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**WOMEN'S RADICALIZATION IN TURKEY: THE CASE  
OF DAESH**

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# **WOMEN'S RADICALIZATION IN TURKEY: THE CASE OF DAESH**

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In addition, I acknowledge that any claim of irregularity that may arise in relation to this work will result in a disciplinary action in accordance with the university legislation.

Yeşim Erdeğer

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Date: 05/07/2023

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## WOMEN'S RADICALIZATION IN TURKEY: THE CASE OF DAESH

### ABSTRACT

Daesh is a jihadist terrorist organization that attracted many people worldwide especially between 2013 and 2016. Daesh made propaganda about the utopia of establishing a so-called Islamic State and called on men and women worldwide to join it. Daesh's propaganda attracted thousands of people to travel to Syria to join Daesh. Accordingly, Daesh has also attracted many recruits from Turkey. Daesh has drawn worldwide attention by recruiting more women than other jihadist terrorist organizations. Although there has been a high amount of women participation in Daesh from Turkey, the Turkish literature has given little focus on women's participation to Daesh from Turkey. In addition, media outlets and state actors in particular, have displayed a flawed perspective on women's radicalization by considering these women as "victims" or "brainwashed." Recent studies literature has criticized this perspective by examining women's agency in radicalization processes. Due to the lack of studies in Turkey, a gender-biased perspective on women's radicalization joined Daesh has remained common. This research challenges the gender-biased discourse of "victim" or "brainwashed" women by highlighting women's agency in radicalization processes. Although the radicalization process cannot be attributed to a single motivation, we questioned women's agency based on women's primary motivations that led to their radicalization. We evaluated individual motivations by considering the Turkey's structural dynamics' effects on women's radicalization. The research observed that women in the research joined Daesh primarily due to religious motivations. We frequently encountered motivations, such as to live Islam properly, contributing to *jihād*, and seeing *hijra* to Daesh as a religious obligation. Additionally, some women indicated family-related motivations to join Daesh. On the other hand, Turkey needs to develop social policies and de-radicalization programs for Daesh returnees by considering ideological motivations instead of considering women as "victims" or "brainwashed".

**Keywords:** Radicalization, Women's Radicalization, Daesh, Islamic State, ISIS, Turkey, Terrorism, Women's Agency, Gender

## TÜRKİYE'DE KADIN RADİKALLEŞMESİ: DAESH ÖRNEĞİ

### ÖZET

DAESH, özellikle 2013-2016 yılları arasında tüm dünyada çok sayıda insanı kendisine çekmiş cihatçı bir terör örgütüdür. DAESH propaganda araçları ile sözde bir İslam Devleti kurduğu ütopyasını yayarak tüm dünyadan kadın ve erkek katılımcıları kendisine katılmaya çağırmıştır. Bu çağrı sonucunda binlerce kişi DAESH'e katılmak amacı ile Suriye'ye gitmiştir. Buna paralel olarak, DAESH, Türkiye'den de birçok katılımcı çekmiştir. DAESH, diğer cihatçı terör örgütlerine nazaran çok daha fazla kadını saflarına katmasıyla tüm dünyada ilgi çekmiştir. Türkiye'den de DAESH'e yoğun bir kadın katılımı gözlenmesine karşılık, literatür bu konuya çoğunlukla ilgisiz kalmıştır. Ayrıca özellikle medya organları ve devletler bu kadınları eşlerinin veya ailelerinin "kurbanı" veya "kandırılmış" kadınlar olarak görerek kadın radikalleşmesinde eksik bir bakış açısı sergilemiştir. Son dönemdeki literatür çalışmaları ise kadınların radikalleşme süreçlerinde faillliğini (eyleyciliğini) araştırarak bu bakış açısına bir eleştiri getirmiştir. Türkiye'de ise bu tür literatür çalışmalarının eksikliği nedeniyle DAESH'e katılan kadınların radikalleşme süreçleri üzerine toplumsal cinsiyet önyargılarına dayalı bir bakış açısı öne çıkmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın amacı kadınların radikalleşme süreçlerindeki failliklerini (eyleyciliklerini) ön plana çıkararak toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı "kurban" veya "kandırılmış" kadın söylemine karşı çıkmaktır. Radikalleşmeyi tek motivasyona bağlamak güç olsa da kadınların öncelikli motivasyonlarından yola çıkarak kadınların radikalleşme süreçlerindeki failliklerini (eyleyciliklerini) sorguladık. Bu bireysel motivasyonları, Türkiye'nin yapısal özelliklerinin kadın radikalleşmesi üzerindeki etkilerini de göz önüne alarak değerlendirdik. Bu araştırma, araştırmadaki kadınların çoğunlukla dini motivasyonlar ile DAESH'e katıldığını gözlemlemiştir. Araştırmada dini ideolojiler belirten kadınların DAESH altında İslam'ı daha iyi yaşama motivasyonları, cihada katkı sunmak istemeleri, DAESH'e hicret etmeyi bir dini zorunluluk olarak görmeleri gibi motivasyonlara sık sık rastladık. Bunun dışında, aileleri ile beraber olmak için DAESH'e katılan kadınlar da mevcuttur. Öte yandan, Türkiye'nin DAESH'ten geri dönenlere yönelik sosyal politikalar ve radikalleşme karşıtı programlar geliştirmesi, kadınları "kurban" ya da "kandırılmış" olarak görmek yerine ideolojik motivasyonları göz önünde bulundurması gerekmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Radikalleşme, Kadınların Radikalleşmesi, DAEŞ, İslam Devleti, IŞİD, Türkiye, Terörizm, Toplumsal Cinsiyet



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<i>AA</i>	Anadolu Agency
<i>BTK</i>	The Information and Communication Technology Authority
<i>DHA</i>	Demirören News Agency
<i>HDP</i>	People’s Democratic Party
<i>IHA</i>	İhlas News Agency
<i>JDP</i>	Justice and Development Party
<i>PKK</i>	Kurdistan Workers’ Party
<i>PYD</i>	The Democratic Union Party
<i>YPG</i>	The People’s Defense Units
<i>WHO</i>	World Health Organization

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Daesh is a terrorist organization formed in 2013 from the remains of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Stern and Berger 2015, 30). Al-Qaeda in Iraq was led by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. However, Zarqawi was assassinated by the USA in 2006 (Stern and Berger 2015, 44), and his place was replaced with Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi. After the death of Zarqawi, Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda in 2006, called for a declaration of the Islamic State of Iraq under the Al-Baghdadi. Yet again, Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi was killed by the joint operations of American and Iraqi forces (Warrick 2015, 207). Then, Abu-Bakr Al-Baghdadi was appointed as the new leader of the Islamic State of Iraq, and he was going to declare the so-called Caliphate. Under the leadership of Al-Baghdadi, the Islamic State of Iraq was renamed Islamic State (Al-Dawla Al-Islamiyya fi Al-Iraq wa Al-Sham *الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام*, or Daesh aka Ad-Dawlah).

The Syrian Civil War in 2011 created a ground for the appearance of different groups within Syria, such as Daesh, Al-Nusra alleged to Al-Qaeda, and YPG (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel/ The People's Defense Units).<sup>1</sup> From many groups, Daesh stepped forward with its control of some territories in Syria and Iraq and attempted to be a state. Daesh aims to unite the *ummah*<sup>2</sup> under the Islamic State by declaring the Caliphate in Iraq, Syria, and beyond on the first day of Ramadan<sup>3</sup> or on June 29, 2014. Daesh made many terrorist attacks and committed numerous atrocities, such as enslavement, beheadings, mass executions, kidnapping, displacement, and smuggling of historical artifacts.

Daesh globally invited people to make *hijra* and live under the so-called Islamic State through social media propaganda and its media outlets. It showed some high-quality productions like beheadings,<sup>4</sup> prompted the claim that Muslims suffered in Syria,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PYD was established in 2003, and YPG in 2004, but gained power with the Syrian Civil War, and the war against Daesh (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior 2017b, 6). YPG, PYD, and PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê/ Kurdistan Workers' Party) unite under the KCK (Koma Civakên Kurdistanê/ Kurdistan Communities Union).

<sup>2</sup> "A people, a tribe, a group of people from each tribe to whom a prophet has been sent," and/or "groups that are united by an important element such as believing in the same religion, living at the same time or being in the same place" (Bulut 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Unknown Author. 2014. "Khalifah Declared." *Dabiq*, Issue 1, p.7.

<sup>4</sup> Unknown Author. 2014. "Special." *Dabiq*, Issue 4, p.51

women had been raped,<sup>6</sup> and created a utopia of an Islamic State with an education system, health system, and economy.<sup>7</sup>

Daesh also wanted to attract women to contribute to establishing the so-called Islamic State, supporting *jihad* via making *hijra* and supporting Daesh.<sup>8</sup> This call for women to join Daesh found a response, and around 6,797-6,902 (known) women joined Daesh worldwide (Cook and Vale 2019, 38). Among these, 1,023-1,105 women joined Daesh from Western Europe (Cook and Vale 2019, 36). Women who joined Daesh from Western states have been highly debated in the literature and media as a reaction to this high flow.

Conversely, Turkey has a considerable flow of Daesh and returnees from Daesh. Some unofficial studies suggest that between 3000 (Milliyet 2014) to 9000 (Erkmen 2015) people joined Daesh from Turkey. These estimations did not separate affiliates by gender; many women joined Daesh from Turkey. Nevertheless, the media, government, and judiciary depict these women as just victims of their husbands, families, or recruiters. Assuming all women are just victims is an ill-designed perception of understanding women's radicalization. This study claims that women are complex in their motivations to join Daesh, and we need to consider their agencies when they decide to join Daesh.

The main research questions are why and how Turkish women radicalize to join Daesh. Women are complex in their motivations, and we must consider their agencies when joining Daesh. Hence, the research focuses on women's radicalization to join Daesh, their desires to live under the so-called Islamic State, the political and religious ideologies of Daesh women, and social and online networks that enable radicalization and structural factors of Turkey. The perception of Turkish women joining Daesh is dominated by gender-biased assumptions such as women's passivity in radicalization, meaning that they are not as agents as men in their radicalization. This reductionist view

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<sup>5</sup> Unknown Author. 2014. "From Hijrah to Khilafah." *Dabiq, Issue 1*, p.43

<sup>6</sup> Unknown Author. 2014. "Advice for the Soldiers of the Islamic State." *Dabiq, Issue 6*. P.11

<sup>7</sup> Unknown Author. 2014 "Islamic State Reports." *Dabiq, Issue 4*, p.27-29. and Unknown Author. 2015 "Islam Devletinden Haberler." *Konstantiniyye, Issue 1*, p.44-45.

<sup>8</sup> Umm Sumayyah al-Muhājirah. 2015. "From Our Sister." *Dabiq, Issue 10*, p.42-48.

leads to a poor understanding of women's involvement in religious terrorist organizations. The dominant view of gender has caused a one-dimensional and shallow understanding of women's motivations to join Daesh in Turkey. The research aims to open profound interpretations and debates by questioning gendered perceptions of the motivations and exploring power relations in the feminist approach. Personal stories in the media in Turkey about women who joined Daesh, officials' attitudes, and decisions in court cases will be sources to explore the radicalization of women. Stories about women joining Daesh and government attitudes in the media can also shed information on the perceptions and realities of women joining Daesh from Turkey. In addition, by investigating their radicalization processes, the research can highlight the gendered component of radicalization, the socialization places of women in Turkey, and their religious and political identities. There is little research on this topic because of the widespread impression of women in Daesh as passive and a lack of government and media resources on women joining Daesh from Turkey. The research aims to highlight the disparity in the radicalization of women who joined Daesh from Turkey and investigate their radicalization processes. The second chapter will mention highly cited radicalization research to build our theoretical framework. Firstly, even though defining radicalization is challenging, we will mention some definitions by various authors (Doosje et al. 2016; McCauley and Moskalkenko 2008) to define the radicalization term we use. Scholars usually refer to radicalization as a process (Schmid 2013, 24). For this reason, discussing the radicalization process creates one of the pillars of our research. We will use Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko's two pyramids model to evaluate ideological and behavioral radicalization processes. We will continue highlighting the importance of like-minded groups in radicalization processes, which work as enabling factors. Then we will mention Zeyno Baran's conveyor belt theory to look at group dynamics in a different way. Another pillar of the research is examining the radicalization process with a gender-sensitive approach. For this reason, we will discuss approaches to women's radicalization in the literature. Women are perceived as peaceful and victims of terrorism widely. Against this poorly defined claim, scholars have highlighted agencies of women in radicalization and terrorism (Alison 2004; Auchter 2020; Evans and de Silva 2021; Martini 2016; Martini 2018; Gentry 2011; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Sjoberg and Gentry 2015a; Sjoberg and Gentry 2015b;

Sjoberg and Gentry 2016; Ali. 2016). The research also argues that women have agencies in their radicalization even though they portray them as victims. However, the literature primarily focused on Western women's radicalization. For this reason, we will discuss a limited source on Turkish women's radicalization at the end of the chapter.

In the third chapter, the state's perception of terrorism, the official's perspective on radicalization, Daesh networks in Turkey, and their recruitment and propaganda activities will be discussed. To comprehend Turkey's unique position for Daesh, it is vital to understand how Daesh networks are organized differently in different cities of Turkey. Daesh uses online networks highlighting their fight against the PKK for Turkish-speaking audiences,<sup>9</sup> and it has organized in cities under the name of Islamic associations and congregations via arranging meetings in various places like houses, stores, and masjids (Eroğlu 2018, 223). In Turkey, their organizations and tactics diversified based on the characteristics of cities and structural characteristics of Turkey. For this reason, we will look at the characteristics of cities where Daesh recruitment was comparably high and Turkey's economic, political, and social conditions.

In the fourth and last chapter, women's radicalization in our research is analyzed based on our theoretical framework and knowledge of Turkey's situation. We will examine how ideological motivations, social and online networks, age, and structural factors like Turkey's economic, political, and social structures affect the radicalization processes of women. We will conclude women are agents in deciding to join Daesh, but they tried to portray themselves as victims of their husbands, families, and social networks, and they were "groomed" due to Turkey's pretend belief as passive women.

## **1.2 Methodology and Framework**

The research questions how and why women from Turkey and Turkish-origin women from outside Turkey joined Daesh by examining their motivations and structural factors for participation in Daesh from Turkey. For this study, participation in Daesh refers to travel to the so-called territories of the Islamic State, engaging in Daesh networks in Turkey, financial support, or making propaganda for Daesh. We use the literature on

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<sup>9</sup> Unknown Author. 2015. "Türkiye'ye Mesaj" *Konstantiniyye Issue 3*, p.65.

women's radicalization to provide a theoretical framework for critically analyzing women's participation in Daesh. However, due to most of the analysis on women's participation in Daesh focus on Western women, the study also considers the structural factors to acknowledge the main differences in participation in Daesh from Turkey. In other words, since Turkey has distinct societal, cultural, political, and structural characteristics from Western states, examining participation in Daesh from Turkey requires alternative perspectives. The social position of women in Turkish society is profoundly different from those of women in Western states. For comparison, the study includes Turkish-origin women from Western states.

For this purpose, the primary resources of the study are news articles about women who joined Daesh, and the statements in open trials, mainly the trials of October 10, 2015, Ankara Train Station attack<sup>10</sup> and July 20, 2015, Suruç attack of Daesh.<sup>11</sup> research uses data from Turkish-language news stories gathered from national news agencies (Demirören News Agency, Anadolu Agency, İhlas News Agency), national and local newspapers from the cities that actively supported Daesh, including Bursa, Konya, Adyaman, and Gaziantep, as well as from major cities like Ankara and Istanbul as seen in Appendix A.2. We applied Google and Yandex searches to reach the news, including women stories joined Daesh. We used the keywords in Turkish "İŞİD," "İŞİD gelinleri," "İŞİD aileleri," "İŞİD Kadın," "DEAŞ," "DEAŞ Gelinleri," "DEAŞ Aileleri," "DEAŞ Kadın," "Cihat gelinleri."<sup>12</sup> After the cases are shaped based on online searches, the names of women, if newspapers openly indicate them, were searched on search engines Google and Yandex between June 2022 and January 2023. We have updated the database if newspapers publish recent news stories. In the trials of the Ankara Train Station and Suruç attacks, some women, mainly from Adıyaman and Gaziantep, were listened to as witnesses due to their husbands' roles in these attacks. After the cases

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<sup>10</sup> In Labor, Peace, and Democracy protests, Daesh made two suicide bombing attacks in Ankara Train Station perpetrated by Yunus Emre Alagöz (Bıçakçı 2019, 121). One hundred two people died in the attacks (CNN Türk 2018a).

<sup>11</sup> The Federation of Socialist Youth Association (SGDF) organized a program to help rebuild Kobane in the Suruç district of Şanlıurfa at Amara Culture Center (Bıçakçı 2019, 120). Thirty people died, and 104 were injured in a Daesh attack by Şeyh Abdurrahman Alagöz from Adıyaman (Cumhuriyet 2015a).

<sup>12</sup> Keywords in English: "ISIS," "ISIS brides," "ISIS families," "ISIS women," "Daesh," and "Daesh brides," "Daesh families," "Daesh women," and "Jihadi brides."

were finalized, we contacted the trial lawyers and accessed the files on the Ankara Train Station and Suruc trial statements.

Our cases consist of fifty-one women from Adana, Adiyaman, Ankara, Aydın, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kayseri, Kırşehir, Konya, Muğla, Muş, Tokat, Australia, Denmark, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands. The research includes nine Turkish women who lived in outside Turkey to provide a comparison among women from Turkey in terms of motivations and structural factors that played roles in participation in Daesh. As a result, the study split Turkish women into two groups: those in Turkey and those who lived in other countries. Even though the news articles contain more women’s stories, we chose more extensive news pieces. In other words, because numerous news items just mentioned women and provided no information on them, we are unable to include these ladies in our research.



**Figure 1.1** Living Places of Women Before Participation in Daesh

Our study uses content analysis based on news articles and women’s statements in trials. Content analysis refers to (Neuendorf 2017, 1)

Content analysis may be briefly defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics. It includes both human-coded analyses and computer-aided text analysis (CATA). Its applications can include the careful examination of face-to-face human interactions;

the analysis of character portrayals in media venues ranging from novels to online videos; the computer-driven analysis of word usage in news media and political speeches, advertising, and blogs; the examination of interactive content such as video gaming and social media exchanges; and so much more.

In our research, we benefited from content analysis while focusing on motivations and push factors. We formed a categorization based on the common themes in the statements of the women or their relatives, if any, and in the news articles. We focused on the most frequently mentioned concepts mentioned in the motivations for joining Daesh in the women's own words. Twelve women stated that they joined Daesh because of their belief that they could live in Islam better under Daesh and because they thought they could be better Muslims. We categorized these statements as "live Islam." Eight women said they joined Daesh to help the so-called *jihad* in the Islamic State. We categorized the aim of this *jihad* as "*jihad* ideology." Four women stated that *hijra* is a religious obligation and that they migrated there because the Islamic State was established. We categorized this motivation as "*hijra* ideology." Two women stated that Muslims were suffering in Syria, and they wanted to help their Muslim brothers and sisters there. We categorized this motivation as "help Sunni Muslims." Three women mentioned violence and threats within the family and said they joined Daesh with their families for this reason. We categorize this motivation as "family safety." Eight women stated that they joined Daesh with their husbands not to be separated from their children due to the risk of their husbands radicalizing and taking them to Daesh. We categorize this motivation as "family union." In a statement leaked to the press, one woman stated that she joined Daesh to revenge the death of her brother, who died in the ranks of Daesh. We categorized this theme as "revenge." It should be noted that the motivations for radicalization do not depend on a single reason. In this research, we have categorized women by considering their primary motivations. In other words, some women might have joined Daesh to become better Muslims under the Islamic State and be with their husbands and children. Among these different motivations reflected in news reports or statements, the primary motivation has been added to our examination. In order to avoid any confusion here, we made a separate categorization for the drivers, which refers to factors that facilitate one's radicalization process. Accordingly, we also examined through which drivers were radicalized and decided to join Daesh. Eighteen

women stated that they were radicalized together with or because of their husbands or romantic partners. We categorized this theme as the “partner effect,” the most common factor for Turkish women. Following this, five women stated that they were radicalized by the effect of a family member. We have categorized this theme as the “family effect.” Five women stated that they were radicalized by online propaganda and recruitment tools. We categorized this theme as “online radicalization.” We categorized three women who were radicalized in a more closed situation by doing religious research on their own as “self-radicalization.” Two women stated that they were radicalized through the associations and congregations they joined, and this theme was categorized as “through an association.” Two different women also reported that they were radicalized and joined Daesh through unofficial Qur’an courses they attended. We categorized this theme as “through a Qur’an course.” Notably, it is possible for a woman to be radicalized by more than one driver. More precisely, a woman may be radicalized together with her husband, while online propaganda may also have become a driving influence. In these circumstances, we have included her in the category in which she stated which one was the primary influence for her or which was reflected in the news. We did not include women with incomplete information in categories.

In addition, as enabling factors, we assessed the age of the women at the time they joined Daesh, their occupations, and the cities they lived in before joining Daesh. These data showed us the ages of women and that women are concentrated in the 17-25 age range.<sup>13</sup> Seeing these ages allowed us to open the concept of youth radicalization for discussion. Furthermore, by examining the women's occupations in our research, we found that twenty-seven women, approximately fifty-three percent of the women in the research, were housewives. Finally, we evaluated the cities where the women lived and the environment, they lived in to assess the effects of life in these cities and the socialization of women on their radicalization. We noticed that Gaziantep, Konya, Adıyaman, Istanbul, and Ankara stood out with higher levels of participation than other cities for our case.<sup>14</sup> We focused on these cities in particular and evaluated them in

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<sup>13</sup> Serhat Erkmen (2015) also stated the same age range for Turkey in his report on Al-Jazeera Türk, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com.tr/gorus/suriye-ve-irakta-savasan-turkiyeli-mucahitler>

<sup>14</sup> Erkmen (2015) mentioned cities Istanbul, Ankara, Konya, Adana, Diyarbakır, and Gaziantep, and following them Bursa, Sakarya, Bingöl, Muş, and Adıyaman for high participation in Daesh, parallel with our findings.

terms of demographic characteristics, daily life, conservatism, proximity to Syria and recruitment activities, and emphasized the significance of these factors in radicalization. The main limitations of the research are the need for more individual data and our dependency on news stories. We cannot contact women who joined Daesh for interviews due to the hardship of reaching them,<sup>15</sup> their hesitancy to conduct interviews and the time constraints of the research. Hence, our knowledge of the research is limited by the data provided in the news and statements of eight women<sup>16</sup> in trials. The narrative and perspective of news stories affect how they portray women who joined Daesh from Turkey. Different newspapers portrayed women in distinct ways. During the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government rule, opposition newspapers decreased, except for a few newspapers and the government-controlled other media outlets (Akser and Baybars-Hawks 2012, 315). Opposition newspapers<sup>17</sup> portrayed women as perpetrators instead of witnesses or victims of their husbands (T24 2020). The mainstream media outlets took the news from Anadolu Agency, Demirören Haber Agency, and İhlas News Agency mostly gave limited information about women without adding comments on the cases<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the majority of the news about women joined Daesh placed in opposition newspapers such as Evrensel, Cumhuriyet, BirGün, Sözcü, and Kısa Dalga. We contacted several journalists and lawyers who worked with Turkish women who joined Daesh.

The first journalist (journalist one) we contacted did interviews with people affiliated with Daesh and wrote several news articles about Daesh's activities in Turkey. The journalist conducted interviews with women who joined Daesh from Turkey as well. We conducted an interview on March 26, 2023, online. The interview notes were computerized in encrypted form at both ends, only to be accessible by me. We used the interview notes to understand insights into women's stories in the journalists' news articles and one's observations about Daesh networks in Turkey.

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<sup>15</sup> Women are mostly lived in closed environment with limited interaction with other people than their relatives.

<sup>16</sup> B.Ş. Merve Dünder, Ayşenur İnci, Hülya Balı, Şengül Büyükçelebi, Demet Taşar, Hülya Yıldız, and Serpil Dere.

<sup>17</sup> We refer to opposition newspapers Cumhuriyet, Sözcü, BirGün, Bianet, Duvar, Evrensel, T24, Medyascope, Diken Kısa Dalga and Gazete Karınca in our research. These newspapers are left-oriented media outlets in Turkey.

<sup>18</sup> CNN Türk, NTV Haber, Hürriyet, and Milliyet mostly took news from these agencies, close to the government.

The second journalist (journalist two) has published investigative news articles on Daesh networks in Turkey. We contacted the second journalist and conducted an online interview on April 19, 2023. The interview notes were computerized in encrypted form at both ends, only accessible to me. We used the notes from the interview to understand and develop the radicalization processes of women in one's news article and knowledge of Daesh networks in Turkey, motivations, and recruitment processes of women for Daesh from Turkey.

We also contacted lawyer Onur Güler and made an interview on December 12, 2022. Lawyer Onur Güler is a well-known lawyer based in Bursa who worked closely with Daesh cases and authored a book about the judiciary processes of Daesh cases in Turkey (Güler 2021). The interview notes were computerized in encrypted form at both ends, only to access the researcher. He mentioned the judiciary processes and general perspectives of the Turkish judiciary on women returnees of Daesh. The information he gave was used to develop insights into the judiciary processes of women who joined Daesh and women in his book (Güler 2021).

In order to evaluate similarities and differences among these women, the study takes into account ideologies, structural factors, such as economic, political, social, and cultural factors, women's position in society, gender perspectives, personal backgrounds (if reported in the news), ages, and social and online networks, taking advantage of interviews conducted by the researcher, news stories, and statements of women in trials. In addition, the primary limitations of this study are the lack of official estimations and research about Daesh affiliates from Turkey and difficulties in reaching women for in-depth interviews. Also, Turkish media mostly neglects women affiliates of Daesh unless they are high-profile women.<sup>19</sup> This situation resulted in more women from Gaziantep and Adiyaman mentioned due to planners of attacks mostly from Gaziantep and Adiyaman cells. Notably, this does not mean that Gaziantep had the highest women's participation in Daesh. People almost from all cities in Turkey joined Daesh (Erkmen 2015). The study argues that gender-biased presumptions such as women's passivity

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<sup>19</sup> The high-profile women representing women were listed in the terror-wanted list of the police, the wives of planners, and the perpetrators of Daesh attacks in Turkey. Even though there are some stories about low-profile women, the media primarily focuses on high-profile women.

influence how the media, government, and judiciary perceive Daesh women in Turkey. A flawed and incomplete understanding of women's participation in religious terrorist organizations results from this reductionist perspective. The overall gender perspective has led to a one-sided and limited understanding of Turkish women's motivations for joining Daesh. The study hopes to open broader interpretations and debates by challenging gender-biased perspectives about women's motivations for contributing to Daesh.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Radicalization is a complex and often debated process in terrorism studies. These processes have several types that embrace and develop extreme beliefs, feelings, and ideas. The radicalization literature introduces practical approaches to understanding the process. This allows us to discuss different definitions and clarify the radicalization term we use in the research. To examine the radicalization process of women in our research, we benefit from the ideological (cognitive) and behavioral (action) radicalization models (two-pyramid model). Also, in-group dynamics are significant in the radicalization process, which we will highlight.

Radicalization is not presenting a specific checklist to determine which radical ideologies and beliefs lead to participation in terrorist organizations. Similarly, participation in such organizations does not necessarily require adherence to extreme doctrines. However, understanding and exploring the radicalization processes can assist our understanding of participation in terrorism. How gender affects radicalization is a particular question that requires diligent and continuous follow-up.

Women's radicalization has been less explored in terrorism studies literature. Scholars tend to neglect women's participation in terrorism (Sjoberg 2013, 13), although women actively participate in terrorism—for example, Chechnya's Black Widows (Bloom 2011), Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers (Alison 2003), Ireland's Irish Republican Army (Bloom, Gill, and Horgan 2012), and Turkey's the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) (Haner et al. 2020). However, recently, the high number of women's participating in Daesh from European and North American countries increased the interest in women's radicalization in the literature (Pearson and Winterbotham 2017). Notably, the leading literature on women radicalization of Daesh concentrates on Western-originated women, even though most of the women involved in Daesh are initially engaged from Middle Eastern countries (Pearson and Winterbotham 2017, 60). Cook and Vale (2019, 35) estimate the women affiliates of Daesh around 1,023-1,105 from Western Europe<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The West refers to states in the Western Europe, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden,

whereas around 3,083 women from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).<sup>21</sup> Although Turkey has more women affiliates of Daesh by itself.<sup>22</sup> The literature maintains the lack of focus on Turkish women joining Daesh with few exceptions.<sup>23</sup> The literature maintains the lack of focus on Turkish women joining Daesh, with few exceptions.

To shed light on Turkish women's radicalization and involvement in Daesh from Turkey is the focus of this research., This research first explores definitions of radicalization and then analyzes the radicalization process from a cognitive and behavioral perspective (the two pyramid models), including the group radicalization (conveyer belt approach), considering pull and push factors. Finally, this research examines women's radicalization literature focusing on contextual factors in Turkey.

## 2.1 Definitions and Challenges of Radicalization

The lack of a clear definition and ongoing discussion surrounding the concept of radicalization complicates its practical use. (Neuman 2003, 885; Sedgwick 2010, 479). Mark Sedgwick argues that radicalization is “what goes on before the bomb goes off” (Sedgwick 2010, 479). Peter Neuman describes this vagueness as “trouble with radicalization” (Neuman 2013). Unlike Sedgwick's broad definition and Neuman's critiques about the term radicalization, highly cited authors like Bertjan Doosje, Fathali M Moghaddam, Arie W. Kruglanski, Arjan de Wolf, Liesbeth Mann, Allard R.

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Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Among these states, the UK, Germany, France, Netherlands, and Belgium have the highest number of women affiliates.

<sup>21</sup> Since most states of the MENA region have not specify the women affiliates of Daesh, the women affiliates from the MENA would be lower or higher, considering this estimation based on unofficial estimations based on available data. Also, for Turkey, authors note that estimations of women affiliates of Daesh are around 2000 with the high probability of underestimation (Cook and Vale 2019, 40).

<sup>22</sup> Cook and Vale (2019, 40) estimate 2000 women affiliates from Turkey with the note that the number of women would be higher.

<sup>23</sup> A few studies point to Turkish women joining to Daesh. See: Şen, Gülriz and Başak Yavçan 2022. “Gender, Radicalization, and Patriarchy in Turkey: An Analysis of Women's Motivations and Constraints When Confronted with ISIS and the al-Nusra Front.” *Turkish Studies*. 1-23.

Yavçan, Başak and Gülriz Şen. 2019. *Assessing the Role of Women in Fighting Radicalization*. Icare4all & Orsam Research Report.

International Crisis Group. 2020. *Calibrating the Response: Turkey's ISIS Returnees*. Europe Report N°258.

Öztop, Fatma A. 2023. “Women, Gender and Terrorism: The Case of Türkiye.” *Journal of Terrorism and Radicalization Studies*. 2(2): 332-352.

Feddes,<sup>24</sup> and Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko<sup>25</sup> provide us worth-noting definitions of radicalization to comprehend various components of radicalization. Besides John Horgan, Alex P. Schmid, and Zeyno Baran give types and categories of radicalization that help categorize and analyze radicalization more practically.

McCauley and Moskalkenko (2008, 415) define radicalization as “a dimension of increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in support of intergroup conflict and violence.” Radicalization is a process, and it involves a process of increasing extremity in beliefs and behaviors, which may happen simultaneously. Radicalization sometimes emerges in extreme beliefs, like developing categorical thinking about “us versus them,” radicalization sometimes becomes visible in behaviors such as traveling to a foreign state to participate in a terrorist organization. The “intergroup” dynamics lead to support of violence and conflict toward the out-group. Creating a strict in-group and out-group representation is essential to legitimize the attack on “others” by a terrorist organization. Also, intergroup dynamics can affect the growing support of terrorist organizations within the intergroup dynamics. In other words, people from a radical group might quickly cultivate their extreme beliefs and likelihood of joining a terrorist organization. McCauley and Moskalkenko’s (2008, 415) definition have some proper inquiries for this research, like extreme beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and intergroup dynamics for radicalization, which help to understand intergroup dynamics. However, we want to give an additional focus on in-group and out-group categorization to comprehend the legitimization of using violence against “others.”

Another definition includes the effects of in-group and out-group dynamics for radicalization comes from Doosje et al. (2016, 79), and they define radicalization as:

Radicalization is a process through which people become increasingly motivated to use violent means against members of an out-group or symbolic targets to achieve behavioral change and political goals.

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<sup>24</sup> Doosje, Bertjan, Fathali M. Moghaddam, Arie W. Kruglanski, Arjan De Wolf, Liesbeth Mann, and Allard R. Feddes. 2016. "Terrorism, Radicalization and De-radicalization." *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 11: 79-84. cited by 509 according to Google Scholar.

<sup>25</sup> McCauley, Clark, and Sophia Moskalkenko. 2008. "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20(3): 415-433. cited by 1766 according to Google Scholar.

Doosje et al. 2016 definition of radicalization contains more aspects, such as political aspirations, the targets of the goal, and aims like behavioral change and political goals. The radicalization process involves a motivation to use violence toward “others.” For instance, Daesh creates a self and other dichotomy and designates Muslims who did not support or make *hijra* to the Islamic State as *murtad* (apostate) and non-Muslims as *kuffar* (infidels) (Kadivar 2020, 260). Doosje et al. indicates the aim of behavioral change and political goals in radicalization. To apply this definition to Daesh, they aimed to create an Islamic State and declared a “caliphate;” therefore, they sought to create a new political entity. They formed new rules and behavioral changes for their followers and enforced their rules under the controlled territories. Women’s place in Daesh is based on strict gender subordination, as women’s roles were primarily being wives and mothers of jihadists (Bloom and Lokmanoglu 2020, 7). Daesh tried to present these “rules” as normal and acceptable for its supporters in its context.

Radicalization is a context-dependent term, meaning that the construction of radicalization changes according to the perception of the “normal” of the specific place (Sedgwick 2010; Neumann 2013; Mandel 2009). Turkey’s structural factors, political, social, and economic dynamics, gender perspectives, perceived grievances, and diverse factors distinguish them from other states. Turkey’s modernization process from its establishment brings a conflict between modern and traditional society, with the idea of Republican modernization highlighting secularism (Göle 1997, 50). This conflict generates polarization among seculars and Islamists, who have created grievances for both sides. Suppressing political Islam by closing its political parties, the constitutional court, and the headscarf ban in public institutions became the embodiments of the grievances of Islamists (Akbulut 2015). Then, the political Islamist party Justice and Development Party (JDP) came into government as a single party. After that, secular’s grievances showed themselves as Gezi Protests in 2013 (Erensü and Karaman 2017, 33). As seen in these examples, the struggle between secularism and Islamism is a process that affects political and social realms. For this reason, this study will consider the spatiality factor to examine radicalization and involvement in Daesh from Turkey.

Considering these discussions, radicalization is the development and adoption of extreme political and/or religious ideologies and beliefs that may lead to political

violence against an out-group or symbolic targets by creating a dichotomy between in-group and out-group to achieve political goals. We benefit from the definition to examine the radicalization processes of women, considering their adoption of the extreme religious ideology of Daesh and their justification of political violence to “others.” The definition combines the prevailing parts of the aforementioned definitions: developing and adopting extreme ideologies, a strict distinction between in-group and out-group understanding formations, and political goals. In the case of Daesh, creating in-group supporters of Daesh and others (infidels) appears as a dominant part of Daesh’s ideology. In this way, Daesh and its supporters can legitimize attacks Daesh, causing several deaths, injuring civilians, the expansion of Daesh in the name of “*jihad*,” and attacking major historical heritages.<sup>26</sup> For these reasons, this definition helps to clarify the approach of radicalization in the research.<sup>27</sup>

## **2.2 Radicalization Processes in the Literature**

Radicalization is a process that has been affected by several factors, such as recruiters, propaganda, opinion leaders, ideology, individual, group-level, and structural factors. (Schmid 2013, 24). Scholars have made significant contributions to explaining radicalization processes (Morgades-Bamba, Raynal, and Chabrol 2020, 1440), and some of the approaches benefitted from the research to examine the radicalization processes of women in Turkey for Daesh. The two pyramids model of McCauley and Moskaleiko, the conveyor belt approach of Baran, the pull and push factors for radicalization, and the three-level analyses of radicalization will be cited to understand radicalization processes that can help comprehend the radicalization processes of women. The two pyramids model of McCauley and Moskaleiko helps examine distinct ideological (cognitive) and behavioral radicalization processes. The conveyor belt approach of Baran helps to analyze the influence of some groups in Turkey in women’s radicalization creating a support structure to embracing radical ideologies. Pull and push factors help to comprehend different motivations and factors to create grounds for

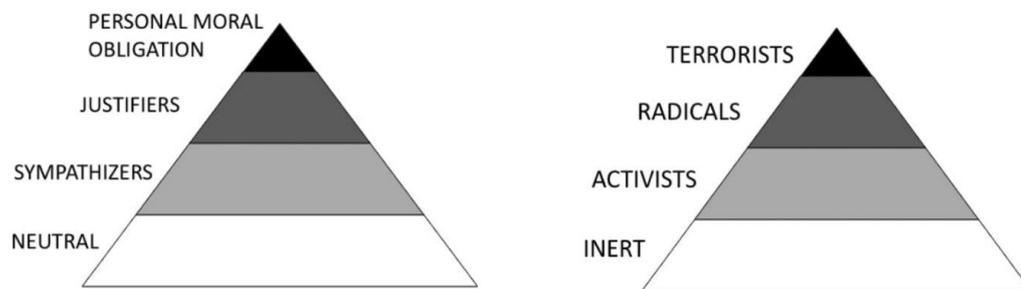
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<sup>26</sup> Daesh demolished historical sites claiming that they were idols of infidels. See: Curry, Andrew. 2017 “Ancient Sites Damaged and Destroyed by ISIS.” *Ancient Sites Damaged and Destroyed by ISIS.* *National Geographic*. Last modified: November 5, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/history-and-civilisation/2017/11/ancient-sites-damaged-and-destroyed-by-isis>.

