Beyond the Songs:

Women Performers of Ethnic Music in Contemporary Istanbul

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ABSTRACT

Beyond the Songs: Women Performers of Ethnic Music in Contemporary Istanbul

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Music has often had a political aspect but its power has increased since the formation of the modern state. In Turkey, music has been an instrument for the nation-building project but also a tool for members of the civil society. With the release of the ban that prohibited ethnic music in the public arena in 1990, women performers of this music genre have managed to carve out their niche on the public stage as well as to gain social respectability in the process. Drawing on a three-month fieldwork in Istanbul, this thesis seeks to present the strategies and obstacles women performers of ethnic music employ to break with the image of the 'entertainer', to advocate for the rights of the ethnic minorities, and to re-define inter-gender relationships. This thesis is an exercise in engagement with these questions: How do women use ethnic music in order to carve out their place in the public arena while gaining and maintaining social respectability? More particularly, how were they able to do it in the peculiar constantly evolving socio-political landscape of the Ottoman Empire first and then of the Turkish Republic? What were the obstacles they faced at various stages and what strategies they employed to challenge, circumvent, overcome, co-opt or neutralize these obstacles?

RÉSUMÉ

La musique a souvent eu un aspect politique mais son pouvoir s'est décuplé depuis la formation de l'état-nation moderne. En Turquie, la musique a été instrumentalisée par les membres du gouvernement réformiste lors de la construction de l'état-nation mais elle a également servi d'outil de contestation ou de négociation pour plusieurs membres de la société civile. Depuis 1990, année durant laquelle le gouvernement turc a retiré l'interdiction officielle contre la présence de la musique ethnique dans la sphère publique, plusieurs artistes féminines à l'intérieur de ce style musical se sont taillé une place sur la scène publique et ont réussi en même temps à obtenir et maintenir leur respectabilité sociale. Se basant sur trois mois de terrain ethnographique à Istanbul, ce mémoire cherche à présenter les stratégies et obstacles que ces femmes jouant de la musique ethnique emploient afin de briser l'image de « l'artiste de variété» (*entertainer*), de promouvoir les droits des minorités ethniques et de redéfinir les relations entre les genres. Ce mémoire cherche à répondre aux questions suivantes : comment les femmes utilisent-elles la musique ethnique afin de se créer un espace sur la sphère publique tout en maintenant leur respectabilité ? Plus particulièrement, comment ont-elles réussi à le faire compte tenu des différents événements sociaux et politiques qui ont secoué la fin de l'Empire Ottoman ainsi que la Turquie depuis sa fondation en 1923? Quels sont les obstacles auxquels ces musiciennes ont fait face et quelles ont été les stratégies qu'elles ont utilisées pour contrer, contourner, outrepasser, s'approprier ou neutraliser ces obstacles ?

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Introduction

As the taxi ventured along the dark road lined with tall plane-trees and stretching in front of the few old *yalı*-s – the wooden Ottoman mansions built in the nineteenth-century on the Bosphorus waterfront – the hustle and bustle of Üsküdar faded away. An impression of calm and peace radiated from the quiet area, its serenity disturbed only by the passing of an occasional vehicle, young couples discreetly chatting while going to a fancy restaurant or the distant call to prayer, the *ezan.* We were in the small and quiet neighbourhood of Kuzguncuk, on the Asian shore of Istanbul. The neighborhood was, in the Ottoman times, home to Jewish, Armenian and Greek artisans and workers. Since the early twentieth century, those minority groups have left and new migrants from the Black Sea area have settled. Since the end of the 1970s, the cosmopolitan feeling of Kuzguncuk has attracted leftists, artists and intellectuals who aimed at "creat[ing] a counterurban culture and space of community in the city" (Mills 2005:450). The day before, I had reserved a ticket for the concert of Gülcan Altan, a Turkish-Circassian singer whose last album featured folk songs in Circassian (Adyge) and Abkhaz languages[1]. Murat, the concert organizer had warned me over the phone that it was a very "*boutique*" concert, that only twenty-five people could fit into the room and that I could only come alone.

The taxi left the main road and turned into a smaller street worming between restored Ottoman houses transformed into art galleries, artisans' workshops and seafood

[1] The Circassians of Turkey come from a region which is today a Russian enclave in the Caucasus. After their conversion to Islam, they have migrated to what was considered the Ottoman lands for hundreds of years and even in the aftermath of the creation of the Republic in 1923. In the Circassian language family, there are two notable languages: Adyge and Abkhaz which are still spoken. Many people who identify themselves as Circassians now live in Turkey, especially in the regions bordering Georgia as well as in the region of Istanbul.

restaurants. The narrow antique shop in front of which the taxi dropped me off had been converted for the evening into a fancy concert hall. Its walls were fully furnished with dark shelves displaying old glass phials, black-and-white pictures, tapestries, Ottoman *faiences* and miniatures, oil lamps, and dried flowers. Gülcan Altan, the singer, had established herself at the back of the shop on a raised platform with a tall wooden canopy which reminded me of a Jewish *chuppah*. She sat at a short table on which she had placed her sheet music and lit two candles. She was in her mid-forties, her long and thick red hair was iron-curled, and she was wearing skinny black jeans, a yellow t-shirt under a blazer and high-heeled black leather boots. When Gülcan sang, a strong, deep and loud voice came out of her chest. At times, she would frown, her eyes would close with emotion, her lips would quiver squeamishly and her hands would trace delicate imagined garlands next to her face and then abruptly bounce from her chest, her arms now extended as if she was reaching out to the world. She was a very flamboyant person and her presence filled the small stage, eclipsing the three other men musicians who played guitars and *garmon,* a kind of accordion.

The concert lasted about three hours in which Gülcan mostly sang in Circassian Adyge and Abkhaz languages, to the great pleasure of the crowd which mainly consisted of members of the Abkhaz-speaking community of Istanbul. The audience sang along with her, marking the music with encouraging shouts. That night, Gülcan also sang melodies in Spanish from the Leftist singer Mercedes Sosa, Portuguese *fado* songs, Greek folk songs as well as Turkish Art Music (*Türk Sanat Müziği*) reminiscent of the classical music composed in the Ottoman *saray* – the Palace. The song, "*Kalamış"*, from Münir Nurettin Selçuk (1900-1987), concluded the concert and transported us to the early days

of the Turkish Republic, when ideas of modernity invigorated the new Europeanized elite. For one evening, as I was sitting sipping my glass of red wine, listening to music in many languages from Turkey or abroad, among black-and-white photographs picturing an Armenian religious ceremony in an ancient Jewish house, I was amazed that such a conscious research of displaying ethnic elements could be something one musician sought to achieve. A few decades ago, concerts like that of Gülcan Altan would probably not have been as publicly visible as today given the political context that denied cultural diversity. Moreover, Gülcan, a woman who has worked all her life to become a professional musician, might not have benefitted from as many opportunities as she had now as a woman. Cultural and ethnic politics have changed for the last twenty years or so and allowed new spaces for women singing ethnic music to become more widely socially accepted and respected.

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In this thesis, I seek to present the strategies women musicians in Turkey employ to gain social acceptability and to carve out a public space for themselves. Based on my research, I demonstrate that despite the fact that public performance of music has been traditionally denied to women, women performers of ethnic music in the modern period in Turkey have carved a niche in this art and have been able to gain and maintain their respectability. The history of women musicians in what is today Turkey is complex and shows a long struggle against the Ottoman concepts of the public/private space and women's place therein. From the Late Ottoman times to the present, women musicians have managed to penetrate the public sphere while battling the traditional societal taboos associated with female entertainment figures in the public space. In the process, these

musicians have also managed to shape and subvert the society's ideas and norms of gender roles and helped recreate ideas of not only gender but also of ethnicity, the rights of ethnic minorities, religion, and class. As traditions continue to evolve and are subjected to transformations, these different interpretations of Islamic moral codes also change in time and space, both temporally and geographically.

Religion has framed most social and cultural conceptions regarding the place of women and of music in the public arena. While the majority of people in Turkey predominantly identify themselves as Muslims there are various understandings of Islam, therefore leading to different conceptions of women and music. For instance, the Alevis – one of the most important religious minorities in Turkey, representing unofficially 25% to 30% of the population – have tended to foster a greater inclusion of women at different levels than have the Sunnis who are the majority (Erol 2010). In addition, the Alevis have given a religious importance to the three-stringed musical instrument *bağlama* or *saz*. Both men and women play this instrument during the *semah*, part of the *cem* Alevi religious ceremony, while singing prayers and devotions to various Alevis heroes like Pir Sultan Abdal in the 16th century and Muslim/Alevi saints like Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law (Erol 2010; Bates 2011). Therefore ideas regarding the professionalization of women musician within Alevi culture differ significantly from the mainstream Sunni ones. As well, a large segment of the population in Turkey has de-emphasized the place of religion within their lives, partially because of the secularization process undergone during the single party period (1923-1950), thus resulting in diverse moral discourses *vis-à-vis* women and music. The discourses of many have often been shaped by Western notions of women's rights and greater acceptance of music.

Ethnicity has also been one factor influencing general conceptions regarding music and women. While most ethnic groups in Turkey, like Kurds, Lazs, Circassians, Arabs, and Bulgarian-Pomaks have been Muslims, they each have their own relationship with Islam, negotiating, dismissing, or insisting on certain aspect of 'official' Islam. For instance, in many regions of the Black Sea coast which hosts a population of mostly Laz (or Lazuri) speakers[2] but also of Georgian, Hemşin and Mingrelian, women have improvised music during their collective work, or *helesa*, in the tea or hazelnut fields, a tradition which dates back, Eliot Bates shows, at least to the end of the World War II (2011:23). Bates also mentions that, unlike popular belief, "*kemençe* [a small box fiddle played notably during the tea and hazelnut harvests] was, and still is, actively performed by women" (2011:22). Women thus growing up in such environment have benefitted from greater exposure to music which was enjoyed and perceived positively by people within the community. The choice of being a professional musician – a choice which women of the new generations had, thanks to the increasing opportunities modernity brought about – might not have been as costly since members of the community saw it as a way of marking its distinct culture. Professional women musicians in this case can even be a source of pride for their ethnic community or region.

Finally, class is particularly important in shaping cultural politics in Turkey. Many upper and middle class families in modern Turkey, especially in urban centers, have encouraged children, both boys and girls, to have a general knowledge of music and to learn to play an instrument. This practice dates back to the Ottoman Empire when

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[2] A group of people which has lived in the South-Eastern Turkey and Georgia since the 6th century BC when the area was ruled by the King of Colchis (Bates 2011:23). Laz (or Lazuri) language, called in Turkish *Lazca*, is a South-Caucasian language related to Georgian and Mingrelian but not to Turkish which comes from the Ural-Altaic family which also features Mongolian, Korean and Japanese.

European ideas and behaviors – were progressively transforming the cultural sphere within the elite circles (Davis 1986). Playing music as a hobby was a sign of a family's sophistication and affluence. In the modern times, similar ideas impregnated the upper and middle classes, even more so due to Atatürks's notions about a nation's degree of civilization being in part conditional to the ability to appreciate and to perform music (Stokes 2010). As such, music was a kind of civilized hobby enjoyed in the secular upper and middle classes. Women musicians who grew up in such environments have for sure encountered different obstacles than working class women – for whom a lack of financial means prevented pricey musical education. Their various strategies to overcome these barriers and to become socially respected were also in function of their class background.

Objectives

In this thesis, I will explore the following questions:

- How do women use ethnic music in order to carve out their place in the public arena while gaining and maintaining social respectability?
- More particularly, how were they able to do it in the peculiar constantly evolving socio-political landscape of the Turkish Republic?
- What were the obstacles they faced at various stages and what strategies they employed to challenge, circumvent, overcome, co-opt or neutralize these obstacles?

Through this thesis, I will attempt to show the individual agency that women musicians from various ethnic/religious communities possess and which they employed in expressing themselves and renegotiating the limits imposed upon them. I will also

indirectly tackle the following questions: What is the role of alternative forms of music, like folk, protest and ethnic music in the society? What has been the role of national politics in parallel to modernity in shaping women's opportunities to enter the public sphere? How have women's strategies differed from men's and does their participation in music challenge or reinforce the traditional moral and gender roles?

Historical background

As a universal language, music is deeply embedded in the social and cultural actions of every society. It has the capacity to gather people from different classes, genders, religions and ethnicities. Music is also inherently political. For instance, scholars of the Frankfurt School[3] have demonstrated that governments and political parties can use music to control the masses and to establish an authoritarian rule (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979). The Frankfurt School's academics may have fallen into generalizations – for fifty years of ethnomusicology have shown that "audiences do not react as dumb masses, taking whatever fare is on offer, but [instead] select among offerings and reconstruct them to fit their own needs" (Peterson 1994) - but they nevertheless have surely demonstrated that music is and can be an instrument of power. If political parties and governments can use music to promote their message and convince the population, then members of the civil society, of various communities, or other groups, can certainly do likewise. Music can be used as a tool to gather public support, for the contestation or for the negotiation of certain/or all aspects of power dynamics.

In Turkey, music has played a vital role in shaping politics. On the one hand,

[3] The Frankfurt School was established in the intra-war period, at a time where authoritarian regimes were growing in power. Scholars of the Frankfurt School were of course more sensitive to the fact that despotic leaders – like Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler – used music as a tool of propaganda (Peterson 2002).

upon the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the new secularist reformists, the Kemalists, gave priority to the creation of Turkish folk music. During the single party era (1923-1950), the attempts to 'construct' folk music went hand-in-hand with the modernizing elite nation-building project. Music has been an object reflecting the state's preoccupations since the early years of the republic. On the other hand, since the 1950s with the end of the single party regime, music has become a space where various social actors have expressed their discontent or negotiated with the government.

Kemalist social engineering strongly affected the domain of arts, in particular music (And: 1984; Tekelioğlu 2001; Bates 2011; Stokes 1992b; Değirmenci 2006). In the 1920s and 1930s, reformers aimed at generating a unique folk music devoid of distinct individual, ethnic or religious specificities and which would help preserve the cohesiveness of a new Turkish nation and convey the Kemalists' aspirations (Bates 2011; Öztürkmen 2001). Fundamental in the elaboration and legitimization of the national culture was the creation of a myth of origin which glorified the nomadic Central Asian and pre-Islamic past (Değirmenci 2006). The remnants of this heritage, according to the Kemalist doctrine, were to be found in the folk culture of the peasantry, 'uncontaminated' by the Ottoman cosmopolitan urban life. Through collecting folk musical forms in Anatolian villages, folklorists constituted a *répertoire* whereby songs were transcribed and standardized into a modern framework. To ensured Turkish folk music's dissemination among the masses, censorship guaranteed that no 'foreign' (that is, Ottoman, Arabic or Persian) music would be accessible. Turkish folk music was the only music authorized – along with Western music – on the radio and television during the one party period (Tekelioğlu 2001; Özer Efe 2013). Musical diversity was expressed in

regionalisms and non-Turkish lyrics were carefully replaced by Turkish ones.

The end of a single party regime in 1950 and increasing democratisation in the following years opened up a space for the emergence of alternative forms of music such as *Arabesk* – a musical genre which drew on Arabic influences (Stokes 1992; Özbek 1997) – and Anatolian rock/pop – a fusion between Western rock/pop and Turkish folk (Stokes 1999) – which answered the claims of a population who has started to openly question the Kemalist principles and reforms and to pinpoint the failures of the top-down implementation program. While *Arabesk* represented the realities of new rural migrants who moved to big cities like Istanbul and faced unemployment and/or poor social conditions, Anatolian rock/pop emerged among the Leftist youth and was politically charged. The social effervescence of the 1960s and growing tensions between the Left and the Right in the 1970s were brought to an end in 1980 when the military took over through a *coup d'état.*

Following the 1980 coup, a new neo-liberal government fostered the development of un-politicized forms of music like *Arabesk* and the Turkish pop music which benefitted from advancements in technology (Özer 2003). As well, broadcasting in a minority language of Turkey was strongly prohibited (Özer Efe 2013). In the second half of the 1980s, civil movements – in particular the Kurdish rights movement which sought the recognition of Kurdish identity and denounced the continuing violence of the state – proposed alternative conceptions of Turkishness and carved their own place in the public arena. Kurds were able to make unprecedented gains in the state's recognition thanks to the 1991 Gulf War which attracted media coverage of the Iraqi Kurds and the international pressure for greater democratization which followed.

Kurds, along with others, have found a voice through music (Aksoy 2006). Performers of protest music and Kurdish/Alevi music, inspired by the political activism of Anatolian rock/pop of the 1960s and 1970s, helped bring about social change. More importantly, the political stance embraced by the practitioners of those musical genres helped women musicians within those social movements to carve their place as respectable musicians. Supported by many feminist organizations which emerged in the late 1980s, women were for the first time proposing a model of women musicianship which opposed the long-lasting image of an entertainer (Çelik & Öney 2008). These women musicians demanded the recognition of their musical talent, and denounced the inequities that women in Turkey experienced and proposed their own solutions to political issues. Thanks to the combined efforts of Kurdish movements, the Left and the feminists, new political and social narratives emerged that included these hitherto excluded voices.

Following this major event, new commercial labels and performing groups emerged on the musical scene. While the different Kurdish communities were the first to record, to arrange and to perform their own folk music in different Kurdish languages in front of national audiences, other ethnic and religious minorities soon followed suit. The 1990s onwards saw the emergence of "ethnic music" performed by groups from many ethnic and religious minorities such as the Circassians, the Laz, the Armenians, the Jews, and Gypsies. Moreover, groups like *Kardeş Türküler*, founded in 1993 at Boğaziçi University, or individual musicians have also started to combine and perform folk songs of different ethnic and religious communities of Turkey, insisting on presenting a cultural project inclusive of various identities (Yıldırım 2008; Özer 2008; Değirmenci 2013).

Ethnic music calls for the unification of different ethnic and religious groups, tolerance and the re-definition of what it means to be Turkish in the 21st century. As well, ethnic music has become a platform where women's musical talent is recognized and which has provided many opportunities for them to carve their place in the public arena while preserving their social 'respectability'. It is these fascinating developments which are the focus of my research.

The Organization of the Thesis

My thesis is divided as follows. In Chapter 1: *Theoretical Framework and Methodology*, I provide a short literature review to explain the concepts of music and gender and the private and public spheres during the Late Ottoman Empire. I then give details concerning the setting of the research and the methods used during my data collection in Istanbul in the fall of 2011.

Chapter 2: *A Short History of Music and Women in the Muslim Middle East* serves as a prelude to the rest of the thesis. In order to show that performing music has been something contentious in many Muslim societies, especially for women, yet not impossible and sometimes even promoted. I ask what has been the status of music in Islam in relation to the political changes that affected the medieval Middle East ? What were the different perceptions of women in general, and of the women who played music, in particular? In what context could women perform in the public sphere and which kind of women? What were the most common obstacles those women musicians faced?

In Chapter 3: *Women Musicians in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Republican Era*, I investigate the status of women musicians in relation to the modernization process which started during the Late Ottoman Empire and intensified

during the Early Republican era in Turkey. Drawing on the historical and political context of the end of the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the nation-building process, I ask the following questions: What were the factors that social changes brought about in the late Ottoman society and how did these affect women's performing conditions? What kind of women played in the urban center and in which settings? What were the roles of women and music in the nation-building process? How did women benefit from the new opportunities of modernization to carve their place on stage?

Chapter 4: *The Emergence of Political Musicians: Alternative Femininities on the Public Stage* explores how the advent of politically committed forms of music – which emerged in Turkey as part of the political democratization process following the 1950 elections – helped women present alternative gender roles in the musical domain. What were the impacts of the implementation of the multi-party system – and of the military coup – on the musical domain? What was the role of music in Turkish politics? How did the general public perceive women in the world of music and why?

In Chapter 5: *Class, Ethnicity and Religion at Play*, I attempt to answer the following question: to which extent do modernization and the increasing democratization provide better opportunities for women to become professional musicians? What were the other factors which influenced women's abilities to become professional musicians? Was becoming a musician something that was universally disapproved of in Turkey? What were the main obstacles to women's development of musical careers? What where the factors which help them achieve their goals?

Chapter 6: *How to Become a Respected Artist* examines how women musicians I

interviewed were able to break with the dominant image of the 'licentious entertainer'? Given the increasing opportunities the identity politics movements of the last few decades provided for to the ethnic (and religious) minorities, what kind of audience does ethnic music attract in Istanbul today and in which kind of place is it performed? Why did women participating to my research decide to play this specific music genre?

Chapter 7: *Songs From a Woman's Mouth,* presents women's folk songs from different ethnic and religious communities. After exploring the literature on gender segregation and music, I ask how women transformed 'traditional' *répertoires* in order to redefine assigned gender roles and inter-gender relationships specific to their own ethnic or religious community. What were the initiatives women musicians undertook in order to create their own new *répertoires* and transcend the so-called 'women's topics' to comment on political and social events? How did women attempt to create a new collective and national identity by promoting the inclusion of different ethnic and religious communities in Turkey? Finally, I conclude the research presenting my findings and identifying the scope for further research.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework and Methodology and Setting

In the summer of 2007, I had the chance to spend three months volunteering on an organic farm in a small village located in the mountains of south-western Turkey. During the day, I would learn Turkish as I removed weeds, harvested grapes and watered tomatoes under the burning sun. At night, my friend Neslihan would take me to *türkü bars* of Fethiye, the closest city. There, she and I would listen to musicians who played the *bağlama*, a type of stringed instrument, and who sang folk songs which spoke of the Kurdish and Alevi struggles for their rights as well as of ancient heroes and impossible love.

I felt deeply moved by those melodies. All summer long, Neslihan translated lyrics into my ear and between the songs told me the lives of composers, like Ahmet Kaya (1957-2000) and Șivan Perwer (born in 1955) most of whom were Kurdish and/or Alevi and had faced persecution by the Turkish state. At the same time, I was surprised to find many women involved in the performance of ethnic music, such as Aynur Doğan (born in 1974) who clashed so strongly with images of women musicians presented in the Turkish media. Women performers of ethnic music, in general, did not display explicit sexuality unlike many pop stars in Turkey. They gave their opinion on a diversity of topics ranging from women's social conditions to environment and economy. They sometimes performed in independent festivals, and were at other times social and political activists. My interest in ethnic music, and more importantly, in women

performers of this style, rapidly grew. Four years and many more trips later, I had amassed more than thirty albums of Kurdish and Alevi music, but also of many of the other ethnic or religious minorities of Turkey.

For me, ethnic music has been a wonderful avenue to understand the complexities, nuances, and power struggles within the Turkish society. This music genre has opened a door which allowed me to access a diversity of worldviews as well as to break with the Islamist vs. Kemalist binary approach so prevalent among the traditional academic analysis of that country. While ethnic music in Turkey has recently started to become the subject of academic discussion (Değirmenci 2013); in terms of its political and social significance (Stokes 2010) and its musical structure (Bates 2010; 2010a), no study has investigated the lives and motivations of those performers – even less so, of the women among them. Women musicianship has, however, been tackled in numerous ways (notably Koskoff 1987; Herndon & Ziegler 1990; Cook and Tsou 1994; Bernstein 2004), in the Balkans (Silverman 2012; Sugarman 1997); in the Arab world (Abdel-Nabi et al. 2004; for instance) and more specifically in Egypt (Van Nieuwerk 1995; Danielson 1991;1997;1999), in the Middle East and Central Asia (Nooshin 2009; Doubleday 1999), in Iran (DeBano 2005), in Afghanistan (Doubleday 1988/1998), and in the Mediterranean (Magrini 2003). These authors have long demonstrated that music is one of the best loci to observe inter-gender relationships and gender roles as well as to confirm, to resist and propose alternatives to those models.

In Turkey, the few studies examining women's musical performance have focused on non-Muslim communities past and present (Holst-Warhaft 2003; Jackson 2010), rural folk music (Ziegler 1990; Reinhard 1990), the lives of queer and transsexual artists

(Stokes 2010; 2003), and famous queen of the Turkish pop, Sezen Aksu (Stokes 2010; 2007) but have not approached the topic of women's musical performance in relation to politics. In my opinion, there have not been many efforts to critically analyze the relationship between music, the private/public concepts within religion, ethnicity and class, and women in Turkey. As such, this thesis aims to make a small contribution to the existing literature by highlighting the role of women in reshaping the politics and society in Turkey, and more generally in the broader Middle East.

The Public and Private spheres

There has been much ink spilled on the topic of private and public spheres, in the social sciences and in particular in the Middle East. Conventionally, the public sphere has, on the one hand, been associated with men's world, outdoors activities and identified as the locus of power. The private world, on the other hand, has often referred to women's world, domesticity and has been perceived as non-political. Thanks in great part to feminist scholarship of the last 20 years, many authors have questioned the relevance of those dichotomies and contested their Euro-centric approach. Indeed, most of those assumptions seem to pertain more to European bourgeois societies that emerged after the 17th century (see for instance Habermas 1962 and for a good critique of it Fraser 1990). As Asma Asfaruddin contends, "private and public sphere have often been anything but bipolar and that, indeed, the two may be plotted along a continuum yielding far more points of contact with the other in varying historical and social circumstances" (1999:3). To support her views, Asfaruddin insists on the importance of situating what 'public' and 'private' mean in reference to "the specificities of gender, culture, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and historical time" (see also Helly and Reverby 1992).

While it true to claim that many women have been prevented from entering the public arena in many Muslim societies as well as elsewhere in the world, it would be false to think of the private sphere as being a non-political space, as Leslie Pierce, the author of the *Imperial Harem* aptly shows in her study on the women's elite households of the Ottoman Empire. Pierces argues that the Ottoman society of the 16th and 17th centuries indeed had clear ideas regarding what domains were considered private or public but that this was not necessarily congruent with categories of gender. Rather, Pierces contends,

> The degree of seclusion form the common gaze served as an index of the status of the man as well as the woman of means. Poor women and poor men mingled in the city streets and bazaars, for their cramped households and lack of servants prevented them from emulating the deportment of the well-to-do. Just as a woman of standing who appeared in public in the sixteenth century could maintain her reputation for virtue only if she were surrounded by a cordon of attendants, so no Ottoman male of rank appeared on the streets or in the public arenas of the city without a retinue (Pierce 1990:8)

Pierce's positions echoes those of other feminists who have worked on the Middle East such as Nikki R.Keddie and Beth Baron (1991) who has demonstrated that women's seclusion has been more effective in the case of urban and elite women rather than poor and rural female population whose work outdoors was essential for the survival of their families.

Hence, it seems that the private and public dichotomies, in the Ottoman 16th and 17th centuries would have been more framed in terms of "elite versus the common, the ruling class versus the ruled" (Pierce 1990:9) rather than male domain versus female domain. Peirce contends that in the Ottoman society, the more an individual ascended the social and political hierarchy the more his/her "authority [becomes] a phenomenon of the

inner, often literally an interior, space…" (Pierce 1990:9). For example, the sultan – and his close family – dwelt in the inner most space, the *harem* (meaning "sacred or forbidden"). As a result, it would be false to think that elite women who lived within the *harem*, were deprived of power. As the domain of the (elite) family life – and not the locus of intense sexual activity that the Orientalists depicted – the *harem* was indeed political and directly related to the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Republican mindset regarding public performance for women. While low status women could do it, it was against the honor of the elite. Just as elite men could not walk in public space without a retinue, an elite woman could not perform music in public, although it was perfectly acceptable to do it in the private space. As well, gaining money from playing music would mark out as an entertainer rather than an elite.

Music and Women

There has been a dominant trend in the literature on gender and music in the last twenty years that situates music as a place which reflects society's gender prescriptions (Herndon 2000), but more importantly as a space where gender is in fact constituted (Magrini 2003; Koskoff 1987). Authors who maintain this stance draw on the anthropological assumption that that categories of gender (woman/man) are socially constructed and should be distinguished from biological categories of sex (male/female). Starting from Margaret Mead who in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935/63) suggested that behaviours associated with men and women were not determined by nature, but were rather the result of social and cultural processes, feminist scholarship has investigated the construction of gender. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir has suggested that "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one" (1953).

Inspired by de Beauvoir's stance, Judith Butler, in her now famous book *Gender Trouble* (1990), defines gender as "the cultural interpretation of sex" (1990:6). As she explains further in another article,

> Gender must be understood as a modality of taking on or realizing possibilities, a process of interpreting the body, giving it cultural form. … it is not a matter of acquiescing to a fixed ontological status, in which case one could be born a woman, but, rather, an active process of appropriating, interpreting and reinterpreting received cultural possibilities (1986:36).

For Butler, one "chooses" one's gender, "Not wholly conscious[ly], but nevertheless [in a way] accessible to consciousness, it is the kind of choice we make and only later realize we have made" (1986:40). During this "choosing" process, one interprets "the cultural reality" with its "sanctions, taboos and prescriptions" and reorganizes them to present a certain kind of body (and behaviors related to it). Butler also shows that despite the fact that one "chooses" one's gender and therefore can reinterpret it in infinite possible ways, social constraints are so strong that it is almost impossible to live outside of gender norms which clearly define unambiguous manhood and womanhood. Those who "dislocate" from the prescribed gender norms may feel "anguish and terror" (1986:42). Butler also insists that gender "intersects… with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" (1990:3). Therefore, gender is inexorably linked to historical, political and cultural settings in which it is reproduced (ibid.). In the same line of thought, in *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, Sherry B.Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, suggest seeing gender (as well as sexuality and reproduction) as "symbols invested with meaning by the society in question, as all symbols are" (1981:1). Ortner and Whitehead emphasize the importance of situating what 'man' and 'woman' mean in

their larger context of cultural beliefs. In the light of what has been said above, music – because it is a space where gender is constructed – becomes a platform for elaborating a greater diversity of genders in a way that performers do not feel "anguish and terror" but rather feel more accepted as they are. It is a kind of "safe space" where the possibility of presenting genders which differ from prescriptions peculiar to each social class and ethnic group is enacted.

The Setting

I have had the chance to live in Turkey on many different occasions over the past few years (in August 2005, the summer of 2007, in July 2008, and during the summer of 2010) and finally in October, November and December 2011 formally to conduct my fieldwork. My first interest in Turkey during my bachelor's years in anthropology resulted from my desire to deconstruct images of Turkish women through a social and historical analysis of the Ottoman society and most particularly the Orientalist' interpretations of the harem institution. I had also gone to Turkey in order to experience the realities women faced today in relation to the "return of Islam" on the political and public sphere, and how this affected their perceptions of themselves and their relationship with others, men in particular. During those stays, as I was trying to formulate my master's thesis project, friends who were ethnic music lovers introduced me to this music *genre*, took me to concerts, and helped me buy music albums. Thanks to them, before my fieldwork, I had already gone to more than thirty ethnic music shows – more particularly of Kurdish music – in *türkü bars* of Istanbul, Izmir or even sometimes in coastal towns like Fethiye in south-western Turkey, as well as in underground cafés and open-air concerts. As I started collecting albums and listening on a daily basis to ethnic music,

even in my hometown Montreal, I found myself more and more aware of the various claims ethnic music sought to pursue. I soon became more interested in Turkey's ethnic politics and the role of women within the world of ethnic music and changed my initial research topic.

Thanks to the fact that booklets which accompanied the albums I purchased were rich in information, I was able to acquire much knowledge about each ethnic community's cultural productions, legends, tales, literature, and history. This formed a sufficient background to understand the content of songs. As well, reading lyrics in non-Turkish languages and the translations in Turkish and English helped me intensify my learning process of Turkish language which started as early as in 2005-2006 while taking my first year-long class at McGill University in Montreal during the last year of my bachelor's degree. In August 2010, in preparation for this fieldwork, I attended a 25h/week intensive course in Istanbul at Ankara University's TÖMER program for one month. Apart from this, I have had the chance to make friendships, in Turkey as well as in Montreal, which over the years have allowed me to improve my skills in this language. When I arrived in Istanbul in October 2011, I could make acquaintances and have basic conversation in this language with people I interviewed and those I met during my fieldwork from October to December 2011.

