turkey (Bates, 1974 ; Kudat Sertel, 1974), the Koya of South India (Brukman, 1974), East Africa (Conant, 1974) and in a Mexican village (Stross, 1974). In the light of the articles from the symposium, the cases of bride kidnapping and elopement have been identified as a strategy that shakes the structural bonds of marriage institution, and also creating a room for manoeuvre. It is situated as the alternative of the arranged marriage. Here, the emphasis on *alternative* includes positive connotations as a marriage type. As an example, the forms of presenting the bride kidnapping and elopement easily show that the bonds of community where arranged marriages as a given forms in rural era have been shaken. Borbieva mentions that this collection of articles recognised the utilitarian function of the bride kidnapping. It is a "'rational strategy' allowing those with few resources to meet their needs or maximize the benefit of available resources." (Borbieva, 2012, p. 147, see also Ayres, 1974, p. 241 ; McLaren, 2001, p. 978). Throughout this thesis, the positive connotations of alternativeness will be criticised and the changes of marriage practices, specifically in bride kidnapping case, will be analyzed through women's eyes instead of structural dimension in relation to the conceptualisation of ritual.

Some of the works on bride kidnapping differentiate from the other froms of the motivations behind the act itself. The higher cost of arranged marriage is one of the crucial reasons for the practice. In the first study, Elke Kamm focuses on bride kidnapping with its historical background, referring to Soviet times, and contemporary practices in Tetritskaro, Georgia (Kamm, 2012). In current situations, involuntary bride kidnappings are still considered as an acceptable way of marriage, "if there is no violence (e.g. rape) involved" (Kamm, 2012, p. 11). This is because, bride kidnapping is forbidden by law in Georgia, but there is still viability of the act as a marriage system. The main reason is that the gossips of the environment and the loss of a woman's reputations and its consequences. Other study has the same motivation where is practiced in the 20th century China (McLaren, 2001). Again, the main motivation is avoiding the bride price and the cost of wedding arrangements. The practice of *qiangqin*, local name of bride kidnapping, is defined as a form of marriage that has an acceptance by the local communities in the 20th century China.

In recent studies show that the specifities of bride kidnapping have been underlined in contrast to the general context of the practice. Firstly, the issue of naming is solved by the localised using. The reason for the usage of local names is a separation of the practice from its general meaning in order to emphasize the uniqueness of the experience. However, I believe that the reason for the different naming is the rising importance of ethnographic studies and the understanding any circumstances from the stand of that people who are experiencing it. My main motivation is also focusing on that issue that will be elaborated in the next sections.

Continuing with the local using, *ala kachuu* is considered as a Kyrgyz traditional practice of bride abduction (Kleinbach, Ablezova, & Aitieva, 2005). However, this study that has been conducted in a village was a duplication of an earlier field research in several cities of Kyrgyzstan (Amsler & Kleinbach, 1999). In the earlier study, the respondents are covered by university students and academics in central cities of Kyrgyzstan.

> ... bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan is predominantly a consensual practice, and reveal that, while many Kyrgyz people may refer to it as a "national tradition", there is very little consensus among the populous as to its causes or

> legitimacy. This research clearly suggests that in the majority of kidnapping cases, this national tradition is non-consensual as it is currently practiced (Amsler & Kleinbach, 1999, p. 11).

In the second study on Kyrgyzstan, *'kyz-ala kachuu'* is also considered as an alternative to patriarchal arranged marriages (Kleinbach & Babaiarova, 2013, p. 53). Nonetheless, there is an ambiguity of young girls' consent in this traditional bridal abduction. In its historicity, the main reasons for *ala kachuu* are parental non-consent and class difference in relation to economic one in 18th and 19th century (Kleinbach, Ablezova, & Aitieva, 2005, p. 192). The Soviet-era has been promoted the conventional arrangements of marriages like bride price, dowry etc. There was an upward trend returning to *ala kachuu* against parental intervention. In this sense, the consensual agreement was considered as the one coming from both men and women. However, *ala kachuu* has become a non-consensual kidnapping from the women's side. In this way, Amsler and Kleinbach interpret kidnapping as "a product, producer, and reproducer of gender stratification and inequality" (1999, p. 195). In this sense, the notion of alternativeness serves to the patriarchal society that is an increase in male dominance and there is no room for women's words.

The most recent study (Borbieva, 2012) on Kyrgyzstan was a well documented contextualisation within the existing systems of oppression with her support of a fieldwork. She clearly puts the historical changes of the understanding of Kyrgyz bride kidnapping and relates with the reinforcement of patriarchal boundaries over women. Borbieva's work is one that is aimed at the incomplete parts of common explanations of bride kidnappings. In other words, she has an answer to the past literature (Amsler & Kleinbach, 1999 ; Ayres, 1974; Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974; McLaren, 2001). Her response to earlier studies is that a more inclusive analysis referring to the existing systems of oppression. However, she is missing the very important point throughout the article, which is the motivation of the bride kidnappings' acceptance. Borbieva mentions that the toleration of bride kidnappings has been the answer to the affirmation of young people's desires and the emphasis on romantic love (Borbieva, 2012, p. 163). In her work, public acceptance is attributed

to the decision of youngsters' act, but still from the women's stand the kidnappings have not been analysed.

Furthermore, another study in South Africa has named the act of kidnapping as *ukuthwala* (traditional bridal abduction) (Nkosi & Buthelezi, 2013). This qualitative case study basically shows that under the umbrella term of culture, kidnapping has gained a meaning and justified itself in the region.

> Traditional bridal abduction or (*ukuthwala*) is a custom to open up marriage negotiations whereas bride abduction is an abuse of the custom of *ukuthwala* which is an act of criminality and is illegal whereas the custom of *ukuthwala* (traditional bridal abduction) is not (Nkosi & Buthelezi, 2013, p. 162).

In this thesis, the naming issue also has been solved by the inhabitants of the village. They named kidnapping as *çekme* and the women who were kidnapped are called *çekilmiş* women. Before getting into the details, the recent studies (Borbieva, 2012 ; Kleinbach, Ablezova, & Aitieva, 2005 ; Nkosi & Buthelezi, 2013) differentiate the traditional bride abduction from the general context of bride kidnapping. Turning point here is that the violation of women's rights because of its absence of consent. For instance, in the ukuthwala case, bride kidnapping happens before marriage negotiations which differs from this study. Actually, bride kidnapping has become a starting point of the arrangements of marriage. One crucial point is that, there is also a consensual kidnapping which means women give their consent during the act. It is sometimes called agreed bridal abduction (Nkosi & Buthelezi, 2013, p. 62). Thereby, the meaning of act has varied in accordance with the local evidence. It shows us the socially-situated position of a marriage form and its specificities. Nonetheless, the issue of consent is always at the core of the bride kidnapping, because it completely changes the context of the act and also its meaning and naming which is elopement.

Throughout the section, the practices of kidnapping were presented around the world. The act itself covers big and ambiguous names like bride kidnapping/bride abduction/ marriage by abduction etc. Even, for the first time Westermarck (1891) used the term “marriage by capture”. Later studies have solved the problem with its local name that is a sign of the historicity of kidnapping. In this section, I used the

term 'kidnapping' with respect to the symposium in 1972. Kidnapping basically means to take the person and run away.

> Essentially 'marriage by capture' is regarded as a universal stage in the development of human civilization that occurred at the transnational period between a posited matrilineal society and the establishment of patriarchy. (McLaren, 2001, p. 973)

The practice itself happens whether before or after the marriage negotiations that means the notion of 'bride' has never gained a meaning. It is organized to eliminate the unfortunate arrangements, but still the case does not indicate an expected end. Interestingly, abduction of a woman is not a different from the elopement in the inhabitants of Yörük in south-eastern of Turkey (Bates, 1974, p. 272), and it is quite confusing the explanation of kidnapping. Also, this thesis is a critical constitution of bride kidnapping as an alternative forms of marriage in the literature. Thereby, the critics will be presented under the same title, since the *çekme* has been defined.

3.3. Bride Kidnapping as a Marriage System in Turkey

Under the 8th Title of the Turkish Criminal Code, the abduction of women is constituted as a "crime ..., it must carry the moral elements of lascivious feelings or the intent of marriage" (Özgen, 1985, p. 326). The usage of abduction clarifies the legal sanctions of the act itself. The practice is officially recognised by the relevant regulations that will differentiate the sociological naming of it. Still, some sociological works are also using the word of "abduction", but there is no evidence for the reason of different usages (Werner, 2009 ; Ayres, 1974).

Delaney points out the public consensus regarding marriage practices in Turkey with respect to the religious context in the book named *The Seed and The Soil* (Delaney, 1991) which is the a first ethnographic study in Turkey. "Singleness is an attribute of God, not of creature" (Delaney, 1991, p. 99) simply refers that human nature inherently should reproduce for the sake of her later generations, and it provides a strict ground for both construction and institutionalisation of marriage as a system. Turkish Civil Code has defined marriage as a civil contract between a woman and a man, in front of a civil servant in order to establish a family under the Family Law

(1985). In other words, marriage means an agreement between two individuals, to formalise their relation at the level of state. Sociologically, marriage defines at the intersection of intimacy, economic and kin ties, evolving gender roles, and transforming cultural practices on local, national, and global levels (Hart, 2007, p. 345). The centrality of marriage is founded in the household directly upon it and its internal structure shaped by the marriage of its members (Stirling, 1965, p. 178). Also, marriage is an institution that forms, links and reproduces families and it is therefore absolutely central to social life (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2001, p. 136).

Having several definitions for marriage is a sign of its historical situatedness and also its public acceptance. However, one of the statements my interviewee explicitly provided shows that the structural basis of marriage limits her agency and subjective matters: "I said, I will go there. He will grow, I will too. He maybe doesn't like me and want to marry me. Then they (the habitants of the village) will say, she is gone and come back to her father's home." The basic argument behind this, is that the marriage practices of the rural era of Turkey is based on arranged marriages in a historical spectrum. Beyond that, urban land rural marriage practices have been categorised as love match marriage and arranged marriages (Fox, 1975, p. 180). The idea of 'modern marriage' has evolved from a social contract to a companionship between two individuals, and the idea of 'family' has been perceived as an institutional structure of this companionship. However, marriage in rural areas is not and never has been a private affair. It is a long term social contract to organise a new household, to negotiate among families and to give birth in order to maintain the father blood (Stirling 1965; Delaney 1991; Werner 1997; Amsler & Kleinbach 1999; Hann & Hann, 2001). The research on rural Turkey still support the idea of marriage as social contract, not necessarily love bond. That's why, *görücülük* (in Turkish) still functions in rural regions. *Görücülük* involves several women from the family of the man who wants to marry; relatives and neighbours visit the home of the prospective bride.

In the ethnographic literature on rural Turkey, Stirling and Delaney, and later Hanns focusing on Lazi community, described marriage and relationships between spouses

(Stirling 1965; Delaney 1991; Hann & Hann 1991). The most recent work on marriage practices has been completed by Kimberly Hart, in Western part of Turkey. Both Delaney's and Stirling's researches demonstrated that emotional attachments between spouses were less important than running the household as a collective enterprise with separate spheres of gendered influence (Hart, 2007, p. 350). Moreover, the idea of collectiveness is an attribution of the village where the couples are also inhabitants, and it is a kind of silent responsibility to her antecedent and her progeny. That's why, the process of decision making regarding mate selection has been run by the family elders or respectable elders from the village. The active role of elderly people in the process of mate selection demonstrates that the establishment of a new household should be addressed the common good of the inhabitants of that village instead of a marriage, based on love. It makes possible not only to preserve the harmony of the village, but also to consolidate the control mechanism in the hands of elder generations. In this sense, marriage practices in rural Turkey is still considered too important a matter to be left to the whims and sentiments of the young (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2001, p. 136)

One of the prominent study is *Turkish Village* (Stirling, 1965) conducted in Sakaltutan and Elbaşı, Kayseri which is located in the Central Anatolia. Stirling emphasizes the recognition of *kız kaçırma* (kidnapping in Turkish) in the region, but the practicing of bride kidnapping is a very dishonoured act. Obviously, it provides escaping the high cost of marriage arrangements, on the other hand, it creates a hostility between villagers. According to Stirling's datas, only five out of 134 marriages happened with elopement, there was no statistic regarding bride kidnapping in two villages.

Later, Nermin Erdentuğ has published *The Marriage Traditions and Ceremonies in Black Sea Region of Turkey* (Erdentuğ, 1969; 1971) in two chapters. Her work has analysed the process of marriage arrangements from betrothal process to the marriage ceremony. However, there is no discussion regarding before the arrangements, so bride kidnapping had no place in this work.

In the symposium on Kidnapping and Elopement as Alternative Systems of Marriage, there were two articles which were conducted in Yörük nomads and peasants in Southeastern Turkey (Bates, 1974; Kudat Sertel, 1974). In Bates's work, the analysis has focused on the motivations behind the bride kidnapping that has a high rate of being a disapproved and socially disruptive behaviour and also the significan of this phenomena for Yörük social and economic relations in the macro level of Yörük social structure (Bates, 1974, p. 276). Here, the core reasons of bride kidnapping in a general sense need to be remarked as economical, social and biological (Tezcan, 2003, p. 3). Especially, in the Yörük case the payment of bride price has been one of the crucial motives to practice bride kidnapping. However, he emphasized that the gap between unequal economic relations among families has been a reason of bride kidnapping:

> Kaçırma [kidnapping, in English] is a solution for the poor in that if the boy's father has little or no capital, the family of the girl can do little to secure indemnity. Thus, those at the lower end of the wealth spectrum seem to reduce their effective bride price requirements through kidnapping, even though this is not a deliberate strategy on the part of the boy's parents... In this way kidnapping can be interpreted as reducing the unequal impact that high cash payments of bride price would have on families in different categories of wealth (Bates, 1974, p. 277).

Apparently, Bates has claimed that the normative system of arranged marriages have been shaken in order to avoid the high amount of bride price and it is the way he justifies the act of bride kidnapping, and also elopement. In this sense, the notion of alternativeness has gained a ground in the ideological basis for descent group cooperation, even it is treated as idiosyncratic and deviant behaviour (Bates, 1974, p. 286). In the same way, Kudat (1974) also has analysed the factors and the consequences of bride kidnapping and elopement in the inhabitants of Yörük. She has detailed the actors and their decisions during the negotiations. Kudat has divided four parties who are involving the marriage. The parties are the bride, her houselhold, the groom, and his household (Kudat Sertel, 1974, p. 289). Then the consent configurations has been showed in which way bride kidnapping or elopement occured. The issue of consent is always at the core of discussion whether

the practice of bride kidnapping or elopement is. However, the basic reason has always been defined as bride price in the Yörük case.

In Delaney's work, the field was also conducted in Central Anatolia, Gökler village in 1980s. Her remarkable seed-field theory of procreation has showed that it is also a marriage strategy. Basically, seed-field theory of proceation corresponds to the first cousin marriage from father's blood that are defined as ideal-mating both in family, and in village.

> The theory of procreation in which the man gives the seed-child and the woman is the field that nurtures it helps us to understand Middle Eastern marriage practices. A marriage between patrilateral parallel cousins is an attempt to neither to alienate the female land nor to have an alien (*el*) as a mother of children. The seed and the field have both come from the same source (Delaney, 1991, p. 102).

Still, Delaney has never mentioned the act of bride kidnapping in her work, so the normative system of marriage in Gökler is based on transferring the women from patrilateral lineages.

In 1984, Renée Hirschon's edit book, called *Women and Property - Women as Property* (Hirschon, 1984), includes several articles which are related to property relations in gender aspects around the world. Specifically, one of the articles has focused on legal and social transformation of rural women from Aegean Region of Turkey (Starr, 1984). Starr defines three types of marriages in the village of Bodrum, located in the south-western of Turkey. There are marriage by negotiations, marriage by convenience and marriage by abduction. Still, the definition of bride kidnapping is very confusing in her words:

> The third marriage type is by abduction (zorla kız kaçırma [in Turkish]]. Turkish villagers and Turkish criminal law distinguish between elopement by mutual consent (kız kaçırma [in Turkish]) and forcible abduction (zorla kız kaçırma [in Turkish]) (Starr, 1984, p. 99)

Here, the confusion exists in both English and Turkish languages. For example, elopement refers to the consent of the both sides; abduction/kidnapping is a forced action. However, *kız kaçırma* directly associate with the bride kidnapping, it has to be *kaçma* for the elopement. And abduction is a legal term which involves the laws

and regulations. The using of abduction immediately criminalises the practice itself. So, bride kidnapping is more of a sociological term and more useful for her discussion, and for this thesis it has continuity with the ground which I am trying to build up critics against the literature. However, Starr analyses the court cases for abduction between 1965 and 1967, so it is meaningful to use the name 'abduction' in her work. Later, her work is directed to another way to analysis, she just gives an impression regarding the village's understanding of marriage.

To specify the region regarding my study, Hanns' (2001) work is the only field research on the Black Sea. The study has covered the specific region which called by themselves as Lazistan where the Lazi people are majority in 3 cities - one town in Trabzon, Rize and Artvin - of the Black Sea (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2001, p. 10). The idea of marriage both in urban and rural Black Sea Region has been considered as one of the fundamental institutions for consolidation of the era, so this may be one of the sharpest points of contrast with the west (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2001, p. 136). The main reason is that, marriage is seen as a contract between their respective families and lied on their long-term happiness and careful relations both rest for the kin and for later generations. Obviously, there exist some informal situations, like love bond between young couple. In other respects, the case of bride kidnapping has been practised because of the difficulty in paying bride price (*başlık parası*) or the socio-economic differences between two families at the beginning of the 20th century. Consideration of my field, the last case has been seen in 1989, but this was not included the study for the considerable reason of age and historical moment.