<sup>27</sup> The study uses radicalization instead of violent extremism because there is little evidence about the performance of violence by women in the research.

individuals' radicalization. Finally, the three-level approach, individual, group, and macro levels help to categorize the impact of factors for radicalization and assist in examining factors at different levels.

McCauley and Moskaleiko (2017) underline that even though a person held extreme beliefs and ideologies they may not turn them into political violent actions. To highlight the distinction between actions, and ideological engagement, they offer a model to explain distinct mechanisms of opinion and action levels of radicalization with their “two-pyramids model.”



**Figure 2.1** The Two Pyramids Model of Radicalization (Source: McCauley and Moskaleiko 2017)

The first is the opinion pyramid, and the second is the action pyramid. These two pyramids represent separate ideological (cognitive) and behavioral radicalization processes. The opinion pyramid includes neutrals (people who are neutral for a political cause), therefore not radicalized, sympathizers (people who believe in a political cause without justification of violence), justifiers (people who justify using violence to reach a political goal), and people who consider violence as a personal moral obligation (McCauley and Moskaleiko 2017, 211–212). The action level includes inert people who do not try for a political cause at the bottom of the pyramid. The second level of the pyramid contains activists who engage in legal protests for a political goal. The higher level is radicals who engage in illegal actions; at the top, there are terrorists. The two-pyramids model does not suggest a hierarchy or linear processes between these steps. In other words, a person can freely move among pyramid levels. This model can help examine women who went to Syria for Daesh without political ambition, those who sympathize with Daesh without taking action against Daesh, or those who have ideological and

behavioral radicalization. For instance, women could go to Syria under the pressure of their relatives or husbands and be involved in Daesh without justifying the violent actions. Some women who supported the ideology of Daesh did not, or could not, travel to Syria to join Daesh or directly engage in the activities of Daesh. Most women in our research both ideologically radicalized by embracing Daesh ideology and behaviorally by traveling to Syria to join Daesh. Thus, the research evaluates women's opinions and action levels of radicalization.

Different scholars in the terrorism field other than McCauley and Moskalenko discuss the distinction between radicalization as cognitive and behavioral radicalization. Randy Borum (2011a) distinguishes radicalization and radicalization into violent extremism (RVE) and defines it as follows (Borum 2011a, 2):

I use the familiar term radicalization to refer to the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs, and the term action pathways (or action scripts) to describe the process of being involved in terrorism or engaging in violent extremist actions.

As Borum highlights, not all radical ideologies and beliefs lead to involvement in terrorist organizations. Similarly, participation in violent extremist groups does not necessarily require adherence to extreme ideologies, such as fascism or radical Salafism, which advocates using violence to achieve its goals, such as *jihad*. According to Borum (2011a, 3), we should focus on radicalization into violent extremism since we cannot measure cognitive radicalization. In other words, Borum advocates that we should not look at why people participate in terrorism, but we should look at how people participate in terrorism. However, it is essential to note that the distinction between cognitive and behavioral radicalization is not mutually exclusive, and disregarding why people radicalize might create a partial examination of radicalization. Understanding the complexities of the radicalization process requires a holistic examination, including cognitive and behavioral radicalization. Supportably, John Horgan argues that the distinction between cognitive and behavioral radicalization would be beneficial to comprehend the radicalization process (Horgan 2008, 82). Recruiters, structural factors such as political and socio-economic structures, pull and

push factors, and individual motivations play significant roles in radicalizing. Ignoring the “why” of radicalization may lead to a shortfall in understanding the diversity and complexities of the radicalization processes. From this perspective, McCauley, and Moskalenko’s two pyramids model provides a model to evaluate both processes together. The research questions women’s ideological radicalization, such as sympathizers or justifiers of Daesh, and behavioral radicalization, such as traveling to Syria to join Daesh benefiting from the two pyramids model.

Another radicalization approach is Zeyno Baran’s conveyor belt approach. The author argues that some legal organizations, cults, or groups can create a supportive environment for radicalization that leads to participation in violent extremism. Baran exemplifies her point with Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT, or the Party of Liberation) as one of the intermediary groups for radicalization into violent jihadist extremism. This organization has not been a terrorist organization but a “conveyor belt” for jihadist terrorist organizations because it spreads the ideology of jihadism. Some organizations like HT indoctrinate people to join terrorist organizations, and Baran called them “conveyor belt” organizations (Baran 2005, 68). For instance, Tawhid and Sunnah congregation based in Istanbul affected three women in our case who joined its meetings by encouraging the *jihad*, and radical Salafi ideology to increase categorization of people as Muslims and kuffar, as well as encouraging them to make *hijra*, and joined Daesh. Dokumacılar Group based in Adıyaman affected the recruitment of three women from Adıyaman. Consequently, in some cities like Adıyaman, some groups and congregations work as conveyer belt organizations, increasing sympathy and support for Daesh. In our case, the conveyer belt approach helps to conceptualize the group influences in some cities. In-group radicalization is significant for women’s participation in Daesh from Turkey with other enabling factors, such as structural factors.

To comprehend the radicalization process, we also emphasize how the combination of group and structural factors affects individuals. Radicalization processes can be affected by individual factors, such as marginalization, alienation from society, or family, lack of sense of belonging, and any factors individuals develop. People can be radicalized by

the effects of in-group dynamics with the encouragement to participate in violent extremism from the community, families, or social networks, which also link the terrorist group and individuals. For instance, like-minded groups might increase the agreement on a specific issue or shift an agreement on some issues and might be willing to take more radical actions with their groups (McCauley and Moskaleiko 2008, 422). In other words, people can join radical groups through their friends, families, and partners, a loved person. Many women, in our case, state they joined Daesh due to their partners or families joining, which will be discussed below in detail. Besides, structural factors can work as enabling factors for radicalization that facilitate participation in political violence. (Schmid 2013, 4). Considering Turkey's cultural, socioeconomic, and political factors, the research to examine structural factors' role in radicalization differs from Western countries that the radicalization studies primarily focus on for analysis. We can operate a holistic approach by considering all these factors for radicalization in the context of Turkey.

From a variety of disciplines like psychology, international relations, and sociology scholars [Borum and Fein (2017), McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008), Horgan (2008), Moghaddam (2005), Sageman (2008), Hafez and Mullins (2015), Mia Bloom (2012), Sedgwick (2010), Sjoberg and Gentry (2007, 2011, 2015), Veldhuis and Staun (2009)] elaborate a diverse pull and push factors for radicalization. Push factors refer to negative factors that may lead to radicalization, and pull factors refer to positive factors that may attract people to radicalization. These factors motivate people to embrace or develop extremist ideologies, beliefs, and behaviors into violent extremism. Mostly mentioned factors are individual motivations, such as alienation and marginalization; political motivations, such as grievances and ideologies; age, social networks, and online networks; and structural factors, such as political, economic, and social factors. Notably, different spatial and contextual situations affect how these factors foster radicalization. In other words, diverse mechanisms work differently in various contexts. For instance, one of the grievances in the Western states has been formed as Islamophobia (Abbas 2021; Abbas 2011; Özyürek 2010). This grievance has a distinct impact in Turkey due to the Turkish societal structure. Since contextual differences can create different mechanisms for radicalization, contextuality and structural factors of Turkey appears

significant to emphasize examining Turkish women's radicalization in Turkey. Before focusing on gender-sensitive perspectives on radicalization, mentioning general push and pull factors can assist in analyzing and comparing gender-sensitive approaches to radicalization.

Scholars point out grievances related to victimization, exclusion, and marginalization for radicalization as push factors (Sageman 2008; Horgan 2008; Hafez and Mullins 2015). The feeling of humiliation, victimization, and unfairness towards Muslims in Iraq, starting with the war on terror, generates more resonant grievances for Muslims, primarily in the West. Schmid (2013, 20) states that grievances are essential for mobilizing people around extremist ideas. Jihadist terrorist organizations used and deepened the grievances of Muslims (not by themselves but with many other motivations) to raise the idea of global *jihad* in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. However, for Turkey, the feeling of marginalization and exclusion have diverse mechanisms than the effects of the war on terror and later Islamophobia as Muslims in the West. According to Optimar Research, in 2019, 89.5 percent of the society expressed themselves as Muslim, and 74 percent of the sample identified themselves as Sunni Muslims (T24 2019), whereas according to the Presidency of Religious Affairs report in 2014, 99,2 percent of Turkish society declared that they are Muslims, and 77% of the Turkish people stated that they belong to the Hanafi sect (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2014, XXIX). This means that the majority of society consists of the Sunni Muslim population in Turkey. This means that perceived Islamophobia is contested in the Turkish context. The Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet in Turkish) was established in 1924 to shape religion in public and private spheres. Diyanet prompted a state-led religious understanding as a part of the modernization process at the beginning of the Republic of Turkey (Gözaydın 2008, 217). Diyanet has continued its duty to regulate the religious sphere in Turkey. Hence, the Turkish state tried to control the understanding of religion, primarily Islam. For this reason, I prefer to use laicity rather than secularism for Turkey. As a continuation modernization initiative of the republic, the military and the constitutional court used to pledge to protect secularism and religion shaped by Diyanet (Akan 2018). As one of the examples of this policy, after the military coup in 1980, the headscarf was banned from education and public institutions

(Tahincioğlu 2013). February 28, 1997, an upheaval against the ban ended with military intervention (Özbudun 2006, 545) and deepened women's grievances with headscarves. This process also helped to increase support for the Islamist Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2002. The grievances in Turkey mostly related to the February 28 process, but after the headscarf ban was lifted under the JDP government, (perceived) victimization and exclusion from public spheres have been eliminated. Therefore, aside from rhetorical victimization, the actual victimization of Muslims in Turkey ended (Anaz et al. 2016). In the *Konstantiniyye* journal, Daesh targeted the Turkish-speaking population, and Diyanet was targeted with the claim of promoting laicity "religion" and distancing Turks from Islam.<sup>28</sup>

Ideology is one of the ways to radicalization into violent extremism (McCauley and Moskalenko 2011, 206). Together with ideology, grievances, online and social networks, and structural factors can influence radicalization. As in the two pyramids model, extreme ideologies might not lead to violent extremism, but they are highly influential in radicalization into violent extremism. To embrace extreme beliefs, engaged with the categorical thinking as us versus others, and in-group and out-group binary distinction is a vital sign for extreme ideologies to legitimize violence against others. In the case of Daesh, ideology appears to come from diverse drivers; some people make *hijra* to the Islamic State because it is a religious duty, a desire to live under the Sharia and to save other Sunni Muslims in Syria from the brutal Assad regime (Speckhard and Ellenberg 2020, 101-106) which is also related to grievances. These ideological factors are also influential in Turkish people joined Daesh (Yalçınkaya 2016, 35; Şen and Yavçan 2022, 11; Öztöp 2022, 558).

Social networks<sup>29</sup> refer to relatives, friends, families, and immediate ties that may facilitate recruitment (Hafez and Mullins 2015, 964). Social networks are crucial for in-group radicalization, indoctrination, and finding enabling factors for radicalization, such as travel and support to engage in violent extremism. The power of love and loved ones like families and friends play a role in radicalization (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008,

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<sup>28</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. "Hıyanet Raporu: Türkiye Cumhuriyet Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının İslam Devleti Aleyhinde Hazırlamış Olduğu Rapora Cevap." *Konstantiniyye, Issue 3*, p.46.

421). Social networks can easily create a collective identity, deepen commitment, and embrace extremist ideas (Hafez and Mullins 2015, 964-965). For the West, alienated or marginalized Muslims can form small groups with like-minded people and create strong ties within themselves. For Turkey, social networks also played a significant role for women who went to Syria to live under the so-called Caliphate. Instead of traveling alone to Daesh, people in Turkey mostly preferred to be involved in groups and associations; then traveled to Daesh with the connections in these groups (Eroğlu 2018, 202). Belonging to their Daesh-affiliated groups, peer pressures, gaining respect within these groups, and supportive social networks in-group level can be listed as in-group dynamics in Turkey to become involved in Daesh (Eroğlu 2018; Yavçan and Şen 2019). Some cafes, Qur'an courses, gathering for the preaching of eminent Islamic figures, masjids, and homes have become places for women's indoctrination in Turkey. After building trust and emotional bonds, these places encourage people to embrace extreme ideologies that may lead to violent extremism. Especially support from the social network structures and enabling factors in Turkey are significant indicators of involvement in Daesh in Turkey. These groups supported radicalization, a sense of belonging, and unique structural factors built distinct enabling factors for Daesh affiliates in Turkey. For instance, networks with enabling factors and social network support could increase the number of *muhajireen* (emigrates) to Daesh. Also, they promoted redemption to join Daesh. Also, redemption discourse can be affected by participation in Daesh. To illustrate, recruiters presented Daesh to some people who had addictions like drugs as a place so they could redeem themselves from their sins and addictions, saying liberating from "hedonistic addictions."<sup>30</sup> Alcohol and drug use among young people in Hacibayram (Gönültaş 2016a), and Şanlıurfa is high (International Crisis Group 2020, 7). Apart from in-group radicalization, for Turkey, easy passage through the borders, support from families or relatives, the initial government attitudes, and some cultural endeavors increase the enabling factors for *muhajir* to Daesh.

Structural, political, economic, cultural, and social motivations of radicalization are highly context-dependent following states. Economic factors, poverty, and youth

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<sup>30</sup> Unknown Author. 2015. "Foreword." *Dabiq. Issue 15*. p.4

unemployment can push people to embrace extreme ideologies (Medhurst 2000), whereas some scholars argue against poverty-driven radicalization (Veldhuis and Staun 2008). However, economic incentives promised by terrorist organizations might increase participation in these terrorist groups (Borum and Fein 2017, 251). Other than economic factors, politically marginalized or suppressed groups may feel unjust treatment, leading to radicalization (Moghaddam 2005, 162). For Turkey, fighting against the PKK under Daesh appeared as a political/structural motivation to join Daesh, primarily for some male participants (Ovet et al. 2022, 4). Geographical proximity to Daesh-occupied territories and the considerable flow from Syria to Turkey during the Syrian Civil War also reveal some context-related factors for Turkey, which will be mentioned in the following chapter. To comprehend women's radicalization in Turkey, structural factors of Turkey help to understand the radicalization mechanisms in Turkey.

None of these motivations and pull and push factors can explain radicalization alone, but radicalization is a process that contains many mechanisms and motivations. We cannot restrain motivations for radicalization aforementioned factors, but they are primarily mentioned in the literature and can help to shed light on some aspects of the radicalization process. They are not the only motivations, and without comparing different motivations, we cannot say one of the factors influences radicalization alone. Many people in the world feel unfairness, grievances, and structural or cultural stimulus, but the masses do not justify or sympathize use of violence. A combination of personal, cultural, societal, structural, or other unmentioned factors can lead to radicalization.

### **2.3 Gender and Radicalization**

Radicalization can occur across a spectrum of components. One of the components is gender. Gendered factors for radicalization need to be addressed because of the research's emphasis on Turkish women's radicalization by Daesh. "Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time." according to the World Health

Organization definition (WHO n.d.). In other words, gender is not given but socially constructed. Therefore, expected roles and behaviors change for genders. Radicalization also varies based on gender.

Gender is socially constructed and performative, unlike the biological sexes. Gender performativity refers to the fact that gender is constructed and reconstructed by behaviors and speeches (Butler 1990). In other words, we perform our genders contextually and situationally, according to the generally expected gender norms (Brown 2020a, 7). Therefore, based on constructed “norms” on gender, we perform our gender roles by interacting with others (Butler 1998). From this perspective, radicalization also varies regarding social construction and the performances of genders. The research adopts a gender-sensitive perspective for women’s radicalization into Daesh from Turkey, considering socially constructed gender roles contextually.

Terrorism has traditionally been perceived as male-dominated in academic literature and media representations (Nacos 2005, 446; Jackson 2019, 3). However, starting in the 1970s and 1980s, studies exploring women in terrorism began to emerge, often perpetuating gender stereotypes such as women being represented as emotional, irrational, or coerced into joining terrorist organizations (Sjoberg and Gentry 2011, 71; Nacos 2005, 437). Parallel to these early stereotypes, recent media portrayals of women who joined Daesh tend to focus on themes of grooming, love, brainwashing, and psychological factors rather than ideological motivations (Martini 2018; O’Loughlin 2016). Daesh’s women affiliates in Daesh have created a significant shock in the West. These women are perceived to have betrayed the freedom and generosity of Western states to support an organization with a strict gender code despite women’s acquired rights in the Western states (Martini 2018, 461). This shock is based on the assumption that Western values like democracy and freedom are superior and desired by other cultures (Martini 2018, 459). Hence, rejecting Western values over a strictly patriarchal Daesh first takes attention from the media (Jackson 2019) and the literature.

The role of gender in the radicalization process is a topic of discussion in the literature. Von Knop (2007) argues that gender creates differences in participation in terrorism due

to culturally designated gender roles. Goldstein (2003) also mentions that women and men have equal potential to participate in violence, and gender is the construction of society. For this reason, women's agency in violent extremism and terrorism is mainly ignored. Accordingly, Turkish literature terrorism literature underemphasizes women's participation; as such, women fighters in PKK are rarely mentioned as women's agency (Haner et al. 2020, 280) even in Turkish literature. This lack of emphasis on women in terrorism is more visible in religious terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, and Daesh. Conversely, the high flow to Daesh from the West among women has increased the attention to women in Daesh (Saltman and Smith 2015, 4). 4,162 – 4,761 women joined Daesh worldwide from 2013 to 2017 (Cook and Vale 2018, 21). Starting from Jihadi Brides, a media-given label for girls who fled to Syria and Iraq to join Daesh, women's involvement in Daesh has gained more attention from the literature and the media. Women have been attributed as caregivers, peaceful individuals, and mothers as gender constructions (Alison 2004; Auchter 2020; Evans and de Silva 2021; Martini 2016; Martini 2018; Gentry 2011; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Sjoberg and Gentry 2015a; Sjoberg and Gentry 2015b; Sjoberg and Gentry 2016; Ali. 2016). Women's participation in terrorist organizations, especially jihadist terrorist organizations, needed explanations for Western people. Some of these explanations for women's involvement in terrorist organizations are brainwashing or grooming by terrorists, victimization, being adventurous (Frontline PBS 2020), psychological effects (Bloom 2007), being the mother of jihadists (Martini 2016), so-called irrational, or emotional motivations, religious and ideological motivations. Ideological motivations for women's involvement are the least mentioned motivation in the media for women's involvement in Daesh (Sjoberg and Gentry 2016; Martini 2018; Evans and de Silva 2021; Gentry 2011; Auchter 2020). The lack of conceptualization and knowledge about *jihad* and Islam also provokes attention in the "Western" literature. Among the numerous articles and books, a few explain what *jihad* is and women's place in Islam.<sup>31</sup> Social networks are frequently stated as a motivation to join Daesh for women, but with an emphasis on the power of love, romantic relationships, grooming, brainwashing, psychological issues, and being a mother or wife of Daesh fighter. The social construction of women's roles and constructed place of women as mothers and wives influenced the participation in

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<sup>31</sup> Bloom and Lokmanoglu 2020, 3-4 give some interpretations of women's involvement in *jihad* quoted from Al-Azhar University in Egypt and some religious leaders.

Daesh from Turkey. The advantageous position of men in power dynamics over women in some families can be more profound in some families in Turkey, as such economic disparities and the limitations of women's roles in motherhood and being a wife (Cindođlu and Ünal 2017, 42). For instance, this position makes it challenging for women in Turkey to object to the decision of their husbands to travel to Syria for involvement in Daesh. In this context, the power of love is emerging as a relevant perspective in women's radicalization. A family member like a father, sister, brother, or relative might impose radical ideologies and may make the path for women's radicalization. However, Daesh presented their gender-segregated ideology and disproportionate positions of men in power dynamics against women as protection of women and liberating women from Western-imposed values and burdens with the promise of "a life in dignity."<sup>32</sup> The first claim regarding why women are involved in terrorist organizations is that women are groomed by social media, family ties, friends, or "falling in love" with a terrorist for involvement in a terrorist organization. From another perspective, men are groomed by their family members or the promise of a stable family and children, as in the Daesh case, if we consider involvement as grooming. However, being fooled by a loved one is usually problematically attributed to women (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry 2011; Alison 2004; Jackson 2019; Martini 2016; Martini 2018), whereas friends, families, and social networks also influence radicalization regardless of gender, as mentioned. Hence, the portrayal of factors such as friends, family, or a "loved one" was represented as grooming for women, but some factors have not been considered as grooming for men.

Relatedly, families and husbands have influenced women who joined Daesh from Turkey. Women's perceived role in preventing a family from falling apart might lead to travel to the Islamic State as families or imagine going with their families and husbands would be more appropriate for the sake of the families (Yavçan and Şen 2019, 26). Hence, socially constructed gender roles impact the decision to join a terrorist organization. Besides, women can radicalize within the family or from social media that support the ideology of participating in terrorist organizations. While counting the family or social media-related factors, we need to consider women's ideological

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<sup>32</sup> Unknown Author. 2015. "The Fitrah of Mankind and the Near-Extinction of the Western Women." *Dabiq, Issue 15*. p.25

engagements rather than them as “groomed” ones. The complexity of the reasons for the radicalization processes of women has remained in the background if the media, officials, and even literature only consider them as groomed or brainwashed people. For instance, many women involved in Daesh from Turkey claimed they were groomed or forced by their husbands without questioning their ideological commitment to Daesh before joining. Then, almost all women affiliates of Daesh in Turkey were acquitted of all their charges due to gender stereotypes’ domination in Turkish courts.

The usage of social media by terrorist organizations is significant for their propaganda and recruitment activities (Winter et al. 2020, 4). The online radicalization process can be fed from propaganda or online recruitment. As a case study, Daesh’s use of social media as a recruitment and propaganda mediator was very effective in promoting global *jihad* and the Islamic State, such as creating personal connections with potentially recruited people, publishing provoking videos that included many brutal scenes, victimhood, exploiting the sufferings of Sunni Muslims, a utopian Islamic life, war, and *jihad* (Winter 2015, 22-31). For recruitment and creating relationships and trust between radicalized people and recruiters, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, and Telegram were the most visible platforms for Daesh (Bloom 2019). Other instruments for propaganda are social media accounts, official journals and media centers of the organization, journals, magazines, blogs, and social networks (Al-Dayal 2021). Scholars emphasize the significant impact of online networks on women’s radicalization for the participation of Daesh from the West (Pearson 2016, 5-6). frequently mention the online radicalization of women for involvement in Daesh.

Nevertheless, the media represents these women as groomed via social media to end up in Syria. Conversely, men are also groomed with the promise of a stable family and children, but being deceived by Daesh is usually problematically attributed to women (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry 2011; Alison 2004; Jackson 2019; Martini 2016; Martini 2018). The online networks, social media posts, and high-resolution videos have influenced women’s participation in Daesh. However, online radicalization cannot be the only motivator for involvement in a terrorist organization and needs other drivers.

Many researchers focus on the psychological effects of radicalization and terrorism (Morgades-Bamba, Raynal, and Chabrol 2020; King and Taylor 2011; Horgan 2003; Victoroff 2005). One of the most cited scholars in the field, Mia Bloom, underlines the eminence of the psychological factors of joining terrorist organizations for women. Even though psychological effects might be significant for all terrorists, attributing these psychological effects primarily to women terrorists eradicate women as the agency with motives in terrorism but rather as victims of their psychology (Bloom 2011, 4; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). This study does not encounter a significant psychological disorder history in its cases. However, psychological factors like hopelessness and loneliness, family traumas, and frustrations can be drivers for radicalization regardless of gender. Conversely, some scholars challenge that psychological conditions can lead women to join terrorist organizations or radicalize (Silke 1988; Doosje et al. 2016). Importantly, we must consider that these psychological effects are not exclusive to gender and can influence every person.

Political revenge and grievance are considered as other reasons to join terrorist organizations regardless of gender (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008, 419; Ness 2005, 360; Alison 2009, 29; Bloom 2007, 95; Bloom and Lokmanoglu 2020, 9; Gentry 2011, 187; Cook and Vale 2018, 26; Zia 2020, 277). Especially for women, the media and scholars frequently mention the death of a family member, friend, or a close person to join organizations that employ political violence. Chechen Black Widows are the most mentioned example of revenge-driven radicalization for women (Stack 2011, 85). In our case, one woman, F.K., mentioned that the death of her brothers led to her radicalization (Akkaya and Dönmez 2015; Birgün 2015a; Milliyet 2015a). Conversely, the media ignore the political or social grievances for women's radicalization, like ideologies. Personal revenge is mainly attributed to female terrorists, whereas political grievance is primarily attributed to male terrorists. This situation originates from the gendered perception of terrorism studies and media representations of women terrorists. The grievances or revenge-seeking, both politically and personally, have not been directly related to gender but can be applied to all individuals. From this approach, revenge is a motivator for radicalization, but attributing personal grievances to women rather than political grievances results in a deficit of understanding of radicalization.

Moreover, being a mother, wife, and martyr are considerable motivations for women's involvement in religious terrorist organizations (Martini 2016; Sjoberg and Gentry 2016). Raising children for terrorists and being a wife and a martyr becomes an honor and a goal for terrorist women. Martini (2016) states that women are aware that they are needed for the continuity of *jihad* via raising jihadist children. Being a mother is a crucial goal for a woman in terrorist organizations like Daesh. Children are the guarantees for maintaining the organization's future and ideology. In this perspective, women's "natural" motherhood instincts cannot be the only goal of being a mother (Gentry 2011, 182). In other words, if being a mother includes the motivation to raise children for *jihad*, being a mother of jihadist children also assists the nation-building process of the Islamic State (Martini 2016). Various problems might emerge if decision-makers or scholars cannot understand the ideological aspect of being a mother. Examining this phenomenon requires considering ideological reasons behind being a mother other than "instincts" to see the further radicalization of children.

There are a few analyses about the political/ideological motivations of women's involvement in a religious organization like Daesh. Several researchers (Bloom 2007; Bloom 2011; Cunningham 2011; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Sjoberg and Gentry 2015b; Sjoberg and Gentry 2016; Martini 2016; Martini 2018; Alison 2004; Auchter 2020; Nacos 2005; Evans and de Silva 2020; O'Loughlin 2016) emphasize that scholars, journalists, and decision-makers need to analyze women as an agent with a deeper understanding of women's involvement in terrorism other than gendered assumptions. The binary relations between men and women, nature, and nurture, cannot comprehensively evaluate terrorism—fieldwork in war zones or reaching these women are not easy jobs for scholars. However, when journalists reach a former or current women terrorist, they focus on her personal life or children rather than her political/ideological commitment (Sjoberg & Gentry. 2016). This research will comprehensively discuss the impact of women's ideology on involvement in Daesh.

Other than motivations, Von Knop (2007) argues that the logistic support of women and tactical advantages of using women, such as suicide bomb missions and logistical

support, should not be underestimated. For instance, women can pass through checkpoints easier than men. Due to gender stereotypes, women took less suspicion than men from police or security forces (Bloom 2011, 3). Also, women's presence with men makes the couple less suspicious for predictive analyses. This less suspicion and easy access to targets make women valuable to terrorist organizations as a strategic asset for tactical purposes.

Additionally, women are more detail-oriented in reconnaissance missions in the planning stage of operations. Operationally, logistically and as suicide bombers, women have always been valuable to terrorist organizations. Some women become volunteers for suicide missions, whereas some are forced to do suicide missions (Bloom 2012, 242). As a result, even though there is no single pattern for women suicide bombers, tactical utility increases the usage of women in suicide missions. For instance, Diana Ramazanova made a suicide attack in Sultanahmet, Istanbul targeted Tourism Office on January 6, 2015, and caused death of one police officer, and two wounded (Kaya and Can 2016). The news reports highlighted her husband's death in Daesh, and she became depressed after his death. However, the news also mentioned her wish to be martyr and went to heaven making a suicide attack (Kaya and Can 2016). Therefore, we can observe a media narrative in the line of black widows in Chechen *jihād*.

Also, the operational and strategic advantages of recruiting women make women desirable in terrorist organizations. For instance, making propaganda, raising funds, teaching, recruiting other women, encouraging men to join terrorist organizations, and much additional operational support, as well as front-fight, make women advantageous for terrorist organizations (Bloom 2011; Sjoberg and Gentry 2011; Bloom and Lokmanoglu 2020; Pearson 2015). Consequently, the motivations of women and recruitment strategies of terrorist organizations are not mutually exclusive factors for involvement.

In the case of Daesh, Western media and literature focus on different motivations to join Daesh for Western women. Western women's motivations to join Daesh have been depicted in the media as vulnerable, groomed, brainwashed or monsters (Jackson 2022).

The critical studies on terrorism primarily mention that the media portrayed Daesh-affiliated women from Western states as groomed, brainwashed (Jackson 2019, 2), marriage-driven (Martini 2018, 465), adventurous, and focused on women's personal motivations instead of their ideological motivations (Gentry and Sjoberg 2016). However, many studies, reports, and research argue against the general perception in the media about women who joined Daesh from the West. We can list the women's motivations to join Daesh as ideological motivations, grievances, marginalization and alienation from society, frustrations, searching for alternatives from their current life and belonging, seeking traditional gender roles as in the form of so-called protection of women in Daesh not to push them to work outside, relationships, and adventure. Muslims' sufferings under the Assad regime in Syria and the desire to help fellow Muslims in Syria appear as the primary motivations for Western women's participation in Daesh (Peresin 2018, 34; Saltman and Smith 2015, 9; Speckhard and Ellenberg 2021, 4). Notably, ideological motivations like being a part of the state-building by Daesh (Shapiro and Maras 2019, 93) and the desire to actively participate in *jihad* (Peresin 2018, 38) were shared among Western women participating in Daesh. Also, Daesh portrays itself as a political entity which advocates and fosters the image of a utopian Islamic life, and this idea attracted women in the West who think they face discrimination and marginalization in the West due to their religion (Peresin 2018, 34; Saltman and Smith 2015, 9; Pearson and Winterbotham 2017, 63; Shapiro and Maras 2019, 93). Especially after the Al-Qaeda attacks to the World Trade Center in 2001, Islam mostly started to be associated with terrorism (Saltman and Smith 2015, 10), which intensified Islamophobia and gave rise to the grievances of Muslims in the West. Western women affiliated with Daesh consider the West, and the Assad regime as the sources of the suffering of Muslims (Saltman and Smith 2015, 13), and grievances coming from social inequalities and discrimination in the West, created a motivation to join Daesh for Western women. Veiling became a primary problem for Muslim women in the West (Brown and Saeed 2015, 1958). Veiled women can face marginalization and alienation from society (Saltman and Smith 2015, 10; Pearson and Winterbotham 2017, 64; Speckhard and Ellenberg 2021, 4). Related to these problems, anger and frustration become significant motivations for participation in Daesh for Western women. Searching for the meaning of life (Peresin 2018, 35) and a sense of belonging can

motivate women to join Daesh since Daesh depicts the Caliphate as a place of sisterhood, and Muslim paradise where they can feel belong (Saltman and Smith 2015, 13; Pearson and Winterbotham 2017, 64; Shapiro and Maras 2019, 93). Consequently, ideological motivations, anti-Western and anti-Assad sentiments, personal motivations such as frustrations, discrimination, alienation, and psychological traumas, and being a wife of mujahid as sources of glory, and mother of the future generation of jihadists become motivations for Western women joining Daesh (Peresin 2018, 35).

Nevertheless, these studies primarily investigate Western women's radicalization of violent extremism. Women from the Middle East and West may have diverse motivations to join violent extremist groups. Sjoberg and Wood (2015, 2) mention factors for participation in terrorism for women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are "dissatisfaction with the regime or political process, seeking security amidst instability, the experience of abuse or humiliation by state security forces, death or abuse of family members, gender subordination/exclusion from mainstream politics, support of the violent extremist group ideology, selective, romanticism of "state-building" project (in case of Daesh), groups' rejection of "Western" political and economic experiments (for Islamist groups)." Besides rejecting elections,<sup>33</sup> imams associated with Diyanet,<sup>34</sup> public schools, and economic models were factors for joining Daesh from Turkey. For some women, in our case, misinformative news reports spread by Daesh, the supporters of PKK attacking women in chadors, led to insecurities among women with chador.<sup>35</sup> Hence, Turkish women's radicalization has distinct characteristics from Western women's radicalization. A few studies in the literature highlight Turkish women's radicalization for Daesh.<sup>36</sup> Yavçan and Şen (2019, 27) find that economic incentives are less attractive for women, and ideological factors are more apparent. Living under the Sharia, showing support to the

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<sup>33</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. "Demokrasi Tutuştu." *Konstantiniyye*. Issue 1, p.9

<sup>34</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. "Hiyanet Raporu: Türkiye Cumhuriyet Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının İslam Devleti Aleyhinde Hazırlamış Olduğu Rapora Cevap." *Konstantiniyye*, Issue 3, p.46.

<sup>35</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: January 26, 2018. p.4

<sup>36</sup> Şen, Gülriz and Başak Yavçan 2022. "Gender, Radicalization, and Patriarchy in Turkey: An Analysis of Women's Motivations and Constraints When Confronted with ISIS and the al-Nusra Front." *Turkish Studies*. 1-23. Yavçan, Başak and Gülriz Şen. 2019. Assessing the Role of Women in Fighting Radicalization. Icare4all & Orsam Research Report. International Crisis Group. 2020. *Calibrating the Response: Turkey's ISIS Returnees*. Europe Report N°258.

Islamic State, and living Islam “appropriately” are ideological motivations for Turkish women’s radicalization by Daesh (Şen and Yavçan 2022, 11). Making *hijra* became women’s way of *jihad* to serve Daesh, but this means that these women recognized Daesh as the “Caliphate,” and making *hijra* as showing their believing in Daesh as the Islamic State. In contrast, the economic dependency of women on their husbands and the gendered role of women to keep the family together and prevent their husbands from marrying other women became motivations for Turkish women to join Daesh with their husbands (Yavçan and Şen 2019, 26). These are highly contextual and cultural factors for Turkish women joining Daesh with their husbands. For instance, some women in our research mentioned that they joined Daesh with their husbands due to the threats of their husbands to take their children with them to Daesh. Conversely, three women in the research left their husbands to join Daesh. Therefore, we can take into account the gendered roles of women as mothers and wives, but some women challenge this gendered perspective to join Daesh. Consequently, Turkey’s political, economic, cultural, and societal factors present distinct dimensions than Western states, and we need to highlight these differences to examine Turkish women’s radicalization process. For this reason, the research examines women’s radicalization of Daesh, considering the Turkish context.

Scholars suggest various definitions for radicalization but cannot reach a consensual definition. Recent literature criticizes the portrayal of women in terrorism studies as just victims of terrorism rather than perpetrators or supporter of terrorism. We tackled various approaches to examine how socially constructed gender roles affect the radicalization process. This research highlights the agencies of women who joined Daesh rather than seeing them mere victims. To have better grasp on Turkish women participation to Daesh, it is essential to understand Daesh activities in Turkey with focus to women’s motivations to join to the organization considering women’s agencies.

### 3. DAESH NETWORKS IN TURKEY

#### 3.1 Official Perspectives on Terrorism in Turkey

Turkey offers a unique case with its political, social, cultural, structural, and economic characteristics to study terrorism. This uniqueness starts with its terrorism definition in the constitution, The terrorism description in the Turkish constitution is broad, vague, and state-centric, and there is no mention of civilian sufferings or psychological intimidations of terrorism.

In the first article of Anti-Terror Law (NR. 3713), terrorism is defined as follows (Alexander et al. 2008, 117):

Terrorism is any kind of act done by one or more persons belonging to an organization with the aim of changing the characteristics of the Republic as specified in the Constitution, its political, legal, social, secular, and economic system, damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation, endangering the existence of the Turkish State and Republic, weakening or destroying, or seizing the authority of the State, eliminating fundamental rights and freedoms, or damaging the internal and external security of the State, public order, or general health by means of pressure, force and violence, terror, intimidation, oppression, or threat.