During my two-and-a-half month stay in the fall of 2011, I resided in a shared flat in the peaceful residential neighborhood of Moda located a few minutes of walk from the main center of Kadıköy locality on the Asian shore of Istanbul. I chose to conduct my fieldwork in Istanbul as it is the largest city of Turkey (around fifteen million inhabitants), and therefore, hosts many different cultural communities. As well, it is the

center of cultural life. Many concert halls, cafés and cultural centers where I conducted interviews or attended concerts were at a walking distance from my home. I had the chance to live with a Turkish-Abkhaz woman who also happened to be the main leader of *Feminist Sosyalist Kolektif*, an organization which published a magazine and organized demonstrations and conferences. Not only would she help me contact artists for interviews and putting me in touch with women musicians she knew, but she would also give me her insight in to many questions regarding my cultural interpretations of this phenomena. Her feminist stance provided me with more criticism regarding the double standard women face in most domains of Turkish society and how, despite the great changes brought about by the secularist state since the foundation of the Republic in 1923, many inequities remained.

Methodology

Contacting musicians was relatively easy. Many were friends of friends with whom I had talked about my project and who helped me get in touch with them, and sometimes served as translators. Friends also scheduled meetings for me with cafes' managers they knew who organized ethnic music concerts. After I attended such concerts, I would introduce myself to musicians, present my project and request an interview. Most of the time, musicians enthusiastically agreed to participate. I also contacted many artists through email as their addresses most of the time were available on their website. I contacted more than twenty artists – men and women. Sometimes artists, like famous Kurdish singer Aynur Doğan, were abroad at the time of the fieldwork, others did not respond after the exchange of email, and finally one or two cancelled the interview at the last minute. I was, however, surprised that well-known

musicians, like pioneer of protest music İlkay Akkaya, answered my email and accepted to schedule an interview. Presenting myself as a MA student from a foreign university probably helped me gain greater access to these artists. One woman I interviewed, Mircan Kaya, even told me that she did not normally respond to such demands from Turkish students but made an exception for me because I came from abroad.

I led semi-structured in-depth interviews with twelve musicians – ten women and two men. The interviews took place at concert halls, at musicians' home, in university offices, in cafés, at recording studios and finally at cultural centers. Interviews usually lasted around an hour-and-a-half though sometimes for as long as three hours. Half of the interviews were done in English solely – the musicians having a good knowledge of the language – and the other half were done in Turkish with the presence of one translator friend. Prior to the fieldwork, I had already planned a series of questions for a guideline which I more or less followed during the interviews depending on the musician. I also sometimes let translators ask their own questions as I was keen to know how they – as those interested in the topic in one way or the other – would perceive and understand the importance of ethnic music. In the interviews, I asked questions about musicians' experience, the factors which facilitated his or her development of career, those which impeded it, their education in the musical domain as well as in other professional domains, etc. At the end, I was able to draw a rough portrait of each musician's life story.

Most musicians I interviewed were born to an upper middle-class background and had benefitted from a very cultured family environment where music was thoroughly enjoyed. They had received private classes in various instruments encouraged by their parents. Others came from lower middle-class or working class families but had

benefitted from the opportunities university education provided them to climb up the social hierarchy. Eight musicians had a Bachelors' degree in various domains like mathematics, marketing, journalism and literature. Two had completed one or two Master's degree in engineering and international relations and two others we enrolled as doctoral students in ethnomusicology. Most musicians were, however, unable to be full-time professional musicians and one even rejected the label of 'professional musician'. Because they were not able to support themselves only with music, nine musicians had at the time of the fieldwork or in the past held a second job unrelated to their musical career. Six musicians identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic community and playing music from their own community. Among this group, two had chosen to perform in addition to their own ethnic *répertoire* music from the other ethnic and religious minorities of Turkey and of other countries around the world. The six other musicians identified themselves more as Turks and played music from the different ethnic and religious communities of Turkey and folk music from abroad.

Apart from the interviews I conducted, I also attended around fifteen concerts where people I interviewed performed, alone or with other groups, ethnic music. I attended most of the concerts at *Kooperatif Arts and Performance Hall*, a small independent café located in a basement in the busy neighborhood of Taksim, on the European side. In this neighborhood I also visited well-known cultural icons, like the bar *Araf* or *Haymatlos* and other lesser known concert halls, such as *Şermola Performance*. I also frequented, on the Anatolian side, *Gitar Café*, an independent venue managed by performer of folk music Sumru Ağıryürüyen whom I also interviewed. There, I also participated in a "Singing Together" workshop organized by Ağıryürüyen and made

observations during two week-ends. The concert prices varied between 10 TL to 30 TL in certain cases. Most of the time alcoholic beverages were served and sometimes food but the distinction between bar, concert hall, café and cabaret was blurred.

During the observations at concerts, I used Virginia Danielson's suggestion to analyze how musicians construct their "public personae" (1999:122). In her work exploring the performances of Egyptian diva Umm Kulthum, Danielson analyzes, "behavior of performers, their musical style, speech, presentation, and dress; published reviews, gossip columns, and other printed commentary about performances; and talk-conversation-about musicians together produce musical culture". Similarly, I used tools Marco Martiniello and Jean-Michel Lafleur (2008) suggested in order to analyze the political expression of ethnic music. Martinielleo and Lafleur propose examining the lyrics of the songs which can be overtly or covertly political. In the case where it is not obvious, it is important to seek through the metaphors for hidden political messages which "may seek to frame the mindset of the audience on a particular question... or educated citizen or ethnic group on a particular question" (Martiniello & Lafleur 2008:1196). Also important here is the language in which the song is performed, as stated, the choice of language can have a great political consequences as the use of some languages forbidden by the state. Finally, indicator of a political significance is what as been called by Rolston a "lyrical drift", which is when "the meaning of a song is taken out of the context in which it was originally produced and reinterpreted by an audience in a different political context" (Rolston 2001:55). For instance, the Armenian song, "Sarı Gelin" was composed a long time ago and spoke of the impossible love between a man and woman of different religions and ethnicities. However, played in the context of the

funeral march for Hrant Dink, it conveyed claims for interethnic peace and tolerance.

As most of these musicians had released albums or had been members in more famous bands of music, there has been quite a lot of information written and published about them. First, many magazines dedicated to Turkish music and culture such as *Roll* or its newer version *Bir+Bir* contain interviews with famous and less famous musicians. Secondly, most artists nowadays own a social media page such as *MySpace* or *Facebook* or *YouTube* on which they can include videos or sound samples of their creations and performances. It is also possible on such websites to follow the comments of their supporters or critics, see pictures taken by the fans or official pictures, be aware of the next event in which they will perform and finally how to contact them. Thirdly, still among the internet-based sources, musicians also have their own official webpage which provides information on their biography, publications, and other relevant areas and how they like to be known. Fourthly, advertisement (posters and tickets) also provide quite useful information as in a limited numbers of words, much information can be conveyed. How is the performance advertised? What is the choice of words? Are there any images? What message does it send? In which neighbourhood will they be playing? Those were questions I asked myself during my fieldwork. Finally, I listened to radio and/or television programs which are exclusively presenting 'ethnic' folk music such as *Yaşam Radyo* which broadcasts weekly programs of Armenian, Greek, Lazuri, Kurdish, Zaza, etc. music and other relevant discussions about linguistic issues.

The Problem of Labeling: Folk Music, World Music or Ethnic Music?

At the outset, I realized that I have to define my central concept of 'ethnic music' since there were very different understandings of what it may refer to. Without such

clarification my data would not serve me as well. Therefore I also engaged in a series of discussion with various musical friends and ethnic music fans as well as my interviewees. Indeed there has been an ongoing discussion about how to label the 'traditional' or 'indigenous' music of different societies around the world. I, as well, encountered such problems when the time came to identify the style of music on which I was focusing. This posed methodological problems too. Which musicians would I contact? And based on which criteria? Who plays ethnic music and who does not? During the interviews, many musicians were hesitant in naming their music 'ethnic music' which they understood as "music of the other(s)". Others on the contrary identified with pride the music they were performing as *ethnic music*, or even sometimes *world music.* Finally, a few of them were not able to describe exactly the music genre they were performing and/or preferred not to label it and saying, "I refuse to be put in a genre just because it is what the industry demands" (Süren,Behiye. Personal Interview. 18 October 2011). Similarly, when at concerts I asked people about the way they would describe the music, I received perplexed looks. Reflecting upon the question and hesitating, people cautiously replied, "ethnic music?" or "world music?" and sometimes "traditional ethnic folk but with contemporary arrangements?" The truth is that there does not seem to be one suitable term for this music although everybody understood what I was referring to when I talked about 'ethnic music'. Instead, what became interesting were musicians' reaction towards me categorizing their music as 'ethnic music' and how they themselves named (or did not name) their music. This revealed much of their ideological standpoint and this topic itself fell under the scope of my scrutiny.

Because of the vagueness and concerns associated with labelling this kind of

music, I find it useful here to define other associated terms and to investigate the ideological baggage they each carry. 'Folksong' (from the German *volkslied* – a term coined by German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803)) is quite problematic for its association with nationalist projects in the 19th century Europe. Nation builders used '*folk'* – the 'people as a whole' – to create a sense of commonness which was fundamental to maintaining the cohesion of many (diverse) peoples under a single nation. As such, *folk* was unilaterally referring to peasants and rural artisans (Pegg: 2012)[4]. As mentioned earlier, in 1936, folklorists under the supervision of Béla Bartok collected, transcribed and made compilations of folk songs in villages of the newly created republic of Turkey, a topic I explore in chapter two of this thesis. Folklorists perceived villages to have escaped change and preserved – unlike Ottoman music which was perceived as 'contaminated' by non-Turkish (read Arabic and Persian) elements – the essence of a single mythical origin located in a remote nomadic past in Central Asia (Değirmenci 2006). As such it sought to erase ethnic and religious differences. Similar projects occurred more or less at the same time in nation-building processes in Europe. It is only during the second part of the twentieth century that post-structuralist, post-colonialist and post-modernists objected the romantic category of 'folk' and brought attention to the fixity of this model which "implied [a] notion of a bounded homogeneous and unchanging community" (Pegg:2012). As a cultural construct, it was also attacked for its complicity with political agendas like colonialism, nationalism, fascism and communism.

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[4] In 1965, ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl developed an evolutionist system of music whereby 'art' and 'classical' music – associated with the professional musicianship of Western cities – were put in contrast with the music of non-literate (read, non-Western) societies which were termed as 'folk' or 'tribal music' and were seen as earlier stages in the development of music. As opposed to 'art 'and classical music, Nettl perceived 'folk' as resulting from a communalist endeavor. (Nettle 1965)

The second term, which has been the one subject to the most academic discussion, has been 'world music'. The term has been attacked on many grounds, firstly for its complicity with global capitalism. Bob White defines *world music* as "the umbrella category under which various types of traditional and non-Western music are produced for Western consumption" (2012:1). However, as Steven Felds (2001) shows, the term had not been contentious before 1980. On the contrary, *world music* was the 'vernacular' term of ethnomusicology which itself referred to non-Western musics and musics of the ethnic minorities. As Feld puts it,

> Like *ethnomusicology*, *world music* had an academically liberal mission, to oppose the dominant tendency of music institutions and publics to assume the synonymy of *music* with Western European Art music. And in practical terms, the world music idea was meant to have a pluralizing effect on Western conservatories, by promoting the hiring of non-Western performers and the study of non-Western performance practices and repertoires (2001:191).

The problem, Feld explains, was that despite all the good intentions the ethnomusicologists had the binary representation of Western European art music /World music (or tribal, exotic, ethnic, folk, traditional, international) remained. World music started to mean music of the "West's ethnic others" (2010:191). It is only in the 1980s that world music was commercialized as such. Collaborative works between Western pop musicians and non-Western 'traditional' ones became a widespread practice, the two most notable examples being the promotional relationship between the Beatles and Ravi Shankar and Paul Simon's *Graceland* (1986) with South African musicians[5]. World

[5] In 1986, Paul Simon recorded the album *Graceland* with South-African townships' local musicians, like Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Ray Phiri, Baghiti Khumalo and Isaac Mtshali, and their instruments. Simon also recorded part of the album with American musicians. By mixing languages, rythms and languages like English and Zulu, Simon is often believed to have triggered the interest for *world music.* The album – which was also released during the South-African Apartheid- also had a politically contentious aspect since Simon had recorded it in Johannesburg and crossed borders to work with Black South-African musicians (www.paul-simon.info/).

music – as a commercial category – proliferated in the 1990s in the academic domain, in magazines, at concerts and awards ceremonies, and in the form of self-professed world music guidebooks. Recording labels soon specialised in this *genre*. Feld summarizes well what happened to world music by the end of the twentieth century,

> World music was no longer dominated by academic documentation and promotion of traditions. Rather, the phrase swept through the public sphere first and foremost signifying a global industry, one focused on marketable danceable ethnicity and exotic alterity on the world pleasure and commodity map (Feld 2010:195).

Although ethnic music – or the music examined in this thesis – is sometimes referred to or associated with world music by musicians, by consumers and auditors and by producers, I would not define it as such because ethnic music does not, in Turkey, necessarily imply the collaboration of a Western musician with a 'folk' non-Western one, which is often typical of world music (see for instance Ry Cooder's project with Ali Farka Toure, *Talking Tumbuktu* (1994), and Buena Vista Social Club (1997)). In Turkey, ethnic music is either produced by people of the same ethnic group as the musicians or by a Turkish independent label. Most importantly ethnic music in Turkey is not commercialized abroad. If ethnic musicians tour outside the country, it is because they have connection with members of the Turkish diaspora – in Germany mainly. Ethnic music from Turkey is not broadcast on the worldwide radios. It is a Turkish phenomenon with relatively few attempts – and maybe desire – to penetrate the world market. Therefore, I do not wish to use the term *world music* to refer to this particular kind of music in this context.

Rather, I prefer to use *ethnic music*, despite the baggage it carries – "music of the national others", because given the ways Turkish state has managed its cultural and

religious plurality, ethnic minorities have indeed become “others”. However, my use of “ethnic” does not mean that I endorse this process of “othering”, but that I want to emphasize the fact that these forms of music aim to revitalize the musical traditions of an ethnic group. Eliot Bates (2010) has coined the term “arranged traditional music” to indicate this musical style which – in my opinion – de-politicizes and de-values the attempts of ethnic music performers to claim for the recognition for their own specific ethnic group. In a sense, it homogenizes all forms of ‘traditional’ music in Turkey and as such, is no better than ‘folk’ music which only took in consideration Turkish songs. As well, I use ethnic music in this thesis because it is how the main company that produces it, Kalan Müzik, has labelled it, the way music shops also classify it on their shelves, and finally because, in the popular usage, everybody in Turkey knows what it means when I spoke of ethnic music.

Since the 1990s, many musicians from ethnic/religious minorities have decided to perform ethnic music thanks to the increasing democratization Turkey has experienced in the last two decades. This phenomenon encouraged women to explore their musical talents and creativity and allowed then to become professional musicians. This was a difficult decision to make since women musicians have endured series of misconceptions and prejudices for many centuries.

Limitations

It is important to note that this thesis will not address questions regarding musical forms or the authenticity of ethnic music *per se.* My musical knowledge resulting from a brief four year of Western classical piano does not place me in a position to participate in a discussion regarding the technicalities of ethnic music in Turkey, the influences of one

style over the other, rhythms, modes, etc. As such, I am not situating this thesis within the scope of ethnomusicology but rather, I understand ethnic music to be a cultural project around which various actors evolve. Ethnic music serves more, here, as a specific genre, with its own history and which brings a set of opportunities or constraints to women to live in Turkey in the 21st century.

Chapter 2: A Short History of Music and Women in the Muslim Middle East

In order for us to understand the social importance of women's performance of music in the modern Turkish society, in this second chapter, I briefly explore the history of women musicianship in the Middle East. I argue that despite the fact that women in many Muslim societies in the Middle East have for centuries been at the forefront of musical life as composers, singers, instrumentalists, and teachers, they have generally not been perceived as "truly skilled and 'serious' musicians" (Danielson 1991:292) especially compared to their male counterparts.

I first examine the peculiar status of music in Islam and the role of conservative Muslim legists in shaping prejudice against both music and women. As a matter of fact, the prohibition of music by religious authorities has often gone together with sanctions on women's public presence and expression. Then, I explore how in spite of this general prejudice, those restrictions varied according to the configuration of power between the state and the other religious authorities. Indeed, court culture has more often than not promoted music as a daily entertainment and encouraged its development in the hands of women. Finally, I investigate the case of the *qiyān,* the women slave musicians of the caliphal harem as means to show how the opportunities of the court culture helped *qiyān* carve their place in the public arena despite the above-mentioned challenges.

The Status of Music in Islam

Music was embedded in the daily lives of men and women living in the Arabian Peninsula prior to the advent of Prophet Muhammad and this custom continued after the adoption of Islam (Gray 1982:10). Musicians – most of whom women – at the time of Prophet Muhammad performed in a variety of contexts all over the Middle East, in "temple rituals, victory and battle songs, family and tribal rituals, entertainments at royal banquets, and ecstatic trance cults" (Doubleday 1999:110). They were singing and playing outside, in the streets, on battle-fields, and in nature such as in valleys, mountains and forests.

After the adoption of Islam, the *ulema*s (Muslim legists) distinguished two types of music: first, the *taghbir,* that is the chanting of the Qur'an; and second, the *ghina'*, the song (Gray 1982:10). It is on the second type, the *ghina,* which I focus here[6]. The permissibility of "listening to music" (*al-sama* in Arabic) has been a litigious issue in the Islamic history[7]. Most historians of Middle Eastern musics nevertheless argue that there is no injunction in the Qur'an against *al-sama* (Roy Choudhury 1957; Gray 1982; Farmer 1967). Instead *hadiths* – the behaviours and words of Muhammad reported by his Companions – have sometimes been manipulated to promote *al-sama* but more often to condemn it (Farmer 1967:25; Doubleday 1999:103).

On the one hand, defenders of *ghina* –, mystics and sufis, musicians, poets, minstrels, art sponsors, and some members of the aristocracy – have often invoked

[6] It is important to note that not all Muslim theologians, even among the most conservatives, have accepted this classification. For instance, Karin van Nieuwkerk argues that 17th century scholar Chelebi distinguished three types of music: music coming from the birds, from the human throat and from instruments. The first was held "perfectly permissible", the second "allowed… subject to certain conditions and rules" and the third "never permissible" (Chelebi 1957:38, quoted in van Nieuwkerk 1992:36).

[7] For a history of the numerous debates surrounding the lawfulness of "listening to music", please see Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music* (1967), an entire chapter is dedicated to this issue.

hadiths according to which Muhammad encouraged poetry, and by extension, music, to support their claim. According to some *hadiths*, Muhammad would have "commended poetry as an art" (Gray 1982:11). Roy Chodhury (1957) mentions that *hadiths* encouraging the practice of *ghina* most often came from A'isha, the Prophet's wife (see also Farmer 1929; Gray 1982). It is reported that she said, "Teach your children poetry which will sweeten their tongues" (Gray 1982:11).

On the other hand, conservative *ulema* have attacked *ghina* on two grounds. First, *ghina* contained pagan elements from the pre-Islamic times. Poets and minstrels who performed *ghina* were considered to hold supernatural knowledge and to have the ability to communicate with spirits (*jinns*) or Satan (*shayatin*). As a result, they were "in direct competition with Muhammad himself" (Gray 1982:11; see also Farmer 1967:23). The second reason whereby *ghina* has been considered unlawful is because it was deemed as distracting humans from religious practice, even more so because of its association with illicit activities, such as drinking (van Nieuwkerk 1992:37), and affecting rational judgement (Hirschkind 2004:134)

The most important reason why *ghina* has been attacked is because women have been an important source of musical production in the Middle East (Farmer 1976:44). Despite the fact that the Prophet seems to have encouraged more women's musical behaviors than men's[8] (Gray 1982:11), conservative religious authorities and sometimes political leaders have more often than not, condemned women musicians. Because of these reasons, music was even completely banned by the Orthodox (*Rāshidūn*) caliphs (632-661 CE) who followed the death of the Prophet Muhammad (Gray 1982:12; Farmer

[8] As Gray contends, "The Prophet made no objection to [the] practice [of music] and permitted females to play the *duff* (tambourine) and clap hands in rhythm at festive events, behavior forbidden to men" (1982:11).

1967:39) and was sometimes censured when it contains satirical song lyrics which were considered anti-Islamic (Gray 1982:12).

It is during the rule of the ‘Abbasid dynasty (750-1258) that women's musical performance started to become more and more confined within the private realm. According to Veronica Doubleday, the implementation of the *purdah*[9] – the (free-born)[10] women's seclusion and segregation – would have precipitated this shift (1999:111). Since then, amateurs [free-born] women musicians have been forbidden to play in front of male or mixed audiences (Doubleday 1999:113). Laudan Nooshin highlights the parallel between seclusion of women and music in Muslim countries and contends that,

> Women and music both represent problematic areas and often share a positioning as discursive ‘Other’: in the case of women, in relation to the normative male domain; in the case of music, in relation to the rational, controlled domain of the spoken and written word. Thus, social controls on women often provide a touchstone for controls on music-making and *vice-versa*. Where the two coincide – women as musicians and dancers – one often finds the most contentious and tightly controlled arenas of social activity, at least in the public domain (Nooshin 2009:3).

Performing at Courts

Although there was a general prejudice regarding music and women in the public eye, limitations were sometimes less strictly enforced thus allowing more space for women to develop their musical careers. As Gray notes, "even in the years of the Rashidun a double standard existed and practices which were publicly condemned were privately practiced. Because of this, many musicians found patrons at court" (1982:12). For instance, the

[9] It is important to note that women's seclusion along with veiling existed a long time before the birth of Islam, for instance in Greek and Byzantine societies, as recalled by Ahmed (1992) and El-Guindi (1999).
[10] I am insisting here on free-born because slave women, that is, non-Muslim women, were not subject to the same expectations regarding their place in the public arena, as I am showing in the next sections of this chapter.

Umayyad's era (661-750 CE) that predated the 'Abbasids' was a period where women musicians represented an important aspect of the public artistic life (Meyer Sawa 2002). Umayyad Caliph Yazīd I (r.680-683 CE) initiated the practice of holding daily entertainment at court during which women and men performed music (Gray 1982:13). Authors on women and music in the Medieval Islamic times often mention the story of Sallāma al-Qass a prominent professional woman musician (Meyer Sawa 2002)[11]. Her story is highlighted in the prestigious *Kitāb al-aghānī* (Book of Songs), a compendium in twenty volumes of the biographies and activities of courtly and non-courtly poets and musicians from the fifth to the tenth century in Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Persia, written by Abū al-Faraj al-Isbahānī (897-967 CE). Sallāma al-Qass would have been one of the many women who were publically recognized as musicians during the Umayyad dynasty.

Paradoxically, it is during the 'Abbasid rule – when conservative Muslim *ulemas* enforced seclusion and segregation of women – that musical activities were the most encouraged at court and in the elite circles as the court culture was more influenced by the Sassanid customs which praised music[12]. Musicians at court enjoyed a high status. As Gray explains,

[11] Sallāma was among the best musician slaves of Mecca and had studied with the greatest teachers, among them Jamīla (d.c. 720). She was in love with a pious ascetic man, al-Qass (the "Pious"), who despite his love for her refused to "consummate their love" and instead wrote songs and poems about her and her musical talents. Since everybody knew about their love in Mecca, Sallāma became eventually called al-Qass. One day, Caliph Yazīd II (r.720-724) bought her along with another Jamīla student, Habāba, and integrated them into his cohort of professional musicians. Upon Habāba's death, Yazīd, who was deeply infatuated with her, died of grief. Sallāma continued her profession as a composer, singer and instrumentalist at the caliphal court in the years that follow. The story is well-known in the Arab world still today (For more information on this legendary love story, please see Mernissi1993:37-51). In 1942, famous singer Umm Kulthum played the role of Sallāma in the eponymous musical film during which she could deployed all her talents in Qur'anic recitation and singing (Meyer Sawa 2002).

[12] Gray notes that Harun al-Rashid (r.786-809) desired to imitate the practice of Persian king Ardashir and categorized his musicians according to their level of performance.

> Court culture promoted a high degree of social mobility. This mobility was distinguished by a "cultural-openness – based on the possibility that a man [or slave woman, I would add] of spirit or special gifts could rise in the social scale without the advantages of family or communal connections, or could move among circles formed by other communities despite the advantages which local ties gave him in his own" (Gray 1982:12) [13].

During the reign of 'Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (r.786-809 CE), poets and musicians were highly admired as shown for instance in the stories from *Alf Layla Wa Layla* (A Thousand-and-One Nights). Caliph Harun al-Rashid was reputed to be a patron of arts and education. His half-sister, 'Ulayya bint al-Mahdi, was also an accomplished and gifted musician (Meyer Sawa 2002:294)[14]. While conservative religious authorities condemned music in theory, members of the aristocracy in practice patronized musical activities and encouraged its development (Gray 1982:12), most often in the hands of men and women slaves[15], called *qiyān* (Richardson 2009).

The Elite Professional Slave Women

Qiyān (s. *qainâ*) were the professional slave women who performed at the caliphal court and aristocratic harems during the Arab-Islamic Caliphates – the Umayyad (661-750 CE); the (second) Umayyad in Spain (661-750 CE); the 'Abbasid (750-1258 CE); the

[13] Gray does not mention the source of such information.

[14] According to Gray, "There were never gathered at a caliph's court so many scholars, poets, jurisconsults, Qur'an reciters, judges, scribes, companions and singers as those who gathered at Rashid's court. He offered each of them a lavish gift and raised them to the highest rank" (1982:14). He was careful however not to invite Muslim scholars to his musical parties.

[15] In the Islamic world, slaves – who were non-Muslims at birth – were often bought by wealthy members of a community, raised and educated by them and could possibly have a more power in the society than free individuals. Meyer Sawa notes that "being a slave was not always a permanent condition, nor was it necessarily full of hardship". Orlando Patterson (1982) argues that the Islamic system of servitude "was not entirely self-denying, as [slaves] gained prestige, political importance, and important allies" (Richardson 2009:106). For instance, in the Ottoman Empire, mothers of Sultans/Caliphs were all former slaves. As well, most of the bureaucracy – including the Grand Vizier who was the Sultan's closest counselor – were slaves. It is also important to note that, *qiyān* were not an Islamic custom *per se*. As Henri George Farmer points out, *qiyān* "were an integral part of Arabic social life during the pre-Islamic period" (Farmer 1929:10) until the abolition of slavery in the twentieth century.

Fatimid (910-1171 CE); and the Mamluk (1250-1517 CE). Although there were 'common' *qiyān* who performed in lower class venues as well as free-born elite women who played as amateurs within the private sphere, *qiyān* best represent women professional musicianship in medieval Islam. They are mentioned for example in many well-known Arabic tales but also in more scholarly work such as in the abovementioned *Kitāb al-aghānī* (Book of Songs).

In her study on the *qiyān* of the 'Abbasid court, Kristina Richardson demonstrates that *qiyān* were respected professional musicians who "could sing and play an instrument as a solo act, perform in (all-women) ensemble recitals that combined instrumentalism, song, and dance, or even participate in competitions between highly rated singers" (2009:114)[16]. Some *qiyān* became music teachers and at least one opened a music school[17] (Meyer Sawa 2002:294-297). As Richardon puts it, *qiyān* were…

> effectively escaping [the] social alienation [of the slave whose identity was wholly tied to her master's] … because [they] received an education and [were] exposed to various cultural and literary elements of society. The nature of the [*qiyān*]'s service gave [them] opportunities for artistic creation and a public forum of expression (Richardson 2009:112).

Qiyān who shared the lives of the free-born noble women in the harem were not bound by the same rules of gender segregation as the latter: they performed unveiled in front of mix-audiences. Richardson argues that the fact that *qiyān* performed directly in front of men without a veil, something free-born women of the aristocracy were prevented from doing, is symbolic of the acceptation – and expectation I would add – of

[16] For an interesting account of a public competition between two women musicians of the 'Abbasid court, please see Matthew S. Gordon (2002).

[17] For instance, during the 'Ummayad dynasty, Jamīla (d.715) was a married freedwoman from Medina who established her own music school. Freedwomen also taught free men. 'Azza al-Mayla (d.710) taught Mecca singer Ibn Surayj (d.746). Another one, Ātika (d.845) acquired a male slave, taught him and sold him afterwards.

their sex-appeal[18].

Indeed, although they were very well educated and accomplished, *qiyān* were also considered as (sexual) commodities. Since they were – apart from their musical duties – also courtesans, they had an obligation toward concubinage. For this reason, and also because they were more 'visible' since they performed in public among intellectuals, artists, and members of the aristocracy, they were sometimes as "vilified as unprincipled women" (Richardson 2009:109). Because they were seen as "morally and socially distinct from other women [of the elite households]" (Richardson 2009:113) *qiyān* had, according to Richardson, a "liminal status". They were, in the eyes of the elite, more respected for their musical talent than the free-born noblewomen considered as "skilled amateurs". Yet they could be, unlike the free-women, perceived as sexual objects. As a result, *qiyān*, "were not fully accepted as members of either group. They held liminal positions as "privileged" slave women who did not command the same respect as free entertainers and men of letters (Richardson 2009:109)".

This liminal status – rendered through *qiyān*'s sophistication and, the same time the sexual connotations they often stirred – of the public women musicians was to endure for many centuries in different Muslim communities in the Middle East. Other women slaves in other systems, like in the Ottoman society on which I will delve in the next chapter, attempted to penetrate the public arena and encountered similar obstacles. With the abolition of slavery, and the many social and political changes of the 19th and 20th century in the region, the 'liminal status' of those *qiyān* also came to target the (free)born

[18] Elite free-born women performed music but were forbidden from playing directly in front of unrelated men. They played music behind a curtain that hid them from men's sight as many Muslim legists deemed seeing a woman musician more dangerous than hearing her – although this was also prohibited by conservative Muslim legists (Meyer Sawa 1987:95).

women who faced the risk of being perceived as women of loose morals as they slowly entered the public arena.

Conclusion

It is thanks to this legacy that many women, especially during to the modernization reforms in many Middle Eastern countries, carved their place in the public arena and became famous singers. It is therefore not a coincidence that many of the most renowned Middle Eastern musicians of the 20th century have been women, like Egyptian diva Umm Kulthum (1898/1904-1975). Umm Kulthum, whose live has been subject to numerous studies in ethnomusicology in particular from Virginia Danielson, became a respected musician despite the society's general prejudice against this profession. Thanks to her abilities in displaying at the same time her "grassroot peasant identity" and her sophistication through singing and improvising "elegant and difficult poetry in literary Arabic" (Danielson 1999:136), Umm Kulthum succeeded in carving a place on the public stage for herself but also for all the other talented women musicians who came after her.

In Turkey, women have also been greatly involved with musical practice as I show in this thesis. Women public musicians in Turkey have been pioneers in their domain. While the profession of a musician has been also regarded, just like in many other countries Muslim or not, as disreputable, women of different backgrounds at different historical periods have battled those stereotypes and attempted to impose themselves in the public arena as skillful artists. While societal attitudes have been slow to change, political and social reforms which attempted to push women towards public visibility surely served as beneficial grounds from where they could carve out their place and deploy many strategies to gain respect and acceptance.

Chapter 3: Women Musicians in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Republican Turkey

Music, like all art, has always had a political dimension but its power has greatly increased since the advent of modernity and consequent attempts to socially engineer societies. At the same time, music is also a weapon in the hands of general public and citizens and has been an effective protest vehicle. Although generally overlooked, the role women have played in this context forms an important part of this development. In order for us to understand women's contribution to the development of music in Turkey, in this chapter I explore how the implementation of the modernization project in the Late Ottoman Empire (19th and early 20th centuries) and Early Republican Period (1923-1950) provided new opportunities for (Muslim) women to appear on stage in urban settings. While the Turkish state sought to include women and to co-opt them in the various public domains as part of the attempt to build a modern nation, the construction and dissemination of the state ideology opened up many new opportunities.

I will first provide the historical background to explain the emergence and dissemination of the modernization discourse in the Ottoman Empire as part of the Tanzimât reforms of the 19th century. I will then situate the performance of three different kinds of women musicians within the broader Ottoman society where the private and the public spheres were clearly defined and closely related to elite (Muslim) women. I will then present a brief historical account of the main events which led to the creation of the

Turkish Republic and how reforms the new state leaders enacted in that period provided new opportunities for women in the society in general, but most particularly, for women musicians. Finally, I will explore what were the effects of modernization in the musical domain and in the creation of Turkish folklore and the role of radio and television in it.