The most current fieldwork was conducted by Kimberly Hart (2007) in Yuntdağ and Örselli village, Manisa which is located in the western part of Turkey. Hart has specifically analysed the marriage practices and ceremonies in the region. Interestingly, the result that she came out is completely different from earlier studies. In Hart's term "arranged marriages can develop into romances before the marriage ceremony." (2007, p. 360).

> Researchers in Turkey have not paid attention to how rural people are agents of their intimate and emotional lives. They see marriage as a practical financial bond between household and lineages (Hart , 2007, p. 350).

In her data, there is only one woman who was kidnapped from seventeen women who married during the 1940s and 1950s (Hart, 2007, p. 353). It is exactly the same generation that I studied in my village. It is one of the critical points for the Hanns' argumentation on the differences of marriage practices between eastern and western part of Turkey. This different practices emerges from the different social locations, and "they can differ not only in the content of their knowledge, but also in what they take knowledge itself to be" (Potter, 2006, p. 156).

Lastly, the thesis of a graduate level in Boğaziçi University is titled as *Abduction of Women and Elopement in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Nizamiye Courts* written by Gamze İlaslan (2015) in Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History. Her study examines the court cases involving the abduction of women and elopement in nineteenth century Ottoman Anatolia and Rumelia provinces, and her focus is the relation between the law and ordinary Ottoman subjects, their perception and usage of law. She defines bride kidnapping "as alternative methods to acquire a wife" from the same position of Bates, Conant and Kudat (İlaslan, 2015, p. 28).

Consequently, marriage practices in rural Turkey generally consisted of arranged marriages as a normative system. It is obvious that the main motivation behind kidnapping is the bride price in all region of Turkey. Still, those studies, except regarding the inhabitants of Yörük, has not necessarily focused on bride kidnapping, it has always mentioned the marriage type as an exceptional or a dishonoured act. The scope of bride kidnapping resides between as a "deviation from the norm" and as an "alternative system of marriage" (Martinez-Alier, 1972 ; Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974). It generally seems as a social structure that has a practical need for the marriage. My main motivation for this thesis is beyond these argumentations that are not related to the stand of the agents. The limited conceptualisation of bride kidnapping ignores the women's position. My aim is to understand their understanding and interpretations of their experience and later, how they dealt with this marriage type that is generally defined as dishonoured act in most villages. In this sense, bride kidnapping, in this thesis, also considers the rest of the villagers' opinion regarding the acceptance of the practice.

3.4. The Definition of *Çekme* as a Ritual

The characterisation of bride kidnapping has been presented as one of the alternative forms in marriage system. First of all, the region has named the case of 'marriage by abduction/bride kidnapping/kidnapping as *çekme*. It basically refers taking a girl away. So, the *çekme* will be used throughout the study in order to solve the naming problem. Moreover, abduction has been criminalised for the first time under the head of Bayezid the 2nd, and in his command abduction has been named as *çekme* (Peirce, 2011, p. 316). Bayezid's ruling states that,

> A person who abducts [*çeküb*, seize and take away] a girl or a boy, or who enters a dwelling with subversive intent [to abduct], or who comes [on a raid] to abduct a woman or girl will have his penis cut off. (Peirce, 2011, p. 316).

In this section, *çekme* will be defined as a ritual with respect to the conceptualisation of E.P. Thompson's book of *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (1993), under the chapter of *Wife Sales*. The definition of *çekme* as ritual has been a ground for presenting the bride kidnapping as a cultural unit in the region. In the very beginning of a field, I spontaneously talked to the people of the village to see what the inhabitants think about the *çekme*. They easily said that *çekme* is cultural thing in this region. My aim to define *çekme* as a ritual is basically derived from that understanding. Here, the notion of "cultural" is a broad and in the first step, an empty concept. In this sense, the formation of ritual makes cultural thing meaningful. Because, culture is consisted of:

> the symbols and values that create the ideological frame of reference through which people attempt to deal with the circumstances in which they find themselves. Culture ... is not composed of static, discrete traits moved from one locale to another. It is constantly changing and transformed, as new forms are created out of old ones. Thus culture ... does not arise out of nothing: it is created and modified by material conditions. (Mullings, 1986, p. 13)

The ritual has a variety of definitions in social sciences literature. The notion of ritual has been central to understanding of religious practices since the late nineteenth century, and it has related to the macro level issues which are based on culture, economics and society (Bell, 2009, p. 3). Throughout the emergence of critical rethinking, the notion of ritual has become a category of experience. It has been a

tool for analysis to "prevent such 'slippage' or maintain the clarity of the boundary between theory and data" (Bell, 2009, p. 13). However, theoretical descriptions of ritual cover the action as thoughtless, and it has a physical expression which is prior to the logical ideas. The routinisation of an action within the social boundaries has been associated with beliefs. In other words, ritual and belief are intertwined and co-oriented in a certain performs. However, in this thesis ritual has been an answer for a societal need. The act of bride kidnapping emerges as a reaction to the failure of arranged marriages as a marriage norm. It has a meaning of cultural particularity and "the emergence of ritual forms for the purpose of social control and/or social communication" (Bell, 2009, p. 89). The cultural construction of history as a ritual form is a social strategy in here. In this sense, the ritual is a process of formalisation and repetition, characterised by reference to the past (Hobsbawm, 1993, p. 4). It takes place within the forms and vocabulary of a society (Thompson, 1993, p. 459). To put it differently, it does not emerge out of social context, it is exactly produced at the very heart of the society, and it has continuity with historic past. This formation of ritual is based on practising in public and with an accepted ceremony (Thompson, 1993, p. 417). Even if it has been practised in different ways, the narratives of 12 women have certain resemblances and the cases of *çekme* have been actualised as a ceremony. Furthermore, these ceremonies have been known by the inhabitants of the village, and *çekme*s already has been practised in women's socialisation places, like garden of nuts/tea or other outdoor chores. Here, it silently proves the public acceptance in the village.

Within the scope of ritual conceptualisation, the feature of FST will intersect and builds the analysis in this study. Firstly, the marginalised institution of çekme contributes a privilege vantage point of *çekilmiş* women to take a stand both among women and in the marriage practices. This provides us with junction points of all narratives to conceptualise the notion of ritual as a social phenomena. It may seem that the main features of FST are disappearing like particularity, partial perspective and so on. However, the conceptualisation of ritual like one narrative does not exclude the specificities of the narratives. Contrarily, those differentiation points are meaningful to self-define and self-value of the *çekilmiş* women. The differences

among stories are ground for the socio-historical conditions of women in the village, and of the village in the societal level. In other words, collective groups as primary agents of FST still are not homogenised unities, their differences in the subjective level are always considered and it diversifies the analysis and the political agendas in the actualities of everyday life.

Consequentially, the clarification of studies on the practice of kidnapping both in the world literature and Turkey, and specific conceptualisation of *çekme* ritual has been presented throughout this chapter. It is essential to place the *çekme* in its historicity and specificity as a marriage practice without loosening its formalised and repetitive form. It is exactly a type of marriage no matter what the motivation behind the act itself is.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will build up the narration of my thesis study in order to make the writing process meaningful in the feminist research. In the first section, I will elucidate the ethnographic research and its characters in the placement of the methodology of feminist standpoint research under the title of The Ground of the Study. Then, the mixed methods that I used in this thesis will be elaborated in the framework of an ethnographic research. In the second section, The Position of the Researcher, I will discuss my position with its challenges and the strategies that I employed in the fieldwork. Then, the sections will continue as The Profile of the Sample, The Process of Data Generating and The Process of Analysis.

The Ground of the Study

The problematisation of bride kidnapping, in this thesis has been studied within the feminist standpoint research method. As a general concern, my aim is to set out to tell "better stories of gendered realities than others" (Ramazonoğlu & Holland, 2002, p. 1). The differentiation of the feminist standpoint research method is its percepetion which is from women's lives. The aim is to explore the women's lived experiences through male dominated societies (Ramazonoğlu & Holland, 2002, p. 61). Harding states that,

> as a methodology, practitioners seem to think that it works to explain kinds of account nature and social relations not otherwise accessible ─ accounts that that provide valuable resources to social justice movements. And it helps to produce oppositional and shared consciousness in oppressed groups ─ to create oppressed peoples as collective "subjects" of research rather than only as objects of other's observation. (2004, p. 3)

Unlike the conventional feminist thought, the unit of analysis in FST is not an individual, yet an explicitly gendered one. Identifying bride kidnapping as a marginalised institution in the marriage systems has provided the actors of the practice that has produced a better account of knowledge with respect to their

outsider-within positions. Moreover, this choosing of the methodology of FST has a political base in order to criticise the conventional objectivist understanding of science. Harding emphasises that the politics generates more credible information regarding the everyday life for scientific research (Harding, 1991, p. 10). Following the conceptualisation of strong objectivity from the point of marginalised views, my aim here is to minimise the false stories about bride kidnapping without women's standpoint. In this sense, I worked on ethnographic field of study in the case of bride kidnapping where the standpoints are defined as starting point of ethnographic studies (Smith, 1987).

Ethnography is at the core of qualitative research methods in social sciences. Qualitative research may basically be defined as investigating the ways of social action through interactions, narratives and documents as well. Historically, ethnographic research emerges in the Western societies as a form of knowledge about distant cultures, especially the non-Western ones (Gobo, 2008, p. 2). In this thesis, the method of ethnography plays an important part in terms of perceiving bride kidnapping as a marriage form and its agencies of the process not in a distant way, but as a part of the village and society in general. As Bray states that the ethnographic research involves:

> an exploration of a society's cosmogony, of the way in which people make sense of the world they live in and how, acting on the basis of their beliefs, they relate to each other and to people different from themselves... By assuming an intrinsic link between what is observed objectively and the subjective interpretation given to it, the researcher explains how people give objects and actions meaning in accordance with their beliefs and the conventions of society. (2008, pp. 301-302)

In this sense, ethnographic research has naturalistic character which aims to elucidate the world what exactly it is. Ethnography is inherently in the human experience, thus the partiality of human experience has gained the research as a holistic perspective. In this sense, something can only be understood when its parts are checked, and "by assuming that a 'whole' is more than sum of its parts" (Bray, 2008, p. 302). In this sense, looking at the act of bride kidnapping in a particular village gives an idea of what it actually means for the people who are practiced in that region. Moreover, this

particular analysis will be a more detailed ground than its generalised conceptualisation. In other words, the act of bride kidnapping has been analysed in its historical time and place. This shows us those women who are kidnapped do not isolate the conditions of the village and the rest of the inhabitants. However, the holistic perspective has been distorted in accordance with the ground of feminist standpoint research method. Even choosing of this topic as a thesis work is a token of the interests from my standpoint regarding the retrospective reading of Beşir's women's lives. In this study, our starting point will be thinking from *çekilmiş* women's lives and their lived experiences. Still, ethnography has a currency from where knowledge is always socially situated in certain people's understanding and in a certain period of time.

Ethnographic method is naturalistic, so the subjects of the study should observed in their natural habitats, without external intervention. While observation is the primary source of information (Gobo, 2008, p. 5), it is very open to use mixed methods in order to collect the varied data in the field. It involves an integration of both first-hand empirical investigation and the theoretical and comparative interpretation of social organization and culture (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p. 1). I used two methods that are *participant observation* and *oral history*, specifically life histories in my ethnographic research. Participant observation is my direct involvement with the village of the people to see their everyday life practices, so I stayed the village almost 2 months from the beginning of July 2016, to the beginning of September 2016. Additionally, I used the method of oral history, particularly life histories of women. The motivation that I am conducting a method of oral history is opening up a space for women as a pacified actor in the practice of bride kidnapping. Oral history is an alternative history method that arises in the middle of 20th century where the past experiences and witnesses has become the distinctive narrative in the micro-level historiography. In other words, it is opposing to the state-centred reading and writing of history (Türkiye Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2006, p. 6). In Thompson's words:

> While historians study the actors of history from a distance, their characterizations of their lives, views, and actions will always risk being misdescriptions, projections of the historian's own experience and

> imagination: a scholarly form of fiction. Oral evidence, by transforming the 'objects' of study into 'subjects', makes for a history which is not just richer, more vivid and heart-rendering, but *truer*. (2000, p. 117)

In this sense, the method of oral history shows me the breaking points of lives for the women without any instruction or guidance to the direction of the interview. My aim is to see the life histories of women and their bride kidnapping practices in this retrospectively remembrances. It is actually in hooks words, a politicization of memory (hooks, 2004, p. 155). It is not simply a documentation of the past, but a construction of a one's historicity in a whole new way. The documentation of the past explicitly shows the male quality of the history and its relation with macro level circumstances, such as wars, genocides or the changes of interior politics. Here, I am curious about one of the normative practice which is marriage, and how it has built up women's thinking. The method of oral history does not only fictionalise the past in our minds, but also it contributes to position the individual as a historical subject. My aim is exactly the same, these *çekme* narratives should be listened from women's side. Furthermore, the reason why I employ oral history is that I specifically do not want to interrupt the interview using another method such as the in-depth interview. It is also possible that the women may have come through traumatic circumstances in the past I do not evoke the harsh memories that may hurt them. On the contrary, I want to see what they remember about this particular incident of their life. Their marginalised position from the act of *çekme* obviously affects the rest of their life, but now, how do they remember those days? That's why, my questions include establishing a narrative of "what happened" as well as when, where, why, and how in order to deepen the interview. Their specific experiences of bride kidnapping attributes those women's lives as a unique meaning that is beyond the documentation of past. In this sense, the method of oral history is not an aim of what is "historically important", it is a history of our everyday life (Gluck, 1977, p. 3). The life history is a narrative formation of one's past and it's explicitly a subjective stands. hooks says about the fragments of memory that "(they) are not simply represented as flat documentary but constructed to give a "new take" on the old, constructed to move us into a different mode of articulation" (hooks, 2004, p. 155). It is a re-constitution of

one's life with all its remembering and forgetting processes. This provides us with the important circumstances of those women's lives. Gluck emphasizes that

> ... we must remember that we have created a unique "document," one which above all is oral/aural. There is no one method for best creating this new source or for best processing the raw materials. Each of us must develop the style that best suits her and the women she interviews. With our fore-mothers we are creating a new kind of women's history, a new kind of women's literature. To this task we should bring the sensitivity, respect, tremendous joy and excitement that come from the awareness that we are not only creating new materials, but that we are also validating the lives of the women who preceded us and are forging direct links with our own past (1977, p. 17).

Obviously, the life histories of women may criticise the problem of objectivity and its' degree of reality. In accordance with FST, the standpoint of women is the key feature to understand their lives. Here, the reality is embodied in her subordinate position. The failure expectation of reaching the objectivity is eliminating bias in the collection and interpretation of data (Potter, 2006, p. 140). However, even in the fieldwork of the researcher cannot free from herself values, interest and historical experiences. For instance, my research interest on bride kidnapping has emerged from my grandmother's narrative. As Dorothy Smith mentions that,

> women's perspective, ... , discredits sociology's claim to constitute an objective knowledge independent of the sociologist's situation. Its conceptual procedures, methods, and relevances are seen to organize its subject matter from a determinate position in society. (1974, p. 91)

So, the researcher cannot exclude herself from beginning the study to the result of it. Our stands determine the ways of understanding of the social world and our choices in the expert fields.

Moreover, we sometimes have a chance to gather the women in one house in order to chat and drink something. During those times, I recorded the women's talks on their marriage without any special effort. It may be called as a method of *focus group* without intention.

The Position of the Researcher

At first, I should present the background of this research. This thesis is built up from a familial story, in other words it is derived from my grandmother's bride kidnapping narrative. Since my childhood, every member of our family have known the story and no one has any problems about it. Later, I listened to the story from my grandmother during my post-graduate years, and it appears to me that there is always an attitude of undervaluing of this experience. So, I decided to work on these bride kidnapping stories in my village. Barbour emphasizes that the ethnographer is the research instrument (Barbour, 2008, p. 92):

> ... about the ethnographer her/himself being the most important of all research 'tools' appears also to be relevant for much travel writing, which Paul Theroux, for example described as a 'minor form of autobiography', whereby the text consists of much more than a list of 'sights' or provision of historical context, but revolves around the layering-on of the writer's personal reactions to images and events (Barbour, 2008, pp. 92-93) .