As mentioned in the definition, the state considers terrorism is an act against the entities of the state instead of civilians. The only statement about civilians is "eliminating fundamental rights and freedoms." However, these fundamental rights and freedoms need to be clarified. Conversely, there is a very explicit emphasis on the state's political, legal, social, secular, and economic systems. Terrorism involves using pressure, force, and violence according to the law but does not include the types and apparatus of these threats against people's fundamental rights and freedoms. Therefore, according to the law, the state, rather than its citizens, is the primary target of terrorism. The constitution fails to adequately address the civilian aspect or the types of threats of terrorism. As a result, individuals in Turkey could be categorized as terrorists from a variety of perspectives. Therefore, the government could stretch the law and classify nonviolent protests or opposition against the state as terrorist acts. On the contrary, the government could underestimate a terrorist organization like Daesh as a couple of angry young people (Diken 2014a), as former prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu claimed. The law

enables that any government and judiciary can expand the limits of this law for their interests.

Although the state places more emphasis on terrorism as an act against its entities than against civilians, recent attention and efforts of the officials have focused on comprehending and addressing the phenomenon of radicalization, through the Police Academy report that involved experts from different countries. The Police Academy Report in 2019 (Gunn and Demirden 2019) includes definitions and perspectives of the Police Academy on radicalization. The report is the product of a workshop among academicians and officials from Turkey and other states such as France, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Therefore, the report is noteworthy as one of the most comprehensive studies about radicalization in Turkish. Radicalization is defined in the report as follows (Gunn and Demirden 2019, 33):

Radicalization is the process of directing violent actions to outsiders of their own group and targeting symbolic values for the majority of society. In other words, the concept is the building of cognitive and motivational elements that result in the perpetration of terrorist actions.

In addition, radicalization might be a part of the activist actions of citizens, who have non-violent radical opinions in accordance with the freedom of speech, and it may not create an illegal situation.

(Translated by the author)

Notably, the radicalization definition has emphasis on civilians' aspect of terrorist actions. Also, the report distinguishes radicalization into violent action and non-violent radicalization and considers that non-violent radicalization is not illegal and put a constraint on considering non-violent activism as terrorism. Hence, radicalization into violent extremism is the prominent concern of the report. In the line with the radicalization literature, the report considers radicalization a process that may lead to violent actions toward out-groups. However, the target of the violence is limited to the symbolic values of the majority of the society. If a violent act targets the symbolic value of a minority group, whether the action is considered radicalization into violent actions seems unclear. The emphasis on the majority of society raises a problem about minority rights and the protection of minorities from violent actions. Also, what these symbolic values are and how we can decide on them still need to be answered. Consequently, the

radicalization definition in the report contains ambiguity and ignorance of different components of violent extremism other than these symbolic targets.

Notably, the report indicates some perspectives on gender and radicalization. The report raises questions like why and how women radicalize, but answers seem limited, and gender biased. The reports mentioned only belonging, identity, the Internet, sexual misconduct, marriage trap, and status-seeking as motivations of women's radicalization (Gunn and Demirdan 2019, 39), but other factors, such as women's political or social motivations and agencies, are ignored in the report.

The report points to political factors, hegemony, socio-economic situations, racism, discrimination, Islamophobia, and xenophobia as factors for radicalization (Gunn and Demirdan 2019, 33). It highlights online networks' significance and protects vulnerable people from radicalization (Gunn and Demirdan 2019, 36). However, these factors give us only a limited understanding of radicalization. We must consider the factors and motivations for radicalization mentioned in the previous chapter in Turkey, such as ideology, lack of sense of belonging, frustrations, age, and geographical factors.

The most noted factors and motivations of radicalization in the literature are applied in Turkey in diverse ways. Islamophobia and grievances can be implemented in Turkey but in remarkably diverse contexts. According to Optimar Research, in 2019, 89.5 percent of the society expressed themselves as Muslim and 74 percent of the sample identified themselves as Sunni Muslims (T24 2019). Most of Turkey's society consists of the Sunni Muslim population. Before the political Islamist government Justice and Development Party (JDP), the military and constitutional court had depicted themselves as protective of laicity in the constitution. In 1982, the Council of Higher Education banned the headscarf in the university, even though the majority of society is Muslims. The headscarf was banned in public and educational institutions and workspaces until 2008. However, the constitutional court canceled the new law of lifting the headscarf ban. Although the law was eventually passed in the Turkey Grand Assembly, the struggle about the headscarf bans victimized devoted Muslim women for years. Yet, the

grievance and resentment about bans on showing religious signs in public spaces have been maintained even today rhetorically.

Secularism in Turkey operated distinctively from state neutrality to religion. Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the Presidency of Religious Affairs has facilitated and considered a higher authority on religious issues in Turkey. There has been direct state control of the religion in Turkey, and this situation is against the state neutrality on religion. Diyanet has covertly shaped by Sunni Islam (Göle 1997, 48-49), and the military and the constitutional court used to pledge to protect secularism and religious sphere shaped by Diyanet (Akan 2018). Therefore, laicity over secularism is more appropriate for the Turkish way. In time, the JDP government gets rid of the tutelage of the military and constitutional court and becomes the single controller of religious affairs in Turkey.<sup>37</sup> The JDP makes powerful moderate and neoliberal Muslims in Turkey who engage with the business (Anaz et al. 2016). Nevertheless, radical Islam remains outside of the limit of the state-controlled religion. As an example, the police keep track of Salafist Muslims and try to intimidate them by tracing and making them a sense of monitored (International Crisis Group 2020, 9). Consequently, these implications create a wave of anger among Salafist Muslims but divergence from the grievances of Muslims in the West.

Ideologies are challenging to distinguish from grievances. In the case of participation in Daesh from Turkey, many people are motivated by their belief in *jihad* and *hijra* and to live Islam under the Caliphate regardless of their knowledge of Daesh's ideology (Tahiroglu and Schanzer 2017, 15; Öztop 2022, 558; Anaz et al. 2016, 625). Religious ideology plays the leading role in engaging in violent extremism in our research. In our research, thirty-three women mention religious motivations such as, living Islam under Daesh, *jihad*, *hijra*, and helping Sunni Muslims in Syria as their primary motivations to join Daesh.<sup>38</sup> Women stated that they cannot live Islam properly in Turkey, and they

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<sup>37</sup> The JDP eliminates the military tutelage over the politics after the e-coup attempt of the military in 2007 by judiciary processes, such as Ergenekon, and Balyoz trials that most of military officers, including the former Chief of General Staff, İlker Başbuğ were convicted and imprisoned for years (Kuru 2012, 48). Before this elimination, Constitutional Court and the Turkish army designated themselves as protectors of laicity in Turkey.

<sup>38</sup> We clarify our categorization in the methodology, see 1.2 Methodology and Framework.

considered (at first) Daesh as a place where they can live Islam, and be better Muslims. Also, they said that they wanted to contribute *jihad*, or religious duty to make *hijra*, and sufferings of Muslim fellows in Syria, and they wanted to help them by joining Daesh. Combining previous studies, religious motivations are the leading motivation to join Daesh for women in our research.

To clarify helping Sunni Muslims rhetoric of Daesh, we need to look at the Arab Uprisings, and how these uprising turned to a civil war in Syria. A series of pro-democracy demonstrations known as the Arab uprisings, which started in 2011, overthrown long-standing political regimes in the Middle East. As an extension of Arab uprisings, non-violent protests started in Syria against the Assad regime (Ferris and Kirişçi 2016, 14). At first, Western states supported these peaceful protests demanding a democratic regime (Martini 2020, 729; Hürriyet 2017d). However, a month after the initial demonstrations, sectarian identities became an important driver in the escalation of violence that gave rise to the civil war (Achcar 2019, 2). Syria became an interplay of violent non-state actors, including Daesh (Philips 2015, 359). The Syrian Civil War caused chaos, instability, and conflicts, and turned to clashes of different non-state actors against each other, and Assad regime. Among these violent actors, Daesh claimed to establish a so-called Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah), and call Muslims to make *hijra* to the self-proclaimed Caliphate.

Turkey's government, and president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been established a harsh discourse against the Assad regime. At the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, now the president, revealed his dream about embracing Syrians and praying in Umayyad Mosque in Syria (Hürriyet 2012). The government depicted Assad as evil and an oppressor of Sunni Muslims by violence in Syria. Many international institutions like Amnesty International and the UN confirmed Assad's oppression (UNHRC n.d; Amnesty International 2021). Even the president presented Assad regime as "state terror" in his speeches (Hürriyet 2017d). The anti-Assad discourse of the government brought a ground for Daesh's strategy to call people to fight back against Assad's brutality toward Sunni Muslims in Syria. The anti-American and anti-Western discourse of the JDP has been increasing for years under its

government (Uslu 2016, 794). Former jihadist networks fueled these anti-Assad, and anti-Western related to religious degradation<sup>39</sup> discourse among the society and existing local jihadist networks (mostly former Al-Qaeda networks) use these discourses to attract people to Daesh. Saving Muslims in Syria from the brutality of Assad discourse of Daesh affected people to join Daesh, and two women in our case, Demet Taşar,<sup>40</sup> and Tuana, and her husband (Güler 2021, 437). These women mentioned that they talked about Assad and Muslims' sufferings in Syria, and saving these Muslims motivated them to join Daesh. Hence, anti-Assad discourse affected people from Turkey to join Daesh to "save" their Muslim brothers and sisters. Anti-Western discourse is perpetrated by Daesh as people cannot live Islam properly in Turkey; Turkey tried to impose democracy, which is incompatible with Islam according to Daesh; Turkey allowed alcohol and adultery and deliberately alienated society from Islam.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, Daesh portrayed living under the Sharia rule in the Caliphate as returning to Islam, being more Muslim, and making *hijra* to the Islamic State obligatory in their Turkish magazine *Konstantiniyye*.

Aside from anti-Assad discourse, Daesh made propaganda on anti-PKK discourse, which is the ongoing internal terror problem in Turkey for decades. Fighting against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) became one of the major push factors in Turkey. PKK is a designated leftist terrorist organization by Turkey, the USA, and many EU states and has had an active insurgency in Turkey for forty-three years. Turkey has a long-lasting struggle against the PKK. Against the PKK, Turkish Hizballah (different from Kurdish Hezbollah of Iran) emerged as a radical Salafis terrorist organization designated by Turkish authorities. Turkish Hizballah fell into silence after detentions in the 2000s. Nevertheless, Solidarity with the Oppressed (Mustazaflar ile Dayanışma Derneği - Mustazaf-Der) association opened in 2002 was claimed to be connected with Hizballah (Yılmaz 2013), and in 2012, the association was closed to be suspected of

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<sup>39</sup> We can observe different types of anti-Americanism in Turkey. Religious motivated anti-Americanism condemns about religious backsliding, immortalization of the society, and lifestyles. On the other side, nationalist anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism condemns about American imperialism, and interventions of external powers to Turkey, rather than lifestyle (Uslu 2016, 798). The mentioned anti-Americanism here related to religious motivated anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism.

<sup>40</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5, p.93.

<sup>41</sup> Unknown Author. 2014. "Demokrasi Tutuştu." *Konstantiniyye Issue 1*. p.9.

recruiting people for Daesh (Esen 2012). Therefore, radicals engaged with Hezbollah networks in Turkey could develop close relations with each other, although this relationship was not on the organizational level. After closing the association, the Huda-Par (Free Cause Party) was founded in 2013 and appealed to the Sunni Muslim Kurdish population. After the siege of Kobane by Daesh, protests for Kobane began in Turkey, and different groups, Huda-Par, ultra-nationalists, and protesters, including HDP, turned protests into bloody conflicts. These conflicts caused thirty-one people's death (Bicakci 2020, 117). As Ovet et al. (2022) suggest, structural, systematic, and macro-level factors in the Eastern part of Turkey make the region a ground for radicalization. As we see from the presence of PKK and (previously) Turkish Hezbollah in the Eastern part of Turkey, the existing violence can prompt political instability in the region. Daesh also depicted YPG and PKK as common enemies of Daesh and Turkey and claimed that PKK and Turkey oppressed the Kurdish people.<sup>42</sup> According to Ozeren et al. (2018) study on Daesh's social media propaganda analysis based on Twitter, the fourth common hashtag used on Twitter by IS propagandists is #PKK. Fighting against the YPG (People's Protection Units), Turkey considers YPG a terrorist group as an extent of PKK based in Syria and Iraq. PKK became a motivation to join Daesh in Turkey (International Crisis Group 2020, 5). Consequently, revenge-seeking became one of the motivations for radicalization related to these political issues.

At first, like the rest of the world, Turkey misjudged the threat of Daesh and focused on overthrowing Assad regime and end the existence of PKK in the region. Even former Foreign Affairs minister Ahmet Davutoglu said in 2014: "ISIS can be seen as a radical, terrorizing organization, but there are Turks, Arabs, and Kurds among the participants. The structure there, the previous dissatisfactions and anger caused a wide reaction on a large front." (Diken 2014a). Therefore, we can observe an avoidance of calling Daesh a terrorist organization in the quote. The government's weak response changed with the increasing Daesh attacks in Turkey in 2014 and with the attack on police officers in Nigde, a small city in Central Anatolia. During the regular traffic control, police officers stopped a taxi carrying two Daesh militants. Militants killed a police officer, a military officer, and a civilian (Daily Sabah 2015). This attack was the first attack against the

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<sup>42</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. "Islam Devleti Neden Kürtlerle Savaşmaktadır?" *Konstantiniyye Issue 2*. P.18

state within Turkey's territories. Even though the government did not increase the border controls, the perception of Daesh shifted to a terrorist organization from a bunch of angry young people. Border control had tightened after 2016 with the suicide attacks, and even started to build a wall on its Syrian borders launched in 2015 (Sahin 2018). Turkey joined the anti-ISIL coalition in the last quarter of 2014, opened the Incirlik Air Base in Adana, and changed its attitude toward Daesh (Yetkin 2014). Therefore, Turkey has intensified the fight against Daesh in time.

The open border policy made Turkey a haven for passage to Daesh (Uslu 2016, 786). People from Turkey and many others worldwide came to Turkey to join Daesh through its borders (Uslu 2016, 788). Some border cities, such as Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, and Hatay, became significant points for crossing borders and joining Daesh from muhajir worldwide (Ministry of Interior 2017, 52). Some well-known smugglers, and border Amir of Daesh, Ilhami Balı, provided border-crossing for Daesh affiliates from border cities of Turkey, such as Hatay, Kilis, and Gaziantep (Uludağ 2016). According to the Ministry of Interior report, foreign terrorist fighters come to Turkey through airlines (Ataturk and Sabiha Gokcen Airports in Istanbul and Antalya Airport), overland, and rarely seaway (Ministry of Interior 2017, 51). Also, the report mentions that 3069 fighters, 1337 foreigners, were arrested between 2011 and 2017 (Ministry of Interior 2017, 54). Also, Turkey deported 4550 people due to connection with Daesh (Ministry of Interior 2017, 55). Therefore, Turkey became a hot point for traveling to Daesh, both from Turkey and Western states, using different means, airways, land routes, or seaways. Turkey's geographical proximity to Daesh provided many people and families with cheap, low-cost, and easy passage to Syria from Turkey and made Turkey a freeway for other prospective Daesh affiliates. This geographical proximity and government attitude might have helped to increase Daesh affiliates from Turkey.

The changing structures of society and understanding of family directly influence gender construction in Turkey. The government promotes the dominant heterosexual family structures (Cindoglu and Unal 2017), attacks LGBTI+ (BBC News 2021), and considers women primarily as wives and mothers (Diner 2018, 103). The government tried to solidify the patriarchal construction of women (Diner 2018), such as promoting

at least three children (Hurriyet Daily News 2013; Duvar English 2020). The governing party, JDP, has tried to create a cultural hegemony in the society with the line of political Islam by shaping public and private spaces, religion, masculinities and femininities, family structures, and women. In time, the government increased its nationalist discourse with increasing threats in its borders especially in Syria, and unrest from society due to increasing refugee crisis in Turkey. These nationalist discourses of the government (Cindoğlu and Ünal 2017, 41) also get reactions from (radical) Islamists since nationalism contradicts the ummah ideal. As mentioned above, the government also wants to shape the religious sphere within its limits, and Turkey still has some distance from Sharia rules. Therefore, nationalism and distance from Sharia law create a wave of anger among radical Islamists in Turkey towards the government.

Scholars pay attention to youth radicalization (Cook and Vale 2019, 23; Speckhard 2015), propaganda and recruitment activities of Daesh targeted young people, and youth vulnerabilities of radicalization (Darden 2019, 7). Youth, people between 15-34 years old, in Turkey have faced many economic, social, and political problems and uncertainties. According to PISA 2018 report, Turkey has lower performance in education than other OECD countries, and socioeconomic parameters strongly influence education (OECD 2019). This means that the quality of education in Turkey is lower than in other OECD countries, and economic inequalities significantly affect education. Also, in 2013, the unemployment rate was 9,7 percent, but the youth unemployment rate was 18,7 percent (TUIK 2014a). The increasing number of universities has decreased the quality of education while increasing the working age. Many university-educated young people are unemployed, and their time to find jobs has risen. This situation can drag the young population to hopelessness, feeling useless and searching for meaning in life. Marginalization (Darden 2019, 9) and lack of sense of belonging (Speckhard 2015, 26), social exclusion, alienation from society, hopelessness, and other personal problems are shared problems among youth. When these situations are combined with social networks and structural problems like poverty, they might intensify the motivations for participation in Daesh among the youth in Turkey. Combining other factors mentioned above, the youth radicalization can be considered as an enabling factor for radicalization.

Networks are one of the most prominent motivations for radicalization. Social networks like family or friends can be factors for radicalization and participation in terrorism. For instance, many people from Turkey refer to their connections, such as the husband, father, friends, or places like Qur'an courses, masjids, or a teahouse, like-minded groups, as enabling factors for participation in Daesh. Networks can create an enabling environment and support structures (Hafez and Mullins 2015). For instance, Islam Tea House in Adıyaman, and Dokumacılar Group, led by Mustafa Dokumacı, recruited many people to Daesh (BBC News Türkçe 2015; Dinç 2015b). Dokumacılar Group named after the main recruiter of the group, Mustafa Dokumacı (aka Abu Usama). He had former connections with Al-Qaeda networks and had investigation about him for membership of Al-Qaeda, but he turned to Daesh when its established (Emen 2015). He initiated recruitment activities for Daesh in Adıyaman (Kızılkoyun and Emen 2015). Adıyaman is a small city with limited socialization places. Around the Islam Tea House, friends and peers started socializing, and Mustafa Dokumacı, the primary recruiter, tried to radicalize predominantly young men in Adıyaman around this tea house (Kızılkoyun and Emen 2015). At first, the locals called them Fridayless, or Refusal Friday (Cumasızlar or Reddi-Cuma in Turkish) since they refused to go Friday prayers in mosques. Instead, they used the tea house for their Friday prays (Emen 2015). In Turkey, tea houses, bookstores, masjids, personal networks, and former Al-Qaeda networks created a group-radicalization and radicalization under like-minded groups (Eroğlu 2018, 67; Saymaz 2017, 20). These social networks can provide crossing to Syria, and they can walk to Syria to join Daesh from the Turkish borders, and they did not have to make international travels contrary Daesh affiliates from other states.

Aside from social networks, the Internet (online networks) and Daesh's propaganda have become factors for radicalization. Winter et al. (2020, 4) defines online extremism as "online extremism as Internet activism related to, engaged in, or perpetrated by groups or individuals that hold views considered to be doctrinally extremist." Extremists can use the Internet for propaganda, recruitment, logistics and planning, and funding activities (Winter et al. 2020, 7). Therefore, the Internet is significant for recruitment or propaganda and provides a space for logistics, planning, and funding. For instance, the

Reina Night Club attack of Daesh in Istanbul on the eve of the new year 2017 caused thirty-nine killings using a Kalashnikov rifle. The attacker, Abdulkadir Masharipov, said in his statement that he received orders and the attack plan over Telegram from a Daesh Qadi (judge) aka Abu Jihad (Ebu Cihad in Turkish) (Hürriyet 2017e).

Daesh created strategies to reach people through social media, videos, and media outlets like Dabıq, Al-Hayat, and Konstantiniyye in Turkish, Hollywood-like productions, fear, threat, and victimization of Sunni Muslims to promote their ideology (Klausen 2015). Also, social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Telegram, and Instagram became communication tools for recruitment and communication for Daesh. Many people find online connections to join Daesh because the Internet lifts the barriers to physical communication. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Western women were mainly radicalized online through Daesh propaganda and connection with Daesh recruiters. Hale Gönültaş, a journalist working on Daesh networks in Turkey and women in Daesh, supportably pointed "professional" online recruiters targeted women, created emotional connections with them, and promised them a happy marriage under the Islamic State.<sup>43</sup> For example, in our case, Merve Dünder reached Mustafa Dokumacı on Facebook, aka Abu Usama (in Turkish Ebu Usame). She expressed her ideological closeness to jihadist extremism. Dokumacı convinced her to come to Turkey, arranged a marriage for her, and even performed an imam marriage over the phone with Mahmut Gazi Dünder. After they joined Daesh together.<sup>44</sup> This means we must emphasize the effect of online networks, recruiters, and youth radicalization to evaluate women's radicalization.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institution (TUIK), access to the Internet in 2013 was 48,9%, and raised 53,8% in 2014, and Internet usage of women became 44,1% (TUIK 2014b). The percentage was relatively low than in the Western countries, which was 75% in 2013 (Eurostat 2013). Ozeren et al. (2018) analyzed 290 pro-IS Twitter accounts targeted the Turkish-speaking population between March and June 2015. The predicted number of female users was forty-four accounts (Ozeren et al. 2018, 6). The

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Hale Gönültaş on April 19, 2023.

<sup>44</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/1201, Date: January 31, 2020. P.3

most popular topics among female users are *jihād*, women's issues like hijab and marriage, *hijra*, PKK, and violence (Ozeren et al. 2018, 12). These users call men to protect Sunni Muslims women who were faced with rape and humiliation in Syria and Iraq and promoted *jihād* as the duty to both men and women (Ozeren et al. 2018, 12). One of the study's essential findings is the criticism of romanticizing *jihād*. These female accounts warned young girls not to *hijra* for flirt or romanticism. This means that Daesh had less promotion to make *hijra* for single women from Turkey compared to the West. This situation might stem from recruiters in Turkey, primarily targeted men. Then, these men brought their ideologies into their homes and shared them with their families. Therefore, recruiters reach women indirectly through male members of families or directly through social media (Yavçan and Şen 2019, 37). We can observe that the Internet and online networks were crucial for recruitment, propaganda, planning and logistics, and funding. Nevertheless, internet usage was limited among women in Turkey in 2013 and 2014, and many social media users also consist of men. We cannot ignore the role of the Internet in radicalization, but the Internet cannot cause radicalization by itself and needs other forces.

To wrap up, factors for radicalization into Daesh can diverge and converge from the mostly mentioned factors by scholars. Turkish way of laicity and the headscarf ban created grievances in Turkey. Similar to other Daesh affiliates, making *hijra*, and *jihād*, being more Muslim, living under the Sharia rule in the Caliphate, saving Sunni Muslims against Assad brutality, and anti-Westernism become drivers for radicalization in Turkey. The government discourse and society's attitude parallel with the anti-Assad, and anti-Western discourse can be seen as facilitator factors for participation in Daesh. Turkey's ongoing struggle against PKK and geographical proximity to the Islamic State became a unique driver for radicalization into Daesh.

Similarly, mentioned structural factors appear to enable radicalization into Daesh from Turkey. Social and online networks are significant for recruitment and participation in Daesh. We will focus on Daesh networks in Turkey to understand the significance of networks in Turkey for propaganda and recruitment.

### 3.2 Propaganda of Daesh in Turkey

Daesh tries constructing an Islamic State utopia under its rule to appeal to people worldwide (Saltman and Smith 2015, 14). Daesh uses a variety of general as well as context-specific narratives to attract Muslims from all over the world. To be a state, Daesh needed a population that consisted of not just men but also women, unlike other jihadist organizations. Daesh employs various strategies for recruiting individuals from various states and women and men separately (The Carter Center 2017). Daesh encourages being a mujahid and martyrdom for men, whereas it hypes the honor of being the mother or wife of a mujahid for women.<sup>45</sup> For women in Western states, Daesh promoted being a wife of a mujahid, as the media mainly mentioned so-called Jihadi brides as a pull factor (Saltman and Smith 2015, 16). For instance, many women, especially from the Middle East, prefer not to travel alone to the Islamic State (Peresin 2018, 34). Yet, Daesh encourages Western women to travel alone to the Islamic State (Saltman and Smith 2015, 14). Daesh's recruitment and propaganda tactics are as diverse as its supporters.

Conversely, propaganda targeting the Turkish-speaking population has not promoted women traveling alone to the Islamic State. One account on Twitter, for example, criticizes the romanticism of *jihad* and warns young women not to travel to the Islamic State for marriage (Ozeren et al. 2018, 13). Also, Yunus Durmaz claimed that women are not clever as men and complained about the gossip of women that may reveal the secret of their mujahid husbands (Saymaz 2017, 169). While there are some general propaganda narratives, like the Assad regime's harassment of Sunni Muslims, especially women, some propaganda tools are context-dependent, like fighting against PKK in Turkey. Daesh promotes fighting against the so-called atheist PKK and its Syria branch, YPG, for Turkish men as a primary goal (Ozeren et al. 2018, 11). Using grievances and anger in societies, such as the PKK in Turkey or Islamophobia in Western states, became effective tactics for Daesh propaganda.

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<sup>45</sup> Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhajirah. 2015. "The Twin Halves of The Muhajirin." *Dabiq*, Issue 8. p.37.

There are official media centers for Daesh propaganda. Al Hayat Center published high-quality productions and videos online, and Dabiq and Rumiya magazines were the two prominent magazines of Daesh. These magazines made spreading the ideology of Daesh possible and included some rules and encouragements to mujahadeen to make *hijra* and *jihad*. They included some utopian ideas about daily life in the Islamic State, the situations of women, martyrdom, marriage, the economy, and many other issues.

Apart from Dabiq, Konstantiniyye magazine is notable for this study since it was published in Turkish. Seven magazine issues were published, which directly targeted the Turkish-speaking population. Konstantiniyye's prominent topics are the glory of *jihad*, utopian life under the Islamic State, criticizing secularism and democracy, and PKK were prominent topics (Korkmaz 2016, 23). For instance, in the fourth issue of Konstantiniyye, polygamy is promoted, targeted mainly at women, and condemns some women who complain about polygamy for aspiring seculars.<sup>46</sup> Also, in the fifth issue of Konstantiniyye, rules about slaves and concubines are included. Even rules about sexual intercourse with concubines are mentioned in the article.<sup>47</sup> Although few articles specifically targeted women, Konstantiniyye did not ignore women to promote Daesh's strict gender subordination. Konstantiniyye contained certain writings that were directed at both men and women.

In addition to the official Daesh magazine in Turkish, there were local media supporters of Daesh. Tawhid Magazine, Sehadet.biz, TevhidDersleri.com, EnfalMedya.com, TakvaHaber.com, and TakvaHaber.net<sup>48</sup> were the supporting media outlets for Daesh in Turkey (Eroğlu 2018, 288). These media platforms published articles about Turkish people joining Daesh, news from Daesh, and promoting *jihad* in the Islamic State. The aims of these webpages, similar to Konstantiniyye, engaged in propaganda and recruitment from Turkey for Daesh. Notably, these local supporters, especially Sehadet.biz, initiated by Murat Gezenler, and Tawhid Magazine, initiated by Halis Bayancuk, changed their standpoints after Daesh's defeat. Nowadays, these channels

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<sup>46</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. "2şer 3er 4er Evlenin." *Konstantiniyye Issue 4*, p.16-21.

<sup>47</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2015. "İslam'da Köle ve Cariye Hukuku." *Konstantiniyye Issue 5*, p.14-22.

<sup>48</sup> These websites have been closed with the decision of the Information and Communication Technologies Authorities (BTK).

focus on Salafi/Takfiri Islamic content independent from Daesh propaganda (Eroğlu 2018, 289). Propaganda aims to increase recruitment for Daesh and call them to join Daesh. Daesh uses various recruitment tactics to turn these propaganda activities into action in the form of *hijra*.

### **3.3 Daesh Networks and Recruitment in Turkey**

Daesh attracted several supporters and mujahideen from Turkey. Local cults, organizations, and preachers promoted Daesh in Turkey through recruitment and propaganda (Saymaz 2017, 61). These local cults, associations, radical Islamists, and some preachers support the Islamic State and owe allegiance to Daesh. In several cities, Daesh networks in Turkey are organized as cell structures by cults, associations, congregations, masjids, courses, bookstores, and preachers. These structures were more active and organized in some cities than others, such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, due to their population, and Konya, Gaziantep, and Adıyaman due to these cities' cultural dynamics. We will examine Daesh networks and recruitment activities in these cities separately to reveal their contextual characteristics.

In many ways, Istanbul is a major city for Daesh in Turkey. Daesh affiliates from the West and certain Middle Eastern countries first traveled to Istanbul to join the Islamic State. (Byman 2018, 935). Besides the transportation importance, Istanbul had a high potential for recruitment since it is the most populous city in Turkey. This indicates that Istanbul is crucial for recruiting and logistics safe transportation to Syria. In addition, Istanbul was the primary hub for controlling Daesh's Turkish media, controlled by local preachers and Daesh's initiatives. (Eroğlu 2018, 92). The old name of Istanbul, Konstantiniyye, even became the name of Daesh Turkish magazine, which has been crucial for Daesh propaganda, as mentioned above.

Two preachers in Turkey who had a broad audience, Halis Bayancuk (Abu Hanzalah) and İlyas Aydın (Abu Ubeyde), were supporters of Daesh in Turkey. Abu Hanzalah's father was a crucial figure in the Turkish Hezbollah in Diyarbakır (Eroğlu 2017), and, therefore, he was raised in Salafi communities. He was educated at Al-Azhar University in Egypt but quit and continued his education in more radical Salafi masjids (Eroğlu 2018, 259). He founded his mosque and his congregation, Tawhid, and Sunnah, in

Istanbul after returning from Egypt. He published preaching in his congregation's magazine and on social media platforms, both online and in person and became an opinion leader (T24 2017c). He still continues to use Twitter, Telegram, and YouTube as social media platforms. The congregation has the webpage [Tevhiddergisi.org](http://Tevhiddergisi.org).<sup>49</sup> and a magazine called Tawhid Magazine. He was prisoned in 2015 for establishing and leading an armed terrorist organization and got sentenced to fourteen years due to his support to Al-Qaeda, and Daesh (Hurriyet 2018). Two women in our study joined this network and radicalized into Daesh.

Ilyas Aydın (Abu Ubeyde) has various responsibilities in the Daesh cell in Istanbul. Compared to Abu Hanzalah, he had been more active in the face-to-face recruitment for Daesh in Istanbul. In addition to his recruitment efforts and propaganda, he supported Daesh's field operations in Istanbul. For example, he visited some Salafi masjids in Istanbul to recruit people to join Daesh (Habertürk 2015c). Before being involved in Daesh, he was active in Al-Qaeda in Istanbul and was monitored by the police. Then, he was claimed to be the Istanbul Amir of Daesh (Habertürk 2015c). We can argue that former Al-Qaeda networks in Turkey (also in Gaziantep and Konya in addition to Istanbul) were the prominent affiliates of Daesh for propaganda, recruitment, and operations in Turkey.

Ankara cell had distinct characteristics from the Istanbul cell. Some neighborhoods in Ankara became prominent for Daesh recruitment. Altındağ district, Hacibayram neighborhood in Ankara were paid attention to by journalists, academicians, and finally, the police for the high number of affiliates.<sup>50</sup> One of the prominent reasons for this

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<sup>49</sup> The current webpage of Abu Hanzalah's congregation: . Information and Communication Technologies Authority disabled his previous web pages in Turkey. After the defeat of Daesh, the congregation and Abu Hanzalah changed his attitude toward Daesh and denied he made propaganda for Daesh.

<sup>50</sup> Benli, Mesut Hasan. 2015. "Solun üssünden IŞİD üssüne: İsmetpaşa" *Hürriyet*. Last modified: July 28, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/solun-ussunden-isis-ussune-ismetpasa-29669541>. BirGün. 2015. "IŞİD'in Ankara'daki Üssü Hacibayram'dan Alınan Gözaltılar Serbest." *BirGün*. Last modified: July 29, 2015, Retrieved from: <https://www.birgun.net/haber/isis-in-ankara-daki-ussu-hacibayram-dan-alinan-gozaltilar-serbest-85765>. Diken. 2014. "IŞİD, Ankara'nın Merkezindeki 'Okulsuz' Mahalleden Militan Topluyor." *Diken*. Last modified: June 27, 2014, Retrieved from: <https://www.diken.com.tr/isis-ankaranin-merkezindeki-okulsuz-mahalleden-militan-topluyor/>. Milliyet. 2015. "Hacibayram'da IŞİD Karnesi." *Milliyet*. Last modified: August 1, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/hacibayram-da-isis-karnesi-2095673>. Taşçı, İlhan. 2015. "Hacibayram: Adı IŞİD'le Anılan Semt." *BBC News Türkçe*. Last modified: July 27, 2015. Retrieved from: [https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/07/150727\\_hacibayram\\_isid\\_operasyon](https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/07/150727_hacibayram_isid_operasyon).

situation was claimed to be the poor economic conditions (Gönültaş 2016b). Apart from Salafi/Takfiri radicalism, Altındağ is a place for leftist movements in this district, attributed to the poor economic conditions (Erdoğan 2022). Some preachers from Sakarya imported radical Salafism beliefs and established Salafi/Takfiri masjid in Hacıbayram even before Daesh rose (Eroğlu 2018, 20). The Masjid in Hacıbayram created a hub for recruitment from this neighborhood (Milliyet 2015a). Especially young people in Hacıbayram also have a drug abuse problem (Benli 2015) and redemption for their drug use and other sins the recruiters promoted to join the Islamic State (Gönültaş 2016b; Erdoğan 2022). Redemption and Daesh's promise of economic gains become apparent points for recruitment in this region (Eroğlu 2018, 31).

Another critical location for Daesh recruitment is Konya. Specific Konya neighborhoods and districts gained attention for significant involvement in Daesh. For instance, the Saraçoğlu neighborhood in Konya saw a significant flow of families joining Daesh. (Eroğlu 2018, 103). Different mechanisms were applied to every city and even every neighborhood based on its conditions for recruitment. Konya had 624 Qur'an courses at the end of 2020 (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2022). Konya is the third city with the highest number of Qur'an courses in Turkey, while it ranked sixth among the largest cities in Turkey based on population. This means that Konya has active religious cults, congregations, and associations and is known as one of the most conservative cities in Turkey.

Some of the existing religious groups and former jihadist networks showed their allegiances to the Islamic State and increased their involvement in Daesh. Bookstores, shops, associations, and home meetings became hot recruitment places for Daesh in Konya. Murat Gezenler, one of the known preachers supporting Daesh, was active in Konya and Ankara for recruitment (Duvar English 2020b). He was arrested for four years due to relations with Al-Qaeda (Saymaz 2020), similar to other preachers who supported Daesh. As we seen in other well-known Daesh recruiters, they have been connected to Al-Qaeda networks previously, and some of them even joined *jihad* in Afghanistan. Murat Gezenler also was one of the preaches who had former Al-Qaeda

affiliation, and then supported Daesh. He had a publisher called Sehadet Publications<sup>51</sup> and the webpage Sehadet.biz,<sup>52</sup> where he made online preaches. He conducted recruitment activities in Konya and Ankara by giving preaches.<sup>53</sup> We observe a tendency to former Al-Qaeda supporters turned to Daesh and became recruiters. During the Syrian civil war, the Islamic State of Iraq, following the Al-Qaeda in Iraq declared the so-called Caliphate in Syria, and changed its name as Islamic State or Ad-Dawlah. Even though Al-Qaeda declared its separation with Daesh, some former Al-Qaeda affiliates in Turkey embraced and followed Daesh instead of Al-Qaeda. This situation may have come from Daesh controlled a territory, and created a utopian ad-Dawlah for jihadists where they can live with their families. Hence, we observe a tendency of former Al-Qaeda affiliates in Turkey became new recruiters, and supporters of Daesh.

Other than religious motivations, other mechanisms played roles, especially in Saraçoğlu Neighborhood in Konya. Former supporters of Kurdish movements in the Eastern part of Turkey were displaced to "cease" disputes in these cities between the PKK and the military. Over time, displaced Kurdish people have diverged from the Kurdish movement (Ovet et al. 2021, 2), and some of these displaced people came to Konya. To illustrate, the father of Yağmur Kılıç, one of our cases in this study, was active in the Kurdish movement and came to Konya, then moved to Norway (Kocak 2019e). Then, her mother could not get used to Norway and committed suicide. This incident caused the oppression of Yağmur Kılıç to be religious and redemption from her mother's sin. Therefore, this "displacement" phenomenon has a place in one of our cases. Apart from displacement, the Saraçoğlu neighborhood is a poor neighborhood where people suffer from serious deprivation. The economic challenges, the anti-Kurdish movement, and anti-PKK narratives are pushed factors for involvement in Daesh from Konya and some of its districts (Eroğlu 2018, 102-103).