The Late Ottoman Empire

In the late 18th century, the Ottoman Empire was multi-religious and multi-ethnic. It encompassed the Balkans, Anatolia and most of the Arab world (Zürcher 2005:9). A great majority of the population of the Empire was Muslim[19] and of different ethnic and cultural origins. In the Balkans, most of the population was Christian but there were also significant Muslim minorities. There were also (mainly Sephardic) Jews living in big cities like Salonika and Istanbul. The Ottoman Empire used the *şeriat* – the Islamic Law – at the forefront of its legal system, but also the *kanun* – a secular law formulated by Suleiman the Magnificent during the 16th century – which partially determined the legal status of Christians and Jewish subjects (Zürcher 2005:10). From the Ottoman state's perspective, the population was not divided into ethnic groups but rather into ethno-religious categories called "*millet*"[20]. Each *millet* had its own judiciary system and the subjects were treated differently according to their *millet* identity (Zürcher 2005:14).

Following the French revolution, Christian populations in the Ottoman Balkans

[19] It is important to note here that there was also a great diversity in the practice of Islam as there were differences between the different schools of thought among the Sunnis, but also with other larger division such as Shiites, Alevis/Bektashis, Sufis and Druzes. This diversity was also present among Christians who were Greek Orthodox, Catholics, Armenians Gregorian, Maronites and Assyrians. The presence of Protestant and Catholic missionaries was also quite noteworthy in the Empire.

[20] Implemented since the fifteenth century, the millet system divided the population into four categories: the Greek Orthodox millet, the Armenian millet, the Jewish millet, and finally the Muslim millet (Baer 2010:11). Members of the high-rank clergy of the three first millets collected taxes and were responsible for the administration of their own community.

were more sensitive to ideas of nationalism and started to identify more with their national identities. They saw the presence of Muslims as incompatible with the formation of "ethnically homogeneous national homelands" (Çağatay 2006:5). As a result, when the Balkan nations gained independence, Muslims of the Balkans (Turks, Bulgarian-Pomaks, Roma Muslims, Bosnians, Albanians, some Greeks and Macedonians) were either expelled or, facing extermination, migrated *en masse* to Anatolia[21]. The strong presence of Russia in the east of the Empire was also a constant threat. Ottoman were losing grounds in the Arab lands due to the rise of Arab nationalism. Finally, economically and technologically, the Ottomans could not compete with Western Europe powers. As a result of this great political and military turmoil, the 'sick man of Europe' was about to collapse.

Saving the Empire

The question of women in the Ottoman society really started to become part of the modernization discourses which began in the 19th century and intensified in the early 20th century. Indeed, during the 19th century Ottoman intellectuals questioned the compatibility of the old system – with its Sultanate and Caliphate – with the emergence of new economic powers in Europe. These elite soon saw as necessary the modernization – and along with it attempts at secularization – of the different state structures through adapting European models developed during the Enlightenment. The Ottoman intellectuals implemented a series of reforms called *Tanzimât* (litt. "reorganization") between 1836 and 1876 which aimed at modernizing and secularizing the state apparatus

[21] Çağatay argues for instance that in the period 1821-1922, 5 million Ottoman Muslims were chased off from their country and that another 5.5 million Ottoman Muslims died because of wars, starvation and disease. Another source, Kemal Karpat (2000) writes that between 1856 and 1914, more than 7 million immigrants from various part of the Ottoman Empire took refuge in Anatolia.

and the army as well as to restrict the Sultan's power by increasing the power of the bureaucracy. In 1876, they formulated the first constitution which proclaimed that regardless of religion or ethnicity, all subjects of the empire were considered Ottoman. They also held for the first ever parliamentary elections (Yeğen 2004:59). Starting from the *Tanzimât* period, the state began to "take an interest in many areas of its subjects' lives (schools, welfare, courts) previously left to the millets" (Lewis 2004:53).

Among the different factions of Ottoman modern intellectuals, there were two major groups that attempted to preserve the unity of the empire: the Ottomanists and the (Pan-) Turkists. The Ottomanists were highly Europeanized: they had received education in Europe or in the European institutions of the empire, spoke European languages and wore European clothes. They advanced ideas of liberty, citizenship, nation, and nationhood that the French revolution had disseminated.

As Ottomanism did not succeed and in the face of growing nationalism among other ethnic groups, it gave way to (Pan-)Turkism (or Pan-Turanism). Represented largely by Young Turks (who later founded the Committee of Union and Progress – CUP or *İttihat ve Tekâkki Komitesi* in 1889), (Pan-)Turkists also embraced European ideas about modernity, positivism and rationality, and nation but, unlike Ottomanists, had "lost their faith in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Empire" (Cağatay 2006:7). Turkists aimed to preserve an empire comprised of peoples considered Turkish.

There was also another group, the (Pan-)Islamists who had the favor of Abdülhamit II, the sultan who suspended the 1876 constitution. Pan-Islamists were in reaction to the former two. While they praised technological modernism from the Western countries, like electricity and locomotives, they however strongly reacted to

what members of this groups considered as "Western immorality", that is mainly ideas centered on "the Islamic regulation of female sexuality (Lewis 2004:61).

Indeed, the position of women was at the center of the Ottomanists' and Turkists' modernization discourse and origininated from European ideas as universalism and humanism (Lewis 2004:56). In the words of Nilüfer Göle, women were "the touchtone of Westernization" (1997). As both movements positionned modernization at odds with Islam which they perceived to be backward (Göle 1997:29), Ottomanists and Turkists saw as necessary the 'liberation' of women from Islamic customs and traditions. They denounced customs such as polygamy[22], the seclusion of women, and the veil (Lewis 2004:61). They also made education mandatory for women until the age of twelve and instituted middle-level schools for girls and teachers' school for women (Lewis 2004:56)[23]. New opportunities for women to become better educated and to have a professional life emerged, in particular among the urban middle class. Those women who started slowly to enter the public sphere and who came from the different Muslim communities challenged the appropriate gender roles according to which (upper class) women had remained in the private realm.

The CUP took the power in a *coup* in 1908 and gave birth to the first constitutional monarchy in the Ottoman Empire. They ruled during the WWI and the momentum of Europeanization started under the Ottomanists continued. During those years, women increasingly entered the public sphere despite a general climate which did

[22] Reina Lewis points out that "polygamy was for long periods and certainly by the nineteenth century an expensive practice that was mainly the preserve of the elite" (2004:97).

[23]As Reina Lewis notes though, "this was intented to create better-educated Muslim wives and mothers able to to share the Westernized concerns and social habits of their husbands' careers, rather than to produce independent women" (2004:56).

not always favour their emancipation[24]. They established women's association such as charity associations and those advocating for women's equality with men. Women participated in education and labour force. For example, during the World War I, they were employed as nurses. In 1919, for the first time men and women could attend the same university classes together. Muslim women were also accepted on stage at the Istanbul Theater (Göle 1997:48). Unfortunately, these changes were restricted to a class of women living in the urban centers, such as Istanbul, and coming from the (upper) middle-class if not aristocratic backgrounds.

As European culture was more than ever celebrated and imitated by the new modern and secularist bourgeoisie (O'Connell 2005:185), musical practices were also transformed with the emergence of new contexts of performance, *répertoires*, musical instruments and musical forms. Members of this elite promoted the teaching of European culture, like "Western-style painting and classical music" (Öztürkmen 2003:42). Within those arts, the position of women also became a major concern. With Ottomanists' and Turkists' program for the inclusion of women in the general society; women's musical activities were also on the verge of being radically transformed.

Women's musical performance in the Late Ottoman Empire

The Ottomans enjoyed music greatly and played it for all ceremonies, public and private. As Bülent Aksoy puts it, "*Musiki* was probably the most widespread entertainment in the Ottoman society" (2008:74). There were three kinds of women

[24] Göle mentions for instance that many *imam* saw as a "requirement of religion" to mistreat women who endorsed those new roles in the public sphere, and encouraged men to spit or stoning them (Göle 1997:48).

musicianship in the city[25]. First, there were *cariye*-s (courtesans) who learned and performed Ottoman Classical music within the Imperial harem (and other harems of the aristocracy) whereby they entertained themselves, the sultan's mother and her court and the sultan himself. Second, there were professional women musician-dancers called *çengi*-s who formed professional troupes in the city and who played urban folk music as well as Ottoman Classical music (Feldman 1996:108). Finally, there were high class women who played music as amateurs – that is, they did not receive money for their performance (Davis 1986). They played for themselves as well as to entertain their husbands and families. A few women were involved with religious music[26], mainly the music of the Sufi Mevlevi order, because of the reasons mentioned in Chapter 1.

The palace was always the institution which patronized music (Davis 1986:158). Slave women courtesans were those mainly involved with its creation and performance (Feldman 1996:70). While male courtesans (*oğlan-s*) learned music as well as other skills in the *enderun* section of the palace, women courtesans (*cariye-s*) learned mostly in the harem[27].

Cariye-s in the Imperial Harem were mostly from the Balkans or the Caucasus. After slave owners purchased them on the slave market, they would learn sewing and embroidery, poetry, religion and "those who showed an aptitude for instrumental music, singing, or dance were trained in these arts" (Peirce 1993:141; see also Feldman

[25] I here focus on urban music because it was, and is still today, the primary site for the professionalization of music. As well, Istanbul was a city where many musical traditions converged thanks to the multi-cultural nature of the Ottoman Empire but also its location at the crossroad of many peoples and civilizations in the history. Finally, historical sources almost only document the activities of the urban world.

[26] The main sources about Ottoman music by women musicians, that is the work of Beşiroğlu, Aksoy and Feldman, do not mention if women played religious music. However, Davis refers to Âdile Sultan (daughter of Mahmut II), Seniha Sultan (Abdülmecit's daughter), and Nazime Sultan who played religious music in their palaces (1986:158).

[27] The harem was the residence of the sultan's family but also the training institution for the servants of the royal family (Pierce 1993).

1996:70). In fact, according to many authors, nearly all *cariye*s were musicians or had a great exposure to musical teaching or listening. The memoirs of Leila Saz[28] (1850-1936) who lived, as a young woman in the Imperial harem, reveal the importance of music in the daily life of the Imperial court. As she puts it, "Tout le monde y aime la bonne musique et chacun sait la goûter et l'apprécier plus ou moins, selon ses moyens et ses aptitudes" [Everybody living in the palace enjoys good music and has a taste and appreciation for it according to her/his means and abilities] (1925/2000:31, my translation). The harem administration provided a salary, or *mevacib*, for women musician's training, practice and performance as well as for their other chores (Pierce 1993:125).

Unlike other women of the harem, *cariye*-s pushed the boundaries of gender segregation codified by the harem. There is a consensus in the literature according to which young *cariye*-s learned to play an instrument in the palace but also outside of the palace, in their professor's home (Davis 1986:158; Feldman 1996:71; Aksoy 1999; 2008). *Cariye*-s were "free to leave and enter the palace on the condition that they informed the gatekeeper" (Aksoy 2008:76). When *cariye*-s required a long training, they would stay at their teacher's house for prolonged periods (Aksoy 2008:77; Feldman 1996:70)[29]. Later in the nineteenth century, teachers were asked to come to the palace instead for a reason which is not mentioned in the literature (Feldman 1996:72; Davis

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[28] Also known as Leila Hanım. She adopted the last name "Saz" after the 1934 law whereby all Turkish citizens had to choose a last name. Leila Saz published her memoirs between 1920 and 1921 in Turkish newspapers under the name of *Anılar* (or "memoirs"). Leila Saz's son, Youssouf Razi, published her work in 1925 as a compendium in French entitled, *Le Harem Impérial Et Les Sultanes au XIXe siècle*. Leila Hanım's memoirs take place in the palaces of Çirağan, Dolmabahçe and Yıldız and offer a good account of the life within the imperial palace in the last days of the Ottoman Empire. *Anılar* were also written with the hope of deconstructing Orientalists' perceptions of Imperial harem.

[29] The treasury of the palace paid the *usta* for the *cariye's* accommodation, food as well as the fees for the classes.

1986:159). Reina Lewis, however, in her study on elite Ottoman women's narratives, mentions that the Late Ottoman times saw a reinforcement in women's seclusion measures due to the increased presence of foreigners (2004:98) which, I suggest, could be a possible reason for *cariye*-s restricted mobility outside of the harem.

In the early twentieth century, upon the radical transformations that the Young Turks brought about, women musicians' profession was more or less recognized as such. Ziya Paşa who had been the ambassador to Washington as well as an influential member of Istanbul's parliament opened the *Darülelhan* (House of Musical Notes) where professors of both sexes would teach eastern classical and folk music to young women (Aksoy 2008). Women who had learned music in the *harem* and who had gotten married after often gave private lessons. Fanny Davis mentions the example of Gülüzar Hanım who had been first flutist of the *harem*'s all-women ensemble in the years preceding her marriage and who gave flute lessons to Ali Ekrem Bulayır, the son of Namık Kemal, a prominent Ottoman poet and social reformer of the 19th century (Davis 1986:159).

Despite the fact that there were probably many Ottoman women musicians and composers, only a few names, mostly from the 19th century, were recorded. Bülent Aksoy (1999) identifies thirty-two Ottoman women composers from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. Among them, Dilhayât Hanım, or Dilhayât Kalfa[30], (1710?-1780) was the most influential women composer of the Ottoman Empire (Feldman 1996:71). She is

[30] Although the information available on her life is very thin, we know that she composed more than a hundred pieces in both vocal and instrumental music which was atypical for that time for both men and women composers and musicians. Twelve pieces survived and are considered to be great classics of the Ottoman classical music. As a teacher to the young Prince Selim (r.1761-1808), she was the first performer if not the inventor of the *makam*[30] *Evçârâ.* Dilhayât Kalfa also composed poetry for her own *fasıl* pieces. This was unusual as there is no record of women singing this musical genre. In the centuries which followed the life and career of Dilhayât Kalfa, other women, mostly attached to the harem service, became well-known for their work as composers, singers, and instrumentalists.

one of the very few women whose name was recorded in the imperial palace's archives[31].

The professional troupes[32] of women musicians and dancers who performed in public spaces represented the second category of women musicians. Those troupes of twelve dancing women called *çengi*-s[33] were led by a manager called *çengi kolbaşı* and her assistant (Davis 1986:160; Beşiroğlu 2012). The Imperial Harem or members of the upper and middle classes could hire these troupes for special occasions (Davis 1986:160). Although this tradition no longer exists in Turkey, *çengi*-s survive in the Balkans under the names of *cöcek* and *çöçek*[34]. According to Walter Feldman, it seems that these women might have been of Gypsy origin (1996:123). This hypothesis is seconded by Aksoy (2008) who explains that there was a great prejudice against Muslim women becoming professional musicians, – that is to say receiving money for singing and playing music. Minna Rozen also supports this statement and argues that "female performers among free people were almost always of *zimmi* origin – Greeks, Armenians and Jews. The Muslims who engaged in the performing arts were mainly Gypsies, who were viewed as outsiders no matter what their religion" (2002:271).

Finally, playing music at home was an important aspect of the lives of (Muslim) women of the upper classes. One could say that it even was a marker of an elite status. Aksoy argues that the upper-class entertainment almost always took place at home until

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[31] Aksoy thinks this is due to the fact that Ottoman music was mostly based on oral tradition and that written music and the notation were only adopted in the 20th century. While not acknowledging directly the fact that women's names might have been omitted consciously by authorities of the time, Aksoy argues that only 10% of the male musicians were recorded and that therefore, we should consider ourselves lucky that we have those women's names mentioned.

[32] According to Metin And professional music and dancing troops were called *singuins*, especially by Süleyman the Magnificent time (r.1520-1566). There would be all-women bands and all-men bands but they would never play together. *Singuins* would play for private parties wealthy families held but also in public settings such as on public places (And 1994: 276-277).

[33] Originally the word "*çengi*" only referred to women who played the harp, *çeng*, but later it came to describe women musicians who also danced to the sound of *çeng* (Beşiroğlu 2012).

[34] Please see Carol Silverman's work on Balkan Muslim Rom Women artists (2007).

the end of the 19th century as member of this class perceived going to the few entertainment places in the cities as “frivolous” [*hafiflik*]. Among other forms of entertainment such as the tales of *masalcı* (women storyteller), playing of games, the Karagöz (shadow theatre), music and dance were the most appreciated entertainment in the 18th and 19th century during women’s visiting day (*kabul günü*) (Davis 1986:157). Husbands also expected their wives to entertain them through playing an instrument. As such, abilities in music as well as in sewing and knitting and knowing home remedies were requirements for a prospective wife (Aksoy 2008). Playing music as amateurs inside the upper class households has thus been a primordial activity. Women of the upper class would not perform music as professionals – that is, to make a living – because first, they would not be expected to have a profession and second, venturing in the public arena was acceptable only under certain conditions. As Lewis notes, regarding the emergence of women’s professionalization in the early twentieth century, “priviledged elite lifestyle… did not see wage labour as an ennobling event [for women]” (2004:126). Being a professional musician in public settings was simply not a respectable activity for a Muslim woman (or for that matter, men too) of the upper class.

In sum, women’s musical performances during the Late Ottoman Empire were carefully delimited by the common conceptions regarding the place of women in society and public and private spheres as mentioned in Chapter 1. As Muslim women by birth, especially from the upper-classes were expected to remain within the boundaries of the private sphere, their musical performance were regarded as amateur. On the other hand, non-Muslim women, at least by birth, were not bound by the same rules. Musicians from professional troupes, to borrow Nancy Fraser’s words, worked as “subaltern

counterpublics"[35] as they claimed their place, often as Gypsy (Muslim or not) women, within a public sphere controlled mainly by a Muslim male bourgeoisie. Finally, while the *harem* is in general identified as the most private domain in Islam, women slave musicians – who had a different status than the elite Muslim women – could, at least for many decades, manipulate the gender rules and move with a certain facility between the private and public worlds. The increasing modernization and secularization in domains such as arts, literature, sciences and politics helped some women to start questioning and re-defining concepts regarding the appropriate place they ought to have in the society. Music, therefore, became a venue for new kinds of respected professions like that of a teacher, a process that was to intensify upon the creation of the Turkish Republic in the aftermath of the WWI.

Establishing the Turkish Republic

As the Ottoman Empire lost the WWI (as an ally of Germany), the country was largely occupied by the Allied Powers including Great Britain, France, Italy and Greece as a result of the Treaty of Sevres signed on August 10th 1920. The Allied occupation, in particular Britain's presence, led to a national independence and resistance movement led by Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938). The War of Independence lasted from 1921 to 1922 at the end of which the occupying powers were expelled and the new republic was declared in 1923 (Zürcher 2005:152). The Treaty of Lausanne – signed on July 24th 1923 with Britain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey – acknowledged the new Turkish Republic.

[35] Nancy Fraser uses the term 'subaltern counterpublics' to refer to "members of subordinated social groups [who] invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs (Fraser 1990:67)". I do not draw more on this interesting concept as women in my research have been more involved with the creation of 'alternative' publics. Instead of contesting explicitly their position within the Turkish society, women who participated in my research have proposed new ways of presenting a public femininity.

With the establishment of the Republic, first the Sultanate and then the Caliphate were also abolished by the new regime.

After the WWI and the War of Independence, the new Turkey had a much more homogenized population. Under the leadership of the CUP who had governed the empire during the WWI, Turkification measures had been taken in order to assimilate or even sometimes eradicate those who were not (Turkish) Muslims. The most drastic policies regarding the early Turkification policies of ethnic/religious communities were those which targeted the Armenians of the Empire. In 1915, Çağatay contends, "most of the 1.2 to 1.5 million Anatolian Armenians either died or were expelled or fled from Anatolia" (Çağatay 2006:8.). As well, after the War of Independence, a population exchange agreement was signed between Turkey and Greece whereby

> Up to half a million Muslims in Greece, who mainly spoke Greek, were sent to Turkey, excluding those living in western Thrace. Up to 1.2 million Orthodox Christians of Turkey, many of whom spoke only Turkish, ended up in Greece. The remainder, excluding those in Istanbul and the two islands remaining in Turkish possession, were 'exchanged' in 1923… Contrary to the treaty, over ten thousand Orthodox Christians were also expelled from Istanbul (Baer 2009:145).

As a result of this and the many wars that preceded it, "whereas in 1913, one in five people (20%) within the borders of what would become Turkey were Christian or Jewish, by 1923 only one in forty (2.5%) were non-Muslim" (Baer 2009:147).

The period between 1925 and 1945 was characterized by the single party rule of the Republican People`s Party – RPP (or Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - CHP in Turkish acronym) which was established in 1924 and partially comprised former members of the CUP-Turkist movement. This party, with Mustafa Kemal – who was given the name of Atatürk (father of the Turks) – at its head, "was a party in the Western European liberal

mold. It stood for secular and nationalist policies" (Zürcher 2005:168). Although there were attempts in the early 1920s to create a real democracy, opposition was shut down in 1925, under the pretext of maintaining the unity of the new country which experienced so many wars, deaths and social upheavals. From 1925 until 1945, therefore, the RPP was the only legal party on the political scene – with a brief exception in 1930. All aspects of intellectual life and culture were controlled by those who followed the ideas of Mustafa Kemal – named Kemalists.

The new members of the RPP elite, in continuation to the Turkists of the Late Ottoman period, were arguably "modern" in all aspects except perhaps with regards to democracy and freedom of expression. They believed that the Ottoman Empire's collapse had been caused by its attachment to Islam and its traditions and refusal of "modernity"- in the European sense. Their main intention when they attained complete power in the early 1920s was therefore to break away with this past through many reforms. For instance, language was one of the most contentious aspects. Indeed, James C. Scott argues that a distinct language carries "a distinctive history, a cultural sensibility, a literature, a mythology, [and important for this thesis] a musical past" (1998:72). First, the Arabic/Persian alphabet was replaced with the Latin-Roman alphabet (Çolak 2004; Zürcher 2005:188) in 1928. As well, a purging campaign removed words which were considered 'foreign' by the reformists, and helped create a "pure Turkish" (*öz Türkçe*) which was thought to represent better the common people (Çolak 2004:79).

Modernity was to be achieved through a series of reforms, which affected the living conditions of Turkish citizens in all domains of their lives, including all cultural domains, like language, music but also the conditions of women.

Secularization – or laicization[36] – was also a part of this state-implemented modernization project. Attempts at secularization took the forms of abolishing the Caliphate, banning dervish orders (in 1925), replacing *şeriat* with Swiss Civil Code and the Italian Penal Code (in 1926) excluding Islam as the official religion of Turkey (in 1928) as well as including the principle of secularism (*laiklik*) in the Constitution (in 1937), among other legal reforms that sought to decrease the presence of religion in different realms, including education[37].

Modernist State-Builders Including Women in the Public Sphere

Women's emancipation was a fundamental issue for Kemalists in the building of a modern and secular nation. A series of reforms began in order to 'emancipate' women from the Ottoman/Islamic laws and customs which had ruled their lives. The new Civil Code sought to stress the importance of equality before the law of every citizen, irrespective of their sex. It outlawed polygamy, gave both partners equal access to divorce and equal right to child custody, to inheritance, to the management of property, and bearing witness (Kandiyoti 1987:320; Schissler 2007:4). Women were allowed the right to vote at provincial elections in 1930 and at national elections in 1934 (Kandiyoti 1987:320). Not surprising many urban upper and middle class women supported these changes and welcomed the new opportunities. That is not to say that these changes did not have an impact on other women of the new nation.

In order to fully accomplish the project of modernization of the new republic, the

[36] It is important to note that although in Turkey secularism (or *laiklik*) is often defined simply as the separation of state and religion and the staying of the latter within the consciences of the believers, as the term *laiklik* (laïcisme in French) implies, official secularism in Turkey has been inspired by the French practice of it and in this regard has meant state control over religious institutions (Roy 2009:31-32). This notion and practice of secularism has differed from that dominant in the United States, for instance.

[37] For a good and concise discussion of these reforms, see Zürcher 2005:186-195.

reformists implemented measures to encourage – or force – the inclusion of women in the public sphere (Göle 1997). Women were, from the state's perspective, agents of modernization who, as mothers of the new nation, would educate their children in becoming good citizens. To do so, the reformists prescribed the inclusion of women into the public sphere and social mixing of the sexes. Such directions were presented to the public at balls where women and men were seen dancing together as couples; at tea parties, dinners, recreational activities, and during saloon games where they interacted; as well as in the streets where they walked hands in hands or shook hands – all actions which would have been previously considered taboos (Durakbaşa & İlyasoğlu, 2001:199; Göle 1997:65-6).

As education was one of the main objectives of the republican leaders, it was declared mandatory and free for both girls and boys as early as in 1923. It was also put into the legislation in the new constitution of 1924. According to Article 80: "Under the supervision of the State all types of education are free. Primary education is mandatory and free in public schools" (Arat 1998:157). Making schooling mandatory was also a strategy to ensure the propagation of Kemalism and the rightful teaching of the new Turkish History thesis which emphasized the origin of the Turks as being in Central Asia and glorified the pre-Islamic nomadic past. By doing so, the reformists again aimed at distancing themselves from the Arab, Persian and Muslim common history which was perceived as pre-modern and antiquated (Zürcher 2005:186-7).

Despite the fact that Kemalist ideas were promulgated in the educational system, as Zürcher nuances, "it should also be pointed out that the Kemalist leadership did inspire a great many people – mostly writers, teachers, doctors, and other professionals and

students – with its vision of a modern, secular, independent Turkey" (2005:181). As well, there was a sizable increase in the literacy rate. Indeed, "The [literate] population over the age of seven increased to 20.4 percent by 1935 (31% male, 10.5% female) and to 30.2 percent by 1945 (43.7% male and 16.8% female)" (Yılmaz 2011: 681). While the state was not able to put into effect the "mandatory education" rule, especially for women (Arat 1998:160), the fact that the state fostered the education of women nevertheless signified a change in the expected gender roles. In other words, as educated and professional women were the ones secularist and modernist state-builders encouraged, it gave way for women of different backgrounds to carve their own place in different public domains such as arts.

Women who followed the reforms organized parties, changed their home interiors and dresses according to European fashion, changed their culinary habits, went to the opera, rode horses, drove planes, became athletes, and had professions just like women in the West. However 'European' those behaviors were, reformers did not expect women to behave entirely as European women as the latter were perceived to be superficial and individualistic. Women were instead expected to "appear serious, working women devoted to national progress" and to "affirm… modesty and devotion" (Göle 1997:66). Despite the fact that the reformists wanted to 'liberate' the Turkish population, and more importantly its women, from the Islamic past, an "Islamic morality" underlined their inclusion into the public sphere (Kandiyoti 1987:170). As Ayşe Durakbaşa contends,

> [Kemalist women's] ideological and institutional affiliations with the new Republic helped them to present a sexually modest and respectable picture that would not threaten the patriarchal morality. Thus, however modernist an ideology it was, Kemalism could not alter the traditional norms of morality that guaranteed a biologically defined and socially constraining femininity for women. The notion

> of female modesty – that is, the traditional values of virginity before marriage, fidelity of the wife, and a particular public comportment and dress – was carried over with an even heavier emotional load to the new generations of Kemalist women and became the basic theme of the "new morality" for the Kemalist elite" (1998:148)

While women were asked to remove their veil, they had to "veil" their sexuality in the public sphere in return.

Ayşe Durakbaşa and Aynur İlyasoğlu who analyzed women writers' fictions of early republican times point out that women experienced much difficulty in integrating and behaving according to this conflicting model. They report the testimony of women novelist Adalet Ağaoğlu[38] who voiced that "[women] were the ones who had to regulate the degree of intimacy with great caution and meticulous attention as they danced with men who were total strangers to them; those who looked properly dressed although they gave up *yashmak* and the *carshaf*…" (Ağaoğlu 1993:148-150, quoted in Durakbaşa & Ilyasoğlu 2001:196). Those conflicting expectations led Şirin Tekeli (1986) to argue that "state feminism" under the Kemalist regime triggered the apparition of a "schizophrenic identity" among early republican women. While this is often presented as a negative aspect of state feminism, such ideology of modesty also opened the way for many from more conservative backgrounds to embrace the new gender roles. After all men and women were also culturally embedded in the same gender ideology and it is unreasonable to expect that morality would change by a single stroke of pen and the new Law. Such changes would need much more time to mature in a given society.

[38]Adalet Ağaoğlu (b.1929) is a Turkish novelist and playwright who, although not defining herself as a "feminist" pointed out to many problems in the Kemalist understanding of womanhood.

The Invention of Folklore

Music was one domain of public life in early republican era to which reformers gave a great deal of attention. One of the main goals of the Kemalist reforms was to create a new culture for the population. Many of the cultural policies concerned the domain of art. Not only were the arts perceived as a tool to convey the Kemalist doctrine, but also advancement in the arts became, as it was established in Europe, a gauge for civilization and part of the curriculum of a 'civilized' person's education. Although theater played a greater role in propagating the ideas (And 1984: 217), no artistic domain has been as challenged, subjected to change and discussion as the domain of music.

Music was a project which aimed to elevate "the people" to civilization. In a speech to the National Assembly on 1 November 1938, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, said, "...The ability to accept, to grasp change in music is the measure of nation's progress"[39] (Stokes 2010:16). As European music had enjoyed great appreciation among the new elite of the Young Turks and before them, the Ottomanists, it was also promoted during the early republican years and included in the *répertoire* of many men and women musicians alike. Teachers from the West were invited to teach at new conservatories, in Ankara and other big cities and piano and violin were the main instruments (Özer Efe 2013).

In addition to Western music a new national music was to be constructed. As Orhan Tekelioğlu argues, the new national music was "a kind of 'target' as leaders sought to fashion a new sort of citizen and a new nation-state" (1996:195). This new national music was to be based on a modernized Turkish folk music and was to reflect the

[39] "Bir ulusun yeni değişkliğinde ölçü, musikide değisikliği alabilmesi, kavrayabilmesidir" (Stokes 2010:16)

state ideology, Kemalism, but also to promote the new national identity: Turkishness.

Here, many social scientists have noted that there has been a considerable gap between what was understood as Turkish citizenship and Turkish national identity (also framed as "nationality")[40] (Yeğen 2004;2009; see also İçduygu et al.:1998). Although in the first Constitution (of 1924), Turkish citizenship signified an official belonging and was granted to everybody living within the territory of Turkey, Mesut Yeğen[41] argues that there have been two ways to understand Turkishness: "Turkishness as citizens" and something more, called "Turkishness as such" (Yeğen 2009). While the former has been conceded to those who lived on the Turkish soil regardless of their ethnic and religious identity, the latter has only been conceded to those who are ethnically Turkish. Yeğen concludes that some citizens could never been considered Turks after all, and that those were the non-Muslims communities, such as the Christians and Jews. Muslim Turks, like the Kurds, Zazas, Circassians, Arabs, etc., were to be considered Turks if only fully assimilated into the ethnic Turkish majority[42]. As a result, to claim one's ethnic identity was to deny one's Turkish citizenship. Thus, speaking in one's language (other than Turkish) in public spaces or desiring to learn one's ethnic literature and art in one's own (non-Turkish) language had an implication of betrayal of Turkishness. Therefore Turkish

[40] Brubaker argues that in United States and Western Europe "citizenship" and "nationality" are used in the same way and mean "membership of the state". Similarly "nation" and "state" are interchangeable terms. However in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in Turkey, I argue, "nation" and "nationality" do not signify "state" or "citizenship" but rather refer to an "ethnocultural frame of reference independent of – and often cutting across the boundaries of – statehood and citizenship" (Brubaker 2004:P208n23).

[41] In his analysis of Article 88 (2004;2009), Mesut Yeğen shows that Turkishness seems to be a political category at first sight, that is to say, that everybody living on the Turkish territory is a Turk regardless of his/her religion and race. According to Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution: The people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race would, in terms of citizenship, be called Turkish. (Gözübüyük & Sezgin 1957:441, cited in Yeğen 2004:58) However, Yeğen brings our attention to the section "in terms of citizenship" of Article 88 and argues that this statement is at the same time inclusive and exclusive; that is to say, in one sentence, there are two different meanings about Turkishness.

[42] This logic was not new to Kemalists as Turkists had also seen the presence of non-Muslims as problematic as demonstrated first with the Armenian Genocide and second with the population exchange negotiated between Greece and Turkey which I have mentioned above.

folk music was to reflect a Turkishness that excluded all ethnic and religious music and instead promoted a unique Turkish music.

Under Atatürk's directives, members of the Institute of Turcology and Folklore Association organized a series of expeditions – one of them led by the famous Hungarian folklorist Béla Bartók in 1936 – during the 1920s and 1930s which aimed at collecting original folk songs in Anatolian villages. Scientists collected traditional monophonic folk songs. They transcribed and transformed them into Western polyphonic notation. As well, they translated songs into Turkish – that is the new Turkish language – and modified them by adding new harmonies.