In this sense, my position is with the motivation of my theoretical ground of feminist standpoint theory is the inclusive one which enables me to empathise the story of those *çekilmiş women*. Regarding the position of the feminist ethnographers, Naples states that:

> Feminist ethnographer also has used standpoint analysis to position themselves within the cultural groups and communities they study and to construct self-reflexive strategies for field research. (Naples, 2000, p. 200)

However, the process of situating myself in the village group took more time than I thought. This was my first time where I conducted a field research and my behaviour towards women changed in time. What is meant by the verb “change” here, specifically is to communicate those women with a more non-hierarchical and empathetic discourse. Except my grandmother, I saw those women for the first time in my life, my presence was the same for them. The issue of confidence is considered one of the critical factors, because I expect women to tell me their private life. In the first days, I reached for the women that were, I knew, subjected to *çekme* before arriving the village. Then, it was heard from the other inhabitants and they recognised me saying that "She is writing a book." At first, it drew a barrier to communicate in a hierarchical way with those women. One of the problems was

basically very short records of the interviews. It took almost fifteen minutes with one woman. I realised that there is a certain distinction to interact with these women. Obviously, I went to the village after thirteen years, most of them knew me through the house I stayed. In other words, I am known as one of the grandchildren of Beşiroglu's family. Beşir is our surname and, Beşiroğlu means the sons of Beşir family. It is a direct reflection of the consanguinity through maleness. So, my stand in the village has been defined with reference to my family. Additionally, during the interview women always emphasized the difference of the language that we use. In Black Sea Region, there is a distinct accent especially in villages. It is both an effect of Romaic language of Pontus Empire in Trabzon and its integration with Turkish. These points show the barriers of my position to connect with these women in a more intimate way. On the other hand, my presence in the village should not be dismissed during the process of carrying out the field. It comes from my position as one of the members of Beşiroğlu family. Although my interaction is very rare with the inhabitants of the village, my belonging has been defined through my father's blood. It took time to become an insider in the village. After short interviews with women, I decided to take a break from building formal relationships with women and tried to interact with those women in their daily life. It happened naturally and also it was a strategy to cope with the issues of our communication. I started to socialise with those women like accompanying to coffee sessions and their chit-chat. After a while, the coffee sessions have turned into a more welcoming place for me. Moreover, these coffee session have been organised outside our home, and I took the responsibility of making coffee in other houses. In that sense, my domestic labour came into the picture in order to interact with these women. Later, they wanted me to make some small domestic chores in their home. During these times, I always encouraged women to talk to me without any hierarchical relations. At first, our conversation was a superficial like daily problems, or generally my student life. In time, they started to talk about their life, specifically elderliness problems with reference to their past. I also asked some questions without giving any impression of digging their history. One of the advantages here is that one out of 12 women's husbands died very long ago and, most of them live with their children or on their own. So, I could spend as much time as I wanted to spend with them in a day. Here, the conversations have

turned longer sessions, but without record. I tried to take notes, in the middle of the conversation and generally I wrote that in my phone notes. One day, I interviewed my grandmother while some of the women were sitting in our garden and drinking tea with my aunt. After our interview was completed, we went outside to join other women. One of the women said that, "Fethiye, there are lot of things to talk to your grandmother. I think, we also have many things to say." During that day, I started to record those women's talking about their *çekme*'s stories with their comparison and contrasts. These sessions repeated two times, and those women interviewed me one by one after that week. However, those women are not the whole interviewees for my study. Some of them did not require this kind of an effort, I interviewed once time and it went very well. Here, it shows that they really accepted me not as one of the members of the village, but as a daughter of them. They even offered me to introduce some of their grandsons to conduce to a 'benevolent thing'. Interestingly, I had a visitor to see me as a prospective bride in the city centre of Araklı. One evening, two women came to our house to hear me as a single. Also, I become an acquaintance to almost all inhabitants of the village to communicate. Those women came over to get to know me and they started to talk about their son. His mother directly said to me "We heard your praise in the village, and we came for you." This statement immediately shocked me while I was conducting a field research. I listened every day another story and saw how a woman became a property for the sake of marriage institution. Here, we can easily admit that as a woman, you will always be identified with your productive and reproductive labour, and that's why the notion of property fits into defining women in the rural understanding of marriage. My reaction was very informal and maybe unprofessional, I directly said that "Where did you hear that I was on sale?" Also, my grandmother, from maternal side, took me wedding ceremonies during my days in the village. She always introduced me to some women that had sons at my age, I think; and she exaggerated my academic success to impress those women. Luckily, there was no attempt to serious meetings for their sons.

In the end, my blurred position always tended to emphasize both the limitations of the area that I socialised with the women and the daughter-like inclusiveness in the

field. For instance, we sent a message to a woman to arrange the interviews. They said to her, "They are going to record you." and, she thought that the record would be make with camera. Surprisingly, she welcomed me in a very well suit and prepared a meal for the afternoon to show her hospitality. It is quite a funny and heart-warming story to see my position from the women's eyes. Nonetheless, it is a contested position to take in order to reflect the objective claims from the subjective stands. Smith clearly states that:

> I am not proposing an immediate and radical transformation of the subject matter and methods of the discipline nor the junking of everything that has gone before. What I am suggesting is more in the nature of reorganization which changes the relation of the sociologist to the object of her knowledge and changes also her problematic. This reorganization involves first placing the sociologist where she is actually situated, namely at the beginning of those acts by which she knows or will come to know; and second, making her direct experience of the everyday world the primary ground of her knowledge (1974, p. 11)

Profile of The Village and The Sample

I conducted my field research in the village of Araklı which is one of the towns in Trabzon. Trabzon is one of the cities in the Black Sea Region which is located in the northeastern part of Turkey. The village is the nearest location of sea level, so it easily connects the city-centre. The old name of the village is the Centre, but Araklı is now a part of the metropolitan municipality of Trabzon. That's why, the villages of the Araklı town have been divided into neighbourhoods. Now, the village consists of two neighbourhoods namely as Hürriyet and Sırt. According to the data of Turkish Statistical Institute in 2013, the population of Araklı is 48.489 which is third biggest town in the city (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013, p. 97). However, there are no detailed data of the neighbourhoods, so I will continue with the profile of the *çekilmiş* women in the village.

There are 14 women who were *çekilmiş* at the age of 65 and over. However, 12 women out of 14 participated in the study. The youngest woman is 69 years old, while the oldest one is 99. This directly puts 69 years old woman into the second generation. The other women's ages range from 80 to 99 years old. The reason I

choose work with the over the age of 65 is basically, after these stories, there was one *çekme* story in the year of 1989 with different motivations behind the act. Before that, the 65 years old woman were *çekilmiş* in 1964. That's why, I paid regard to the narratives of historical commonness and, I did not include the contemporary story in this thesis. 2 women out of 12 were dead, and 2 more had Alzheimer diseases, so their story was listened from their girls, sisters or daughter-in-law. And lastly, one of them lived abroad and her story was listened from her sister. Other 7 women have been interviewed face to face.

Process of Data Generating

At first, I started to make a list for ethnographic studies on marriage in Turkey, then I did the same thing for the ones in international academic platforms. In addition to searching on literature, I worked on writing women's oral history as an alternative source for social history. In the third step, the distinctive relation between knowledge and politics both in social theory, and specifically from my position in the feminist theory has been analysed through the theoretical readings with some predictions about the field. Moreover, our thesis seminar has been a valuable contribution to ground for FST discussions, and also more generalised ways of understanding for social theory. During the seminars, we collected a various compilation of FST articles and analysed it with the categorisation of basic concepts and relations of FST. Then, we brought together all charts and tables into a single document. In a small group of people, we worked on those concepts for a deeper understanding of FST, and generating our standpoint with the guide of it. Then I brought those concepts with my readings of marriage literature and also my specific reading regarding the historical situatedness of bride kidnapping and its ritual conceptualisation in respect to the British Marxist social historians.

This data generation has been supported by 12 interviews with the method of oral history, field notes, off-record notes and small scale focus groups without intention. Because, this is a mixed method study to elaborate the bride kidnapping in a deeper understanding:

> Ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly and covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts - in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are emerging focus of inquiry (Atkinson & Hammersly, 2007, p. 3).

Arranging the interviews, 2 women refused to make an interview with me about their story. They showed some personal issues to not to participate the field. One of them was a wife of mosque's hodja. Hodja has a special place to all village inhabitants. In those times, he was responsible for funeral services, village children to read Qur'an. Also, he was a bonesetter, toothing like basic health care. So, the prestigious status of hodja has been damaged the story about his marriage act. The other women refused to talk, in my grandmother's comment because of her arrogance that was coming from the blood of her family. The interviews I made generally took place at homes of women, rarely at my grandmother's house in a silent and comfortable place and, the duration varied from 20 minutes to almost 3 hours. At the end, the records had almost 10 hours and the transcription took nearly 100 pages.

Process of Analysis

In the analysis process, I did not use any programs to code my transcripts. I coded all the data by myself, generally after the interview in the village. Then, I came to Ankara and I started to revise free coding to make analysis with a complex conceptual maps. In the first stance, I revised the readings, specifically the ethnographic researches on Turkey to see the historical changes for the understanding of marriage. I categorised the similar and distinctive points of my work in comparison to earlier studies. As a second step, I listed the common points of narratives to see resemblances and then, differences among women's stories. My focal point was always in the narratives of çekme, I listened to their life stories though. Later, in the theoretical scheme I made *marginalisation*, *collective consciousness*, *solidarity*, *specifities of subjectivities*, *everyday life politics* which were some of the critical codes. I matched these broader codes with the statements women declared.

Throughout my readings, the alternativeness of bride kidnapping has showed me something dismissed in the analysis. There has to be a historicity in the act, and I found it in the field. In the back of my mind, I always thought about the conceptualisation of ritual but I was never sure of the outcomes of the field. The narratives of *çekme* perfectly fitted into the ritual concept and additionally showed me the strategies of women to deal with the circumstances that they did not give their consent. Still, the conceptualisation of ritual does not exclude the operationalisation of the FST's main features. I caught these manoeuvres in their daily life interactions with their husband and other women. Interestingly, I never thought about the tradition of *kaide atma*, as an emancipative action, it is one of the brilliant emergences from the field. It is an expression of the women's feelings and it is a way of self-definition and self-valuation via a kind of folk songs. Therefore, my data have supported my earlier predictions and also provided a new perspective about the content of the work.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE FIELD

This chapter consists of two sections. Under the heading of The Practice of Ritual, there are two sub-headings namely, *Çekme* Ceremonies and Public Acceptance, in order to build up the conceptualisation of the ritual. The second section is Politics of Everyday Life and Its Knowledge Production, also there are two subheadings called, The Making of a New Life Form within the Household and Black Sea Women's Self-Definition and Self-Valuation. The division of two sections is basically two-phased analysis which will be constituted from structural base to the agencies. In other words, in the first section, *çekme* as a marriage form will be conceptualised into a ritual form. Then, in the second section, the analysis turns out how *çekilmiş* women continue in their everyday life after *çekme,* and in this process how they create a room for their manoeuvre in everyday challenges. In both sections, I examine the relations among marginalisation, socially-situated knowledge, epistemic advantage, strong objectivity, outsider-within position of the (self), sharing the collective experience and standpoint, self-definition and self valuation of Black Sea women and specifities of subjectivities of the *çekilmiş* women.

Under the heading of The Practice of Ritual, I will apply the conceptualisation of ritual from the position of E. P. Thompson (1993) and Eric Hobsbawm (1993). In their analysis, ritual has based on distinct ceremonies and public acceptance in the region. In the ceremonies sub-headings, I categorises the common points of 12 different stories in a chronological order, like in a single event. In the light of my findings, there are 6 common points that present the story line in every narratives and I will categorize them in 4 parts. I will elucidate the reason, the social space, the agents and the patterns of the realisation of *çekme*. Following Thompson's conceptualisation, public acceptance is the second stage to define a practice as a ritual. In this study, public acceptance spread out the whole village, even for the institutional structures like Hodja in the village mosque or gendarmes. Furthermore,

one women figure, called 'aunt' in the village, has an essential role in arranging the *çekme* in favour of boys. Here, I will add one more step for the definition of ritual that is collective memory, and it essentially emerges from the field. These 4 out of 12 narratives have been listened from their daughters, sisters or daughter-in-laws. In the first instance, it seems to me one of the limitations of the study. Later, these limitations show that those stories are known in the region and each of these has become a common narrative.

The other section, Politics of Everyday Life & Its Knowledge Production, focuses on the process of after *çekme* with comparison to the earlier process of *çekme* and women's strategies to deal with the problems in their new form of life. In the separation of three stages for the method of life histories, my third and last concern focuses on how women cope with the issues inside the household after *çekme* in comparison to their lives in father's house. In this section, firstly I will entitle a sub-section as The Making of a New Life Form within the Household. Here, I will use the term household that is composed of more than one family dwelling under the same roof. The using of household is necessary in order to determine the relations among women in the extended-families. In view of the historical conditions, daily interactions between these women and other women that are not *çekilmiş*, but are from same generation seem to be one of the crucial solidarity instances in the village. Interestingly, some women have a distinctive qualification that is a kind of battle of words (*kaide atma*, in Turkish, general naming: *atışma*) in a melodic order. This battle is directly a reflection of instant emotions and sensations of women. This tradition is a good example of expression of women's in their daily problems and it is kind of emancipatory act to do. In the second sub-section, Black Sea Women's Self-Definition and Self-Valuation, I will criticise the views about Black Sea women as a passive subject in the process of decision-making and there is a need for the constitution of a self-definition and self-valuation with respect to the Collins' (2004) conceptualisation of Black women in order to understand their position from their point of view. Throughout this section, I will present the strategies of women (as a political action) and daily life interactions (as a space of knowledge production and sharing) with respect to the notions of FST.

5.1. The Practice of Ritual

In this section, there will be two sub-headings to elaborate the ritual. Firstly, the stages of *çekme* ceremonies and then, its acceptance in the region will be elucidated to see how *çekme* has a historical position and it presents itself in a formalised repetition.

Before getting into the detail, the possibility of the conceptualisation of ritual for the practice of *çekme* needs to be discussed in contrast to the alternative forms of marriage in the literature. While bride kidnapping has a continuity in the rural Turkey, the act of *çekme* is a repetitive action in the village. In other words, *çekme* has a historical situatedness that leads to the continuity and the iteration of the practise. This repetitive action occurs as a collective historical subjectivity in which the actors are sharing the same experience in a certain historical time and place. Of necessity, sharing the same experience does not achieve a standpoint by itself. Simply, it arises from occupying a marginalised position within the web of everyday of social relations. Hence, our starting point is the conceptualisation of *çekme* and its actors as in the subjugated positions.

Çekme is a marginalised institution in the normative systems of marriage. In contrast to the notions that are attributed to bride kidnapping like 'deviation from the norm' or 'alternative' do not determine the place of the act and it also does not deepen the discussions regarding its formation in the marriage system (Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974 ; Martinez-Alier, 1972). The normative form of marriage in rural Turkey is arranged marriages, and bride kidnapping and elopement as a different form are always located outside the centre. The placement of bride kidnapping at the margin explicitly fits into the marginalisation of the act of *çekme*. hooks thinks about the marginality as ""[t]o be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside of the main body." (hooks, 2004, p. 156). Here, being in the margin does not exclude the practise from the totality of a main body. It is outside the dominant approach, the common explanation in the totality, but still margin has a place in the whole. At this point, the adaptation of the notion of marginality into the act of *çekme*, it has an outsider position which is defined as the 'deviation from the norm' or 'alternative' to

the normative form of marriage. At the same time, *çekme* is still a marriage form whatever the conditions are, because the narratives of women have been concluded with a new form of life in their marriage. Moreover, *çekme* has an acceptance in the region both from individual level and the rest of the villagers. So, *çekme* has an insider position as a marriage form in the umbrella of systems of marriage. Following the argumentation of Patricia Hill Collins on outsider-within status, it is a way of seeing the world from the perspectives of the dominant one, while one may be positioned in the margin. This double vision creates an understanding both for the conditions of marginalised and also the experience of the dominant as being part of that experience. In this sense, the actors of *çekme* have experienced the bride kidnapping in its uniqueness, but it is still a form of marriage at the end. Of necessity, *çekilmiş* women have a subjugated position in the rest of the village women. Hence, both the actor of *çekme* and *çekme* as a marriage institution have a marginalised form. The *çekilmiş* women have a particular way of seeing the reality in contrast to the women who were married with the normative form. The actors of *çekme* will be in the margin of the village, and their position is also an outsider-within in the married women of the village. Their lived experiences of marriage completely have a quality of uniqueness from the women who have experienced arranged marriages.

> Outsider within status is bound to generate tension, for people who become outsider within are forever changed by their new status... Outsiders within occupy a special place ─ they become different people, and their difference sensitizes them to patterns that may be more difficult for established a sociological insider to see (Collins, 2004, p. 122)

After placing the *çekme* as a marginalised institution in the marriage system, now it requires to clarify the difference between *çekme* and bride kidnapping in general. The conceptualisation of bride kidnapping can be found in the literature chapter, but here *çekme* has a cultural attribution to this general marriage system. The naming mainly refers to that 'a man pulls a woman to take away'. In the first place, bride kidnapping is defined as a crime in the Turkish Criminal Code (Özgen, 1985, p. 326), but the act of *çekme* has no legal sanctions over the man if women's father has gone to the court that will be intensively discussed lately. Even in the court process, women mention

their consent for the *çekme*, and their charges over man have been dropped. The reason is that *çekme* has a public acceptance as a marriage form in the region. Moreover, all *çekilmiş* women have been under the age of 18 which are not allowed to marry. However, the popularity among young ages in the rural Turkey has also affected to this practise, and they arranged religious marriage between families, because civil marriage is not common in rural region. However, the distinctive feature among two terms is where *çekme* has a cultural naming of bride kidnapping that is generated from socially-situated knowledge of marriage practices in a village of Black Sea Region.

Noor O'Neill Borbieva, in her analysis of bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan, focuses on "the speak[ing] of kidnapping not as the domination of victims by perpetrators, but as the actions of subjects in a cultural context that continually forms them" (Borbieva, 2012, p. 152). Her focus is actually what this thesis proposes. hooks' conceptualisation of being in the margin is defined as site of both deprivation and resistance (hooks, 2004, p. 158). In this sense, *çekme* as a marginalised institution and their distinctive socially-situated understanding of the reality will provide us to less false stories about their past. While bride kidnapping as a marriage form is one of the marginalised institution without women's consent, there is still a room for strategies of women in their new household. Here, being in the margin is not a safe place as we think about the process of the *çekme* practise. The uniqueness of the *çekme* is a totally different form with some negative treatments against women from the arranged marriages. However, the act itself is constituted by the actors of the *çekme* repeatedly in a specific context. In this sense, the practise of *çekme* has a variety of localised lived experiences that are interactively shaped both by the subjects and also the institution.

Hence, the narratives of the *çekilmiş* women have certain commonalities in the historical process. For the conceptualisation of ritual, I will pick the main focal point of the narratives. It may seem to reduce all of the stories to a single one for the abstraction of ritual, but it will never miss the differences in the narratives. Contrarily, the differentiations of the narratives show the specificities of subjective

experiences and also the uniqueness of socially-situated knowledges of *çekilmiş* women. Those distinctive points among narratives are also a contribution to the process of self-definition and self-valuation of the Black Sea women. In this sense, the practise of *çekme* as a so-called cultural phenomenon may be defined as a social phenomena with respect to the conceptualisation of the ritual. However, the formation of *çekme* ritual is not the same thing everywhere. In other words, bride kidnapping is not always conceptualised as a ritual. It must be addressed "how a particular community or culture ritualizes (what characteristics of acting make strategic distinctions between the act and others)" (Bell, 2009, p. 81).