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<sup>51</sup> Available at: [www.sehadetkitap.com](http://www.sehadetkitap.com)

<sup>52</sup> The webpage is not available, but they changed their name Şehadet Mektebi, available at: <https://sehadetmektebi.com>

<sup>53</sup> In his interview with journalist İsmail Saymaz, he admits that he was an "inviter" for Daesh until 2015, but he withdrawn his support to Daesh after its dissolve (Saymaz 2020). In this interview, he portrayed a more radical standpoint than Daesh, saying that Daesh accepted Turks as Muslims, but he does not accept Turkish people as Muslims, but instead polytheist (Saymaz 2020).

Dissimilar to other cells mostly made recruitment activities, the Gaziantep cell of Daesh was known as the planner of eight Daesh attacks in Turkey as seen in the Table 3.1.

Date	Place	Target(s)	Perpetrators	Deaths and wounded
May 18, 2015	Mersin	People's Democratic Party (HDP) Office	Savaş Yıldız <sup>54</sup>	
May 18, 2015	Adana, Seyhan	People's Democratic Party (HDP) Office	Savaş Yıldız	Three wounded <sup>55</sup>
June 5, 2015	Diyarbakır	People's Democratic Party (HDP) rally	Orhan Gönder <sup>56</sup>	Four deaths, and over a hundred wounded <sup>57</sup>
July 20, 2015	Şanlıurfa, Şuruç	Press release of the Federation of Socialist Youth Association (SGDF)	Şeyh Abdurrahman Alagöz	Thirty four deaths, and a hundred and one wounded <sup>58</sup>
October 10, 2015	Ankara	Labor, Peace, and Democracy rally	Yunus Emre Alagöz, and Abu Usama from Syria	A hundred and three deaths, and over five hundreds wounded <sup>59</sup>
March 19, 2016	İstanbul, Taksim	Tourists	Mehmet Öztürk	Four deaths and thirty nine wounded <sup>60</sup>
May 1, 2016	Gaziantep	Gaziantep Police Headquarters	İsmail Güneş	Three deaths and twenty four wounded <sup>61</sup>

<sup>54</sup> T24. 2015. "Emniyetin aradığı canlı bomba şüphelisi, HDP Adana ve Mersin bürolarına bombalı saldırının faili çıktı." *T24*. Last modified: October 25, 2015 Retrieved from: <https://t24.com.tr/haber/emniyetin-aradigi-canli-bomba-suphelisi-hdpnin-adana-ve-mersin-binalarina-bombali-saldiriyi-yapan-kisi-cikti.314128>

<sup>55</sup> Milliyet 2015. "HDP'nin Mersin ve Adana binalarında patlama." *Milliyet*. Last modified: May 18, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/hdpnin-mersin-ve-adana-binalarinda-patlama-2060704>

<sup>56</sup> Aslan, Ferit. 2015. "Diyarbakır bombacısı miting alanına böyle girdi." *Hürriyet*. July 10, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/diyarbakir-bombacisi-miting-alanina-boyle-girdi-29515524>

<sup>57</sup> Hürriyet 2015. "Diyarbakır'daki bombalı saldırıda dördüncü can kaybı." *Hürriyet*. Last modified: 2015, June 13, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/diyarbakir-daki-bombali-saldirida-dorduncu-can-kaybi-29275148>

<sup>58</sup> BBC News Türkçe. 2020. "Türkiye'de son 10 yılda düzenlenen büyük saldırılar." *BBC News Türkçe*. Last Modified: November 14, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/articles/clmgndprxg8o>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Sözcü. 2016. "Canlı bomba ile ilgili çarpıcı iddia: Geçtiğimiz yıl yakalanıp serbest bırakıldı." *Sözcü*. Last modified: March 21, 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/canli-bombanin-kardesleri-sorgulaniyor-1147127/>

<b>August 20, 2016</b>	Gaziantep	Henna night	Unknown	Fifty seven deaths, and ninety-one wounded <sup>62</sup>
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**Table 3.1** Daesh Attacks in Turkey Planned by the Gaziantep Cell

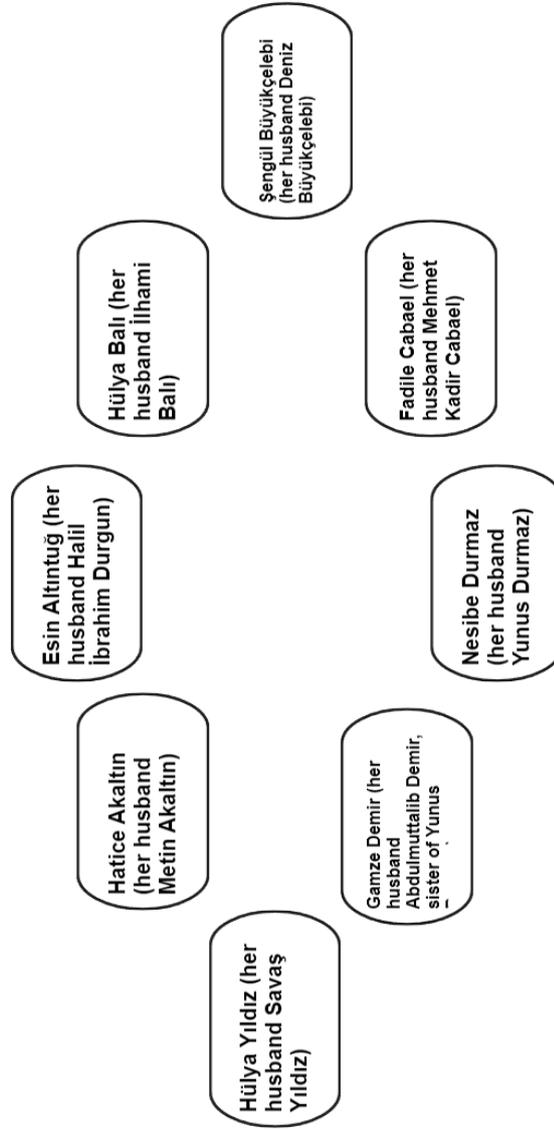
Like the other cells in Turkey, the Gaziantep cell was rooted in Al-Qaeda networks in Gaziantep. However, the Gaziantep cell focused more on attacks than recruitment strategies. Nesibe Durmaz's husband and Gamze Demir's brother (in the research), Yunus Durmaz, was responsible for planning the Daesh attacks in Turkey.<sup>63</sup> For this reason, he was mostly mentioned as the Gaziantep Amir of Daesh (Bulut 2020). Yunus Durmaz, on the other hand, made explorations and selected the potential targets for Daesh attacks in Turkey. The Ministry of the Interior Affairs report mentioned fourteen Daesh attacks in Turkey, eight of which were planned and perpetrated by the Gaziantep cell (Eroğlu 2018, 166). Yunus Durmaz as a planner of these attacks, was a high-level terrorist. The targets of these attacks were predominantly tourists, security forces, the Kurdish movement, and HDP supporters because they considered HDP and Kurdish movement supporters equal to PKK and YPG (Duvar 2016). This cell specifically targeted supporters of HDP to attract the support of Turkish people and Kurdish people who are distant from the Kurdish movements. The cell planned an attack with improvised explosive devices (IED) on the two HDP bureaus in Adana and Mersin on May 18, 2015 (BBC News Türkçe 2015). One of the perpetrators of these attacks, Savaş Yıldız, was the husband of Hülya Yıldız in our case as well. Also, Orhan Gönder from Adıyaman planted IEDs at the HDP rally in Diyarbakır, which caused four people's death on June 5, 2015 (International Crisis Group 2020, 27). He was a childhood friend of Ayşenur İnci in our case.

<sup>61</sup> T24. 2016. "Emniyet, IŞİD'li İsmail Güneş'in Gaziantep'te saldırı yapacağını 5 gün önce haber vermiş!" T24. Last modified: May 3, 2016. Retrieved from: <https://t24.com.tr/haber/isidin-gaziantep-te-saldiri-yapacagi-5-gun-onceden-biliniyordu-emniyet-istihbarat-saldirganin-ismini-bile-vermisti.338756>

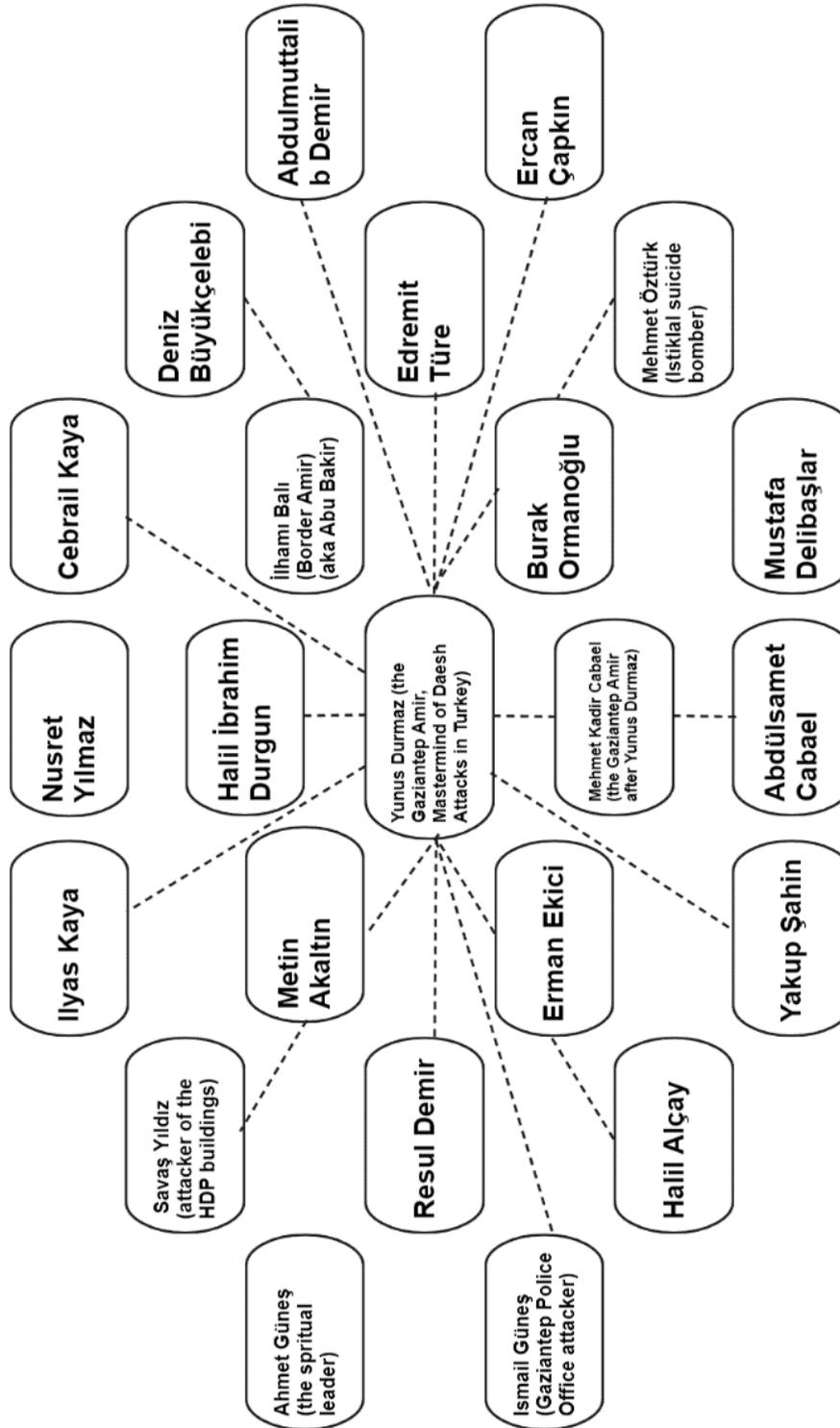
<sup>62</sup> Parlak, Mehmet Akif. 2020. "DEAŞ'ın "en mutlu günü kana bulayan hain saldırısı" hafızalardan silinmiyor." *Anadolu Agency*. Last modified: August 19, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/deasin-en-mutlu-gunu-kana-bulayan-hain-saldirisi-hafizalardan-silinmiyor/1946493>

<sup>63</sup> Bilgi İşlem Şube Müdürlüğü Gaziantep Valiliği [Information Processing Unit Directorate Gaziantep Governernship]. 2016. "BASIN AÇIKLAMASI [PRESS RELEASE] (2016- 107)." Last modified: June 23, 2016. Retrieved from: <http://www.gaziantep.gov.tr/basin-aciklamasi-2016--107>.

Another attack was in Suruç, Şanlıurfa during the public press of SGDF (Sosyalist Gençlik Dernekleri Federasyonu, Socialist Youth Associations Federation). SGDF aimed to go and deliver aid to Kobane, where there was a siege by Daesh (Saymaz 2017, 150). One suicide bomber, Şeyh Abdurrahman Alagöz, from Adıyaman as well, exploded himself in Suruç and caused the death of thirty-three people (BBC News 2015). Brother of Şeyh Abdurrahman Alagöz, Yunus Emre Alagöz, was the suicide attacker with the second attacker aka Abu Usame from Syria for Daesh's deadliest attack in Turkey, the Ankara Train Station attack on October 10, 2015, and caused one hundred-three people's death (Reuters 2015). Other terrorists took part in perpetrating this attack; Halil İbrahim Durgun and Metin Akaltın's wives are included in our research (Esin Altıntuğ and Hatice Akaltın see Figure 3.1). After these Daesh attacks, planned by Yunus Durmaz and perpetrated by the Gaziantep cell, the police started operations against the Gaziantep cell. Yunus Durmaz exploded himself during a police raid (Hurriyet 2016). Fadile Cabael's (another case in the research) husband, Mehmet Kadir Cabael, became responsible for Daesh's attacks in Turkey (Saymaz 2017, 221), as the relations in the Gaziantep cell are seen in Figure 3.2. After perpetrating three additional attacks, the police captured the top members of the Gaziantep cell killed Mehmet Kadir Cabael, and the activities of the Gaziantep cell were vastly reduced (Kaşık 2016). As a result, the Gaziantep cell is significant to our case because they joined Daesh as families, and both men and women in this cell included the Daesh networks in Turkey. They were most radicalized in Turkey as planners and perpetrators of Daesh attacks. From this point, even though the number of participants in Daesh from Gaziantep was not the highest in Turkey, they were disproportionately visible in Daesh networks in Turkey as planners and perpetrators of Daesh attacks in Turkey, with the help of Adıyaman cell.



**Figure 3.1** Female Members of the Gaziantep Cell



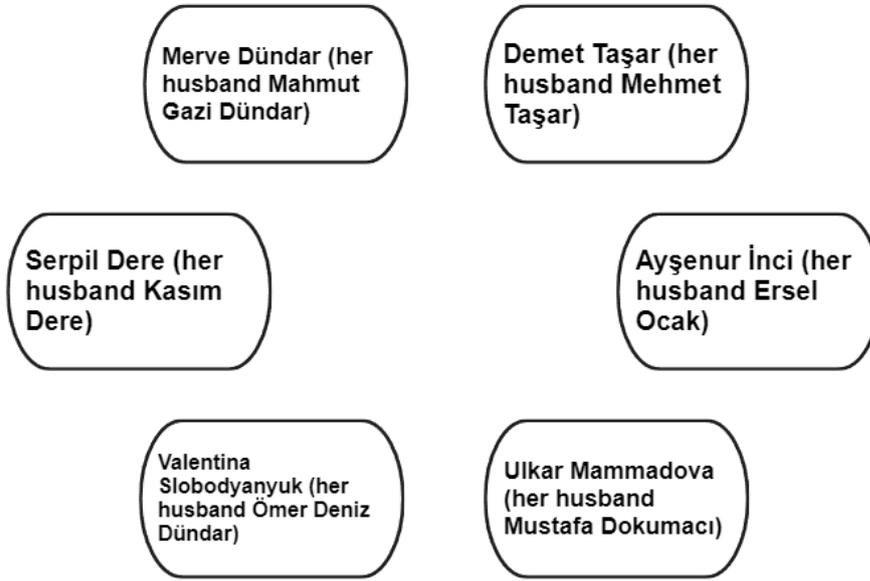
**Figure 3.2** The Male Members of the Gaziantep Cell of Daesh

Adıyaman is another city where recruitment for Daesh was taken attention from the media. Adıyaman took this attention because its affiliates carried out suicide attacks under the guidance of the Gaziantep cell. Mustafa Dokumacı was the leading recruiter in Adıyaman based in Islam Tea House (Independent Türkçe 2021), and the Islam Tea House in Adıyaman quickly became a hub for Daesh recruitment. (CNN Türk 2015b). Islam Tea House, at first, was run by Mustafa Dokumacı. After he went to Syria, different people continued to run the Islam Tea House and maintained the travel organization to Daesh (Saymaz 2017, 129). The recruitment in Adıyaman spread out through social networks and the reference system. Every new affiliate brought their friends, relatives, or families, and these circles grew around the Islam Tea House. Men who started to engage with Daesh networks in Adıyaman tried to indoctrinate members of their families or their friends/girlfriends. Ayşenur İnci's Demet Taşar's, Merve Dünder's, and Serpil Dere's husbands were all related to Mustafa Dokumacı and the Islam Tea House before they joined Daesh. Another significance of the Adıyaman cell is that some of the suicide bombers of Daesh attacks in Turkey were from Adıyaman, Orhan Gönder, Şeyh Abdurrahman Alagöz, and Yunus Emre Alagöz. Daesh affiliates from Adıyaman mainly engaged with people from Gaziantep, and they lived together in Syria<sup>64</sup> and could build trust with each other. This trust resulted from the visibility of Daesh affiliates from Adıyaman in Daesh suicide attacks in Turkey.

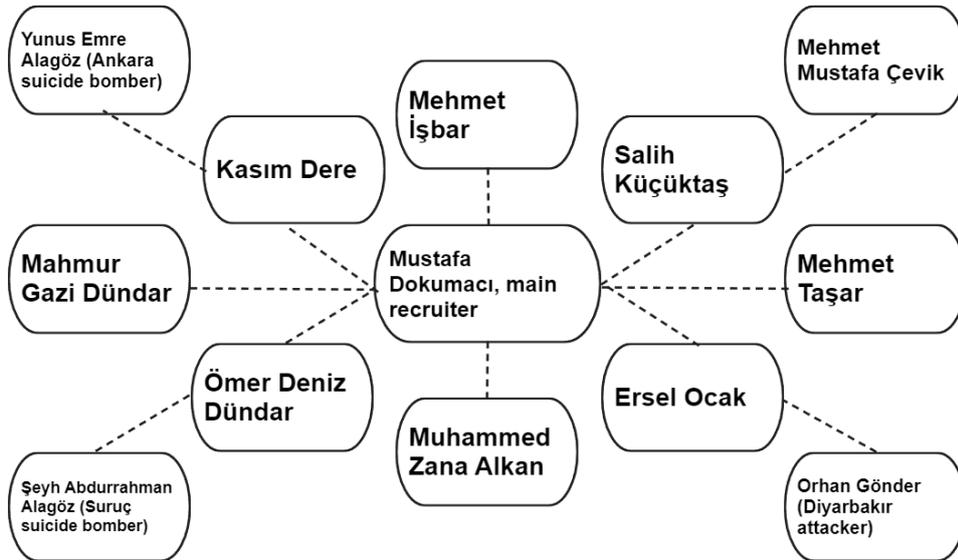
In addition, wives of members of Adıyaman and Gaziantep cells of Daesh were interrogated about these attacks. Also, women from Adıyaman who were involved in Daesh were added to the police's list of potential suicide bombers of Daesh. Hence, these materials provide us with more detailed information about women's participation in Daesh from Adıyaman, Ayşenur İnci, Serpil Dere, Merve Dünder, Demet Taşar and Gaziantep, Şengül Büyükçelebi, Hülya Balı, Hatice Akaltın, Esin Altıntuğ, and Gamze Demir. Figure 3.3 shows women Daesh affiliates from Adıyaman and male Daesh affiliates in the Figure 3.4. They either met each other in Adıyaman or Gaziantep, or Daesh.

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<sup>64</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018. p.4



**Figure 3.3** Female Members of the Adıyaman Cell



**Figure 3.4** Male Members of the Adıyaman Cell of Daesh

On the contrary, there were a limited number of female recruiters from Turkey, which would have possibly decreased the number of female affiliates of Daesh from Turkey (Yavçan and Sen 2019, 19). Instead, women are recruited through the male members of their families (Yavçan and Sen 2019, 31). As a Turkish-speaking social media supporter of Daesh, Defne Bayrak used her Twitter account actively for Daesh propaganda (Aksu 2015). She graduated from Istanbul University and started to work as a journalist (Aksu 2015). She was also a journalist working on Daesh's media outlets in Turkey and made the Islamic State's propaganda. Then in April 2015, she went to the Islamic State with her two children (Çaksu 2023).

Furthermore, some witnesses from Adıyaman claimed that Serpil Dere, wife of Kasım Dere, one of the planners of Daesh attacks in Turkey, was one of the women recruiters.<sup>65</sup> Her connections with Daesh networks were based her husband's networks. With the suggestions of their husbands, women in Dokumacılar Group met each other in houses segregated from men. She was claimed to gather women in her house and make Islamic conversations to convince them to join Daesh, such as Ayşenur İnci, and Demet Taşar.<sup>66</sup> Even the *nikah (religious marriage ceremony)* of imam to Demet Taşar's occurred in her house.<sup>67</sup> However, her influence on women and her role as recruiter is unclear.

Another woman from Konya, Havva P., was a local women recruiter. She and her husband made religious preaching, raised funds for Daesh, and encouraged other women to join Daesh in Konya (IHA 2019b). As we can see here, in our case, there were only a limited number of three women recruiters in Turkey. Supportably, there were only a limited number of (known) women recruiters of Daesh in Turkey (Yavçan and Şen 2019, 19).

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<sup>65</sup> T.C Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/2623, Date: March 8, 2020. p.20

<sup>66</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018b. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018. p.2

<sup>67</sup> T.C Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/2623, Date: March 8, 2020. p.4

Many people from almost all cities in Turkey joined Daesh. There is no official estimation for the exact number of affiliates of Daesh from Turkey. However, between three thousand (Milliyet 2014) and nine thousand (Erkmen 2015) or more people are expected to have joined Daesh from Turkey. Even though Daesh members are in almost every city, some cities—like those discussed in this chapter—attract attention because of their high recruiting rates or crucial roles in planning Daesh attacks. That is why we concentrate on cities Istanbul, Ankara, Konya, Gaziantep, and Adıyaman. Also, in recruitment, women joined Daesh in substantially lower numbers than men (Cook and Vale 2019). However, this does not make women's participation in Daesh less significant. The following chapter will focus on women's radicalization into Daesh from Turkey to shed light on women's agency in radicalization and apply the gender-sensitive approach to examine radicalization.

## 4. WOMEN'S RADICALIZATION IN TURKEY: THE DAESH CASE

The research focuses on women's radicalization into Daesh from Turkey and Turkish-origin women from Western states. The research focuses on how and why women are radicalized, concentrate on their agency. The research focuses on their radicalization processes that point out drivers of radicalization, such as partners, families, social networks, and online networks. After, the research mentions motivational factors to join Daesh, such as *hijra*, *jihad*, anti-Assad sentiments, living under Sharia, family union, economic dependencies, and safety problems. Finally, the research examines the structural factors of Turkey that create push and pull factors for radicalization. To this end, we state the similar and diverse factors, motivations, and drivers for Women's radicalization from Turkey into Daesh.

The research primarily considers the political motivations of women in our case to examine their agencies. The concept of agency encompasses the capacity to exercise choices and translate those choices into tangible outcomes. In the context of women's agency, it refers to their ability to choose for affiliation with Daesh (Bloom and Lokmanoglu 2020; Gentry and Sjoberg 2007, 2011, 2015; Martini 2016), considering the potential influence of other factors that may also apply to men. Understanding ideological and political motivations becomes crucial in assessing women's agency. Conversely, threats from spouses and families or some economic dependencies can serve as counteractive forces to the agency for women. Yet, making *hijra* from Turkey to Syria can partially mitigate victimization since they deliberately migrate to a war-torn region under the control of Daesh. In this regard, McCauley and Moskalenko's two-pyramids model offers a valuable framework. Their model examines the cognitive and behavioral levels of engagement, aiding in determining the extent of agency in women's participation within Daesh. We are looking for sympathizers or legitimizers among women. If their travel to Daesh aimed to live under Islamic State, Sharia rule, being more Muslim, *jihad* and *hijra* ideologies, we can count their behavioral radicalization combined with ideological radicalization. Interpreting women's travel to Daesh involves recognizing their primary organizational functions, such as raising children and entering

marriages, supporting Daesh's ideological agenda. Despite not engaging in combat, their roles contribute to maintaining Daesh's ideology. These political factors show us women's agency in radicalization to join Daesh. The research argues against the general perception in Turkey that women who joined Daesh are not mere victims of their husbands or families but agents in deciding to join Daesh.

Besides, it is significant to consider Turkey's structural factors and gender perception in Turkey. Women's position in Turkey affected the women's participation in Daesh. This does not diminish their agency but changes the forces of radicalization into Daesh. For these reasons, firstly, we mention how women radicalized into Daesh, then their motivations to join Daesh, and finally, how structural factors of Turkey affect women's radicalization process into Daesh.

#### **4.1 Motivational Factors of Women's Radicalization**

Various factors have influence on women's radicalization processes in our case. Ideology is one of the primary factors for women's radicalization. According to women's own words, their radicalization process led to participation in usually started in their families, with the effect of their partners, or in socialization places like masjids, tea houses or Qur'an courses in Turkey. Structural factors, and age work as enabling factors in these dynamics. To analyze women's radicalization, we firstly focus on living places and how socialization affect women's radicalization, and the ideological motivations of women's radicalization processes.

##### **4.1.1 Living places and spatiality**

Spatiality impacts women's participation in Daesh from Turkey and outside Turkey. The cities and neighborhoods women lived in before joining Daesh affected their socialization and engagement with Daesh networks. According to KONDA's research of Life Styles in Turkey in 2019, ninety-one percent of homemakers, who consist of half of our case, socialize with their neighbors, and in total seventy-eight percent of women socialize with their neighbors, whereas men mostly socialize with their colleagues (Konda 2019, 47).<sup>68</sup> The second group homemakers socialize with is their fellow

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<sup>68</sup> The research asked for women to choose two options out of five, which are neighbors, fellow country person, schoolmates, other (political, religious, sports fans, and other groups), and colleagues.

country people (Konda 2019, 47). This result demonstrates that women's socialization areas are their neighborhoods. Our groups and places for socialization affect our perspectives and ideas. This means that radicalization also can be affected by spatiality. Spatiality is essential because people women interact primarily in their neighborhoods. As seen in Figure 4.1, in our case, nine women are from Gaziantep, the closest border city to Aleppo near Syria, five women are from Istanbul, the largest city in Turkey, and four women are from Konya, a conservative city, and three women from Adiyaman, a close city to Gaziantep. Notably, people joined Daesh from almost all cities in Turkey (Erkmen 2015). One reason we see women from Gaziantep in our case is that the Gaziantep cell of Daesh organized eight Daesh attacks in Turkey before the police launched operations on this cell as mentioned in the previous chapter. Thirteen women<sup>69</sup> from Gaziantep, Adiyaman, and Hatay are wives of Daesh members who planned and perpetrated these attacks. For this reason, the court took their statements in trials on these women after they returned to Turkey, and they were listened to as witnesses by the court in the Suruc, Gaziantep, and Ankara attacks of Daesh. Hence, news reports disproportionately cover these women despite the fact that participation in Daesh from Gaziantep is not the highest in Turkey. Still, Gaziantep is a significant city for Daesh recruitment and leading cities in participation in Daesh from Turkey (Erkmen 2015), compared to its population (1,844,438 in 2013 according to TurkStat 2014d). Nine women in our case lived in Gaziantep before they joined Daesh due to the Gaziantep cell's unique position.

Conversely, this particular cell in Gaziantep helped many muhajirin (emigrants) smuggle to Syria from Turkey regardless of their nationalities. Especially, the husband of Hülya Balı, İlhami Balı, and the husband of Şengül Büyükçelebi Deniz Büyükçelebi, were responsible for the border passages of Daesh. İlhami Balı, originally from Reyhanlı, Hatay, was the so-called Border Amir of Daesh. The husband of Nesibe Durmaz, Yunus Durmaz, was the so-called Amir of Gaziantep and responsible for planning Daesh's attacks in Turkey. For this reason, Gaziantep cells are disproportionately visible in the news and recruit trustable people for Daesh. We should note that since Gaziantep was a border city with Syria, after the Syrian Civil War broke

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<sup>69</sup> Ayşenur İnci, Demet Taşar, Hülya Yıldız, B.Ş., Serpil Dere, Şengül Büyükçelebi, Hülya Balı, Merve Dündar, Nesibe Durmaz, Fadile Cabael, Hatice Akaltın, Esin Altıntuğ, and Gamze Demir.

out, refugees primarily came to Gaziantep. Today, Gaziantep is the second-ranked city that host Syrian refugees in Turkey, and This situation changed the demography of the city, and people from Gaziantep started to engage with Syrians culturally, socially, and economically (Gaziantep Pusula 2022). This engagement put Gaziantep in a unique city for relations with Syria and Syrian population. Besides Gaziantep, other close cities in Southeastern Turkey, such as Adiyaman, affect the flow of Syrian refugees, and Adiyaman highly affected from the Gaziantep cell.



**Figure 4.1** Living Places Before Joining Daesh

Adiyaman, a city in Southeastern Turkey, has intense recruitment activities compared to its small size.<sup>70</sup> Mustafa Dokumacı was the leading recruiter in Adiyaman, and all people who joined Daesh had a connection with him, and his tea house called Islam Tea House. He is on the red-code terror-wanted list of Turkey, which is the highest code.<sup>71</sup> Mustafa Dokumacı recruited Demet Taşar, Merve Dündar, and Ayşenur İnci’s husbands in the Islam Tea House. Merve Dündar from Germany said that in 2013, her first aim

<sup>70</sup> Adiyaman’s population was 597835 in 2014. Hürriyet. 2016. “Adiyaman Nüfusu Bir Yılda 5 Bin Arttı.” Last modified: January 28, 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yerel-haberler/adiyaman/adiyaman-nufusu-bir-yilda-5-bin-artti-37234710>.

<sup>71</sup> Terror wanted list is available from: <https://www.terorarananlar.pol.tr/tarananlar#kirmizi>

was to go to Syria and join Al-Qaeda<sup>72</sup> and joined her jihadist uncle in Syria connected with Al-Qaeda.<sup>73</sup> Hence, she was radicalized a long time before she joined Daesh. She has family ties with jihadist networks through her uncle and connected with Mustafa Dokumacı in 2013. She had the problems in the school in Germany, and wanted to come to Turkey to escape from punishment according to her statement.<sup>74</sup> Even though she did not indicate in her statement, we can say that she frustrated her unsuccessful school life and searched for something meaningful. At this point, her uncle fought for a holy goal, *jihad*, might have become a role model, and an example for her. We do not have any knowledge on her parents, but most probably, she grew up in a conservative family. This process could not happen in a short period, but she radicalized enough to connect people from jihadist networks from Facebook and aimed to go to Syria alone. When she wrote about her wish to go to Syria to a person with the codename of Abu Usame, Mustafa Dokumacı, he offered her a potential husband also wanted to *jihad*. She met with her husband, Mahmut Gazi Dündar, online through Mustafa Dokumacı, on Facebook, and came to Turkey.<sup>75</sup> Besides, Ayşenur İnci's boyfriend was recruited by Mustafa Dokumacı,<sup>76</sup> and Ayşenur İnci got radicalized together with her imam marriage husband, Ersel Ocak. Similarly, Demet Taşar's husband, Mehmet Taşar, was also recruited by Mustafa Dokumacı,<sup>77</sup> and he affected Demet Taşar's radicalization. For Adıyaman general trend was the recruitment of men led by Mustafa Dokumacı in the Islam Tea House, and these men imported their ideology to their wives, families, and partners. People from Adıyaman highlighted the mosaic of Adıyaman, similar to Turkey, including Sunni Muslims, and Alevites, as religious communities, and Turkish and Kurdish as ethnic communities (Kasapoğlu 2015). Also, some known cults in Turkey, such as Manzil and Naqshbandi, are active in Adıyaman (CNN Türk 2015). Hence, the city has always been active place for religious communities. Some people in Adıyaman also may have considered Daesh as an organization that fought against

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<sup>72</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2021. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: June 9, 2021. Hearing Number: 11, p.32.

<sup>73</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/1201, Date: January 31, 2020. p.3.

<sup>74</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/1201, Date: January 31, 2020. p.3

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018. p.3.

<sup>77</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2019. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2019/1349, Date: February 19, 2019. p.3.

Assad, who caused Muslims sufferings in Syria (CNN Türk 2015), and this situation might have legitimized their cause. However, the main problems of the city were unemployment, and the poor economic conditions (Kasapoğlu 2015; CNN Türk 2015; Dinç 2015b). However, women from Adıyaman seem to ideologically radicalize to join Daesh in our case. For this reason, we primarily emphasize the religious activity in Adıyaman, and how they affected women in our case, and then its structural factors.

Another city that congregations, and cults are active is Konya. Konya located in the Central Anatolian region, one of most conservative cities in Turkey. To illustrate, Konya had 624 Qur'an courses at the end of 2020 (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2022). Konya is the third city with the highest number of Qur'an courses in Turkey ranked sixth among the largest cities in Turkey based on population. The other cities are Istanbul, and Ankara, the most populous cities in Turkey. In other words, Konya is leading city in Turkey in the number of Qur'an courses per person. Hence, congregations, and religiosity have greater influence of people from Konya than other cities in Turkey (Çelik 2002, 319). A city like Konya provides a place for Daesh networks can grow, and hide themselves with other religious groups, congregations, and cults. Therefore, in Konya, and religiosity, and religious groups have impact on Daesh recruitment. In our research, four women joined Daesh from Konya. Moreover, Daesh's recruitment in Konya was influenced by political and economic factors. The military forced certain Kurdish people into internal migration to fight PKK (Ovet et al. 2022, 14), and some have since settled in specific areas, including Saraçoğlu in Konya (Eroğlu 2018, 101). Yağmur Kılıç, for instance, mentions that her father was relocated to Konya from the eastern part of Turkey for his activities in Kurdish movement, and afterward went to Norway, which had changed Yağmur Kılıç's life.

Nonetheless, Konya's Kurdish community is more conservative today and has withdrawn from politics. Kurdish community against the PKK constitutes one of the active Daesh recruitment hotspots in Konya (Eroğlu 2018, 102–103). Significantly, in our case, no woman from Konya mentions economic factors for participation in Daesh. Women from Konya<sup>78</sup> and their relatives do not indicate economic or political factors

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<sup>78</sup> Hatice Cırcır, Bozkurt family, F.K., and Havva P.

for joining Daesh. They state partners' effect (Hatice Circir and Bozkurt family), revenge (F.K.), and religious factors (Havva P.) for joining Daesh. Notably, the news reports state that Havva P. raised money for Daesh and tried to recruit women to join Daesh (Yetkin 2019). To wrap up, the leading factor for joining Daesh for women, in our case in Konya religious motivations.

Istanbul and Ankara are the largest cities in Turkey. Recruiters were active in Ankara and Istanbul. In our case, three women from Ankara<sup>79</sup> and five women from Istanbul.<sup>80</sup> All women from Ankara indicated they joined Daesh with the effect of their husbands. For both these cities, we can say that recruitment and socialization places of Daesh were masjids, shops, coffee shops, workplaces, and houses. For instance, Handan engaged with Daesh networks through a Salafi association, Tawhid Magazine. Afife from Istanbul has a Salafi background and started engaging with Tawhid Magazine, led by Halis Bayancuk (Güler 2021, 393). Z.E. was radicalized in a Qur'an course and attempted to join Daesh. However, she was caught by the police due to her being underage (ManşetX 2016). Kübra Ekinci's father says that her daughter became radicalized online with her husband (Habertürk 2018b). Defne Bayrak is another woman who joined Daesh from Istanbul. We will mention her story and propaganda activities. Consequently, in our case, women from Istanbul were radicalized in associations, the Qur'an courses, or online networks.

Women from Germany, Merve Dünder, Derya Ö., and H.K. has different motivations. Merve Dünder has a previous connection with jihadist networks, and her uncle joined Al-Qaeda in Syria.<sup>81</sup> She radicalized with the effect of her family and online networks and came to Turkey to travel to Syria. On the other hand, Derya Ö. and Gülay state their partners' effects for joining Daesh. Zehra Duman from Australia made online propaganda for Daesh on their Facebook and Twitter accounts (Maiden 2019). Yağmur Kılıç (Koçak 2019e) from Norway, Melis Atıcı (Fever 2019), and H.K. (Öz 2018) from the Netherlands indicate their partners' effect on their radicalization. Considering this

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<sup>79</sup> B.Ş., Şeyda, and Ayla Ada.

<sup>80</sup> Defne Bayrak, Kübra Ekinci, Afife, Handan, and Z.E.