Those new folk songs came to be known as *türkü*. Ethnomusicologist Eliot Bates explains that,

> [t]o become a *türkü*, a song needed to be sung in Turkish and not be suspected of having religious functions or meanings. Numerous songs performed in Kurdish, Armenian, Lazuri, Zazaki, and other indigenous language were either not recorded or were translated or adapted on the spot into a Turkish version. Although some *türkü*-s are probably similar today in melody and lyrics to the initially collected version, in many instances lyrics were changed, melodies simplified, and rhythmic variations standardized" (2011:3).

According to Bates (2011:3), today, most *türkü*-s are authorless because they were composed and used to be played by Anatolian peasants who did not use musical notations.

As a result of the song collection process, tens of thousands of *türkü*s were assembled in *répertoires*, classified in genre and regional origin, and rendered anonymous. Regional styles emerged to form parts of a cultural mosaic which helped shape a homogeneous Turkish culture (Değirmenci 2006:59, Öztürkmen 2003:50). Regional differences were 'tolerated' to the extent that they were congruent with the

definition of the state. For example, music from the Laz, Mingrelian, Hemşin, and Georgian speaking communities of the Eastern Black Sea region was categorized as "Eastern Black Sea" music. This process aimed at "produc[ing] a 'safe' variety and difference [which] involved, among others, Turkification of the lyrics and changing the rhythmic structure of the music in order to adjust it to the invented lyrics" (Değirmenci 2006:60, see also Stokes 1992b:217). The collected folk songs, or *türküs* were broadcast on the TRT radio airwaves by the group *Yurttan Sesler Korosu* (Voices from the Homeland Chorus) (Özer Efe 2013:17; Stokes 2010:17). Eventually, TRT became "widely criticized for being out of touch with popular tastes" (Stokes 1992b:215).

Radio and Television

Radio broadcasting has been an "important means of propagating the notion of national unity [because] [r]adio listening outside the developed world is often conducted in public space (Stokes 1994:11). As such it has been a tool for many state reformers, in Egypt for instance (Danielson 1997), in Afghanistan (Baily 1994), and also in Turkey. Nazife Güngör (1990) showed that during the early republican era, there were 4,834 registered radio sets in rural Turkey that aimed at diffusing educational programs which propagated the new Turkish language, history, and folklore, the news and also the state-approved music, that is, as I show below, European music or 'purified' Turkish folk music. As such, radio was "a tool of social control" in Turkey, but also in many other nation-building projects elsewhere (Stokes 1994:12).

The first radio broadcast in Turkey occurred in 1925, the year where the RPP became the sole official party. The new elite soon saw as necessary the diffusion of their ideas of modernizing reforms. During most of the single party era, Ottoman Turkish

music – now renamed as Türk Sanat Müziği (Turkish Art Music) – was banned from the airwaves because it was thought antiquated and because reformers wanted to break from the Ottoman musical traditions (Özer Efe:20, Stokes 1996:1; Tekelioğlu 1996:195). In order to incite Turkish people to appreciate Western music, tango, waltz and other kinds of light music were broadcasted on the radio, during state balls, or even on the boats of the Turkish Maritime Lines (Tekelioğlu 1996:195). Although the ban on Turkish Art Music only lasted 12 months, the Turkey Radio and Television (Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu) or TRT established in 1964 and based in Ankara, ensured the control on music broadcast (Tekelioğlu 1996:195). It controlled as "describing what type of Turkish music could be played on the radio, and later, on TV" (Tekelioğlu 1996:205). In 1968, TRT launched the first TV channel. TRT played a big role in regulating all cultural productions especially before the emergence of private channels starting in 1990. As Diler Özer Efe mentions,

> The history of TRT broadcasts is full of bans on music. TRT Review Committees had been established in order to review the content. Songs could be rejected due to many reasons such as the content of the lyrics, the language, the instruments, melodic phrases, etc. For example; instruments such as bouzouki and balalaika, and musical patterns reminiscent of Greek tunes were previously banned by Committees (2013:20)

As well, Egyptians films had enjoyed great popularity all over the Middle East, including in Turkey. However, since it reminded the secularist elite of the "oriental other" they were banned in 1948 (Stokes 1992b:215). As a consequence, people started to listen to Egyptian radio, a practice which became difficult to control from the state's perspective and would even foreshadow the emergence of *Arabesk* music style as I show in the next chapter.

The People's Houses (*Halk Evleri*)

The reformists' ideas on state and society – and among them music – were propagated to the general public thought the airwaves, the system of education, but also the People's Houses (*Halk Evleri*) in towns – which replaced the traditional Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocakları*) in 1932 (Zürcher 2005:180) – and the People's rooms (*Halk Odaları*) in larger villages. As Metin And describes them,

> They were designated to fill leisure hours with entertainment and educational activities with the aim of ennobling people physically, mentally and intellectually, by bringing the arts – in which Kemalist principles were stressed – directly to the people… There were lectures, classes, meetings, libraries, publications, plays, athletics, concerts, exhibitions; social assistance and guidance for various kinds were provided (And 1984:219).

In many ways these were an instrument of engineering a new social, artistic and political culture by the state. People's Houses, just like the educational system and the radio (and later the television) were subject to constant control and surveillance from the Republican People's Party provincial offices. By the WWII there were nearly 500 People's Houses in Turkey (Zürcher 2005:180; And 1982:219).

The First (Muslim) Women on Stage

While some women in the Ottoman and Early Republican Era performed in public as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, they had a different social status than the Muslim majority as they often came from the different ethnic minorities and/or from the lower strata of the society. In the 1920s and 1930s, many of the artists who performed in cabarets were still of non-Turkish non-Muslim origin and were frequently from the remaining Armenian-speaking communities who for the most part had stayed on or migrated to Istanbul after the wars (Hagopian 1998, cited in Beşiroğlu 2001). What

changed however with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey is the fact that women from the Muslim communities – for whom public music performance had been denied – now had new opportunities provided by the state, to make their place in the public arena and that included the musical stage. Singers like Faide Yıldız and Zehra Bilir were the most influential in this period. They were the pioneers of the *gazino*-s, or nightclub, style which became increasingly popular in the 1950s and 1960s with icons like Zeki Müren and Müzeyyen Senar. They also performed in concert halls, on the radio in big cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir and released albums. Despite its homogenizing nature, the created folk music and the promotion of Western music in early republican era helped improve women's place within the public arena. As Öztürkmen demonstrates, the performance of those new forms of music in Turkey "challenged Muslim-Ottoman tradition by bringing women to the public [music and] dance space…" as some women musicians and dancers often went on stage "with uncovered arms and legs" and mix-couples danced together at balls (2003:55).

The End of the Single Party Period

Upon Atatürk's death in 1938, one of his most trusted lieutenants, İsmet İnönü (1884-1973) was chosen as president and national leader of the republic. He continued the reforms started during the reign of his predecessor. However, during the WWII, İnönü "lost the support of important elements of the 'Young Turks coalition' on which the Kemalist movement had been built" (Zürcher 2005:207). As well, İnönü was very unpopular especially among small famers in the countryside who constituted about eighty per cent of the population (Zürcher 2005:206). Many resented the state's secularist policies as well as the lack of improvements in terms of health, education, and

communication[43]. Because İnönü had lost support from many segments of the bourgeoisie and bureaucracy, he decided to allow a certain degree of political liberalization and let the opposition parties to emerge on the political scene (Zürcher 2005:208). In the meantime, the Allied, and most importantly United-States' victory also signaled the victory of "a pluralist, capitalist democracy" as a viable model which impressed many states, including Turkey (Zürcher 2005:208). The republic which now established political and military relationships with United States felt greater pressure to make the regime more democratic. Turkey was on the road to a new multi-party period.

Conclusion

In sum, it can be argued that the implementation of modernity by the secularist reformists in Turkey during the Single Party Era helped a greater number of women in Turkey to carve their place in the public world of music. While this art was restricted during the Late Ottoman times to women of the ethnic minorities or those who had a different status than the free Muslim women, the process of secularization and modernization which envisioned women as equal, educated and professional citizens helped redefine the boundaries between the public and the private sphere. This modernity however was not flawless. The lack of democracy prevented the expression of a great diversity of music from the various ethnic minorities. As well, while the inclusion of women in the public sphere was a great endeavor, the fact that ideas on being 'modest' and 'moral' posed a new problem for those courageous (Muslim) women who dared to perform in public.

[43] For instance, Zürcher argues that by 1953 only 0.025 per cent of Turkey's villages were electrified, despite the modernization project advanced by the Kemalists.

Chapter 4 – The Emergence of Political Musicians: Alternative Femininities on the Public Stage

When İlkay Akkaya[44] (b. in 1964) - who was to become a famous political singer - announced to her family, in the years following the 1980 military coup, that she intended to become a professional musician, and even more so, a singer, their reaction was of incredulity. Back in the early 1980s, İlkay Akkaya told me in a recent interview[45], being a singer was not a "brilliant job" for a woman. Her parents and extended family, from Turkish-speaking middle-class in Istanbul, were all concerned. They wanted her to go to university instead of going to the Conservatory, which was Akkaya's wish. As she explains,

> The example of women singers that families had in [the early 1980s] were those who performed on TV only for entertainment. A singer was a woman who dressed beautifully, who had fun and who made people have fun… But after [the early 1980s], other women singers became engaged in politics. They had something to say. They didn't want to only entertain people. Things have started to change thanks to those examples. Their families were afraid that they would have a difficult life. *My* family was afraid of that… (Akkaya, İlkay. Personal interview. 31 October 2011).

[44] During more than 23 years of career, İlkay Akkaya has released with or in solo eighteen albums, given innumerable concerts in Turkey as well as abroad, been a columnist in newspapers, and become an activist in human rights organizations. Akkaya was prosecuted not only because she was a political singer who also sang in Kurdish, but also because she had been an activist in human rights associations for the missing people in custody. She was also working with the relatives of those people "lost" in prison and assumed being "anonymously" murdered.

[45] The interview took place on October 31st with İlkay Akkaya and her daughter Özge Akkaya who was the interpreter as well as manager. I use Özge's translations here and substituted the "she" (referring to her mother) for "I" (as if İlkay Akkay was talking directly to me) to facilitate the reader's comprehension.

After graduating in journalism, Akkaya briefly joined the famous protest music group *Grup Yorum* and eventually established her own band, *Grup Kızılırmak* (Group Red River)[46] in 1990.

Inspired by political artists like Mercedes Sosa, Violetta Para, and Inti-Illimani[47] who were "shouting people's voice" during the resistance to military dictatorships in Latin American countries, she desired to combine the melodic structures of Anatolian folk music with political activism. During her long career, *Grup Kızılırmak's* numerous concerts have all been banned in Turkey because the group sometimes performed songs in Kurdish languages – which despite the removal of the ban in 1990 still remained a contentious issue – and promoted the revolution. Akkaya is a pioneer woman musician. She paved the way for change in assigned gender roles of women. She is one of the first women to break with the image of the woman entertainer, who had traditionally relied on their feminine charm and sex appeal as much as her singing, which had dominated the cultural sphere in Turkey.

In this chapter, I investigate the advent of political music in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s and its development into the new *genres* of protest, Kurdish and ethnic music in the late 1980s and 1990s. I delve deeper into how this phenomenon helped women find new ways of claiming social justice in Turkey as well as to redefine gender roles. While modernity had provided new opportunities for women to play on public stage and to

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[46] The name of the group was taken from an eponymous poem written by Hasan Hüseyin Korkmazgil (1927-1984), a socialist poet whose work inspired many protest music groups in the 1980s.

[47] Mercedes Sosa (1935-2009) was a famous Argentine singer who sang folk songs, women's songs, and political songs which denounced the corruption and brutality of the South-American military regimes. Violetta Parra (1917-1967) was a Chilean ethnomusicologist, a song-composer and musician who was one of the main inventors of the "*nueva canción*" (the "new song"), inspired by folk music, which was associated with the revolutionary movements of Latin America. She is the composer of "*Gracias a la Vida*" rendered popular by Mercedes Sosa. Finally, Inti-Illimani was a Chilean group founded in 1967 made up of students who was forced to exile when Augusto Pinochet came to power in 1973.

receive (musical) education, the image of women performers, as entertainers "having fun and making people have fun" endured within the traditionally male-dominated world of music and in the society in general. However, with the advent of political music, women now had words to say beyond their songs and started to contest this dominant image.

I will first introduce readers to the rise of political music, like *Anadolu rock/pop*, during the early years of the multi-party period since 1950. I will then proceed to explain how the military coup of 1980 affected the musical domain and gave way to apolitical genres like *Arabesk* music and the Turkish pop which were co-opted by the state. Next, I will demonstrate how neo-liberal economic reforms helped de-regulate music broadcast as well as paved the way for other political genres like *protest* and Kurdish/Alevi music, and later ethnic music. They were also brought about by social movements which became more vocal in the late 1980s and 1990s. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion on the role political music had in common perceptions of women's assigned roles and their representation in the public arena. Drawing on anthropological debates, I will investigate the reasons for the enduring image of the entertainer.

Political Democratization, Migrations and the New Entertainment Venues

While music was perceived as a tool for maintaining the social unity and conveying the Kemalist message during the single party era, music during the multi-party period which started in 1950 served a different purpose. Following the efforts towards economic and political liberalization, Turkey's social fabric changed. This was mostly a consequence of rural to urban migration and of a new political system that allowed for more oppositional voices to emerge and to openly contest the society and the state's politics.

In May 1950, the Democratic Party – DP won the first real elections since the creation of the Republic. The party was a moderate Kemalist party which emerged in opposition to the RPP in 1946 and which comprised many members of the RPP disenchanted with İsmet İnönü's rule. At the head of DP, Adnan Menderes became the new prime minister. The years 1950-1960 saw a massive expansion of the agricultural sector thanks to the importation of new machinery and the building of new roads and railways which connected cities to villages. There were also measures to increase farmers' prosperity (Zürcher 2005:224). Soon, wealthy farmers migrated and bought properties in cities like Istanbul. Those *nouveaux riches* brought new audiences to the urban entertainment businesses that were only indirectly under the control of the state as opposed to the People's Houses.

Ottoman music, which the folklorists had renamed *Türk Sanat Müziği* (Turkish Art Music), and *fasıl*[48] music had been enjoyed by the urban population during the Ottoman Empire in *gazino*-s nightclubs[49] (Beken 2003). Kemalist reformers, as I have shown in the last chapter, had carefully monitored the performing and broadcast of *Türk Sanat Müziği* as it was considered to be a "relic of the barbarous Ottoman past" (Stokes 1996). Nevertheless, the practice of going to *gazino*-s to listen to this musical genre continued during the single party era. After the 1950s, Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) even "trained performers of *Türk Sanat Müziği* … because they did not want to lose its audience" (Tekelioğlu 1996:207). Münir Nurettin Beken tells that when wealthy

[48] A classical style which focused on "*şarkı* song form, *taksim* improvisation, and instrument *peşrev*-s and *semai*-s" (Stokes 2010:24).

[49] As Martin Stokes defines it, "the *gazino* was, and is, a kind of club where one can drink, eat, and watch some kind of floor show" (Stokes 1994:23). He also argues elsewhere that *gazino*-s developed from the *meyhane*-s (bars) managed by the Christians and *kahvehane*-s (café-s) by the Muslims of the Late Ottoman Empire. In the early republican era, since many Christians were gone, Turkish Roma in majority owned them (Stokes 2010:24).

migrants came from rural areas in the early 1950s, they were not interested in listening to an urban genre like *Türk Sanat Müziği* and *fasıl* but instead enjoyed *türkü* (folk songs). *Gazino-s* owners had to comply with their demands since the latter brought most of the income. Some performers of *Türk Sanat Müziği* and *fasıl* left the *gazino* industry to perform on the radio, in concerts or on records. Others like the stars Zeki Müren (1931-1996) and Müzeyyen Senar (b. in 1918) performed in *gazino*-s only dedicated to this style. The migrations from rural and small towns to larger cities brought together population from diverse cultural backgrounds. This new composition in the cities led to the development of new forms of musics.

The Advent of Political Music

The period from 1960 to 1980 in Turkey saw the emergence of a clearly defined left and right axis in politics. While the Marxists had been completely banned during the single party era, the transition to democracy allowed a certain forms of intellectual debates to take shape in major universities[50]. As well, many leftist movements were established in reaction to the 1960 military coup[51]. As Murat Belge contends, "Marxist socialism turned into a strong current of thought among the more educated social strata, primarily students and the urban intelligentsia" (2009:10). Although they came mostly from the middle classes, students identified with the lower classes because they were

[50] For more information on the roots of Leftist movements in Turkey as well as in the Ottoman Empire, please see Belge (2009).

[51] On May 27th 1960, Turkish military officers – among them Alparslan Türkeş (1917-1997) a extreme nationalist colonel who eventually established the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* – or MHP in Turkish acronym) – seized power of the State and ousted the Democratic Party led by Adnan Menderes (1899-1961) and president Celâl Bayar (1883-1986) who were found guilty of treason in martial court. Menderes was hung a year later for the "violating the constitution" and because of what has been referred to as the "Events of September 6-7" or "Istanbul Pogrom" during which the Greek community of Istanbul was severely assaulted (Zürcher 2005:241)

inspired by the labor movements from Latin America (Özer 2003:202). This was a period of, as Meral Özbek puts it,

> … a relative cultural renaissance in Turkish society that lasted until the late 1970s… The 1960s were a time of experimentation and innovation in popular culture and provided fertile ground for the creative exchange of influences among various musical traditions (1997:214)

These students who started to contest the enduring autocratic policies of the state were well aware of the counter-culture symbolism that European and American rock and roll music contained. Soon, they started to perform their own music – in Turkish – drawn from Anatolian folk music (*türkü*) and fused with the Western rock (Özer 2003; Stokes 1999:132-133). The creation of this style called "*Anadolu rock/pop*" (Anatolian Rock/Pop) pushed forward by Cem Karaca (born in 1945), who was the first to sing rock music in Turkish language, and Barış Manço (1943-1999) also served as means to oppose the tightly controlled musical content presented on TRT and the broader state policies. The *saz* or *bağlama*, the prime instrument used to play this *genre*, became "an icon for popular and radical musicians and for the leftists militants of the 1960s and 1970s" (Özbek 1997: 214).

A few women, like Selda Bağcan (born in 1948)[52] also enthusiastically embraced this new politically inspired musical style. These women broke the mold of a typical female singer which had been cast in the shape of *gazino*-s nighclubs and of pop music singers. This was primarily done through the renunciation of using sex appeal and

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[52] Selda Bağcan is Turkish singer, guitarist and *saz* player. Since the mid-1970s, Selda Bağcan has been touring in Turkey as well as in Europe. She has composed her own songs and re-adapted traditional Turkish folk songs (*türkü*). She also performed progressive and psychedelic rock. Bağcan's songs are satirical and contest the government. For this reason, she was persecuted during the 1980 coup and imprisoned three times. She could not join the WOMAD (World of Music and Dance) organised by Peter Gabriel because her passport had been sized by the authorities. http://www.seldabagcan.com.tr/selda-bagcan-biyografi

feminine charm to woo the audiences.

Performers of *Anadolu Rock/Pop* were also reacting to the growing popularity of Turkish pop music, clearly inspired by non-Turkish popular styles and dominated by figures such as Erol Büyükburç (born in 1936) and Fecri Ebcioğlu (1927-1989) (Stokes 2010:116). Women like Ajda Pekkan (born in 1946) and Sezen Aksu (born in 1954) were fundamental in the popularization of this *genre* (Stokes 2010:116). These artists often performed translated versions of rock and roll songs from United-States, France and Italy. Although Turkish pop was not broadcast by the official media in the 1970s, it enjoyed great support from the Istanbul-based recording industry, in the press media, and at concerts in major cities (Stokes 2010:117).

The 1980 military coup and Depoliticized *Arabesk*

On September 12th 1980, Turkey experienced its most brutal military coup which was presented as a way to put an end to increasing violence between the numerous rightist and leftist movements. Belge argues that in fact, the actual objective was to eradicate the Left in order to "conform to the anti-Communist 'Green Belt' policy planned in the USA" (2009:14). He also contends that the military coup was a way to eradicate the Kurdish movement which had started in the 1970s. In June 1981, "all public discussion of political matters was prohibited" (Zürcher 2005:279). Thousands of people – "trade unionists, … politicians, university professors, teachers, journalists and lawyers, in short anyone who had expressed even vaguely leftist views before" (Zürcher 2005:280) – were arrested, tortured, detained, and sometimes sentenced to death on the

suspicion of belonging to political groups[53]. In 1982, the military government implemented a new constitution and authorized three parties to exist, including the neo-liberal *Anavatan Partisi* ("Motherland Party") which won the elections held in 1983, with its leader, Turgut Özal (1927-1993), becoming prime minister. In an attempt to directly target the Kurds, the new constitution forbade "The Use of Languages other than Turkish" according to Article 26 ("No language prohibited by law can be used to express or disseminate thoughts") and Article 28 ("Broadcasting cannot be carried out in any language prohibited by law") (Özer Efe 2013:21).

In the years that followed the military coup, the only music that was accepted by the state was "depoliticized" music which aimed at entertainment like Turkish popular music as well as *Arabesk* (Özer 2003:204, see also Beken 2003). *Arabesk* was a kind of music born in the 1960s presenting clear 'oriental' rhythms, instruments, and modes and which came from the *fasıl* and *gazino* culture influenced by the Egyptian music (Stokes 1992c; see also Markoff 1994)[54]. As Ozan Aksoy (2006) aptly describes this period,

> The military coup of 12th September 1980 saw a corruption of the reproduction of the cultural heritage, especially that involving artists from political movements [of the 1960s and 1970s]. Instead, a sterilized musical tradition was supported by the military government – a process that continued into the 1990s.

In the years that preceded the military coup, *Arabesk* had spoken for the alternative voices of those rural-urban migrants who had settled in the shanty towns

[53] As Zürcher summarizes, "in the first six weeks after the coup 11,500 people were arrested; by the end of 1980 the number had grown to 30,000 and after one year 122,600 arrests had been made…All in all, over the two years following the coup nearly 3600 death sentences were pronounced, though only 20 were actually carried out. There were also tens of thousands of lesser sentences"(2005:279-280).

[54] Arabic language, music and films were banned in 1948. As a result, musicians in Istanbul started to make similar music, but in Turkish language (Stokes 1992c:90) Another interesting characteristic Stokes noted here to invoke such a parallel is that only in *fasıl*, *Türk Sanat Müziği* and *arabesk* styles transsexuals and transgender like Zeki Müren and Bülent Ersoy have been able to become national idols.

(*gecekondu*-s)[55] established in the outskirts of big cities. It represented a kind of subversive music that opposed the Western and folk musical traditions that the state approved. As such, it was strongly forbidden on the radio as the Kemalist elites saw *Arabesk* as a kind of foreign music which "encouraged the dissemination of a worldview which glorified fatalism, "spicy cuisine of Eastern Turkey, alcohol, entertainment, immoral behaviour, and it negative values" (Markoff 1994:232). As Stokes argues, "[*Arabesk*] songs advocate a path of total inaction calling on their listeners to light another cigarette, pour another drink, and curse the world and their fate" (1992a:214). Because it was banned on the official radio and television, *Arabesk* was mostly disseminated through the cassette industry which became quite popular from the mid-1970s onwards[56] (Özbek 1997:217). *"*By the mid-1970s", Özbek tells, "[*arabesk*] was everywhere. It could be heard in music halls and blaring from cassette players in minibuses [*dolmuş*] and taxis, and it could be enjoyed in workplaces in the informal sector, in squatter homes, and in drinking establishment (*meyhane*)." (1997:218).

Following the election of the Özal government, *Arabesk*'s presence in the public arena became tolerated because – despite the Kemalist elite's abhorrence of this style – it was perceived as unthreatening in comparison to more overtly political styles (Stokes 1999:134)[57], like *Anadolu Rock/Pop*. The new Prime Minister Özal even supported *Arabesk* in the 1980s when he used catchy *arabesk* songs for electoral jingles and

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[55] Literally "built during the night".

[56] The production and commercialization of cassettes was cheaper than 45 rmp and LP production and the technology was more mobile. Cassettes were also easily reproducible thus contributing to the rapid popularity of the *arabesk.*

[57] Today, *arabesk* is no longer hated by the Westernized elite. It has transcended all social classes and milieus as it is now appreciated by Islamists as much as secularists, low classes, middle and high classes. It was in the 1990s that *arabesk* was fully became considered as entertainment and became part of the music industry in Turkey (Özgür 2006:181). This new recognition of *arabesk* came thanks to the increasing inclusion of Western pop music, the fact that songs' theme were not as melodramatic as before and finally because star presented a more "modern" image.

requested the musical participation of famous *arabesk* stars at elections rallies and pushed for lifting the ban on *Arabesk* (Stokes 1994:26). As a result, *Arabesk* became "diffused, fragmented, and commercialized" (Özbek 1997:212).

Because of this, many Leftists in the 1980s, Özbek contends, saw *arabesk* as a kind of "opium for the masses" (1997:224) because it did not contain "elements of social protest" and advocated for a passive and fatalistic life. They also saw the rapprochement of the *gecekondu-s* people, some of whom eventually became part of the industrial bourgeoisie, with the institutions of the state as a sign of their endorsement of the neo-liberal politics implemented in the 1980s. *Arabesk* came to define the new "lifestyles, tastes, and sentiments" of the *nouveaux riches* (Özbek 1997:220).

While *Arabesk* was at first a music *genre* mostly dominated by men like Orhan Gencebay (born in 1944), Ferdi Tayfur (born in 1945), Müslüm Gürses (1953-2013) and later İbrahim Tatlıses (born in 1952) who presented the image of a "*kırro*", that is, a "kind of overstated machismo in dress and behavior" (Stokes 2005:28), many women took their place on the *Arabesk* musical scene, contributing to the popularization of this style. The most notable ones have been Bergen (born in 1959), Ebru Gündeș (born in 1974), Seda Sayan (born in 1964) and Sibel Can (born in 1970) who performed on stage at *gazino* nightclubs and cabarets and eventually on TV shows, in soap operas and on commercials. Those stars, who eventually included Turkish pop music into their *répertoire*, were featured in newspapers and tabloids. Along with their counterparts in Turkish pop music, women singers of *Arabesk* were often perceived by many as entertainers who relied as much on their sex appeal and charm as their abilities in singing. Although women were able to enter the public arena and to perform on stage, which was

in fact a great endeavour compared to previous generations, they did not always challenge the assigned gender roles.

Protest music

It is really during the second half of the 1980s and mostly 1990s that protest movements started organizing demonstrations, campaigns and conferences to denounce the state policies. The rise of those civil movements, like those of the Islamists, the feminists and the Kurds, was made possible thanks to the increasing political liberalization during those years. Political liberalization was also accompanied by economic liberalization. From Özal's government onwards, the state's measures to foster a nascent import-export market as well as competition on the domestic market, the growth in the touristic industry and the increasing privatization of the state industries (Zürcher 2004: 320-322) forced the opening of the highly controlled mass media sector to the private investment. As private radio and TV stations started to emerge in the 1990 (Özer Efe 2013:20). As Stokes points out, "The TRT had to compete with private television channels, FM radio, and later the Web as media were progressively deregulated "(2010:18). These neo-liberal policies were coupled with increasing pressure on Turkey to improve its human rights' record in order to qualify for membership to the European Union. In 1991, the state removed the ban over broadcasting in a "language prohibited by law" which had been enforced in the 1982 Constitution (Özer Efe 2013:21). As result, a diversity of musical *genres* began to be disseminated through an industry which – at least legally – now recognized its multi-lingual content.

The rise of those civil movements which denounced the state's homogenizing policies also reverberated in the musical domain. First *protest music*, also called "*özgün"*

(“authentic”), which had its roots in the *Anatolian rock* of the 1960s and 1970s, became quite significant with the creation of two groups, *Grup Yorum* (“Group Commentary”) and *Grup Kızılırmak*, mentioned earlier. Protest musicians were very much inspired by the music performed in Latin American revolutionary movements as well as by American rock and international socialist marches (Bates 2011:101-102). Grup Yorum’s songs, Bates notes, “advocate for the prisoners’ rights, sing against imperialism and capitalism, and decry the atrocities of war” (2011:102). In 1988, at a time when the ban on non-Turkish songs had not yet been raised, Grup Yorum performed a song in Kurdish language for which they were imprisoned. As well, many members of the group were arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for organizing antiwar marches all over Turkey (Bates 2011:102).

Interestingly, there was also another kind of *protest music* which drew on *arabesk* music tradition – normally a depoliticized genre. The most famous musician in this *arabesk* protest genre was the Turkish-Kurdish musician Ahmet Kaya[58] (1957-2000). Kaya embraced his Kurdish identity and announced during an award ceremony in 1997 that he had written a song in Kurdish and intended to produce a music video. As a result, he was accused of supporting the PKK, the Kurdish separatist armed movement, and, facing persecution, escaped to Paris where he died of a heart attack shortly after.

[58] In an interview, Barış Dönmez even argues that *protest music* came to be known as *özgün müzik* after the release of Ahmet Kaya’s “Ağlama Bebeğim” (“Don’t Cry My Baby”) album in 1985 (Özer & Yıldırım 2008:204). His songs are still thoroughly enjoyed in Turkey and performed mostly within the context of *türkü* bars. It is not uncommon that more than half of the songs performed during one night – often as the result of the audience’s request – are Ahmet Kaya’s songs, as I have noticed during my many visits to *türkü bars* since 2007.

Kurdish and Alevi Music

While *protest music* included Kurdish and Alevi musical forms within its larger *répertoire*, a clearly defined Kurdish and Alevi musical scene emerged in the 1990s following the lifting of the ban over broadcasting non-Turkish music. This event was particularly important for the Kurds as it put an end to decades of official ban on using Kurdish language in the public realm[59]. However, still today, a song can be banned in Turkey if lyrics contain the words "Kurdistan" or "PKK". As well, if a judge considers a musician to support the Kurdish separatist movement, that musician can be arrested (Aksoy 2006).

Kurdish music which emerged in the 1990s was mainly practiced by young Kurdish migrants who performed at Kurdish cultural centers in the cities, like the Mesopotamian Cultural Center (MKM) in Istanbul (Aksoy 2006). As independent singers or instrumentalists who formed "Koms" or groups, Kurdish musicians modified traditional Kurdish folk songs and added new political lyrics. Most the time, those musicians were associated with the leftist movements, although they were sometimes in conflict with them. Ozan Aksoy argues that sometimes those young Kurdish musicians left cities and went in the mountains to join the PKK or other Kurdish guerrilla groups and that music was instrumental in to "recruit[ing] guerrillas…, support[ing] the struggles and life of a guerilla, and of course [in] maintain[ing]… solidarity" (2006).

Among the topics found within the Kurdish political songs, the love for strong and independent women guerillas was perhaps the most popular. This formed a stark

[59] For instance, "in 1967, the Turkish government made it illegal for Kurds to own or to distribute recordings in 'a language other than Turkish'. Police in many parts of Kurdistan have search houses looking for Kurdish-language recordings" (Blum & Hassanpour 1996: 325), a measure reinforced in the Constitution of 1982 as mentioned above.

contrast to the traditional folk songs which praised the beauty, charms and modesty of women. Aksoy argues that, "Through politicizing love and exalting women guerillas, I believe those songs might have helped Kurdish women start interrogating their identities" (Aksoy 2006).

Ethnic Music

It is really thanks to the development of protest music and Kurdish music which became more accepted in the public arena from 1991 onwards that the *genre* of ethnic music emerged in the 1990s. The international pressure and, later, the process of joining the European Union, compelled the Turkish government to provide cultural and political rights to Kurdish people which in turn helped them gain their political voice. The Kurdish movement paved the way for other ethnicities' claims too. As Diler Özer explains,

> New albums or cassettes of Kurdish songs started to be released by music companies. Suddenly people began to talk about it. Members of ethnic minorities said "We, as Laz, also have such folk songs, such traditional songs" and, "We, as Circassian people, have them too". So, it spread like an epidemic. People started to wonder about their culture or their ethnic origins. Laz, Kurdish, Arabic, Armenian and Greek musicians – among others – began singing in their own language… So, there was a kind of awareness for the musicians themselves and also of course with the other people [of other ethnic identities] (Personal Interview. 17 November 2011).