> The goal of ritualization as such is completely circular: the creation of a ritualized agent, an actor with a form of ritual mastery, who embodies flexible sets of cultural schemes and can deploy them effectively in multiple situations so as to restructure those situations in practical ways. (Bell, 2009, p. 81)

5.1.1. *Çekme* Ceremonies

The ceremonies of *çekme* will be categorized in 4 parts. Firstly, the difference of the motivations of the realisation of *çekme* from arranged marriages will be emphasized. Secondly, the social space of the realisation of *çekme* will show how *çekme* occurs in women's socialisation areas. Thirdly, the agents of the realisation of *çekme* will show the resemblances to the arranged marriages in family relatives. Lastly, the patterns of the realisation of *çekme* will elaborate on the legal transformation of the process and actors' behaviours in this period.

5.1.1.1. The Motivations of the Realisation of *Çekme*

The emphasis on 'alternative'ness in the literature mainly comes from the exceptional cases emerging during the negotiations of arranged marriages (Bates, Conant, & Kudat, 1974). If the negotiations for arranged marriages do not end up with the expected the process of marriage, *çekme* is seen as a solution that is attributed the cultural preferences for a social issue. In other words, *çekme* differs from bride kidnapping because of its ritualisation, specific time and situatedness in a village of Black Sea region:

> My uncle works with ships in abroad, in that time. He comes and one of the guys in here, my father's uncle said "They give your sister to marry to a man, but that man is sickly. My uncle said "I do not give my sister to a sickly man."
>
> (Evdeki dayım o sırada gemilerle yurtdışında çalışıyor, geliyor işte buradaki adam da babamın dayısı gidiyor diyorlar ki senin o kız kardeşini verdiler bir adama ama o adam hastalıklı. Dayım da diyor ki ben hastalıklı adama kız kardeşimi vermem.)

Following the argumentation of bride kidnapping as an alternative marriage system, FST does not accept an exceptional explanation of any kind of reality. Reality has always expressed itself as a partial interpretation, because the knower is never complete:

> The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another (Haraway, 2004, p. 90).

It also involves the specific circumstances that are always meaningful. According to Collins, taking the group as the unit of analysis does not mean that all individuals in the same group have shared the same experiences in the same way. (Collins, 2004, p. 249). Here, the act of *çekme* has been defined as a marginalised institution. The normal process of marriage has begun with the negotiations, but when the negotiations fails, bride kidnapping has been a solution for the marriage. Thus, bride kidnapping has an outsider-within position in the systems of marriage and their actors have the privileged position as the producer of the knowledge for the act of *çekme*.

There were minority cases that *çekme* has been practiced without 'requesting of the girl' (*kız isteme*). The reason for this case, boys and girls are mainly betrothed in the cradle (*beşik kertmesi*) which is basically a marriage arrangement among family relatives, right after kid's birth.

> They make me a bride in a very young age ... Hadji Grandfather was 40 days, and I am 4 months. I am him 3 months older than. It is not engagement, but they make us betrothed in the cradle, it is like engagement. They said that "He belongs to them, she belongs to us." (S)

> (Beni küçük yaşta, etmişler gelin... 40 günlük Hacı Deden, ben 4 aylık. Ben 3 ay büyüğüm ondan. Nişanlı değil de, beşik kertmesi etmişler; nişanlı gibi bir şey işte. Diyorlar ki; "Onundur, onundur; bizimdir, bizimdir".)

In this case, the marriage has been arranged since the children's birth. Later, young boy has realised the *çekme* by means of his friends, and he has stuck to the arrangement. Here, the motivation is that girl's father did not stick to the agreement, so the boy actually practiced the process of a culturally meaningful act. *Beşik kertmesi* is a long term arrangement which is based on the form of ideal mating marriage that is consisted of father's blood. Hence, *çekme* may seem as a continuation of a cultural practice with another cultural term of bride kidnapping.

One of the *çekilmiş* women that became a second wife (*kuma*), said her husband's words after the negotiations had been failed. The statement of "I want her, you do not give; I steal her, you do not see." (A) is a remarkable summary of the first stage. It may be easy to say that women in these cases are seen as qualifications of property. Property in general meaning is associated with the development of capitalism and with the notion of commodity. The material motivation behind the marriage has an economic base which refers to the organisation of a new household. Of necessity, the constitutive feature of a household is mainly women's labour. In Kathi Weeks's analysis on the ontology of labour, women's work is considered as 'labour in the concrete bodily mode' (Weeks, 2004, p. 185). Weeks seems labour is the second source of the standpoint theory in a materialist account. Within this regard, through marriage the woman takes a role in the organisation of a new household. In other words, the circulation of her labour is a fundamental base for marriages. Her social and biological reproductive capability is marked socially by the transfer in which labour produces not only capital, but also society itself, "including the networks of sociality and the subjects they sustain." (Weeks, 2004, p. 185). They believe that the adjustment of the marriage system to the realities of the individuals' choices turns the normative form of marriage into an alternative system. Nonetheless, it may be easy to say that the motivations of the realisation of *çekme* do not involve any individual choices from the women's standpoint. The process actually functions between the boy and the girl's father, and later it will institutionalise with the court case which

will be discussed in the patterns part. There is a heavy silence for women in this stage, since negotiations are continuing between families, especially with girl's father and boy's family. However, *çekme*s in every cases have been realised out of the boy's family's knowledge. It brings about power relations between father's girls and boys to decide who have the girls and their productive and reproductive labour. Here, it may seem that there is no such kind of distinctive points regarding the act of *çekme*. However, those 12 narratives have been concluded with the marriage. At this point, *çekme* is still a marriage form, but the experiences of women are explicitly unique. In other words, the differentiation of *çekme* is in the actual process of the act, not with its total reference to the bride kidnapping, and a marriage form in general.

In the case of *kumalık*, there is also another important position between wives of the husband. 2 women, in this thesis, have become second wives after *çekme*. Their position is also crucial to understanding their duplication of the perspective regarding the marriage. As a second wife, they did not have marriage certificate. In a legal term, she does not have any proof for being the wife of the man. In this sense, *kuma* is not recognised at the level of state institution, while she is still one of wives in the household. That's why, her children's mother have been registered to the first wife who have the formal marriage. In one story, children did not know who their real mother was until their 18th birthday:

> Let me tell you something. The state of the house is always a one. But I am pleased. May god be pleased as well. She took care of the children, looked after them. She treated them well. Believe me, she would bathe them twice in a day. She loved them like she loved herself. She said for the eldest daughter that, since she had started to talk and say mother and father, let them address you as sister and address me as mother. I said okay. Okay. We live under the same roof, does it differ, mother or sister? Now my eldest daughter calls me sister. They all know her as their mother. (A)
>
> (Şimdi bir şey diyeyim sana, evin hali hep bir hali. Ama ben razıyım, Allah da razı olsun. O kadar çocuklara baktı, o kadar onlarla ilgilendi. O kadar onlara da iyi davrandı, inan günde akşam sabah yıkardı onları. O kadar özü gibi severdi. Büyük kız için dedi ki, durdu konuşmaya, anne baba demeye, sana abla desin; bana anne desin. Olsun dedim, olsun. Hoş,bir evin altındayız ha anne ha aba. Şimdi büyük kızım aba der bana. Hepsi birden anne onu bilirler.)

Here, *çekilmiş* women have an outsider position in their marriage with other women as first wives. In this sense, Collin's configuration of outsider-within status from Simmel's stranger (1921) gives us some clues about this duality. Stranger, in the sense of objectivity has also a distance with the society that she relates. Of necessity, this distance gives some critical insights about her position and also rest of the people. This subjugated position of *kuma* does not have a legitimized place in the marriage system, but the experiences of *kuma* women will potentially be distinctive among married women. In this case, they also have to live together, and they should learn how to live with this circumstance. In the statement from above, they also take care of the children, because the children belong to the house in general, not to a woman who gave birth. This also shows the *çekilmiş* women have been accepted in the family and became an insider. The insider position of *kuma* derives from the second position of the women in the patriarchal system. There will be certain commonalities of perception shared by married women. However, the special position of both *çekilmiş and kuma* women is still meaningful. Hence, the differentiation from other *çekilmiş* women directly shows the duplication of marginalised position of *kuma* women.

5.1.1.2. The Social Spaces of the Realisation of *Çekme*

The act of *çekme* has mainly practised women's socialisation areas that are very related to their daily domestic work outside the home. It may seem that the relation between the act of *çekme* and the space of the act is irrelevant. However, it gives the valuable insights about the women's outside practices and it constitutes the process of after *çekme* regarding the women's work in order to cover up the need of the household.

> There was land in reverse side. The older brother's wife said "Sister, sister; a car is coming.". I said, "There are strangers in it, and sister Elmas is too." Anyway, when we go down the car road, this person that I married with him grabbed my arm. (A)
>
> (Ters tarafta arazi vardı, oraya yaprağa gittik. Dedi, benden büyük ağabeyimin karısı ki; 'Abla, abla dedi; bir araba geliyor.' Dedim, 'yabancılar da var onda'. Dedim ki, Elmas Abla da onunla. Neyse, araba yoluna iner inmez, bu evlendiğim kişi koluma sarıldı.)

Here, girls do not live behind doors in the village, conversely they are very active workers at the garden and they do other related works in the outside. One of the remarkable ethnographic works, including Lazi region which is particularly named as East Black Sea Coast, of Hann summarises the situation very well:

> ... the women of the Rize region are dominated by men in ways which would be considered unacceptable in elsewhere in Central Anatolia. For example, women are said to perform the heaviest operations of farming, whilst men stand idly by or sit gambling in their coffee houses; and women are the normal means of transportation in the marketing of produce, such that they are often left to stagger under heavy burdens whilst their husbands walk unencumbered a short distance in front of them (1993, pp. 127-128).

As a proof of Hann's emphasis on contrasting the women's socialisation in different regions are explicitly seen in the works of Delaney from a village in Central Anatolia:

> As men are the only legitimate wanderers outside the village, so too they are the legitimate occupants of the street. Women's place is in the home; "*men make outside relations*." A woman enters the street unprotected and open to contagion through the potential mixing of the sexes. (1991, p. 238)

Here, the social spaces are gendered as men have public space, and women have the private space that is related to domestic labour in Central Anatolia. In the Black Sea Region, mother of the houses generally are at the home and responsible for the domestic chores. Young girls go to work outside, they are able to handle heavier stuff rather than their mothers are:

> He sent many guys to take me, while I was wash clothes in the stream, my sisters too. I came here to water, they let him know that your girl that you want to marry, came to the stream. He kidnapped me from there, but he did not take me away. (Ş)
>
> (Beni alırken, çok milleti yollamış ki ben ırmakta çamaşır yıkıyorum, kız kardeşlerim çamaşır yıkıyordu. Ben gelmiştim suya, buraya. Sudan beni, haber verdiler ona ki, suya geldi senin isteyecek olduğun kız. Oradan kaçırdı beni, aldı götüremedi.)

They are the ones who primarily work outside, but they still serve domestic labour at home, instead of the elder members of the family and of course male population of

the house. Another point here is that, the act of *çekme* has been practised in the day light in which inhabitants of the village may witness the situation:

> ... on that day, my mother,5 to 10 women, and total 15 to 20 people. They are going to somewhere far from home. They are carrying woods to the seaside, and then send to them to their home. There comes news here (her father's house) that younger brother will not give H. in marriage, he came. Older brother's wife send let my father know. Then, my father is gathering 5 to 10 men, and they are going there to kidnap her. (H)
>
> (... o gün de annemler 5-10 karı 15-20 kişi var, evlerinden uzakta bir yerde gidiyorlar odun taşıyorlar deniz kıyısına, kayıkla da eve götürecekler. Buraya haber geliyor mu ki, H.'yi vermeyecek küçük kardeşi, abisi geldi. Büyük abisinin hanımı da haber yolluyor, neyse buradan da babamlar bize vermeyecekler bunu diye, 5-10 adam toplanıyorlar, bunu oradan kaçırmaya gidiyorlar.)

It is explicitly a sign of an acceptance for the practice. There is no fear for the boys from the rest of the village, in the section of public acceptance we can also see that there is no antagonism in the village. The power struggle on the name of girls is still between the fathers of girls and the boys, at this stage.

5.1.1.3. The Agents of the Realisation of *Çekme*

Interestingly, even the act of *çekme* has occurred between family relatives. In other words, endogamy is still a dominant factor in marriage strategies. "*Akraba* marriage and village endogamy can both be seen as an expression of a distrust of outsiders and a concomitant desire to keep as close(d) as possible" (Delaney, 1991, p. 107) . "He is my auntie's son. He comes and goes to our home, but I never see him. We never see each other in our young age." Actually, this kind of statement is seen quite common in arranged marriages, because of the following reasons: "The property should not go outside", "The property should stay in the family", and "The inheritance should not be split up." (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2001; Bates, 1974; Fox, 1975).

Regarding *çekme* as an alternative form of marriage, it may seem that family lines and order has shaken, there is only one example that *çekme* has been practised outside the intermarriage. In that case, girl's family lives in a different village and there is no blood tie.

> This Aunt S.'s mother-in-law is from H's village, from Mağona. She introduces. She (boy's mother) sees, they got engaged through arranged marriage, without seeing and knowing each other. After they got engaged, my mother sold oranges, they are orange seller in the market, my father went t here and saw her a few times, while she was selling orange. (S)
>
> (Bu S. yengenin kaynanası H.'nin köyünden. Mağona'dan, o tanıştırıyor... Görüyor (çocuğun annesi), görücü usulüyle birbirini görmeden, hiç birbirlerini bilmeden nişanlandılar. Sonra bunlar nişanlandıktan sonra, annem, portakal satardılar pazarcılık yapardılar; babam da gidiyor pazarcılık yaparken, portakal satarken görüyor birkaç kere.)

In her story, the adaptation process has taken more time than others. She has thought that she might go back to her father's home. Even, one of the *çekilmiş* women, before her, has come to talk to her to accept the situation that will be discussed under the section of public acceptance.

In one woman's narrative, her daughter said "My mother's aunt died, my mother is the oldest girl in the house. She became 18, and was not still married. Then, my auntie's husband kidnapped her with his friends." In this story, the husband of aunt has not a blood tie with the relatives of his wife, but still he practiced the act for his indirect nephew. Even, this story has shown the recognition of young single girls in extended families, and the aunt's husband has chosen the easy way to married again.

The reason of the practice of *çekme* has been realised through family relatives in order to preserve both the continuity of family lines and property relations. In this sense, practising *çekme* inside the family shows the insider position in the umbrella of marriage system. The subjugated position of *çekme* replicates the arranged marriages in order to gain an acceptance in the rest of family members. In other words, the failure negotiations of arranged marriages do not change the attitude regarding the preservation of the extended family. Thereby, the notion of alternativeness has loosen its meaning here, and it shows the acceptance as a marriage form.

5.1.1.4. The Patterns of *Çekme*

The strongest commonality of *çekme* narratives whether it is practised between family relatives or not, the act of *çekme* has been realised without the consent of girl.

Hence, *çekme* involves a kind of violent act that is a critical discussion to the pacifism of women's agency.

> They kicked her, kicked her when she was running away. Now, she is deaf. She grabbed nuts tree, I run after her voice... Now, she grabbed nuts tree, they hit her hands with sticks, then her hands hurts and she leave the tree.
>
> (Vurdular, vurdular ona da; kaçtığı zaman tekmeyle. Kulakları işitmez, şimdi. Bu ellerini, fındık ocağına sarılmış, ben sesinin üstüne koştum... O şimdi böyle sarılmış ya fındık ocağına, sopalarla hep vuruyorlar ona ki elleri acısında bıraksın ocağı.)

In fact, the consent has been consolidated with hitting the girl in H's words:

> … they were hitting her hands with sticks. Then they took her away. I surrendered after that, since I could not run away from 5-6 men. But there was a chaos in the back, 5-10 women, may be girls, fought against men. (H)
>
> (... ellerime vuruyorlar, böyle değnekle, sonra aldılar, getirdiler. Ben, ondan sonra teslim oldum ki daha 5-6 erkeğin elinden kaçamam. Ama arkada da kıyamet, 5-10 karı, kimi karı kimi kız, adamlarla çok mücadele ettiler.)

Nonetheless, in the very beginning, the idea of consent needs to be discussed how the agents use it for its own legacy and in the mean time how it becomes a useless notion in the very structure of a state institution. At first, elopement and bride kidnapping are equivalent to attacks on the household from the perspective of the girl's family. (Bates, 1974, p. 275).

> But my father wanted it so much later on. My father and uncle pushed me real hard. Leave them and come back they said. Yes, after I got married, they were really bad to my father to make me come back. Why did you get married to that relative, they asked. They would not do this to our daughter. They did it because you had them married. They tortured me as they wished. Just like enemies. (Ş)
>
> (Ama babam sonradan, çok istedi yani, babam amcam çok zorladılar beni ki, bırak da gel... Evlendikten sonra, evet bırak da gel diye babama çok kötülük ettiler ki, sen o akrabadan niye evlendin. Bizim kızımıza onlar öyle yapamazdılar. Sen evlendirdiğin için yaptılar. Bana da istediği işkenceyi yaptılar. Aynı bir düşmanı almış gibi.)

One of the narratives shows that there is no violent act during the *çekme*. The reason here is the generation of that woman. She was the youngest interviewee who is 69 years old, and she directly falls into the second generation. In this sense, socio-

political conjuncture of the region has effected to her experience and she can reach a plenty of opportunities that will be discussed in the second section.