<sup>81</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/1201, Date: January 31, 2020. p.3

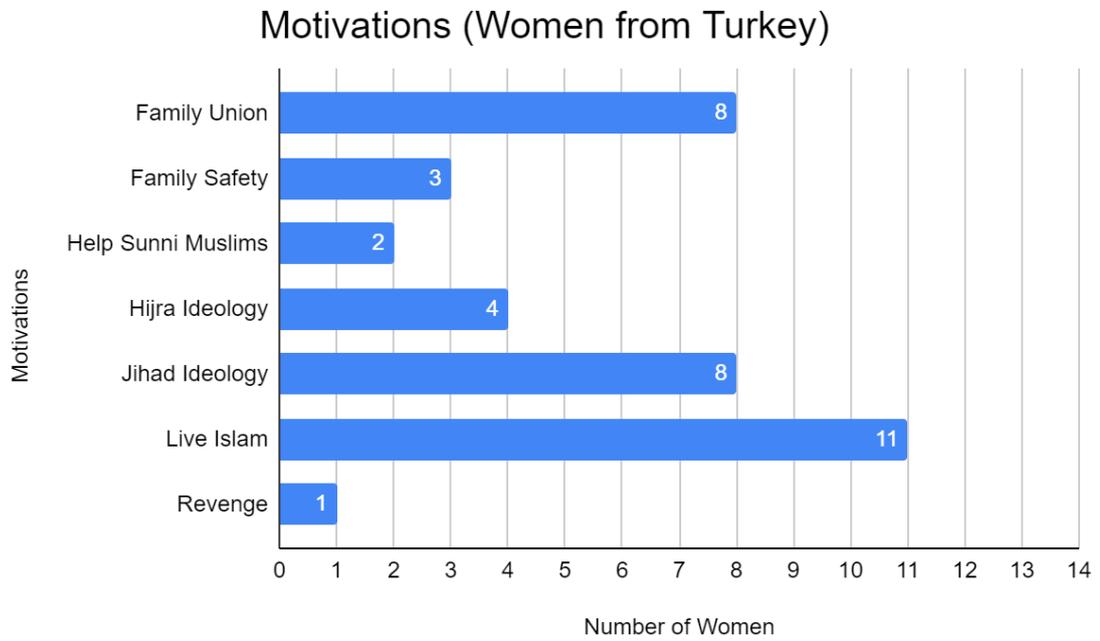
information, we could not observe the commonality of spatiality effects on women's radicalization from outside Turkey.

As we stated, women joined Daesh almost from all cities, and some cities like Adiyaman, Gaziantep, Konya, and Istanbul provide some enabling factors for joining Daesh, like easy access to Daesh networks. Detailed analysis of these women's radicalization processes will be given in the ideology section in the chapter.

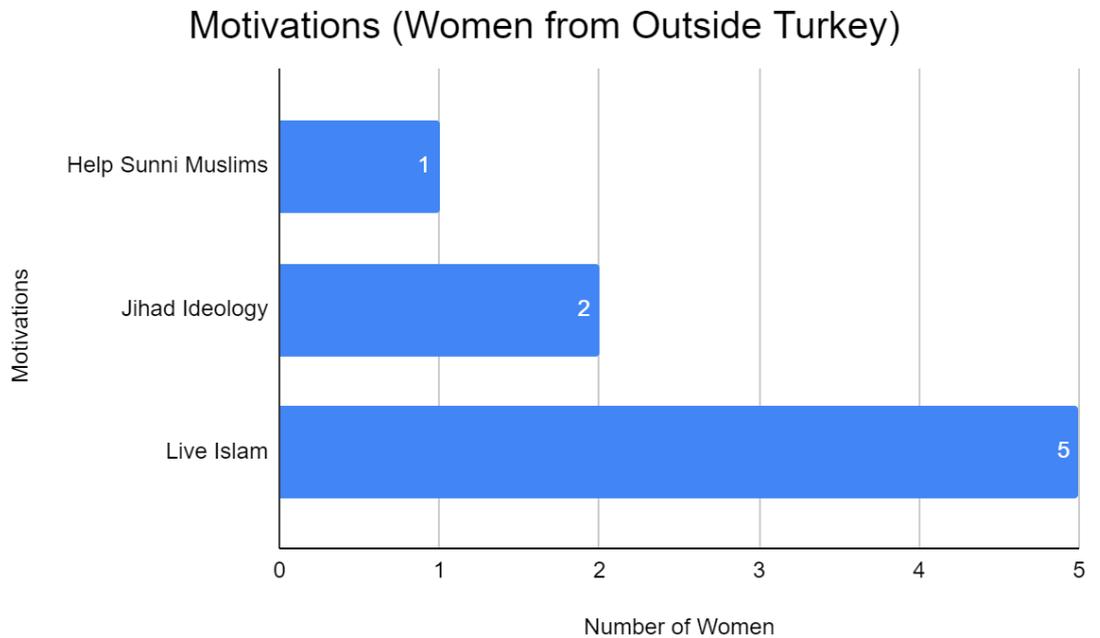
#### **4.1.2 Ideology**

We made a content analysis based on news articles about women and statements of women. We categorize the similar ideological themes in our figures that women mentioned in news and statements, as live Islam, *jihād* ideology, *hijra* ideology, and help Sunni Muslims (see Figure 4.2, and 4.3). If they talked their motivation to join Daesh as live under the Sharia rule, live Islam properly under Daesh, and they could not live Islam in Turkey, we categorize these similar themes as live Islam. If women talked about the establishment of the Islamic State, and the religious obligation to emigrate the state (Ad-Dawlah), we categorize this theme as *hijra* ideology. If women stated the aim of helping and supporting *jihād*, we categorize this theme as *jihād* ideology. Finally, if women indicated the sufferings of Muslims in Syria, and their purpose of helping Muslims, we categorize this as help Sunni Muslims. We distinguish women from Turkey, and Turkish women from outside Turkey, because their socialization, and living places has distinct characteristics that need separate consideration. As we can see, the most mentioned motivations of Turkish women's participation in Daesh are to live Islam more appropriately in the Islamic State, and live under the Sharia rule, *jihād* ideology, *hijra* ideology, and help Sunni Muslims as seen in Figures 4.2, and 4.3. The predominantly expressed motivations for joining Daesh are religious motivations. Help Sunni Muslims refers to helping Muslims in Syria from Assad's brutality. N.K. stated that she went to Syria to help Muslims in Syria (Kaya 2020). *Hijra* ideology refers to holy migration to Daesh as a religious duty. Similarly, *jihād* ideology refers to holy war for Daesh, but these women refer to their roles in *jihād* as supporting Daesh, as wives and mothers of jihadists, and supporting *jihād* ideology instead of fighting. Also, some women wanted to take part in *jihād* as suicide bombers (Hülya Tuba Olgun, and F.K.), or supporting *jihād* by promoting it online (Defne Bayrak, Zehra Duman and Leyla Olgun). Live Islam refers to living under the Caliphate and Daesh because they believed

that they could not properly live in Islam in Turkey. Turkey is a democratic and secular state, which makes Turkey a kuffar (rejection of Islam, non-Muslims, or non-believers), or *taghut*<sup>82</sup> state.<sup>83</sup>



**Figure 4.2** Motivation to Join Daesh (Women from Turkey)



**Figure 4.3** Motivations to Join Daesh (Turkish Women from outside Turkey)

<sup>82</sup> Daesh defined *taghut* as: “tyrant ruling by manmade law” (Unknown Author. 2014. “The Concept of Imamah is from the Millah of Ibrahim.” *Dabiq, Issue 1*, p.23.

<sup>83</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. “Erdoğan’ın Kürt Devleti.” *Konstantiniyye. Issue 2*. p.49

#### **4.1.2.1 Guide us to the straight path**

Live Islam demonstrate the aim of becoming better Muslims through live under the Sharia rule, and the self-declared Caliphate instead of taghut states. Hence, twelve women stated they want to live Islam properly meant that they want to live under the so-called Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah) to become better Muslims. Ayşenur İnci, from Adıyaman, stated that she wants to live in the Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah), and start a family in Daesh. Serpil Dere also from Adıyaman, stated her desire to live in Daesh. Hatice Akaltın, and Gamze Demir from Gaziantep showed their supports to Daesh networks in Turkey, and their ideological engagement with Daesh. Hence, we categorize their ideology as live Islam. The wife of a policeman from Gaziantep talked about her desire to live in Daesh and took her two children with her. We categorize her goal as live Islam. Bozkurt family from Konya joined Daesh as a big family, and her sister's stated that they went to Daesh to live Islam under the Sharia law. Berivan Yılmaz, and Mihriman Yılmaz sisters from Diyarbakır radicalized, and their ideological engagement increased with Daesh. They went to Daesh due to their ideological engagement with Daesh, and we categorize motivations of these sisters as live Islam. D.İ. from Kırşehir linked Daesh networks in Turkey and joined Daesh to live Islam. M.G. from Kayseri indicated that she could not live Islam properly in Turkey, but she can become better Muslim in Daesh. We categorize M. G's motivation as live Islam. Kübra Ekinçi from Istanbul indicated her motivation as to live in accordance with Islam in the Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah). Ş.A. from Muş, claimed that Turkey is not an appropriate state to live Islam, and she went Daesh to live in the "real" Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah). We categorize her motivation as live Islam.

We evaluate the radicalization processes of ethnically Turkish women outside Turkey because the socialization of these women showed distinct characteristics than women from Turkey, which need separate consideration. We include these women to compare Turkish women socialization, and its impacts on radicalization processes. Leyla Olgun from Denmark indicated her desire to live in the Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah) and call other women in Denmark to join Daesh in her social media accounts. Hazal Olgun her sister, had the similar ideology with her. We categorize their motivation as live Islam. Yağmur Kılıç from Norway was deeply affected by her mother's suicide and started to

be more religious after the incident. She saw the salvation to live in Daesh, and we categorize her motivation to live Islam. Melis Atıcı from the Netherlands mentioned she wanted to go heaven, and she saw the way is live under the Sharia rule under Daesh. We categorize her motivation to live Islam. Finally, Merve Dünder from Germany initially wanted to join Al-Qaeda in Syria but joined Daesh to live Islam properly. We categorize her motivation as live Islam, we examine women's radicalization processes considering their living places, and started with women from Adıyaman, where Daesh networks were visible around a group called Dokumacılar Group. Serpil Dere, Ayşenur İnci, Demet Taşar, and Merve Dünder engaged with this local group. We started with Serpil Dere, who is claimed to be the local women recruiter of Dokumacılar Group.<sup>84</sup>

Serpil Dere is a significant case to mention because some of the witnesses in her file claimed that she was a woman local recruiter for Daesh in Adıyaman,<sup>85</sup> and she had connections with other women from Adıyaman. Serpil Dere arranged small house meetings among women mostly in 2014, she connected with the Dokumacılar Group, and Ayşenur İnci said that Merve Dünder, and Z.K., also took place in these house meetings, and talked about religion.<sup>86</sup> She was thirty one years old when joined Daesh, and older than other women joined Daesh from Adıyaman in our research. Her age might provide her with a respect from other younger women. Ayşenur İnci said that Serpil Dere called her with insistence to invite to her house.<sup>87</sup> We cannot be sure what they were discussing, but considering all these women joined Daesh, they might have talked about how Muslims suffer in Syria, and joining Daesh to live Islam. Even Demet Taşar's, another women connected with Dokumacılar Group from Adıyaman and joined Daesh, *niqah* (imam marriage) took place in Serpil Dere's house.<sup>88</sup> This marriage becomes a symbol for Daesh recruitment, and showed the officiator's, Mustafa Dokumacı, recruitment from Adıyaman. Demet Taşar joined Daesh after a month of her marriage with her husband. This demonstrates that these marriages a step before joining

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<sup>84</sup> T.C Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/2623, Date: March 8, 2020. p.20.

<sup>85</sup> T.C Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/2623, Date: March 8, 2020. P.20

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018b. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018 p.2

<sup>88</sup> Ibid p.4

Daesh for Demet Taşar. Since these meetings took place in Serpil Dere's house and all young women met her in houses, the chance of her being recruiter increased as well. The male members of Dokumacılar Group primarily connected around a tea house, and the main recruiter Mustafa Dokumacı. Then, their partners and wives connected, and arranged small meetings in houses mostly led by Serpil Dere. To understand her radicalization process, we need to go back in time, and look at her husband's former connections with jihadist networks.

Her husband, Kasım Dere, said in the previous chapter, started to radicalize in 2013, according to Serpil Dere, and connected with Mustafa Dokumacı. His way of praying was changed, and he stopped going to the mosque to pray<sup>89</sup> because the state pays the salaries of imams in Turkey. Therefore, they serve the state, not Islam.<sup>90</sup> Kasım Dere went to Afghanistan in 2013.<sup>91</sup> At first, Serpil Dere went to the police and reported that her husband was missing. Then, the police reported to Serpil Dere that her husband's phone signal was coming from Iraq or Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup> Kasım Dere called her once with a different state-code phone number, and said they talked. We do not have the inside of this phone call, but she probably learns where her husband was. Still, even before the travel, Kasım Dere radicalized enough to join *jihad*. Even though Serpil Dere did not mention in her statement, both Serpil Dere and Kasım Dere most likely devoted Muslims most of in their lives. Due to Adıyaman's religiosity, Serpil Dere might socialize with people in a limited sense, such as with her husband, neighbors, and relatives. For women in Turkey especially in small cities, small Qur'an reading groups meeting in houses, or religious groups in short, became significant socialization places. For this reason, in small cities, partners, and social networks gain importance in radicalization.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p.3

<sup>90</sup> Unknown Author. 2014. "Hıyanet Raporu Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının İslam Devleti Aleyhinde Hazırlamış Olduğu Rapora Cevap" *Konstantiniyye. Issue 3*. p.45

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p.3

<sup>92</sup> T.C Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/2623, Date: March 8, 2020. p.3

After his return, Kasım Dere offered Serpil Dere that go to Syria to help Muslims there in the same year.<sup>93</sup> She accepted, and the couple went to Syria for a few months between September 2013, and January 2014 to help Muslims in Syria. This means that she had already thought that Muslims in Syria suffered, and she and her husband already talked about Muslims' sufferings in Syria, and probably *jihad*. Also, Serpil Dere's mother said that Serpil Dere was against sending children to school (in a kuffar state) and going to the mosques affiliated with the Presidency of Religious Affairs.<sup>94</sup> Turkey is a democratic state, and uses people made law instead of Sharia; therefore, a taghut state, and sending children to the state's schools and praying behind the state's imams are not religiously appropriate in a taghut state, as Daesh promoted in its propaganda.<sup>95</sup> After they returned from Syria, she met with wives of her husband's friends around the Islam Tea House, owned by Mustafa Dokumacı, and she started to arranged small house meetings we mentioned. Hence, their returned might have aim recruitment for Daesh from Adıyaman. All these means that Daesh networks around Islam Tea House created a jihadist network among men and their partners. Serpil Dere was the main character in this network among women in Adıyaman. That is why she was claimed to be a local woman recruiter for Daesh.

Her second travel to Syria was in 2015, and all other women in her network also went Syria to join Daesh before her. She claimed that her husband threatened her to go to Daesh with him.<sup>96</sup> Notably, due to the perception of the Court of Cassation on women returnees of Daesh, almost all women in our case claimed that they went to Daesh under the influence of their husbands, partners, or families, and they are victims. Hence, this claim might become a tactical move to escape from punishment that they have been told to do so by lawyers or people in Daesh networks. We observe the language of grooming for almost half of our cases make us to think to put responsibility on husbands becomes a tactical move. However, she has been more active than many other women who joined Daesh by arranging small meetings in her home, and contacting younger women in

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid. p.3

<sup>94</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2021. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: June 9, 2021. Hearing Number: 11, p. 23

<sup>95</sup> Unknown Author. 2014. "Hıyanet Raporu Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının İslam Devleti Aleyhinde Hazırlamış Olduğu Rapora Cevap" *Konstantiniyye. Issue 3.* p.45

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p.14

Dokumacılar Group. When they were in Syria, her husband died in fighting in the fronts of Daesh. She said that she moved to a villa-type house after her husband died in Syria.<sup>97</sup> She did not go to maqar (مقر or Headquarter-Station) and did not remarry unlikely other women in Daesh. This privilege, or exception, is questionable and improbable in Daesh, and her privilege supported the claim that she was a recruiter, and her hierarchical position among other women. To wrap up, in some ways, her story does not fit the gendered expectations and biases, such as victim and passive women. For instance, some people claimed she gave religious lectures in her house and recruited women to join Daesh. Also, she could stay unmarried Daesh and live maqar. Lawyers in her trial in the Ankara Station Attack of Daesh, where she was listened as witness, questioned her hierarchy in Daesh and how the organization gave her this exception or privilege. However, her question remains unanswered in the court.<sup>98</sup> These situations distinguish her from other women, her activities in Daesh networks, and religious beliefs display her agency in radicalization.

Other women from Adıyaman in Dokumacılar Group Ayşenur İnci was twenty years old when she traveled Syria to join Daesh in 2014. Her radicalization process started in Dokumacılar Group together with her partner, Ersel Ocak, who she knew from the high school. She was a university student in Adıyaman lived with her family before joining Daesh. She said that before she and her boyfriend connected with Dokumacılar Group, she and her boyfriend hold hands, and made tours in Adıyaman with Ersel Ocak.<sup>99</sup> She claimed that before joining Dokumacılar group her boyfriend was a gadder, and did not pray.<sup>100</sup> She even did not know how to read Qur'an before she traveled to Daesh.<sup>101</sup> She said that her boyfriend started to radicalize in 2014 after joining Dokumacılar Group. We do not know how he engaged with the group but drove Ayşenur İnci's engagement with the Dokumacılar Group as well. He started to tell to İnci that not to wear pants, not to listen to music, to drop out of university, because these were not permissible in

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<sup>97</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2020. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2020/2623, Date: March 8, 2020 p.6

<sup>98</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2021. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: June 9, 2021. Hearing Number: 11, p.21

<sup>99</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5. p.77.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5, p.78

Islam.<sup>102</sup> She met with Serpil Dere, and Z.K., the older women, with Ersel Ocak's connections with their husbands from the Dokumacılar Group.<sup>103</sup> According to Ayşenur İnci's father, she did not have many friends, and they made activities as family usually.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, she had a small circle of friends, and her boyfriend most probably made up her utmost of social circle.

She met with Serpil Dere with the suggestion of her boyfriend and met Merve Dündar in Serpil Dere's house. After, she went to Z.K.'s house to meet same women again. Z.K. told her not to wear pants, and drop university of a taghut state, since these are not permissible in Islam.<sup>105</sup> Z.K. also gave her a religious book about the sufferings of Muslims have faced (*Religious Life Stories/Dini Hayat Hikayeleri*).<sup>106</sup> This shows us they talked about Daesh's ideological claims as the true way of Islam, and spread the ideology to Ayşenur İnci in their house meetings. After engaging the Dokumacılar Group plus her boyfriend's effect, she slowly started to embrace Daesh's ideology. Ersel Ocak offered her a marriage in October 2014, and his desire to make *jihād* under Daesh.<sup>107</sup> Then, they had an imam marriage in Z.K.'s house, and Mustafa Dokumacı performed the wedding on October 25, 2014 according to Ayşenur İnci.<sup>108</sup> Similar to Demet Taşar's wedding, this marriage became a symbol for victory of Mustafa Dokumacı's recruitment for Daesh, because after five days the marriage, they went to Syria with Ersel Ocak to join Daesh. This is noteworthy that even though the main reason for their participation, according to their statements, was their partners, they also created a social network with each other in Adıyaman, and even they met each other in Daesh. Hence, her small social circle, and limited socialization places increased effects of her husband solidified with women in Dokumacılar Group for her ideological radicalization into Daesh.

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<sup>102</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018. P.2

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2014. Statement of the Complainant. Case Number: 2014/3027, Date: November 6, 2014. p.2.

<sup>105</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018. p.2.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid p.2.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p.3.

Ayşenur İnci said that Ersel Ocak radicalization started in August 2014,<sup>109</sup> and they married on October 25, 2014.<sup>110</sup> According to this timescale, she radicalized in few months, and joined Daesh. However, she might have not told the previous process of her radicalization to the police in her statement. Ersel Ocak's brother also said that Ayşenur İnci started to radicalize, and wear chador just before they traveled to Syria to join Daesh.<sup>111</sup> Ayşenur İnci's father also said she wanted to wear niqab (a way of veiling for women only shows eyes), but they did not allow, and she started to wear chador (a way of veiling for women only shows the face) instead due to her parents' persistence.<sup>112</sup> These clothes showed a more fundamentalist religious beliefs for women in Turkey, with their dissimilarities with the traditional or modern Turkish way of veiling, and colorful headscarves (Gökarıksel and Secor 2010, 322). Ayşenur İnci mentioned these reactions to her family about her chador in the letter she left to her family before joining Daesh, five days after her imam marriage on October 30, 2014. "İlim eğitimi için medreseye gidiyorum, ben kapandığımda siyahlara girdiğimde çoğu kişi bana hor baktı, gidiyorum ama İnşallah hafızlığı tadınca geleceğim ve inşallah yuvamı da kuracağım. [I went to madrasa for (Islamic) education, everyone looks down at me when I covered with blacks (wearing black chador), but may Allah I will return when I become hafiz (حافظ-memorizer) and make my home.]"<sup>113</sup>

We observe the resentment about people judging her look, and her limited socialization mostly consisted with her boyfriend. For Ayşenur İnci, wearing a chador became a symbol of her radicalization to her family and friends. Ayşenur İnci, who was twenty years old when she traveled to Syria, radicalized with the effect of her boyfriend, and some other people she met before her *hijra* to Syria; her social network, was similar to other women in Turkey. As seen in her letter, she wanted to live a religious life, learn religion, and start a family. Her relatively brief period of time in her radicalization, and her emphasis on learning religion, and starting a family can be interpreted as she was

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<sup>109</sup> He might have been started to radicalize and engaged with Daesh networks in Adıyaman before this date. This date based on Ayşenur İnci's statement.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid p.2.

<sup>111</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2014. Information Request Record. Date: November 19, 2014. p.2.

<sup>112</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2014. Statement of the Complainant. Case Number: 2014/3027, Date: November 6, 2014. p.2.

<sup>113</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 17, 2018. p.20.

more moderate than Serpil Dere in her views but radicalized enough to join Daesh. Turkey's generally accepted gender norms and roles as passive women, victims and vulnerable women, and satellite of men, especially in terrorism, cause some potential errors in evaluating women in terrorism. Ayşenur İnci's statement, age, and her relationship with Ersel Ocak fit the perception of passive and victim women. However, we observe her desire to live Islam properly, and she considered living in Daesh as the way to achieve her goal, and this become a way of starting her own family in the right place, Daesh.

Nonetheless, Ayşenur İnci was in the blue category, the second highest category in Turkey, on the terror wanted list of the General Directorate of Security as a potential suicide bomber of Daesh. Suicide attacks of Daesh in Turkey were perpetrated by young members of the Dokumacılar Group, and the directorate of security put some people in the Dokumacılar Group on the terrorist wanted list. She was an active agent in joining Daesh, examining her letter and this situation with other factors like social networks and her resentments.

Other than Adıyaman, Gaziantep was one of the most significant cities in Turkey for Daesh recruitment and connected with Dokumacılar Group. However, the prominent significance of the Gaziantep cell is that they planned, organized, and perpetrated eight Daesh attacks in Turkey (Eroğlu 2018, 166), and three of the bombers, Orhan Gönder, Yunus Emre Alagöz, and Şeyh Abdurrahman Alagöz, in these attacks planned by the Gaziantep cell was from Dokumacılar Group. Also, some women from Adıyaman, and Gaziantep lived in same maqars in Syria, and met each other. The leader of the Gaziantep cell was Yunus Durmaz, so-called Daesh's Amir of Gaziantep (Karakaş and İnal 2020). Gamze Demir, from Gaziantep, is a significant woman since she is Yunus Durmaz's sister. She is also the sister of Hacı Ali Durmaz, who got sentenced to 101 aggravated life sentences and 20 years and six months in prison to help planning and organizing the Ankara Train Station attack (Haberturk 2020). Apart from her brothers, Gamze Demir's mother was in Syria, and live under Daesh in 2015. Hence, they joined Daesh as a family, a widespread phenomenon in Turkey. However, their radicalization was not limited with Daesh. Yunus Durmaz's first participation in *jihad* was in 2006 in

Afghanistan (Saymaz 2017, 104). Considering his radicalization timeline, Gamze Demir raised with a jihadist brother, most probably with hearing his “heroic” stories of fight for *jihad*, and strict religious rules. Therefore, her radicalization process started in his family. Yunus Durmaz marries Gamze Demir with his “reliable” man Abdülmubtalip Demir (Haber 342 2016). This showed that she was acting with her brother and fulfill his wishes. She said she went to Syria to give birth to her child beside her mother in 2015 and did not have the aim of joining Daesh (Haberler.com 2016). This seems a tactical move to escape from punishment, because the police captured them with Talha Güneş,<sup>114</sup> Abdülmubtalip Demir, and Gamze Demir in Gaziantep in a cell house (Haberler.com 2017). In the house, the police seized twenty kilograms of TNT explosives, a suicide vest, three hand grenades, and a pistol (Anadolu Agency 2016). When captured, they were claimed to be preparing for a sensational attack in Turkey (Milliyet 2017). She was with other terrorists to plan attacks in Turkey on behalf of Daesh. Considering her brother, mother, husband, and other person she captured with was members of Daesh, she is supporting, and helping<sup>115</sup> to prepare the attack on the behalf of Daesh when she captures. In other words, she was an agent in participating Daesh, and showed her ideological engagement with Daesh with helping a failed Daesh attack, and behaviorally by taking part of preparation of an attack.

Another woman from Gaziantep cell is Hatice Akaltın. Her husband, Metin Akaltın was one of the members of Gaziantep cell and he was one of the executors of the Ankara Train Station attack of Daesh, planned by Yunus Durmaz (Açıl and Kılıç 2017). Hence, Metin Akaltın was in the close circle of Yunus Durmaz in the Gaziantep cell. Metin Akaltın had a criminal record for stealing beer in 2016 (Cumhuriyet 2016b), which is ironic for a member of Daesh because consuming alcohol was *haram* (forbidden).

She was twenty-three years old when she joined Daesh with her husband (Kaya et al 2019, 83). After the Ankara Train Station Attack of Daesh in October 2015, and Metin Akaltın’s arrest warrant, she started to run with her husband, Esin Altıntuğ, and Halil

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<sup>114</sup> The secret witness claimed that he was a chemist and bomb maker in Daesh and wanted for the Ankara Train Station trial (Anadolu Agency 2016). He is also the brother of Ahmet Güneş, another perpetrator of the Ankara Train Station bombing.

<sup>115</sup> Her help could take place in different forms, such as helping hide explosives or supporting men in their goals, that we did not know in detail.

İbrahim Durgun, other people wanted by the police for the attack (CNN Türk 2018a). After they arrested, she changed her statements for several times, and refuse to talk with the “warning” of Metin Akaltın during the trial (Sözcü 2017). Therefore, she was under pressure of her husband, but also cover her husband. We cannot be sure about how her radicalization process started, but her partner effect seems to prominent driver for her radicalization. We think that she was radicalized, because she participates the Daesh networks, and similar to Gamze Demir, support an attack, and tried to escape from the police after the attack with her husband. She is also one of the rare cases in our study to get punishment for being a member of an armed terrorist organization (Açıl 2020).

According to lawyer Onur Güler, who takes over the cases of returnees of Daesh, and closely worked with them, judges mostly look for four criteria to charge a woman affiliated with a terrorist organization. Being a wife of a fighter, going to Syria, gaining a stipend or salary from the organization, responsible for a cell’s house, and involving hierarchical order and active actions, and proven all of these can cause sentences on the participation of a terrorist organization for women.<sup>116</sup> Hatice Akaltın met most of these criteria in some ways. Firstly, her family gained a salary from Daesh, when Metin Akaltın was in Syria (Bulut and Yeltekin 2018b). She joined (religious and ideological) training from some hodjas in some associations (Bulut and Yeltekin 2018b). She kept one of the primary perpetrators of the Ankara Train Station attack and a considerable amount of munitions in her house. Also, the inconsistencies in her statements ended with her sentence for membership in a terrorist organization for seven years and six months. The court decided that she was an active agent involved Daesh networks.

Berivan, twenty years old, and Mihriban, seventeen years old sisters went to Syria from Diyarbakır, another city in Southeastern Anatolia Region. However, Diyarbakır is distinct from Gaziantep, and Adyaman with its highest Kurdish population, and more active Kurdish movement in the city (International Crisis Group 2012). Still, the father of sisters said that their family is a conservative family. His children had headscarves, but they were social, and intellectual people without fundamentalist views about Islam. (Acarer 2017, 107). However, according to their fathers, sisters get radicalized in time

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<sup>116</sup> Interview with Onur Güler on December 10, 2022.

by exposing to Daesh ideology online. The sisters raised in a conservative family, but we do not know what triggered their radicalization exactly. However, according to their father, they were radicalized with exposing Daesh's online propaganda (Acarer 2017, 107). The sisters probably exposed to Daesh propaganda about how Muslims suffer in Syria, and living righteous way of Islam is to join Daesh. The father realized her daughters' radical beliefs in religion (Acarer 2017, 108), but he could not anticipate their radical beliefs ended up with travel to Daesh. Considering their ideological radicalization, and travel alone, they are active agent to join Daesh.

Ş.A was a wife of a police officer in Muş, a small and conservative city in the Eastern part of Turkey. Similar to Berivan and Mihriban sisters, she radicalized through online networks. She was "groomed" via Facebook according to her husband. She talked with recruiters on Facebook (Dişkaya 2015), most probably she participated Facebook groups of Daesh. Recruiters said that Turkey is not an Islamic state, and she should make *hijra* the "real" Islamic State (Dişkaya 2015). She escaped from her husband with their two children and went to Daesh in 2015 (Dişkaya 2015). After a few days, she texted her husband and expressed her regret (Dişkaya 2015). Her radicalization and disengagement with Daesh happened relatively in a short time period than other women. However, she most probably lived in a closed social circle, due to Muş' conservatism and highly limited places for women's socialization. We can guess that she was a devoted Muslim before her radicalization. She aimed to live an Islamic life under Daesh, and this made her an agent in her decision to join Daesh.

D.İ is from Kırşehir, a small and conservative city in Central Anatolia. Her radicalization process was distinct from women from Gaziantep, and Adıyaman, and closer to women from Konya. Her family are devoted Muslims, and she grew up in a conservative family in Kırşehir, a conservative city in Central Anatolia. We assume that her social network is limited with her family, and relatives. Therefore, her family probably raised her as a devoted Muslim as well. Even, her members of family such as her aunt joined Daesh and married with a mujahid (*jihad* fighter). Most probably with the encouragement of her aunt, she participates in some WhatsApp groups of Daesh networks. She says that recruiters in these groups tried to convince people to make *hijra*

to the Islamic State (Yıldız 2018). She also joined Daesh to live Islam and stayed with her aunt. Therefore, her radicalization process started in her family and deepened in online networks. She joined Daesh and traveled to the Islamic State, claiming that recruiters in these WhatsApp groups were brainwashed to join Daesh (Yıldız 2018). She went to Syria alone to live in the Islamic State, meaning she has an ideological affiliation with Daesh.

M.G. is from Kayseri, a metropolitan city in Central Anatolian region. Her radicalization process story shares similarities with those of other women associated with Daesh, but also has a few distinguishing features. Similar to D.İ., her family had participated in Daesh, and her dad was died fighting for Daesh in January 2014 (IHA 2019a). She said that after her dad's death, her uncle talked about that they cannot live Islam in Turkey properly, and she can live and Islamic, a true life under Daesh (IHA 2019a). Hence, the male members of her family contributed to her radicalization process, and most probably she raised in a conservative family. According to her mother, M.G was a social, and unveiled women until five years ago she joined Daesh (IHA 2019a). This demonstrated that she veiled in the last five years, and she radicalized in five years slowly. Even her mother said that the uncle threatened her to say that if she has not come to Daesh, her death become *wajip* (necessary). M.G. went to Syria to with her uncle, where she had two marriages and gave birth to two children (IHA 2019a). Notably, her former husband claimed her father was an Amir in Daesh (IHA 2019a), and this showed that her father and uncle were highly radicalized and committed to Daesh. What sets M.G. apart from the other women in our case is that she sentenced to six years for her membership in a terrorist organization (IHA 2019a), but most probably she is released by the Court of Cassation similar to other decisions of the court with related cases. Unlike the other women in our case, who were suspected of being active members of Daesh but were not convicted, M.G. was found guilty. Even though she claimed that her uncle groomed her, she went to Syria to live under the so-called Islamic State. Hence, she was an active agent in joining Daesh with other factors like her family.

Women lived in Turkey motivated by live Islam in Daesh from Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Diyarbakır, Muş, Kırşehir, and Kayseri states different drivers in their radicalization, but shared a motivation. We observe a conservative background, and limited chance of socialization in their living places. Limited socialization is a structural social feature of Turkey, especially in small cities, as well as in conservative families. Recent technologies, the Internet, and social media show people alternative ways of living in this social structure of Turkey. The algorithm of social media created an echo-chambers by suggesting similar contents. Therefore, a woman once looked at Muslims sufferings in Syria will be suggested more related suggestions. In this way, recruiter can reach people in these echo-chambers, or like some posts related to Daesh. As Ş.A. from Muş, recruiters can reach people and tell them the utopia of the so-called Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah).

In this limited socialization, religious groups could be a chance for conservative women that provide a socialization in house meetings. In this way, their in-group identity has increased, and like-minded group radicalization can rise as we observe in Ayşenur İnci. Also, families in the limited socialization have influence on radicalization of women, such as D.İ, and M.G. However, these are driver forces to triggered or lead to radicalization processes of women, similar to men, and these women decided to join Daesh, live in the utopic Islamic State (Ad-Dawlah), because Turkey seems to not the right place to live Islam, and kuffar for some women.

On the other side, ethnically Turkish women live outside Turkey lived in very distinct social structures, different families, and socialization chances. For this reason, giving a distinct focus on these women is needed, and increased our chance to compare dissimilarities among women from Turkey, and outside Turkey. Yağmur Kılıç lived in Norway, Melis Atıcı lived in the Netherlands, Leyla and Hazal Olgun lived in Denmark before joining Daesh will be discussed.

Yağmur Kılıç and Melis Atıcı are Turkish-origin women who live outside Turkey that wanted to “live Islam.” Their radicalization processes started with the influence of their partners. Yağmur Kılıç is lived in Norway, and her radicalization process is embedded

in her mother's suicide. The father of Yağmur Kılıç had to be forced to immigrate to Konya from the Eastern part of Turkey because of his association with the Kurdish movement (Koçak, 2019e). After that, they moved to Norway, but Yağmur's mother could not adapt to her new life in Norway and committed suicide (Koçak, 2019e). This event was accompanied by the condemnation of some of her relatives, who believed that her mother's suicide would result in eternal damnation, because suicide, and murder are forbidden in Islam (Surah al-Isrâ 17:33), and people who committed suicide was forbidden from the Heaven. She raised with her relatives talking about her mother eternal damnation, and therefore, she raised with the fear of eternal damnation, and this led to her to be more religious. She veiled at 16 years old, and attended a mosque in Norway for religious education to avoid her mother's eternal damnation (Koçak, 2019e). She encountered a radical Salafî Muslim at the mosque (Koçak, 2019e). Joining a utopian Islamic State seems to an ideal way to avoid hell to her. Her increasing religiosity substitute with fear of hell lead her radicalization into Daesh. She married a *mujahid* in Norway, and joined Daesh with him (Koçak 2019e). She still supported polygamy, concubines, the idea of and a state ruled with Sharia with the aim of *jihad*. However, she condemned Daesh's harsh application. She claimed that her journey was a sad journey for love (Koçak 2019e). However, her engagement with ideology of Daesh, as mentioned, demonstrates her agency and engagement with the ideology. Also, she would joined again if another organization similar to Daesh had been abandoned the harsh treatment of its settlers.

Melis Atıcı lived in the Netherlands before joining Daesh in 2016 had similar motivations with Yağmur Kılıç. She stated that she wanted to go to heaven (Fever 2019), and the holy war claim of Daesh present a way of redemption, and a way of heaven for her. Her father claimed that main driver of Melis Atıcı was her boyfriend a *mujahid* died in fighting for Daesh (Fever 2019). Notably, when she returned to the Netherlands and was tried, she received a short sentence, eighteen months but twelve months is conditional (NOS 2018a), like women in Turkey. She was arrested for traveling Syria to join Daesh for six months and released to lack of evidence of fighting (NOS 2018a). In Turkey, travel to Syria is not accepted as a criminal offense. For this

reason, women are judged for being member of a terrorist organization, arrested until their first trial, and released in their first trial.

Leyla and Hazal Olgun, lived in Denmark, had radicalized in time, but the family could not realize (Coban 2016). Leyla, born in 1991, and her sibling Hazal, born in 1996, went to Syria in 2016 (Coban 2016). Leyla had been more radicalized than her sister, and the father believed that Leyla's radicalization process started in the Qur'an course she went (Moestrup et al. 2017). However, in her social media account shows her radicalization process started even before. Her social media posts extremely judgmental to Shia Muslims (Coban 2016). We do not know what triggered her radicalization at the first place, but sectarian division, and in-group, and out-group division most probably shaped her radical thoughts. She called young women in Denmark to join Daesh at her social media posts (Moestrup et al., 2017). For this reason, Leyla is believed that a female recruiter in Denmark for Daesh (Moestrup et al. 2017). She active agent in supporting Daesh and Daesh's ideology (Meostrup et al. 2017). Leyla was especially highly ideologically engaged with Daesh than her sister and traveled to the Islamic State. She is both ideologically and behaviorally radicalized.