Today, an independent record label company 'Kalan Müzik', which Hasan Saltık founded in 1991 and which is based in Istanbul, produces most of the ethnic music in Turkey. In addition to Turkish ethnic music – which is categorized as such in their catalogue[60] - Kalan Müzik also releases Turkish folk music, Ottoman Classical music (often through re-masterizing old recordings from the beginning of the twentieth-

[60] Kalan Müzik website.

century), Turkish art music, and protest music. According to Bates, Kalan “has been one of the top ten labels operating in Turkey since the early 2000s; their best sellers are their [ethnic music recordings]. Even obscure albums sell 5,000 or more copies despite limited advertising budgets” (2010:85). Far from aiming solely at entertainment, Saltık often presents the company he founded as a “political commitment”[61]. His main goal has been to protect “little known cultures and their music”[62], especially those facing threats to their survival, through collecting and archiving their music to preserve it and also to commercialize it. Just like the folklorists of the 1920s and 1930s who were interested in archiving the peasants’ folksongs with the aim of creating the ‘music of the nation’, Kalan sends specialists and ethnomusicologists everywhere in Turkey and its surrounding regions to collect “forgotten recordings considered historically important”[63] as well as contemporary recordings. The difference with the previous folklorists’ work is that Kalan is recovering and preserving plurality.[64] Kalan Müzik also releases contemporary Turkish ethnic music which draws on the ‘folk’ songs recorded by Saltık’s team and arranges it with new instruments, the addition of new lyrics, ‘fusing’ it with contemporary sounds, while preserving the ‘spirit’ of the song and most importantly, its language. Because of this commitment, Saltık has faced prosecution, though he has not been sentenced to jail. In 2001 the court revoked his music-publishing license because Kalan published Kurdish

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[61] See for instance Kalan Müzik website as well as this article published in Times magazine http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,703446,00.html

[62] On Kalan Müzik website.

[63] Kalan Müzik website.

[64] Among those archives, one can find late Ottoman music, old recordings of *rebetika* associated with the Greeks living in Turkey before the population exchange in 1923 and from the music genre *klezmer* associated with the Jewish community of Istanbul, songs from Armenian and Greeks singers, as well as old tango and *kanto* recordings.

folk songs which featured the word 'Kurdistan' which the Turkish authorities perceived 'incit[ing] separatism'[65].

The Funeral of Hrant Dink and "*Sari Gyalin*" (Highlander Bride)

Perhaps the most famous example of the involvement of ethnic music with movements that denounced the state's policies but also the exclusionary practices and ideas defended by some in Turkey has been the funeral of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. On January 23rd 2007, as more than 10,000 marchers accompanied the coffin of renowned Dink to its graveyard in Istanbul, one could hear, broadcasted over and over again from a van, the song "*Sari Gyalin*"[66] sung in Armenian by the ethnic music group *Kardeş Türküler.* This was something that would have been unimaginable two decades earlier due to the suppression of ethnic languages, music and art as part of the development of the Turkish nation, as seen above. "Sari Gyalin" or "Highlander Bride" tells the story of an impossible love between an Armenian woman and a Muslim man, and has become "symbolic of the plight of the Armenian minority in Turkey" (Bates 2011:104) since then. Hrant Dink (1954-2007) had been assassinated four days earlier by a Turkish ultranationalist Ogün Samast in front of his office, the headquarters of the bilingual newspaper *Agos*. Dink had worked all his life to establish a dialogue between Turks and Armenians. He was among those intellectuals, Armenians and others, who spoke openly of the Armenian Genocide. Because of this, the Turkish government prosecuted Dink three separate times invoking Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code which stipulates that insulting the Turkish government and institution or Turkish

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[65] http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,703446,00.html, accessed January 23 2013

[66] Composed in Erzurum, a city in Eastern Turkey which used to be very multi-ethnic and multi-religious before the WWI, "Sari Gyalin", which means "Highlander Bride", is also known in Turkish as "Sarı Gelin" meaning "Yellow/blond-haired bride" (Bates 2011:104)

ethnicity is a crime (Bate 2011:105)[67]. Dink also received 2,000 death threats. The assassination of Dink was a dramatic event in Turkish recent history because it has shown the extent to which non-Muslims are still seen as a threat to 'Turkishness' and how xenophobic viewpoints have become even more radicalized. During the march, protesters from the Armenian Turkish, Kurdish and other ethnic communities, carried signs saying "We Are All Hrant Dink" and "We Are All Armenians"[68] in Turkish, Armenian and Kurdish languages. The broadcast of "Sari Gyalin" during the march stressed the presence of the Armenian community in Istanbul and demonstrated how music can gather people from all ethnic or religious backgrounds in their desire to live together and propose a broader definition of what it means to be a Turk in the 21st century.

The Enduring Image of the 'Licentious Entertainer'

As more and more women were able to overcome various obstacles and started entering the professional musical scene, one enduring obstacle that they had to combat was the association between women musicians and loose sexual morality. Women I interviewed were all conscious of this main obstacle that prevented them from being taken seriously as musicians but also often as politically committed singers. Being a professional musician in public settings – that is, performing for money in front of unrelated people and strangers – has indeed been a very contentious issue in Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries.

Reactions were strong when I asked women about the ways the audiences perceived them. For instance, Sumru Ağıryürüyen, a mandolin player, singer and concert organizer

[67] It is common for public personalities, journalists, for instance who talk about the 1915 Ottoman Turkification campaigns against the Armenians as "genocide" to be prosecuted under the Article 301.
[68] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6289275.stm, accessed 2 January 2013.

of folk music of different peoples, recalled an anecdote from the beginning of her career in the 1980s.

> My friend and I were back[up] vocalists for Ajda Pekkan who was a [pop] superstar at that time. [During a tour], we were waiting for another flight in a special room in the airport. The police sergeant asked us, "What are you doing? What is your profession?" We answered that we were back[up] vocalists but he did not understand. He thought that we were prostitutes because we were in this special room… We told him, "We are not doing *this* job. One of us is architect and the other one is a clerk in a bank. But we love music and therefore we are musicians as well". This was the mentality of course… (Sumru Ağıryürüyen, Personal Interview. November 19 2011)

Another example, even more explicit, shows that women musicians have been so closely associated with prostitution in the public mind that when they went on stage municipal authorities sometimes asked them to get a special permit similar to – if not the same – as the one for prostitutes. Turkish-Circassian singer Gülcan Altan recalls a time where she sang *Türk Sanat Müziği* in military hotels in the city of Edirne in order to support herself during her studies. She tells that,

> 15 years ago I was performing on a stage which required from me a kind of document/identity called *vesika*. I thought that it was something that was given to musicians. In order to get this *vesika*, I applied to the National Police. Unfortunately, I learned what this *vesika* really was. It turned out to be a document given to prostitutes. This country thought that when I performed music on stage, I was doing the same work as the prostitutes. I don't know if this is still the case (Gülcan Altan, Personal Communication. November 17th 2011)

Such events seem to have occurred many times and in many cities although the topic has not been documented to my knowledge. According to Şirin Özgün, PhD. in Ethnomusicology at Istanbul Technical University, all women who were on stage,

singing or acting[69], needed – at least in the past – to have a special permit which however was not required of men. Sumru Ağıryürüyen remembering that period told me that, "In the *gazino* (cabaret) at the Izmir Fair, the municipality even asked for a *vesika* from Sezen Aksu[70]. It became a big issue at that time.

As women musicians in Turkey entered the public arena, they have had *to prove*, not unlike their counterparts in many Western societies at that time, that they were respectable gifted women who although performing in a wide range of venues – sometimes *gazino* (cabaret) and *pavyon* (nightclubs) – were not prostitutes, an assumption which has survived the changes of political systems and elites in Turkey.

The Source of the Problem?

Professional women musicians` (as well as other women who penetrated into a men-dominated domain) being accused of having loose sexual morality has been subject of much research in anthropology. Why such a stigma? Why, unlike the men I interviewed, were women musicians socially at risk? Why was their respectability as artists and women connected to their sexual morality? In this section, I examine the different debates regarding women, modesty and reputation in the Muslim Middle East to explain the source of such misconceptions.

The first response that emerges from this debate concerns the changing conditions of performance in the twentieth century in conjunction with the advent of commercial entertainment venues. Ethnomusicologist Virginia Danielson and anthropologist Karin

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[69] In our interview (November 17th 2011), Şirin Özgün mentioned that famous movie and theater actresses Adile Naşit and Yıldız Kenter have encountered such a situation.

[70] Sezen Aksu (born in 1954 in Denizli) has established the foundation of Turkish pop along with Ajda Pekkan also mentioned above in the 1970s. For more information on her political and social importance in Turkish history, please see Martin Stokes, *The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music,* University of Chicago Press, 2010, chapter 4: pp.107-147.

van Nieuwkerk have both written extensively on this topic. In her analysis (1999) of women performers' strategies to maintain social respectability on stage, Danielson explains that

> The commercial environment [progressively emerging in the twentieth century] presented many more problems for entertainers than did private homes or community gatherings: audiences were larger, they usually were unknown to the performer, and patrons were occasionally rowdy... The association of performance with vices such as gambling, prostitution, and the consumption of drugs and alcohol was particularly strong in the arena of public commercial entertainment... [E]ntertainers stretched the boundaries of respectability and good reputation (Danielson 1999:120).

As women started to play beyond their circles of relatives and community, those new conditions of performance – and the unrelated kind of strangers it involved – put them more socially at risk to lose their reputation and to be associated with women of loose morals. In addition, Danielson argues that in Egypt, just like many other countries, "to live in a moral society" has been an on-going project/desire in order to maintain the patriarchal structure of the society (1999:121). "For women", she specifies, "morality often involved not only sexual virtue but also a reputation of modesty… These common social values colored views of public entertainment" (1999:121). As a result, women musicians, like the famous Umm Kulthum whom Danielson extensively draws on, had to solve the problem of how to perform on stage while maintaining their social reputation and counter these associations, an experience very similar to that of those women I interviewed – especially those who started singing in the 1970s and 1980s.

In a similar vein, van Nieuwkerk (1998) demonstrates through a historical analysis how categories of women musicianship were blurred since the nineteeth century.

She shows how lower-class entertainers, whom she calls 'common *awalim*[71]', along with the unveiled public dancers, the *ghawazi*, were expelled from Cairo during the French Occupation (1798-1801) and the rule of Muhammad 'Ali (1811-1849) and sent to exile to Upper Egypt. As they were interested in seeing Egyptian women dancing, foreigners, who came in increasing numbers to Egypt, followed them and became the main source of income for those exiled women in search for ways to support themselves. As a result, "A number of entertainers turned to prostitution" (1998:23).

The association with prostitution or loose sexual morality intensified even more when women entertainers were allowed to come back to Cairo but upon the condition that they were to perform in the night-club circuit that started to develop in the late nineteenth century. As van Nieuwerk describes,

> The main task of female entertainers was to sit and drink with customers (*fath*). They usually sang first, or danced on the stage, and if they were admitted by a client, he ordered them to sit at his table and opened bottles of champagne, whiskey, or beer for them. *Fath* was the most profitable part of the job for nightclub owners as well as the women" (1998:26).

Danielson and van Nieuwkerk, drawing on historical analysis, demonstrate well how the advent of commercial entertainment re-defined the traditional contexts of performance for women and, along with it, the boundaries between the public and private domains. As well, they show how as social, political and economic circumstances affected their performing conditions, women experienced great difficulties in supporting themselves both economically and socially. Women were often socially at risk for they had to make

[71] Karin van Nieuwkerk also mentions the presence of elite *awalim*, or 'learned women' among the categories of entertainers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Those cultured women played in harem in front of all-women audiences and were not visible to men. For this reason, they were held in great esteem. Van Nieuwkerk admits what became of these high class *awalim* is not clear but that the word '*awalim'* in the early nineteenth century had lost its original meaning and not denoted 'singer-dancer' (van Nieuwkerk 1998:22-23).

their way in the male-dominated system of commercial entertainment where owners drew on the entertainer's sex appeal to woo the audience and make more profit.

Similar events occurred during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to Republican Turkey. As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, women musicians have often had to negotiate around the different conceptions of the public and private domains, conceptions influenced in great part by their social status. On the one hand, free-born Muslim women of the upper-classes during the Ottoman Empire – who performed mostly within the private circles of relatives – were considered as amateurs, unskilled and playing frivolous music. However they would have more chances to maintain their reputation and high status. On the other hand, women who played in public settings might have been respected at certain times for their talent and (musical) education but they often stirred sexual connotations.They were considered "liminal characters" (Richardson 2009), like the courtesans of the Arab-Islamic and Ottoman courts, or "subaltern counterpublics" (Fraser 1990) or marginal characters like the Gypsies who formed troupes. The association with sexuality was seldom a threat for many of them.

During the early years of the Turkish Republic, as modernizers provided new opportunities for more women to enter the public sphere and to have a profession, women musician's performing conditions changed. With the increasing popularity of firstly, Western forms of music (like tango or walz) and Turkish folk music, and secondly, of Turkish Art Music and *Arabesk* performed in commercial entertainment venues like *pavyon*-s or *gazino*-s, women musicians of various socio-economic status began to perform in front of new audience.

For upper-middle-class women, like those I interviewed, the performance was not

anymore restricted to the private sphere of their relatives and for many of them, music had become much more than a 'lady-like' hobby but rather a legitimate way of expressing one's views about the state and society but also of earning an income. These women started to perform in front of mixed audiences, stretching the boundaries between the private and the public domains, and they commanded respect for their art. Unfortunately, their expectations were not always met as they were associated with the entertainers who drew on their charms and sex appeal in order to attract an audience and profit.

The second response that seeks to explain women performers and consequent associations with licentiousness emerges from post-colonial feminist sociological debates on Islam and the Middle East. Authors like Fatima Mernissi and Deniz Kandiyoti have argued that reputation of modesty and sexual virtue have played a great role in the ways a woman has perceived herself and has in turn been perceived by other members of her community and family. From their perspective, women professional musicians have been considered as 'licentious entertainers' or 'prostitutes' because they have crossed the boundaries men established to control their sexuality and therefore have posed a threat to the social order.

In many Muslim communities, Fatima Mernissi argues, men perceive women's sexuality as potentially active and threatening to the maintenance of the male social order (Mernissi 1987:12; see also 1991). According to her, mechanisms to limit women's power and freedom such as veiling, seclusion and laws unfavourable to women have been implanted by men who feared that releasing this latent sexual power would cause social *chaos* (*fitna* in Arabic) and lead to the collapse of the Muslim community (*umma*).

Deniz Kandiyoti, who agrees with Mernissi, also claims that women's sexuality (mostly expressed through the maintenance of virginity before marriage, the respect of gender segregation rules and the lack of any explicitly act suggesting sexual behavior) is repressed through the family's control of women's sexual purity – also called *namus*. Women's sexual purity becomes intrinsically linked to family (or lineage) honor. In our interview, one factor İlkay Akkaya invoked to explain her family's apprehensions regarding her choice of becoming a professional musicians was presicely "Because there is something called *namus...*"(Akkay, İkay. Personal Interview, October 31st 2011). The word *namus* in Turkish and Persian (ناموس) comes from the Greek word, *nomos* (νόμος) meaning "law, honor". Aysan Sev'er and Gökçeçicek Yurdakul argue that in Turkish, "*namus* is a type of sexual honor that presupposes physical and moral qualities that women ought to have" (2001:973). According to theories of "honor" or *namus*[72], women are expected to control not only their own *namus* but also that of the other women related to them, for instance, their daughters and grand-daughters. A woman's father and brothers have full rights to "control, direct, and regulate" her sexuality and freedom of movements before her marriage (Sen 2005:46-50). This responsibility is passed on to husbands and other male kin after her marriage (Sev'er & Yurdakul 2001:973). Most importantly, when *namus* is lost, dishonor not only affects women but also the entire family's reputation within the "honor group" (Sen 2005:51). İlkay Akkay's family therefore feared that their daughter becoming a woman "who has fun and who makes people have fun", i.e. an entertainer, would bring dishonor upon them.

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[72] Frameworks of honor which have been numerous in the history of anthropology have often been associated with frameworks of shame (Campbell 1964; Hirschon 1981, 1993; Peristiany 1966; Pitt-Rivers 1963 for example) – a relationship which has been much contested in recent anthropological literature and therefore on which I do not desire to dwell.

I suggest that women musicians have had two different relationships with *namus*. On the one hand, amateur women musicians, in the rural and the urban areas, have not posed a threat to the maintenance of the family honor as they performed in circles within the private sphere which either comprised the extended family, or even the entire community or village as I discussed in Chapter 1. This is a charitable service to the community and is seen as generosity. On the whole, it appears that women's demonstration of her sexuality during these amateur musical performances has been more generally accepted. For example, many ethnomusicologists or anthropologists who have focused more on rural settings have talked of musical performances which "provide a context for sexually explicit behavior, such that musical performance becomes a metaphor for sexual relations" (Koskoff 1987:6). Sexual behaviors which would not be tolerated in mundane public settings are sometimes allowed in musical domains. Men have not considered amateur musicians as potentially dangerous[73].

On the other hand, women professional musicians who played outside of the private sphere – whether in front of un-related members of the family or strangers like these women I interviewed during my fieldwork – have been perceived as potentially disruptive of the male imposed order, and therefore attacked in the most pernicious manner. Veronica Doubleday argued that "accusations of "harlotry" and "prostitution" reflect male discomfort with active female sexuality" (1999:121). This is particularly well explained in her ethnographic work on Afghanistan entitled *Three Women of Herât*

[73] For instance, Tullia Magrini shows that some dances such as the *tarantella* in south Calabria in Italy, is traditionally used by the society as a "performance of relationship" between a man and a woman. In north Calabria, the *tarantella*, although conforming to local standards of behaviors between a man and a woman (i.e. no bodily contact), becomes a "danced courtship rich in sensuality" (Magrini 2003:6). As well, Lila Abu-Lughod in her work among the Bedouin emphasizes the importance of poetry to express women's and men's emotions cautiously absent from their 'normal' discourse bounded by rules regarding modesty and honor (1999)

(2006/1998). Doubleday tells about her observations among three settings of woman musicianship: a Shiite household where men have been public musicians and where women play at home as amateurs to entertain themselves; a Sunni household in a similar to the conditions of the previous setting; and finally a professional all-women band, the Minstrels. While the two first groups were not subject to any particular social probe, the latter group was highly objected to. As Doubleday notes,

> Unfortunately, because [the Minstrels] did not use male chaperones and sometimes played within view of strange men, they had acquired a bad name. Some people thought, wrongly, that they were loose women. They flouted the conservative Afghan expectation that women should not earn money in public....and they also aroused traditionalist Islamic prejudice against music…These facts led people to assume that the Minstrels women must also be available, though this proved not to be true (1998:158-161).

Doubleday stresses the association between perceptions of women musicians being prostitutes – or being a "loose women" – and mobility in the public space. She claims that the Minstrels women were marginal women as they "lived on the border of seclusion". While they wore their *burka* – understood here as an extension of the private sphere – in the streets, they directly spoke to men, negotiating the payment of their musical performance, walking around in the city comfortably with their conspicuous musical instruments and showing their faces to strangers within the walls of a house (1998:163). Doubleday concludes that, "people objected to the Minstrel women because they did not observe *purdah* [gender segregation] strictly... in fact they were dangerously free" (Doubleday 1998:196).

In Turkey, Ayşe Durakbaşa (1998:152) explores the correspondence of a young woman who lived in the early republican times, Semiha Berksoy, with her father. Berksoy aims to reassure her father about the fact that she will keep her "virtue" when

pursuing her desire to become a professional singer. Her father is afraid that she will lose both her "woman's dignity" and, at the same time, the "family status". Durakbaşa shows that despite the fact that Kemalists/secularists/modernists provided many opportunities for women to develop their talents,

> …the traditional sexual morality was not ever radically questioned within the Kemalist ethic. Since the notion of "sexual virtue" defined in terms of virginity of women before marriage, was preserved, the social conduct of women with men was controlled and female sexuality was repressed without much direct intervention. (1998:152)

Among the interviewed women who started to perform music in the last decade, nobody had faced the issue of this particular *vesika*. This may be an indicator that mentalities have changed since the 1980s and that more people now recognize women musicians as artists instead of as "women who have fun and make others have fun". The reason why women musicians in Turkey do not wish to be perceived as entertainers anymore is because this label informed men – and other women too – that they were "available women" and that they had a licentious morality. However, despite the fact that there has been a change in mentality, many women mentioned that they often felt the members of the audience, in particular men, still perceived them "easy women" or "available women". Women musicians continue to fight such images today.

Esra Arslan, a singer of the Gypsy music band *Velvele* whose life story I explore in the next chapter, has worked a lot to gain respect in the musical domain. Because she did not come from a upper or middle class environment, and did not pursue her university studies in music nor the conservatory, she has had to prove that she was talented. Her work was even more difficult because, she argues, she is a woman. As she puts it,

> Let's compare a man in my situation. If a man decides to play music at 24 years-old and without studying at the conservatory, he gets accepted earlier. He doesn't need to prove anything… People only listen objectively and judge him for his talent. But for a woman … You have to prove that you are not an entertainer, that you are not here to make people have fun and have fun yourself, and that you are not here for [making money] (Arslan, Esra. Personal Interview. December 1 2011).

Again, the issue of women musicians being derogatively perceived as entertainers comes up despite the fact that women musicians are not officially associated with prostitution anymore even by municipal authorities. We also learn that another stereotype of being an entertainer is again associated with the fact that women gain a salary by playing music in the public arena for the reasons I have elaborated earlier.

> Everybody makes you need to prove that you are not looking for fame... But for men, it's not something like that. They are taken in consideration as musicians. Even if a man musician' only aim is to entertain, it is okay. But for a woman, [if people understand that your only aim is to entertain], it makes you seem like you are open to date with everybody, to be available for every men… (Arslan, Esra. Personal Interview. December 1 2011)

Esra also argues that her position as a soloist, unlike that of an instrumentalist, was another reason why people did not take her seriously. This was coupled with the fact that Esra did not have the chance to study at a conservatory. However, Esra did have the chance to study with Selim Sesler, a very famous musician[74] who became like a father figure to her. Selim Sesler taught her how to sing while accompanying her with his clarinet, explained to her theories of *makam*-s, and gave her the confidence that she could

[74] Selim Sesler (b.1957) was born in Edirne, in the European part of Turkey. From Gypsy descent, Sesler is a musicians and a clarinet virtuoso. He played with Canadian Turkish-music singer Brenna McCrimmon in Canada. He also features in Turkish-German film director Fatih Akin's movies "Head on" as well as Sounds of Istanbul.

sing such an unfamiliar music as “Turkish palace music” [Türk Sanat Müziği]. Along with Selim Sesler and his sons, Esra performed in Europe a few times. This training provided her with greater chances to be accepted in the music community and be taken seriously.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate that the rise of political music, like *Anadolu Rock/Pop*, and later Protest, Kurdish/Alevi and Ethnic music genres opened new kinds of gender roles for women that differed from those in entertainment music like *Arabesk* or the Turkish pop music. Turkey’s political democratization starting with the institution of the multi-party system in 1950 created a space for the contestation of the state’s policies, more particularly from the socialist movements. Women within these movements were pioneers as for the first time they proposed an alternative model of woman musicianship which opposed the image of the ‘licentious entertainer’ who, in the minds of many, was a woman who drew on her sex appeal to charm audiences. This alternative image of a woman musician was also promoted by other politically committed forms of music which emerged, thanks to the implementation of neo-liberal policies, in the period following the 1980s military coup like protest, Kurdish/Alevi and later, ethnic music. As they became ever more prominent in the public arena, women musicians within those *genres* have had to battle with the assigned genre roles. The reason for the persistence of these stereotypes, I have suggested, was the fact that women who crossed the established boundaries between the private/public were perceived as threatening the male-dominated order. Thus, it can be argued that political democratization, in Turkey, and along with it the opening to neo-liberal economy, have resulted in more opportunities

for women of different backgrounds and kinds of femininity to stake their own place in the society.

Chapter 5 – Class, Ethnicity and Religion at Play

In chapter 2, I have shown that state reformers during the single party era (1925-1950) in Turkey had implemented policies that aimed to modernize the newly established republic and an important facet of that modernization was the inclusion of women in the public sphere. I have argued that those reforms provided new opportunities for women to receive better (musical) education but also to become professional musicians. However, as I demonstrated in chapter 3, women who became professional musicians continued to face the problem of respectability as many perceived them as entertainers – and sometimes even prostitutes. With Turkey's increasing democratization in the 1960s and 1970s, and even more so by the end of the 1980s, women who had started to play politically committed music, contested – implicitly or explicitly – this image. Since the 1990s, as a result, women have had greater chances to become respected professional musicians and to be socially accepted.

In this chapter, I show that while modernity and, later, democratization in Turkey helped women of various backgrounds to carve their place on the musical stage as professionals, it would be reductionist to think that those were the only determining factors. There were many other aspects involved which restricted or promoted the development of musical careers perhaps to a greater degree. As such, modernity and democratization have surely been determinants as they established official structures for women's professionalization and emergence in the public sphere, but their power has

been limited by ideas emanating from class, ethnicity and religion, for better or worse.

Drawing on three life stories from women musicians I interviewed during my fieldwork, I here demonstrate how ethnicity, class and religion shape women's choice of becoming professional musicians. I first present the story of Behiye Süren whose parents opposed her choice of becoming a professional musician as, coming from a working-class background, they feared for their daughter's insecure financial future. I then show how cultural interpretations of music among Mingrelian-Georgian traditions helped Mircan Kaya develop her musical skills. Finally, I demonstrate that unlike in Muslim-Sunni official interpretations, the Muslim-Alevi understanding of both women and music in fact helped Ayfer Vardar in developing her career and to become a respected member of her community.

Music Does Not Pay

Behiye Süren was born in Sydney, Australia, in 1976. Her parents are primary-school graduates Turkish-Arabs from Adana, a city close to the Turkish-Syrian border. They spoke Turkish with each other, Arabic with other members of the community and English with Behiye and her brother. Behiye's parents migrated to Sydney forty years ago as unskilled workers attracted by working opportunities in the factories. Behiye's father worked in a tire and a beer factory and later on owned a kebab restaurant. Her mother worked in a cheese factory before joining her husband's restaurant venture.

Behiye showed interest in music at an early age but she had to stop her musical education early because her father said he could not financially support her private lessons. She studied literature in Sydney. Her parents were very proud of having a daughter at university but did not understand exactly that she was developing her creative

skills as a writer and eventually a song writer. Upon graduation, Behiye traveled to New York, met with artists and started composing songs. When she returned to Sydney, she knew she wanted to become a professional singer and song-writer. Her parents did not approve of her choice as they had hoped she would have what they and their environment considered to be a normal live, that it, to "get married" and "work to have a mortgage".

After ten years of musical education in singing and guitar playing provided by members of the artistic community of Bondi Beach in Sydney, Behiye moved in the spring of 2011 at the age of thirty-five to Istanbul, aiming to reconcile with her "roots" which she had always rejected. She had always viewed her parents' Turkish customs as "oppressive", "traditional" and "backward" and felt that they were incompatible with what she considered the modern Australian lifestyle. Behiye is now learning Turkish music and formed a band which in the fall of 2011 performed her songs every two weeks or so at venues located in the district of Beyoğlu, the cultural hub of Istanbul. The songs featured on her single album speak of romantic love and her difficult relationships with her parents. She described the music she makes as "folk music with a middle-eastern twist"[75]. At thirty-six years old, she is unmarried, lives in a tiny two-room apartment she shares with a Slovakian female student in the hip neighbourhood of Cihangir. In addition, she gives private English lessons in the upper class neighborhood of Suadiye. Her income however is so low that Behiye is struggling to make ends meet and therefore cannot devote as much time as she wants to her priority, music.

Behiye was strongly affected by her parents' disapproval of her career's choice and still today, ten years after her musical debut, she is very concerned by this issue. She

[75] http://www.behiyesuren.com/

spent a great part of the interview expressing her sadness and frustration at her parents' and relatives' pressure to conform to their ideas of a "conventional life". As she put it,

> Actually I had a whole lot of negativity from my perception. I think I was ... a *little* bit sensitive about it… at the point where I really needed support, people were like "well, you know, you can take it up as a hobby"... or ... "there is nothing wrong in being creative on the side". Everybody was encouraging me to live a more conventional life, get married, have children, have a mortgage, and it is not that I did not want those things, it just that it was not a priority for me. Music just took over and that is the way it was. And everything else took a back seat. Every time I was faced with the choice of "do I take this job" because it would provide me financial security or "do I turn it down" because I needed the time to compose, or I needed the time to learn or perform, I always chose music and it hasn't been an easy decision because music does not really pay (Süren, Behiye. Personal interview. 26 October 2011).

Behiye is the only professional musician in her family. She also has a female cousin who plays the *bağlama* and who performs mostly during weddings or small concerts organized within the Turkish community of Sydney. When I asked Behiye why the community was accepting of her cousin playing music in public and not her, her answer was, "It is because I chose it as a career. I chose it as a priority for my life rather than a hobby. That is why."

Behiye's parents who represented the first generation of Turkish migrants to Australia were very "working-class" as Behiye mentioned earlier in the interview. Financial insecurity was source of constant worry. They were hoping to secure their daughter's position in the Australian society and expected her to conform to standards of a life they thought was "normal and good". Jenny B.White (1994) has demonstrated that family support does not come unconditionally but rather with a set of unspoken rules and expected behaviors. This set of expected behaviors underlines a concern about women's sexual reputation which is at threat when women work and, I would add even more so

when a women decides to pursue a musical career. In this regard, Behiye's father saw her performance on stage outside the community as problematic. Behiye says that, "the fact that I would be performing on stages had a stigma for my dad. He just assumed that I was gonna be a target for men". Music was not among the "respectable" jobs. When Behiye took the decision to become a professional musician, she broke the rules which guaranteed her the main source of social and economic support in her life. This was also amplified by the fact that she did not get married. She greatly suffered from this as is reflected in her songs and the emphasis she placed on her parents' reaction during the whole interview.

This clash between Behiye's parents' expectations and her own wishes can also be articulated through the class framework. While her parents came from a working-class background, Behiye grew up in Australia at a time where her parents started to have more money, at least, enough to own their own kebab restaurant and not to need Behiye's monetary contribution as it is often the case in working-class families in Turkey (see for instance White:1994). As well, the Australian government providing loans and bursaries to university students helped Behiye receiving her higher education and obtain a B.A. degree. It also allowed her to be immersed in an environment where being a musician was not considered "unrespectable" but rather as the natural way for an artist to express his/her voice and develop his/her creativity. In the song "So Mama", Behiye tries to explain to her mom how her new social status which had brought along new opportunities for her and that she should not fear for her daughter.

So Mama, what you're saying is right
It's true
There is no-one perfect
It's gotta hurt me sometimes too
But if you had the bag of choices
You cleverly gave me
Would you fly this nest and see the world
Or stick with family?[76]

While acknowledging financial anxieties as well as her discomfort to see men sometimes asking her out after her performances, Behiye ceased to hope for parental recognition, decided to overcome those obstacles and chose to make a life on her own. When her mom asks her "when are you going to stop this", Behiye answers, "a tree should be a tree – you can't change what you are in life and if a musician/artist is what you are, that's not an easy life but if it's a true calling, you have no choice but to follow it". This choice does however have a cost. In order to support her musical activities, Behiye had to teach English, a profession in which she did not necessarily seek personal development and achievement.

Reaffirming Ethnic Traditions

Mircan Kaya was born in 1963 in the city of Artvin located in the Eastern Black Sea region along the Turco-Georgian border. Her family were descendants of a group of people who had migrated from Mingrelia, a Georgian region on the Black Sea coast located in the now contested semi-autonomous region of Abkhazia. She lived in the city of Artvin which overlooked the Çoruh River and whose old stone and wooden houses had been erected in the past by the Armenian population. As Mircan says, "It was a multicultural environment with an extraordinary beautiful nature… I was deeply affected

[76] Excerpts from the song "Hey Mama" taken from http://www.behiyesuren.com/lyrics/25-so-mama

by [it]"(Kaya, Mircan. Personal Interview.2 November 2011). Mircan's grand-parents spoke Mingrelian, an unwritten Kartvelian language[77] closely related to Laz (or Lazuri), mainly spoken in north-eastern Turkey. Other members of the community spoke Georgian which Mingrelians often use as their literary language. At home, Mircan's parents would speak to their six children in Turkish because, "they did not want us to have any problem with the society and speaking Turkish better was more important for them."