> I mean, I did not 'elope' by force. My man says to me, I went and my wife is expecting me. So I went, I mean, I went. He said, I'll take you back to the place where the man I went to. He did not kidnapped me. (F)
>
> (Yani zorla cebren kaçmadım. Adam der ki bana, ben gittim bizim karı bekliyor beni. Öyle gittim, gittim yani. Dedi, adam gittiğim yerde ki pişmansan geri götüreyim seni. Zorla kaçırmadı yani beni.)

This statement, that is the toughest translation for me, is need to be elucidate carefully, before focusing on her special situation. At first, she said 'I did not elope' (*kaçmak*, in Turkish), not kidnapped. Here, the naming of the act changes the whole meaning of *çekme*. The question should be "Is *çekme* only identified with the violent act?" Obviously, we saw the violent activities in 11 *çekme* stories, but still her words did not show us that her story was not a *çekme*. This may be a sign of an acceptance the form of *çekme* or maybe a recognition that *çekme* always involves a violent act. Furthermore, the notion of generation gives us a different standpoint for the youngest woman. Her understanding of the world is completely different from the older women, because of her literacy, her direct interaction of the public places and of her husband. Her specific stands in those women also give us an idea about the changes of the village and women's participation in public sphere.

On the discussion of consent, the last two stages of *çekme* intersect in the process and it explicitly shows the acceptance of the practice in the village. After the *çekme* process, boys take girls to a safer place and rape there. The aim is to prevent the girls from returning their home in any circumstances.

> Immediately seizing the girl, they take her to an isolated place and the prospective husband rapes her. This ensures that she will be disinclined to escape. Once her virginity is lost, any other prospects for a suitable marriage are greatly diminished. Most kidnapped brides accepts their abductor and choose to remain with him because the alternative of returning home is not an attractive one. (Bates, 1974, p. 275)

Throughout this study, this was the hardest part of the conceptualisation of whether it is rape or forced sexual intercourse. *Çekilmiş* women never used the word 'rape'

during the interviews, instead they describe the situation as being husband and wife. For a long time, I tried to not use the word rape, without hearing it from women. Then, I realised that there is no such imagination as rape for those women. They believe that one day they will marry a man with or without arrangement, and there will not be love-bond. For this reason, it does not matter for them who is going to marry them. The whole process only serves the structure of marriage, not the individual, so this is not important to choose one of the men in the village. There is no choice for women in the arranged marriages, and for bride kidnappings. So, we cannot identify the intercourse as rape, here.

> Of course, they try to be together with the girls who are kidnapped, as they kidnapped her, so when you got back, you said that I went with my own will.
>
> (Tabii kaçırılan kızları hemen, kaçırdıkları gibi birlikte olmaya çalışıyorlar ki, geri aldıkları zaman desin ki, ben kendi isteğimle gittim.)

At the moment, fathers' of girls also go to gendarmes to take the daughters back. In this sense, forced sexual intercourse now has been defined as rape, because of the father's attitude to go to a state institution. In other words, it is criminalised by the fathers and the case is carried on the structural level. Here, the emphasis on virginity comes in the picture. The ideology of sexual purity for women is associated with the bride-wealth payments. Here, virginity has its price (Hirschon, 1984, p. 14). It is one of the crucial norms that are expected from young girls in the very first night of their marriage. Even in some regions, family relatives expect the bloody sheets, in the first night, as a proof that she is pure and untouched. The absence of blood is taken as proof of unchastity (Stirling, 1965, p. 184).

> A girl who has been forcibly abducted, kept against her will, and forced to have sexual intercourse, after a time may agree to marry her abductor as the only solution to her future. It is major way she can be reunited with her family and be re-admitted to local community life, albeit now as a married woman. Because of the norms regarding virginity in a bride (which are supported by the pervasive notions of honour and shame) the girl may realise that is she wishes to marry at all, she must agree to marry her abductor. (Starr, 1984, p. 99)

Women's statements are heard for the first time in courts. The virginity is a key factor to approve this marriage in that moment, and those words are said on behalf of the men:

> Her elder brothers did not allow them, but the gendarme came and took them. They ask her "Did you run away with D. B. With your own wish?" she said "Yeah, I eloped with my own wish." She did not reveal what happened, she was his wife now. They became husband and wife, how could she reveal and come back? Then my father was not sentenced, besides they were old enough. (H)
>
> (Bunu ağabeyleri bırakmıyor; ama, jandarma geliyor bunları alıp götürüyorlar. Bu diyor ki, buna soruyorlar: 'Kızım, diyorlar, D. B.'ye sen isteğinle mi kaçtın?', 'Hee', diyor, 'ben kendi isteğimle kaçtım.' Onları anlatamıyor, olmuş artık karısı, karı koca olmuşlar daha, deyip de geri mi gidecek? O zaman -babam da ceza yemiyor, zaten yaşları da tutuyor.)

Several *çekme* cases have not been ended up returning home for the girls, thereby other fathers did not report to the gendarmes in the later cases. It is a sign of for the next step to how public acceptance will be obtained in the village.

> We did not go to the court. They had kidnapped another girl from Kalecik, before they kidnapped me. Her father tried real hard. She said in the court that, I loved him and ı got him. I seduced him. My father said to T. Effendi that he held her hand, that girl's father's name was T. Effendi. He said do not push it, don't let them go to the court. (Ş)
>
> (Mahkemeye çıkmadık, benden önce gene, Kalecik'ten bir kız kaçırmıştılar, onun babası çok şey etmişti. Kız mahkemede dedi ki, ben sevdim ben aldım, ben çocuğu kaldırdım ayağa**.** Babam da dedi ki bunun koluna tutmuş dedi, T. Efendi'ye, o kızın babasının adı T. Efendi'ydi, çok uğraşan olmasın, bırakma dedi mahkemeye.)

5.1.2. Public Acceptance

To define a practice as a ritual, while it reproduces itself in the historic past, it also needs to be accepted by the inhabitants of the region. The history of bride kidnapping, in general naming, has its historical situatedness in the Turkish tradition:

> One of the oldest marriage traditions in Turkish culture is kidnapping. Especially in ancient Turks, they were in the form of marriage, like kidnapping and looting. In fact, the legitimate marriage took place through kidnappings in the Altay and Yakut Turks. The Epic of Manas and many

other Turkish epics have been mentioned marriage with kidnappings. (Tezcan, 2003, p. 2)

The ceremonies of *çekme* have been ritualised and it has never an obstacle to the totality of the community. There are several actors that they express their thoughts about *çekme* and it directly shows the acceptance in the region. However, firstly I will mention the conflict among families before the acceptance. The legal process of acceptance has been supported by the *çekilmiş* women's statements, it has taken time to accept in the fathers of these women though. One of them offered to his daughter to leave her children to husband:

> My father said, he had held your hand. But my father really wanted it afterwards. My father and my uncle forced me to leave him. The relatives did not want either. They said take your child and come back, we can take care the husband. (Ş)
>
> (Babam dedi ki, elinden tutmuş artık. Ama babam sonradan, çok istedi yani, babam amcam çok zorladılar beni ki, bırak da gel. Akraba da istemedi, bırak da gel; çocuğu olsa da biz şey ederiz onu oradan.)

It is one of the specific examples where tension never ends between families, but still father accepts the situation where his daughter's hand is held by a man. Here, we can see that marriage between two people is a notion of beyond two young people. It is a public concern to preserve and sustain the peace of village. Even, several people supported the *çekme* practice by giving a hand. This help is not specifically related with the unique characteristics of *çekme*. In other words, *çekme,* contrary to arranged marriages, needs a special effort to realise it. In this sense, several people that have whether public status or not have involved in the *çekme* act.

In a *kuma*'s experience, doctor said the man about first wife's appointment about pregnancy: "She cannot have a child, you should save yourself." Even a civil servant's words may serve a ground for the practice of *çekme*. He does not directly points out the *çekme* as a solution, but still doctor motivates him to act. Conversely, despite the fact that one of the *çekilmiş* women takes nearby the village mosque's Hodja to help, the Hodja does not take any role and responsibility in this case.

> Ayşe Hanım Yenge announced, so they understood that they would kidnap her. Then she went to the mosque hodja and said that “Hodja, please save me. They will kidnap me.” He said “Daughter, how can I save you. They came to me before you and said that they would kidnap you. They told me not to do anything. They have guns. I cannot say anything.” My mother did not expect his help. She locked herself into an empty house. (S)
>
> (Ayşe Hanım Yenge haber verdi ya, bu anlıyor ki kaçıracaklar onu. Bu o zaman gidiyor cami hocasına diyor ki, 'Hoca efendi beni kurtar, beni kaçıracaklar.' 'Kızım diyor, ben sana nasıl kurtarayım; bana senden önce geldi tembih ettiler. Bu kızı kaçıracağız, sakın bir şey etme. Onlar hep silahlı, ben bir şey diyemem.' Ondan medet umamadı annem, gitti bir boş eve tıkandı.)

Hodja does not take any responsibility both for not disturbing the peace in the village and for his sake, because "it rests upon a custom preserved by the people, of which perhaps it would be dangerous to deprive them." (Thompson, 1993, p. 451)

One of the *kuma*s has tried to come back to his father's home during the court. She did not have a sexual intercourse with the man. Unless, her brother did not give a permission to do that, he tried to arrange formal marriage process with the local authority of the village (*muhtar*, in Turkish).

> He held your hand, you have been with him for 8 days. I said, never, brother. He asked why. I said no, he had a wife. My brother, the elder one, said, okay. He said the village and the mukhtar was in the man’s back, they would make this marriage an official one. But it could not be official, he had his wife at home. (A)
>
> (Bu senin elinden tuttu 8 gündür bunun elindesin. Dedim ki, asla olamaz ağabey. Neden dedi. Dedim ki, olamaz, karısı var. Ağabey dedi ki, büyük ağabeyim; olsun dedi. Biz dedi, köy halkı muhtarla beraber adam dedi, resmi muamele yapacak. Ama ne resmi muamelesi evde büyük karısı var.)

This shows the acceptance of girl's family to the honour of the whole family.

Furthermore, there is a woman called as *hala* (aunt) who helps the boys in most of the *çekme*s in the village. Also *hala*'s brother helps the boys in all the *çekme*s in the village. This family is the most powerful in both material and moral terms, and they have a certain prestige in the eyes of the rest of the village. So, the boys before *çekme*s may consult on them to organise the act. During the interview with her, she emphasized that these girls would marry someday. And, these girls have no lovers,

so there is no necessary consideration whom the groom will be. She explicitly said that "Love does not satisfy your hunger." It is still a dominant idea that overlaps the Stirling's work in 1950s and Delaney's in 1980s:

> Individual preferences on the basis of romantic love is not an overriding issue, especially since there is very little opportunity for young people get to know each other well. Preferences, therefore, are stated in more general terms (Delaney, 1991, p. 109).

> Women do not look their husbands for companionship, still less do men look their wives. It is taken for granted there is no common ground for conversation. The relationship is limited to economic operation and to sexual intimacy (Stirling, 1965, p. 113)

Nonetheless, the attitudes of *hala* show that a woman who does not have the experience of *çekme*, cannot not empathise herself with the others and she accepts the normality of this act and helps the boys. It is not a sign of the experience of *çekme* can bring all of the women in the region together and it produces a specific kind of empathy to understand each other. The celebration of multiple standpoints is meaningful in this context. The lived experiences of *çekilmiş* women have distinctive points from other women who are married the normative systems of marriage. This distinction lies in the process of *çekme,* they have unique experiences for a marriage practice. It is coming from the marginalised institutionalisation of *çekme* act. So, both actors of *çekme* and *çekme* as an institution are located in the margin, and this partial perspective of *çekilmiş* women contributes to the occurrence of a more reliable perception about marriage.

> The standpoints of the subjugated are not "innocent" positions. On the contrary, they are preferred because in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretative core of all knowledge... "Subjugated" standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world. (Haraway, 2004, p. 88)

Here, *çekme,*as a marginalised institution, attributes the women subjugated stands which have the potential of transforming through when struggled with. The case I mentioned under the section of The Agents of the Realisation of *Çekme,* which is referring to the persuasion of one woman who is *çekilmiş* outside the village can be

read in two ways. For the acceptance of the practise, one of the *çekilmiş* girls that her case realised two years ago comes to the new *çekilmiş* girl and she tries to relieve her and advise to accept the situation: "Okay, H. Okay. It has happened once. “Okay” say. Look, I was subjected to *çekme*, as well. I am a mother now, we will raise them together." (S). Here, the position of the older *çekilmiş* woman may be considered in two ways. On the one hand, it shows basically how public acceptance spread the inhabitants of the village, even the passive agents of the *çekme*s. On the other hand, the attitudes of the older *çekilmiş* woman can be read as empathy to help the woman in order to ease the situation for her. This may be one of the cores for women's solidarity in the village's everyday life.

5.2. Everyday Life Politics and Its Knowledge Production

In this section, the process after *çekme* will be analysed with relation to other women in the household. Throughout the analysis, FST will be functionalised both in political action and knowledge production in the actualities of *çekilmiş* women's everyday life. Women develop some strategies in order to cope with a new form of the household. Harding emphasises the notion of politics in certain lived experiences of women:

> Politics was necessary to create the possibility of the formation of diverse forms of women's collective group consciousnesses that would enable women in their different class, race, sexuality, and cultural locations to identify, value, and engage in the kinds of research that could enable them to see how to end their culturally-distinctive forms of sexist oppression. (2004, p. 30)

Here, this is not a sign of escaping from the new institution, but take a position in the act. In FST, the agents of the act always interact with the structure that they relate. The standpoint of women generates an "opposition to dualism of any sort, valuation of concrete, everyday life, sense of a variety of connectedness and continuities both with other persons and with the natural world" (Hartsock, 2004, p. 45). In other words, women are becoming agencies in their new form of life. Also, this new form of life within the household turns out *the Making* process with its very own actors. It is always a process of de-articulation and re-articulation of both new agents and new

structures, and all of them are shaped in this Making process by the very activities of agents.

5.2.1. The Making of a New Life Form within the Household

The *Making* here, basically refers to the reinvigoration of agency. It is that "making, is a study of an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning" (Thompson, 1963, p. 9). The term has been used the conceptualisation of class from the point of workers experiences:

> By class I understand an historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material experience and in consciousness ... The notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship. Like any other relationship, it is a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop it dead at any given moment and anatomise its structure ... The relationship must always be embodied in real people and a real context. (Thompson, 1963, p. 9)

Here, the starting point of the analysis has become worker's experiences. In this sense, women's experience presents itself in the process of making the new life. This new life has begun with a unique marriage experience, but before *çekme* I want to discuss the limited access on such decisions that *çekilmiş* women made. In father's house, girls are related with domestic chores and land's work. They are always under the authority of their father. After *çekme*, the authority replicates from the boy's family, because all members live under the same roof as an extended family. However, having a kid contributes to gain a status in the family, as a woman. In this sense, girls are related to the work of land as a property. After marriage, women become the land, as a human property. So, both land and women are the sources of preservation and perpetuation of the family (Delaney, 1991, p. 102). Women did not talk about their father's house, the detailed explanation of their life is in the process of *çekme* and after marriage life.

Çekilmiş women's experiences of marriage give a specific meaning to the understanding of the new form of life, after *çekme*. The conceptualisation of *çekme* as a ritual shows us the invisibility of women's agency until the court process. In other words, *çekme* has been a power relation between girl's father and boys. Now,

the specific experience of *çekme* has been a distinct form of life. It can also be put into words saying that "relationship must always be embodied in real people and in a real context." (Thompson, 1963, p. 9). In this sense, women have generally emphasised on the notion of 'household', when they mentioned about their marriage. Intemann emphasises the embodied knowledge within FST and how it grounds a more accurate episteme:

> ...standpoint feminists take knowledge to be embodied and because social positions track power relations in ways that are epistemically significant. Given historical systems of oppression, individuals from diverse social positions and backgrounds are likely to have had different experiences, and these experiences can provide access to evidence that has implications for the plausibility of background assumptions, models, and method (2010, s. 790).

The normative systems of marriage have a monolithic, universal and essentialist understanding, that's why, bride kidnapping has been defined as an alternative form of marriage in the literature.

The understanding of marriage has been completely different for the *çekilmiş* women, after the practise. We cannot easily identify this new life within the normative system of marriage. Their distinct standpoints have generated a new vision for the marriage and created a different consciousness. One of the features of FST is building communities as knower, not the individualistic phenomenon (Potter, 2006, p. 138). This makes possible to differentiate the *çekilmiş* women as a unique community in the village, for their specific subjective experiences. Of necessity, it is not culturally-free, it is directly a context-specific which is derived from the distinct women's experiences.