We showed diverse features of radicalization process of women from outside Turkey, then women from Turkey. Yağmur Kılıç's psychological trauma, and her religious fear lead her radicalization. Melis Atıcı wanted to "go heaven." Leyla Olgun were more active than other women by making online propaganda for Daesh. Their socialization chances probable more diverse than women in Turkey, but they chose the path of participate religious networks.

As seen, women in our case are motivated by living under the Islamic State, and Sharia law is related to the desire to be more Muslim and live Islam "appropriately" under the "real" Islamic State. Being more Muslim and live Islam became the primary motivator of women's radicalization (see Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2). Most women argue that their partners and families are the main drivers of their radicalization. However, their religious/political motivations, such as the desire under the Islamic State, make them agents in their radicalization rather victims of their partners and families.

#### 4.1.2.2 *Jihad* ideology

Some women in our case highlighted their desire to be part of *jihad* to establish the Islamic State, and their duty for the “holy war.” *Jihad* is not obligatory for women, and there is an ongoing debate about women’s participation in *jihad* among Islamic scholars (Lahoud 2014). However, if the enemy invades a Muslim town, if a Muslim leader call to everyone to contribute *jihad*, or if the Muslim leader appointed women for a certain task, they can participate the *jihad* (Bloom and Lokmanoglu 2020, 3). Women such as Afife, and Defne Bayrak, Handan, Z.E., Hülya Tuba Olgun, Sümeyye Alaca, Hurinur Alaca, and Zehra Duman emphasized their wishes to contribute to *jihad* in different ways, Afife, Hülya Tuba Olgun, and Zehra Duman expressed their wishes to fight for the Islamic State, Defne Bayrak wanted to write a book for the Islamic State, and Handan, Sümeyye and Hurinur Alaca expressed their support to *jihad* ideology. They wanted to participate something bigger than their lives in an organization and wanted to be more active in *jihad*. They went beyond wanted to live Islam, and being better Muslims, and also, they wanted to fight, make propaganda, or support the *jihad* by joining Daesh. They legitimized and wanted to be parts of political violence against the out-group. Their lives in Turkey Their lives in did not create a proper context for their “greater purposes.” The declaration of the Caliphate in Daesh provide them a place to reach a greater purpose in their lives. Their statements demonstrate their agency in radicalization.

Among these women, Defne Bayrak steps forward with her long-time commitment to Al-Qaeda networks, and her ongoing support to *jihad*. Defne Bayrak is one of the rare profiles among women who joined Daesh from Istanbul. She is the oldest and the most educated woman in our case. She graduated from Istanbul University Communication Department and worked as a journalist in Islamic magazines and newspapers like Vakit, TimeTurk, Risale Haber, and Baran ve Aylık magazines (Oda TV 2015). She met his husband during her bachelor's at Istanbul University and married him in 2001 (Koçak 2019c). After her marriage, she veiled and moved to Jordan with her Jordanian husband. Even though she had connections with Islamic networks before her marriage, and she was a devoted Muslim already. Her husband led her way in engaging jihadist networks. She has ideologically radicalized with her husband and moved to Jordan with him. He

was an Al-Qaeda suicide bomber, but also had the connection of CIA. He worked as double agent for Al-Qaeda and CIA, and called CIA agents to share information, but instead, he detonated a suicide bomb to kill agents on December 30, 2009 (Aksu 2015). After her husband attacked Forward Operating Base Chapman on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, she expressed her pride in her husband and martyrdom (Reuters 2010). Before her husband made the attack, she came to Turkey in 2009 with her two daughters, whom they named after Leila Khaled, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Lina Makboul, who made Leila Khaled documentary (Aksu 2015). She wrote a book about Osama bin Ladin called “Osama bin Laden: Che Guevara of the East” (Reuters 2010). After Daesh was established, she started to support Daesh and moved away from Al-Qaeda (Dinç 2015). She worked on Daesh media outlets in Turkey and became Daesh’s (perhaps) only women propagandist (Koçak 2019c). In April 2015, she declared on her Twitter account that she joined Daesh with her two children (Koçak 2019c).

After Daesh lost its power, she gave some interviews to journalists (Acarer 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Çaksu 2019; Koçak 2019c). Notably, she still supports Salafi ideology,  *jihad*, and  *hijra*, but she condemns Daesh’s application of the Islamic State (Acarer 2019). In almost all interviews, she mentioned sexuality and marriage corruption in Daesh. She considers men and women seeking new marriages and sexuality in Daesh instead of  *jihad* and an Islamic life (Koçak 2019c). Therefore, she highly commits the  *jihad*,  *hijra*, Sharia rule, and Salafi ideology. Her political motivations and ability to choose to join Daesh make clear her agency in joining Daesh.

She complained about how unmarried women cannot do anything in Daesh, and she could not educate her children due to Daesh policies (Koçak 2019c). She worked for some translation jobs in Daesh and requested to work and write a book about Daesh, but she could not find what she was looking for (Çaksu 2019). This means that she wanted to take part in Daesh by actively working for it. Considering all her activities and complaints about Daesh, she is still an active supporter of radical Salafism and the idea of an Islamic State. Still, she did not find what she desired in Daesh. She was an active participant in Daesh and other possible caliphates. From this perspective, she was an

active agent joining Daesh. However, she has some divergent points of radical Salafism. She talked men journalists, and her face can be seen in these interviews even though she still wears a black chador. For instance, after her husband's attack, she gave an interview to journalist, and got critique from her jihadist network, because her face can be seen in these interviews (Dinç 2015a). She advocates women's education and works in some relevant jobs. She tries to reconstruct the Salafist gender perspective while advocating the gendered perspective of Salafism by claiming their *jihad* ideology still alive, and they are waiting for the holy war (Acarer 2019b).

Handan, also from Istanbul, has very different story than Defne Bayrak. She participated in Daesh networks in Turkey when she was eighteen in 2014. She was born in 1996 in Adana and educated at an *imam hatip school*.<sup>117</sup> She made a *niqah* (imam marriage) at twenty (Gönültaş 2022a). During her marriage, she went to meetings with Tawhid Magazine. She divorced her first husband. After her divorce, she did not want to return to her parent's house and increased her engagement with Daesh networks through Tawhid and Sunnah associations (Gönültaş 2022a). She expressed that she was already a devoted Muslim, and joining the association increased her ideological engagement with Daesh. She wanted to make *hijra* to Daesh, but her father's medical condition held her back (Gönültaş 2022a). She stayed with other women whose husbands died in Syria in sister houses<sup>118</sup> arranged by the Daesh networks in Istanbul. Daesh-related men provided them financial aid, and these women performed *hijamah* (wet cupping) and *ruqyah* (read suras from the Qur'an to heal someone). Sometimes, they experienced financial hardships. She tried to get help from WhatsApp groups from Daesh networks (Gönültaş 2022a). This means that she had not left the network despite financial problems, and she committed to the group. She said men in the same Daesh network married women in these houses for sexuality, and the *niqah* (imam marriages) only lasted a few weeks (Gönültaş 2022a). She also experiences such marriages and psychological problems in this environment (Gönültaş 2022a). Although she experienced financial and psychological problems, she had not left the "sisters" houses.

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<sup>117</sup> A type of public vocational school mainly educates prospective imams and theologians.

<sup>118</sup> Houses where women who returned from Daesh, or women whose husbands died in Daesh stayed together.

She asked other women how she traveled to Syria and contributed to *jihad* (Gönültaş 2020a). Even she participated in a video that said she was ready to die for Sharia (Gönültaş 2022a). Her case was different from other women whose stories. She engaged with Daesh networks through a Salafi association, Tawhid, and Sunnah. She could not go to Syria, but she was still in the Daesh networks in Turkey (Gönültaş 2022a). Also, even though she experienced financial and psychological problems, she persisted in her association with Daesh networks. She was part of a Daesh propaganda video shoot in Başakşehir Gardens of the Nation. Her desire to travel to Syria also solidified her participation in Daesh. Therefore, she was an active agent in making participating Daesh networks in Turkey and did not leave these networks until she was arrested. Her psychological, and financial problems could create a hopelessness for Handan made difficult to leave Daesh networks for her. Also, she might have feared to leave, become helplessness, or been not aware of other options. Handan's radicalization process demonstrated how Daesh stirred psychological problems with its sexualization of women, limiting women's activity in houses prioritizing the sexual dominance of men over women, and harsh applications. We observe that how short, and frequent marriages, and polygamy promoted by Daesh caused psychological problems, because of sexual violence and exploitation of women in these marriages. Also, harsh application on women's body, such as veiling including eyes close, and restrictions on women's leaving houses without a male companion caused harsh punishments for women, but these restrictions was presented as purification of women by Daesh (Ahlam 2019, 188). These application inclined psychological problems of women in Daesh.

Afife was born in 1997 in Güngören, İstanbul, and originally from Batman (Güler 2021, 392). She was raised in the Turkish Hezbollah environment, and her father was a supporter of Turkish Hezbollah. She went to Huda-Par (*Hür Dava Partisi/ Free Cause Party*), the political wing of Turkish Hezbollah (Güler 2021, 392). Hence, she was raised in Salafi networks. This shows us she already raised with Salafi ideologies, and always engaged with these networks in Turkey. However, she radicalized more in time and started to find Hezbollah soft. Then, she engaged with Tawhid Magazine, led by Halis Bayancuk (aka Abu Hanzalah) (Güler 2021, 393) as Handan. She started to consider democracy and voting as kuffar (Güler 2021, 393). This means she engaged

with Daesh ideology, and her family's and this network's ideology became the main pillars of her radicalization process.

Then, she met Hamza, a Daesh fighter, on the Internet and marries him on the phone to go Daesh with him (Güler 2021, 393). They went to Syria on March 2016 with Hamza (Güler 2021, 393). Afife got training on how to use weapons for seven weeks in Daesh (Güler 2021, 394) because she wanted to participate more actively in *jihad*. Although Hamza lost her life in battle, she was unwilling to remarry a mujahid. She claimed that Daesh tortured her into getting remarried. (Güler 2021, 394). Then she escaped from Daesh to Al-Nusra (Güler 2021, 394). In the Al-Nusra, she offered to be a suicide bomber against Assad soldiers or Shi'ites (Güler 2021, 394). However, Al-Nusra beguiled her out of being a suicide bomber, and they sent her to the Turkish border (Güler 2021, 394). She surrendered to the Turkish soldiers with unusual belongings in her backpack. There were many bullets, three Daesh flags, a photo of Usama bin Ladin, and a note saying that she intended to make a suicide attack in Istanbul (Güler 2021, 392). These items clearly showed her ideology and support for Daesh.

Regarding these belongings, she got sentenced to four years and two months (Güler 2021, 395). She is one of the rare cases to get a sentence for being a member of an armed terrorist organization. She fits the law enforcement's perspective of the victim of her husband. Nonetheless, her former connection with Salafi environments, her weaponry training, and her wish to be a suicide bomber probably changed the court's decision. For these reasons, even the court cannot see her as an agentless victim of her partner.

Another woman whose social networks play an essential role in her radicalization is Hülya Tuba Olgun from Muğla, a tourism city in Aegean region. According to her ex-husband, she was radicalized via people she met at a wedding. At this wedding, she met some people supported Daesh and connected with them online (Hürriyet 2017c). Before her marriage, she was unveiled, and her ex-husband says she dressed as an average conservative woman with a headscarf in her marriage. However, she started to wear a chador after the wedding (CNN Türk 2017). Her ex-husband says they were divorced

due to her radicalization and the economic hardships they experienced (CNN Türk 2017). She became increasingly engaged with Daesh networks after her divorce. She worked as a security guard at Dalaman Airport and mentioned her desire to be a suicide bomber to her co-workers (Hürriyet 2017c). Before she went to Syria, she was taken into custody but released (CNN Türk 2017). Her ex-husband claimed that she joined Daesh to make *jihad* (Hürriyet 2017c), and as we seen in her desire to be a suicide bomber, she wanted to make bigger contribution to *jihad* other than making *hijra*. In other words, she wanted to be bomber for the *jihad* to kill the kuffar. She took her children with her to Syria (Hürriyet 2017c). She has not fit the agentless victim woman profile because she was radicalized and took her children to Syria. She did not wear a headscarf at first, and then she started to wear a headscarf. This shows us her radicalization process was slow, firstly she became a devoted Muslim, then started to support the idea of *jihad* actively. Therefore, she is an active agent to participate in Daesh and is at the top of McCauley and Moskalenko's two pyramids both ideologically, and behaviorally.

Unlike other women, Sümeyye and Hurinur Alaca sisters from Aydın, a city in the Aegan region, were radicalized without the effects of social networks or partners. Since they were not mentioned any other drivers for radicalization, we call them as self-radicalizers. Sümeyye Alaca was born in 1996, and her sister, Hurinur Alaca, was born in 1995 and resided in Aydın until they pursued higher education. Both sisters attended the university in Uşak, a city located in central Anatolia (Eriş 2017). They started to study the Qur'an and hadith, and after a while, they wanted to leave the school (Eriş 2017). They were most probably engaged with fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, and then engaged with radical Salafi ideologies. They most probably started to consider schools of state as kuffar, and they have not served Islam for them. This might have been the reason their desire to leave the university. During their trial, they displayed extreme beliefs, exemplified by their refusal to appear in court because the Turkish state is a taghut (kuffar) entity, and they deemed standing trial as shirk (polytheism) (Eriş 2017). Furthermore, they insisted that only a Muslim judge in Daesh (Qadi) could judge them, rejecting the authority of the Turkish justice system (Hürriyet 2017a). In addition, they expressed homophobic sentiments by threatening to kill their children if they

identified as LGBTI individuals (Eriş 2017). We do not know what triggered their radicalization at the first place, but the social environment, and gender relations at the university could be the turning point for their religiosity. Their statements in the trials showed their intense radicalization, compared to other women in our case. They wanted to be part of *jihad*, as killing kuffar, or fight for *jihad* in any way, even this means killing their own children. Their commitment to *jihad* most probably is not limited to Daesh, but they could support any *jihad* in any condition. Consequently, Sümeyye and Hurinur Alaca have become highly radicalized Takfiri/Salafists and active supporters of the Daesh ideology, displaying intense cognitive and behavioral extremism.

Apart from women from Turkey, ethnically Turkish women from Australia Zehra Duman, showed very different socialization, and radicalization process than women from Turkey. She is a third-generation migrant in Melbourne, Australia, and she was born in 1995 (Harvey et al. 2019; Evlin 2020). In her trial in Turkey, she said that her parents' divorce psychologically made her more naïve and vulnerable to outside forces (Dredge and Welch 2021). She became increasingly religious after the divorce in time. Her increasing religiosity most probably caused her engagement in online networks of Daesh. Mahmood Abdullatif a Daesh fighter reached her online, and led her participation in Daesh (Dredge and Welch 2021). However, since the radicalization is not a sudden process, her increasing religiosity could make the first step for her radicalization. Subsequently, she married Mahmood Abdullatif, a member of Daesh in Syria (Evlin 2020). In 2014, at nineteen, she traveled to Syria to make *hijra* and participate in *jihad*. Her parents claimed that Abdullatif "brainwashed" her in her radicalization (Evlin 2020; Kelly 2019), but when we look at her social media posts, Zehra actively supported Daesh and called women to *jihad* on her Twitter page. She called her sisters to support *jihad*, and send their husbands to kill kuffar in Western states such as the UK, the USA, and Australia (Evlin 2020). Hence, she promoted anti-Western sentiments of Daesh as a woman lived in Australia, and engaged the in-group and out-group division of Daesh by supporting Daesh against the West. For this reason, she was suspected of being a female recruiter for Daesh in Australia due to her active Twitter account, which she used to propagate the group's ideology (Maiden 2019). Twitter eventually suspended her account. This means that, even though she and her

parents claimed that her partner groomed her, she was ideologically engaged with Daesh ideology to call other “sisters” to make *hijra* and participate in *jihad*.

Until her interview with ABC News in the Al-Hol camp, there had been no news of her (Harvey et al. 2019). During the interview, Duman expressed a desire to return to Australia; however, her citizenship had been revoked by the Australian government (Maiden 2019). In 2020, she was smuggled into Turkey, where she was sentenced to six years and ten months in prison for being a member of an armed terrorist organization (Dredge and Welch 2021). Despite her conviction, she was released because no one can take care of her children, whom she gave birth in Daesh (Dredge and Welch 2021). Duman’s claim that she went to Syria to marry Abdullatif, who brainwashed her, presents her as an agentless victim of her partner. Additionally, she attributes her difficult childhood to her parent’s divorce, further underscoring her vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation. In an interview with Zehra Duman’s mother, she is unveiled and she defines herself as a modern woman (Elvin 2020). Hence, she was not raised in a conservative family in limited socialization contrary to women from Turkey. However, her active Twitter presence and her advocacy for “killing the kuffar” raised questions about her “agentless victim” profile and demonstrated her ideological support to Daesh as an agent radicalized both behaviorally, to making *hijra* to Syria, and ideologically, calling women Daesh for *jihad*. Psychological traumas can be seen as one of the factors for women’s radicalization in the literature. Even though she stood out her psychological trauma about her parents’ divorce for her vulnerabilities, her active support on the social media, and call for *jihad* to other “sisters” demonstrate her agency.

As seen in women in our case, supporting *jihad* is one of the primary motivations for women’s radicalization women in our research. Although *jihad* is not obligatory for women, the so-called Caliphate in Daesh called everyone to contribute *jihad*. Some women in our case considered making *hijra* to contribute establishment of Daesh, but some women as Defne Bayrak, Handan, Hülya Tuba Olgun, Afife, and Zehra Duman wanted to be more actively support *jihad*. They might have considered the establishment of Daesh as a glory of Muslims against Western states, which oppressed Muslims for decades. They may have wanted to contribute turning back to glorious

*jihad* in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Even though they have various other drivers in their radicalization processes, such as family, social networks, and partners, they actively support *jihad* and want to contribute to *jihad* in different ways, such as recruiters such as Defne Bayrak, and Zehra Duman, suicide bombers such as Hülya Tuba Olgun, and Afife. These women were also justified in killing the “kuffar,” for *jihad*. The categorical thinking, as others versus us, is established in these women. Hence, they are both ideologically and behaviorally radicalized and active agents in their radicalization despite the presence of other drivers.

#### **4.1.2.3 Hijra ideology**

The Islamic State portrayed emigration to the Islamic State as an obligation.<sup>119</sup> Women who have political motivations acknowledged making *hijra* as an obligation. Women who wanted to live in the Islamic State, and women motivated by *jihad* also recognized *hijra* as a religious duty. Still, Havva P., D.A., Betül S., and Serap Kırgıl emphasized *hijra* as their primary motivation to join Daesh.

Betül S, from Tokat, a small city in Black Sea region, went to Syria in 2014 to make *hijra* with her husband (Saymaz 2017, 93). She met a mujahid, Yasin Demir, online, and they connected emotionally. She aimed to make *hijra* to the Islamic State and married Yasin Demir for her *hijra* (Saymaz 2017, 94). In other words, we wanted to make *hijra*, and found a mujahid she loved to make her *hijra* with her husband. This way made *hijra* lawful according to Islam. Even though we do not information about how her radicalization process started, we interpret her online connection with Yasin Demir that her radicalization might have been affected by online networks. We can see her commitment to Daesh in her divorce with Yasin Demir. She tried to get a divorce because her husband used domestic violence (Saymaz 2017, 94). She said that the violence is only permissible toward to the kuffar, but she is not kuffar (Saymaz 2017, 94). Therefore, she justified the violence toward kuffar, and her justification is also applicable to political violence of Daesh toward “others.” Then, she requested Turkish judges in Daesh and expressed that she only trusted the judges in Daesh of the Islamic State for her divorce, and any other case she might face with (Saymaz 2017, 95). She

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<sup>119</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. “Foreword.” *Dabiq Issue 2*. P.3

also expressed that Turkey is a taghut state and she could not trust their trials, and judgment, or person-made law (Saymaz 2017, 95). As we observe in her records, even though her main objective was to make *hijra* in her marriage. She embraced Daesh ideology and consider others as the kuffar. Therefore, she was ideologically committed to Daesh and demonstrated her agency to radicalize.

Other woman has similar way to join Daesh is Serap Kırgıl, from İzmir. She joined Daesh in 2014 when she was twenty-five years old. After graduating high school, she was married in her eighteen (Acarer 2019b). She said that she was always a conservative person, but after Daesh establishes, through online networks, she started to support Daesh's ideology. Even she had a conflict with her husband because of her religious radicalization (Acarer 2019b). We do not know when her radicalization process starts, but her early marriage, and ongoing disputes with her husband about religiosity could lead her to search alternative ways to live her religiosity, which turned to be a radicalization. Also, İzmir has been defined as "a castle for left," and considered as the most secular city in Turkey by society (Hürriyet 2005). Even there is a saying "gavur (unbeliever/unfaithful) İzmir" in Turkish society (Bardakçı 2013). This secular life in İzmir may have an impact her radicalization as well.

To make *hijra*, she found a Daesh recruiter, aka Maşallah Baran, on Facebook and proposed to him to make *hijra* together (Acarer 2019c). She wanted to make *hijra* but was scared to go alone (Acarer 2019c). She took her two children, left her husband, and make *hijra* eventually with the help of the recruiter. In her interview, she expressed that she did not have remorse and was happy to join Daesh (Acarer 2019c). Kırgıl embraced the idea of the Islamic State and professed that it would never end, indicating her strong support for Daesh ideology (Acarer 2019c). Thus, Kırgıl demonstrates her agency in her participation in Daesh and ideological support.

D.A. from Gaziantep had a distinct story with other women in our research. D.A. was born in 2001 and lived in Gaziantep (Güler 2018). She went to a sports center and met Bekhan Ezerkhanov, a former Chechen jihadist aiming to join Daesh and related to the Atatürk Airport attack Daesh (Güler 2018). He started to "brainwashed" her, according

to her mother, and D.A.'s behaviors changed in two-three months (Güler 2018). She engaged with the Daesh ideology and claimed that all officers in Turkey are kuffar, and that killing the kuffar is not a sin according to Islam (Güler 2018). Bekhan Ezerkhanov. forced her to marry him and sexually harassed her (Güler 2018). When she did not want to go to Syria to join Daesh, he started to threaten her to rebel against the wish of God (Güler 2018). The parents of D.A. realized her radicalization and discovered her situation. She was engaged with the Daesh ideology but forced to do something by Bekhan Ezerkhanov, including sexual harassment and death threats. Hence, her psychological trauma led her radicalization for a short period of time, but she struggled with disengagement with Daesh networks because of threats.

Havva P. from Konya has a quite different story than Betül S., and Serap Kırgıl. She was a local recruiter in Konya, raised money for Daesh, and encouraged women to make *hijra* (HaberTürk 2019b). She and her husband introduced themselves as hodjas (teachers in Islam) and made Daesh propaganda (IHA 2019b). Also, they raised money for Daesh under the name of *sadaqah* (charity for pleasing *Allah* or God). Even though we do not know how she radicalized, she was probably engaged with jihadist networks for a long time and considered encouraging people to make *hijra* as her way to contribute to Daesh.

Betül S., Serap Kırgıl, and Havva P. making *hijra* became the primary motivator for these women and many others. They considered making *hijra* to the Islamic State as a moral obligation. Against the general portrayal of “victim” women of their husbands, these women showed agency in their radicalization. This means that they are both ideologically and behaviorally radicalized.

#### **4.1.2.4 Helping Sunni Muslims**

Daesh used the brutality of Assad regime on Muslim fellows and the previous sufferings of Muslims in Iraq, and Afghanistan due to the “evil” of the USA.<sup>120</sup> Daesh made propaganda on the sufferings of Muslims helping them by joining *jihad* (Winter 2015, 24). It presented as the savior of Muslims, and they fought for women, children, and all Sunni Muslims. Daesh promoted to collect supporters that innocent Muslims brothers

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<sup>120</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. “Foreword.” *Dabiq, Issue 3*. p.3-4.

and sister was killed by the US in Iraq,<sup>121</sup> and now Assad suppressed Sunni Muslims, and the regime soldiers brutally killed Sunni Muslims, and raped women in Syria. In other words, Daesh presented as joining them as a way of contributing the war of saving Muslims. In our case, Demet Taşar, N.K., and Derya Ö. mentioned the brutality of Assad and their intention to help Muslims in Syria by joining Daesh.

N.K. was convicted by the court of membership in a terrorist organization and sentenced to six years and two months in prison (Kaya 2020). Unlike most women in our case study, N.K. did not fit the agentless victim profile of Daesh women. She claimed she traveled to Syria alone to help Sunni Muslims in Syria but was subsequently forced into marriage (Sun 2020). Notably, she worked at a hospital in Daesh-occupied territory (Sun 2020), which could be interpreted as her contribution to the organization's efforts. Therefore, she went alone to Daesh to help Sunni Muslims, which demonstrated her agency to go to Daesh.

Demet Taşar, like Ayşenur İnci, was listed on the terror-wanted list of the General Directorate of Security in Turkey. She lived in Adıyaman, and her father is retired police officer. At the age of 13-14, Demet met with Mehmet Taşar, and they were married when she was 19 years old.<sup>122</sup> Like many women who have joined Daesh, Taşar has spoken about the influence of her partner on her decision to join. However, it is essential to note that this does not necessarily mean that Demet Taşar did not have a religious background before joining Daesh.<sup>123</sup> She stated that she began researching religious issues and wearing headscarves at 17, but her father opposed these actions.<sup>124</sup> She said that her husband offered her these religious searches, and gave her some books.<sup>125</sup> Most probably, after the Mehmet Taşar's engagement with Dokumacılar Group in Adıyaman, he conveyed Daesh ideology to Demet Taşar that led her way in radicalization. Considering their long-term relationship, they were already talked about religious issues. It was during this time that her partner, Mehmet Taşar, supported her

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<sup>121</sup> Unauthorized Author. 2014. "Foreword." *Dabiq Issue 2*. P.3

<sup>122</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: January 26, 2018. P.4

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5. p..85.

and radicalized alongside her. In March 2014, they were made an official marriage, and in October 2014 they joined Daesh together. She knew Serpil Dere, Ayşenur İnci, and Merve Dünder, and her *niqah* performed by Mehmet Taşar was performed by Mustafa Dokumacı in Serpil Dere's house in Adıyaman.<sup>126</sup> As Ayşenur İnci, after a short period of time their marriage, they joined Daesh. This marriage also became a way of Daesh recruitment of Mustafa Dokumacı. She also mentioned some women in Dokumacılar Group she met, and socialized with Serpil Dere, Merve Dünder, and Ayşenur İnci.

Demet Taşar also mentioned that media disinformation played a role in shaping her perspective on Daesh. For example, she saw media reports that members of PKK attacked and insulted women who wore burqas, chadors, or hijabs and men with beards.<sup>127</sup> Taşar also stated that she began reading religious books provided by Mehmet Taşar and learning about the brutality of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad against Sunni Muslims.<sup>128</sup> In a few months, they joined Daesh with her husband. These factors and her social networks likely facilitated her travel to Syria. Even though her radicalization grew with her partner's radicalization, she showed her ideological engagement with Daesh. Nevertheless, she disengaged with Daesh later.

It is worth noting that after returning to Turkey and becoming a confessing member, Demet Taşar reported that other women in Daesh called her a traitor and stated that according to Islamic law, her body, property, and life were *halal* (permissible) for Muslims to use or take.<sup>129</sup> Taşar also spoke about the negative impact of the black chador making her life darker for her in the organization. In contrast, some women have pride in their husbands or sons who died fighting for the organization.<sup>130</sup> She expressed a desire to raise her child away from this ideology and ensure they receive an education. While Taşar may have disengaged from the organization to some extent, many

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<sup>126</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2019. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2019/1349, Date: February 19, 2019. P.2.

<sup>127</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: January 26, 2018. P.4

<sup>128</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5. p.93.

<sup>129</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2019. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2019/1349, Date: February 19, 2019. P.4

<sup>130</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2019. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2019/1349, Date: February 19, 2019. P.13.

individuals may require de-radicalization and counter-extremism programs to help them distinguish between misleading interpretations of religion. As Ayşenur İnci noted, many people in Turkey lack the knowledge and understanding necessary to interpret religious texts for themselves and are therefore reliant on second-hand information and interpretations. Therefore, a counter-extremism program supported by efforts to weaken the social networks of terrorist organizations could be beneficial in the fight against terrorism in Turkey.

Conversely women from Turkey, Derya Ö. lived in Germany has an unlike radicalization process. Derya Ö. was from Germany with Turkish origin. She was a member of a street gang in Germany, which forced her into prostitution (Björn and Pauly 2019a). She said on her trial that always had troubles at school, and in her childhood (Björn and Pauly 2019a). While she was working on a night club, she met Mario S., who was a radical Salafi, and supporter of Daesh. Derya Ö. converted to Islam with the effect of her partner. She probably saw joining Daesh as a redemption to joining Daesh from her way of live. As in Daesh propaganda, Mario S. used the narrative of Muslims, and especially children in Syria suffers, and they can help them by joining Daesh. She went to Syria to join Daesh to help Sunni Muslims, especially children in Syria according to her statement (Björn and Pauly 2019a). Hence, various factors affected Derya Ö.'s radicalization process, such as her psychological traumas from troublesome childhood, her occupation, and her partner. As we observe in her story, her socialization places, and her life in Germany are vastly different than women from Turkey. This situation demonstrates the Turkey social conditions, and gender perception have huge impacts on women's socialization, and their radicalization processes.

For Daesh, it is vital to emigration of women in establishing and expanding the Islamic State. For this reason, Daesh has also called on women in Turkey and worldwide to make *hijra*. As we have seen, these women responded to the call to become better Muslims by raising children for the Islamic State and marrying mujahideen. As we see in these stories, the women's main ideological motivations are to live Islam, *jihad*, make *hijra* and support Sunni Muslims in Syria. Women do not join Daesh only after being

groomed by their husbands or families, as is often perceived by the judiciary and the media, especially in Turkey. We see that their own agency plays a leading role in their radicalization. Similar to men, various factors, such as social networks and family, play a role in the radicalization of women. However, it is misleading to see men radicalized through social networks or their families as agents but women as indoctrination or groomed through their partners, families, or social networks. As we saw in the women we studied, women, like men, are radicalized for many motivations, such as living Islam, *hijra*, contributing to *jihad*, or saving Muslims who have been oppressed by Western powers for years under the Islamic State. They see sending children to school, voting in elections, and praying behind state-appointed imams as *kufr*, and Turkey as a country of infidels. These ideologically radical thoughts show that women are agents of their radicalization processes, although other factors also play a role.

#### **4.1.3 Age**

Youth are frequently regarded as important periods that can create vulnerabilities to radicalization. Due to things like identity formation, searching the meaning of life, a need for belonging, and a sense of marginalization can be appeared in young people more frequent than others. Youth radicalization has been identified as a common factor among women, in our case, who joined Daesh. As younger individuals tend to be more daring and adventurous, they may have been more susceptible to the idea of joining an extremist group. Also, identity crisis, marginalization, poverty, unemployment, and weak family bonds can be other causes of youth radicalization (Beršnak and Prezelj 2021, 53). This is consistent with our observation that the women in our research are all relatively young, with an average age of twenty-three.

Young people might tend to challenge the accepted norms in society, and this may make young people more prone to radical ideologies. Also, worldwide, supporting Daesh became a trend among young (radical) Muslims (Rand and Vassalo 2014). According to Horgan (2008), the sense of belonging is a significant factor in the radicalization of individuals. The women in our research may have felt a sense of belonging to the extremist group, which provided them with a community and a sense of purpose. For instance, Ayşenur İnci and Demet Taşar engaged with the Daesh networks in Adıyaman and radicalized in these networks. Afife joined Tawhid and Sunnah congregation and

decided to join Daesh (Güler 2021, 393). As the research will point out below, all women in the research first radicalized, and engaged with Daesh networks, and their radicalization became deeper in these Daesh networks.

Besides, younger people may be more exposed to extremist views spread online, especially easy access to the internet and social media, and their intense using of the social media. Because they make it possible for the spread of extremist material, recruitment activities, and the creation of online groups that support radical ideologies, internet platforms can serve as a fertile ground for radicalization. Women's average age in the research is twenty three, the average age for women from Turkey is twenty-three, whereas the average age of Turkish-origin women outside Turkey is twenty-one in the year of joining Daesh. The search results have yet to provide a clear answer on how the average age of Daesh affiliates has changed over time. However, some sources suggest that the average age of Daesh fighters has remained relatively stable over the years, with the average age ranging from twenty-four to twenty-seven at the time of joining. According to Bergen, Schuster, and Sterman (2015, 6), women affiliates of Daesh tend to be younger, with an average age of twenty-one. Another research suggests that the average age for men is twenty-six and for women twenty-four (Speckhard and Ellenberg 2020, 88-89). Rosenblatt (2016, 8) indicated that the average age for Daesh affiliates was twenty-seven regardless the gender. These figures are based on different sources and may not represent all Daesh affiliates, but we can say that Daesh affiliates tend to be young.

Furthermore, marginalization from society can also contribute to generational radicalization. Doosje et al. (2013) suggest that socially and economically excluded individuals may be more vulnerable to extremist ideologies. In the case of the women in our study, their conservative cultural and social backgrounds and upbringing in devout Muslim families may have marginalized them from mainstream society. For instance, Ayşenur İnci says that her parents did not allow her to leave the house, and she was exposed to disgrace from people due to her chador. Hence, marginalization from society can play a role in youth radicalization.

The ideological, cultural, and socio-economic factors also influence youth radicalization. Turkey's political and social environment, and the violent environment, especially in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian Region due to PKK, are significant factors for joining Daesh from Turkey, which will be discussed in detail.

Youth radicalization is a significant factor in women's decision to join Daesh. The sense of belonging, marginalization, ideology, violent environment, cultural and socio-economic situations, Internet usage, belonging to a like-minded group, courage, and adventure-seeking may have influenced their radicalization.

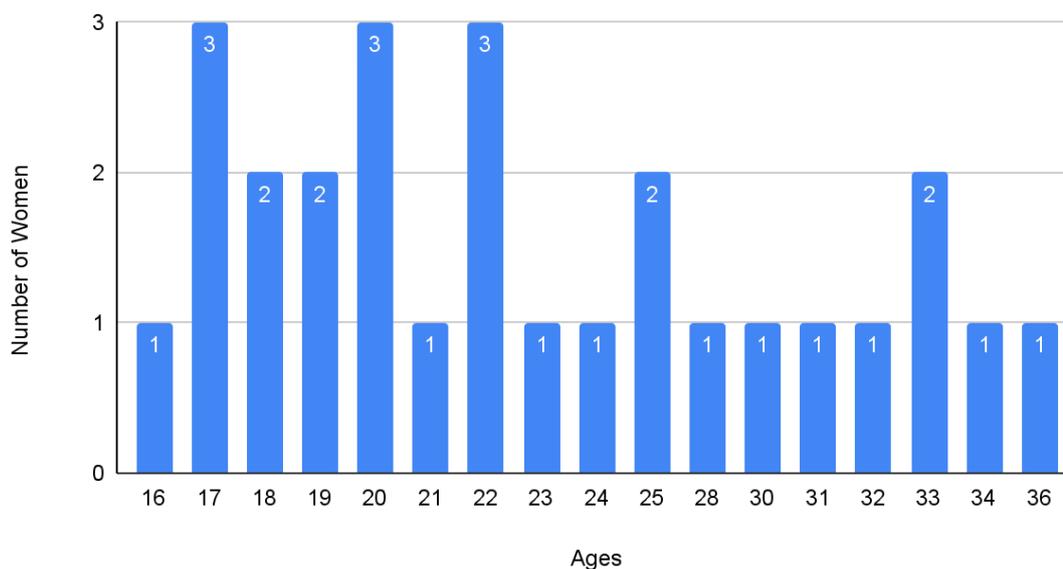
Hence, our figure also parallels the young age of Daesh affiliates. As shown in Figure 4.5,<sup>131</sup> women outside Turkey are between 20 and 25. As we see in Figure 4.4, the average ages are close, but the age range varies in Turkey. The youngest woman was sixteen years old, she attempted to travel to Syria to join Daesh with recruiters, but the police caught her before going (ManşetX 2016), probably due to her age. The oldest woman who joined Daesh from Turkey is Defne Bayrak, thirty-six years old. In April 2015, she declared on her Twitter account that she joined Daesh with her two children Koçak 2019c). After Daesh lost its power, she gave some interviews with journalists.

Notably, she still supports Salafi ideology, *jihād*, and *hijra*, but she condemns Daesh's application of Daesh (Acarer 2019). Also, F.K. was 34 years old when the police arrested her on the charge of a potential suicide attacker. However, we cannot claim that when older women have more actively participated in Daesh since we do not have enough detail and data to come to this conclusion. In our case, women tend to be young women with an average of 23, in line with women who joined Daesh from other states (Cook and Vale 2018, 23).