Music was always a part of Mircan's life as it was a fundamental aspect of the Mingrelian-Georgian culture in which she lived. Mingrelian, Laz and Georgian people sing polyphonic music[78] while working in the fields for instance. "Nobody teaches them, so they do this instinctively", Mircan says. At home, Mircan, her brothers and sisters often listened to the newly released records and tapes from all over the world. At weddings, Mircan's father, a businessman in the timber industry, would invite her on the stage to perform in front of everybody. When Mircan was nine years-old, the family moved to Istanbul so that the two eldest children could go to a good university. Mircan went to high school in the renowned Nişantası Girls High School. In those years, she bought her two first guitars and had private lessons from a Jewish guitarist. She sang and played songs of Carole King, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Melanie, the Beatles, King Crimson, Pink Floyd and Renaissance. At university, she participated into a choir of *Türk Sanat Müziği*. She also established along with three other young men a symphonic rock band. They composed songs with Shakespeare and Edgar Allan Poe's verses but never released

[77] A South-Caucasus language family comprising Mingrelian and Laz (sometimes understood as a single Zan language), Georgian and Svan. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Caucasian languages," accessed February 16, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/100251/Caucasian-languages.

[78] "any music in which two or more tones sound simultaneously (the term derives from the Greek word for "many sounds")" http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/469009/polyphony

an album.

Since 2005, the year where her musical career took off, Mircan has released nine albums. Mircan takes her inspiration from literary works, arts and philosophy. For instance, in 2008, she released an album entitled *Once Upon a Time in Mingrelia* which is a "multi-disciplinary work" resulting from Mircan's journeys to Georgia and Eastern Black Sea, the construction of a house with local people, the writing of a book, and composing of songs drawing from the words of the Mingrelian poet Xhelimishi Xasani. In 2012, Mircan released an album presenting her self-composed lullabies in Laz-Mingrelian language, entitled *Ninni* ("lullaby"). Mircan, who describes her style as "world music" or "Mircan's music", does not only perform music in the language of her grand-parents. She also performs in English as well as many other languages of the ethnic minorities in Turkey. Mircan's desire to recreate cultural unity through combining those various ethnic musics came from the environment which surrounded her as a child in the Eastern Black Sea mountains known for its linguistic and cultural diversity. In fall 2012, she released *Minor*, which contains folk songs in Abkhaz, Armenian, Azeri, Bosnian, Georgian, Laz-Mingrelian, Kurdish, and Turkish and Yiddish[79] languages. She frequently collaborates with many other artists in Turkey from various ethnic groups but also from the UK where she records most of her albums. In 2006, Mircan established her own music production company, UnCatalogued Music (UMC) after being rejected by a disc company who had told her her work did not "fit into their catalogue".

Apart from her interest in music, Mircan has obtained two MAs in different domains of Engineering. She has always been working in this domain – except for taking care of her children in their early years – combining this scientific profession with her

[79] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzZV0_C8vHs, accessed January 21 2013.

musical career. Although Mircan's close environment encouraged her to develop her artistic talents, her parents had strongly opposed the idea of making music a profession because she "was too successful at school". This was, she argues,

> … not a problem for me. I am not the type of a person who cares about what people say and think because I am very determined. The reason why I am dealing with engineering is not that my parents wanted or my social environment wanted me to do so. It is because I wanted to be like this, because I do both.]"(Kaya, Mircan. Personal Interview.2 November 2011)

Unlike Behiye who wishes to be able to make a living only by playing music and selling her CDs, Mircan's first acknowledged wish is not to make money with her practice of music. As she puts it in an article released on her music company website,

> I am fighting to stay outside of the mainstream in spite of pressure from the media. I am investing the money I earn from engineering into my music as an effort to remind people about what music used to be and what its purpose used to be. At the very least, music did not used to be a way of earning money[80]

During our interview, Mircan spoke along the same lines and added that,

> … personally I never wanted to sell music. I never wanted to be a musician only… For me, to sell yourself, to show up too often, to want to be a celebrity, a famous person, these are all to be controlled by the ego. I don't like it very much.]"(Kaya, Mircan. Personal Interview.2 November 2011)

Interestingly, while Mircan received more musical exposure than most women in Turkey, thanks in great part to the fact that she came from a wealthy background and was of Mingrelian-Georgian descent, Mircan rejected the fact that she was a professional musician – at least if one defines "being professional" as desiring to receive a monetary remuneration from being a musician.

In many ways, Mircan's wish has been to reaffirm the well-established musical

[80] http://www.ucmproduction.com/reviews/article4.xml, Accessed February 16th 2013.

traditions of the Mingrelian-Georgian women who performed within the community, in the fields while working and during celebrations or at home. The implementation of the modernization policies and of democratization did not necessarily provide Mircan with more opportunities to perform in public – as this had been encouraged by her social environment, in particular her father, since her childhood – but it has provided a greater access to a diversity of musical genres.

Modernization and the increasing interest in ethnic and religious minorities which emerged as part of the political democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s made it possible for women of the ethnic communities to perform outside of the traditional contexts and to get to know more about other communities' traditional musics. The economic liberalization Turkey experienced in the 1980s onwards and ensuing globalization, also allowed access to musics from all over the world, and in return influenced Mircan's musical composition. Indeed, Mircan mixed her traditional Mingrelian songs with songs of other communities of Turkey as well as with contemporary Western instruments and jazz forms, thus creating a new musical genre in Turkey and re-defining the concept of folk music in that country as one that integrates various languages and histories.

In a sense, Mircan is reaffirming the long-established traditions of Mingrelian-Georgian women musicians. Mircan is rendering this tradition accessible to people outside of this community, thus promoting at the same time the image of skillful women musicians, the culture of her ethnic group as well as carving her own place as an accomplished and sophisticated woman.

When Religion Encourages Women to Publically Perform Music

Ayfer Vardar was born in 1983 in Erzurum, a city located in Eastern Turkey known for its Sunni-conservative religious population. When she was 1½ year old, she, her five brothers and sisters, and parents moved to Istanbul. Zaza (or Zazaki), an Iranian language which shares some similarities with Kurdish, was the most common spoken language in the family. Only the youngest children, like Ayfer, became fluent in Turkish as they grew up and received education in this language upon their migration to Istanbul.

Ayfer is the only musician I interviewed whose parents and social environment did not oppose her choice to become a professional. On the contrary, they, in particular her mother, have always encouraged their daughter to become the professional *bağlama* player and singer that she had dreamt to be. Interestingly, the reasons which underlined her parents' encouragements were mostly religious. Ayfer's family members are from the Alevi community which is one of the most important religious minorities in Turkey[81]. As Alevism has developed since the 13th century in opposition to the mainstream Sunni-Islam in Turkey, "the most obvious difference... is their attitude to music" (Erol 2010:376). As Ayfer described it during our interview,

[81] Although some argue that Alevism represents a totally separated religion from Islam, many others have described it as related to Shi'a Islam and to Sufism. During the Ottoman Empire, Alevis have been perceived by the Sunni-Ottomans state as collaborating with the Safavid Dynasty in Iran were as such identified as "*Kızılbaş*" ("red-heads" which represented the Safavid's hat). As Ayhan Erol points out, "the Alevis were oppressed not only by the state, but were also disliked by the Sunni community [and were not considered as] 'proper Muslims" (Erol 2010:375). Alevism combines elements of Shia' Islam, ancient Turkic beliefs, and Sufi interpretations and evolved since the 13th century in opposition to mainstream Sunni Islam. Erol maintains that, while it is difficult to estimate the number of Alevis in Turkey as many of them have hid their identity for fear of persecution, the percentage of Alevis oscillates between 10 and 25 per cent in Turkey. Many languages are spoken within the different Alevi communities such as Arabic, Zaza, Kurmanci, but also Turkish (Erol 2010:377).

> … in our [religious/cultural] tradition the *bağlama* is used in our worship… Perpetuating this tradition (living it and making it live) is essential and important to our inner selves [*içliydi*]. I have embraced it even more. As well, the fact that *bağlama* is used very often in folk music in Turkey, created an immense love/desire for it within me (Vardar, Ayfer. Personal Interview. 28 November 2011).

The *bağlama*, or *saz*, is the most important instrument for the Alevis as it is played in *cemevi*-s (religious center) and in cultural centers during the *deyi*-s (songs) and *semah*-s (dances) of the *cem* ceremony. During those occasions, the *bağlama* player is referred to as *aşık, zakir*, *güvende*, or *sazende* depending on the region. Melodies tell about Prophet Muhammad, Imam Ali, Imam Hüseyn and heroes like Pir Sultan Abdal (ca. 1480-1550) who was a legendary Alevi poet persecuted by the Ottoman state as he rebelled against their authoritarian rule.

Ayfer "fell in love" with the *bağlama* at an early age. At 9 year-old, she was pretending to play the instrument with the help of a broom. While nobody played *bağlama* professionally in her family, everybody had some knowledge about it. As Ayfer mentions, "in every Alevi house there is a *bağlama* hanging on the wall even if nobody plays". *Bağlama* is invested with such sacred symbolism that it should never lay on the floor and instead should always be hung on the wall. *Bağlama* was, according to Ayfer's friend Erkan, a *dede*[82] who also plays the *bağlama* and was present at the interview, a "stringed Qur'an" [*telli Kuran*] because it sings the "words of God" [*kelam*]. When Alevis refer to "*kelamullah*", the term refers both to the Qur'an and to the *bağlama*. Ayfer became the first one in her family to perform the *bağlama* professionally.

When Ayfer's parents discovered her passion, they immediately registered her for *bağlama* courses at a *dersane* (local center for courses) and later at the *cemevi* where she

[82] Religious leader, the equivalent of an imam, in Alevi tradition.

learned from a student who had graduated from the Conservatory. As pointed out by Erkan, if a person manifests his or her intention to play the *bağlama* within an Alevi family, the father needs to provide the instrument and arrange courses for him or her as it is a religious obligation. As she desired to accompany herself on the instrument, she first learned singing as well. Then, Ayfer went to the Istanbul Technical University's Conservatory where she focused on another instrument, the *ney*. At the Conservatory, she also learned Western music, Turkish Art music and the *makam*-s as well as folk music.

Ayfer has been playing in front of audiences since she started learning music. At 9 years old, she played in front of her community in the *cemevi.* At 10 years-old, she performed at a fundraising event organized by an Alevi cultural center called *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Dernekleri*. Later, at 14 years-old, she started to perform on stage in *türkü* bars, the local cafés which started to become particularly popular in the mid-1990s and where folk songs from all over Turkey – but in particular from the Kurdish, Zaza and Alevi communities are played by (semi-) professional musicians.

Ayfer says that she started playing in *türkü* bars because "these were the kinds of places where you would start when you didn't have the chance to make an album at the beginning of your career." She was performing in secret because Turkish laws forbid people under 18 years-old to play on stage at least in commercial establishments like *türkü* bars. When the police came, managers of *türkü* bars would sometimes hide the young musician. At other time, the police would just presume that Ayfer was 18 years-old or they would simply ignore it because they were used to seeing her playing there.

Despite the fact that *türkü* bars are places which comprise a largely male audience, and where alcohol is consumed, Ayfer's parents did not oppose her choice of

performing in this setting because, they understood that she would not be happy if she played only in front of her family. She desired to experience the “atmosphere” of playing in front of bigger groups, in front of a crowd. Her family was not, she said, “of the mentality that “this place or that place is shameful”. The only problem she encountered when playing in *türkü* bars were when the members of the crowd quarreled regarding the choice of music she would play. In the busy times, Ayfer played 7 days a week in *türkü* bars, and in less busy times, 4 days or 2 days a week. In fall 2011 when I interviewed her, Ayfer did not play anymore in *türkü* bar but rather was a music teacher in a high school. She was however open to the idea of playing again at a *türkü* bar if the managers made a good proposition to her.

When asked if it was easier for Alevi woman to play *bağlama* now than before, Ayfer and Erkan both answered that it has become easier mainly for the songs collection [*derleme*]. In the past, when an Alevi woman musician went to villages – not necessarily Alevi villages – in order to collect songs from other *bağlama* players, she would have to be accompanied with another man musician or vice-versa. Gender segregations rules made it difficult for a woman not from the village to collect songs from local men. At best she would only be able to have a short chat with him. However, Ayfer points out that becoming a professional musician was certainly easier for her than other Sunni women. Because Alevis do not hold a prejudice against making music, unlike the Sunni, “it was not very strange or out of place for a woman to play *bağlama* among us Alevis”.

Conclusion

To conclude, it seems that although conditions were better for women to become professional musicians after the implementation of the modernizing policies during the single-party era and greater political democratization in the multi-party period, there were still many factors to do with cultural politics that helped or prevented their possible concern. The reality was that becoming a professional musician was not an easy choice to make, especially for those who came from the working class background because music did not bring a regular income and made it harder for one to live a conventional life. As well, because women public musical performance had not always been something condemned unilaterally in all Muslim communities, the influence of modernization and democratization might not have been so pertinent in all cases. Women who since childhood had opportunities to receive musical education and to be encouraged by their social environment to perform in public surely benefitted from political changes in Turkey but their choice of following this career path – or not – was clearly motivated by other concerns. The choice of becoming a professional musician was not as costly for them as they had either the support of their family or the financial means provided by another career.

Chapter 6 – How to Become a Respected Artist

In the two last chapters, I demonstrated that women encountered many problems upon making the decision to become professional musicians. While political and social change since the creation of the Republic of Turkey helped them finding new ways of performing in public settings, women musicians are still perceived by many today as 'entertainers' instead of as skillful artists. Women who however decided to become professional musicians, sometimes thanks to the opportunities of receiving musical education and exposure as they grew up, were therefore conscious of the potential loss of reputation they might have. This, I have suggested, because they threatened the male-dominated world order by appearing on stage.

In this chapter, I show what were the strategies women employ to follow their dreams of becoming professional musicians while preserving their respectability. The first strategy I explain deals with the 'desexualization' through controlling body image and behavior on stage. Sometimes women I interviewed this strategy to attenuate the risks of being perceived as a threat. At other times, this was imposed on them by other members of the band, often men, or managers who were conscious of the possible loss of reputation of their own group of venue, as I show by telling an anecdote from my interviews. The second strategy I will mention in this chapter has been chosen by most of the interviews and consisted of carefully choosing the performing venue and the kind of

music as means to attract audiences aware of the proper *etiquette* and to become better respected.

Desexualizing Women Musicians

One common strategy employed by women performers to gain greater respectability has been to present a kind of femininity which does not draw on traditional charm and sex appeal. For instance, one of the women musicians I interviewed, Filiz İlkay Balta, had chosen to perform *tulum*, bagpipes-like instrument from the Eastern Black Sea region. Because of the nature of the instrument – which requires great pulmonary capacity and a strong physical conditioning – and the fact that Filiz has always pictured herself playing in nature, she often wears clothes which gave an impression which project an active and sporty image of a feminine musician. Filiz has posted on her Facebook page numerous video clips whereby people can see her playing in the mountains, wearing running shoes, comfortable jeans and a sweatshirt or raincoat, her frizzy hair dancing in the wind, her face constricted by the effort of blowing into the *tulum*.

This kind of alternate femininity sometimes reflects women's desire to transcend the appropriate gender behaviors as it is often mentioned in the literature on women and music. Indeed, music provides a space for gender "cross-over", that is to say, musicians can more easily display characteristics associated with the other gender. For instance, anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have often noted the presence of women who behaved like "men among men" (van Nieuwkerk 1995). Marie Virolle in her study on the Algerian *raï* (2003) demonstrates that women singers, the *sheikha or shikha*, performing in cannabis dens, brothels and back rooms of cafés at the turn of the twentieth century

were the main proponents of this musical style. According to Virolle, the *sheikha* exhibited so-called 'masculine' characteristics such as swearing, shouting loudly, smoking, drinking alcohol in public, taking more space than what women are usually permitted, and singing in a deep voice. As well, Gail Holst-Warhaft (2003:10) who explored the lives of female Greek *rebetiko* singers past and present, noted that these women behaved in a similar manner and showed a "disdain for societal norms". Holst-Warhaft gives the example of Sotiria Bellou, an openly gay *rebetika* singer who fought in the resistance during the civil war in Greece and sang in taverns to support herself after the failure of her marriage. Bellou was among the few women who sang in all-men ensembles among the *rebetika* bands. She also had a deep, almost masculine, voice and dressed in "mannish attire, sitting at ease and smiling among her male companions" (2003:176).

In the case of Filiz İlkay Balta, she might have chosen to present a kind of femininity different from the socially accepted gender norms in order to gain respectability. Indeed, playing the *tulum* has posed several challenges for her since it is normally considered to be a 'masculine' instrument not traditionally associated with women. Filiz even proudly says that she is the first woman to play *tulum* in Turkey. Since playing music, she contended in the interview, has been considered by many in her social environment as "a sin" [*günah*], she might have chosen to lessen the chances of being perceived as 'the licentious entertainer' on which I have delved earlier in this thesis by presenting a femininity less sexualized.

At the same time, desexualisation can also be imposed on women musicians by an authority figure. Martin Stokes contends that because "musicians, by influencing an

audience, have the power to bring about social disorder; there is a tendency to give them a low social value. Throughout the Mediterranean world, therefore, the "desexualisation" of musicians is a well-known strategy for exercising control (Stokes 1994:23)".

In Early Republican Turkey, desexualizing or "degendering" and "regendering" – to use Ayşe Durakbaşa's words (1998:141) – women was a precondition for the push toward visibility in public arena. The new woman that the Kemalists idealized was supposed to exhibit a new kind of femininity which did not draw on sexual charm, but rather on modesty, elegance and intelligence. Kemalists favored a Western aesthetics which differed much from the Ottoman concepts of femininity and which reflected the new young urban woman who spent her days interacting with men in the public sphere: short hair, small breasts, narrow hips, an athletic body, and an "upright posture". Daughters and wives of Republican elites were expected to show their new femininity, wearing Western clothes, when attending Kemalist celebrations, cocktails and *soirées* (Schlisser 2007:4). During those occasions, their behavior was subject to a critical gaze as they still needed to show that they "preserved their honor". This 'desexualization' was reflected in many state-controlled structures such as school institutions.[83]

This 'desexualization' does not remain an important feature of everyday life in most public domains in contemporary Turkey because the top-down implemented Kemalist reforms remained a rather 'foreign' model for the population outside of big urban centers and for many of newly urbanized migrants. However, this 'desexualization'

[83] Zehra F.Arat (1998:169) argues that in the new schools which dispensed education to both girls and boys, girls were forbidden to wear any make-up, headwear or accessories. Girls' uniforms – as well as those of boys – were plain and of dark colors such as black or brown and for some years, children were wearing hats which resembled those of soldiers. As Arat puts it, "any reflection of femininity was scrutinized and often resulted in a scolding or an insult, if not punishment."

strategy is still at play in many domains where men have traditionally dominated such as politics and economics and is the case here, in the world of music.

Here I present the story of Esra Arslan, a young woman who faced pressure from other members of her band to "desexualize" her appearance and behavior and who resisted it. Esra Arslan was born in Kadıköy, Istanbul, in 1984 in a Turkish-speaking family. She studied business administration at university but never completed her degree because, as she explains, she had anti-consumerist/capitalist ideas. She worked as a restaurant administrator, in marketing, as a waitress and as a model. Work was very important for her because she financially supported her family when her brother went to university. At 24 years-old, she told herself "Ok. It is enough. It's my life and I have only one. I have to give it the value that it deserves. That I deserve for my life" (Arslan, Esra. Personal Interview. 1 December 2011). Esra was interested in the particular ways music was embedded in the lives of Gypsy people who fascinated her. Thinking that music was the most unifying language between humans, Esra started to learn music and compose harmonies by herself because she did not have money to pay for classes. It is through developing her network among musician friends that Esra started to participate in various musical projects. One day, members of the Gypsy-rock group *Velvele* ("commotion/chaos") asked her to be their lead singer and she accepted. Esra and other members of *Velvele* desired to make a kind of "anarchist" music, a non-profit-making music, and to play in the streets. With them, she has mainly performed at the well-known avenue *Araf* ("limbo"), where all important groups of Gypsy music in Istanbul play. *Araf* is located on the top floor of a building in the narrow streets of Beyoğlu, the cultural district of Istanbul where most venues and bars are to be found. When I went there, the

crowd was eclectic with thirty-something music lovers with long hair, mixed with middle class cosmopolitans enjoying fancy drinks, and a group of English-speaking young adults, intoxicated who were loud and took up all the space on the dance floor.

Many thought Esra was in the musical domain to become famous and make money while taking advantage of her beauty. She was the center of attraction every time I met with her. All men would turn on her passage, fascinated by such an uncommon figure. She was taller than all women and many men, dyed her hair bright red, underlined her green eyes with a large line of black kohl and sometimes wore short skirts which showed her long slim legs. She always walked around confidently, with a large blunt smile illuminating her face. Despite the fact that managers of *Araf* never discouraged her from expressing her views to *Velvele's* audience, they, along with other members of the band, told Esra that,

> "Sometimes you wear clothes which are too sexy. Don't wear that, audience will not respect you". I said, "Shut up! Get out of my way. Audience has to get used to the idea that we, women, can wear whatever we want as well." … Even an open-minded woman told me that, "You seem to like showing off your body. Don't you trust your singing? Are you trying to cover up something with your appearance?"… Some people think that a man is right to force you to date or flirt [with a person dressed like I am]. It is something real. I don't step back and I fight with that. I resist. I insist on wearing some woman's clothes, acting like a female human being, and I don't cover up [my femininity]. If a man thinks I am available and that he has a right to force me to date I can make him step back (Arslan, Esra. Personal Interview. 1 December 2011).

This attempt to control Esra's image and to hide her femininity was also a source of conflict between Esra and her fellow band members, all men. While her physical appearance was already subject to much discussion, her behavior on stage seems to have amplified this concern. Being a singer in a music group is to embrace the musical role of

a leader, but also to be a representative figure of it. Members of *Velvele* were afraid that the entire group would not be respected by the audience if Esra behaved in a too "feminine" or in a flirtatious way.

> The first time I got on stage, I acted different than the other vocalists before me. I was dancing, I was talking, and I was singing cheerful songs in a cheerful way. I didn't think that I should stay still and serious. It made me sing better because I was telling the story with my mood and my dancing moves. My band *Velvele* told me, "You are dancing too much. You don't seem serious on stage. The audience wants you to be serious or they won't respect you". I said, "Shut up! This is the way I am! You don't have to like me. You don't have to do business with me. If I can sing well, if I don't ruin the job you are doing and if I am doing it well, please stay out of my way. I hope that you join me in that, because we are telling the same story together. Let's join me and forget about me being a female. Let's tell [the song] together!" (Arslan, Esra. Personal Interview. 1 December 2011).

Many other women musicians, like Esra clearly affirmed their gender difference through clothing and attitudes, thus receiving mix-reactions from the audience and members of the band. On the one hand, their choice of presenting this public image can be understood as a way to conform to certain men-based standards for women to be young, thin, sexy and beautiful – in order to become "famous". Some women, as Esra mentioned earlier, perceived other women who dressed in "sexy clothes" or behaved in a flirtatious way to be complicit in men's expectations. On the other hand, others, like Esra, perceived it as a way to re-claim their femininity while demanding respect for it.

Figure 1: Esra Arslan and the band Velvele, ©Velvele, Permission January 2013

Esra resisted misperceptions and followed what she considered to be the best way for her to become a respected singer. Whether it is thanks to her resistance, or simply the fact that audiences "got used to it", Esra feels that "people respect these aspects of me now. I see that in their eyes. They admired … Now they find me unique, strangely serious when I am on stage… but I am doing the same thing as I was doing two years ago". People think that an intelligent, talented and beautiful women like her are "from another universe" and that she "must be really strong to do that". Audience, band members, and managers, now acknowledge Esra's talent, and respect her, but "differentiate" her from the other, "ordinary women". Esra is bitter about those reactions,

> I am doing my best for my own life, not to be perceived so differently from the other women, as a stronger and more talented person. I use my talents because it makes me happy it does not hurt anyone. I don't want other women to need to try so hard just because they are women… [I don't want that] ordinary women to try hard for ordinary goals" (Arslan, Esra. Personal Interview. 1 December 2011).

The Power of the Venue and of the Musical *Genre*

I have shown in Chapter 3 that general views about women musicians in Turkey did not always acknowledge their artistic talents because women were perceived as entertainers and "easy women" who "looked for fame". Esra has struggled with these perceptions by persisting to be "feminine" and showing that she was a hardworking, intelligent and gifted woman at the same time. This was one strategy. Another strategy which women I interviewed almost universally employed was to carefully choose the venues where they performed. Esra mentioned the power of place in providing respect to musicians, and more importantly the audience that such a place attracts. As she puts it, "[it is important to] to play music in front of people who are aware that they are there to listen to music". Music in entertainment places like a *pavyon* or a *gazino* is also very central but reflects more the ambiance of a cabaret where people's main purpose is to meet with other people.

Closely related to the venue is the music style. Each venue invites musicians from a very distinctive music genre. For instance, *Türk Sanat Müziği*, *Arabesk*, and Turkish or Western pop music are music genres which have been played in entertainment venues such as *pavyon*-s and *gazino*-s. The decade following the 1980 military coup saw new kinds of music emerge, brought about by intellectuals of the Left and/or the Kurds such as protest music, Kurdish music, and later, ethnic music. Those styles were perceived by their performers as 'higher status genres' because they were non-commercial. Musicians I interviewed played mostly in university amphitheatres, small underground cafés, unusual settings like an antique shop, and Marxist/Leftist/Feminist festivals. This created a new space for women to become professional musicians and to be respected as high class

intellectuals. In this last section, I argue that playing ethnic music is, in Istanbul, a strategy women musicians use to be respected as serious and skilled musicians.

When I asked Sumru Ağıryürüyen if there was a reason why municipal authorities in Istanbul had never asked her for her *vesika*, she answered, "Maybe [it is because of] the style of music that I am doing… I don't know" (Ağıryürüyen, Sumru. Personal Interview. 17 November 2011). Sumru Ağıryürüyen is a singer as well as a mandolin player. Since her university years at Boğaziçi University where she founded the music group *Mozaik*, she has been interested in playing folk music from various ethnic or religious groups, most importantly Gypsy/Balkan music, but also Sephardi-Jewish and Turkish music. Similarly, Gülcan Altan, who now plays not only *Türk Sanat Müziği*, but also Circassian (Adige) music, and world music, contends that,

> The type of music that is performed is very important. If you are performing *varoş* (poor suburbs') music [read probably *arabesk* or Turkish pop music] you might encounter difficult situations concerning your femininity. But as the audience/listeners of the music that I play have a certain education and are more "cultured", I don't really encounter many problems (Altan, Gülcan.Personal Communication. 17 November 2011).

Women playing protest or Kurdish music, and later on, ethnic music, usually managed to escape the stereotype of "easy women". I asked Şirin Özgün, a young woman who used to play percussion in Kardeş Türküler, if she had ever had the impression that male audience perceived her in that way while performing. She became extremely embarrassed – I myself felt awkward and regretted having asked her such a question – and she answered that it had never been the case. As Gülcan Altan pointed out above, the fact that members of the audience in places where ethnic music is performed in Istanbul have come from intellectual, (upper) middle class, and Leftist environment

have prevented women musicians from being perceived as an “easy woman”.

Ethnic music is a style which has attracted an audience that was conscious of the work and talent that women musicians required to perform on stage. As Bourdieu says, “all cultural practices… , and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level and secondarily to social origin” (1984:1). The social identity is affirmed (or achieved) through the “practice” of going to an ethnic music concert in non-commercial venues. Most places where I attended ethnic music concerts during my fieldwork were frequented by intellectuals from the (upper) middle class who tended to respect musicians – and more importantly women musicians – as artists not as entertainers (or even worse, prostitutes). Members of the audience did not attend those concerts just for easy entertainment. They were there because, in Bourdieusian terms, to assert their social identity as “cultured” people and also because they shared the performers’ ideological and aesthetical stance.

Ethnic music however has become more than a phenomenon restricted to (upper) middle class intellectuals. It has also attracted, because of being “ethnic”, people from all backgrounds, thus creating sometimes a gap between certain members of the audience’s expectations and that of the musicians’. This problem was primarily reflected on the proper *etiquette* and respect to adopt at concerts. The examples I show below demonstrate the importance that the venue and the music style have in relation to the respect the audience shows to the performers. I describe two settings and compare the different components in order to draw some factors determining the respect granted to the musicians.

A Solemn Silence at Gitar Café: Ayşenur Kolivar's Bahçeye Hanimeli

One evening, I was heading to Kadıköy's center to attend Ayşenur Kolivar's concert at *Gitar Café,* a venue managed by Sumru Ağıryürüyen and Kolivar among other. The concert was held to celebrate the release of Ayşenur Kolivar's new album *Bahçeye Hanımeli* (KALAN). The two-CD album presents "women's songs" – that is songs performed traditionally by women and/or related to so-called 'women's concerns' – from the Turkish, Hemşin, Mingrelian, Laz, Georgian, Circassian, and Greek communities of the Eastern Black Sea. The songs focus on women's experiences during the "migration to foreign lands, exile, forced emigration, and population exchange that took place in the Eastern Black Sea [region]" (Kolivar 2012). Ayşenur Kolivar, born in the Eastern Black Sea region in 1976, is currently a PhD student in Musicology and Music Theory at Istanbul Technical University as well as a former member of Kardeş Türküler[84]. She has been conducting fieldwork since 1996 to document the different realities of women from the Eastern Black Sea region through their songs.

Gitar Café was established five years ago and is a non-profit organization. Musicians, ethnomusicologists or music lovers in charge of the place are volunteers. Various amateurs and professionals of world music and ethnic music perform there three or four times a week. I had to buy my ticket (25TL, app.14 $CAN) in advance, knowing that *Gitar Café* can only accommodate an audience of not more than forty people. The price of other concerts that month varied between 15TL to 25TL. *Gitar Café* is located on the second floor of a hundred year-old apartment building in a quiet street off of Kadıköy's center. *Gitar Café* is one bloc next to Kadife Sokak – also informally named

[84] The album *Bahçeye Hanımeli* also features performances from other Kardeş Türküler members.

"*Barlar Caddesi"* ("Bars' Street") – famous for its rock bars, cinema, tattoo shops, small cafés, restaurants, independent/underground boutiques and used records shops. The neighborhood is very animated at night with hundreds of enthusiastic middle class adults in their twenties and thirties drinking beer, conversing, playing chess, and discussing politics. During the day, the numerous cafés offer shady terraces where the same crowd of people sit on long cushions while drinking tea, smoking the *narghile* or working on their laptops.

Gitar Café used to be a private house. Organizers, Sumru Ağıryürüyen says, aimed at perpetuating the tradition of holding intimate concerts in such settings, without a big stage. Cultivating such intimacy at concerts, Sumru Ağıryürüyen explains that,

> We tried, [with the creation of *Gitar Café*] to destroy… the distance between musicians – "god musicians" (*laughs*) – and the audience. We are almost at the same level. After concerts or even before, [the audience] can "touch" the musicians. We are not stars, we are humans… We have to be together, we *need* to be together, that is the idea! (Sumru Ağıryürüyen, Personal Interview, November 17th 2011).

I entered the concert room – which probably used to be a living room or a parlor – which had two sections full of old velvet sofas, old chairs and long wooden tables. Organisers had drawn a map with each seating place available and the name of the person who had booked it, just like in restaurants. Every square centimeter was calculated. The audience was gender mixed and of all ages. Most people were couples or accompanied by two or three friends or family members. They all spoke Turkish, but I also heard English spoken once or twice. They joyfully chatted, sipping beer, wine, tea or coffee. I also noticed the presence of one notable British ethnomusicologist who stood in the corridor for the entire concert and spoke with all the organisers. Since the first drink was included in the price, I

ordered a glass of red wine which arrived in a coffee mug a few minutes later.