> To struggle-with would involve building relations with others by which we may come to know the world and understand one another, that is the project of building communities (Pohlhaus, 2002, p. 292)

After *çekme*, women have shown their agency in several ways of everyday life. Even though *çekilmiş* "women in the community were the particular guardians of the institutions of the family, but it would seem that the women had the skill, on occasion, to turn the moves to their own advantage." (Thompson, 1993, p. 461). At first, they have become a member in extended families, and relations of other

women, like men's sister and mother. Almost all of the *çekilmiş* women had challenges with their husbands' mothers. They were staying at home and caring for both the children and the domestic chores. All of the women usually had a relation with their husband in the night, when everyone backed their room. Other women in the household, especially men's mothers beat their brides several times. *Çekilmiş* women have become wives between the ages of 12 to 17. They were very young, and mothers do not want to them in their home:

> … that aunt of mine did not want my mother. When something happened, she thought it was my mother's fault. She complained my father of my mother. My father would beat my mother. Look I will tell you this story. My aunt and my grandmother from my father's side allied against my mother, they gave her away to him. He believed in them and bit my mother. Then he thought "I am biting her, but they laugh in the other room as mother and daughter." Then my grandfather said "Look H. When they complain about you tomorrow, we will come to this room, I will hit the pillow, you will scream like 'ouch, it hurts'." Then he never hit her again. They go to the room, my grandmother sits down, my grandfather hits the pillow. They complain again. And the complaint is in vain. They went into the room, and since there were two rooms, they would have a bath and Hatun (sister-in-law) did not clean the room. She would leave the job to the other one, since she had children. It was nonsense. Then my grandfather never hit her again. He hit he pillow. My father would hit the pillow, as well. She would say "Oh, İzzet (you cannot address your husband with his name in front of the elder family) don't hit." (H)
>
> (... o halam annemi istemezdi. Bir şey olsa, babama çok şikayet ederdi, hep ondan bilirdi. Babam da bunu döverdi. Bak şimdi o hikayeyi de anlatayım. Babam da bunu döverdi, ikisi babaannemle halam bir oluyorlar, söylüyorlar; babam da onlara inanıp dövüyor. Babam bakmış "Yav, ben bunu dövüyorum; ana kız içeride kakara kikiri gülüyorlar." Deden kalkmış buna demiş ki; "Bak H., şimdi bunlar seni bana yarın akşam şikayet ettiklerinde gene odaya gireceğiz; ben alacağım yastığa vuracağım; sen 'Oyy, annem yandım.' bağıracaksın." Deden kalkmış, bir daha babaanneni dövmemiş, gidiyorlar odaya babaannen oturuyor, deden alıyor yastığı da, tabii onlar gene şikayet ediyorlar. Şikayet de ne? Hiçbir şey yok. Girermişler odaya, odada iki tane ya, yıkanırmış Hatun (evdeki görümce) orayı temizlemezmiş buna bırakırmış; bu da çocukları var şey var, yani abidik gubidik şeylerden. Ondan sonra deden bunu daha dövmemiş. Hep yastığı dövmüş. Babam yastığa vururmuş, o da dermiş ki "Ooo, İzzet (büyük ailenin yanında saygıdan kocaya isimle hitap edilmezmiş) vurma.)

In this statement, my grandfather supports her wife and protects her from other women in the family. In Stirling's (1965), Delaney's (1991) and Hanns' (Bellér-Hann

& Hann, 2001) work on marriage in different parts of Turkey emphasises the basis of marriage as an agreement on economic responsibility and sexual intimacy. In this case, there is room for emotional intimacy between the couple in order to protect them against his family. The motivation behind this, according to *çekilmiş* women, man separated their wives from their family. They became strangers in the new household. In the process of women's acceptance, men tried to take a stand in their wives. This recognition and acceptance process has a political ground that is achieved from the *çekilmiş* women's standpoint. It can be claimed as some sort of positive outcomes that are derived from the male support. The acceptance of the *çekilmiş* women generally conserves with the attitude of husbands, because rest of the family does not want to girls due to the father's violation of the marriage negotiations. In this sense, the constitution of a new life within the household is possible with the agents' ─wives and husbands─ cooperative and co-constitutive acts towards their family. Moreover, in the case of *kuma*s, there is a kind of consensus both among women and husband. The man's family has shown great respect to *kuma*s in order to give birth to his child, and treated very well. She puts it clearly:

> I came here, but there was not any job. I was hold in high esteem. I was his 3rd wife, they respected me. When I gave him children, I was even more respected. We lived like this. I was happy. (Ş[1])
>
> (Buraya geldim burada iş güç yok. Elde hediye, başladı tü tüye. 3. karısıydım, kıymetli tuttular. Hele de uşakları ettik ya, daha kıymetli olduk. Öyle de yaşadık, mutluydum yani.)

Following the argumentation of specific subjectivities, these unique lived experiences of *çekme* have constituted a new relation between wife and husband. In other words, the new network of relations which is grounded in a marginalised act of *çekme* has provided a new reality for the understanding of a new form of life. The co-constitutive process of a new life explicitly differs from the rural explanation of couple's roles and responsibilities towards each other. Of course, there are some stories which beg to differ regarding the relations between couples. One of the *çekilmiş* women has remembered the days that she was beaten by her husband. She emphasised her relief after her husband's death with joyfully:

> I was beaten a lot. I cannot tell how much. I loved him afterwards, but he did me wrong. Then I felt strange from him. Then he died. The daughter of our friend is there now, her name is Mehtap, she is a doctor. She would say thanks god, the ones who did wrong died, the women survived. But the women are left with one hundred kinds of diseases.
>
> (Yedim çok. Hesabı yok. Sonradan sevdim ama o bana çok yanlışlar yaptı. Ondan sonra da soğudum. Öyle de öldü gitti. Orada (İstanbul'da) şimdi arkadaşımızın kızı vardır, Mehtap, uzman doktor. O derdi ki; iyi oldu öyle yapanlar öldüler, kadınlar kaldılar. Ama kadınlar da yüz türlü hastalıkla kalmışlar.)

In her case, she has to deal with both the problems of her husband's family and him.

Continuing the women relations in the household, the position of *kumalık* has been a certain cooperative relation between the women. They raise the children of home together, and learn to live together as two wives of one husband. For instance, first wife has divorced and married another man, but her *kuma* has supported her financially in the new marriage, while taking money from her husband.

> Ooo A. helped the *kuma* a lot. Since the first *çeken* took her, he was poor, with no job or money. K. said to H. to give K. 2 billion, 3 billion. He was a rich man. What will you do? I will give it to Makbule (the first wife). She would take the money from the husband and give it to her. Now that my elder sister got married, she took care of the children of that woman. She felt sorry for the mother of the kids when she became broke. The kids had a strong bond, since they had the same father. Their mothers were different but the fathers were the same. But K. was not like a step mother to them. (K)
>
> (Ooo, kumaya ne kadar yardım etmiş. A., ilk çeken aldı ya onu, fakir bir tutarı yok, parası yok. K. dedi ki İ. H.ye ver bana 2 milyar, 3 milyar. Durumu iyiydi onun. Ne edeceksin? Makbule'ye (ilk eş) vereceğim. Kocadan alırdı, ona verirdi... Şimdi ablam evlenince, o kadının çocuklarına hep o baktı. Çocukların anası da orada parasız kalınca acıdı onu. Çocukları birbirinden koparmamışlardı hiç, babalar bir olduğu için. Analar ayrı babalar bir. Ama K. onlara üveylik etmedi.)

In another example, *çekilmiş* woman as a second wife has taken care the first woman in the house in her old age. "Time passed with both kindliness, and malignancy. My *kuma* had got paralysed. I took care of her in 9 years in her bed." (A) The reason behind this kind of solidarity is mainly the both brides are not exactly a part of the families. They are always placed in the outside the close family relations. The

tension between the brides and mothers is based on the fear of mothers who seem themselves as the owner of the family.

Continuing with the emphasis on women solidarity in the village, poverty is always emphasised as a crucial point about remembering the past in all narratives. Women are the safeguards of the houses, from domestic chores to the care of members of the family. They are always struggling with the material conditions of the house.

> We were poor, how could we throw baby's nappies? We did not have water, o we could not throw clothes away. They would bodge everything again and again. They would wear pants after they bodge it. When one of them got old, they could not throw it away. They would bodge the torn part with some other. They would bodge and bodge. Ah, we did not have ready-wear of course! I would sit with my mom and ditch 4 to 5 pants. We would go to the Kurt River to wash the clothes, we would light a fire. Sheets were covered with sheets, we did not have bedclothes. People lived in poverty. My father was a craftsman, he was poor. He would go to the foreign lands for work. (S)
>
> (Fakirlik var, bezleri atmak nerede? Su yok, öyle çamaşır atmak yok. Yama yama üstüne vururlardı, donları diker, giyerlerdi. Bu don eskidi mi, bunu atmak yok. Bunun yırtılan yerine, başka bir yerden yamam vururlardı, dikerlerdi yama yama üstüne. Ooo, önceden konfeksiyon mu var, otururdum da anneme bir kerede 4-5 tane don dikerdim. Çamaşır yıkamaya Kurt Irmağı'na giderdik, orada ateş yakardık. Çarşaflar kaplamalı, nevresim yok. Öyle fakirlik çoktu, babam ustaydı, fakir idi. Gurbete çıkardı.)

Here, my aunt told how they covered their clothing, when it became old or dirty. In the village they do not have access to the shopping stores in order to buy clothes. They buy fabric around 4 to 5 meters to sew some shirts or skirts for members of the family. As we consider the preservation of food:

> They would buy a bag of flour and eat it as the household. There was a cow in the barn, a bag of flour in the home and beans in the garden. There was no such thing as pepper filing meal back then. We would milk the cow in the barn, take some of the flour in the bag and make bread at home. We would get by as 7 people, 5 siblings. (F)
>
> (Eskiden mesela, bir çuval un alırdılar, onunla evde geçim yapardılar. Ahırda inek, evde bir çuval un, bahçede de fasulye. Eskiden biber dolması etmek yok idi. Ahırda inekler, inek sağılırdı; sütünden, yağından bir çuval da un alırdık evde ekmek yapardık, öyle 7 can, 5 kardeş geçinirdik.)

There is a certain parallelism between Hanns' work on Lazi region and in a village of Araklı. Women are responsible for all work with related to domestic work. Hanns' clearly states that:

> Most agricultural as well as household tasks are linked primarily to women: animal husbandry, vegetable production, cleaning, washing, cooking, needlework, and caring for the aged, the sick and children all fall within the female sphere.. Domestic activities such as embroidery and knitting for the trousseau are not classified as work (2001, p. 118)

This process of the preservation of food has constituted a certain type of solidarity between women whether they are *çekilmiş* or not. The exclusion of the material world, here the relations with the capital -specifically money, creates such a space for surviving together. The problem of poverty has been tried to solve the exchange of the available materials:

> When the cattle did not give birth, we would go to sister Aynur and take some minci (a kind of cheese). We would exchange with our neighbours. We would not go to the downtown, but only exchange. Sister Aynur, give me some ayran when you do it, and I will give you bulgur pilaf, I would say. (S)
>
> (Sığır doğurmamış olsa, gidin Aynur Ablandan biraz minci alın gelin, maslahat (komşuluk dilinde takas) ederdik birbirimize. Çarşıya gitmek yok, maslahat. Aynur Abla ayran ver bana yayığı vurdun mu, bulgur pilavı etmişim.)

Furthermore, the solidarity among women has been constituted in the sense that the known stories of *çekme* by women members of the family in the village. At last, collective consciousness has a place in the public acceptance. As I mentioned in the methodology chapter, 4 narratives have been listened from the related women's sisters, daughters and brides because of the health conditions and death. The *çekme* stories always told the next generations of the family. Specifically, women intended to talk about that stories, even their bride knows the story well. Due to the need for women to be included in the history and social analysis, the validity of historical data has shifted from written documents to oral traditions which is an important indicator of the life experience of women and men in society, an important indicator of its

scope and boundaries, has been tried to be heard through memory studies of the hidden secrets of history (Parmaksız, 2011, p. 571). Harding states that:

> the importance of a group's experience, of a distinctive kind of collective consciousness, which can be achieved through the group's struggles to gain the kind of knowledge that they [standpoint theorists] need for their projects. (2004, p. 36)

The physical space, which is an important indicator of the life experience of men and women in a society, its scope and boundaries, shows that the subjective experience of building memory is in the socialization process and it cannot be made independently. This means that the recognition of the subjective experiences of the formation of a memory will not be possible in an independent, isolated way of living; but through the collective memory itself, and at the same time, in the shaping of that social memory. In this process, women transferred their past narratives to their women's relatives, mostly sisters and daughters. However, the recognition of *çekme* stories in the village has become possible to be known also by their daughter-in-laws.

5.2.2. Black Sea Women's Self-Definition and Self-Valuation

In a varied popular culture, Black Sea women are identified as a singular category. It assumes that there is one kind of narrative for those women. Most of the movies, Black Sea women are always portrayed with the stronger physical conditions, like carrying a heavy tea or nuts baskets. Even they use guns and other stuff related to violence, therefore there is an assumption that makes those women more powerful (Taşkın, 2016, p. 137). According to Taşkın, the stronger physical condition is a symptom of unequal division of labour, it reproduces the stereotype of Black Sea women; it is a sort of subalternity (Taşkın, 2016, p. 139). Also, Ayşenur Kolivar states that even Black Sea women are described as challenging, they have been obliged to get the consent of male dominant judgment for a critical decision (Kolivar & Çelik, 2007, p. 56). The positioning of women as a pacified subject in *çekme* shows that:

> ... the ritual took place within the forms and vocabulary of a society in which gender relations were structured in superordinate/subordinate ways in doubt" (Thompson, 1993, p. 459).

Here, this analysis has a generalised notion of Black Sea women that are identified as the boundaries of domestic work and subjugated to male domination. Moreover, in Hanns' work, women are always identified with their reproductive labour, and they use the basket metaphor to illustrate the position of women in the Lazi region. They collect some popular metaphors to confirm the passifisation of women: " 'A woman is basket. You empty it and then fill it again' (*Kadın sepettir. Boşaltıyorsun, sonra yine dolduruyorsun*)", another version of the same saying emphasises her passivity: " 'A woman is a basket. You throw the old one away and replace it with a new one.' (*Kadın sepettir. Eskisini atarsın, yenisini alırsın.*)" (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2001, p. 113). These statements have also provided a motivation for the case of *kumalık*, because the main reason for the *kumalık* practise is that the first wife cannot give birth to a child.

The missing point is that the standpoints of *çekilmiş* women are controversial in a context-specific experience. The experience of *çekilmiş* women is a distinctive form than the other women and its unique position has been valued with their terms and relations:

> Claims about the role of context-specific experience in the production of knowledge, and about how new kinds of such experience and insight can be gained through active engagement in political struggles, lie at the heart of contemporary debates over the kind of subject of knowledge and history that modenirty requires vs the kind that maximally democratic social relations require. (Harding, 2004, p. 37)

In this sense, Black Sea women, specifically *çekilmi*ş women need an attribution of self-definition and self-valuation for a better understanding of women from that region. Collins writes *The Meaning of Self-Definition and Self-Valuation* in her essay, and she points out the insistence on self-definition saying that it "reframes the entire dialogue from one of determining the technical accuracy of an image, to one stressing the power dynamics underlying the very process of definition itself" (Collins, 2004, p. 106). In all narratives, *çekilmiş* women are always identified with their physical strength to escape their kidnappers. That's why, they were forced to use violence against women. Moreover, their emphasis on strength also may be interpreted as employing the possibility of their consent towards their kidnappers.

The illustration of physical strength is a sign of using their agency in order to escape the *çekme*. In this sense, it is clearly a rejection of "the taken-for-granted assumption that those in positions granting them the authority to describe and analyze reality are entitled to do so." (Collins, 2004, pp. 106-107). The self-definition of *çekilmiş* women as in the harsh conditions gives them a motivation for the survival in the long term. After *çekme*, women did not try to turn back to their father's house, but they took care of their children. All of the *çekilmiş* women express the acceptance of their circumstances that consolidates after giving birth to their first child. Within this regard, we assert the notion of powerfullness to Black Sea region, both in the process of *çekme* and after dealing with the new form of life.

> ...defining and valuing one's consciousness of one's own self-defined standpoint in the face of images that foster a self-definition as the objectified "other" is an important way of the resisting the dehumanization essential to systems of domination. (Collins, 2004, p. 108)

Within this regard, it is possible to claim that there is a diversity in self-definition of those women's experiences of after *çekme* to express themselves rather than a normative understanding of marriage with integrity, which points out the multiplicity of the standpoints. This diversity is coming from the expression of their emotions through a kind of folksong which also brings to the process of self-valuation of *çekilmiş* women. They reflect their instant emotions with a tradition called *kaide atma/kaide/kayde* -as a general naming *atışma*. *Kaide* consists of brief fragmental melodic phrases, in which the voice follows the *kemençe* -a particular musical instrument belongs to region- closely (Stokes, 1993, p. 33). In the work of Tewari Jassal (2012), she works on folksong of North India to examine the relations of caste, gender, labour in rural context. She clearly utters the importance of the folksongs:

> ... by the fact that they [folksongs] embody the voices of the marginalized, those who rarely have been the focus of systematic analytical inquiry. Indeed, the search for women's agency in biographies, diaries, poems, and other forms of written expression by individual women, largely of the elite or middle-classes, has obscured the value to be found in the voices of unlettered women, who comprise the vast majority. Drawn from laboring castes and classes, peasant milieus, or groups otherwise marginalized, these songs,..., largely reflect women's "subaltern consciousness." (2012, p. 4)

In this sense, some *kaide*s have been good examples about the relations among family relatives, women's self-emotions and their understanding of the world. Constituting an oral tradition in specific region, "the remembrance and recollection of songs in a particular contexts also invoke a variety of interconnections with other contexts." (Tewari Jassal, 2012, p. 7).

> Should one ever fit
> Is the love of child ever enough
> With the words of the wifes'
> Is it okay to curse the momes
>
> (Uyulur mu uyulur mu
> Evlatlara doyulur mu?
> Karıların (eş) sözleriyle
> Analara sövülür mü?)

One of the core points in the *kaide*s is the relations among the man's mother and his wife. In the new household, women are the ones who are using the power from their stands against them. In this *kaide*, one of the men's mother complains about the son's support of their wives.