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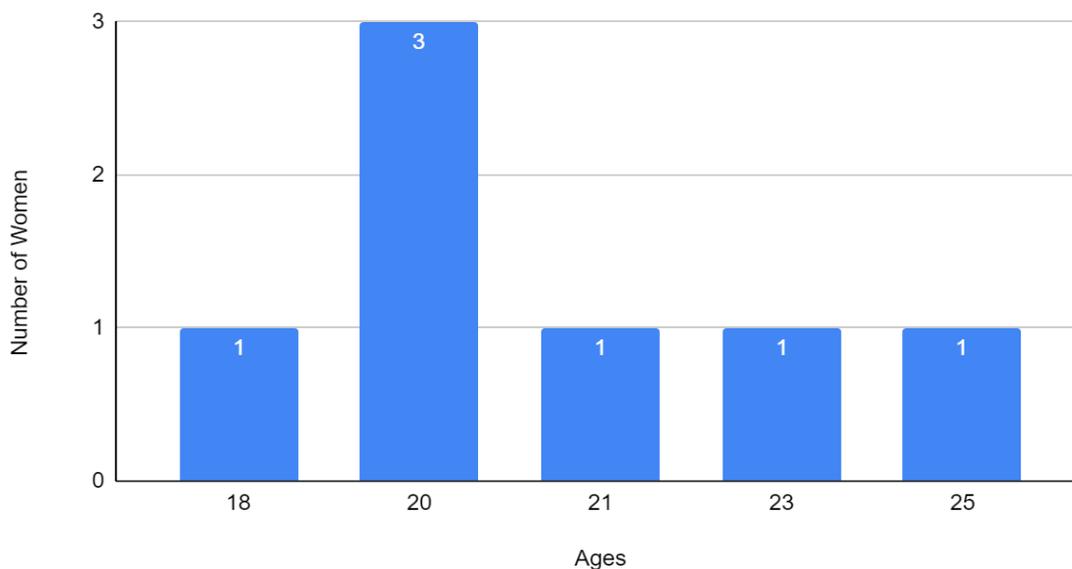
<sup>131</sup> Since the news reports have not specified the ages of fourteen women, we do not include them in this figure.

### Ages at the Years of Joining (Women from Turkey)



**Figure 4.4** Ages at the Years of Joining (Women from Turkey)

### Ages at the Years of Joining (Women from Outside Turkey)



**Figure 4.5** Ages at the Years of Joining (Women from Outside Turkey)<sup>132</sup>

Contrary to their young age, women joined Daesh as married, except Defne Bayrak, Kübra Yaşar, Berivan Yılmaz, Mihriban Yılmaz, D.İ., M.G., N.K., Hülya Tuba Olgun, wife of a policeman, Leyla Olgun, and Hazal Olgun,. Also, some women married to join

<sup>132</sup> Since the news reports have not specified the ages of the two women, we do not include them in this figure.

Daesh with their jihadist husbands, Serap Kırgıl, Ayşenur İnci, Demet Taşar, Afife, Betül S., Zehra Duman, and Merve Dünder. Besides, single women did not mention the aim to become wives of a *mujahid*, but instead, they mentioned living under Daesh as a motivation. From this perspective, Turkish women did not join Daesh to be a “jihadi bride.” Even they complain about marriages in Daesh, such as N.K.,<sup>133</sup> Defne Bayrak, and Tuana,<sup>134</sup> but youngness would probably create different vulnerabilities independent from being jihadi brides.

#### **4.1.4 Partners, family, and kinship**

Radicalization is a complex process that cannot be explained by one motivation, or factor, but we can examine radicalization as the combination of various factors. Women in our research stated various motivations, drivers, and factors that lead their radicalization. The most mentioned driver of their radicalization process is effects of partners as seen in figures 4.6, and 4.7. The family effect becomes the second-rated driver for radicalization. Social networks (friends, different types of associations such as local communities, NGOs, and the Qur’an courses) follow the family. Online networks also emerge as a significant driver for radicalization. Lastly, we also have self-radicalizers, who were engaged in Daesh ideology alone, doing their research without being directly affected by the recruiters. Hence, partners, family, social networks, and people who socialize disproportionately affect women’s radicalization in Turkey.

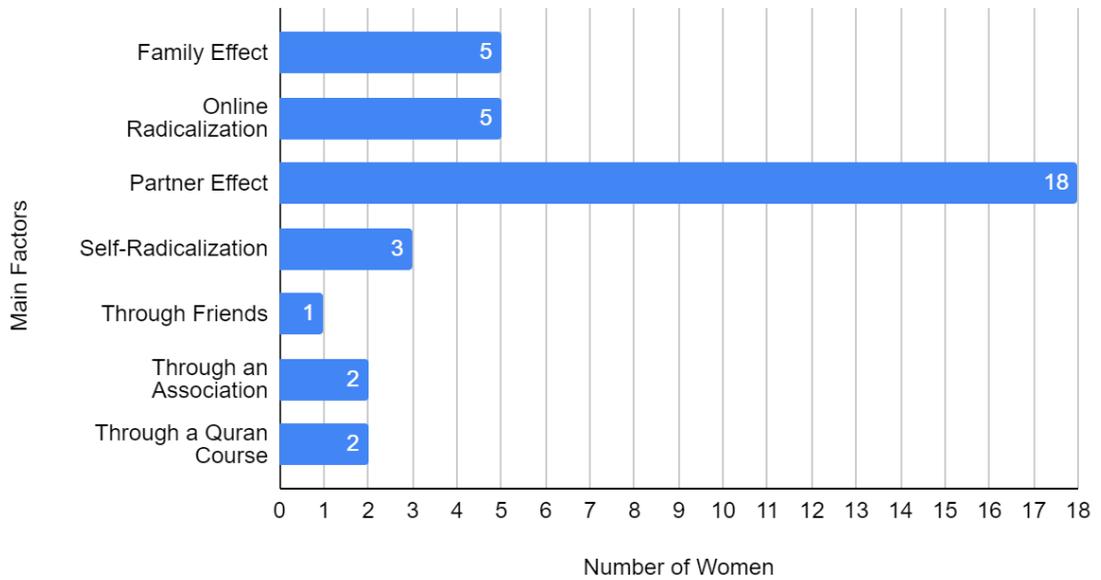
The self-radicalization situation is highly related to the social structure of Turkey and gender perception in Turkey. According to the Gender Report of Turkey conducted by Konda in 2019, apart from their families, 78 percent of women socialize with their neighbors, which raises to 91 percent for homemakers (KONDA 2019, 47). Women’s socialization is mainly limited to their neighbors and close circles. Hence, it is unsurprising that women’s partners, families, and social networks primary drivers for women’s radicalization, because our socialization can shape our perception of the world, and identity by creating an in-group and out-group perspective. Nonetheless, this does not diminish the women’s agencies to join Daesh. However, this figure shows us that women’s socialization places are limited due to gender perception in Turkey.

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<sup>133</sup> She says that Daesh forced her to marry a mujahid (Sun 2020).

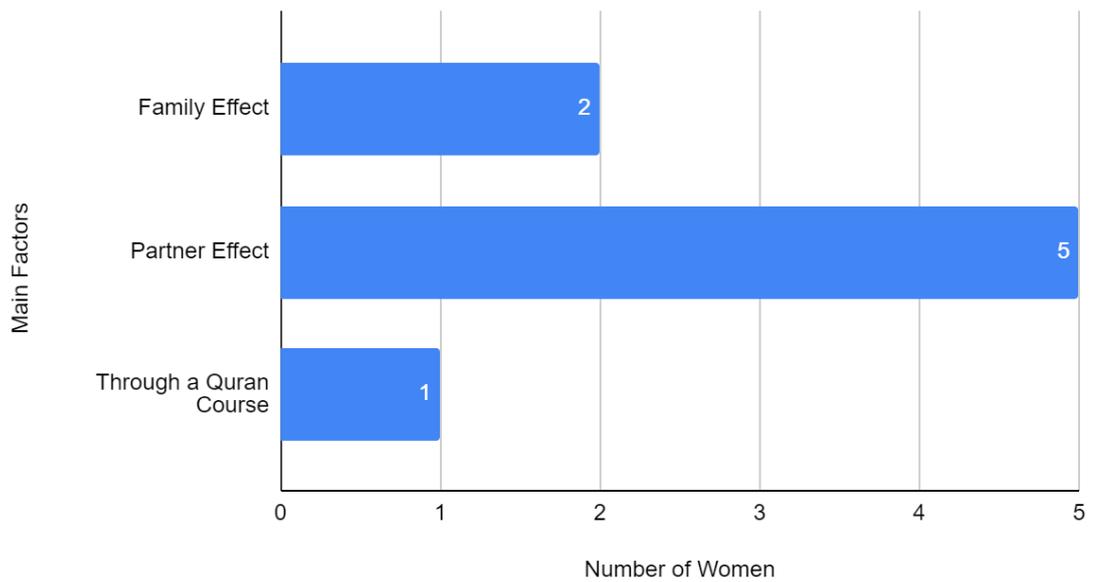
<sup>134</sup> She says that her psychology was affected heavily by her husband's second wife (Güler 2021, 434).

### Factors for Radicalization (Women from Turkey)



**Figure 4.6** Factors for Radicalization (Women from Turkey)

### Factors for Radicalization (Women from Outside Turkey)



**Figure 4.7** Factors for Radicalization (Turkish Women from Outside Turkey)

Religious communities can be perceived as more secure places for its gender-segregated nature. Nonetheless, (unregulated) religious communities can work as conveyor belts if the *hodja* (teacher) or the leaders of these groups promoted *jihad*. In other words, if their in-group identity is formed with supporting *jihad*, and these groups promoted

extreme ideologies as jihadist-Salafi interpretations of Daesh, in-group radicalization can produce supporting Daesh.

As seen in Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7, the leading factor for women's radicalization is appeared as partners. The uneven effect of partners in radicalizing women can be explained by combining structural factors in Turkey, including economic and social factors, and as a tactic for escaping from punishment.

In these figures, family union refers to the aim of being with other members, primarily children, without seeking ideological motivation to join Daesh. Notably, law enforcement in Turkey released women returning from Daesh if they claimed they went with their husbands because their husbands threatened women to take children with them to Daesh (T24 2020). The Court of Cassation, (*Yargıtay*) issued the following decision for Fadile Cabaal's trial in Daesh cases: "Taking into account that Daesh does not accept women as group members - on the contrary, it sees them as goods - the only job of women is housekeeping, raising children and serving their husbands [in Daesh-managed houses] - a personal conviction has not arisen in our court that the suspect committed the offense charged, and therefore, she has been acquitted." (Emen 2019). As seen in the court ruling, the Court of Cassation in Turkey does not consider women as Daesh members but instead primarily considers them as victims or passive actors in Daesh. Accordingly, except for twelve women from Turkey,<sup>135</sup> all women claimed that their partners, families, and social and online networks "groomed" them to join Daesh. Notably, when they claimed to be groomed by their partners or went to Daesh with their partners or families, they were usually released by the court.

Besides, women are designated socially as responsible for keeping the family together. When their husbands joined Daesh, they may have felt obligated to go with them (Yavsan and Sen 2019, 36). Tuana, Şeyda, and B.Ş. stated that they went to Daesh with their husbands since they wanted to keep their family together, and they love their husbands.

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<sup>135</sup> These women are Berivan Yılmaz, Mihriban Yılmaz, Afife, Betül S., Handan, Serap Kırgıl, F.K., Hülya Tuba Olgun, Sümeyye Alaca, Hurinur Alaca, and Ş.A.

Family safety refers to threats to the safety of women or their children (mostly) by their husbands and families if they did not travel to Daesh with their partners. Hülya Yıldız, Hatice Cırcır's aunt, Hülya Balı, Serpil Dere, Şehrazat, and Gülçehre stated their husbands threatened them with taking their children with them to Syria, and they had to go to Syria with their children.<sup>136</sup>

Hülya Balı is the wife of high-profile Daesh member İlhami Balı, who was also jailed for membership in Al-Qaeda in 2012. She stated that she left the school after graduating from elementary school with her wish.<sup>137</sup> She married İlhami Balı in 2007 at 17 years old.<sup>138</sup> İlhami Balı, the so-called border Amir of Daesh, coordinated illegal human trafficking from Turkey to Daesh. He was one of the high-ranked militants of Daesh from Turkey, and he was wanted with the red-code on the terror-wanted list of Turkey, which is the highest code.<sup>139</sup>

Hülya Balı told that since her husband forced her to go to Syria and threatened her with their children, she went to Syria to join Daesh.<sup>140</sup> She escaped from Daesh in 2018 while İlhami Balı was not at home for days with the help of her neighbors.<sup>141</sup> After her return, according to her sister and sister-in-law, she tried to reach İlhami Balı via their family friend.<sup>142</sup> This situation put her story that she told to police in questions. First, she escaped from Daesh, and İlhami Balı, but then tried to reach him. She told her sister-in-law that she wanted to return to Turkey while she was in Syria after her escape from Daesh, and her sister informed the police. Then, the intelligence service captured her with an operation in a Turkish-controlled area in Syria (Tahincioğlu 2018). Even this capturing presented as “a cross-border operation of intelligence service (*MIT*)” in

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<sup>136</sup> Hatice Cırcır's aunt claimed that her husband threatened her to travel Daesh (Girit 2018). Şehrazat and Gülçehre, married with the same man, stated their husband's threats about children to convince them to travel Daesh (Güler 2021, 408-412).

<sup>137</sup> T.C. Kilis Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2018/13, Date: February 14, 2018. P.2.

<sup>138</sup> T.C. Ankara 5th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5 p.34.

<sup>139</sup> Terror wanted list is available from: <https://www.terorarananlar.pol.tr/tarananlar#kirmizi>

<sup>140</sup> T.C. Şanlıurfa 4th Criminal Court. 2018. Court Record, File Number: 2017/43 Esas, Date: November 22, 2018. Hearing Number: 7. p.3.

<sup>141</sup> T.C. Kilis Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2018/13, Date: February 14, 2018. p.4.

<sup>142</sup> T.C. Ankara 5th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5. p.-9-10.

the media (HaberTürk 2018a; NTV 2018; OdaTV 2018; Star 2018; Akşam 2018; Hürriyet 2018). The same news reports include MIT made additional operations to capture İlhami Balı, but they could not capture him (HaberTürk 2018a). Hence, the aim of the operation might have been captured İlhami Balı, instead of directly to Hülya Balı herself, since other women, such as Şengül Büyükçelebi, have not been captured with MIT operation even though their husbands in the terror-wanted list as well, and other operations of MIT to capture İlhami Balı. Also, as we mentioned in the decision of the court, women affiliated with Daesh mostly have not been considered as terrorists, or security threats. This incomplete understanding of officials in Turkey creates a lack of consideration for de-radicalization programs targeted women, and their roles in terrorist organizations. She came to Turkey, Kilis, and was jailed for sixteen months. At first, she got a sentence for membership in a terrorist organization for six years and eight months. Then, the Court of Cassation reversed the decision and acquitted her.<sup>143</sup> She has witnessed in different trials, such as the Suruc bombing and the Ankara Train Station bombing.

She said in her statement that her husband has connections with groups like the Menzil order<sup>144</sup> and Hayır and Ensar Association<sup>145</sup> (Prosperity and Ansar Association),<sup>146</sup> but İstanbul governorship informed the court that they could not find a record about İlhami Balı in the association closed in 2015. Also, she stated that she and ten other women (most of them associated with Daesh) created a group and read the book of Halis Bayancuk (Abu Hanzalah) at the suggestion of their husbands.<sup>147</sup> Consequently, Hülya Balı had relations with other women who joined Daesh before and while she went to Syria. In Daesh, she stayed with Şengül Büyükçelebi in Syria, according to her first statement.<sup>148</sup> Even Şengül Büyükçelebi claimed that Hülya Balı came to Syria with her

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<sup>143</sup> T.C. Ankara 5th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5. p.20.

<sup>144</sup> The Menzil order represent an extension Naqshbandi cult based in Adıyaman, Menzil (Durak) village (Dağ and Kılıç 2019, 207). The Menzil order has the highest number of followers in Naqshbandi in Turkey. Its first spiritual leader Albülhakim Hüseyini was born in 1902 and founded the Menzil order (Dede 34).

<sup>145</sup> The association was opened in 2012, and dissolved in 2015 (Anka 2020), but their YouTube channel is still open available from: <https://www.youtube.com/@hayirveensar8156/featured>.

<sup>146</sup> T.C. Kilis Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2018/13, Date: February 14, 2018. p.3.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. p.3.

home furnishings. This can be analyzed as she joined Daesh prepared and not with force.

She lived under the socially constructed gender roles in Turkey and Islam. She did not continue her education after elementary school. She married at seventeen years old, the lowest age for marriage under the constitution, with the family's permission. She always said that her husband did not share much information with her in Turkey and Syria. Also, her sister stated that she had radicalized more since 2011 and started wearing the hijab. This shows us before Daesh was emerged, her radicalization process started. İlhami Balı was also associated with Al-Qaeda networks in Turkey before Daesh (Cumhuriyet 2016c). This means that they have already engaged with jihadist networks in Turkey. Like other women in these cases, she stated that her husband forced her to go to Syria with the threat of taking their children to Syria. However, she also stated that she met with other women who joined Daesh, and her sister said that she radicalized religiously in time.

Consequently, she portrayed herself as the victim of her husband, and passive to join Daesh like most women in our case. Still, she had an ideological engagement with Daesh. We should note that how we define agents and having similar ideologies make differences in analyzing these cases. Jihadist Salafi ideology is the determinant factor for these families and women to involve in such activities. For instance, Ayşegül İnci, Sengül Büyükçebe, Merve Dünder, Serpil Dere, and Hülya Balı stated that they went to the (unofficial) the Qur'an course, or masjid, or group meetings for religious conversation. These activities create social networks within jihadist Salafi groups. Therefore, these activities, social networks, and ideological affiliations cannot be ignored to examine women's participation in terrorism, and our case Daesh.

Other women stated her husband's effect to join Daesh is Hülya Yıldız. Hülya Yıldız from İzmir, but originally from Adana, is the wife of Savaş Yıldız, who is the perpetrator of the attacks against the Mersin and Adana HDP buildings and the Ankara Train Station attack by Daesh. Hülya Yıldız was born and lived in Adana, and then Hülya Yıldız, Savaş Yıldız, and their child went to İzmir due to their economic

problems. She indicated that since her husband threatened her to take their child with him to Syria, she went to Syria in 2015.<sup>149</sup> When we returned in 2019, the police investigated her in Adana, and her trial was held in Şanlıurfa. She was acquitted of all charges and listened as a witness in the Ankara Train Station trial.<sup>150</sup> She said she lived in Al-Thawrah in dire conditions without money because her husband left her and their children to fight for Daesh. She stated that she and her children suffered from poverty and malnourishment in Al-Thawrah, and lived as if in prison in her house.<sup>151</sup> In her statement, Hülya Yıldız revealed her anger at her husband for leaving them without money and for their suffering.<sup>152</sup> Hülya Yıldız is angry with him because even today, she and her children have no financial gains, and they live with her mother. She mentioned that she does not want to raise her children with a (Daesh) mindset and raise her with moral manners.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, her story was shaped by her husband and economic problems. We can observe a disengagement from Daesh and her husband, replacing her feelings with anger.

On the other side, her husband said that in the YPG camp, he was radicalized in Adana with Eyüp Hoca's group but went to İzmir for economic reasons (Haber Sol 2016). In İzmir, Hülya Yıldız's uncle initiated his encounter with "Sarı Murat Cemaati" (Haber Sol 2016), which was a Daesh-supporter association in Izmir. Hence, Savaş Yıldız claimed that Hülya Yıldız's family members like her uncle has ties with Daesh, and he engaged Daesh networks by them. Even though she claimed she went to Syria due to her husband's threats, Savaş Yıldız claimed that her uncle and brother also engaged in Daesh networks (Haber Sol 2016). We could not know how she joined Daesh, but her husband, and her uncle and brother could lead her way to join Daesh. Consequently, socially constructed gender roles, such as wives' and mothers' roles in the families, and economic factors might affect her involvement in Daesh.

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<sup>149</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2021. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: June 9, 2021. Hearing Number: 11. p.2.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid p.3.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid p.9.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid p.11.

Other women stand out their husband's threats are Şehrazat, and Gülçehre from Bursa. Şehrazat and Gülçehre have already engaged with the Takfiri/Salafi ideology through the Tawhid Magazine (Güler 2021, 409). Talha married Şehrazat officially and made the imam marriage to Gülçehre (Güler 2021, 409). Talha was responsible for the İnegöl branch of Halis Bayancuk's congregation, Tawhid, and Sunnah. They lived in Bursa, and Talha had a furniture store; therefore, a good economic condition (Güler 2021, 409). At first, women did not want to go Daesh, but they feared that Talha might kidnap their children (Güler 2021, 409). They went to Syria to join Daesh in May 2015, and Talha started madrassah training (Güler 2021, 410). Even though they did not want to go Daesh, they have engaged with the Takfiri/Salafi ideology, and probably support the idea of *jihād*. Daesh monthly paid them 100-200 dollars, but Talha and Gülçehre's two sons died during a fight (Güler 2021, 410). They decided to return to Turkey and went to Azez, a Turkish-controlled territory in Syria (Güler 2021, 410). They claimed that Talha forced and threatened them to go Daesh (Güler 2021, 410). However, they have ideological engagement with Daesh as well. After they returned, they softened their Takfiri/Salafi ideology but still supported it.

To wrap up, as we observe women highlighted their husband's threats to kidnap their children to Syria. Nonetheless, their connection to jihadist networks in Turkey is apparent. Even though their first choice might not have gone to Syria to join Daesh, they most probably support the idea of *jihād*. We need to keep in mind how putting responsibility to their husbands provide them as a tactical advantage in courts.

All women outside Turkey mentioned partners, family, and social networks as they joined Daesh. As we see in Figures 4.5 and 4.6, five women point out the effects of their partners joining Daesh. Zehra Duman's mother claimed she was radicalized due to her partner (Evlin 2020; Kelly 2019). However, she was very active on social media and made propaganda for Daesh (Maiden 2019). Leyla Olgun and Hazal Olgun's father said that Leyla Olgun was radicalized in a masjid and then caused her sister's radicalization (Moestrup et al. 2017). Leyla Olgun was also active on social media and made propaganda for Daesh (Moestrup et al. 2017). Consequently, all women outside Turkey

radicalized through social networks, contrary to women from Europe, who were primarily radicalized by online networks in our case.

To conclude, partners and families are the primary factors for radicalization for women in our case. Some women argued that their husbands forced them to travel to Syria to join Daesh. Also, Onur Güler says that most women joined Daesh through their husbands. However, they had religious backgrounds.<sup>154</sup> From this perspective, partners and families are essential to meet Daesh ideology for women and significantly impact how they join Daesh. However, their religious backgrounds and structural factors are indispensable to how they joined Daesh.

#### **4.1.5 Online networks**

Winter et al. (2020, 4) defines online extremism as follow: “Internet activism that is related to, engaged in, or perpetrated by groups or individuals that hold views considered to be doctrinally extremist.” Extremists can use the Internet to promote propaganda, recruitment, logistics, planning, and funding (Winter et al. 2020, 7). For Western countries, online radicalization was one of the most prominent factors in women’s engagement in terrorism. In 2013, as seen in Table 1, only 38,7 percent of women used the Internet regularly. The percentage was relatively low than the Western countries, which was 75% in 2013 (Eurostat 2013). This percentage decreased in the Eastern part of Turkey. In 2013, Internet usage among women in Southeast Anatolia, which includes Gaziantep, and Adiyaman, was only 21,4 percent (TurkStat 2022). The gap between Internet usage among women in different regions of Turkey is also an extension of inequalities between Turkey’s Eastern and Western parts. The gap between men and women also results from gender inequalities in Turkey. Hence, we cannot separately evaluate online radicalization from other factors because the Internet is an indispensable part of daily life. We can argue that the Internet and online networks were crucial for recruitment and propaganda. Yet, we should note that internet usage was limited among women in Turkey in 2013 and 2014, and most social media recruiters/propagandists in Turkey were male. Ozeren et al. examined 290 Turkish-

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with Onur Güler on December 10, 2022.

speaking social media users who supported Daesh; only 44 were female (Ozeren et al. 2018, 6).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Internet users</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Internet users</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
2011	<b>45,0</b>	<b>54,9</b>	<b>35,3</b>	2017	<b>66,8</b>	<b>75,1</b>	<b>58,7</b>
2012	<b>47,4</b>	<b>58,1</b>	<b>37,0</b>	2018	<b>72,9</b>	<b>80,4</b>	<b>65,5</b>
2013	<b>48,9</b>	<b>59,3</b>	<b>38,7</b>	2019	<b>75,3</b>	<b>81,8</b>	<b>68,9</b>
2014	<b>53,8</b>	<b>63,5</b>	<b>44,1</b>	2020	<b>79,0</b>	<b>84,7</b>	<b>73,3</b>
2015	<b>55,9</b>	<b>65,8</b>	<b>46,1</b>	2021	<b>82,6</b>	<b>87,7</b>	<b>77,5</b>
2016	<b>61,2</b>	<b>70,5</b>	<b>51,9</b>	2022	<b>85,0</b>	<b>89,1</b>	<b>80,9</b>

**Table 4.1** Internet Usage in Turkey between 2011-2022 by sex (Source: TurkStat, Survey on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage in Households and by Individuals, 2004-2022)

In our sample, eight women,<sup>155</sup> mention the influence of the Internet on their radicalization. This does not mean that others did not expose to Daesh propaganda from social media, but the prominent factor for their involvement was not the Internet. As in the Western states, women in Turkey have been indoctrinated through social media for Daesh (Yavsan and Sen 2019, 28). Two women from Istanbul were reported to meet male recruiters online, marry them, and travel to Syria (Yavsan and Sen 2019, 25). The father of Kübra Ekinci claimed that his family, three daughters, one son, and a daughter-in-law, were “groomed” on the Internet (Habertürk 2018). The husband of Ş.A said that Ş.A was exposed to the Daesh propaganda on Facebook and connected with the recruiters to join Daesh (Dişkaya 2015). Betül S. met a mujahid online and joined Daesh with him (Saymaz 2017, 93). Supportably, journalist two we talked with emphasizes the influence of online networks on young women’s radicalization. Young women who do

<sup>155</sup> Berivan Yılmaz, Mihriban Yılmaz, Serap Kırgıl, Kübra Ekinci, Ş.A, D.İ, and Betül S.

not receive love from their families and feel emptiness correspond with Daesh recruiters/mujahids frequently, and they start to feel belonging and love to these men. They join Daesh and marry men whom they talk to online.<sup>156</sup>

D.İ, as mentioned above, had a former connection with Daesh through her family, but she highlighted the effect of online networks in her radicalization. She says that recruiters in these groups tried to convince people to make *hijra* to the Islamic State (Yıldız 2018). Berivan (20) and Mihriban (17) sisters went to Daesh, and their father claimed that they were radicalized online (Acarer 2017, 108). Considering their ideological radicalization and travel alone, they are active agents of joining Daesh. From these examples, Markedly, we cannot ignore the role of the Internet in radicalization, but the Internet needs other forces to result in radicalization and indoctrination. The journalist one stated that social networks were significant, but online networks worked as catalyzers for radicalization.<sup>157</sup> In other words, even though online networks are not the only factors for radicalization, they might consolidate and reinforce radicalization by exposing propaganda.

#### **4.1.6 Social networks**

The research refers social networks as people we interact and socialize with in different communities, and groups. These social networks include families, partners (we discussed in the previous section), associations, the Qur'an courses, and acquaintances. As we see in Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7, social networks are one of the most mentioned factors in the radicalization of women in our research. Kübra Yaşar, Afife, Handan, Z.E., Hülya Tuba Olgun, Leyla, and Hazal Olgun mentioned the effects of social networks in their radicalization. We mentioned Handan and Afife's radicalization processes and relations to Tawhid Magazine, which was led by Abu Hanzalah. Also, Abu Hanzalah affected Tuana, Gülçehre, Şehrazat, and Hülya Balı's radicalization process.

Kübra Yaşar is from Gaziantep and went to Syria to support *jihād* in 2014 when she was seventeen (Haber 342 2017). Her parents indicate that she was “groomed” in the Qur'an

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with the journalist two, on April 19, 2023.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with the journalist one, on March 26, 2023.

course she went to learn Qur'an in Gaziantep (Gaziantep27 2017). She is in Iraq, a camp of Peshmerga affiliated with the UN, and she said that there are many Turkish women in this camp (Gaziantep27 2017). She fits the victim, the agentless woman groomed by recruiters to join Daesh, but she indicated that she wanted to support *jihād* in the Islamic State. Therefore, through her social networks, Kübra Yaşar radicalized in her the Qur'an course. Like Kübra Yaşar, Z.E. was sixteen when she attempted to join Daesh (ManşetX 2016). She was trained to be hafız (memorizer) in a The Qur'an course. In this course, she was engaged with Daesh networks and tried to go to Syria for *jihād* for Allah (ManşetX 2016). Like other women, she was claimed to be fooled/groomed/brainwashed by Daesh recruiters in this The Qur'an course, and she was the innocent and agentless victim of recruiters. Nevertheless, they supported the *jihād* ideology before joining Daesh with the effect of social networks in the Qur'an courses. Leyla Olgun started to go on a private the Qur'an course, and her father believed that the instructor in the Qur'an course caused her radicalization. Then she caused the radicalization of her sister Hazal Olgun (Coban 2016). However, signs of Leyla's radical Islamic views were already evident on her social media accounts (Moestrup et al., 2017). Leyla is believed that a female recruiter in Denmark for Daesh (Moestrup et al. 2017). She supports Daesh and Daesh's ideology (Meostrup et al. 2017). To wrap up, social networks, people we socialize with places like masjids, and the Qur'an courses can influence women's radicalization. Social networks are also highly related to living places and spatiality effects because Daesh's cell structure works in small groups that we discussed in detail.

## **4.2 Structural Factors**

The process of radicalization in women is influenced by a myriad of factors, as discussed above. In addition to individual determinants, women's radicalization in Turkey is intricately linked to a complex interplay of structural factors. These structural factors, contingent upon various contextual elements such as cultural, social, economic, and political factors in states, cities, and spatiality, profoundly influence the trajectory of women's radicalization. While existing studies primarily emphasize individual factors for women's radicalization, a comprehensive understanding of radicalization necessitates an exploration of the structural dimensions at play.

Turkey's economic conditions, youth unemployment, women's low participation in the workforce, economic dependency on family, and Daesh's economic promises to its participants impact the radicalization process. Also, political factors in Turkey, ongoing violence by the PKK in the Eastern parts of Turkey, open borders between Turkey and Syria, and political polarization among seculars and devoted Muslims had diverse influences on radicalization. Particularly, Turkey's social and cultural factors shape the gender perspective in Turkey that significantly impact women's life. In other words, particularly distinguish from Western nations, Turkish women encounter a distinct set of cultural, social, political, and economic influences, shaping their radicalization processes. This section aims to illuminate the distinctive impact of structural factors within the Turkish context on women's radicalization.

#### **4.2.1 Economic factors**

Economic factors have some impacts on radicalization in various ways. Poverty, economic dependencies, and gains (Borum and Fein 2017, 251) can lead to radicalization. Even though the link between poverty and radicalization is weak (Mesøy 2013), the link between poverty and radicalization can be more visible in some contexts, states, cities, or neighborhoods (Zaidi 2010; Haji and Juma 2019; Kochbati 2020). Put differently, most of studies investigated the relations between poverty, and radicalization found a weak causal relation between them, for some states, cities of neighborhood, poverty can lead to decrease in education, marginalization from the society, and some frustrations. Kochbati (2020, 11) discusses how economic factors in Tunisia resulted into high unemployment rate led to frustrations, and dissatisfaction among youth, which can increase vulnerabilities to radicalization. For Turkey, several researchers and journalists primarily emphasized the economic factors on radicalization in the Altındağ district, Hacıbayram neighborhood in Ankara (Gönültaş 2016a; 2016b; Erdoğan 2022; Eroğlu 2018, 19). Altındağ district has slum areas where economic conditions, and social services are poor, also drug use is high in some parts of the district (Erdoğan 2022) similar to its Hacıbayram neighborhood (Gönültaş 2016a). These places also experienced failed projects of "gentrification" process result in ruined houses, and demolished schools (Eroğlu 2018, 24). Even in 2020, Hacıbayram was

declared as a risky area with its unplanned growing, and an expropriation decision has been issued by the president.<sup>158</sup> This shows us the presence of shanty towns in Altındağ and Hacıbayram, and they considered as urgent places for urban renewal.

Following these poor economic conditions and marginalization in these places, Altındağ was also one of the well-known places for leftist radicalization (Erdoğan 2022). The leftist radicalization in the place may come from marginalization and the sense of inequality resulting from poverty. After Daesh was established, the Hacıbayram neighborhood became a hot bed for radicalization into Daesh (Taşçı 2015). Hacıbayram has many other dynamics, such as an existed Salafi ideology, limited access to education, drug addiction, and youth unemployment (Benli 2015; Milliyet 2015a; Birgün 2015b; Diken 2014b), which are also related to poor economic conditions to the neighborhood. In addition to poverty, the promised economic gains in Daesh affect participation in Daesh from Turkey might have been the prominent motivations in these neighborhoods. This economic incentive promised by Daesh could be a motivation for people living in places similar to Altındağ. However, in our case we have no woman mentioned these economic incentives as their main motivations to join Daesh.

However, Hülya Yıldız from İzmir mentioned her family experienced poverty and economic problems. She and her husband Savaş Yıldız moved to İzmir to live with her family due to economic problems.<sup>159</sup> She has not directly linked their participation in Daesh with their economic problems, but she mentioned how their economic problems led changes in her family, and Savaş Yıldız However, her husband also mentioned Hülya Yıldız's family connection with Daesh networks (Haber Sol 2016). Therefore, their leading motivation joining Daesh networks seems to family ties, but considering her emphasis on their economic problems, economic incentives of Daesh may have become a secondary motivation for joining Daesh for them.

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<sup>158</sup> Resmi Gazete Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararı. April 21, 2020. "Ankara İli, Altındağ İlçesi, Hacıbayram Mahallesi Sınırları İçerisinde 23/10/2019 Tarihli ve 1694 Sayılı Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararı ile İlan Edilen Riskli Alan Kapsamında Bulunan Taşınmazların Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı Tarafından Acele Kamulaştırılması Hakkında Karar." Decision Number:2449, Number: 31106. Available at: <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2020/04/20200421-21.pdf>

<sup>159</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2021. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: June 9, 2021. Hearing Number: 11. p.2

We observe the effect of economic incentive of Daesh in Şengül Büyükçelebi, and her husband. Deniz Büyükçelebi, Şengül Büyükçelebi's husband, was a critical figure in organizing border crossing from Turkey to Syria with İlhami Balı. He was a baker from Gaziantep before he initiated his smuggling "business." In 2014, he started to work with İlhami Balı to organize illegal border-crossing to Daesh from Gaziantep. Şengül Büyükçelebi mentioned her husband left his baking business, and started to smuggle, and they got money from Daesh for his activities as a smuggler.<sup>160</sup> İlhami Balı and Deniz Büyükçelebi was getting fifty US dollars per person after the arrival of Daesh participants to Syria. Both in Turkey and Syria, İlhami Balı paid the salary of Deniz Büyükçelebi as his superior.<sup>161</sup> However, Şengül Büyükçelebi indicated that they joined Daesh networks through Müslüman Gençler Derneği (Muslim Youth Association), and then her husband started to smuggling activities.<sup>162</sup> It is possible that İlhami Balı gave this smuggling job to his second man after first establishing trust by connecting him in Daesh networks. Even Şengül mentioned that she helped her husband to escort women Daesh affiliates at the border.<sup>163</sup> This means she was not just a stay-at-home wife or mother but active in Daesh. Also, they went beyond the gain economic incentives from Daesh, but wanted to help people to join Daesh through smuggled people from Turkey to Daesh.

To conclude, economic gains appear as an incentive for their radicalization processes with ideological engagement, but no woman specifically mentioned economic gains as a prominent factor for participation in Daesh. Economic incentives attracted foreign fighters to Daesh (Borum and Fein 2017, 251), but women in our case have not mentioned economic gains as their motivations to join Daesh.