As the show started people immediately stopped talking and moving[85]. Everybody listened quietly to the singer. Ayşenur Kolivar was dressed in a simple black and grey cotton gown which shaped her short and delicate silhouette. With very little make-up, she stood erect and serious in front of the crowd. Her strident, nasal and high pitched voice – characteristics of Eastern Black Sea women's way of singing – filled the small room. She was accompanied by six other musicians (one woman, five men) who played traditional Black Sea instruments like *kemençe*, *tulum*, *panduri* and different types of percussion, but also "Western" instruments like cello, guitar and bass guitar. During the show, the music encouraged people to mark the rhythm on the ground with their foot or shoulders. At other times, music was sad, slow, and deep. Some members of the audience closed their eyes and gently swayed their heads and looked to be in a trance. Nobody talked. Everybody seemed concentrated on the sole purpose of admiring the beauty of Kolivar's music. The ambiance was solemn, and corresponded perfectly to the description written on *Gitar Café*'s website, "[d]espite the service of drinks and food, [*Gitar Café*] is a place where people focus on the music listening quietly while at other times it is filled with cheerful listeners…"[86].

Chaotic noise at Kooperatif: Perapolis at the Fundraising Concert

On October 23rd 2011, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake occurred in the mainly Kurdish populated city of Van, in Eastern Turkey. 523 people died, 1,650 were injured and 2,000 buildings collapsed. This dramatic event happened at a time when the Turkish army,

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[85] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMKFovgDJAg&list=UUGo5JeiI6lB3ahC933bzeZg, accessed May 7 2013

[86] http://www.gitarcafe.com/gitarcafe-in-english/, accessed May 14 2013

responding to the killing of 24 soldiers, was chasing the PKK, the Kurdish separatist armed-movement, in the region. Ethnic tensions were more vivid than ever. Following the earthquake, Turkish government refused foreign help for many days arguing that there was no need for it. My friends, consternated by the government's slowness, organized their own trips to Van, 1,260 km from Istanbul, to bring tents, food, diapers, blankets, and other stuff. While TV channels broadcast images of collapsing buildings over and over, men looking for relatives among the dusty rubble and families trying to warm up in the Kızılay (Red Crescent) tents surrounded by snow, musicians started to organise fundraising concerts. A big rock concert was organised. Smaller organisations also mobilized themselves.

My friend Neslihan and I attended a fundraising concert at *Kooperatif Arts and Performance Hall* in the busy cultural district of Taksim. We went on the spur of the moment and paid 10 YTL (app.6$CAN) for each ticket. We entered the bar/café through a small cement staircase that led to a basement in a narrow dark alley behind the mosque on Istiklâl Caddesi. The first time I had gone there a couple of days before, it had taken me at least five minutes to find the place as there were no formal indications. People were sitting in the staircase, smoking and drinking beer. There was a joyful and loud ambiance inside. Two arches opened on to the low ceilinged café concert hall. There, a couple of tables occupied the space. At the back of the room in front of an alcove, a low stage was cluttered with speakers, sound systems, chairs and microphones.

There were four bands playing that night. The first to play was the recently-formed group Perapolis[87] which performs "*café aman*" music – precursor to world-

[87] "Pera" refers to the neighborhood in Istanbul which corresponds to the district of Beyoğlu today. The expression was still in used during the Ottoman Empire where the neighborhood was home to a very

known *rebetika*[88] music – in both Turkish and Greek languages. Rebetika was popular among the lower class Greek-speaking populations in the cities of the late Ottoman Empire, like Smyrna (Izmir) and Istanbul. The Turko-Greek war and the population exchange[89] that followed in 1923 brought thousands of Greek-speaking Anatolian refugees to mainland Greece. Those refugees who came from urban centers contrasted sharply with the mainly rural population of Greece in terms of manners, customs and music. The music they brought along was a "mixture of instrumental music based on the classical Ottoman tradition, of popular songs from Istanbul and Smyrna, and of Greek folk songs and European-style café music" (Holst-Warhaft 2003:172). In the early 1920s, rebetika music was more commonly referred to as *café-aman* a music genre that featured vocal improvisations called *amanedhes* (sing.*amanes*). The "aman!" (mercy!) exclamations punctuated the songs which spoke with nostalgia of the harsh life in the back streets of Istanbul, Smyrna and Piraeus where refugees had immigrated from and of hashish smoking.

While rebetika was not popular in Istanbul in the 1960s and 1970s due to the mass emigration of the Greek-speaking population in the early republican period, it regained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. Daniel Kolgin (2008:4) argues that this resurgence was brought about thanks to political musician Zülfü Livaneli who collaborated with Greek singers like Maria Faranduri and Mikis Theodorakis; and to the group Yeni Türkü who released in 1992 and 1994 successful versions of rebetika songs translated into Turkish. In 1990, the Turkish government also removed the ban on the public screening

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multicultural population, including the Ottoman-Greeks, but also French and English. "Polis" in Greek means city.

[88] For more detailed explanations on the music genre *rebetika*, please see Chorbajoglou (2012).

[89] Please see description of this event in chapter 2.

of Kostas Ferris' film *Rembetiko* (1983) which had became quite acclaimed around the world and created a new fashion for rebetika.

If new interpretations of rebetika have become very popular in Turkey in the last three decades especially among a new class of cosmopolitans nostalgic for a common Ottoman past (Kolgin 2008:11), the renewed interest in *café aman* has just started. A few weeks before the Van earthquake, three Turkish-Greek men musicians had approached Esra Arslan, *Velvele*'s soloist whom I mentioned earlier. They needed a woman singer who could sing in both Turkish and Greek. Esra was performing songs in Turkish, Arabic, Macedonian, Romanian, Hungarian, Roma/Gypsy language and Greek. Esra explained that, "[the three Turkish-Greek musicians] planned to make c*afé aman* music because it's so rare in Istanbul[90]. You can hear rebetika all over Istanbul but *café aman,* we don't know it well". For Esra, *café aman* was a more authentic music genre than rebetika because it had not been commercialized and become a form of entertainment. She argued that, "[*Café aman*] is the more musical and melodic side of Greek music. Rebetika is for fun and rebellious purposes only. *Café aman* is more for music… We play the *café aman* songs, you know, *as they are*".

That night at the fundraising concert for the Van earthquake, the place was crowded with members of the Istanbul's Greek-speaking community. They were there for Perapolis because I had never seen them at concerts for other groups at Kooperatif which I frequented a lot during my fieldwork. The Greek-speaking group comprised about

[90] Perapolis does not seem to have been the only group to be interested in performing *café aman*. Another group, purposely named *Café Aman*, also emerged the same month, and released an album with the famous ethnic music production company KALAN. The latter group used more the authenticy/nostalgy aspect of *café aman.* Black-and-white video clips on the internet and advertisement on popular TV chains showed members of the group dressed in early twentieth century fashion while singing the well-known *Gülbahar.* In comparison, Perapolis seemed more discreet in terms of advertisement. By the time I attended their concerts, they did not have a website yet, they had not released any albums or video clips, and they were dressed in contemporary clothes.

fifteen people who all knew each other. They spoke Greek between themselves but Turkish to the waiters. There were two or three people over sixty years-old in this group, but most of them were in their thirties or twenties. The twenty other people that formed the rest of the audience spoke Turkish, English and French. People could hardly fit in the room. People at the entrance of the café next to the bar did not seem to pay attention to the concert although they could see the stage from the two arched openings which connected the two rooms. The echoes of their conversation however amplified those omnipresent in the main room where we sat.

Three Turkish-Greek men playing the *oud*, violin, percussions and guitar came onto the low stage. They sat around the soloist, Esra. Unlike her performance with *Velvele*, she sat seriously and upright, only moving her arms and her shoulders to illustrate melodies. Indeed, women who sang *café aman/rebetika* in the past never danced while performing.

Despite the great beauty of the songs, the concert soon became very unpleasant. Members of the Greek-speaking group in the audience 'accompanied' the singers during all the songs up to a point that we could not hear Esra nor the other musicians anymore. At some point, two young women of this group went right in front of the low stage to dance, thus blocking the view for the rest of us. Their friends and family members shouted and clapped to encourage them. Other members of the audience, Turkish and English-speaking also spoke very loud.

Esra tried to calm down the crowd between songs but in vain. On many occasions, my friend Neslihan intervened to ask people to stop talking. Esra seemed very disturbed by all this noise and she left the stage immediately at the end of their performance. The

noise and talking continued with the two other music groups. During the performance of the third group, *Yukarı Deniz*, formed by five Kurdish men coming from the region of Van where the earthquake took place, the music was very dramatic but rhythmic. Again, members of the Greek-speaking group encouraged the two young women to dance to this music in a "baladi" style. My friend Neslihan immediately looked at me horrified. She was outraged that people danced in this fashion to such sad music. She thought it disrespectful for the musicians who carried the emotional load of such a tragic event as the earthquake. Neslihan, who could not bear to see the musicians playing without anybody but us listening, decided that we should leave.

Discussion

Silence is an indicator of respect in the performing of ethnic music. To remain quiet is to acknowledge the efforts and the talent of the performer in creating music. As such, practitioners do not perceive ethnic music as entertainment but rather as a form of art. When comparing the two events – the Eastern Black Sea concert at *Gitar Café* and the *café aman* one at *Kooperatif Arts and Performance* – I asked myself which factors determined the audience's decision to remain silent, or not.

The first factor considers the location of the performance. Geographic location, décor, ambiance, and activities practiced within this setting are indicators of what *etiquette* is expected from the audience. Ayşenur Kolivar's concert at *Gitar Café* was more restricted in many aspects. In terms of geographic location, *Gitar Café* being situated in Moda, Kadıköy – on the Anatolian side – is not as easy to access as Kooperatif Arts and Performance in Taksim which is in one of the busiest place in Istanbul and where all roads converge.

As well, *Gitar Café* cultivates a kind of "*bourgeois bohême*" intimacy by giving concerts in an old parlour. This reminded me of the Late Ottoman times when most of the entertainment for the (upper) middle class took place at home where members of the household – most commonly women – played music as amateurs. Playing music at home was an activity which marked the (upper) middle class status. Such intimacy was also encouraged during workshops organized at *Gitar Café*, like "*Birlikte Söyleyelim*" (Let's Sing Together) which I attended on November 12th, 19th and 26th 2011. Four other women and I were all sitting on an old sofa, singing together Sufi chants, Balkan/Gypsy and Sephardic-Jewish songs, and drinking tea, while Sumru Ağıryürüyen, a great figure in the world of ethnic/world music in Turkey, taught us the basics of rhythms, voices, and improvisation. The homely feeling provided by the space also aimed at "destroying the distance" between the musicians and the audience which is a kind of bourgeois illusion since many famous and renowned performers of world/ethnic music came to *Gitar Café* and thus had also a claim to be cosmopolitan as well. This kind of *rapprochement* seems to have had a price however, given the costs of the concert ticket as well as of the workshop which I attended. The fundraising concert at Kooperatif in comparison was less than half the price I paid at *Gitar Café's*.

Finally, because not many people could fit into the room at *Gitar Café*, reservations were mandatory thus creating some kind of demand. Because it is not a commercial venue, concert's advertisement was almost non-existent apart from *Gitar Café*'s website and brochures. That night, people who were "just passing by" could not come in. This was not the case at Kooperatif which is bigger and can accommodate much more people and where members of the audience kept entering and leaving without

reservations.

The second factor influencing the audience's behavior has to do with the "kind" of ethnic music being played. On the one hand, all Ayşenur Kolivar's songs at *Gitar Café* were folk songs which Kolivar, a researcher in ethnomusicology, had collected in the Eastern Black Sea region. The album resulted from an intellectual endeavour which was conscious of keeping the ethnic or community authorship of the songs. Songs were not commonly performed on a stage, in a city like Istanbul although a few were popular songs that other singers also sang. They were rather associated with women working in the fields or at home in all-women gatherings, or songs sung during holidays, or at least this was the impression given to the audience.

Ayşenur Kolivar's voice is also very particular, nasal and high-pitched. Her music can be a masterpiece for an ethnomusicologist or a person native to Eastern Black Sea region, but it is not musically accessible for everybody. Just like the *tulum* (Eastern Black Sea bagpipes) melodies Filiz Ilkay Balta – another musician I interviewed – played, certain kinds of ethnic music resonate better with *aficionados* and *connoisseurs*. The problem of the accessibility of music has also been underlined by other musicians I interviewed like Mircan Kaya, an Eastern Black Sea musician who collaborates with British and other Western musicians when performing traditional folk songs. As she puts it,

> To convey to the younger generations and to the people living in cities like Istanbul, Izmir, or Ankara, you have to do something different, you have to use Eastern and Western elements together, you have to add something in a traditional song. If you just play the *bağlama* or traditional instruments and sing the songs, in purely a traditional way, you do not reach many people (Kaya, Mircan. Personal Interview.2 November 2011).

Ayşenur Kolivar's album was produced by the recording company KALAN which mostly succeeds in combining "traditional" music with Western sounds or more contemporary forms of music (like *arabesk* for instance). Thus, musical arrangements using Western instruments like cello, guitar and bass guitar and Western musical forms aimed to 'attenuate' Kolivar's particular voice technique and to make her music more accessible in Istanbul and in many other regions of Turkey. Despite this, the album certainly addresses a *connoisseur*'s ear. Those *connoisseurs* are most of the time, fellow ethnomusicologists – like the one who was present at that concert – or communities where the songs originated. Thus, Ayşenur Kolivar's ethnic music is a style which, when performed at *Gitar Café* – that is, taken out of its original context for performance –, attracted more of an upper class audience and had an intellectual aura.

Café Aman on the other hand is not rural folk music. It is a style which was played at the turn of the century in lower-class entertainment places such as taverns, cannabis-dens, and brothels (Holst-Warhaft 2003). Just like rebetika, it has been reclaimed by the Greek and Turkish-Greek middle classes as a national style for the former, and as a distinctively ethnic style for the latter. Members of the Greek-speaking community took most of the space in the concert hall because, I believe, they were proud that their musical traditions were being recognized in a Turkish state and society which had ignored and even sometimes attempted to suppress their culture. The Greek-speaking group could have been considered 'chauvinists' but in the context of Turkish state's treatment of the Greek-speaking communities, their behavior was a celebration of the fact that their music was something fashionable and promoted in the public space. The Greek-speaking community's interest was beyond a simple cosmopolitan fashion, they knew the music's

history, what kind of music *café aman* was and in what kind of place it was performed in the past. Their behavior – singing over the singer, creating one's own show by sending girls to dance in front of the group, paying more attention to conversations than music, and flirting – was a contemporary interpretation and reproduction of how the lower class audiences behaved at the turn-of-the century taverns. They were reproducing and celebrating the "informal atmosphere and tumultuous *joie de vivre* one often experiences in Greek" rebetika performances (Koglin 2008: 15). In some way they wanted to be actively part of the show rather than being passive audiences who enjoyed someone else's ability and art.

However, *rebetika* and *café aman* have attracted non-Greeks from all over the world in the last two decades. Intellectuals and Leftists have also showed a special interest in it. The ethnic music company KALAN, for instance, has released two archival albums of original recordings from famous *rebetika* singers. Koglin speaks of the "intellectualization" of *rebetiko* which was brought about by the leftist circles (Koglin 2008:21). *Café Aman,* is now performed as an "ethnic music" enjoyed by (upper) middle class cosmopolitans. It is not considered entertainment anymore. It had become 'art', with a different *etiquette.* Perapolis' musicians expected to be respected through having the audience remain silent during their performance. Nevertheless, the Greek-speaking group's behavior dictated the appropriate behavior for all the other non-*connoisseurs* in the audience. During the interview with Esra, Perapolis' singer, I brought up the topic of the lack of silence during this particular show. She took the opportunity to express her discontent. As she put it,

> Some people don't know how to listen to a musical performance… I don't understand it at all! You go there to listen to some music. It's your aim, it's your *primary* aim and you start to chat with the others… We are doing the job properly not for ourselves only, we are also doing it to be respected by the audience, by you… We are trying our best *because of you*. You should pay attention please. It's a matter of respect … It's not disrespectful for me only. It's disrespectful for the victims of Van earthquake. We are here for them; we are not doing it for entertaining you or ourselves (Arslan, Esra. Personal Interview. 1 December 2011).

Having demonstrated how two ethnic music concerts in two different settings were understood in two opposite ways by their audience, I here argue that the expected proper audience behavior at an ethnic music concert is encoded with class. Characteristics of the venues (location, organisation, price, etc.) as well as the "kind" of ethnic music played are important factors which determine the status of the music group, and by extension, performers. A place is more than just an abstract and objective physical setting. For instance, in North-American and European classical concerts, people who applaud between different movements of a concerto or a symphony are subject to *connoisseurs*'- often the upper class' – scoffing gaze. The latter often complain to concert organisers during the *entr'acte* asking them to remind the audience of the particular *etiquette.* Those *connoisseurs* respond in part to performers' expectations. Applauding between the movements of a concerto or a symphony becomes synonymous with disrespect for musicians and other listeners. In the case of Kolivar's concert at *Gitar Café*, audience followed the proper *etiquette* (that is, remaining silent) because they were upper-class *connoisseurs*, or at the very least, aspired to be.

Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate that women musicians have been using ethnic music – a genre which in Istanbul is mainly in the hands of Left-wing intellectual circles – to become respected artists. Women I interviewed represented the first and second generations of musicians who attempted to show that they were talented, educated, and intelligent artists who deserved to be taken seriously. While the first generation had, mostly in the early years of their career, experiences of being associated with prostitutes or easily available woman, many women of the earlier generations did not encounter such problems as much. Despite this change, however, the idea that women on stage were 'available women' still permeated the minds of many. For this reason, male venue managers or fellow band members sometimes compelled women musicians to present a desexualized femininity. Although this could have been a strategy for women to be considered in more respectful terms, Esra - who faced this problem – had chosen to assert her own understanding of femininity and to ignore those demands, which resulted in a positive outcome.

The most common strategy for professional musicians was to carefully choose the music genre and so the place where they would perform. In this case, I have shown that ethnic music provided a space where women performed in front of *connoisseurs* who often came from the (upper-) middle class backgrounds who shared performers' aesthetic tastes and were aware of the *etiquette*. In this case, women musicians escaped from being identified with sexual stereotypes and were appreciated as skillful artists. On the other hand ethnic music, while not being restricted to (upper) middle and intellectual classes of audience, was also enjoyed in other contexts and in front of different audiences who did

not necessarily behave according to the performers' expectations of *etiquette*. In those circumstances, women musicians, like other performers, were still perceived more as entertainers.

Chapter 7 – “Songs from a Woman’s Mouth”

In the previous chapter, I have demonstrated how ethnic music, by attracting an audience which was conscious of respecting musicians as skillful artists, provided opportunities for women musicians to break away from the image of the entertainer which has dominated the world of music. In this last ethnographic chapter, I show how women performers of ethnic music negotiate, reaffirm, or protest inter-gender arrangements. Instead of drawing on musicians’ life stories as I did in the last chapters, here I examine how women musicians reinterpret traditional ethnic folk songs which speak of women’s lives, their hopes, their frustrations, their sadness, their activities and their sources of joy in order to comment on contemporary events and propose alternative understandings. I delve into the “*kadın ağızın türküleri*” – literally “folk songs from a woman’s mouth” – or “women’s’ songs” to illustrate how women have been expressing themselves on matters of domestic or inter-group relations, but also on topics traditionally considered to be “masculine” such as war and politics.

At first, I present the literature on gender segregation in the world of music and demonstrate that women’s and men’s *répertoire*s and instruments have more often than not been strictly separated due to cultural concepts regarding the place of both sexes in the public and private spheres. I illustrate how political and social change in the 20th has affected the exclusivity of those *répertoires* and provided new ways of redefining gender roles and inter-gender relationships. Following this, I show how famous Kurdish

musician, Aynur Doğan, faced prosecution after releasing her own version of the song *Keçe Kurdan* (Kurdish Girl) which subverted the traditional inter-gender arrangements and was booed at a recent concert after singing in Kurdish. Then, I present two 'women's songs' from the eminent ethnic music group, *Kardeş Türküler* – which has been famous for performing traditional songs from different ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey with contemporary sounds and instruments.

Men's music vs. Women's music

Women's songs and more particularly the separation of women's and men's musical spheres has been subject to much discussion in the anthropological and ethnomusicological literature (Koskoff 1987; Post 1994; Doubleday 1999; Abu-Lughod: 1999/1986, to name just a few). This literature has, more often than not, represented women's performance of folk songs in rural settings. Ethnomusicologists have shown that women and men – behaving in accordance with gender segregation rules prevailing in the society where they live – have been expected to remain within certain musical *répertoires*, roles and instruments. Firstly, women's *répertoires* have 'traditionally' talked about relations between the sexes, whether in a romantic or humorous way (Doubleday 1998:182), and has also taken the form of laments, weddings songs, songs during housework, and lullabies (Koskoff 1987:15). As well, in many societies where men control political, economic and religious structures, men have excluded women from classical or religious *répertoires*. For instance, Veronica Doubleday shows that the main difference between women's and men's *répertoires* in Herât, Afghanistan, was the fact that women "did not perform classical or devotional music, which was a male preserve" (1998:182). Men professional musicians used a system of notation which they "jealously

guarded" and therefore prevented Minstrel women from having the knowledge of various rhythms, modes and structural elements in the music (Doubleday 1998:178). On the other hand, women performed music in private and domestic settings therefore providing an occasion for them to complain about and tease men (1998:182).

Secondly, many instruments have been associated with one sex only. Doubleday, in another study (1999), demonstrates that women have been the ones who have always played frame drum (*deff or daireh*) in the Middle East while men practically never did so, and this, has been the case since Ancient Mesopotamia (third millennium B.C.E). Jennifer C. Post, also notes that in Western classical traditions some instruments such as the keyboard, guitar, and harp are more likely to be perceived as "feminine" instruments since they were thought to "demand[...] no alteration in facial expression or physical demeanour" (1994:40). Musicians playing the instrument and *répertoires* 'belonging to the other sex' "could be stigmatized as [indulging in] improper and socially unacceptable behaviour" (Magrini 2003:8).

Gender segregation and its repercussions on the musical domain have been a source of constant devaluation for women's art. Many men have traditionally looked down upon women's *répertoire* or instruments. They have perceived women's art as "non-music" or not "real-music" (Koskoff 1987:15). For instance, Doubleday explains that while contemporary Afghan women perceive the frame drum, the instrument they mostly play, as "a good thing" which has the power to chase malevolent spirits (*jinn*), Afghan men see it in more negative terms and generally with derision as a "women's instrument". She observes that, "The drum has no part in prestigious genres like classical or radio music, and male professional musicians scathingly say women do not "know

anything" about music theory" (1999:118). Because of this, women musicians have been less often considered as respected musicians despite the fact that they have often been at the forefront of musical composition, performance, diffusion, as well as be archivists of the popular *répertoires* of musical traditions (Danielson 1991).

Post shows that women conventionally play in all-women spaces in three kinds of settings: when they are alone while doing domestic work; in small-group orientation during collective work or to entertain themselves with other women; or in the company of their children - for instance, when they sing lullabies (Post 1994:37). In numerous Middle Eastern societies, the most common event for women's performance of music is during weddings ceremonies. Doubleday points out that in Afghanistan if bridegroom's women do not play frame drums, they hire other women professional musicians. Wedding processions are among the very few events where women can play in public (1999:112). Doubleday also notes that public performance was authorized for the new years' celebrations in the parks of Herât but then in the mid-1970s, men started to forbid it (ibid.). Due to this emphasis on gender segregation and the restricted space to play music, women musicians have had fewer opportunities to play in public (Post 1994:42). Those who did perform in public, like professional musicians, have often had a "worldly experience far beyond the average expectation" (Doubleday 1998:174), despite the general mis-perceptions of licentiousness. Doubleday observed that her Minstrel friend, Shirin, who crossed the boundaries of the private sphere, had "a generally wider and more informed view of her own society than most women I met. She had the opportunity to meet women from very different walks of life: from the ultra-religious to the emancipated, and from the relatively poor to the very rich" (1998:174).

In spite of this, many authors note that the segregated world of women also paradoxically gives them more chances to develop their own *répertoires* and styles and to accomplish limited social change (Post 1994:44). Doubleday observes that, “Middle Eastern women often enjoy the privilege of all-women space, a setting which facilitates the power of female solidarity and provides the principal context for music-making” (1999:103). Likewise, Koskoff adds that gender segregation “can also act as a positive catalyst for female bonding” (1987:9) and provides them “a socially acceptable, if limited, forum for musical expression as well as an environment for the expression of gender identity” (1987:9). This observation has also been made in the anthropological literature (see Abu-Lughod 1985; El-Guindi 1999).

The exclusivity of these *répertoires* and instruments is however subject to changes due to social/political actors and factors, or what Tullia Magrini frames as, “the loss of ‘traditional’ contexts for performance” (2003:8). Among those social/political actors and factors, are urbanization, ‘modernization’, sedentarization, “the rupture of large households” (Magrini 2003:8), globalization, migration to large cities, the adoption of a neo-liberal economic policies and lifestyles. Those forces bring about changes concerning gender roles which in turn affect the exclusivity of the ‘traditional’ *répertoire*s and instruments appropriate for each gender. These changes have in some cases been detrimental to women. Many woman musicians have lost the monopoly of their *répertoire*s because of the commercialization of their music by agents other than themselves. For example, during her fieldwork among the ‘Awlad Ali Bedouin tribe Lila Abu-Lughod observed that women performed *ghinnawas* (little songs) in front of other women and young men. *Ghinnawas* were a form of resistance against men of the tribe

(1990:46). However, with the urban migration which sparked off the commercialization of music through new technologies (the cassettes), young men started to record and sell *ghinnawas* and use it them to confront patriarchs of the tribe. *Ghinnawas*, thus became almost exclusively a "male forum of resistance". Abu-Lughod shows that women did not follow suit as they were more reticent in recording their music because of their understanding of modesty. Women felt uncomfortable that, first, their voices would be heard by (male) strangers and second, they would have to sit with unrelated men in a recording studio (1990:48). This resulted in fewer opportunities for these Bedouin women to perform music and young men of the tribe slowly took possession of it. Hence, women "lost access to this mode of resistance" (1990:48) "through the cross-appropriation of musical *répertoire*s or practices that had caused a shift in their previously established feminine or masculine nature" (Magrini 2003:8).

Loss of the monopoly of *répertoire*s is also a direct consequence of the new tendency of mingling between the two sexes in societies where local customs used to foster gender segregation. These observations have been made in Turkey, notably by Şirin Özgün. In our interview[91], Özgün described her MA fieldwork in an Alevi village in the region of Kahramanmaraş in Turkey. Özgün was interested in women's performance of frame drum (*tef*) which occurs mainly during the henna ceremony (bride preparation) called, in Turkey, *kına gecesi*. Özgün observed frame drum performance as a woman's activity practiced in all-women spaces only. According to her, gender segregation – which used to be quite normalized in most rural areas of Turkey – created safe places for women whose art could develop without men's interference. Knowledge of the instrument and the instrument itself passed on from older women to younger ones, new

[91] November 17th 2011.

styles emerged, lyrics composed and a musical life flourished. However, with social changes such as industrialization and the implementation of the secular modernist program in Turkey which strongly promoted mixing of the sexes as well as the professionalization of women as part of the attempt to modernize the country, women's practice of frame drum is declining. Paradoxically, what the Kemalists authorities instigated to liberate women and promote their integration into the public arena did not always result in better opportunities to develop women's art. Özgün's conclusions are that frame drum performance is,

> ... still a feminine activity but the place of drummers is not so emphasized because there are not many drummers anymore. It is about to perish ... Before, the *kına geceleri* [the henna nights] were done between women only, in domestic places. Now, they changed it. All women and men are playing and singing together in one place. But now that men are present, women can't sing or dance. There is a change which seems positive, but there are some contradictions in this change because it does not give liberty to women, it oppresses their expression (Ozgün, Șirin. Personal interview. 17 Nov. 2011).

Because of the political and social changes mentioned above, the women Ozgün interviewed desired to have a profession which would allow them to support themselves as well as to be respected. Many of them did not see music as a source of income which – thanks to the modernist project on which I have elaborated earlier in this thesis – they considered to be their responsibility. In fact, those women – whose grandmothers were playing the frame drum from one generation to the next – looked down upon the professionalization of music perhaps because it took away control of music from women in general, and left it in the hands of professional players of both sexes.

Songs, whether in the men's or women's *répertoire*, are a space for the construction of various gender models, as I have shown in chapter 1. Similarly, music

reflects/constructs how inter-gender relationships vary. Although men usually control the political, religious, educational, and economic institutions, both Koskoff and Margini contend, each society and each household in fact organizes its own gender arrangements, suggesting that there exists a wide range of social configurations. Despite the fact that women are overall disadvantaged in most systems, such variability permits the opening of a negotiation or contestation space. Musical performance as a result can be a platform from where inter-gender relationships can be contested, confirmed or transformed (Koskoff 1987:10). Koskoff distinguishes four categories of musical performance which surface in relation to inter-gender relations:

i) Performance that confirms and maintains established social/sexual arrangement;
ii) Performance that *appears* to maintain established norms in order to protect other, more relevant values;
iii) Performance that protests, yet maintains, the order (often through symbolic behaviour);
iv) Performance that challenges and threatens established order (1987:10).

The third and fourth categories – music as a vehicle for protest - address the topic I will explore in this chapter since women in Turkey have used this medium to express their anger (and sexual needs, Koskoff would add) thus challenging the expected behavior for women (Koskoff 1987:10-11). Indeed, the analysis of women's music provides us information about what women "themselves can tell about their roles in the society, [about] their feelings, and protests through the symbolic forms of song, dance and ritual" (Magrini 2003:15). Music, in a sense, becomes a weapon through which they are able to contest prescribed gender roles and propose alternative ones.

Aynur Doğan and the Controversy of "*Keçe Kurdan*" (Kurdish Girl)

This research on women playing ethnic music would be incomplete if I did not to devote at least one section to the famous Kurdish-Turkish singer Aynur Doğan. Aynur Doğan's songs were the first ethnic music friends introduced me to during my first stay in Turkey in 2007 and 2008. I immediately bought her album *Nûpel* (KALAN 2005) which I listened to over and over again for many months, mesmerized by her strong and rich voice which told Kurdish love stories, the sad and the happy ones. Her voice reminded me of those powerful women *dengbêj* or *stranbêj*, or Kurdish Minstrels, like Ayşe Şan (or Eyse San) (1938-1996) who amidst an environment in general hostile to women professional musicianship stood among a male tradition of *dengbêj* and commanded respect as talented and respected performers.

Aynur Doğan, whose popularity rose after her participation in the German-Turkish film director Fatih Akın's *Crossing the Bridge: The Music of Istanbul* (2005), has been giving concerts internationally even in places without any prominent Turkish or Kurdish communities like Singapour[92]. Aynur Doğan was born in 1975 in the Alevi-Kurdish province of Tunceli (Dersim) in Eastern Turkey. She moved in 1992 to Istanbul where she studied *bağlama* and singing at the prestigious *dersane* (lesson house) ASM (Arıf Sağ Müzik). Aynur Doğan has released seven albums with the recording company Kalan.

The release of her most famous album *Keçe Kurdan* ("Kurdish Girl") in 2004 created an uproar in the Turkish public arena. The eponymous song, originally composed

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[92] Pektaş, Ali. 2009. "'Kurdish Initiative Exciting and Inspiring" says singer Aynur Doğan" *Today's Zaman*, 17 October 2009, www.todayszaman/newsDetail_openPrintPage.action?newsled=190141 , Accessed 16 March 2013.

by the political Kurdish singer Şiwan Perwer[93] exiled to Germany already had a politically contentious aspect since it was one of the first Kurdish recording released after the lifting of the ban on Kurdish language in 1992. The song goes as follows:

[94]keçê biner çerxa cîhan	Girls get up and announce your voices to the world
zor girêdane me re zor	Difficult things also await you up there
jin çû ne pêş pir dizwîni	Because women are up front and they study now
êdî qelem ket şûna şûr	They take their pen since it's mightier than the sword
keçê em dixwazin bi me re werin [şêwrê	Girls, we want you to come into the light with us
Keçê em dixwazin bi me re werin [cengê	Girls, we want you to come to battle with us
Hayê hayê em keçikê kurdan in	Yes, we are Kurdish girls
şêrin em li cengê em li hêviya merdan	We're lions, we're vivacious, we're the hopes of men]
hayê hayê em kulîlkê kurdan in	We are the roses of the Kurds
derdê nezana berbendî serhildan in	We rebelled against the troubles of the ignorant

Fifteen months after the release of Keçe Kurdan song and album, the Sixth Criminal Court of the province of Diyarbakır banned the album under the pretext that this song "encouraged women to go up into the mountains and engage in separatism"[95] along with the PKK (the Kurdistan Worker's Party). A higher court annulled the decision in September 2005. However, another incident occurred on 13 November 2007 when Mehmet Arslan[96], editor of the local radio station Dünya in Adana, southern Turkey, broadcasted Aynur's Keçe Kurdan. He was accused of "incitement to hatred and hostility" but acquitted on 19 March 2008 (Önderoğlu 2009).