> Smokes on the sea
> How can a kid see
> You broke up with me
> Now your wife will be a fatty
>
> (Deniz üstü dumanlar
> Küçük çocuk ne anlar
> Oğlum ayrıldın benden
> Şimdi karın şişmanlar)

This *kaide* also emphasises the separation of homes of the new family, and again mother complains that the wife does not take good care of her son. Tewari Jassal states the important themes of the songs and its associations in the women's narratives which very close to the *kaide*s of the women:

> First are songs that describe women's daily live in their conjugal homes, along with the bleakness of their situation. Second are songs about conflict within families and close kin and how this conflict is (is not) to be resolved. Family relationship in these narratives are characterized as potentially, in many cases actually, antagonistic, reflecting the turbulence experienced by inmarrying daughters-in-law. Third are songs that narrate, in some detail, the consequences for women who transgress a variety of behavioral norms, such

as breaking caste boundaries, violating codes of honor and so on. (2012, p. 37)

There are more of them regarding the distant relations between mothers and their sons, after the constitution of a new life with a girl who is not approved as a bride. This tension among women in the household is based on a creation of group consciousness that is engaged in the *çekilmiş* women. In Harding's words:

> The creation of group consciousness occurs (always and only?) through the liberatory political struggles it takes to get access to and arrive at the best conception of research *for* women or other oppressed groups, among the other goals of such struggles. (2004, p. 32)

One of the *kaide*s has focused on the loneliness after *çekme,* she complains about the distant relations between her mother and father, and its suffering:

> Cottages on the mound
> Let them collapse
> Neither mom have I, nor dad
> Now that I am hardhearted
>
> (Dağlar başı binadır
> Yıkılsın yetim ona
> Ne anam var ne babam
> Taştan olmuşum taştan)

Struggling with the material world and its simple issues, kaides are where the women's voices heard. They clearly emphasise their problems, their physical and mental pain in their life in those lines. With regard to the conceptualisation of agency regarding the women's activity in everyday life, Abu-Lughod states that it is "not simply as a synonym for resistance to relations of dominations, but as capacity for resistance to relations of subordination create and enable." (Mahmood, 2005, p. 18). In other words, these kaides are both the expression of women emotions in terms of the structuralisation in the larger society and also they have a capability to impact these structure. It is an interactive process that is to say the Making of the structures simply means the Making of the agents that acts in those institutions.

> I had the days when
> I took the bird from wattle
> Now is the day when
> I cannot go up the hill

Öyle bir günüm var idi
Daldan alırdım kuşi (kuşu)
Öyle bir güne geldim
Çıkamayrum (çıkamıyorum) yokişi (yokuşu)

Nonetheless, the way of expression is the emergence of women's critical consciousness towards the response of the victimisation of women in a rural traditions and cultures. They are always aware of the circumstances that burden them, and those lines explain the women's feelings very well. For instance, one of the *kaide*s clearly mentions the issue of cheating, and this *kaide* may be a critical voice to hear, to express herself and her awareness of the situation. It is a precious way to understand women's emotion:

Oy my lover
To say lover I dare
You talk to others
They say, I hear of course

(Oy gidi benim yarum (yarim)
Yar demeye kıyarum (kıyarım)
Ellerle gonişirsun (konuşursun)
Ben olari (onları) duyarum (duyarım))

In such circumstances, the voice of the women shows the different positions of women and their struggle with that position. Those women at first, come to the new household with the act of *çekme*. Then, they become mothers and their status has become more respectful in the family. And lastly, these lines are the expression from a total different position as *çekilmiş* women. Different stands in the *kaide*s turns the experiences of women upside down. The conflict among different stands makes the partial understanding of a reality which may distinct interpretations about those women's experiences of those positions. Harding utters the multiplicity of conflict consciousness very well:

> So the logic of the directive to "start thought from women's lives" requires that one start one's thought from multiple lives that are in many ways in conflict each other, each of which itself has multiple and contradictory commitments... (2004, p. 134)

In this regard, *çekilmiş* women have been bifurcated positions in the long run. Changing positions in the household determines the degree of status in the family. In

this positions, they develop some strategies in order to create a space for their decisinons. As an unrecorded information, women are using an Aspirin as a contraceptive to end the pregnancy. This is a powerfull emancipatory act with regards to controlling their bodies. However, women mentioned those information after the record. One woman just said the protection of women from pregnancy explicitly: "Back then the women would use contraceptives.We did not have pills or medicines. I would use Asprin, half of it, as a birth control method." (A). The secrecy of the Aspirin as a way of contraception is a representation of an achievement and it is exactly struggled for the liberatory act over women bodies. This was learned by the midwife of the, village, and the network of this information has spread out the village. Exercising contraception is a way of political act to do. This is where the actualities of women's lived experiences occur. The notion of "actual" is "like the arrow on the map of the mall saying "You are here," that points in the text to beyond-the-text in which the text, its reading, its reader, and its concepts also are." (Smith, 2014, p. 264). In this sense, beginning in women's experiences for this study, is a vital political moment and substantial knowledge production.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The last chapter consists of contribution and limitations of the study and recommendations of further studies. Contributions section has three sub-sections as theoretical, methodological and practical contributions, and limitations have two as theoretical and methodological limitations.

Contributions of the Study

In this thesis, my main aim is building an understanding of bride kidnapping from the viewpoint of women with respect to the Feminist Standpoint Theory by focusing on the act of *çekme* and the new life within the household. In addition to this, the self-definition and self-valuation of Black Sea women with the tradition of *kaide atma* takes place in the study.

Theoretical Contributions

Contrary to the conceptualisation of bride kidnapping in the literature as an alternative system of marriage, *çekme* (bride kidnapping, in general) has a marginalised position in the system. This marginalisation has highlighted the unique experiences of the women and it provides a critical consciousness to define and value their positions. Within this regard, the *çekilmiş* women have an outsider-within position in the village women, and their marriage experience has also an outsider-within position in the marriage system, in a broader sense. Even if the act of *çekme* has been realised, their unique experiences still end up with a marriage. The total narratives of women have certain resemblances with each other in terms of the practice of the act, so it is defined as ritual. The conceptualisation of ritual has been grounded on *çekilmiş* women's situated position in the past with the repetitive act of *çekme*. Continuing with the process of after *çekme,* women have to deal with the problems of the new household, and other women in the family. Contrary to their father's home, there is a tension between the bride and the elder female members of

the family. However, they have figured living somehow in the same house. Moreover, *çekilmiş* women have a certain sense of solidarity among other women in the village. The poor conditions of the village at that time have caused sharing a life within the neighbourhood. Due to the fact that women's domestic labour is essential to preserve the daily life, their collective survival experiences have a political meaning for the strategies of a new conditions of life.

In addition to analysis of the *çekme* experiences, the attribution of a self-definition and of a self-valuation process have been constituted via *kaide*s, which is an instant expression of a melodic kind of folksong. In this way, Black Sea women have shared their feelings with the world, that has a strong meaning to express themselves. It is also both a political meaning and a distinctive type of knowledge that women produce in their everyday life. Therefore, the tradition of *kaide atma* gives some clues about the conditions of women's life in the region, and their specific subjective experiences in their past.

6.1.2. Methodological Contributions

Feminist Standpoint Theory does not seem to have much popularity in our days. The reasons are that it has an ambiguous position between modernity and postmodernity. It does not have a certain stand in Social Theory. Studying bride kidnapping with FST improves the theory itself. It also produces political knowledge with women, for women. The definition of FST as a developing theory and methodology, contributes to improving the literature, and to understanding its constrains and limitations.

Furthermore, looking from the viewpoints of the agents of the topic, listening to and hearing their own voices and experiencing the reality with their own words make a contribution to situate the standpoint of women as the subject of the knowledge, and to reveal their subjectivities.

6.1.3. Practical Contributions

During my fieldwork, the agenda of the village has become women's marriage experiences. Not just *çekilmiş* women, but even younger and older women came together and tell their stories to each other. I can easily see the empathy they feel

towards their experiences and thinking on their past has a political gain in terms of producing collective memory for village's women.

Moreover, Black Sea women have a more reliable public image with the process of self-valuation and self-definition in contrast to the popular media. The expression of themselves in a particular way has gained a specific voice, which has the potential to contribute to a transformation of understanding of Black Sea women in general.

6.2. Limitations of the Study

During the field research, I encountered several issues that made the task harder and tougher. In this part, I will share the reasons of these difficulties in two sub-sections as theoretical and methodological limitations of the study.

6.2.1. Theoretical Limitations

FST locates itself somewhere in between modernist and postmodernist approach, so it is one of the difficulties that I encountered during the theoretical discussion. In other words, the 'greasy pole' has been on stage for me, too. The risk of falling into what I criticized about the modernist approach or reproducing the same discourses within the postmodern paradigm causes to the feeling of the failure of FST's operationalisation in this study.

In addition to FST, there have appeared some limitations in the issue of bride kidnapping, as well. Already existing literature on the topic has limited research regarding the bride kidnapping as a marriage system, not the position of the actors in the practice. It has made it even harder to situate women's position on this particular experience into the literature.

6.2.2. Methodological Limitations

During the study, I have some methodological limitations as well. First of all, the generation gap between me and *çekilmiş* women has been a real issue at the beginning of the field, that I mentioned in the Methodology chapter. No matter how non-hierarchical our relationship was, they could not escape the thought that I was a

virgin, unmarried young girl. They basically saw me as their granddaughter, so our relationship was another intimate level that totally affected the process of interviews.

Also, this was the first time that I had ever written a Social Sciences thesis and conducted a field research in a region. As a Political Science undergraduate student, my feminist anthropological thesis has an interdisciplinary characteristic that I should cover both the related anthropological works and also feminist theories. Therefore, there may have some points that are improvable within the whole process.

6.3. Recommendations for Future Studies

As for future studies, I suggest a study with a younger generation who are living in the urban areas in order to see the patterns of bride kidnapping whether it differs or not from the rural experiences. We can easily find a distinctive number news regarding bride kidnapping of young girls from different places in the city centre. It may show the process of bride kidnapping and also changes in the practices. It also shows the understanding of bride kidnapping in younger generation as a marriage system and its cultural attribution from their point of view.

Additionally, this study may also be conducted in different regions to see the possibility of the adaptation of ritual conceptualisation. Of necessity, women's different standpoints may give a distinctive reality about their bride kidnapping experience in a certain time and location. This cultural practice of marriage is common different rural regions in Turkey, but of course there may be distinctive action during the process bride kidnapping. It may be a comparative study to see different attitudes towards women in the act.

Lastly, a new study may be a comparison between kidnapped women and women who are married with arrangement to see the marriage experiences and how it affects the whole life conditions and their thinking after all. I did not directly focus on this separation among women, but still it may be valuable to see the experiences of women who are married with arrangement whether they have a social status or not.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TÜRKÇE ÖZET/TURKISH SUMMARY

TÜRKİYE'DE KARADENİZ BÖLGESİ'NİN BİR KÖYÜNDE 'ÇEKME' RİTÜELİ: ALTERNATİF EVLİLİK SİSTEMLERİNE BİR ELEŞTİRİ OLARAK KIZ KAÇIRMA

Babaannemin evlilik hikayesi, çocukluğumdan bu yana detaylarından arındırılmış bir şekilde çoğu zaman dinlediğim bir hikaye olmuştur. Yörede Beşiroğlu diye adlandırılan geniş aile içerisinde de, herkes öyle ya da böyle dedemle babaannemin nasıl evlendiğini bilir. Babaannem çekilmişti; bu ifade, tıpkı *çekme*nin sözlük anlamındaki gibi kolundan tutup götürülmeye eşdeğer bir muameleye denk düşmektedir. Daha genel adıyla, babaannem kaçırılarak evlendirilmiş bir kadındı. Bu kişisel hikaye benim için bu tez konusunu oluşturmam da zemin oluşturmuştur. Evlilik sistemleri içerisinde kız kaçırma eski Türk topluluklarından bu yana deneyimlenen bir evlilik biçimidir. Daha önceleri konar-göçer ikamet eden Türk topluluklarında çadırdan kız kaçırma norm olan bir evlilik formu olarak görülürken, yerleşik düzene geçildikten sonra zaman içerisinde performe edilme sayısı gittikçe azalmıştır. Bu çalışma da geç 1940'lar, erken 1950'ler döneminde zorla kaçırılarak evlendirilmiş kadınların deneyimlerinden yola çıkarak kız kaçırmayı bir evlilik biçimi olarak anlamlandırmayı amaçlamaktadır. 1972 yılında Georgetown Üniversitesi'nin ev sahipliği yaptığı bir sempozyumda kız kaçırma ve kaçma evlilik biçimleri içerisinde alternatif bir konumda anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Ancak, bu çalışma içerisinde en temel eleştiri bu literatür ekseninde genişleyen alternatif evlilik kavramsallaştırmasınadır. Buna karşıt olarak, çekme bu anlatı içerisinde ritüel olarak tanımlanmış ve kendine sosyo-tarihsel bir konum elde etmiştir. Alternatiflik nosyonuna atfedilmiş pozitif konotasyonların hiçbirine sahip olmayan çekme deneyimleri bizatihi kendisini bir evlilik formu olarak göstermekte ve bahsi edilen yapısal değişikliklerin esnemesine ya da değişip dönüştürülmesine dair örnekler bulunmamaktadır. Aksine daha sert ve keskin sonuçları olan çekme pratiği kadını ilk başta kurban gibi bir pozisyonda gösterse de, aslında onların ikincil pozisyonlarının nasıl da gündelik hayatları içerisinde alt üst olduğunu da görme fırsatımız

olmaktadır. Bu çalışma, çekme pratiğinin kötücül süreçlerini göz ardı etmemekte ancak feminist etik çerçevesinde de üsten bir dil kurmayı da reddetmektedir. En temelde buradaki amaç, çekme pratiğini kadınların deneyimleriyle anlamlandırıp evlilik sistemleri içerisinde konumlandırmak ve daha sonrasındaki evlilik içerisindeki mücadelelerine ilişkin nüveleri yakalayabilmektir.

TEORİK ÇERÇEVE

Teorik zemin içerisinde analiz birimi olarak kadını tek bir kategori alan kadın-erkek dikotomisini ve aynı zamanda kadınları farklı ırk, etnik köken, toplumsal cinsiyet, sınıf, cinsel kimlik ve benzeri kesişimsellikleri de göz önünde bulundurmasına rağmen gerçekliği yine de bütüncül anlayışı temel alan toplumsal cinsiyet temelleri reddeden Feminist Duruş Kuramı (FDK) bu çalışmanın mihenk taşını oluşturmaktadır. Kadın-erkek dikotomisinden hareket eden analizler her zaman kadını hiyerarşik düzlemde kadını ikincil pozisyona hapsetmektedir. Kadın temelli analizi öngören ikinci kutup da ise aşılamayan nokta eleştirdikleri ikili sosyal teori anlayışına teorik zemin kazandıramamışlardır. FDK'ye göre gerçekliğin hiçbir zaman kesin, bütüncül bir anlatısı yoktur ve tam olarak anlatılamaz, gerçeklik ve onun bilgisi daima taraflıdır. Dolayısıyla, genellenmesi, özünün aranması, bir mantık temeline oturtulması anlamsızdır, gerçekliği yansıtmamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, sadece öznelliklerin değil, çoklu öznelliklerin çoklu özgünlüklerini dikkate alarak bilgiyi konumlandırmak bizi tam olarak gerçekliğe götürmese de daha güçlü bir nesnellik epistemolojisiyle daha az taraflı bir duruşa zemin oluşturacaktır. FDK'ye göre, bu daha az taraflı bilgiye işe marjinal olanın bilgisiyle ve hiyerarşik olmayan ve interaktif bir bilgi üretim süreciyle ulaşılabilir. Kendi öznellikleriyle baskın olanın dilini konuşan gruplar olarak marjinal bireyler çemberin hem içinde hem dışında yer alma özellikleriyle baskın olandan farklı olarak çift vizyona sahip olan bireylerdir. Bu çift vizyona sahip olma özellikleri, FDK'ye göre, kendilerine gerçekliği deneyimleme ve anlamada epistemik bir öncelik kazandırır, o yüzden bilgiyi marjinal olanın yaşam deneyimlerinden almak anlamlıdır, daha az taraflı bilgiye ve daha güçlü nesnelliğe götürendir.

Devamında, duruş kuramının üç boyutunu vurgulamak gerekmektedir. Öncelikle, feminist duruşların özneleri kolektif öznelerdir. Tarihsel teorik kuramın öncüsü olan Lukács'ın (1968) toplumsal değişimin faillerinin proleter kolektif özneler vurgusu, Feminist Duruş Kuramı'nın bir ayağının Marksist literatürde durduğunu göstermektedir. İkinci olarak duruş kuramı, feminist duruşlar üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu haliyle bireyci tekil kazanımlardansa, toplumsal değişim ve dönüşümün merkezi özne konumlarını işgal etmeyi amaç edinir. Üçüncü vurgu ise, feminist duruşların çoklu imkanlarına yöneliktir. Farklı kadınlık özne konumları, feminist duruşların çoğulluğuna dönüştürülebilir. Diğer bir deyişle, kolektif öznelerin oluşturduğu duruşların da çoklu özneler yarattığıdır.

Modernitenin tüm varsayımlarını eleştirmesinin yanı sıra, postmodernitenin öznellik epistemolojisi, çoğulculuk ve parçalılık anlayışından da esinlenen FDK bu anlamda iki epistemolojik duruşun ortasında konumsuz bir duruşa sahip oluşuyla da eleştirilebilir. Ancak burada postmodernite moderniteyi reddeden bir yaklaşımken FDK postmoderniteden yararlanmasına rağmen moderniteyi reddetmeyen ve fakat kökten eleştiren bir teorik zemindir. Postmodernist söylemin totolojik görelilik yaklaşımına düşmekten de kendini gerçekliğin taraflı ve konumsal bilgisine ulaşma iddiasıyla kurtarır.