Other than economic incentives, economic dependencies of women might affect women's participation in Daesh from Turkey. In Turkey, women's labor force participation rate was only 30,8 percent in 2013, whereas it was 71,5 percent for men (TurkStat 2014a). This implies that women in marriage mostly experienced economic

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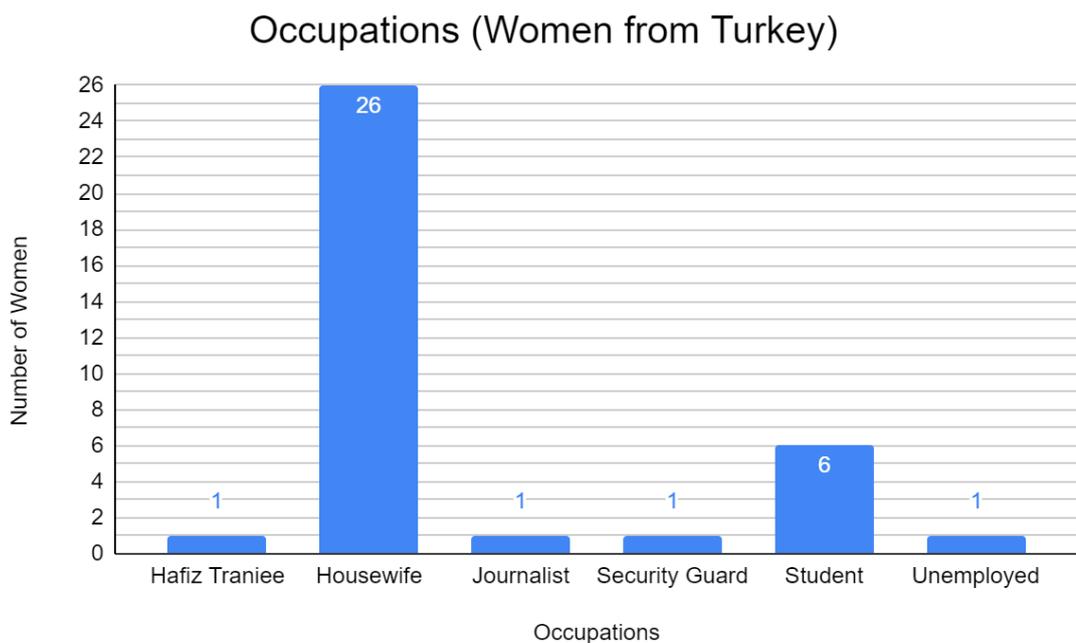
<sup>160</sup> T.C. Şanlıurfa 5<sup>th</sup> Criminal Court 2018. Court Record. File Number: 2017/43 Esas. Date: February 8, 2018. Hearing Number: 4 p.8

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

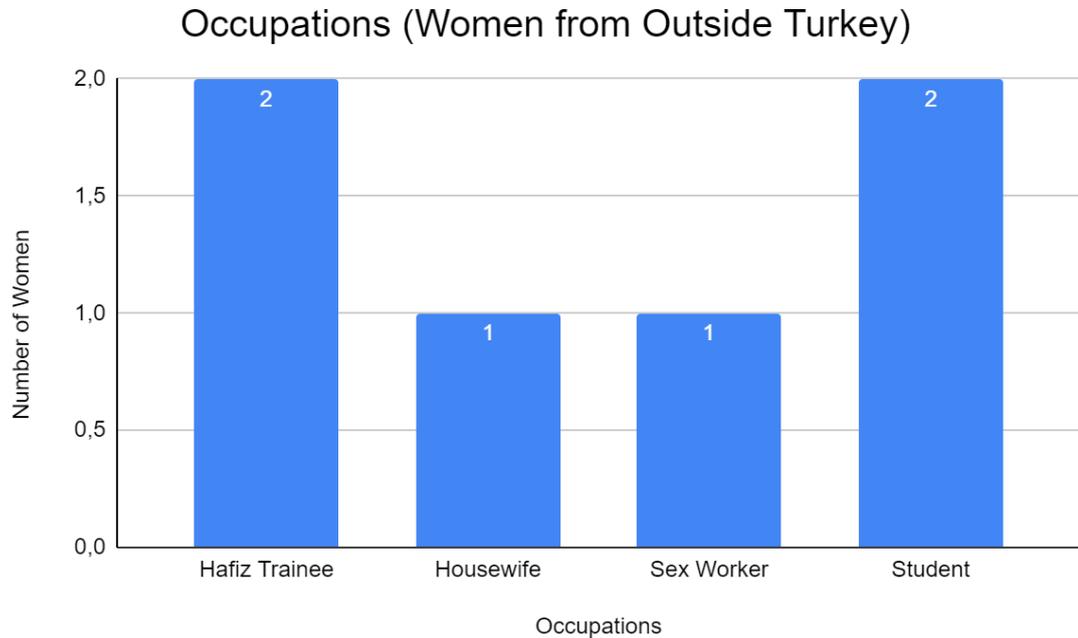
<sup>162</sup> Ibid p.10

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

dependencies on family income. Also, they had been depended on family income before the marriage in their youthhood. Then as housewives, women started to be depended on their husbands' income. Economic dependencies of women may cause unequal power dynamics in families between men and women, limit the social activities of women, and increase the vulnerabilities to death, or divorces for women. These situations can result in frustrations, and isolation of women, or limit their options for socialization. Based on the findings of the Gender Report of Turkey, conducted by Konda in 2019, it is revealed that 61 percent of housewives have not made any form of investment or savings (KONDA 2019, 64). Consequently, it can be inferred that a considerable number of housewives rely on collective household earnings. Women's heightened economic dependence on male-generated income could increase their vulnerability to radicalization and participation in Daesh with their partners. In our case, only three women, Defne Bayrak, Hülya Tuba Olgun, and Derya Ö. had regular income before they joined Daesh. Defne Bayrak was a journalist, and when she declared her participation in Daesh via her Twitter post saying that she had already had the connection with Daesh while she working as a journalist (Koçak 2019c). Hülya Tuba Olgun was a security guard in an airport (Hürriyet 2017c). Derya Ö. worked in a nightclub in Germany (Björn and Pauly 2019a). However, as seen in Figures 4.8 and 4.9, other women were housewives, students, or unoccupied.



**Figure 4.8** Occupations of Women from Turkey



**Figure 4.9** Occupations of Women from Outside Turkey

This means that women in marriage mostly experienced economic dependencies on family income. If these women had not gone to Syria with their husbands, they would have faced financial difficulties in Turkey. Economic dependencies might influence women's participation in Daesh. Firstly, some women did not primarily aim to make *hijra* to the Islamic State, and they may have gone to Daesh with their husbands. Also, women who sympathize with Daesh may not have gone to Daesh due to their economic dependencies.

Conversely, Daesh promised an alternative life for these women, a life can provide them with economic, and political protection. A house, a monthly salary for women, men and children, and an Islamic life that guide them a straight path. Women joining Daesh might have consider these promised protections of Daesh as “liberating” women from their frustrations, and daily life problems into a righteous way to an Islamic life.

Also, as we seen in Handan story, Daesh opened “sisters” houses for Daesh returnees' women and help them financially (Gönültaş 2022a). Also Demet Taşar mentioned when she returned from Daesh, a woman she knew from Daesh networks gave her money, and

said her not to divorce with Mehmet Taşar.<sup>164</sup> Also, other networks, such as Bacın Esir Kampında (Your Sister is in Prison Camp),<sup>165</sup> raised money under the name of helping women returnees of Daesh, or saving them from camps. Therefore, Daesh still tried to “protect” women returnees by providing them as houses, and financial supports. The police made operations to intimidate these people (DHA 2022), but Daesh financial activities still continued in Turkey (Bulut 2022b).

To wrap up, economic factors like poverty, economic gains, and economic dependencies may impact radicalization and participation in Daesh. Nonetheless, in our case, poverty and economic incentives have not directly affected women’s radicalization, but instead, they affected their families’ participation in Daesh. Economic dependencies of women affected their participation in Daesh and “women’s place” in their families and even in Turkey. Also, Daesh’s economic activities, and financial helps to women returnees of Daesh in Turkey maintain their networks.

#### **4.2.2 Social and gendered factors**

Turkey is a Muslim-majority country. According to the Religious Life Research of Diyanet in 2014, 99,2 percent of Turkish society indicated their religion as Islam, whereas this percentage decreased to 89,5 in 2019, according to Optimar Research (Özkök 2019; T24 2019). The percentage of Muslims in society decreased by ten percent in five years in Turkey. However, the number of Qur’an courses, masjids, and mosques increased. The number of mosques increased from 82.693 in 2011 to 86.101 in 2014 (Diyanet n.d.). Notably, according to Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2022), there were 384.646 participants in Qur’an courses, and 298,809 were female in 2021. Among 384,646 participants, 156.649 were under fifteen years old. This means that almost half of the participants in Qur’an courses were young, and 77,7 percent were female. Accordingly, KONDA’s research on Lifestyles in 2018 showed that when researchers ask people: “If you could, or if they were all free of charge, you could take your daughter on summer vacation. to which of the following would you like to send

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<sup>164</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2019. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2019/1349, Date: February 19, 2019. p.5

<sup>165</sup> They have Facebook page, Twitter account, Instagram account, and a Telegram channel to raise money to save women in Al-Hol, and Roj camps. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/bacinesirkampinda1/?hl=en> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5swxo-yc1RlzJ2ZiEA1MIg> [https://twitter.com/bacin\\_esir?lang=en](https://twitter.com/bacin_esir?lang=en)

it?” Thirty percent of women participants answered as Qur’an course (KONDA 2019, 108). Notably, this percentage raised to 39 percent for housewives. However, when they asked the same question for their son, the percentage dropped to 23 for women and 30 percent for housewives (KONDA 2019, 108). Hence, according to these statistics, women's religious education is more significant than men. Also, according to Religious Life Research in Turkey, 2014<sup>166</sup> 49,3 percent of women knew how to read Qur’an in Arabic script, whereas 34,3 percent of men knew (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2014, 88). According to the same research by Diyanet, fifty percent of women who know how to read the Qur’an with Arabic scripts and read it every day or several times a week, while this percentage is 36,6 for men (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2014, 90). While 49.8 percent of women pray five times a day, this rate drops to 34.8 percent among men (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2014, 43). According to Konda’s Research on Lifestyle, parallel with the Diyanet, fifty percent of women pray five times a day. In contrast, this percentage was forty-eight percent in 2008 (KONDA 2019, 105). Significantly, this percentage is sixty-four percent for housewives in 2018, whereas it was fifty-six percent in 2008 (KONDA 2019, 105). According to all these figures, religious instruction for daughters is given higher priority in families than for sons. Besides, women practice their religious obligations more regularly than men. This percentage was raised for housewives among women. Consequently, women are more devoted Muslims than men according to their practices of religious obligations. While most of the society is Muslim, Turkey still has some fundamental differences from an Islamist regime. According to Pew Research Center Report, twelve percent of Muslims in Turkey desire or demand Islamic rule (Sharia) in Turkey (Cumhuriyet 2021b).

Gender segregation and stereotypes of women are still widespread among society in Turkey. For instance, the primary role of women is considered as being mothers, and wives (TurkStat 2021, 108). Even though women’s rights, gender equality, and the LGBTI+ rights movements have become more visible in Turkey, religion and traditional social norms maintain their significance in the social sphere. For instance, based on the 2021 Turkey Family Structure Survey conducted by Turkstat, it was found that fifteen percent of the population expresses opposition to women's employment if it

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<sup>166</sup> We use data from 2014 because Daesh’s recruitment was active in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

is not required for the family's survival (TurkStat 2021, 107). An examination of regional factors reveals that this percentage increases to 28.5 percent in the Southeastern Anatolia region,<sup>167</sup> while only 9.4 percent of individuals in the Aegean region hold similar views. According to the same report, 35,8 percent of the participants support that women's primary roles are childcare and housework, and this percentage raises forty in the Southeastern Anatolia region (TurkStat 2021, 108). In families, cooking is a women's responsibility with 85,4 percent, which raised 92,2 in the Southeastern Anatolia region (TurkStat 2021, 3). Cleaning is also a women's responsibility, with 85,4 percent, and this percentage raised 92,5 in the Southeastern Anatolia region (TurkStat 2021, 5). Childcare is women's responsibility with a percentage of 94,4 (TurkStat 2021, 5). These findings demonstrate a disparity in conservatism and societal attitudes regarding women's participation in the labor force and women's household responsibilities across different regions in Turkey. The conservatism in Turkey based on cities and regions<sup>168</sup> corresponds with our data in Figure 4.1. In our case, women from Southeastern Anatolia, Central Anatolia, and Istanbul seem more frequently participating in Daesh than other regions.

Aside from society's perception of women, officials, such as the Court of Cassation and courts in Turkey, released almost all women affiliates of Daesh, considering them just victims of their husbands for their participation in Daesh.<sup>169</sup> This means that officials consider women who joined Daesh as victims of their husbands or families, and passive in deciding to join Daesh. In this way, the officials and indirect government recreate passive/victim women assumptions.

To conclude, although majority of the population considers themselves Muslims, there are differences and ambiguities in how religion is understood and practiced. Women in Turkey demonstrate greater devotion to religious rituals and education compared to

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<sup>167</sup> The region includes these cities: Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt.

<sup>168</sup> Central Anatolia, and Southeastern Anatolia regions

<sup>169</sup> Cansu, Burcu. 2020. "Sanık Olacakken Tanık Oldular." *BirGün*, Last modified: February 17, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.birgun.net/haber/sanik-olacakken-tanik-oldular-288250>. Yıldırım, Burcu. 2021 "Senem Dođanođlu: 'İŞİD Üyesi Kadınlar Türkiye'de "Mağdur" Sıfatıyla Yargılandı.'" *Evrensel*. Last modified: October 10, 2021. Retrieved from: [www.evrensel.net/haber/444820/senem-doganoglu-isid-uyesi-kadinlar-turkiyede-magdur-sifatiyla-yargilandi](http://www.evrensel.net/haber/444820/senem-doganoglu-isid-uyesi-kadinlar-turkiyede-magdur-sifatiyla-yargilandi).

men, with higher rates of Qur'an reading and daily prayers. Housewives tend to be more religious, practicing regular prays, and show more conservative sentiments in different areas, such as *niqah* (imam marriage) is needed for men and women live together, or choosing Islamic banks for investments (KONDA 2019, 102-103). As can be seen in the Figure 4.8, twenty six women in our research were housewives before joining Daesh. Therefore, they might have showed more conservative, and Islamist views than other people in society. This may ease their engagement with more radical views as such Daesh ideology in our case.

Islamism, religiosity and congregations in different regions in Turkey also shows correspondence with the participation of Daesh from these cities for our case. People in more conservative cities, such as Konya tended to increase their engagement with Daesh. Despite the abundance of congregations, and religious communities, understanding the Qur'an is limited due to language barrier among Turkish people. According to president of Religious Affairs, fifty-nine percent of the society do not know how to read the Qur'an (T24 2018). Also according to Mak Consultancy survey on Turkey Society's Perspective to Religion, and Religious Values, twenty-seven percent of people read the Qur'an (MAK Consultancy 2017, 7), and among people who read the Qur'an, only seventeen percent have read Turkish meaning (MAK Consultancy 2017, 13). Therefore, the lack of attention to read the Qur'an, and inability to understand to the Qur'an may make people dependent on views of imams, or the leader in their religious community. People might become vulnerable to radicalization because many people in Turkey do not understand the Qur'an and rely more on the Internet, imams, or spiritual leaders for religious information. This situation can increase the importance of these leaders, and some religious communities become significant places for radicalization. The requirement for thorough religious education and access to trustworthy information sources have increased to prevent misinterpretation and exploitation of religious teachings.

Besides, the gendered perception toward women also resulted in seeing women affiliates of Daesh as just victims and agentless in the eyes of courts. This situation made almost all women who joined Daesh to be released. Judges tended to give shorter

sentences to women than men (Cassidy and Rydberg 2019, 77). These factors affect women's radicalization and perception of women returnees of Daesh in Turkey.

#### 4.2.3 Political factors

Turkey political environment have influences on radicalization, and participation in Daesh. As mentioned in the previous chapter (see 3.1) anti-Assad discourse, open border policy, anti-PKK discourse, and sharp political polarization were worked as enabling factor for radicalization and especially participation in Daesh.

Anti-Assad discourse motivate people to help Sunni Muslims in Syria under the Daesh flag. Daesh presented themselves as the savior of Muslims in Syria, and making *hijra*, and joining *jihād* will end the sufferings of Muslims all over the world caused by the West, and the kuffar like Assad. Parallel with this discourse of Daesh, Demet Taşar mentioned they talked about sufferings of Muslims in Syria.<sup>170</sup> Tuana's husband wanted to join Daesh because "they raped the Muslim sisters in Syria." (Güler 2021, 437). Ayşenur İnci said that Z.K., another woman in these meetings gave her a book about the suffering, and challenges of Muslims.<sup>171</sup> Derya Ö. mentioned her wish to help children in Syria to cease their sufferings caused by Assad regime (Björn and Pauly 2019a). N.K highlighted she went to Syria for humanitarian help and worked in Daesh-controlled hospital (Sun 2020). Even though these motivations do not directly relate to Turkish politics, but parallel with the world, motivations were coming from anti-Assad sentiments, and sufferings of Muslims in Syria.

Open-border policy on Turkey's border with Syria made easy to cross the border with all women in our case. For instance, Defne Bayrak was known radical jihadist whose name appeared in CIA reports (OdaTV 2015). She stated that she arrested in Gaziantep in 2014 while trying to pass the border to join Daesh. Nonetheless, she released next day, and pass the border without additional hardship (Çaksu 2019). Another woman, Merve Dündar also mentioned a different way to pass border easily. They pretended as volunteers at İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı or *IHH* (The Foundation

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<sup>170</sup> T.C. Ankara 4th Criminal Court. 2020. Court Record, File Number: 2018/287 Esas, Date: February 13, 2020. Hearing Number: 5. p.93.

<sup>171</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018b. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018. p.2

for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief)<sup>172</sup> to border soldiers and went to Syria for delivering humanitarian aid (T24 2021). Similarly, Serpil Dere claimed that her husband (probably illegally) passed the borders in 2013 for a short while to deliver humanitarian aid to Syria (Cumhuriyet 2021a). Hence, under the name of “humanitarian aid” some people were able to cross the border effortlessly. Aside from Turkish jihadists, people from all over the world were crossing the Syrian border from Turkey to join Daesh (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior 2017, 51). They usually came to Istanbul, or Antalya first with airway or highway, and travel from Istanbul to border cities like Gaziantep, Hatay, Adana, and Şanlıurfa (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior 2017, 52), whereas a citizen of Turkey can travel to border cities without issued on fake passports or other risks of international travels. For these reasons, to travel Syria for joining Daesh was relatively easy, and less costly for citizens of Turkey than other jihadists.

Existed Salafi communities, associations, and former Al-Qaeda affiliates in Turkey have also contributed to increased participation in Daesh by showing their allegiances to it. As mentioned above, Afife, Handan, Tuana, Gülçehre, and Şehrazat said that they joined Daesh due to the networks around Tevhid Magazine and the influence of its leader Abu Hanzalah. Hülya Balı also stated that she and other women gathered affiliated with Daesh in Hatay mainly consisting of her husband's friends' wives and read Abu Hanzalah's books.<sup>173</sup> In this way, women also created a network among themselves as a small group in Hatay. In addition, the group gathered around the Islam Tea House, and Mustafa Dokumacı in Adıyaman also joined Daesh together. Serpil Dere, Ayşenur İnci, and Demet Taşar met and started meeting with each other through their husbands, who attended the Islam Tea House.<sup>174</sup> Thus, women from Adıyaman also created a network among themselves. Şengül Büyükçelebi from Gaziantep also mentioned that they went to the Muslim Youth Association (Müslüman Gençler

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<sup>172</sup> An Islamic aid foundation-based Turkey and active in 123 states.

<sup>173</sup> T.C. Kilis Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2018/13, Date: February 14, 2018. p.2.

<sup>174</sup> T.C. Adıyaman Anti-Terror Unit. 2018. Additional Record of Suspect Statement. File Number: 2015 /3726, Date: December 22, 2018. p.2

Derneği).<sup>175</sup> They met other people from Gaziantep who went to Daesh around this association. As we can see in these examples, small cell structures and Daesh networks have been organized in cities through associations such as the Islam Tea House, which gathered under the leadership of one person, or through online sermons and the Tevhid Magazine with an influence that spread throughout Turkey or associations. These groups have also created conveyor belt organizations for recruitment to Daesh from Turkey. As part of these networks, women have also formed their own networks through house meetings (separate from men).

In conclusion, the anti-Assad discourse in Turkey, Turkey's proximity to Syria and some conveyor belt organizations are among the factors contributing to Daesh recruitment. In addition, Turkey's delay in responding to the Daesh threat, like the rest of the world, has attracted mujahideen and muhajirs from all over the world to Turkey to cross into Syria. When different terrorist organizations like Daesh flare up, the high participation is likely to happen again if states do not implement social counter-radicalization and counter-violent extremism programs. At the same time, the necessity of de-radicalization programs has increased with the returnees of Daesh in Turkey. In addition to a security perspective, Turkey should also develop social programs and include people who joined Daesh in these de-radicalization programs. Otherwise, some people may be more vulnerable to radicalization if a similar terrorist organization emerges.

Radicalization is a complex and multidimensional process. Still, considering similarities and differences, we can reach some conclusions on the radicalization processes of women in the research. First, half of the women in our case emphasize their partners' influences on radicalization. However, the claim of partners' effect on radicalization comes from two significant inquiries. One is especially in conservative small towns women's socialization places are limited and dominated by families, relatives, neighbors, and the Internet. Therefore, they hold radical beliefs and ideas, and with their partners and families, their radical beliefs increase, similar to like-minded group effects. Secondly, the state and society's perspective on women joining Daesh affected how

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<sup>175</sup> T.C. Şanlıurfa 5<sup>th</sup> Criminal Court 2018. Court Record. File Number: 2017/43 Esas. Date: February 8, 2018. Hearing Number: 4. p.10

they explained their radicalization processes. If they claimed that they joined Daesh with the effect and force of their partners and families, law enforcement released these women and even did not ask any further questions about their radical beliefs. Thus, the partner effect claim became a protective shield for women against law enforcement. Although they highlighted partners' effects, women in our research reveal their ideological engagement with Daesh in the form of the desire to live under Sharia to become more Muslim, considering *hijra* as a moral obligation, traveling Daesh as a way of supporting *jihad*, and contributing establishing of an “Islamic State” and helping Sunni Muslims suffering from the brutality of Assad under the Daesh flag. As in which their radical thoughts and beliefs increase together with like-minded persons, like partners and families, but they are agents in these radicalization processes. Their ideological thoughts on supporting Daesh show us their agency.

Another socialization place for women is religious networks where these women feel belonging. like Tawhid Magazine group, Dokumacılar group, or their small groups' house meetings for reading religious books and Qur'an became places for creating a like-minded group effect. Except for two women (Zehra Duman, Yağmur Kılıç, and Derya Ö), these women were raised in conservative families, and they were religious people. Their religiosity increased in these groups, but they joined these networks due to their increasing radical beliefs. Put differently, they already had been devoted Muslims and tended to increase radical beliefs in religion. These like-minded groups worked as boosters for increasing their radical beliefs and joining Daesh. Joining Daesh seems to be an escape from their lives in their houses and small cities. Making *hijra* and contributing to *jihad* became a way of finding themselves and contributing to a holy goal. They can feel a part of something new and bigger than themselves, *jihad*. However, when they realize that joining and living under Daesh could not change their lives the way they desire and could not become a part of a holy goal. Then, after Daesh dissolved, they returned to Turkey because staying there made no sense anymore.

Age, online networks, and structural factors worked as enabling factors for radicalization for women. We see that the ages of women in our case are between 16-36, with an average of 23, when they joined Daesh. This parallels the findings of other

academic works about the ages of women affiliates of Daesh (Bergen, Schuster, and Sterman 2015, 6; Speckhard and Ellenberg 2020, 88-89; Rosenblatt 2016, 8). Youth might increase their vulnerabilities to radicalization, such as searching for alternatives in their lives, marginalization, and becoming more courageous with the effect of less baggage in their lives. Therefore, youngness might increase vulnerability to radicalization and works as an enabling factor for radicalization. Also, people can expose to terrorist organizations' propaganda on the Internet. Also, algorithms of social media have increased the echo chambers of people. One person who clicked and liked religious posts started to see more suggestions about religion. Similarly, if a person increases their attention or likes these posts, they become more exposed to the propaganda of a terrorist organization. These echo chambers also created a like-minded group effect virtually. Connecting with recruiters and exposing to the propaganda online via the echo chambers worked as enabling factors for joining Daesh.

In addition, structural factors, economic, political, and social factors can work as enabling factors for radicalization. Economic incentives and economic dependencies of women can become enabling factors for radicalization into Daesh. Political factors like anti-Assad discourses and geographical proximity with the open border policy enable more people to join Daesh from and through Turkey. Social factors such as gender segregation and more narrowed socialization chances of women than men limit women's encounters with various sources for radicalization aside from their families, partners, and small groups. These structural factors also affect the characteristics of women's radicalization in Turkey. Most women mentioned live under Daesh for being more Muslim. Their ideological statements show their agency in radicalization, and due to social and gendered factors, their socialization places are limited to families, partners, and social networks shaped by religion.

To conclude, ideology, partners, families, social networks, and structural factors become the main factors for radicalizing women into Daesh. While these factors worked as drivers, agencies of these women demonstrated themselves through their ideological statements. As a tactic to escape punishment, most women claimed that they went Daesh under the effects of their partners or the force of their partners. Still, their

ideological engagement with Daesh is revealed when we examine statements about their beliefs.



## 5. CONCLUSION

The emergence of Daesh has had significant impacts on global security. The group's methods, which involve committing terror acts and using advanced propaganda techniques, have garnered worldwide attention. Prompting the claim that Muslims have been suffering in Syria and presenting Daesh as an Islamic State utopia, Daesh has attracted women from Turkey. However, even though women who joined Daesh were portrayed as victims and passive in deciding to join Daesh by the state apparatus, the research argues that women have the agency to join Daesh from Turkey and challenge the traditional belief that women are passive victims. This study explored the complexities of women's radicalization, emphasizing their ideological and behavioral radicalization. By analyzing several factors, such as ideology, gender, and structural elements, it becomes clear that women who join Daesh from Turkey have agency in their decision-making, contrary to the belief that they were brainwashed or groomed. These findings emphasize the need to move beyond simplistic narratives and recognize the multifaceted nature of women's participation in religious extremist groups. This research highlights the need for gender-sensitive approaches to counter radicalization and de-radicalization in Turkey. A comprehensive understanding of women's radicalization will help improve more effective strategies to prevent and counter extremist ideologies.

The majority of research about women who joined Daesh focused on Western women and their motivations for participating in Daesh. Nonetheless, most Daesh recruitment was from the Middle East and North Africa regions (Pearson and Winterbotham 2017, 60). Thirteen percent of Daesh affiliates were women (Cook and Vale 2018, 21). When we apply this percentage to Turkey, one thousand three hundred or more women might have joined Daesh from Turkey.<sup>176</sup> For Turkey, the lack of official data prevents us from drawing an exact picture of the number of women who joined Daesh from Turkey, but the unofficial estimations similar to ours indicated a significant number of women from Turkey joined Daesh (Şen and Yavçan 2022, 7). Despite this phenomenon, studies focusing on the radicalization of women from Turkey remain limited. This situation creates a gap in the literature, and the study also aims to fill this gap.

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<sup>176</sup> This calculation assumes that 10000 people (Erkmen 2015) or more people joined Daesh from Turkey.

For this purpose, the research discusses definitions of radicalization, the process of radicalization in the literature, and gender and terrorism literature. Discussing different definitions, we conclude that radicalization is developing and adopting extreme political beliefs that may lead to political violence against an out-group. The development or adoption of extremist beliefs cannot emerge suddenly. That is why scholars agree that radicalization is a process with different paces.

Enabling factors can provide us with a discussion about Turkey's structural factors that enable participation in Daesh. Therefore, we give a review of these approaches and how we are going to use them for our study. After these highly cited approaches in the literature, we continue with gender and radicalization in literature. Since the terrorism field is perceived as male dominated (Nacos 2005, 446), studying gender in terrorism studies becomes significant to capture the whole picture. We notice that scholars debate gender in terrorism and women's radicalization in the literature by disproportionately focusing on Western women's radicalization. Feminist scholars argue against the accepted claim that women are peaceful victims of terrorism. We should see women as perpetrators of terrorism as well.

For this reason, we argue against portraying women who joined terrorist organizations as groomed, brainwashed, or passive in their decisions. Literature also highlights ideology, social and online networks, psychology, and being part of a goal as motivations for women participating in terrorism, similar to men. Also, being a mother or wife of a fighter is a specific motivation for women joining Daesh. We interpret this as part of a state-building process of the so-called Islamic State and supporting *jihad*. Taking these discussions in the literature primarily focused on Western women, we discuss a limited range of studies concentrating on Turkish women's radicalization. The Turkish context appears significant in evaluating Turkish women's radicalization since their socialization significantly distinguished from Western women. In this respect, compared to the radicalization process of women in the West, we observed that social networks and the phenomenon of socialization are more prominent in Turkey than online networks. Accordingly, in order to examine the socialization process, we also analyzed the radicalization processes by referring to social networks in order to make

sense of this socialization. Since the social structure of Turkey affects the formation of these social networks, we made this evaluation by considering the social structure of Turkey.

We intend to comprehend how Daesh networks, propaganda, and recruitment activities worked in Turkey. Besides, we want to give the state understanding of terrorism in Turkey, which will help portray officials' perspective of Turkish women who joined Daesh. The complex and state-centric definition of terrorism in the Constitution demonstrates the state's perspective on terrorism. The Constitution has portrayed terrorism as a violent act against state entities, but it has not mentioned acts against the people. This law has created a situation in that every person can be a terrorist arguing against the state. Conversely, the impression in the law is alike that terror attacks targeting people stay in a secondary position in the importance of terror attacks than targeting the state.

We discuss the radicalization definition made by the Police Academy Report in 2019. The radicalization definitions in the report parallel the literature but include little attention to gender issues. We also point out how motivations for participating in a terrorist organization can apply in the Turkish context. For instance, we could not observe Islamophobia in Turkey, but there is an ongoing tension between the seculars and conservatives. This situation has caused victimization and grievances for both conservative people and seculars for decades. Therefore, we take the grievances considering this polarization instead of Islamophobia. Notably, the PKK presence in Turkey has created another grievance for radicalization. This opens ground for Daesh, focusing on fighting against the PKK for its recruitment and propaganda in Turkey. Combining this enabling factor to join Daesh with the anti-Assad discourse, politics, and economy of Turkey, Daesh created its propaganda tactics for Turkey other than ideology. The open border policy of Turkey during the Syrian Civil War also made it easy to join Daesh without being caught. We also emphasize different recruitment tactics in different cities in Turkey since Daesh diversifies its tactics and propaganda in accordance with the places' demography. Notably, the small number of women recruiters in Turkey, both online and face-to-face, attract our attention. In our research,

two women were local recruiters, and one woman was Daesh's online propagandist. This may have reduced women's participation in Daesh, and we close the chapter with this analysis.

The main analysis of our research is to examine women's radicalization processes collecting them in mostly mentioned categories: ideology, partners, and families' effects, living places before the participation in Daesh, social and online networks, and structural factors of Turkey. Women in our study stated that living under the so-called Islamic State, making *hijra*, supporting *jihad*, and the family union as their leading motivations to join Daesh. Also, we observe that spatiality and living places affect women's socialization and radicalization processes. Due to Turkey's demographic, social, political, and economic structure, the socialization of women is limited and mainly depends on their families and close circles with their neighbors. Parallel with this, women indicate their partners as leading factors for participation in Daesh. However, attributing the responsibility to men fit with the expectation of law enforcement and officials, and result in less or no punishment for these women. More precisely, using the effects of partners become a tactic for escaping from punishment. Nevertheless, we observe that women have agencies deciding to join Daesh even though they portray themselves as victims of partners and families. From this point, our main findings are:

- Women ideologically engaged with Daesh and demonstrated their agency in deciding the participation of Daesh.
- Turkish officials have not considered women as active agents in Daesh, attributing them to passivity and victimization. This situation leads to a poor understanding of women's radicalization in Turkey.
- Turkey's political and social factors have significant impacts on radicalization. Gender segregation in Turkey affects the socialization of women and their radicalization process.
- Living places and diverse demographic conditions in dissimilar cities affect women's socialization and radicalization processes.

- When we look at the age range of women in our research, which is in line with the estimations in the literature, youth radicalization appears as a significant problem for women joining Daesh.

Based on the research findings, Turkey urgently needs a gender-sensitive approach to radicalization and terrorism. Turkey has already lacked the counter-radicalization and de-radicalization programs, which might be Turkey's next challenge—ignoring women's agencies results in an incomplete set of strategies for Turkey to counterterrorism, counter-radicalization, and de-radicalization. Since returnees of Daesh also have used Turkey for transit, and Turkish citizens have started to return, Turkey has become a hub for the transition of Daesh's returnees. The lack of social policies on de-radicalization, and the lack of attention in the literature on Turkish women affiliates of Daesh cause difficulties to improve policies for returnees. Returnees of Daesh also open new challenges for Turkey, such as citizenship problems for children born in Daesh, and integration problems. These issues are beyond the scope of this research, but we hope that our research will launch a new perspective for social policies on the de-radicalization of women to prevent women from radicalizing again.

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## APPENDIX A

### Appendix A.1: News Articles about Women in the Research

Names	News
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Names	News
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<p><b>Derya Ö.</b></p>	<p>A Haber. 2019. “DEAŞ’ın Eskort Gelini Derya Ö. Hikayesini Anlattı.” <i>A Haber</i>. Last modified: February 19, 2019. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2019/02/19/deasin-eskort-gelini-derya-o-hikayesini-anlatti">https://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2019/02/19/deasin-eskort-gelini-derya-o-hikayesini-anlatti</a>.</p> <p>NTV. 2019. “Almanya’da Eskortluk Yapan Türk Kızı, DAES’ye Uzanan Hikayesini Anlattı.” <i>NTV Haber</i>. Last modified: February 19, 2019. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/almanyada-eskortluk-yapan-turk-kizi-deasa-uzanan-hikayesini-anlatti,H5jmySLHQkCgy7Pw8XpMgw">https://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/almanyada-eskortluk-yapan-turk-kizi-deasa-uzanan-hikayesini-anlatti,H5jmySLHQkCgy7Pw8XpMgw</a>.</p> <p>Stritzel, Björn, and Anne Pauly. 2019. “Exklusive Doku: ISIS-</p>

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## Appendix A.2: Keywords and Sources

Keywords	IŞİD	IŞİD Gelinleri	IŞİD Aileleri	IŞİD Kadın	
	DEAŞ	DEAŞ Gelinleri	DEAŞ Aileleri	DAEŞ Kadın	
<b>National News Agencies</b>	<b>National Newspapers</b>	<b>Local Newspapers (Adıyaman)</b>	<b>Local News-papers (Bursa)</b>	<b>Local Newspapers (Gaziantep)</b>	<b>Local Newspapers (Konya)</b>
İhlas News Agency	Akşam	Adıyaman Işık Gazetesi	Bursada Bugün	Gaziantep27	Pusula haber
Demirören News Agency	Artı Haber	Güne Bakış Gazetesi	Kestel Yöre	Gaziantep Güne Bakış	Memleket
Anadolu Agency	Aydınlık	Adıyaman Kahta Gazetesi	Olay	Kırşehir Habertürk	Merhaba Haber
	Birgün	Gap Olay Gazetesi	A Gazete	Olay Medya	Konya Postası
	Cumhuriyet	Adıyaman Kent Gazetesi	Şehir Medya	Gaziantep Güneş	Anadoluda bugün
	Diriliş Postası	Besni Yeni Bakış	Gemlik Gündem	Gaziantep Pusula	Seydişehir Toroslar
	Evrensel	Adıyaman Ses Gazetesi	Haber Yorum	Bizim Nizip Gazetesi	Konya Yenigün
	Güneş	Adıyaman Gündem	Eko Haber	Gaziantep Telgraf	Yeni Meram
	Habertürk	Besni Güncel	Bursa Haber	Gaziantep Ekspres	Hakimiyet
	Hürriyet		Bursa Hayat	Baba haber	Konyanın Nabızı
	Karar		Gemlik Haber	Mega Haber 7	Pervasız
	Milliyet		Yıldırım	Gaziantep Doğuş	Konyanın Sesi
	Posta		Kent Gazetesi	Gaziantep referans	Konya Olay
	Sabah		Gazete bursa	Güney'in Sesi	Akşehir Postası
	Sendika.org		Karacabe y Takip	Artı Haber	Rasyonel Haber
	Sol		Tuna Gazete	Gaziantep Oluşum	seydişehirin Sesi
	Sözcü		Mudanya	Yeni çizgi	alaaddin

			Gazetesi	haber (mersin)	Haber
	Star		Bursa Post	Gaziantep denge	Ereğli Gazetesi
	Takvim		Pembe Pusula	Gaziantep Hakimiyet	Sarayönü (Saray Medya)
	Türkiye		Yeni Marmara	Haber 342	Yeşilpınar Gazetesi
	Vatan		Manşet X	Gaziantep Sabah	Bozkır Postası
	Yeni Akit		Bursa'da Meydan	Gaziantep Söz	Ereğli Güneş
	Yeni Şafak		Bursa Sancak	Nizip Radyo Televizyon	Anadolu Günlük
	Yeniçağ		Ekometre	Güncel Gazete	Seydişehir Postası
	Yurt		Karacabey Haber	Gaziantep Tutku	Anadolu Telgraf
			Gemlik manşet	Çağdaş Gazetesi	Çumra 26 Haziran
			Yenişehir Yörem	Gaziantep GAP	Yeni Ereğli
			Okur Gazetesi		Haber Yunak
			Yenişehirim		Kulu
			Gazete Jurnal		
			Ayrıntı		

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