Another episode politicized the career of Aynur. On Friday July 15th 2011, she

[93] Please see chapter 3.
[94] Lyrics and translations taken from Bates 2001:95.
[95] www.aynurdogan.net/en/biyografi/index
[96] Mehmet Arslan had already been pursued and acquitted two years before for broadcasting "Mihemendo" a Kurdish song from Şivan Perwer. The anti-terrorism unit of the Adana police were the ones who had filed a complaint.

had to leave the stage under the audience's jeering. The concert, organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Arts and Culture (IKSV) which gathered five women singers from Portugal, Greece, Israel, Spain and Turkey, was held at *Harbiye Hava Açık Tiyatrosu* (Harbiye Open Air Theater) in the upper class neighborhood of Nişantası in Istanbul, a neighborhood associated mostly with secularists and nationalists. Such incident happened at the time where the "Kurdish question" polarized the Turkish society as two days before the concert thirteen Turkish soldiers had been killed by the Kurdistan's Workers' Party (PKK). During Aynur's second song, some people in the audience started to shout "the martyr's blood is not yet dried" and "sing Turkish" (Güzeldere 2011) and whistled. In the aftermath of the concert, she received support from left-wing intellectuals and artists who "fear[ed] an increase in nationalist tendencies and tensions" (Utku 2011). After writing a statement whose main line was "Let's silence the guns, not the songs"(Utku 2011), those intellectuals and artists called for a peace march. The demonstration taking place a few days later reunited a thousand people – Turks, Kurds and others – who walked on Istiklâl Caddesi[97] and chanted slogans such as "[t]o the stage Aynur, to the stage!" (Comert & Jamjoom 2011) and "we only need to make peace" (Comert & Jamjoom 2011). At the end of the peaceful demonstration, protesters gathered, danced to and sang Aynur Doğan's most famous song, "*Keçe Kurdan"* ("Kurdish girl").

Through playing songs in the different Kurdish languages[98] of the Middle East, Aynur seeks to recreate the unity among the very diversified Kurdish communities which

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[97] A long strip in the center of Istanbul which hosts many demonstrations every year.

[98] Aynur Doğan sings folk songs of the different Kurdish languages like Soranî - spoken by the Iraqi-Kurds-, Goranî – which Iranian-Kurds speak – various dialects of Kurmancî spoken among the various Kurdish communities of South-Eastern Turkey, and finally in her mother tongue, Zazakî, spoken in the Alevi-Kurdish region of Dersim (Tunceli) in Eastern Turkey. She also sings in Turkish.

have been separated by geographical constraints, but also political ones, like forced emigration or population displacement.

Women of Kardeş Türküler

Boğaziçi University, more particularly the *Boğaziçi Folklor Külübü* (Bosphorus University's Folklore Club) and later *Boğaziçi Gösteri Sanatları Topluğu* (Bosphorus University's Performing Arts Ensemble), has provided a fertile ground for the establishment of musical groups conscious of ethnic and religious diversity, like *Mozaik* in the 1980s and *Kardeş Türküler* in the early 1990s. As the number of feminist organizations increased in the late 1980s, a group emerged in the late 1990s named *Feminist Kadın Çevresi* – FKÇ (Feminist Women Circle) within the structure of *Boğaziçi Folklor Külübü*. FKÇ has been organizing conferences and music concerts during the International Women's Week that starts on March 8th every year. During these concerts, which are restricted to women audiences, FKÇ musicians sing "women's songs" reflecting the diversity of women's experiences from all around the world, as well as between different ethnic and religious communities and social classes in Turkey. Some of the most active members of FKÇ went on to play with the mix-gendered ethnic music group Kardeş Türküler. They brought along with them those "women's songs" into the group's performing *répertoire*.

Since its inception, Kardeş Türküler has focused on "women's songs" - or what Fehmiye Çelik and Feryal Öney, two members of Kardeş Türküler and FKÇ, frame as "*Kadın Ağızın Türküler*" ("folk songs sung from a woman's perspective") (2008:162) - as an important part of its *répertoire*. Kardeş Türküler has performed women's songs in different languages of Turkey, restoring their authenticity to their ethnic origins. The

songs have been about diverse topics: young women's sadness in departing from their families upon marriage, women's oppression from their overload of work in the fields or at home, their exploitation by their husbands and mothers-in-law, un-wanted arranged marriages, women's anger, mothers' laments over their children's death in wars, women protesting against the political and ethnic violence in Turkey, violence men inflict on women, their lovers, forbidden relationships between men and women, women's solidarity, their hopes and dreams, as well as women's working songs – that is, songs particular to different communities that their women sing while working collectively in the fields or at home. While the folk traditions of Turkey contain many songs traditionally sung by women which tackle topics known to be of "women's concerns", a limited number of women musicians in the public arena have performed them in an attempt to empower modern women[99]. Moreover, the *répertoire* in languages other than Turkish was not addressed for many decades – because of the ban on non-Turkish languages and absence of focus on ethnic identity – and thus lacked the representation of women from ethnic minorities, a deficiency that Kardeş Türküler sought to remedy.

Kardeş Türküler has performed "women's songs" in a way which denounces injustices against women but at the same time hopes to empower and encourages them to take control of their own lives. For instance, women musicians have often added 'empowering' verses to their interpretation of popular folk songs, as I show below. Moreover, apart from addressing women's realities through songs, Kardeş Türküler has been able to preserve the only musical domain where women have dominated since pre-

[99] The most popular of those "women's songs", before the rise of the ethnic music movement, had been Tulay German's version of the folk song *Burçak Tarlarsı* (Field of Vetch) which had been popular in the 1960s and 70s and spoke of women's overload of work in the field and exploitation by their husbands and mothers-in-law (Çelik & Öney 2008:166).

Islamic times. Women in Turkey, as well as in many other Middle Eastern countries, have often been the ones involved with the practice of percussions, at least in “amateur” practice and/or practice in all-women gatherings. Diler Özer, Selda Öztürk, Burcu Yankın and Şirin Özgün, some of whom I had the chance to interview, have been the ones the most consistently playing the many different percussion instruments in Kardeş Türküler’s songs: *asma davul*, *askı davul*, *el davulu*, *def*, *bendir*, *darbuka*, *djembe*, *conga*, *bongo*, *cajon*, *erbane*, and *zil*[100]. By preserving this “tradition” – that is fostering women’s long relationship with those instruments – Kardeş Türküler has acknowledged the expertise of women in this domain and promoted it in the public arena.

Despite this attempt to break into the world of music usually dominated by ‘men’s concerns’, Kardeş Türküler’s women were restricted to merely performing the songs as singers or instrumentalists. It was only upon the release of the album *Bahar* (Spring) in 2005 (KALAN) that women became involved in other domains of musical production: from control room to stage management, from archival work to the preparation of the *répertoire*, the creation of the costumes for the shows, the composition of songs and lyrics, and the musical arrangements (Çelik & Öney 2008:163). The album *Bahar* marked a turning point in the inclusion of women at different levels of musical production and also brought the issue of women’s representation in arts into focus. The majority of musicians and other staff involved in the production of the this album were women[101]. Since its release, Kardeş Türküler has started to perform songs at concerts played only by women singers and instrumentalists.

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[100] From albums *Bahar* (2005) and *Coçuk H’aklı* (2011). For a description of the instruments please see the appendix.

[101] In the background picture of the *Bahar* CD pocket, there is a picture of members of Kardeş Türküler, all dressed in beige pants and pastel shirts and gathered together under a blooming apple tree. On the 21 musicians, 16 are women.

Negotiating Domestic Inter-Gender Arrangements

Here, I would like here to draw particular attention to the song *Gülsüm*, a traditional song from the Teke region[102], because it is Kardeş Türküler's first song to be composed, performed, arranged and recorded exclusively by women. As part of a "women's voice folk songs", *Gülsüm* was first performed during the International Women's Week Festival at Boğaziçi University by the women of BGST and the Folklore Club. It was later included in *Kardeş* Türküler's *Bahar* album. The song is about a young woman, Gülsüm, getting married and leaving her father's house. In the original version of the song, Gülsüm's father is talking to her. He is complaining about her departure, not because he loves her and will miss her, but rather because he will lose a working member of the family.

[103]Gülsüm, a Gülsüm	Gülsüm, ah Gülsüm
Sen buralardan gittiğinde	when you leave here, who will drive
Davarları, koyunları, sığırları,	the flocks, the sheep, the cows,
Sıpaları, tavukları, köpekleri	the colts, the chickens, the dogs?
kim gütsün?	Who will drive them?

Fehmiye Çelik and Feryal Öney (2008:170) sought to re-write the words of the song. They say that they wanted it to be a song for a *kına gecesi* (henna night), or the night which precedes the marriage of a daughter and where women perform music among

[102] A region bordering the city of Antalya in South-Western Turkey.

[103] Lyrics in Turkish and the English translation of the song are taken from Kardeş Türküler's *Bahar* (2005) album's booklet. The *Uğurlama* (Farewell) part of the song was composed by Neriman Güneş, written by Feryal Öney and Fehmiye Çelik, and performed by Feryal Öney. Important here to mention is also the presence of a *sipsi* (see appendix for the description of the instrument) player, Halime Özke, who was originally neither playing with Kardeş Türküler nor involved with any of the Boğaziçi clubs. Instead, Halime Özke, is one of the few women playing *sipsi* in Turkey and originally plays in weddings.

themselves. Just like when they weave carpets together, knead dough for *börek*[104], or prepare the *tarhana*[105], the *kına gecelesi* is an occasion where women can "get their frustrations against men off their chests" (Çelik & Öney 2008:170). Although these occasions do not directly empower women *per se,* as Çelik & Öney argue, they provide a relatively free forum of expression for women and an opportunity to develop a potential to change the future. The Kardeş Türküler's version of the song *Gülsüm* also presents the father's perspective but in a theatrical and mocking way. The *Uğurlama* (Farewell) below composed by Çelik & Öney was added to the original song shown above. In this "new" complementary version, Gülsüm is sent to her husband's house but receives advices from the women of her family when they say farewell to her.

Inek sağdırı, odun kıydırı,	She milks the cow, chops the woods
[südü pişiri, kaymağı taşırı	boils the milk, skims the milk]
Ocakta yemek, öğlene pişcek,	she'll cook food on the hearth for the afternoon,
[tarlaya gitcek	and go the fields]à
"anası, atası, danası, sıpası…"	"[damn] his[106] mother, his father, kids…"
(atıyo tepesi, atıyo tepesi)	(she bellows up)
"öffffff beeeeee!"	"Uffffff!"
Kınamızı soldurana	come on girls, let us say "enough already"
gülümüzü kurutana	to the one who makes our henna fade

[104] A thin-crust salted pastry baked in different shapes and containing various ingredients such as cheese, spinach, leeks or potatoes. The dough (*yufka*) – similar to the one used to make *baklava* - is stretched and thinned on large low circular wooden tables and with a thin rolling pin. Because some making *börek*-s is a long process, the dough is often made, in villages mostly, during the collective work of women.

[105] A kind of powder made of dried yoghurt, various spices, flour, and tomatoes. It is meant to be kept during the winter months and cooked with water to produce a kind of instant soup.

[106] Although Çelik and Öney do not mention neither in the song nor in the explanations, "his" probably refers here to Gülsüm's new husband. As well, it is not clear in the explanations of the song who is the locutor of this stanza. Is it Gülsüm's father still complaining about the loss of his daughter as he was at the first couplet or the women attending the *kına gecesi* who provide advice as it is the case in the following verses? I would tend to think that it is more the father's perspective, since Feryal Öney clearly uses a very low tone of voice maybe as a way to imitate and mocking a man when she sings, "[damn] his[106] mother, his father, kids…", as if the father was jealous of his daughter's future family-in-law for the work she will do for them.

ömrümüzü çürütene	who parches and shrivels our rose,
"öfff be!" diyelim hele…	who rots our lives
Gülsüm, kız Gülsüm	Gülsüm, girl Gülsüm,
Gelin olup gittiğin evde ahıra avluya,	in the house you'll be married into, don't you go running to the shed]
çalıya çırpıya, tarlaya odun da sen koşma gari	the yard, gathering tinder, working the fields, chopping wood]
kız Gülsüm…	girl Gülsüm
Gülsüm yolun açık olsun	Gülsüm, may your road be open
Gurbet ekde başın (bahtın) gülsün	may you be happy in that far-off land
Gözünden yaş döktüreni	and may fog descend on the road
Yollarına duman çöksün	of anyone who brings tear to your eyes

A great number of "women's songs" challenge the existing gender arrangements and sometimes even propose alternative gender roles and inter-gender relationships. As I have demonstrated in chapter two, Kemalist reforms, although providing new professional opportunities for many women, have not completely changed the existing gender arrangements. Many studies have focused on the exploitative nature of women's work in the traditional societies, in particular the duties expected of a daughter-in-law (*gelin, "*the one who comes", in Turkish). For instance, in her study on women embroidery workers in poor neighbourhoods of Istanbul, Jenny B.White (1999;2004) demonstrates how a woman's identity is achieved through her participation in the family's work which is understood as her duty. In return, women receive security and protection of the family. Fear of being mistreated by the husband's family, in particular the mother-in-law (*kayın valide*) and the husband himself, a very real possibility, is often expressed and lamented through songs.

However, the mis-treatment of the daughter-in-law is often considered as something that all women have to cope with until they become themselves mothers-in-law, a kind of future reward based on the exploitation of the next generation rather than a

social change. This circle of exploitation has often been presented as one with no escape. As I have mentioned earlier referring to Koskoff's four categories of musical performance in relation to inter-gender relationships, there exist women's songs which "protest, yet maintains, the order" (1987:10). Here *Gülsüm* takes a different stance, thanks to Kardeş Türküler's inclusion of the new verses. Although women do not encourage Gülsüm to break completely with the existing gender arrangement – indeed, Gülsüm will marry[107] and leave her family - women however urge Gülsüm to resist certain exploitative aspects of this union[108]. Instead of perceiving Gülsüm as a victim of such a system, or simply protesting against it, women encourage Gülsüm to take control of her destiny, to see the different opportunities and chose the one which will make her the most happy. I also appreciate how women's solidarity is portrayed in this song and how women – maybe older women who know the reality of the kind of life they have had and have suffered – decide that Gülsüm will not contribute to the perpetuation of this circle. Women ask for Gülsüm's protection and they call for the punishment of those who will make her suffer. In other words, those women show that despite the fact that there are conditions which limit the full emancipation of women, women themselves always have a choice to negotiate between those limits. Women *can* aspire to a happy life.

Protesting Against the (Social) Violence Inflicted Upon Women

Another topic Kardeş Türküler approaches through the performing of "women's songs" is the denunciation of violence against women in Turkey. Despite the fact that there has been some improvements in the legal apparatus to guarantee gender equality, to

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[107] Indicated by the verses "in the house you'll be married into" and "may you be happy in that far-off land".

[108] As shown by "don't you go running to the shed the yard, gathering tinder, working the fields, chopping wood".

criminalize domestic violence, sexual assaults, so-called honor killings, sexual harassment and trafficking[109], the number of women victims of men's violence has increased, especially in Istanbul. Men killed one woman almost every day in 2012[110]. The internet-based Leftist newspaper *Bianet* which focuses on gender issues, has been compiling, all cases of violence made against women (murder, rape, harassment in the streets) reported in the media since 2010. In 2010, 217 women were reportedly killed by men. In 2011, it was 257[111]. Commentators generally argue that violence against women is on the rise because of the migration of rural families into urban centers resulting in a crisis whereby daughters want to appear and behave "modern" (i.e. secularized) against more modest traditional customs of their families enforced in particular by their fathers and brothers. Others say that this has always been a problem but that the higher numbers merely reflect better and more widespread reporting (Shafak 2011). In North-America and Europe, many anthropologist and social scientists have criticized the media's and other public figures' tendency to see 'honor killings' as a phenomenon unique to Muslim communities (Terman 2010:5-6). For instance, Yasmin Jiwani and Homa Hoodfar have contended that using the label 'honor killings' "serves only to frame 'honour killing' as peculiar, when in reality it is part of a larger pattern of violence against women." Jiwani and Hoodfar (2012) have instead proposed the use of the term 'feminicide'. Sherene Razak (2008) has also argued that 'honor killings' just like forced marriage, the veil, female genital mutilation, and female seclusion has been manipulated by the North American and European countries to eject the Muslims from the mainstream.

[109] See the report www.stopvaw.org/turkey

[110] www.bianet.org/english/prnt/136709-men-killed-one-woman-almost-every-day

[111] We can imagine the number to be quite superior to those numbers as many actions are not reported to the police officials, or police officials do not bring the issue to the media.

Similarly, in Turkey – where political elites have long identified Kurds as foreigners or excluded them from the collective national identity – Hilal Onur Ince et al., among many others, have denounced the media's ethnocentrism when "correlate[ing] [the so-called honor killings] to the culture of the Kurdish and Arabic minorities for whom clan-based social formations are still dominant" (2009:539). Starting from a feminist reading of the Turkish modernization, Hilal Onur Ince et al. show that honor killings – which they prefer to term as "customary killings" – should be explained by the inability of the "modernization process' … to transform men and letting them remain – or worse, redefining them – as 'fathers', guardians and guarantors of the social structure" (2009:549).

In order to denounce the violence against women, but also to deconstruct the idea that women's killings by their male relatives only happens among the Kurds, women musicians from Kardeş Türküler composed a song, *Güldünya,* in honor of one of the victims (Çelik & Öney 2008:174). Güldünya Tören was a 22 year-old woman from the South-Eastern city of Bitlis who was killed in February 2004 by her brother. After becoming pregnant, unmarried Güldünya had fled to Istanbul to give birth[112]. After a family council was held that judged Güldünya as guilty, her brothers[113] tracked her down in Istanbul and shot her. Güldünya survived and found shelter at a hospital in Istanbul. Although she asked for police protection while she recovered at the hospital, one of her brothers entered her room two days later, claiming to be one of her relatives who desired

[112] http://www.kwrw.org/kwahk/index.asp?id=62, accessed 26 July 2013.

[113] According to a report by Kurdish Women Action Against Honor Killings, families often force or encourage male teenagers of the family to perpetuate the crime because they receive lighter sentences. Güldünya's two brothers were sentenced, the eldest to life, and the youngest, still minor at the time, for 11 years in prison. http://www.kwrw.org/kwahk/index.asp?id=62 , accessed 26 July 2013

to visit her, and shot her dead[114]. Güldünya Tören became a very strong symbol in Turkey for the struggle against women's murder by their relatives. Women members of Kardeş Türküler who were also in FKÇ decided to the song *Güldünya*[115] not only in Kurdish but also in Turkish in order to oppose the steretoype associating such crimes exclusively with the Kurds. They argue instead that violence against women, in many ways, happens all over Turkey and all over the world (Çelik & Öney 2008:175). Lyrics of the songs (presented below in Turkish only) denounce the concept of *namus* which explained earlier.

Olmaz olmaz, yok böyle gitmez.	No, no, it won't go on like this
Lekeydi yasaktı diye diye,	saying it's a stain, it's forbidden
Bu dünya dönmez!	This world cannot turn
Namus kimin?	Whom does the honor [*namus*] belong to?
Bu hayat kimin?	Whom does this life belong to?
Olmaz olmaz.	No no
Ah güldünya gülmedin ya	Ah Güldunya, you have not smiled
Güldünya gülmedin ya	Güldunya, you have not smiled
Şarkın vardı yarım kaldı	you had a song which remained incomplete
Dondu dilinin ucunda	which got stuck at the tip of your tongue
Olmaz olmaz böyle olmaz	No, no, it cannot be like this
Bıktım namus belasından	I am sick of this honor [*namus*] nonsense
Kirlenen ne aklanan ne	What is it that gets dirty, what is it that gets cleansed
Bıktım artık düş yakamdan[116]	I am tired of it, go away from me

Kardeş Türküler were not the only musicians to write songs about Güldünya, whose murder has probably been the most politicized among all cases of violence against women. Rock musician Aylin Aslan, and other famous figures like Sezen Aksu, also

[114] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3494270.stm , accessed 26 July 2013.
[115] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LqhwVR7M50 This the only recording I could find on the internet from this song which was not added to any of Kardes Turkuler's albums.
[116] http://eski.bianet.org/2006/03/10/75660.htm, translation by Emre Ünlücayaklı.

released songs about Güldünya to oppose the culture of violence against women, in Turkey and all over the world. As part of the claims from the feminist movement which really started in Turkey by the end of the 1980s (Dinler & Tokaş 2010), violence against women has been perhaps one of the issues which has gathered together the most different branches of feminists in Turkey, ranging from the Islamic feminists to the secular and the Kurdish ones. While these movements often disagree on many issues – most of the time due to the Kemalist worldviews promoted in certain feminist associations and resulting in the exclusion of the religious, leftist and Kurdish feminists – one common point of unity among them has been to raise awareness on feminicide. My roommate Berrin who has been one of the leading figures in the *Feminist Sosyalist Kolektif* organization told me how one of their most successful campaigns year after year has been the distribution of thick needles to women to counter sexual harassment in the public transportation, a project that had started in the late 1980s and was named *Mor Iğne* (Purple Needle) (Dinler & Tokas 2010). This feminist organization has also collaborated with one of Kardeş Türküler's percussionists, Selda Öztürk, in order to provide, percussion classes to women, free or at a nominal cost, as a way to re-affirm women' expertise in this domain in the Middle East, and to reinforce women's solidarity.

By raising awareness on such political and social issues as ethnic conflicts, war, and violence against women, feminists, like women members of Kardeş Türküler, have used music as an effective tool for changing a common perception that (Muslim/Kurdish/traditional) women are silent, have no resources, and are victims of a deeply rooted patriarchal system from which they cannot escape. Instead, they are proposing the image of women as agents in charge of their own lives who have the power

to make a better future for themselves and all the other women. At the same time, they are advocating for the re-definition of a new national identity for Turkey inclusive of all ethnic and religious minorities that have traditionally been excluded from the national culture.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate how women effectively use traditional folk songs and subvert them in order to contest and re-negotiate gender roles and inter-gender relationships. I have first outlined the main anthropological and ethno-musicological concepts and showed that men's music and women's music have traditionally been two separate domains which operated in parallel with gender segregation in Muslim societies. While gender segregation prevented women from taking their place in the public arena, it nevertheless provided a venue for them to vent their frustrations against men, to perpetuate and teach music to younger generation, to have a forum of expression, and to foster women's solidarity.

As many new nation-states, including the Turkish Republic, implemented modernizing policies in the 20th century, their attempts to redefine the public and private spheres – and along with it gender roles – has blurred the boundaries between what is considered "women's music" and "men's music". While in many cases this change has been detrimental to women – men have sometimes used this opportunity to appropriate women's traditional *répertoire* – it has on the other hand allowed women to present their songs in the public arena. By doing so, women musicians have attempted to prove that so-called women's concerns are in reality everybody's concerns.

As such, women performers of ethnic music – who have often been feminists or at

least have been sensitive to gender concerns – have used traditional songs from the many ethnic or religious minorities in Turkey to address a larger set of concerns within the Turkish society. Through modifying those songs, they have proposed new inter-genders arrangements which empower women by encouraging them to break with or to negotiate around the established gender roles. As well, by creating new folk songs denouncing the patriarchal structures within all segments of Turkish society, they are working to make Turkey a better and safer place for women.

Finally, women performers of ethnic music are re-creating cultural unity in Turkey by bridging gaps between different ethnic and religious communities. By mixing-up instruments, musical forms and sometimes dances from the different minorities with the lyrics in different languages they are attracting a diverse audience and attempting to combat the traditional prejudices.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that professional women performers of ethnic music in contemporary Istanbul have been able to carve their place in the public sphere – otherwise denied to them – and, at the same time, to gain and maintain social respect. I have attempted to show that women's development of musical careers in Turkey has overall been a difficult experience as they have had to battle the traditional ideas regarding the appropriate gender roles for women which were strongly influenced by the Ottoman and then Turkish societal concepts of private and public spheres as well as the general prejudice against musicians, and more particularly women musicians in Islam.

Indeed, during the Ottoman times, women musicians' place was – just like any other subject of the sultan – clearly circumscribed by ideas regarding the proper place of not only men and women in the society, but also the social classes in the society. As I showed in Chapter 1, the seclusion of women within the private sphere, in the Ottoman traditional society as well as in many other Muslim communities, has pertained more to members of the upper classes in urban settings. For this reason and because Islam has more often than not condemned music, many in the society thought of professional musicians who performed in public as 'low status' people. For women musicians, this association of being of a 'low status' was often coupled with accusations of loose morals. Thus, women who played within the public sphere as professionals were rarely Muslim women, but rather women less concerned by the Islamic concepts of private and public and of music, namely the non-Muslims and more often than not, the Gypsies, the ultimate

outsiders. Interestingly, concubines within the inner most private space, the Imperial *harem*, could transcended the private and the public boundaries, at least concerning their musical training, thanks to their slave status. As a result, the Muslim women (by birth) who could be involved with musical practice were often those who did not seek and/or need monetary compensation, that is, the upper class women who played at home as amateurs. Music became, with the growing influence of European models on the upper classes during the Late Ottoman Empire, a marker of elite status.

The distinction between the public and private spheres – and along with categories of women musicianship – were to be blurred during the Late Ottoman Empire with the rise of the nationalist movements first among the non-Muslim populations and then among Muslim-Turks. With the social, political and military upheavals those movements engendered, European modernism and secularism were proposed by many as a solution to maintain the cohesion of the Empire and to prevent its collapse. Soon the upper-and-middle classes who increasingly adopted/imitated European ideas, fashion, and cultural practices started to question the status of women in the society and saw as necessary their progressive inclusion within the public arena. A limited number of women benefitted from this new opening to develop careers – especially during the WWI. Teaching music became one respectable avenue for women musicians to earn a living.

The process of inclusion of women within the public arena continued as the Empire lost the WWI and collapsed, and when the Turkish Republic was established in 1923. The new government under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk broke with the Ottoman mould and attempted to modernize the society through granting women more rights, fostering their education and their professionalization, and forcing the mixing of the sexes in the

public arena. I have shown in Chapter 2 how during the single party era (1925-1950), many Muslim women musicians benefitted from those reforms as they took their place on stage while performing the state-approved music: that is, the Western 'light' music (tango, waltz, etc.) and the newly 'invented' folk music. The latter had been created to promote the reformists' ideology (Kemalism), to bring 'the people' to a more 'civilized' stage, and most importantly, as a way to achieve the formation of a nation united under a single national identity – Turkishness – that suppressed all other ethnic or religious identities. Consequently, songs from the numerous ethnic and religious communities were translated into the new Turkish language, standardized through notation, and categorized regionally. These endeavors were carried out in parallel with much more drastic measures to exclude non-Muslims from the definition of Turkishness and to assimilate the ethnic others (like the Kurds, Circassians, Lazs, Arabs, Bosnians, etc.). The lack of democracy and dictatorial tone of the Kemalist reforms also reverberated into the musical domain where all other *genres* were forbidden on the radio, and later the television.

It is only upon the opening toward a more democratic political system, that new musical *genres* emerged in the public sphere. Women along with men performed in the numerous entertainment venues that sprouted in urban centers which soon saw the migration of thousands of people attracted by the employment opportunities. The rise of political music in the 1960s and 1970s, like *Anadolu Rock/Pop*, served to oppose the state through proposing the inclusion of new collective narratives. This politically committed style also developed in the years following the 1980 military coup thanks to the deregulation of the media resulting from the implementation of neo-liberal policies.

Political music took the shape of *Protest music, Kurdish/Alevi music,* and in the 1990s, *Ethnic music* genres. More importantly, as I argued in Chapter 3, those styles which openly questioned the homogenizing policies of the state, became at the same time a platform for women to break the mould of the 'licentious entertainer' dominant in nightclubs and cabaret circuit.

The first female political singers, like İlkay Akkaya, "had words to say along with their melodies" (Çelik & Öney 2008). Many of these pioneer musicians encountered obstacles as they attempted to propose an alternative model of women performer who did not rely on sexual charms to attract the audiences. In the process, the first generation of women I interviewed deplored being vilified as 'easy woman' or 'available woman' and even sometimes prostitutes. I have suggested that one possible explanation for the persistence of this misconception has to do with women's transgression of the public and private boundaries and the consequent perceived threat to the traditional male-established social order. Although the state helped bring about social change through providing them more legal rights, women who entered the public arena as professional and educated musicians and earned their own wages faced age-old prejudices. Thus, by renouncing their overt sexual charms, the first women to overtly or covertly contest this prejudice were the political musicians who also paved the way for the next generations of women. I have therefore argued that political democratization, by allowing a greater diversity of musical genres in Turkey to emerge in the public sphere, has provided more chances for a greater range of women to become professional musicians.

While political changes – that is, the creation of a modern Republic and later the implementation of a multi-party system – re-defined the *contours* of the public and

private spheres and the place of women and social class therein, many other factors which dealt more with cultural politics shaped women's decision of becoming a professional musician – or not. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 4, despite the general prejudice in Turkey against this profession, women from certain ethnic or religious communities have traditionally had the support of their social environment for musical training and, in some cases, for becoming professional musicians. Interestingly, this greater exposure did not necessarily result in women's desire to become a professional musician, as it has been the case with Mircan Kaya for whom music, as an art, should not be a source of income. However, the co-option of women's musical performance among the Alevis, unlike the mainstream Sunnis, helped Ayfer Vardar pursue her dreams of becoming a music teacher and performer. As well, one of the major obstacles for becoming a professional musician was the fact that it did not provide a secure source of income and therefore posed a problem, especially for the working classes. Many women like Behiye Süren, faced their social environment's (and sometimes their own) fears for their financial future. In order to support themselves, they needed to have a second job and devote less time to their musical practice.

Women who participated in my research deployed many strategies in order to face the association with being 'licentious entertainer' which had resulted from women's shattering of the assigned gender roles. The two main strategies I observed during my fieldwork were, first, the choice – imposed or not – to display a kind of femininity which does not emphasize sexual charm and, second and most commonly, to play ethnic music. Through presenting the observations at two concerts, I demonstrated in Chapter 5 that performing ethnic music, in general, attracts an audience that consciously respects

musician as artists and not just entertainers for their talent.

On the one hand, ethnic music, when performed in more restricted urban venues and when presenting rural folk songs, appealed to an upper middle-class and intellectual audience who subscribed to an 'appropriate' *etiquette* and saw those rural folk songs performed in this 'new' context as 'art'. On the other hand, when ethnic music was practiced within less restricted spaces and drew on an (past) urban entertainment genre from a religious minority group, like *rebetika*, the different members of the crowd and the musicians experienced conflicting interpretations. The distinction between 'art' and 'entertainment' along with the proper *etiquette* for each style were blurred in this case. As a result, I argued that ethnic music – while circumscribing clearly its performance context – could provide a platform for women musicians to be finally recognized as sophisticated artists in their own right thus breaking with the traditional stereotypes.

Having succeeded in carving out for themselves a niche in the public sphere as respected artists, women professional of ethnic music used this space to engage with social and political issues as well as to conciliate divergences between the various nationalist claims in Turkey. In the process, as I showed in Chapter 6, they have re-defined the concepts of women's and men's musics which has often been understood by the general public as being consistent with categories of gender segregation and roles – and along with it, the private and public sphere. By drawing attention to the injustices against women in Turkey through their songs, women performers of ethnic music, like the Kurdish singer Aynur Doğan and those from the group Kardeș Türküler, are politicizing these issues and showing that the so-called women's concerns (previously expressed during women's songs) are in reality everybody's concerns. Finally, through

subverting traditional “women’s songs” they are breaking with the assigned gender roles for women and the traditional inter-gender arrangements. Instead these musicians propose new images of women as educated and skilled and as being agents of their own lives. I have attempted to show in this thesis that women performers of ethnic music have done much more than simply singing or playing songs. They have proposed the inclusion first, of more diversified ways of being a woman in contemporary Turkey and second, of many ways of being a Turk. Women performers of ethnic music have acted way beyond their songs: they are attempting to create a new Turkish society which is more plural and inclusive and open to dialogue

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