Bu bağlamda, feminist duruşların verili değil de üretilmiş olduğu kanaati, bize onları kuranın ne ve hangi yolla olduğunu açıklamak durumundadır. Bu çalışmada, Karadeniz Bölgesi'ndeki bir köye ait *çekme* ─bölgede kız kaçırmanın adlandırılması─ deneyimleri 12 farklı kadından dinlenmiştir. Çekme deneyimi evlilik sistemi içerisinde marjinal bir konuma sahip olmasından kaynaklı kadınların deneyimlerinin de, norm olan görücü usulü evliliğin karşısında marjinalliğini gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu marjinalliğin sağladığı konumlanışın kendisi çekilmiş kadınlara bambaşka bir gerçeklik anlatısı sunmaktadır. Bu anlatının kendisi epistemolojik olarak daha nesnel bir konumdadır.

METODOLOJİ

Bu teorik çerçeve içerisinde, bu tezde çekme pratiğinin evlilik sistemleri içerisindeki konumunu FDK bakış açısıyla epistemik öncelik, konumlandırılmış ve taraflı bilgi,

çemberin içinde ve dışında olma konumu, güçlü nesnellik kavramları üzerinden tartışmayı amaçlanmıştır. 2 aylık bir etnografik alan araştırmasını temel alan bu çalışma da sözlü tarih yazımı tekniği, Araklı ilçesinde eski ismiyle Merkez Köyü olarak bilinen, şimdilerde Trabzon Büyükşehir Belediyesi'ne bağlanmasıyla Hürriyet ve Sırt Mahallesi'ni kapsayan bir alanda yapılmıştır. Bölgede 65 yaş üstü kaçırılarak evlendirilmiş 14 kadın varken, bu kadınların 12'si çalışmaya dahil olmuştur. Ancak, çalışılan yaş grubunda 2 kadının vefatı, 2 kadının da alzhemeir hastası olması, birinci ağızdan görüşülen kadın sayısını 8'e düşürmektedir. Diğer 4 kadının yaşam hikayeleri ise kızlarının ve kız kardeşlerinin ağzından dinlenmiştir. Bu yaklaşım, ilk başta çalışmanın bir limitasyonu olarak görülmekteyken, çalışmanın önemli bir bölümünü oluşturan *kolektif hafıza* kavramsallaştırılmasının zeminini oluşturmaktadır. Kolektif hafıza ya da toplumsal bellek bu çalışma içerisinde kısaca; hafızanın çağrışım yaptığı bireysel deneyimlerin, kapsayıcı bir bütünlüğe doğru evirilmesi olarak tanımlanabilir. Konuyla birleştirecek olursak, kız kaçırma deneyiminin her başat aktörün deneyimlerinin tarihsel süreç içerisinde bir toplama doğru ilerlediği ve anlatıların birçok unsurunun toplamdaki tek bir hikayenin ortak keseni olduğunu görebiliyoruz. Bir diğer deyişle, görüşmelerin ilerleyen sürecinde, çekme süreci anlatılarının neredeyse görüşmelerin tamamında ortak bir anlatıya dönüştüğünü açıkça gözlemleyebiliriz. Hikayelerin ortaklığı bizi bu çalışmanın bir sonraki aşaması olan çekme deneyiminin, bir ritüel olarak tanımlanmasını olanaklı kılmaktadır.

Görüşmelerin akışını hiyerarşik bir ilişki ağına dönüşmesinden endişe ettiğim ve, soru-cevap olarak değil; anlamlandırmaya çalıştığım çekme deneyimini, hayatlarını üç bölüme ayırarak - 1. çekme öncesi baba evindeki yaşam, 2. çekme hikayesi, 3. çekme sonrası yeni evdeki yaşam anlatmalarının geçiş süreçlerindeki hissiyatlarını ve bu geçişlerin birer dönüm noktasına işaret edip etmediklerini görebilmek amacıyla kadınların yaşam hikayeleri belirlemiştir. Sözlü tarih tekniğinin bu çalışma için kadınların gözünden alternatif bir tarih yazımına katkı sunmaktadır. Ayrıca, görüşmeci kadınlardan birinin dudaklarından dökülen 'Hikaye masal demiş, döner de *adamı* keser demişler.' sözüyle, tarih anlatısının insanların hikayelerinin şekillenmesiyle, geçmişle yeniden bir yüzleşmeyi de beraberinde getirmektedir.

Görüşmelerin en kısası 20 dakika ile en uzunu 3 saat arasında değişen yaklaşık olarak 3 saate yakın ses kayıtları, 100 sayfaya yakın deşifreler çıkmıştır. Bu deşifreler metne aktarılırken görüşmecilerimin isimlerinin baş harfleriyle kodlama yapılmış, aynı baş harfine sahip görüşmeciler n^1, n^2... şeklinde ifade edilmiştir. Bu deşifrelerin hepsini elde kodlayıp, teorik zemin içerisinden marjinalizasyon, kolektif bilinç, dayanışma, öznelliklerin özgünlüğü ve günlük hayat siyaseti gibi kodlamalarla analizin temeli oluşturulmuştur.

ANALİZ

Bu çalışmada kız kaçırmanın bir alternatif form olarak sunuluşuna bir eleştiri üzerinden; bu çalışmada kız kaçırma - çekme, bir ritüel olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çekmenin bir ritüel olarak tanımlanması, bu çalışmada kız kaçırmanın bir kültür öğesi olarak sunulmasının zeminini oluşturmaktadır. Nihai hedefi olan çekmenin ritüel olarak tanımlanmasının zemini; törensel bir eylem ve kamuoyunun konsensüsü bağlamında incelenmiştir. Törensel eylem her anlatıda ortak olan unsurların - görücü usulü istemenin gerçekleşmemesi, akrabalık bağı, çekme esnasında kadına karşı şiddet, cinsel birleşme ve mahkeme süreci - bir araya gelmesiyle, ve bu törensel eylemin süreç içerisinde yeniden tekrarlanmasıyla kamuoyunun da konsensüsü oluşmaktadır. Herhangi bir birey, hiçbir koşulda toplumdan izole sosyalize olamayacağı için, kolektif belleğin oluşumunda ve bu belleğin bireylerin öznel deneyimlerini şekillendirdiğini söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Bu bağlamda da, çekme icat edilmiş bir gelenek olmadığı için, tarihselliği içerisinde kendini bir ritüel olarak kabul ettirmiştir.

Çekmenin ritüel olarak tanımlanmasından önce FDK kavramsallaştırması ışığında evlilik sistemleri içerisinde marjinal bir konuma sahiptir. Bu haliyle çekme norm olarak görülen görücü usulü evliliğin dışarısında bir formdur. Ancak bu haliyle, çekme hala bir evlilik biçimi olarak da kabul görmektedir. Literatürdeki istisnai olma hali, bir alternatif sistem olarak tanımlayıp, evlilik kurumunun katı, işlenemez yapısında çatlaklar oluşumuna imkan sağladığı iddia edilmektedir. Ancak, çekilmelerin tamamının evlilikle sonuçlanması; kız kaçırmanın kendisini alternatif

olarak sunamamaktadır. Bu durum, çekmenin evlilik biçimleri içerisinde hem dışarıda hem de içeride bir konum sağlamaktadır. Bu çift vizyon hali, çekme deneyimine sahip kadınların evliliğe dair fikirlerini ve kendi hayat deneyimlerini başka bir perspektiften anlama ve anlamlandırma imkanı sunmaktadır.

Çekme süreci anlatılarındaki benzerliklerin nasıl törensel bir eylem içerisinde gerçekleştiğini dört başlık altında toplayabiliriz. Görücü usulü kız istemelerin birçok farklı neden sebebiyle sonuçsuz kalması, kız kaçırmaya ilk sebebiyet olarak gösterilebilir. İsteme ritüeli hiç gerçekleşmeden çekilen kadınların azınlıkta olduğunu düşünürsek, öncesinde istemeyle bir çeşit anlaşma yoluna girilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Çekilip geldiği bir evde kuma olarak yaşayan bir kadın; kocasının, babası istemeye geldiğinde vermemesi üzerine dillendirdiği "İsterim vermezsin, çalarım görmezsin." sözü, bu durumu iyi özetlemektedir. Ardından gelen çekme eylemi, genellikle kadınların gündelik iş yüküyle ilişkili sosyalleşme alanlarını oluşturan mekanlarda gerçekleşmektedir. Çekme eylemi, kadınların haneye hizmet adı altında sürdürdükleri işler için bulundukları mekanlarda ve, köydeki herkesin şahit olabileceği zaman aralıklarında çekmeler gerçekleşmektedir. Ayrıca, bu çekmelerin bir çoğu akrabalık bağı üzerinden yürümektedir. Görücü usulü evlilikler çoğunlukla; sahip olunan özel mülkiyetlerin kaybedilmesi gibi kaygılardan ötürü, aile içinde organize edilmiştir. Hatta, kız kaçırma/kaçma farklı bir motivasyonla gerçekleştiği için, akrabalık bağlarının sarsılmaya başladığını düşündürse de, görüşmelerde ortaya çıktığı şekliyle çekmeler aile içinde de yaşanmıştır. Bu durum, bizatihi farklılıkları içerse de çekmenin hala bir norm gibi görülen bir evlilik biçimi gibi tasavvur edilmesi ve o yönde yeni hanenin organize edilmesi söz konusu olmuştur. Çekmenin tarafları arasında akrabalık olsun olmasın; her anlatının en büyük ortak keseni, sürecin de bir diğer unsuru olan, çekmelerin rıza olmaksızın gerçekleşmesinden kaynaklı kadına uygulanan şiddettir. Çekme sürecinde yaşanan son iki unsursa, birbirinin içine geçmiştir ve anlatıların kabulünü açıkça göstermektedir. Çekme olayının ardından, kızın ailesi jandarma birlikleriyle beraber oğlanın evinden kızlarını almak için giderlerken, erkek de bu sürecin kızın babasına lehine sonuçlanmasını önlemek amacıyla, kaçırdıkları ilk güvenilir mekanda - çoğunlukla bir akraba evinde - cinsel ilişkiye girmektedirler. Bu süreç, mahkemede kızların

kendi rızasıyla gittiğini beyan etmeleriyle sonuçlanmaktadır. Hatta, sonucun kızın eve dönmesiyle sonuçlanmaması, daha sonraki çekme vakalarında babalarının jandarmaya haber vermemelerine de sebep olmaktadır. Bu durum, bir kez daha köy içerisinde çekmenin kabul edildiğini göstermektedir.

Çekmenin ritüel kavramsallaştırmasının ikinci ayağı olan kamuoyu konsensüsü de köy içerisinde ciddi anlamda muhafaza edilmiş ve kabul görmüştür. Evlilik çalışmaları içerisinde yer alan kaçma/kaçırılma çoğu zaman normların dışında istisnai modeller olarak tanımlansa da, kaçırılma eyleminin geçmişi eski Türklere kadar götürülmektedir. Kız kaçırma ritüeliyle evlenme yörede kabul görüyor olmakla birlikte; seremoni olarak tanımlanmasının unsurlarından olan mahkeme süreçleri yaşanırken, bu problem komünitenin bütünlüğünü bozacak noktalara ulaşmamaktadır. Köyün ileri gelen kişilerinin aldığı pozisyonlar itibariyle çekme pratiğinin o tarihsel koşullar altında genel geçer bir evlilik biçimi olduğu gözlemlenmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın ikinci ayağı olan çekme sonrası yeni hane içerisindeki kadınların gündelik hayatla nasıl mücadele ettikleri ve ne gibi stratejiler geliştirdiklerine ilişkindir. Burada, yapının özneyi belirlediği modernist argümanın eleştirisi olarak, bizatihi öznelerin yani çekilmiş kadınların, aile kurumunu nasıl bir süreç içerisinde oluşturduklarına dikkat çekilmiştir. Bunu yaparken de, gündelik hayatın nasıl politize olduğu açığa çıkmaktadır. Modernist anlatı içerisinde şekillenmiş evlilik anlayışı tekil, evrensel ve özcü bir yaklaşıma dayanırken, FDK ışığında çekilmiş kadınların deneyiminin özgünlüğü ve bu özgünlükten açığa çıkan yeni bir evlilik anlayışı söz konusudur. Çekme deneyimi sonrası, ailenin oluşumu içerisinde kadınlar kendilerine yönelik bir takım stratejiler geliştirmişler ve bunu kendi bedenlerinde söz sahibi olacak şekilde kullanmışlardır. Dahası yeni hane içerisindeki üyelerle, özellikle kadınlarla kurulan ilişkinin boyutu da çok daha farklı olmuştur. Kadınlar arası ilişkinin farklılığı çekilerek yeni haneye gelen gelin için kocası ile kurduğu ilişkinin boyutunu ciddi bir şekilde etkilemiştir. Bu haliyle, verili literatür içerisinde yer alan kırsal bölgelerdeki evliliğe atfedilen sorumluluk ve iş bölümü eksenindeki nosyonu bir anlamda farklı bir biçim almıştır. Bir diğer odak noktası ise gündelik hayatın sorunlarına ilişkin kadınlar arası kurulan dayanışma da bunun bir başka örneğidir. Ev

odaklı fakirlik vurgusundan da ilerleyen bir kolektif yaşama hali bulunmaktadır. Kısıtlı üretim ve pazara mesafeli yaklaşım takas usulü bir kolektif yaşamı mümkün kılmaktadır. Son olarak sahadan devşirdiğim, Karadenizli kadınların öz-tanımlama ve öz-değerleme süreçlerinin derinlikli analizi yer almaktadır. Bir sözlü kültür ürünü olarak Karadeniz kadınlarının kaide atma geleneği, bilgi üretim sürecinde marjinalize olan kadınların gündelik hayatlarına ilişkin bir pratiğin onların eylemliliklerinin kendini gösterdiği bir alan olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu kaideler boyunca, kadınlar kendi aile bireyleriyle olan ilişkilerinden, çok daha genel anlamda isteklerine, arzularına ve hatta pişmanlıklarına dair ifadelere yer vermişlerdir. Bu durum, en basit haliyle kadınlarda eleştirel bir bilinç sürecinin oluştuğunun ya da oluşmaya başladığının nüvelerinin en güzel örneklerindendir. Eleştirel bilinç süreciyle de kendilerini tanımladıkları ve değer atfettikleri bir alan olarak kaide atma geleneği, gündelik hayat pratikleri içerisinde kadınların kendi gerçekliklerini ifade edebilmektedir. İlk bakıldığında görünen öznel deneyimler, çekme deneyimine sahip bütün kadınlarda ortak kesen olmakta ve kendini bir konum olarak üretmektedir. Bu bağlamda, duruş projesine atfedilen niteliksel değişim ve dönüşüm hatta devrimci bir eylemlilik hali kaide atma geleneğinde açıkça görülmektedir. Kadınların duygu ve düşüncelerinin bir ifade biçimi olarak kaide atma geleneği özgürleştirici bir eylem olarak siyasal bir anlama ve bir sözlü kültür anlatısı olarak kadınlar için kadınlara dair bir bilgi üretim süreci olarak okunabilmektedir.

SONUÇ

Bu çalışma özet olarak evlilik sistemleri içerisinde bir form olan kız kaçırmayı kadınların konumsallığı üzerinden anlamaya ve anlamlandırmaya çalışmıştır. Bunu yaparken yöredeki 'çekme' isimlendirmesinden hareketle, pratiğin kendisi bir takım sosyal ihtiyaçlardan ortaya çıkmış ve ritüel kavramsallaştırması ekseninde bir evlilik formu olarak açıklanmıştır. Tezin ikinci kısmında ise, kadınların çekme eylemi sonrası evlilik hayatlarıyla nasıl mücadele ettikleri ─hem yapısal düzlemde, hem de bireylerle iletişim özelinde─ ve kendilerine bir öz-değerleme ve öz-tanımlama biçimi olarak kaide atma geleneği üzerinden anlatılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu haliyle, bu çalışma yalnızca evlilik literatürüne değil FDK teorik zemininde yapılan çalışmalara da bir diğer katkı olmuştur. Çekmenin, daha genel ifadeyle kız kaçırmanın evlilik

sistemleri içerisindeki marjine itilmiş konumu ─alternatif olsun, olmasın─, normun dışında olması bize gerçekliğin bilgisini daha objektif olarak sunmaktadır. Çekilmiş kadınların deneyimi evlilik kurumuna ilişkin gerçeğe daha yakın bir anlatıyı mümkün kılmıştır. Literatüre ve teoriye bu katkılarının yanında elbette sınırlılıkları da bu tezin bünyesinde eklemek gerekmektedir. FDK'nin kendini ne modernitede ne postmodernitede konumlandırmamasından kaynaklı her daim kavramları işlevsel hale getirirken kaygan bir zeminde ilerleme riskini de barındırmaktaydı. FDK'nin net olmayan duruşunun yanı sıra evlilik literatürü içerisinde kız kaçırmaya dair çok sınırlı çalışmalar da kavramsal çerçeveyi oluşturma hususunda epey zorlamıştır. Bu haliyle bu çalışmanın ileriye dönük genç jenerasyonları da dahil ederek kız kaçırma deneyiminde değişimler olup olmadığı aynı zamanda kız kaçırmaya yüklenen kültürel anlamı da görmeyi sağlayacaktır. Öte yandan bu çalışmanın Türkiye'nin diğer kırsal kesimlerinde de yürütülmesi farklı mekansal konumsallığın getirdiği sosyo-tarihsel ve hatta kültürel kodlara dair bize çok daha farklı bir kız kaçırma anlatısı sunmaya katkı sağlayacak ve aynı diye adlandırabileceğimiz bir eyleme dair gerçekliğin farklı anlatılarını görebilmemize imkan tanır.

APPENDIX B: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	X
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	
Enformatik Enstitüsü	
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Beşir
Adı : Fethiye
Bölümü : Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Ana Bilim Dalı

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : 'Çekme' Ritual in a Village of Black Sea Region in Turkey: Bride Kidnapping as a Critique of Alternative Systems of Marriage

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans [X] Doktora [ ]

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. [X]
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. [ ]
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. [X]

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: