

“MOTHER, BRING THE HENNA”: *KINA GECESÍ* AND FRAGMENTED IMAGINATIONS  
OF THE NATION-STATE

by

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## ABSTRACT

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This research articulates *kina gecesi* (henna night) as a critical site for the production and reproduction of gendered politics in Turkey. *Kina gecesi*, as a women’s pre-wedding ritual, is situated at the margins of civil wedding ceremonies, and thereby intersects with wedding’s politicization in pronatalist discourses. Tropes of fertility in this ritual in concert with its proximity to marriage show it to be salient to biological, cultural, and national reproduction. I argue that women’s discourses on *kina gecesi* engender fragmented imaginations of the nation-state. This notion of fragmentation follows Dipesh Chakrabarty’s understanding of “provincializing” which advocates direct translation of experience rather than filtering it through abstract universals. Discourses on *kina gecesi* can thereby be understood to respond to and engage with different imaginations of the nation-state, and thus fragment it. Importantly, these narratives rely on affective attributions to *kina gecesi*, which underlie affective relationships with nation-state and place. During the period of research increasingly characterized by political unrest, political anxieties about the future of the nation permeated narratives of *kina gecesi*. In this way, fragmented imaginations of the nation-state as expressed in these narratives demonstrate different anxieties in different places. *Kina gecesi* was then not only a ritual event, but also a medium through which to articulate affective relationships with the nation-state.

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## NOTES ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Turkish, while written in the Roman alphabet, contains letters that may be unfamiliar to English speakers, and features different sounds for letters familiar to English speakers. I have noted important distinctions below, following the Cornell University Library's Turkish and Ottoman Studies Research Guide.

a	a, as in <b>ugly</b>
c	hard j, as in <b>jar</b>
ç	çe, as in <b>chat</b>
e	e, as in <b>elephant</b>
ı	ı, as in <b>number</b>
i	i, as in <b>insect</b>
ğ	soft g, elongates the vowel in front of it
j	je, as in <b>garage</b>
o	o, as in <b>orchestra</b>
ö	ö, as in <b>urge</b>
ş	şe, as in <b>shelf</b>
u	u, as in <b>oops</b>
ü	ü, as in <b>fruit</b>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	<i>Adaldet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> , Justice and Development Party
CHP	<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> , Republican People's Party
HDP	<i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i> , Peoples' Republican Party
MHP	<i>Millet Hareket Partisi</i> , Nationalist Action Party
PKK	<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê</i> , Kurdistan Worker's Party

See Appendix A for more detailed descriptions of political parties—AKP, CHP, HDP, and MHP. PKK is a Kurdish separatist guerrilla insurgency group.

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## EPIGRAPH

*Kınayı getir aney*  
*Parmağın batır aney*  
*Bu gece misafirem*  
*Koynunda yatır aney*

—From the folk song, “*Kınayı Getir Aney*” (Mother Bring the Henna)

Mother, bring the henna  
Dip your fingers in it  
For I am a guest tonight  
Let me sleep one last time in your arms

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Bariş taught me the word *kasvetli*—gloomy, sullen, and somber—as I searched for adjectives to describe the air<sup>1</sup> that day. We had just left the elementary school where Bariş and his wife Sevgi cast their votes in the June 6, 2015 Parliamentary election. Every election they would go to the same elementary school Sunday morning, where they were assigned to cast their ballots in the same room. We walked through the playground populated with small groups of people who had already voted.

“Look over there,” Bariş gestured to four people on the other end of the playground. “They support the AKP [*Adalet ve Kalkınama Partisi*, Justice and Development Party].”

“How can you tell?”

“Just look at them.”

I continued stare and puzzle at how their appearance indexed support of the AKP as we were shuffled from one end of the school to another—Bariş and Sevgi joked that their being assigned to vote in a different room in a different wing of the school might portend different election results—maybe perhaps the secular main opposition party, the Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, or CHP—which was also the party of the Turkey’s founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—would gain traction or establish a majority in the parliament.

It would not. But neither would the AKP secure the number of parliament seats required to establish a single party government for the first time since the AKP came to power in 2002. Instead, two of the nationalist parties had gained the most ground since the last parliamentary election—the Nationalist People’s Party (MHP), a right-of-center Turkish national party, and the Peoples’ Democracy Party (*Halkların Demokrati Partisi*, or HDP), a left-leaning Kurdish

interest party. For the first time in its history, the HDP passed the 10 percent threshold in the nationwide popular vote required for a party to enter parliament as a party (rather than as independent politicians). This initiated a period of political liminality<sup>2</sup> that my interlocutors referred to as *hükümsizlik*—literally, the absence of a government. The then acting-constitution required that a coalition-government be formed and, if it could not be, that another election be held, which it was November 1, 2015 and which resulted in a decisive victory for the AKP. The time between these two historic elections saw the first attack claimed by the so-called Islamic State (IS) on Turkish soil, the renewal of a decades-long war with the Kurdish separatist guerilla group the People's Worker's Party (PKK), and round-the-clock curfews in South-Eastern Anatolian cities. As such, this period—also the period of my research—was characterized by anxiety and uncertainty.

Conversations with friends since I left Turkey in August 2015 expressed not only different anxieties about the future of the nation, but also a deep, and pervasive distress over the growing frequency of terrorist attacks. The July 15, 2016 coup in particular shook the country, along with friends, interlocutors and myself, politically and emotionally. In the declaration and continuation of a state of emergency in Turkey, the government has purged of thousands of individuals from the police force, military, higher education and elementary through high school education for alleged participation in the coup attempt or affiliation with the Gülenist movement—now identified with the acronym FETÖ, *Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü* or the Fetullah Terrorist Organization, after the exiled Muslim cleric Fetullah Gülen.



**Photo 1. Statue in Anıt Park in Afyonkarahisar**

I lived in Turkey for two years, between 2011-2013, and returned to Turkey the summer of 2015 in which I conducted this fieldwork. I found many friends eager to talk about how they saw that the country had changed over the course of the two years prior. It is in this strange deluge of memories and iterations of the familiar becoming unrecognizable that I pursued my longstanding curiosity of the concept of *gurbet*<sup>3</sup>—the painful state of being away from home, similar to but utterly distinct from homesickness—in the women’s wedding ritual of *kına gecesi* (henna night).

\*\*\*

Bariş and Sevgi had voted first thing in the morning. Anxious and hungry we drove to the city center where we bought pastries filled variously with feta and black olives and walked to Anıt Park—literally Memorial Park—decorated with small garden plots, a statue of a naked man

intended to represent Atatürk descending upon an enemy cowering at his feet, and a tea garden below a patch of trees. Barış and Sevgi turned the conversation away from the election toward *kına gecesi*.

“So what do you want to know about it anyway?” Barış asked.

“I’m interested in the politics of it.”

“There are no politics to it. It’s not political. You see it is just something that started in the east. You only find it in Europe as far as the Ottomans went. See, it has nothing to do with politics.

“We did it. They [the guests] sang ‘Mother Bring the Henna’ and ‘To the Highest Hills.’ My sister put henna on Sevgi’s hands,” Sevgi nodded in confirmation, “and dipped my pinky finger in henna.”

“Don’t forget the gold,” Sevgi chimed in, her throat still raspy with the laryngitis she was anxious to overcome before they left the next day for a much-anticipated vacation to Prague. “The bride’s mother-in-law gives her gold bracelets and a gold coin to coax her hand open so they can put the henna on it.”

“Henna isn’t just for weddings either. Men who are about to go off to do their military service also have henna nights,”<sup>4</sup> Barış continued. “For two to three years now university students are doing them the night before they graduate. It’s nonsense (*saçma*).”

\*\*\*

In many ways, this conversation set the tone for my subsequent encounters with *kına gecesi* and how I would come to understand them. First, this brief vignette coupled with the opening dialogue exemplifies an ongoing theme throughout the summer. That is, my conversations would oscillate between daily politics and geopolitical anxieties, on the one hand,

and commentaries on *kına gecesi* on the other. These two poles of conversation would not directly inform one another, but they would intersect at critical, intertextual moments in the form of discourse and in the performance of different gendered political subjectivities. Second, as shown in the vignette above, Barış's description of *kına gecesi* contains a particular geography predicated on a distinction between imaginations of east (*doğu*) and west (*batı*). That Barış would distinguish *kına gecesi* from politics, but at the same time utilized a dichotomy between east and west might at first appear puzzling if not contradictory. These designations are part and parcel of the rhetorical performance of the power to construct the Other (Said 1978, 206), making them expressedly political and interwoven with relations of power. However, Barış's admonishment that *kına gecesi* is not political has three important implications. First, his protest underscores *kına gecesi*'s incapacity to be understood through party politics. Second, Barış, being a devoted secularist and supporter of the CHP, shows that this dichotomy between east and west might instead do the important work of deconstructing the facile association of west with secular. Third, it shows the way in which *kına gecesi* is used to voice boundaries—itsself part of the performance of power. Barış's observation lays the foundation for the understanding of *kına gecesi* presented here—it produces a geography of the ritual that is itself implicated in the articulation of difference and belonging.

That is, in light of this conversation, and after reflecting further on field notes from *kına gecesi* and similar instances of casual conversation over tea and pastries about *kına gecesi*, I found the celebration to be less entangled in party politics than it was in different, and often conflicting, imaginations of Turkish secularism as manifest in gendered political subjectivities. And, more importantly but as of yet unaddressed, this finding begs the question around which

this research both revolves and offers preliminary answers: How do interlocutors implicate *kına gecesi* in gendered politics?

I argue that *kına gecesi* represents a loaded site for material, discursive, and embodied productions of different imaginations of the nation. Interlocutors' narratives imbricated *kına gecesi* in dichotomies of modernity and tradition, homogeneity and plurality, and authenticity and pollution. In this way, narratives interfaced with politics of belonging in a nation at a moment when the fate of the state was a source of much anxiety and trepidation.

### **Situating *Kına Gecesi***

*Kına gecesi*, as a women's pre-wedding ritual, is necessarily part of the ecology of wedding celebrations. Weddings can last for multiple days that ritual events such as *kına gecesi* punctuate. These events might also include an exhibition of the bridal trousseau; *gelin alma*, the taking of the bride; and the civil ceremony which is often publicly celebrated. The bridal trousseau (*çeyiz*) refers to those items that the bride has made (especially knit, crocheted, or sewn items such as table clothes and bed sheets) or purchased (such as dish sets, or other items readers in the United States might associate with bridal registries) and that she will take with her to her bridal home. Sherife Ayla Samli, in her examination of the ways in which the materiality of and negotiation over *çeyiz* speak to desires for the future, writes, "The trousseau shows current ruptures with the past in terms of taste, work, and desires; marks the reconfiguration of gender roles, domestic life, women's education, and cultural heritage as a result of Turkish modernity" (2011, 7). That is, the items in the trousseau and narrative frames of it that construct is as antithetical to the practices of educated women show the trousseau to be a critical site for the negotiation and contestation of gender roles in contemporary Turkey.

While the trousseau is often exhibited at the bride's house before the *kına gecesi*, *gelin alma* (which takes on different names in different regions), occurs on the day of the wedding. Here, the groom's party arrives at the bride's family's house with the wedding car—often decorated in red and white ribbons, mimicking the colors of the national flag. After a back-and-forth between the groom and one of the bride's male relatives (in one of the *gelin alma* I attended of the summer, one of the bride's close female friends took on this role), who refuses to let the groom through the front door until given a “bribe” (*bahşiş*). The bride then enters the bridal car with the groom and head to the groom's family's home. In one *gelin alma* I attended, the groom's friends following the bridal car in a caravan would speed ahead and block the road with the car. You men and the musicians playing drums (*davul*) and clarinet (*zurna*) poured into the street to dance for what could only have been a couple minutes before the groom pulled bottles of rakı out of his trunk and gifted it to his friends blocking the road. They promptly climbed back into their vehicles. The bride and groom then arrive at the wedding celebration together, some hours after the *gelin alma*.

*Kına gecesi* occurs before the wedding, either the night or several nights before. It represents the brides last night with her natal family in her parents' home and, in some narratives of the ritual, her last night as a virgin (Tokmak 2009, 93). Carole Delaney uses the medium of henna to link *kına gecesi* to Islamic imagery surrounding procreation. She writes, “*Kına* is considered auspicious; it is the sacred soil of *Cennet* (Heaven, Paradise), which is envisioned as a garden [in Islam]” (1991, 137). The songs sung and poems (*mani*) recited presented to the reader contain “sexually suggestive” imagery (ibid.), furthering an association between *kına gecesi* and biological reproduction.<sup>5</sup> Delaney integrates this conceptualization of henna as the soil of heaven into her argument that gendered cosmologies rhetorically and symbolically

situated women as analogous to soil: “Seed and soil, seemingly such innocent images, condense powerful meanings: although they appear to go together naturally, they are categorically different, hierarchally ordered, and differently valued” (1991, 8).

Delaney’s ethnographic work importantly unpacks the ways in which everyday folk theory informs constructions of gender and reproduction partake of the symbolic. Furthermore, her description of henna as the soil of heaven necessarily implicates *kına gecesi* in Islamic belief. However, while the use of henna—also used in Eid al-Adha, boys’ circumcision ceremonies, and the night before men leave their homes to do obligatory military service in Turkey—might have religious connotations, these rituals are not regulated by the Diyanet, the institution formed in the early days of the republic to both replace the caliphate of the Ottoman Empire and ensure state regulation of Islam (Gülalp 2005). In this way, *kına gecesi* is not only at the periphery of the state by way of preceding the wedding—which is a civil ceremony, some families opt also to have a religious wedding in addition—but also because it is unregulated by state institutions. Instead, gossip emerged as a critical tool for regulation of *kına gecesi* in this research.

*Kına gecesi* has many different expressions that vary along a number of axes, including the regional and local affiliations of the bride and groom; their ethnicity and religion; their families’ socioeconomic statuses; practices of piety in which couples and families might choose not hold the celebration between Şeker Bayram (Eid al-Fitr) and Kurban Bayram (Eid al-Adha) even when the period overlaps with the summer wedding season, to name a few. Consequently, the breadth of these different narratives and performances make *kına gecesi* difficult to summarize in a way that does justice to its diversity and malleability. Furthermore, what *kına gecesi* is, even, is contested. One close friend declared it had nothing to do with being Turkish. When I was talking with her about an interview I did with a grandmother in Bodrum who had

admonished me for suggesting that some women choose not to have a henna night—saying “All Turkish women celebrate *kına gecesi*”—this friend, shocked, corrected the narrative. Rather than being an element of Turkishness, it was a ceremony tied to religion, full of religious symbolism.

Yet this interpretation is also contested. Another friend who had grown up in Kadıköy, but who has Kurdish roots, was surprised when I recounted some of the conversations in this chapter to him: namely, that secularists would reject the ritual for the reason that they did not consider the ritual itself to be secular. He understood this rhetoric as situating *kına gecesi* as Islamic, something he also rejected, replying that *kına gecesi* was something that was regional, that he couldn't imagine his sister, who was secular, rejecting because she would want to do a *kına gecesi* consistent with those in their village in Eastern Turkey. Here three different, albeit overlapping understandings of what *kına gecesi* is emerge: is it Islamic; it is Turkish; and it is regional, that is, connected to place.

It is these variances in *kına gecesi*, especially by way of its intersections with different imaginations of secularism, modernity, and belonging in the nation, that I will trace and unpack in this research. However, to better contextualize the contestation and deconstruction of this ritual in this research it is nonetheless important to provide a picture of precisely that which will be deconstructed and problematized. The paragraphs that follow identify a ritual script, describing the different steps of the ceremony, and different people involved. Keeping in line with my intention to convey the different textures and articulations of *kına gecesi*, I start each paragraph with a step of the ritual and follow it with explanations of the different variations I encountered.

When it is time to light the henna, the bride leaves the floor of the party where she and her friends had been dancing and changes into a *bindalli* (caftan) from a ball gown in a private

room. The music played often changes here from dance music (*oyun havası*) to the folk song “Mother, Bring the Henna” (*Kınayı Getir Aney*), followed by “To the Highest Hills” (*Yüksek Yüksek Tepelere*). The bride would then reenter the dance floor from her changing room alongside close, unmarried female friends who hold lit candles, and sit down on a chair that has since been placed in the center of the dance floor. Her friends walk around her in a circle before one woman carrying a large bowl of wet henna walks into the circle with another woman who is often one of the groom’s relatives. At this point, the song “Mother Bring the Henna,” has passed and “To the Highest Hills” has begun. While some interlocutors referred to this song as a “compulsory” (*şart*) part of the *kına*, Chapter 3 will show others’ frustration with its apparent ubiquity.

These scripts of *kına gecesi* call for ritual crying (Yılmaz 2010, 57). One bride I spoke with not only reinforced this “rule,” but also disparaged other women for sobbing. When I gestured to her henna-stained hands, she added, “One tear fell and that was enough.” Explanations of the bride’s crying vary. Delaney describes crying at different stages of wedding rituals as symbolic of the bride’s distress over leaving her maternal family (1991, 134). Conversely, not crying might insinuate to onlookers that the bride is too *hevelsi*—eager to start a period of socially sanctioned sexual activity (Artun 1998). Interlocutors also described ways in which the bride is made to cry. One is listening to the songs themselves. “Mother, Bring the Henna” describes a bride’s last night with her natal family, while “To the Highest Hills” warns of marrying a man who lives far away—in the highest hills—not only because the bride might be labeled an outsider but also because of the deep longing for home that it will initiate. Second, at *kına gecesi* that struck more irreverent tones, several women described being pinched by their friends (or being the ones to pinch the bride) to force tears. One woman told me that she didn’t need any help being made to cry, because the discomfort of wearing a thick velvet caftan over

her clothes on a hot summer night was all she needed for her eyes to water. Her friends pinched her any way. She told me that she was going to write on Facebook that she'd find everyone who pinched her and pinch them at their *kına gecesi*. Other women told me that they had not expected to cry, but found themselves inexplicably in tears nonetheless. For others still, crying was not important at all. As one woman about to get engaged said to me proudly, "I won't be crying at my *kına gecesi*, I'll be so happy that I laugh."

Next, a female relative of the groom, sometimes the groom's mother, is tasked with dyeing the bride's hand in henna. A prerequisite for this role is often having a good marriage oneself, and so excludes women who are widowed or divorced (Yılmaz 2010, 57). Ritual script calls for the bride not to open her hand right away (Delaney 1991; Esen 2015). The bride is supposed to keep her fists closed and pull her hands away from the woman. This relative of the groom then offers the bride a gold coin to coax her hand open. I was tasked with fetching these coins from the jewelry store for one friend's mother: They are not only used to entice the bride to open her hands at the henna night, but also as gifts presented to the bride and groom and weddings and, in some cases, henna nights. They come in three sizes, corresponding to different values: quarter (*çeyrek altın*), half (*yarım altın*), and full (*tam altın*), which is 22 carats and 7.2 grams (Hurriyet 2015b). The bride has the option of accepting the gift or rejecting it, in which case the groom's relative would present her with yet another gold coin until she was satisfied. In one instance I heard that keys to a new car or new apartment could also take the place of the coin.

Once the bride opens her palm, a thick ball of henna is pressed into it. The henna is then secured in some way, such as by placing a napkin over it before wrapping a band around the napkin to secure both is and the henna or by placing the bride's hands in decorated pouches. The bride at one *kına gecesi* I attended sat patiently through the process of smearing her hands in

thick gobs of henna before she hurried to the bathroom to wash it off, before joining her friends on the dance floor again. The next day she complained bitterly that even though she had only had the henna on her hands for less than five minutes, it still stained them. And it smelled. I pulled my palm to my nose when she said this, as our mutual friend had also scooped henna from the disregarded bowl often left for guests and fixed it to my hand two nights earlier. As long as you can see it, you can also smell it—the scent of sweet fermented earth was emanating from my hand.

This brief explanation of *kına gecesi* outlines several components of the ritual that women stressed and criticized: the giving of gold and bracelets to the bride from the groom's mother, the ritual's association with virginity, henna's association with religious imagery, and connections to different resonances of the notion of tradition.

### ***Kına Gecesi* as a Ritual and Critique**

Emile Durkheim understands religion and religious ritual as necessarily generative of social cohesion through collective effervescence (Durkheim 1995, 220), such that ritual would contain a “representation of society itself” (Moore 1975, 33). This framework enables different understandings of *kına gecesi* through its production of social cohesion via Islamic (Delaney 1991) or Anatolian (Çetin 2008) referents. Conversely, *kına gecesi* has also been subject to functionalist interpretations (Artun 1998), in which it is situated in terms of rites of passage. This account builds on Arnold Van Gennep's understanding of ritual as the means for the public witness of a subject's transformation in status (1960, 3), and details a formula for *kına gecesi* in Tekirdağ, a province in Turkey west of Istanbul. Victor Turner famously revolutionized this framework of rites of passage and liminality, developing his concept *comunitas*, or anti-structure (1960, 169). He describes ritual events as sites for the temporary disintegration of social

hierarchy. In this way, Turner's approach distinguishes itself from earlier emphases on social cohesion, structure, and function as he argues: "a social system is not a harmonious configuration governed by mutually compatible and logically interrelated principles. It is rather a set of loosely integrated principles" (quoted in Moore 1975, 36).

Importantly, Turner argued that liminality does not only characterize religious ritual, but also in secular ritual, as both demonstrate that the attribution of "the powers of the weak." This attention to ritual outside of religious contexts opens up the space for understanding how too secular ritual "can dramatize/ its social/moral imperatives" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, 3). This conceptualization of ritual necessarily draws on Durkheim's understanding of it reflecting societal values, ritual also plays an important role in engendering—and contesting—those same values (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, 24). As a result, this framework works to defetishize ritual and relocated its study in so-called "advanced" political systems. Ritual here becomes a "ubiquitous" component of politics that trades on the important interplay between symbols and power (Kertzer 1988, 11). That is, "Ritual mobilizes societal authority for this investiture [e.g., changes in political office], while powerful symbols help make the general population more emotionally receptive to the creation of such power over them" (Kertzer 1988, 25). Moore and Myerhoff show that ritual renders relations of power visible. In this way, ritual can both legitimize and *delegitimize* authority (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, 14; Kertzer 1988, 2).

Thus study of ritual can also engender investigations into the production and reproduction for the nation-state. While Kertzer, and Moore and Myerhoff highlight the significance of symbols in mobilizing power, Daniel Kaplan, draws attention to the ritualized production of national time in Israel. He shows that Israeli radio's practice of commemorating holidays with particular songs has also been mobilized during emergencies (2009, 329). Here, he integrates

Benedict Anderson's understanding of technological advances as essential to the emergence of nationalism in Europe to Durkheim's understanding of ritual as being essential to cultivating collective belonging. Two of Anderson's conceptualizations of nationalism's inception are especially important here. First, he shows that the printing press was critical to the standardization of a nation language (2006, 46). Second, and more foundational to Kaplan's argument, the proliferation of print in the form of novels and newspapers engendered a sense homogenous, empty time that had the effect of temporally uniting the nation (Anderson 2006, 145; Kaplan 2009, 314). Kaplan argues that Israeli radio's appropriation of bureaucratic memorial practices in states of emergency demonstrate "a ritualized distinction between the ordinary and the extraordinary, albeit one that doesn't entail a belief in the divine but rather provides a symbolic confirmation and veneration of collective values and emotions shared by members of the community" (2009, 334). The intersection of Jewish mystic time and national time are critical to his argument, begging the question of how state and religion intermingle in the production of both ritualized practices and the nation. Above all, Kaplan's investigation points to the ways in which ritualized practices are instantiated in the politics and enactment of national belonging. The women I spoke with in Turkey emphasized different performances of *kına gecesi* in the production and occupation of different senses of time, namely modernity and tradition—categories that intersected with imaginations of modernity and Islam, which have been alternatively and concomitantly mobilized since the founding of the Turkish republic (Kandiyoti 2012).

Scholarship that has engaged ritual practices in Turkey vis-à-vis national pluralism and the politics of belonging have emphasized various and contending performances of modernity, and the debates that surround those performances. Senses of time, particularly as manifest in

notions of tradition and modernity, have been especially important to these debates. In his study of Alevi mourning rituals in Central Anatolia, Kabir Tambar traces the interstices between interlocutors' proclamations of the ritual as anachronistic when performed in urban centers, suggesting instead that it belongs to the time-space of the rural village (2014, 17). As such, he shows this concern for occupying a particular, modern national time to be an outgrowth of the mainstream conditions of political belonging for Alevis. That is, nationalist rhetoric relegates Alevi custom to the shared past of the Turkish nation (Kabir 2014, 139). Kimberly Hart's examination of the orthodoxization of rituals in a Sunni village in western Anatolia similarly underscores a concern amongst research subjects to embody modernity (2009, 736). She finds that her interlocutors increasingly abandoned the use of *davul* (drums) and *zurna* (clarinet) in favor of *mevlüt* (small religious ceremonies usually led by an imam or religious teacher), owing to those instruments' association with folklore and its resulting incongruence with conceptions of modernity.

Sarah Baker Kellogg, integrating sensory experience into ritual study, shows the entanglement of sound with lived, material understandings of modernity and tradition. She utilizes conflicting aesthetics of ritual sounds in liturgies among the Syriac diaspora in the Netherlands to make visible the different experiences of diaspora and state secularism that underwrite tensions in the Syriac diaspora community (2015, 432). Like Tambar and in contrast to Hart, Kellogg examines the politics of belonging in the context of an ethnoreligious minority. However, where Tambar focuses on folklorization (Tambar 2014, 93; Kellogg 2015, 440), Kellogg is concerned with these politics' manifestation in sensory culture: "Syriac Orthodox experience suggests that minority recognition is conditioned by the organization of sensory

practices” such that “secular political practices operate as culturally productive aesthetic practices” (Kellogg 2015, 440).

Both Tambar and Kellogg’s approaches to ritual differ from Kertzer’s: while they also implicate the state, they are not concerned directly with state rituals (Kertzer 1988, 15), but rather the rituals of the Syriac diaspora in the Netherlands and Alevi in Turkey vis-à-vis different, although overlapping, experiences of state secularism. Furthermore, they are similar in their attention to religious and cultural institutions. Thus while attention to folklorization and the different collective memories of state secularism provide important avenues for this inquiry into how performances of *kına gecesi* instantiate different and sometimes contesting imaginations of secularism, *kına gecesi* is distinct in its relationship to institutions. Instead, *kına gecesi*, as a wedding ritual, is on the periphery of the state—it stands adjacent to the civil marriage ceremony and thereby in close proximity to the state—as interlocutors indicated, both in defense and critique of the ritual, *kına gecesi* represents an index of women’s sexuality.

### **Sexuality and Woman as Political Subject**

The politics of women’s sexuality has occupied a preeminent place in scholarship on Turkish politics. Much of this work has focused on the gendered production of secular state subjects at the founding of the Turkish Republic in juxtaposition to emergent Islamic visibilities and subjectivities in the 1990s (Çinar 2005, 2008; Gökarıksel and Secor 2010; Göle 1996; Secor 2002). This scholarship emphasizes the discursive and visual campaigns that engendered the equation of the modern subject with the secular subject, thereby relegating Islamic dress, and the veil in particular, as symptomatic of the backwards and the traditional. With the rise of political Islam in Turkey—and throughout the world—in the 1990s and early 2000s (Fernea 1998),

gendered politics of the body continued to emphasize this dichotomy between secular and Islamic.

Göle (1996) and Çinar (2005; 2008) situate these debates on questions of women's sexuality. Göle argues that the entrance of an unveiled woman into the public sphere necessitated the desexualization of the female body: "Women's attainment of a new social identity outside the private realm became possible only when they stripped off their sexual identities" (Göle 1996, 79). The entrance of women into the public sphere thereby occurred "at the expense of individual and sexual identities of women" (1996, 78). Çinar, on the other hand, shows the early republican secularist constructions of the female body to be part and parcel of the designation of what parts of the body—hair and neck in the case of unveiling—ought to be subject to the public and state gaze. In this way, she articulates the increasing number of women veiling in the 1990s as constituting a challenge to the secular state's designation of the secular, female body (2005).

These sexual identities to which Göle (1996) and Çinar (2005) refer have also been argued to have been produced in the discursive constitution of women's citizenship in the 1926 Civil Code. Here, women were granted universal citizenship alongside men, yet at the same time were distinguished from men via familial roles (Arat 2002, 160-1). That is, while the 1926 Civil Code guaranteed civil rights to both men and women, and, importantly, instituted the civil marriage contract (2002, 160). The subsequent 1961 and 1982 constitutions, similarly, universally expanded civil liberties (Arat 2002: 161), but continued to identify husbands as family heads until 2001 when the new civil code "equalized the status of husband and wife in the conjugal union" (Özyegin 2015, 17). This is what Kandiyoti has referred to as the "conundrums of citizenship" wherein the discursive contradictions of gendered citizenship arise out of universalistic constructions of citizenship; restrictions of women's rights within the context of

the family; and women's designation as "privileged bearer of national authenticity," which Kandiyoti characterizes as "postcolonial malaise" (2002, 52). While revisions of both penal and civil codes in Turkey have expanded women's rights, particularly since the 1980s with the emergence of multiple feminist critiques of early Republican state feminism (Göle 1996, 81), Özyegin argues that the constitution continues to privilege the family.

Zeynep Kurtuluş Korkman, similarly writes that while the early 2000s in Turkey saw an integration of feminist discourse into the mainstream, in the last decade both state policy and political discourses have generated "a state-sponsored familialism" (2016, 112-3). This familialism is not only manifest in the three child recommendation, but also in "the replacement of the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs with the Ministry of Family and Social Policy in 2011" (Korkman 2016, 113), and the designation of birth control usage as a form of treason (ibid.; Hurriyet 2014a). Korkman refers to these issues as "politics of intimacy," which I argue would also incorporate then deputy prime Minister Bülent Arınç's 2014 comment that women ought not to laugh in public (Hurriyet 2014b), Erdoğan's November 2014 speech in which he reasons that men and women are not equal, suggesting feminists do not understand the importance of motherhood (Hurriyet 2014c), and the Minister of Health's comment that motherhood is the only suitable career for women (Hurriyet 2015a).

In this way, interlocutors' contentions that *kına gecesi* is part and parcel of the performance of particular sexualities, and thereby political intimacies, makes inquiry into these events and the discourses surrounding them especially salient to contemporary gendered politics in Turkey, and to imaginations and contestations of the nation and nation-state. The context and production of such political intimacies through state discourses then begs the question of how they are lived, enacted, contested, and reproduced. Özyegin asked this question in the context of

young, upperclass women's articulations of sexual desire in Istanbul. Here, the conundrums of citizenship become conundrums of sexuality in which her interlocutors found themselves "between two undersirable states of the virgin and nonvirgin" and around which "new constructions of young elite women are being built" (Özyegin 2015, 68). Sexuality, then, becomes not only an object of regulation, but also a site for the production of subjectivities. Women's sexuality is a particularly salient site for the intermingling and contestation of different kinds of power. Michel Foucault situates sexuality in general at the interstices of government regulation and intervention at the level of the individual as well as population. He describes sexuality as:

A great surface network in which the simulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power (1978, 105-6).

Here, he emphasizes sexuality as something necessarily constructed through discourse, but also as something—also necessarily—experienced bodily. Furthermore, he links the regulation of sexuality to the "biopolitics of the population" (1978, 139), where biopolitics refers to the incorporation of the management of life under the auspices of the sovereign. Consequently, such regulations, Foucault argued, were also economic and entwined in the distribution of wealth. Controlling sexuality is part and parcel of control of the population (1978, 106-7). Hence, sexuality emerges as the site in which regulation of the individual body and regulation of the population converge (1978, 139).

Sexuality, however, does not only emerge as salient to the production of subjects and populations, but is also entangled in the production of space (Philo 2005, 328). Thus while in a state apparatus' object of government shifts from territory to population is concomitant with the emergence of biopolitics in Foucault's formulation, the notions of space, territory, and

geography remain essential to the deployment of sexuality and the investigations thereof (Philo 2005, 326). As a result, biopower can be understood as a complex of discursive and institutional strategies that produce sexuality, seek to regulate it, incite its verbalization, and generate expert knowledge on it as part and parcel of the regulation of the collective population.

However, biopolitics is not the only way through which women's sexuality can be understood as the object of technologies of power. Nira Yuval-Davis, in her outline of the intersection between the production of gender and nation, argues that women's sexuality is instantiated in the reproduction of nationalism both literally and metaphorically. On the one hand, this reproduction is biological (1997, 22). On the other hand, women's sexuality is part and parcel of cultural reproduction (1997, 23).

The paradigm of intimate geopolitics explored in feminist geography has similarly put nationalism and biopolitics on conversation with one another. That is, it emphasizes intersection between space, sexuality, population and nation. Intimate geopolitics does not only build of the interstices of the "macro-level government of population" and "micro-level 'bio-politics' fixated on manipulating individual conduct" (Philo 2005, 326), but also, and perhaps more saliently, on feminist calls for the deconstruction of hierarchies of scale (Mayer 2004, 167; Narayan 1997, 11). Mountz and Hyndman argue that feminist inquiries in the global intimate destabilize local/global binaries (2006, 446) insofar as they show both poles are necessarily constitutive of one another. They write, "We conceptualize the intimate as embodied social relations that include mobility, emotion, materiality, belonging, alienation" (2006, 447). Their emphasis on materiality and the body in particular—citing calloused hands as part and parcel of the global redistributions of labor—links the global intimate both to sensory experience and sensuousness as well as to the embodiment of a politics that is not limited to the borders of the nation-state.

Hyndman emphasizes attention to embodiment as critical to feminist analytics. She argues that this approach “challenges the state centrism of global politics, [and] the disembodied epistemology of knowledge production” (2007, 36). This embodiment of geopolitics and global flows of capital, while it at once challenging the centrality of the nation-state in global politics, also has important implications for the enactment and constitution of national territories. That is, bodies actually affect the territorization of space and become entangled in nationalist struggles over it (Smith, Swanson, and Gökariksel 2015, 259).

This focus on the body and embodiment also engenders an important critique of Foucauldian biopolitics: because of its concern with the convergence of the body and geopolitics, intimate geopolitics can account for a history of colonialism in a way that Foucault’s outline of biopolitics does not. While Foucault is clear that his genealogy on the emergence of biopolitics focuses on the phenomenon of governmentality—that is, the many facets of reasoning that inform approaches to and the enactment of government—as it developed in Europe, he also fails to account for the exercises and practices of colonialism that were concomitant with the development and deployment of biopower (Mbembe 2003).<sup>6</sup> Achille Mbembe argues that the sovereign’s right to make live and let die fails to take colonial domination into account. He, instead, characterizes the manifestation of biopolitics in colonial domination as necropolitics: “New and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*” (2003, 40; emphasis in original).

Anand Pandian, also engaging biopolitics in a postcolonial critique, argues that attention to pastoral power, in postcolonial locales, necessitates a broadening of the scope of biopower: “A close examination of the government of animals *by* humans is vital for an anthropology of biopolitics: for an understanding, that is, of the many ways in which humans themselves have

been governed as animals in modern times” (Pandian 2008, 86). In this way, he describes a different kind of denial of life that resonates with Mbembe’s articulation of necropolitics. This approach pluralizes the forms that biopolitical technologies might take (2008, 86). Thus feminist geopolitics shares with postcolonial critiques of biopolitics a call for the destabilization not only of the European nation-state as the nexus of biopolitical governmentality but also an appreciation for the myriad of ways in which relations of biopower manifest. These critiques additionally engender further opportunities for investigation into everyday biopolitics by way of the negotiations over territory and sexuality, both of which characterized interlocutors’ critiques of *kina gecesi*.

### **The Ambivalences of Subjection**

Ambivalence was a key theme over the course of research. Interlocutors who “hated” *kina gecesi* also reported having their own; those who said it was traditional and backwards indicated that it could also be made modern. Friends’ expressed excited for others’ *kina gecesi* but also dreaded attending them. Furthermore, interlocutors used secularism to admonish *kina gecesi* and to praise it. The previous section outlined a brief history of scholarly approaches to the state’s discursive production of women’s sexuality and its place in Foucauldian conceptualizations of power. Issues of subjectivity, embodiment, and agency have been prominent themes in this scholarship, particularly in the context of veiling. Foucauldian biopolitics, and attention to sexuality more specifically, highlight the salient role of discourse and power in subject formation. Judith Butler both elaborates and critiques this in *The Psychic Life of Power* wherein she explicates the dual character of the term subjection: “Subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependence on a discourse we never chose, but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency” (1997, 2). That is, relations of power engender

subjecthood while simultaneously subordinating subject (1997, 12). However, Foucault, for all his attention to subjection, neglects to address interior worlds of the subject (Navaro-Yashin 2012), or what Butler refers to as “the psychic form that power takes” (1997, 2). Butler argues that the internalization of power is highly ambivalent such that it instantiates a kind of agency that simultaneously resists and reappropriates power (1997, 13).

The discursive production of citizenship and its materialization in public institutions engenders different relationships to the state that are also characterized by ambivalence (Arat 2002). Arat explores the range of these relationships through the production of three different ideal types: carpet weavers, Islamists, and feminists. She writes that while carpet weavers engage in what Kandiyoti calls the “patriarchal bargain,” such that they advocate for themselves within a patriarchal frame (Arat 2001, 163) and Islamists employ concepts of civil rights to justify public Islamic visibilities (Arat 2001, 164), “feminists seek to expand their citizenship rights politically in the pursuit of personal liberation in a secular context” (ibid.), and thereby face the struggles of system that neutralizes their sex and gender. While Arat here problematically assigns the term feminism exclusively to secularist representations, her analysis is particularly useful by way of challenging “the seemingly neutral concept of citizenship” both imagined and produced in the early Republican period. Her categorizations of different gendered relationships to the state reflect Göle’s identification of the three “intellectual outlooks” that emerged in the final decades of the Ottoman Empire: “Islamic, Westernist, and Turkist” (1996, 36). As such, these different “outlooks,” as they manifest in Göle’s identification of these three types of relationships with the same, also underscore conflicting and, at times, overlapping imaginations, enactments, and embodiments of nationhood.

The ambivalences that Butler identified in processes of subjection also manifest in more specific applications of this poststructuralist framework. Saba Mahmood, writing on participation in the Islamic movement in Egypt in the 1990s, and particularly in pious women's groups, argues for a more nuanced understanding of subjection and resistance in feminist scholarship. She emphasizes a model of subjectivity and embodiment that eschews resistance as the pinnacle performance of agency and, instead, imagines discourse as constituting multiple possibilities of agency (Mahmood 2001, 209). The reliance on resistance as a model for agency underwrites feminist scholarship's difficulty in writing about the Islamic revival of the 1990s (2006, 201). Therefore, just as Butler identified subjection as both power's production of the subject and the power's subordination of the subject, so too does Mahmood demonstrate the ambivalences of power, its strategic uses, and the difficulties that an emancipatory platform faces in its attempts to grapple with the subject of women's participation in Islamic movements. Özgeyin, has similarly focused her investigation of subjectivity on the ambivalences of the performance of virginity and sexual experience in Istanbul. She argues that virginity in this context is not only physically defined, but also morally constituted (2015: 54).

Begoña Aretxaga, in her ethnography *Shattered Silence*, shows the production of gendered subjectivities in the context of violent political conflict in Northern Ireland (1997). Aretxaga builds on Foucauldian notions of subjectivity. She writes that while Foucault importantly demonstrated that relations of power bring subjects into being and produce subjectivities, he neglected the ways in which subjects also transform those relations of power. Using Jacques Lacan's understanding of subjectivity as "grounded in history," Aretxaga argues for an approach to subjectivity founded on women's own narratives as "experience is inextricably linked with subjectivity" (1997, 18). Aretxaga demonstrates this in her attention to

narratives of British soldiers forcibly entering the homes of women whose husbands and sons had been imprisoned reflected strong senses of violation and pollution. The combination of these home invasions and the policing of the streets, which women had already begun to do re-inscribed both public and private space as the house no longer protected their residents from aggression (1997, 70). In this way, Aretxaga shows that the concepts of purity and dirt necessarily interface with discursive constructions of gender and their contestation, begging the question of how emergent gendered political subjectivities are intertwined in bodily experience.

Aretxaga's text exhibits a complex interplay between silence and vocalization such that explications of the experience and perpetration of violence effectively outline the very silences that permeate the text (1997, 127). Ambivalence, thereby, can be seen to operate of multiple levels of scholarly inquiries into the production of subjectivity: not only is the very process of subjection ambivalent (Butler 1997; Mahmood 2001), but so too can be understood in interlocutors' narratives of their experiences (Özgeyin 2015), and in the very writing about these phenomena (Mahmood 2001; Aretzaga 1997).

This study similarly explores ambivalences of *kına gecesi*. These did not only emerge between different interlocutors' outlooks on its celebration, but also within interlocutors' own productions of narratives of *kına gecesi* that are characterized by what at first appear to be contradictions, but instead represent different instantiations of fragmented imaginations of the state. Furthermore, at the level of writing, the production of ambivalence, as Aretxaga demonstrated, can also contribute to a text's stated argument. In this way, poetics can encapsulate the ways in which ethnographic method and writing are necessarily intertwined (Clifford 1986; Behar 1993; Sharman 2007).

## Outline of Research

The pages that follow focus on women's narratives of *kına gecesi*—both those ceremonies tucked away in interlocutors' memories and those that I attended alongside interlocutors. They interwove explanations of secularism, modernity, and globalization into their discussions of *kına gecesi*, thus theorizing these narratives at the same time as producing them. Navaro-Yashin made a similar observation in her work on moral anxieties in Istanbul in the 1990s. She notes, "The so-called public in Turkey has already critiqued and deconstructed the state" and in response turns the focus of research to the different ways in which these critiques produce different "faces of the state" (2002, 4). I take a similar approach, asking in particular what the implications for these narratives of *kına gecesi* are on gendered belonging within the nation-state.

I took the opportunity to explore the interest I developed in *kına gecesi* while attending an intensive Turkish language course at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. This situation of being based in Istanbul rather than Afyon or Ankara, two cities in which I had previously lived for one year each, presented both constraints and opportunities for research. I attended six *kına gecesi* ceremonies in four different cities over the course of my time in Turkey. Because I was based in Istanbul, some of these visits were either weekend or weeklong trips. While three of the *kına gecesi* I attended were with friends in familiar cities, for remaining ceremonies I left the cities and my hosts as quickly as I had arrived. By constantly uprooting myself, I guaranteed this paucity as I would have little appreciation for context and little-to-no time to ruminate, not to mention, rephrase, re-ask, and follow up with more questions. Yet, at the same time, this constant movement enabled a better appreciation for the role that place played in the construction of narratives on *kına gecesi* and especially in how women theorized them. While it was at first

difficult to grapple with this material, I began to appreciate these different narratives as analyses and critiques of *kına gecesi* that spoke to political concerns and worries at the time. The result is a multi-sited ethnography that is uniquely interested in the moment of research—itsself embroiled in worry over the future of the state—and whose pace of research echoes and refracts the anxiety and uncertainty I encountered in these different locales.

Ulf Hannerz, writing on multi-sited ethnography, suggests that there is a necessary give and take within this particular ethnographic endeavor. That is, on the one hand, a multi-sited ethnography has the potential to illuminate “translocal” connections in which place or locale is not a space wherein social action unfolds, but is in fact intricately interwoven with those relationships and with other spaces (2012, 402). On the other, he cautions that the more cities (and countries) visited, the less time that can be spent in any one. Yet, while Hannerz notes multi-sited ethnographies might risk losing their strength in context, Mary Des Chene suggests that multi-sited ethnography represents one method by which to defetishize the notion of “the field.” Multi-sited ethnography, according to Des Chene, has the potential bridge the intimate view of a small group of people with attention to “large scale systems over time” (1997, 80). Illuminating an “invisible” past, as she puts it, enables the integration of everyday minutiae and world systems, and multiple locales. This situation of governmentlessness (*hükümsizlik*) was one of these emergent conditions. It represented a period of intense anxiety that was complemented by everyday routine. As such, it was not so much a complete departure from the ordinary. At the same time, these anxieties could also be found in the everyday through changes in routines, something Veena Das has referred to as “descent into the ordinary” (2007, 7). *Kına gecesi* as a ceremony customarily celebrated before weddings (though, as Barış pointed out, it is not exclusive to weddings) would likely not be considered an everyday event. Yet, it is

intimately imbricated in everyday and emergent politics of place, politics that the multi-sited aspect of this research made more visible.<sup>7</sup>

The chapters that follow interrogate different understandings and imaginations of *kına gecesi*: regulating of women's sexuality; outlining the interstices of tradition and modernity; contesting imaginations of the nation; and Kemalist nostalgia—that is, nostalgia for the early Republican period which was characterized by secularist reforms. The first chapter takes place in Istanbul, focusing on a key interlocutor, Fidan. This chapter is characterized by the absence of a *kına gecesi* insofar as we did not attend one. Instead, Fidan and her cohort articulated *kına gecesi* as a performance of acquiescence to the government's pronatalist agenda. At the same time as situating *kına gecesi* in constellation with current discourses on women's sexuality, so too were these discourses implicated in performances of Turkish national secularism, as one of Fidan's friends insisted that secular Istanbulites did not celebrate *kına gecesi*. The second chapter unpacks an argument between two interlocutors—Arzu and her mother, Hatice Teyze—following a *kına gecesi* we attended together on the outskirts of the Aegean town of Bodrum as a means of exploring the contestation between homogenous and plural imaginations of the nation. Here, sense of place (Basso 1996) emerges as critical to the articulation of nationhood and anxieties that surround it. Finally, chapter three explores the production of nostalgia and representational authority in the town of Mudurnu, where a key interlocutor, after her dissatisfaction with the *kına gecesi* we attended together, composed an essay outlining the representation of Mudurnu *kına gecesi* she deemed most appropriate for me to reproduce in this research. I use the essay to trace intertextual moments between the essay, a formal interview we did with one of her acquaintances, and our casual conversations.

Several key themes emerged throughout this research. First each of these chapters addresses different experiences of secularism vis-à-vis imaginations of the nation. Whereas in Istanbul interlocutors indicated that *kına gecesi* was not something secular women celebrated, in Bodrum Arzu's aunt admonished me for suggesting that some women chose not to celebrate *kına gecesi*, saying that it was a Turkish tradition of which all Turkish women partake. The second theme was a pronounced interest, on the part of my interlocutors, of how I would represent *kına gecesi*. Both the second and third chapters revolve around this issue of representation.

As such, this research is primarily interested in telling the stories that were told to me: stories whose varied, porous, and conflicting gendered discourses convey the “granularity” (Munyikwa 2017) of the experience and production of secularism and nationalism in Turkey. The style of writing employed here is also representative of this effort. It draws on feminist anthropology's attention to life histories (Abu-Lughod 1993), on the one hand, and also humanistic anthropology on the other. Storytelling opens up the space for not only communicating the narrative gifts received from interlocutors, but also emphasizes story's capacity to bridge different moments in time and thereby connect the reader to them (E Turner 2007, 114). This follows humanistic anthropology's understanding of ethnography as “the telling of stories with all of the epistemological and political complexities that implies” (Sharman 2007, 118). As such, narrative style has the effect of “producing an experience in which others can participate” (Sharman 2007, 123). Whereas Clifford describe ethnography as inhabiting a space between science and art (1986, 3), this work is situated closer to the latter. Particularly, in seeking a form of prose similar to ethnographic fiction, I hope to better engage and highlight the different voices present in this research, as this multivocality is an essential characteristic of fiction (Bakhtin 1984).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE WRONG PLACE FOR *KINA GECEŞİ*

Fidan’s friends burst out laughing when she told them that we had met because I had research interests in *kına gecesi*.<sup>8</sup> We were sitting in the same tea garden where I spent most of my time with Fidan. It was part of a cultural center named after a communist Turkish poet, and had a kitchen and leftist bookstore attached. The cobblestone entrance greeted customers with smoke wafting up from the grills searing sandwiches, and the steam from brewing black tea and coffee. The book displays at the entrance recalled the Gezi Park Protests with stacks of graphic novel *Revolt (İsyân)*. The book’s cover of a hooded protester wearing a gas mask politicized the smoke rising up from the kitchen’s grills.

As Güneş and Deniz were trying to catch their breath, Deniz managed the word *leş*, an exclamation of disgust and also a word for carcass.

Güneş, recovering from her laughter, cautioned me, “You’re in the wrong place”—gesturing to the tea garden canopied by tree branches—“to study *kına gecesi*.”

This designation of Kadıköy as the *wrong* place to study *kına gecesi* presents an important opportunity for situating the ritual. In my conversations with Fidan and her friends in this same café, I encountered two other “rejections” of *kına gecesi*. The first focused on the ritual’s enactment of regulations of women’s sexuality and in doing so tied it to the pronatalist discourse of the current government. The second cited the ritual as being antithetical to secularism in Istanbul. That is, Selin—who described herself and family as being true Istanbulites (in contrast to the migration of Anatolians to Istanbul in the 1950s (Öztürkmen 2002; Mills 2010) citing that they had lived in Istanbul since at least the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—explained that Istanbulites do not do *kına gecesi* first because they are secular and second

because *kına gecesi* is not. I encountered a similar position from friends in Ankara who similarly cited the ritual not so much as traditional but “not modern” and in a visit with a family friend, also an Istanbulite, who exclaimed that secularists “hated” *kına gecesi*. These different rejections then beg the question not only of what *kına gecesi* is, but also how it is seen to engage with different imaginations of the state—the current government’s pronatalist discourses on the one hand and the discourses of secular Turkish nationalism that characterized the early Republican period, also termed Kemalism after the founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Both signal a particular protest vis-à-vis the state: the growing encroachment of state policies into women’s intimate spheres, and contesting claims of Kemalist secularism. As a result, these discourses have the effect of, to use Dipesh Chakrabarty’s titular term, “provincializing” imaginations of the state (2001). That is, the imagination of the state and of secularism ceases to represent a uniform, consistent entity as interlocutors render their conceptualizations and criticisms of *kına gecesi*. Consequently, *kına gecesi* emerges in these discourses as a critical site for the reproduction and contestation of the state—as well as the manipulation of state discourses. *Kına gecesi* as a site is both materially and discursively constructed such the question of what makes Kadıköy the *wrong* place for it also shows how the ritual is manipulated, rationalized, and celebrated nonetheless.

Importantly, these constructions of *kına gecesi* were interwoven with discourses of secularism. Imaginations and instantiations of secularism were especially important to the secularizing reforms of the early republic as they were inscribed onto women’s bodies. In this way, at the same time that women gained universal citizenship, they were also constructed as the bearers of national authenticity (Kandiyoti 2002; Arat 2002). *Kına gecesi*, as a ritual intricately linked to women’s fertility and reproduction, thereby intersects with the discursive strategies

employed by secularists and Islamists, in the early republican period and 1990s in particular, used different constructions of the female Turkish citizen to political ideologies. The different conversations I had with a small group of interlocutors in Kadıköy, underscored the importance of early republican articulations of nationalism and secularism in Turkey. As I will demonstrate below, these articulations appeared to rely on Orientalist imaginations of the Ottoman Empire, underlining the ways in which the work of othering is sewn into national constructions of secularism.

### ***Kına Gecesi in Kadıköy***

Kadıköy has a reputation for its strong secularist leanings. In the June 7 2015 election, 58.44 percent of the district's votes went to the CHP, Atatürk's party; followed by the AKP at 18.33percent the leftist, Kurdish interest HDP at 10.31percent; the right leaning Turkish nationalist MHP at 8.33percent; and a smattering of smaller parties and independent candidates (Cumhuriyet 2015a; see Appendix B). Thus while the clear majority of the vote was won by the secularist CHP, the notable size in votes won by the AKP and MHP indicates that the district is anything but homogenous. In this way, the fissures in imaginations of national secularism give way to questions of cosmopolitanism and pluralism.

Amy Mills examines this question in her ethnographic research in the neighborhood of Kuzguncuk, just north of Kadıköy and Üsküdar. The architecture of the neighborhood belies the emptying of its Greek, Armenian, and Jewish populations in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While current residents note that these former neighbors return to places of worship, they had moved to neighborhoods of Kadıköy and Göztepe. Current residents were a part of the rural-to-urban migration from Anatolia to Istanbul in the 1950s (Mills 2010, 180). As a result, these cities saw the swift construction of *gecekondus* (squatter settlements).

The influx of Anatolian migrants to Istanbul reflects the tension to which Öztürkmen alludes in her examination of publications on Istanbul's folklore through to texts: Émile Henry Carnoy and Jean Nichoaidès' *Folklore in Constantinople* and Mehmet Halit Bayrı's *Istanbul Folklore* (2002). The juxtaposition of these two texts signals the tension between Istanbul's cosmopolitan imaginary and the instantiation of a Turkish Istanbul identity with the emergence of the Turkish nationalist movement: the former articulates folktales and sayings of religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire while the latter examines those of the Turkish-speaking Muslim population of the city. Consequently, she uses these texts to "[call] attention to a contemporary tension between the 'true Istanbulite' and the migrant from Anatolia. The elements that made of the 'old Istanbul,' now idealized as a pure, unpolluted space, are in fact rooted in the folklife of nineteenth-century Istanbul" (Öztürkmen 2002, 272). It is this nostalgia to which Mill's analysis also speaks, arguing that nostalgia for cosmopolitanism "responds more directly to the ethnic-national dimension of the state's identity" (2010, 209).

In Istanbul, my encounters with *kına gecesi* were fraught with contradiction and disagreement, themselves embedded in enacted geographies of the city. I attended one *kına gecesi* through a series of connections in a landlocked, rundown district of Istanbul—its dusty yet damp asphalt and cement pavement a stark contrast from Kadıköy's cobblestones and vistas of the sea. The bride and her family were from the eastern Black Sea region, which I was told the women's ululations while dancing the *horon* (a popular folk dance for which the region is famous) reflected. For the lighting of the henna she changed into a green gown reminiscent of the costumes found in the popular television drama *The Magnificent Century* (Mühteşem Yüzyıl), tightly tailored, low-cut, and embroidered with ornate flairs in golden thread. Earlier in the summer, a friend complained to me that she could not find a dress for her engagement party

because they all looked like the wardrobe from *The Magnificent Century*. In another conversation with a local *Istanbullu* (Istanbulite) who prided himself on his knowledge of the city, *kına gecesi* became something that the supporters of the *AKP* practiced. He said that this was evidenced in the current fashions of *kına gecesi*, which he identified as neo-Ottoman, saying that *kına gecesi* was an expression of Ottoman nostalgia (Fidan would later reject this interpretation) (cf. Batuman 2014).

I was unable to find such dresses in Kadıköy. The neighborhood's famed wedding street (*düğün sakağı*) was lined with store after store and story upon story of window dressings showing white manikins dressed in wedding gowns of white, beige, and pastels. The street also featured a number of stores for pious clothing explicitly for making the hajj, and dress for boy's circumcision ceremonies (*sünnet düğünü*). Asking tailors and store clerks where I could find *bindallı* for *kına gecesi*, I was told that I would not find such a thing in Kadıköy, and that I might have better luck on the "other side" (*öteki taraf*, referring to the European shore), at the Grand Bazaar or in the historic shopping district Eminönü.

This struggle to find a store selling *bindallı* represents one way in which Güneş's indication that Kadıköy was the "wrong place" to study *kına gecesi* came into fruition: I could not find it in the commercial districts of Kadıköy. On the European side, particularly in Eminönü and popular tourist areas like the Grand Bazaar and near Taksim Square, visual references to *kına gecesi* abounded. Near Taksim Square, one shop allowed tourists to dress in "Ottoman" attire for them to be photographed. Interestingly, while the shop in Karaköy played on Ottoman imaginations in particular, Kadıköy's architecture also recalls imaginations of the Ottoman



Photo 2. Shop near Taksim Square. "The Palace's Ottoman Photography" is running across the sign on top in Turkish and English. *Bindallı* are hanging in the background.



Photo 2. Shop in the Grand Bazaar Photo shows *bindallı* reminiscent of costuming in television series, *The Magnificent Century*.

Empire. These pieces of the built environment—namely churches and synagogues—reference the Ottoman Empire and Istanbul's cosmopolitanism. In this way, these different imaginations of the Ottoman Empire, in addition to the legacy of the built environment, demonstrate the ways in which such imaginations are necessarily fragmented, thereby recalling Chakrabarty's notion of provincialization. Such provincialization underscores attachments to particular facets of these imaginations, and begs the question of how they are mobilized.

### **Regulations of Women's Sexuality**

Two different kinds of rejections of *kına gecesi* permeated my conversations with women in Kadıköy: rejection of its symbolism and rejection of its association with Anatolian tradition. Each intersected with different facets of the state and also wove them together. This rejection of

symbolism is predicated on the identification of *kına gecesi*'s references to fertility and sexuality as part and parcel of the government's pronatalist agenda. Here, criticisms of *kına gecesi* also engender criticisms of state biopolitics. The rejection of *kına gecesi* on the basis of its relationship to tradition overlaps with biopolitics but does not neatly conform to it. Additionally, interlocutors admonished the ritual for being traditional in opposition to being modern, and defining modern as secular, in opposition is Islamic. Furthermore, these distinctions were also mapped onto an imagination of the nation (Anderson 1983) that rendered Anatolia traditional and Istanbul modern, and imagination that references and reinvents discourses of cosmopolitanism in Istanbul.

Fidan and Merve had both moved to Istanbul for university and while Fidan worked as a bureaucrat, Merve did freelance translations of articles for scholars in different fields. They spent their time as students between a number of small apartments in different parts of the city before landing in Kadıköy. They both frequented this tea garden named after the exiled communist Turkish poet, and passed many of their evenings and weekend afternoons there or at other haunts in the neighborhood. At the same time, they explained that Kadıköy was getting more and more difficult to stay in because of the dramatically rising cost of rent, which Fidan linked to the aftermath of the Gezi Park Protests in 2013.

The Gezi Park Protests began as a small sit in at Gezi Park in Taksim Square in the heart of Istanbul the night of May 27, 2013 to protect the park from being razed and turned into Ottoman style barracks that would also include a shopping mall (Abbas 2013, 23). The brutality of the police intervention one night of the sit-in at the end of May galvanized Istanbul and by dawn, thousands of people had gathered in Gezi Park (Atay 2013, 39). The standoff lasted through mid-June when the police successfully cleared the park, its renovation rather than the

construction of a shopping mall. The Gezi Park Protests, according to Fidan and Merve had effect of politicizing everyday life, such that rather than sustaining stares from more conservative neighbors, as Fidan put it, demonstrators preferred to move to neighborhoods where they would live with like-minded people—hence the astounding increase in rent prices.<sup>9</sup> In Kadıköy, demonstrations continued each Friday evening at one of the busy intersections. Walking by them one Friday evening on our way to bar street where Fidan insisted we have a dinner of *rakı*—a clear, anise-flavored 80 to 100 proof alcohol—and fish before I leave, she did not pay any mind to them. “They are always there,” she said, signaling that protest had become a part of Kadıköy’s landscape.

Fidan situated the Gezi Park Protests as inherently feminist. The galvanization of demonstrators following the police crack down on the park, also mobilized protests across the country and pluralized the motivations behind the resistance, amongst them an emphasis on women’s rights. Fidan’s indication that the protests were themselves feminist refers to the encroachment of government policy and discourse into the private lives of women in the mid-2000s. Erdoğan’s three-child recommendation is a well-known example that explicitly situates women’s role as the biological reproducer of the nation. During this time access to abortion and birth control saw further restrictions, realities that galvanized feminist participation in the protests (Dević and Krstić 2015; Uluğ and Acar 2015). These intrusions into women’s sexual lives were accompanied by critiques of other encroachments described by demonstrators identified as “interference in people’s chosen lifestyle” in the form of regulations on alcohol consumption (Çelik 2015, 228).

Fidan and Merve discussed these encroachments both in terms of encounters with them in everyday life and also in terms of those encroachments implications for how women relate to

themselves and their bodies—in other words, women’s gendered political subjectivities in Turkey. I use the term gendered political subjectivities here specifically to invoke Begoña Aretxaga formulation of the term. Aretxaga, in her ethnography on women’s involvement in the conflict in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 80s, emphasizes gender in her study of political subjectivities: “Yet in the abundant social science literature on the conflict the political practices of nationalist women have either passed virtually unnoticed or been considered anecdotal to the *real politics* of the conflict”(1997, 6; emphasis added).

The designation “real politics” also coincides with Zeynep Kurtuluş Korkman’s argument concerning the dismissal of gendered politics in Turkey as a distraction from “real politics” (2016). In her analysis of media discourses, she found that progressive journalists would often dismiss the ruling party’s arguably indelicate rhetoric on women’s rights and women’s reproduction in particular, suggesting that these discourses were actually intended to draw attention away from “real politics.” Such designations, Korkman argues, have the effect of further marginalizing women and women’s rights, instead rendering them dismissible and irrelevant to so-called real politics. Both Aretxaga and Korkman’s works situate gender as central to politics. Their approaches to recenting gender in political contestation differ, however. Where Korkman shows how gender is written out of mainstream media discourse, Aretxaga focuses on women’s own discourses. That is, while Korkman focuses on the implications for marginalization in government and media discourses, Aretxaga turns her attention to the ways in which women interact with, contest, and manipulate them. Aretxaga thus roots her examination of political subjectivities in women’s experience of conflict to show the ways in which women’s subjectivities are not only informed by relations of power, but also the ways in which discourses and practices are in turn transformed by the very subjectivities they

enable” (1997, 19). As such, she locates one’s own experiences, in addition to Foucauldian approaches to subjectivity, as critical to the very study of subjectivity.

Fidan and Merve’s discussion of these encroachments focused on commercial and institutional settings—namely the family, and schools and hospitals. Merve described buying pads at the corner store and having the cashier bag them twice so that the bags’ contents could not be identified. Fidan relayed a story in which she and her sister were with their male cousin and were talking about needing to purchase pads. When he asked what menstruation was, his mother overheard Fidan and her sister begin to explain it and reprimanded Fidan for sharing the mechanics of menstruation with her male cousin. The anecdotes continued—oscillating between Merve’s male university friend who consulted her for his anatomy homework to the rationalization to how the way they learned about menstruation in school: the boys were sent to the playground outside while the girls sat in a classroom. These experiences, Merve explained, have the effect of “alienating” (*yabancılaşmak*) women from their own bodies. Fidan enfolded women’s healthcare into the conversation, describing her first encounter with a new gynecologist in Ankara after she had gotten married. She recalled that he had said to her that it was okay for her to be nervous about sex because she was recently married, to which she responded sternly, “My husband and I were together for six years before we were married.

“This is actually a good place to tie *kına gecesi* back into this discussion,” Fidan continued. “*Kına gecesi* and wedding rituals, they carry the entire culture, in a manner of speaking. The *kına* is the bride’s last night in her parents’ house and her last night as a virgin, for example. You know what I mean? And for this reason she wears red.”

“The color of blood?” I clarified.

“Yes, that’s what it represents actually,” Fidan explained. “The bride is all dolled up and decorated (*süslenir*) like wrapping paper on a gift. And her face is covered. So it’s the groom who shouldn’t see her because there’s still one night left—henna nights are usually done one night before the wedding. The henna is lit and in this context it means that in one night you’ll sleep with the groom. The ceremony is over and everyone knows. They are all dancing and having fun, but this knowledge is what lies beneath (*altuna yatan*) all that.”

Merve jumped in, “So on the day of the wedding, for example from my cousin’s wedding—they’re, well, they’re a very conservative family. On the day of the wedding, because my cousin didn’t have a brother, my brother—since he was the closest relative—was the one to tie a red belt around the bride three times like this.” She mimed as though wrapping a loose band around my waist. “And then there are some strange (*tuhaf*) parts of the ritual and they make you into a gift box. The red belt symbolizes virginity. This is why a number of women reject (*reddetmek*) this ritual. I absolutely reject it. I don’t agree with it at all. I hate henna nights, because I can’t condone this kind of culture.”

In this discussion with Fidan and Merve, *kına gecesi* emerged as but a footnote that was tied into stories of encounters with encroachment into women’s intimate worlds and explanations of the effect these encroachments have on women. “The knowledge that lies beneath” and “this kind of culture” specifically implicate *kına gecesi* in state discourses that place a strong emphasis on virginity and work to regulate women’s sexuality. Merve, when talking about her family, described their conservatism in terms of their support for the AKP, but also her mother’s wearing of the headscarf and her father’s embarrassment over calling her cat by its name, *raki*. In this way, while Fidan and Merve theorized the implications of *kına gecesi*, they also situated them in everyday experience.

The ritual's reported effect of objectifying the bride was particularly disquieting for Fidan and Merve. Their descriptions of the dress of the bride and red belt were not only a way of representing virginity—although menstruation was something that had to be hidden—but also of objectifying it. Thus, their description of *kina gecesi* turning women into gift packages by wrapping them up with symbols of their virginity has the effect not only of objectifying the brides themselves, but also dissociating virginity from them and, instead, transforming virginity into a gift. In this way, Merve's explanation of women's alienation from their own bodies interfaces with "the kind of culture" she sees *kina gecesi* perpetuating. That is, it pulls sexuality into the sphere of recognition and regulation outside of the woman in question, and in doing so dissociates her from both her own sexuality and body.

Their framing of ritual additionally interweaves interpretations of *kina gecesi* with imaginations of the state. Fidan frames *kina gecesi*, and ritual more generally, as something that carries the values of society. This understanding intersects with multiple interpretations of ritual in anthropology. It echoes Durkheim's understanding of ritual as reflecting the values of society more broadly (1993). That is, as Fidan explained, the ritual "carries" the culture and thereby acts as a microcosm of it. Fidan and Merve's attention to symbols might recall Geertz's attention to symbolic meaning in his interpretivist approach (1973). In his examination of the Balinese cockfight, Geertz explores what he calls deep play, wherein the cockfight represents the confrontation of class and kin politics in Bali. An interpretivist frame would see *kina gecesi* as a stage for similar confrontations. However, the concept of deep play is deep because it is inconsequential—that is, it has no impact beyond the game itself. Merve's indication that she rejects *kina gecesi* as a practice due to its political symbolic entanglements, challenges its

conceptualization as deep play. For if it is to be rejected, it must thereby be considered consequential.

Kertzer's understands ritual as medium for the mobilization of symbolic power. Through this lens, Fidan and Merve's attention of the symbolism surrounding the regulation of women's sexuality, and their rhetorical connections with state discourses become especially salient. That is, Fidan and Merve conceptualized the symbols of the red belt and *bindalli* as carrying the broader implications of the ritual. Yet, Kertzer's exploration of ritual in politics is primarily concerned with the state and state institutions' mobilization of ritual in order to engender a sense of collective belonging under the state. *Kına gecesi*, however, as a pre-wedding ritual, is necessarily situated at the periphery of the state, which necessarily bears the onus of recognizing unions. Weddings have become particularly politicized under the AKP, wherein weddings attended by AKP politicians were transformed into venues for extolling the three-child recommendation, thereby further implicating weddings in state biopolitics.

The three child recommendation does not only relegate women's roles to motherhood, but also has the effect of glorifying motherhood as the means of belonging in the nation. These two aspects of this discourse come to the fore in Fidan and Merve's critique of *kına gecesi*. That is, women, while occupying the center of the ritual, are effectively decentered from the reigns of their own sexuality. This kind of ambivalence reflects Turner's understanding of liminality through its ambiguity. He examines liminality in part by drawing of Van Gennep's articulation of three different ritual stages: initiation, liminality, and incorporation. But he elaborates on it, arguing that it is not solely sandwiched between initiation of and incorporation into a new social role, but also that it contains a recognition of social hierarchies and its opposite, which he refers to as *comunitas* (1977, 96). Turner writes of *comunitas* that it "is of the now; structure

[hierarchy] is rooted in the past and extends into the future through language, law and custom” (1977, 113). In concert with Turner’s understanding of structure, Fidan and Merve’s explanation of *kına gecesi* show the boundaries of the ritual to be porous as it intersects with the encroachment of state discourses into women’s intimate worlds. As a result, it is this kind of understanding of ritual as enveloped in what Turner refers to as “structure” upon which their rejection of *kına gecesi* is founded. They did not only produce a politicized narrative of *kına gecesi*, but did so by linking it to state biopolitics.

### **Kına Gecesi and Secular Modernity**

However, *kına gecesi*’s implication in state biopolitics was not the only source of its rejection. More often I encountered the explanation that *kına gecesi* was not a secular ritual and therefore something that secular Istanbulites would not undertake. One Istanbulite friend I asked about whether she knew anyone getting married who might let me attend their *kına gecesi*, replied that her social circle (*bizimkiler*) did not do *kına gecesi*; or if they did, they would change it. The event would be at a club or bar, and would be more like a bachelorette party, “very high society” (*sosiyetik*). Recently married friends in Ankara reported the something similar. Both of them said that no one really does *kına gecesi* and that when they do, they “change it” to make it more “modern.” When I asked how, they explained that the *kına* is at a hotel rather than the home. Mehtap handed me her phone, instructing me to flip through the photos of the Ottoman-themed celebration of a “modern” *kına gecesi*. Later in the summer I returned to Ankara for a henna night held in a posh neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. There, at a branch of the chain wedding salon with a French name, two older women at the table insisted that this was not a “real” (*gerçek*) *kına gecesi*, that it was more like a wedding and, at best, could be considered a “high society” (*sosiyetik*) henna night. To see a real one, they explained, I would have to go to

the village. All these conversations were framed by the words of a Turkish acquaintance in the United States who told me before I left for the field that around the time she got married in the 1970s no one did *kına gecesi* because it would be embarrassing to be caught in public with henna on your hands. It is something people do now, she continued, because they will use any excuse that can to throw a party. Barış echoed this sentiment in the introduction when he disparaged university students for holding their own henna nights the night before graduation as “nonsense” (*saçma*).

In Kadıköy, criticism of *kına gecesi* focused on its apparent opposition to secularist sensibilities. This conversation occurred one afternoon with Fidan, her husband Can, and her friend Selin chasing shady café seats and the latest gossip on preparations for the upcoming election about who would be running and whether they would run as a member of a political party or as an independent candidate. Fidan and Can had apologized to me multiple times, saying that they did not usually spend their days chasing gossip. This Sunday afternoon followed the terrorist attack in Suruç by only a week—the first attack on Turkish national soil claimed by the so-called Islamic State, one which targeted socialist Turkish and Kurdish activists preparing to bring humanitarian aid to the war-torn border city Kobane in Syria. While the gossip these interlocutors awaited was not directly informed by the attack, it contributed a palpable weight and urgency to our conversations that day. Selin, whom I had met earlier in the summer when Fidan and I attended a Latin dance night where raffle tickets took the form of mugs decorated in Cuban flags and sketches of street musicians, was only amused by the desperation for gossip and embarrassment at the coincidence of hosting me at the same time. In a brief break in the conversation, Fidan asked how my research was coming along. I explained my anxieties about

not finding enough material. Fidan immediately turned to Selin and asked her to describe the *kına gecesi* she had recently attended.

It had been an especially posh occasion, held at the historic *yalı* (mansion on the Bosphorus), Fuad, named after (if not for) Fuad Pasha, who played an instrumental in the development of the Tanzimat. Despite the venue's Ottoman-era namesake and its construction in the Ottoman era, Fidan admonished me for asking if it were Ottoman. It was a "modern" venue. Selin described sitting outside on the patio with friends of the bride, sipping wine. She walked me through the different outfits the bride wore—three throughout the night starting with a sari to match the India theme the bride had chosen for the henna night, to the *bindallı* for the lighting of the henna. We never made it to the third dress. Can interrupted Selin's description of the song "To the Highest Hills" sung during the ceremony, deriding it as the "I-miss-my-mother song." Following Selin's description of the bracelets given to the bride by her mother-in-law, Fidan jumped in, reiterating that this was another manifestation of what she had earlier described as the commodification and objectification of the bride: "However much money you have, that's how many gifts you give."

"It turns women into bracelets," Selin agreed.

"Yeah there's a little *accounting* that goes on there," Fidan continued, laughing but then suddenly serious. "So the kind of *kına* we're talking about is more urban, but very wealthy, but for people who want to be [emotionally] moved by tradition, so according to their different tastes they create a theme."

Selin amended Fidan's take on this wealthy, urban henna night. "Here, for example, the bride didn't want a henna night. The bride's family is from Istanbul. The groom's family was from Anatolia and is very influential (*güçlü*). So, the bride decided to wear that Indian dress, or, I

don't know, whatever other kind of outfit for example. So then, compared to what all the groom's family wanted, she made that part of the ritual more contemporary (*geliştirmek*). Then, all of a sudden, modern music starts playing. Generally it's really—”

“The understanding is that it's like a theme party,” said Fidan.

“Yes, yes,” Selin nodded her head. “This modern *kına gecesi*—theme party—was done like a bachelorette's party.”

Selin continued, “No one in my family has had a *kına gecesi*. They didn't see the need. My parents went directly to the municipal building to sign the marriage license and had a small party at their house.”

Can chimed in, adding that his parents had done the same, “In their day, when they got married, it would have been shameful (*ayıp*) to do a big wedding with the drums (*davul*) and clarinet (*zurna*) and everyone doing this or that folk dance (*halay malay*).”

“It's rude (*görgüsüzlük*, without manners or etiquette), something that's backwards (*geri*), low (*alt*) culture.”

At the same time, Selin was looking through her phone looking for photos of the *kına gecesi* she had just described. Instead, she found pictures of a *kına* that was “even more of a concept party” than the first. The bride didn't wear a *bindallı* at all: “She didn't wear that low culture costume. Ah, here it is I found it. See, it was a concept party, Ottoman-harem themed.”

Commodification and objectification took on what at first appear to be contradictory roles in these narratives. Fidan, along with Merve and Selin, identified *kına gecesi* as a set of practices that have the effect of rendering the bride a commodity: Fidan and Merve discussed this in terms of the dress worn as a means of “giftwrapping” the bride while Selin likened the giving of gold bracelets as a way of quantifying the value of the bride, in her words, “turning the bride into

bracelets.” Yet, at the same time, commodity consumption also represented an avenue through which to imbue the celebration with connotations of the modern and urban. In this way, in their narratives of modernity and *kına gecesi*, the object of consumption shifts from the bride to ritual entanglements. Nonetheless, Selin described *kına gecesi* as something that she, and other secular Istanbulites of Sunni background—Fidan and Can are Alevi—would not do for its association with “backwards” Anatolian custom. In this way, narratives of *kına gecesi* are also realized in part through imaginations of place in relation to secularism and modernity.

The word *modern* was peppered throughout the discussion of these urban, secular *kına gecesi*. It at once appeared to commodify this “low culture” (*alt kültürü*) celebration and do so through the enactment of Orientalizing imaginations, such as the Ottoman-harem- and India-themed *kına gecesi*.

### **Modernity and Secularism in Turkish Nationalism**

In Turkey the concept of modernity is intricately tied to the secularizing reforms of the early republican period in which modernity was defined as both secularist and Western. With the founding of the Turkish republic in 1923, the capital was moved from the Ottoman seat of power in Istanbul to Ankara, then a small central Anatolian village with a railroad and no architectural signatures of the Ottoman Empire in the form of grand mosques (Çinar 2005). Çinar argues that this shift was part and parcel of distinguishing the secular republic from its Ottoman predecessor. Consequently, the realization of this transition and transformation through manipulations and uses of space come to the fore in the production of imaginations of the newly founded nation. That is, these imaginations are in part “*seen through place*” (Mills 2010, 209; emphasis in original). The early republican regime embarked on constructing the public space<sup>10</sup> of the nation not only through law and public discourse, such as the introduction of the 1927 Civil Code,

based on the Swiss Civil Code, but also the construction of public squares and monuments to Atatürk and the Independence war (Hart 1999; Çinar 2005). That is, the state inscribed public spaces with emblems and representations of both its victory in war and its ideology, namely, Kemalism.

The secular reforms of Republican Turkey represent an extension of modernizing reforms initiated under the Ottoman Empire, although they are predicated in part on representations of Turkey's radical break with the Ottoman past (Gülap 2005; Kadiyoti 2012; Miller 2006; Tambar 2014). The processes of modernization are most often associated with the Tanzimat reforms, which began in 1839. These reforms instituted Ottoman citizenship, granting equal rights to Muslim and non-Muslim (*gayri-Müslüman*) populations (Atasoy 2009). As a result the Tanzimat reforms saw the disintegration of the *milltet* (nation) system, in which Christian and Jewish minorities within the territory of the Ottoman Empire to operate as though they were autonomous states. The Tanzimat reforms represented a response not only to the growing economy declining of the Ottoman Empire, but also to growing nationalist sentiments that threatened the Empire's dissolution. These reforms' concern with citizenship belies their roots in liberalism. In this way the Tanzimat reforms, according to Atasoy, was part and parcel of a deliberate Westernization (*batılılaşma*) and Europeanization (*Avrupalılaşma*), as liberalism marked a governmentality of modernity (2009, 35). Ottoman reformers thus viewed liberalism as an "ideological tool"—rather than an economic one—employed to "restructure the state through the creation of a homogenous public space that was multi-linguistic and multi-religious" (ibid.).

However, as noted above, the "master narrative" of secularism and the realization of Republican secularist reforms relies on a "rupture" between conceptualizations of the "traditional Muslim society" of Ottoman past and modern secularism (Kandiyoti 2012, 515). Kandiyoti

argues that this master narrative “is also reliant, to varying degrees, on a conception of a unified Muslim *habitus*<sup>11</sup> entering into conflict with Western modernity” (ibid.). This narrative shows both consistencies and inconsistencies with the production of modernity in Turkish nationalism in the late years of the Ottoman Empire. Ziya Gökalp, one of the oft-cited authors of Turkish nationalism in this era, argued that Ottoman civilization in particular (and eastern civilization more generally) represented an obstacle to the realization of modernity, which he saw as manifest in Europe (Karadaş 2010, 54). This argument is in part predicated on his distinction between *hars* (collective, unlearned learned culture) and *tehzib*, which referred to “refined culture” and would be understood as civilization. Through this distinction between civilization and culture, Gökalp articulated Turkish culture as already containing liberal economic, modern values of Europe and Ottomanism as inhibiting their realization (2010, 57). Karadaş argues that this discursive strategy had the effect of Orientalizing, and therefore othering, the Ottoman Empire while at the same time contesting Orientalizations of Turkishness in Europe.<sup>12</sup> Yet, unlike the master narrative Kandiyoti describes, Gökalp incorporates Islam into the category of culture, defining it as part and parcel of Turkish identification (2010, 47). In an alternative to the “master narrative” of Turkish secularism, Kandiyoti argues, “Turkish nationhood and claims of national belonging were never divorced from being Sunni and Muslim” (2012, 516). Rather, religious and secular ideologies have been mobilized in different ways in different times, showing that they are not necessarily fundamentally at odds with one another, although they may be imagined as such.

### **Outlining Secularist Subjectivities**

Talal Asad, in his genealogy of secularism, argues that the ideology of self-governance germane to liberalism necessitated the production of certain laws as well as subjects: “It is

because the ideology of self government [implicit in liberalism] seems also to call for the ‘civilizing’ of entire subject populations through law that the authority of the law and its reconstructive power comes to be taken as supremely important” (2003, 253). Here, Asad draws on Foucauldian notions of the productivity of power; in contradistinction to conceptualizations of power as repressive (Foucault 1978, 18). That is, as secularism emerged along side new methods of “classification and calculation, and new forms of subjecthood” (Asad 2003, 24)—methods that Foucault identified as integral to the practices of biopolitical regimes. Hence, secularism and biopolitics both entail the production of particular subjects.<sup>13</sup>

Charles Hirschkind, in his examination of secularism as a form of “self-fashioning,” identifies Asad’s approach to the study of the secular as one entangled in the development of biopolitics. In response, Hirschkind poses the question:

Would it be correct to state that the regime of knowledge and power that we call ‘biomedical’ plays a significant role in constituting the secular, and that the disciplinary exercises and institutions put into play by this regime shape us—our attitudes, our visceral reasoning, our patterned hierarchies of the senses—as secular people? (2011, 640).

This question becomes especially important as both the biopolitics and secularism entertain associations with the articulation of modernity. He suggests that the biomedical view, in fact, distracts from investigations into the religious-secular dichotomies and, in doing so, obscures inquiry into the construction of the secular body. In this way, he argues that rather than constituting a static identity, the secular is mobilized through “dynamic relations” (2011, 641). These relations and embodied dispositions do not themselves necessarily represent the secular, but instead are subsumed within it. That is, the secular is something that necessarily “depends on... the secularist narrative of the progressive replacement of religious error by secular reason—what Asad calls the ‘triumphalist narrative of secularism’”(ibid.).

While Asad and Hirschkind focus attention on the secular body, it is also important to

“provincialize” such understandings of secularism (Chakrabarty 2001). Provincializing is one of Chakrabarty’s titular terms. He applies it to Europe in an effort to show that the concept of Europe holds different connotations in different parts of the world. In this way, provincializing is not only about deliberately fragmenting hegemonic tropes of Europe, but also about problematizing the application of abstract concepts such as secularism. He argues that historicism, which “takes its object of investigation to be internally unified, and sees it as something developing over time” (2001, 23) underwrites such approaches as they suggest that abstractions of modernity, capitalism, and secularism emanated from Europe and spread across the world *over time* (2001, 7). In this context, binaries oppositions between tradition and modernity emerge as signifiers of colonial and pre-colonial periods (2001, 15).

Nilüfer Göle understands that any account of secularism in Europe would be incomplete without attention to colonialism and interaction with Islam. This challenges accounts of the development of secularism that deal solely with its connection to Christianity (Asad 2003; Taylor 2007). She writes, “Limiting the narration of secularity to Latin Christendom dismisses the civilizational powers of Western modernity, which are inseparable from sexual and spatial politics” (2010, 244). As such, she suggests that secularism should not be understood in opposition to Islam, but rather via their “interdependence” (2010, 246).

Turkish secularism provides an important example for understanding “how the modern secular is indigenized and acted out in changing Muslim definitions of self, ethics, and aesthetics” (Göle 2010, 253). Secularism in Turkey, which Göle qualifies as an authoritarian secularism, sought to develop a “phenomenology of everyday life practices,” similarly employing disciplinary practices of the gaze through the hat law and emphasis on unveiling. Consequently these practices were both embodied and spatialized (2010, 254). Thus rather than

the public sphere being taken for granted as an essential character of the Republic in France, in Turkey it instantiated the “civilizing mission” (2010, 243) of the Atatürk regime (Çinar 2005, 2008). The early Turkish Republic’s attention to corporal constitution and to the purification of the language, replacing Arabic and Persian words with Turkish ones, further entrenched Kemalist secularism in mundane, daily practice. As a result, Göle argues, “It [Secularism] also designates a ‘colonized’ lifeworld in the sense that it frames these realms [linguistic, bodily, and spatial practices] in reference to Western notions of truth, ethics, and aesthetics” (2010, 255). In doing so, she focuses on the constitution of Islamic and secular habitus, emphasizing their qualities as something learned through disciplinary practices.

Meyda Yeğenoğlu, like Göle, connects colonialism and secularism in Turkey. However, rather than conceptualizing secular reforms as an indigenization or secularism (Göle 2010), Yeğenoğlu argues that the early Republican secularist reforms constituted an internationalization of Orientalist rhetoric on the Other. This critique is part and parcel of her problematization of the lack of attention to gender in Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Orientalism, as a system of representation and domination, shaped the collective European imagination of the place of the Orient do not correspond to lived realities. The production of these discourses, thus in itself, becomes an act of domination as “the very presence of a ‘field’ such as Orientalism, with no corresponding equivalent in the Orient itself, suggests the relative strength of Orient and Occident” (1978, 204). In this way, Orientalism is itself a discourse of “confrontation,” that is, a means for defining oneself—Western Europe—as distinct from the Middle East (1978, 206), that was also used to justify European colonial rule (1978, 39).

While Said’s focus was on the very consequential portrayal of the Orient as backwards, as being home to only a glorious past but a declining present, Yeğenoğlu argues that this

discourse would not be possible without the underpinning of gender. Through this lens, Orientalist discourses are fundamentally gendered: “Orientalism is a fantasy built on sexual difference” (1998, 11). She draws on two examples, campaigns in support of veiling in Algeria and the constitution of secular reforms in Turkey predicated, in part, on unveiling. These examples share the important point that women’s bodies in particular are mobilized in nationalist discourses as emblematic of nationalist values. Yet, they also, according to Yeğenoğlu, demonstrate these nationalisms’ reproduction of Orientalist discourses. These nationalist discourses, furthermore, reproduce Orientalist discourse insofar as they are predicated on “the imperial divide between Western and native” (1998, 122). Here, she draws a parallel between colonialist discourses on veiling and the association of veiling with backwardness in early Republican Turkey, arguing that women’s bodies served as boundary markers, articulating the territory of the nation (1998, 136).

In the nationalist frameworks to which Yeğenoğlu refers, she bifurcates the West from the “native” (1998, 122). This rendition of the nascence of the Republic of Turkey is at odds with Göle’s. Göle articulates three different, and competing nationalist strategies: ethnic Turkish, secular, and Islamic, whereas Yeğenoğlu dichotomizes these into Islamic and secular. However, Göle also relies on a conceptual construction of a homogenous Islamic habitus (Kandiyoti 2012, 515). As a result, both neglect to do the work of provincialization that Chakrabarty cites as essential to writing against the grain of historicist mentalities (2001). Instead, they have the effect of naturalizing concepts of the east and west, and of homogenizing Islam and the subjects of the Ottoman Empire in what is present-day Turkey, thereby reproducing the Orientalism being critiques. In contradistinction to Yeğenoğlu, Göle, in her demonstration of the imbrication of Islam and secularism in Europe, engages in a provincialization that necessarily problematizes

historicist oppositions between Islam and secularism.

Uma Narayan takes this a step further, arguing that situating critiques of local practices—particularly surrounded gender—in colonial settings as themselves being Western or secular has the effect of robbing women of their critical, gendered political subjectivities (1997, 15), to which Fidan alluded in her argument with Selin This an essential insight for interpreting Fidan’s critique of *kına gecesi* and the biopolitics in which she sees it imbricated. Rather than engendering an internalization of Orientalism, as Yeğenoğlu suggests, Fidan’s narratives show a gendered political subjectivity informed by encounters and negotiations surrounding both the visibility of menstruation and expectations of chastity. Furthermore, her indication that the Gezi Park Protests constituted a feminist critique underscore her understanding of these encroachments on women’s intimate worlds as part and parcel of the discursive, institutional, and juridical marginalization of women under the current government.

Women’s rights and their juridical articulations have focused on women’s partial, if not paradoxical inclusion into the national fabric as subjects with rights (Arat 2002; Kandiyoti 2002). Arat notes that women’s pursuit of the expansion of their rights depends on a system of liberal democracy that in fact neutralizes their gender. Kandiyoti, on the other hand, refers to the conundrum of women’s Turkish citizenship being characterized by the granting of universal citizenship that at once distinguished women’s roles within the family and also characterized women as the bearers of national authenticity. Ruth Miller, situates these arguments in critiques of the public/private distinction as part and parcel of the denial of both women’s rights and gendered citizenship (Miller 2006, 352). By contrast, Miller argues, “The liberal (and contradictorily authoritarian) state explicitly recognizes the family as a political entity and relies

heavily on the notion of reproduction in social (and political relation)” (ibid.). As a result, she locates reproduction at the core of “the biopolitical sovereign power’s right to make live” (ibid.).

Miller shows that rather than exclusion from neutral subjecthood—the neutral subject being the bearer of rights—“The sexual reproductive nature of modern citizenship lies in the modern state’s relentless inclusion” (2006, 353). She emphasizes the biological foundations of citizenship through an examination of transformations in abortion laws since the Tanzimat reforms of the Ottoman Empire through the contemporary Turkish state. The first mention of abortion in Ottoman law occurred in 1859, having been adapted from the 1810 Code Napoléon and “criminalized and used as a forum for creating the disparate categories of male and female citizen” (2006, 359). These proscriptions centered abortion as a crime on women’s inappropriate behavior and in doing so conceptualized abortion as a biological crime against the collective whole (2006, 361).<sup>14</sup> With the adoption of the Swiss Civil code in 1926, Turkey also adopted the Italian criminal code of 1889, wherein abortion was defined as a crime unto itself. These would be replaced with the Codice Rocco before 1938. Miller uses this exploration to show that crimes against a race or population and “rhetorically” linked to reproduction and women’s sexual behavior, thus making sexuality an important technology of statecraft as well as biopolitics. In this way, Miller argues that the “granting or limiting of rights or choice, with maturity, responsibility, sanity, or coercion” does not in fact offer women control over their own reproduction. Instead, it separates the individual woman as the subject who bears human rights from her reproductive capacities, thus situating reproduction squarely within the jurisdiction of the state.

In this way, state practices of “relentless inclusion” become part and parcel of biopolitical technologies for the maximization of life. Furthermore, they also have the effect of tracing the

discursive boundaries of political belonging. In this context, belonging is not only predicated on the production of sexuality, but also secularism.

### **Fidan's Kına Gecesi**

The interconnected quality of secularism and Sunni Turkish identity are especially visible in a conversation Fidan had with a acquaintance, Yiğit, at the tea garden named after the exiled communist poet that would often frequent. Yiğit was surprised that Fidan had decided to have a *kına gecesi* in the first place. She brought up her *kına gecesi* in our first conversation just as Merve was concluding her sentence explaining her rejection and hate of the ritual.

Fidan began speaking over Merve, saying, “And then there’s me—I was forced (*zorunda kaldım*) to have a *kına gecesi*!”

At this point an “Ah!” burst out from Canan.

“Everyone was saying, ‘You should have a *kına*,’ ‘If you don’t have a *kına gecesi*, we will do it for you!’ You know, it was that kind of pressure.”

Merve chimed in, “I mean, after all it is a part of daily life isn’t it? It’s fun (*eğlence*)-”

“Oh, we had a lot of fun. Really. But we didn’t do every part of the ritual.”

“Some people just do the whole ritual because it’s a wedding so the logic is that no expense should be spared: ‘Let’s have a *kına gecesi*,’ ‘Let’s do this and that,’” Merve clarified. “They look at it in terms of having fun, but what lies underneath is a long history and religious ideology.”

Fidan emphasized that this pressure was something that her sister had uncharacteristically meekly insisted upon. “My sister and I were very close. We were like best friends. She decided that I would do it when I was getting married actually. It was that kind of pressure. Normally, we

[Fidan's family] are the kind of people who can get divorced, continue sleeping with your ex, and have children and it's fine! We're very relaxed (*rahat*).

“When we were growing up we were always together, and she was more of a tomboy. She broke all the rules. But when I was getting married she came over to me all secretive and said, ‘So now,’ she said, ‘of course,’ she said, ‘But you’re not going to leave without doing a *kına gecesi* are you?’ She didn’t say much but I understood what she meant. She wanted a night to remember. So then we figured if we’re doing a henna night we should follow the rules. And then my cousin asked if he would be the one to tie the red belt around me and I said, ‘No, no! We can do a *kına gecesi*, but I’m not going that far.”

Fidan emphasized that her family was not the *type* to practice *kına gecesi*. Importantly, she composed this distinction through references to women’s sexuality and gender expression. In her qualification of her family pushing her to celebrate *kına gecesi* she portrayed her family in terms of sexual activity that was not considered cause for rebuke: divorce, being sexually active outside of marriage, and having children out of wedlock. Furthermore, when Fidan elaborated on the family pressure to have a *kına gecesi*, she indicated that it was her sister who first initiated the discussion. Yet, she describes her sister as a tomboy—someone who never bothered to follow gender norms—and in doing so foregrounds the actualization of her henna night and the sowing of the very idea of it as inconsistent with—if not antithetical to—the normative constructions of gender that underwrite other henna nights.

Furthermore, Fidan explained that her *kına gecesi* was “mixed” (*karaşık*), referring to the presence of both men and women, in contrast to what she identified as “traditional” (*geleneksel*), Sunni *kına gecesi*. She indicated that the mixing of genders at her *kına gecesi* was part of Alevi tradition. Alevi, in Turkey, refers to a religious minority<sup>15</sup> whose constituents include ethnic

Turks, Kurds, and Zaza. Some estimations suggest that 15 percent of Turkey’s population is Alevi (Tambar 2014, 9). However, because Alevi is not a designated category for census data, this estimation is not verifiable. The absence of Alevi as a bureaucratically recognized category is in fact part and parcel of what Kabir Tambar refers to as “ambivalent pluralism” (2014: 4), that is, a form of inclusion that simultaneously excludes. He shows that Alevism was integrated into the national fabric<sup>16</sup> through its folklorization as a living artifact of the Turkish national past (Tambar 2014).

It was this kind of “ambivalent inclusion” (Tambar 2014) with which Yiğit confronted Fidan. He sat on the other side of the table, taking alternative sips of his tea and cigarettes. They had known one another for some time through their many shared friends and acquaintances at the tea garden. He had retired recently after working for years in construction, and was delighted in relaying to Fidan the all the reading—novels and political essays—that he was able to catch up with in the recent months.

He was shocked, “*You had a henna night?*”

Fidan qualified her *kına gecesi*. She explained that because she is Alevi, her *kına gecesi* was different from what he might expect, emphasizing that both men and women were in attendance (*kadın-erkek karışık*). She continued saying that Alevism does not have the same concept of gender segregation present in Sunni Islam.<sup>17</sup>

But Yiğit strongly disagreed and corrected Fidan, saying that Alevi *kına gecesi* ceremonies being “mixed” (*karışık*) was not related to configurations of gender relations in Alevism, but, instead, was a reflection of the tendency for Alevis in Turkey to be secular. Hence, Yiğit articulated gender relations in Alevi ritual, not through Alevi ideological or religious foundations but, rather, through the impetus of state secularism—subsuming it within Kemalist

secularism thereby not only exemplifying Tambar's "ambivalent pluralism" (2014), but also the "relentless inclusion" Miller uses to describe the Ottoman and Turkish states' constitution of women as rights-bearing citizens and their productions of women's sexuality (2006). That is, secular events and rituals do not segregate by gender, and Alevi are secular, therefore Alevi ritual does not segregate by gender. Yiğit thus rendered secularism in Turkey the driving characteristic of Alevism, subsuming Alevi practice under the umbrella of secularism.

Fidan vehemently disagreed. She began citing other instances of *mixed* Alevi gatherings, reiterating that Alevism does not practice of gender separation.

Yiğit repeated himself.

Fidan would not back down. They went back and forth like this several more times. With each round, the argument grew more and more heated until Fidan put an end to it, saying, "You may be right. I say it is Alevi because I have only heard of mixed *kına gecesi* in the Alevi context."

"It is because they are secular," Yiğit said, on last time.

"That could be" (*olabilir*), Fidan replied and concluded this chapter in the conversation.

In this way, Fidan emerges as a subject of intersectional marginalization from both Kemalist secular nationalizing discourses and the pronatalist biopolitics of the state. Simultaneously included in and excluded from each, Fidan embodies an ambivalent gendered subjectivity that situates her outside of easy dichotomies of Islamist and secularist.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE WRONG KIND OF KINA GECESİ

I first met Arzu in the summer of 2010 when a close mutual friend suggested that I stay at her family's hotel in Bodrum. Arzu greeted me at the bus station in Bodrum's city center. I remember the red and white Republican People's Party<sup>18</sup> (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) flags that greet vehicles coming into the city from the highway and the sea of white stucco houses, some with blue window frames and other dotted with bright magenta vines. As we walked to her family's hotel after a short bus ride that wove through beaches, piers, and tall dry hills, Arzu remarked that we were no longer in Bodrum, but in Gümbet. She added, "I don't like Gümbet."

Everyone I met at the hotel that year seemed to be working class and from England, Ireland, or Scotland. Guests would usually visit the hotel twice each year, with every visit spanning two to three weeks. Arzu, who I think could quite easily be described as a natural performer, was always at ease amongst the guests. They would call good morning to her, and she would dance amongst the tables. Most of the guests were older. They spent their days at one of the nearby beaches, at a *hamam* (Turkish bath) around the corner whose signs were only in English (but for the word *hamam*), or going on boat trips that would take off from a pier down the way. The beaches in Gümbet were shallow, and rocky—only several meters of sand stood between seaside restaurants and the sea. Many of the restaurants had large signs in their entryways, advertising English breakfasts and showing plates filled with beans and eggs. Some signs highlighted that the restaurant served pork. Arzu's family restaurant did not serve pork, although their menu had primarily consisted of English food, in addition to pastas and Mediterranean salads. They had only just added Turkish food to the menu that year.

One night, a group of guests—middle aged, working class Scots who had been visiting the hotel since Arzu was in diapers—invited Arzu and me to go out to a nearby bar for karaoke. They assured Arzu’s mother, Hatice Teyze, that they would stay with Arzu the whole time and that they would come back at a reasonable hour, confirming that they would not go to Bar Street, but a small bar around the corner from the hotel. As we left, Hatice Teyze called out to Arzu in Turkish, “Don’t drink any alcohol, it’s still Ramadan!” At the bar, Arzu ordered a Rum and coke.

Days later, on the first morning of Şeker Bayram, the feast holiday celebrating the conclusion of the fasting month of Ramadan, I accompanied Arzu to visits with her many relatives in Bodrum proper. With each visit, we were served chocolate, often followed with tea and baklava or another simple syrup-soaked dessert. When we returned to the hotel, Arzu and I complained to the same group from the boat trip and karaoke that we were unbearably full with sweets. One, confused, responded, “But I thought that Ramadan was over?”

Arzu paused, “It’s complicated.” And refused to elaborate.

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These first interactions with Arzu and her family at their hotel in Gumbet set the stage for my umpteenth visit with them in the summer of 2015. These early encounters underscore a particular constellation of sense of place (Basso 1996) and cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 1997). Basso developed his sense of place in his work with Western Apache in the southwestern United States. He describes it as affective relationship to place, in which place both incites narratives and become critical components of other narratives such that place names invoke the constellation of stories around it. The stories of places described above, and to follow, similarly pay close attention to sense of place.

The segments of these conversations underscore the vocabulary of geography in everyday speech. Utilizing the names of cities and regions in everyday speech does not only index those places themselves, but also their affective entanglements Keith Basso describes this through the concept of sense of place, which represents a process wherein individuals “become sharply aware of the complex attachments that link them to features of the physical world” (1996, 107). He emphasizes that places can only evoke those things that others, through the construction of narratives, have enabled them to say. Sense of place, therefore, is simultaneously constituted and constituting, thus distinguishing it from Benedict Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities,” wherein national belonging is produced through the image of horizontal comradeship across a sovereign, bounded space (1983, 7). However, sense of place does not only pertain to imagination but also to affective entanglements with the material world. There is an important distinction, however, in how sense of place manifested in these conversations in Turkey and their social world in Basso’s research setting among the Western Apache in the southwestern United States. That is, here, place became a register not only of individual character, but of a particular subjective, political position vis-à-vis growing sectarian violence in Turkey and the region, in addition to the anxiety of governmentlessness (*hükümetsizlik*).

However, rather than index narratives, the invocation of place underscores contested imaginations of national belonging. That is, place becomes an imagined, material, and affective trope for different ethnic and religious groups’ embodiment of secularist Turkish nationalism. Hence, invocations of place themselves become entangled in judgments of national belonging and the determination of insider and outsider.

Here, articulations of space are part and parcel of expressions and contestations of cultural intimacy. Michael Herzfeld defines cultural intimacy as “the recognition of those

cultural aspects of cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality” (1997, 3). The structure of cultural intimacy enables a better understanding of how discourses circulate and the critical role of audience in this circulation. However, cultural intimacy relies on the binary articulation of insider and outsider. Rather than assume group membership, following Vliet’s directive, I ask how discursive strategies of speech and silence inform the construction of different imaginations of the Turkish political subject? Herzfeld’s concept of cultural intimacy is nonetheless salient, as it highlights the fissures in imaginations of national belonging and the import of place in their articulation.

In the summer of 2015, after enduring the oppressive heat of Turkey’s southern Aegean coast, it was a relief to drive into the hills on the outskirts of Bodrum to attend an open-air *kına gecesi* in the center of a large field of gravel that exposed us to the winds blowing in from the sea. We traveled to the site of the *kına gecesi* by car with Arzu’s parents. Arzu’s mother and father followed the slow caravan of cars and motorbikes, passing the groom’s party of a group of men on mopeds as they pulled to the side of the road to park. Nearing the site of the *kına gecesi*, Arzu’s mother turned around in the passenger’s seat of the car to face me and say, “No one in this area is from Bodrum. This is a squatter settlement (*gecekondü*). They’re all foreigners (*yabancı*), but not in the way that you’re a foreigner.”

We found a small line of empty seats amongst the rows of white lawn chairs set up around three sides of the cement stage. The DJ was trying to coax the guests into dancing saying, “The groom’s side is on his way”—they were parking their mopeds—“Let’s show them a full dance floor.”



**Photo 4. *Kına gecesi* in Bodrum.**

The groom and his party walked up the sidewalk, passed the soccer field erected behind the community center, and traversed the threshold between pavement and the open gravel lot that extended up hill from the tennis courts. The piercing sound of *zurnu* (clarinet) and deep resonance of the pounding *davul* (drum) announced their arrival, as one young man carrying a Turkish flag and a bottle of beer in his back pocket led them onto the cement stage, effectively pushing off the women who had been dancing. The young man holding the flag stood in the center while the groom and his friends danced the *zeybek*, an Aegean folk dance, around him.

After, the bride and her friends repopulated it, and the groom's party retreated to the open gravel lot behind us.

Arzu's mother laid her hand on my arm, "This music isn't Bodrum music. We don't like this kind of music." Awhile later she took my arm again, "No one here [sitting, watching the bride and her friends and family dance] is from Bodrum" (*Burada hiç kimse Bodrumlu değil*).

Instead, the same wedding song I'd heard in Ankara and in Istanbul exuded from the speakers. It was decidedly in the Ankara style, up-beat and brassy. When the bride came out, she and her friends all dressed in matching *bindallı* the music changed and Arzu and I moved closer to the cement dance floor. The bride's friends followed her as she walked in a circle around the two chairs that were being set up in the middle. Just uphill, the men on the groom's side were having their own celebration, and the faint sound of *davul* and *zurna* wafted over the *kına*. There were further interruptions. The line following the bride got broken up by those guests anxious to pose with the bride's party for photos. At one point, only two of the bride's friends faithfully walked in her steps, while the rest of their cohort took turns taking photos with guests. The bride's face dropped when she, making it full circle, realized what'd happened. She continued, however.

When it came time to light the henna, the groom joined her and the guests encircled the couple. We watched her wipe her eyes with her fists tightly closed. A woman kneeled in front of her and pressed a thick gob of green henna into her palm, secured it with a napkin and beaded gauzy wrap. The groom's mother dipped his pinky finger in the henna. And the ceremony was over.

Arzu led me to the chair where the tray of henna had been relocated. We stood behind a number of guests scooping balls of henna from the tray and painting their hands and arms with it in broad strokes. Arzu reached in to grab a napkin and lump of henna and pushed them against my palm one after the other.

As we were leaving, Hatice Teyze, again took me gently by the arm and said, “Don’t bother remembering (*aklına tutma*) this *kına gecesi*. It wasn’t right (*güzel*) at all”

“The bride isn’t from Bodrum?” I managed to squeak out after a long pause.

“She isn’t. This *kına gecesi* wasn’t *orijinal*. I’ll tell you why later,” She turned to Arzu, “We need to find a YouTube video for Alexandra.”

Arzu began to argue, “But Mom, she can’t just watch a video! She has to see it with her own eyes.”

Hatice Teyze held her ground. “But this isn’t a good example at all.”

“So what!?” Arzu retorted, “I mean she could write about a *kına gecesi* for when someone from Bodrum (*Bodrumlu*) and an outsider (*yabancı*) get married!”

Hatice Teyze refused to budge, insisting that we find a video of a *Bodrumlu kına*. Arzu finally threw her hands in the air, exclaiming, “For God’s sake, Mom!” as we climbed into the car.

The next morning while I was sitting with Arzu at the reception desk, Hatice Teyze mentioned very briefly what a terrible (*hiç güzel değil*) *kına gecesi* we had attended. Arzu’s cousin jumped in. He hadn’t attended the henna night but instead the meal at the groom’s house before the *kına gecesi* began, and complained bitterly about the food—it was too salty.

Still irritated with her mother, Arzu asked, “What was actually wrong with it?”

“It wasn’t organized at all. It was chaos.”

“The bride was upset about that too. Especially when her friends stopped in the middle of it to take photos without her,” Arzu agreed.

“Besides, the bride is Alevi,” said Hatice Teyze.

When I asked Hatice Teyze to elaborate on how this made the *kına gecesi* something I should forget, said again, “Another time,” which never arrived.

### **Failed Ritual**

The argument between Arzu and Hatice Teyze about the *kına gecesi*, and whether or not that particular celebration was suitable for me to write about underscores a broader argument about homogeneity and hybridity in the reproduction and representation of Turkish nationalism. That is, where Hatice Teyze emphasized that this was not a faithful representation of Bodrum henna nights, she also rejected the idea of presenting this particular *kına* as an instance of hybridity, as Arzu expressed. In this way, the argument does not only illuminate a tension between different imaginations of the nation—homogenous, and plural and hybrid—but also brings to the fore the question of how place is intertwined with matters of national belonging. These different engagements then show themselves to be entangled in *kına gecesi*. And conversely, they also show *kına gecesi* to be produced and performed in conversation with imaginations of the nation, underscoring the ritual as one way in which these imaginations are both materialized and embodied.

Yet these materializations are also contested, as Hatice Teyze shows. Although the *kına gecesi* was ostensibly successful, insofar as a wedding followed and from what I have heard the bride and groom settled into a new home closer to the Bodrum city center, from Hatice Teyze’s perspective it might be deemed a failure. According to Hatice Teyze, it failed to embody *Bordumluluk* (the state of being of Bodrum), something that Arzu affirmed when she said the *kına gecesi* could exemplify a hybrid *kına gecesi*.<sup>19</sup>

Emily Chao, in her examination of a failed healing ritual in Southwest China, argues, “Examining failed rituals redirects our analytic gaze to local processes of legitimization” (1999, 505). Chao’s inquiry importantly points to the question of how legitimization is constituted. She

describes an instance in which the relatives of an ethnic Naxi man plagued by madness call a shaman to retrieve his sanity. The shaman, however, did not call upon the gods of heaven, mountain, and earth, but rather the deified revolutionary trinity of Mao Zhuxi, Zhou Enlai, and Dan Xiaoping (1999, 509). This replacement, coupled with the emblem of the Red Guard on her shoulder bag, further interfaced with economic growth in the post-Maoist era, but had not extended to the madman as it had to his family. In this way the designation that the ritual failed underwrites a particular disposition toward the Maoist era, such that its recall in the face of burgeoning economic prosperity was scorned and, as Chao put it, “not socially persuasive” (1999, 513).

Chao’s analysis draws necessary attention to the processes of legitimation, and begs the question of how appeals to *Bodrumluluk* became so important for *kına gecesi*. Conversely, I began to wonder, whether these appeals to sense of place also signaled a sense of precarity. The answer to this question in part lies in the conversation above, but also in the multiple global flows overlapping one another and constitutive of Bodrum as a place: its tourism industry, which namely attracts wealthy Turks from Istanbul and Europe and which also attracts Turks and Kurds from across the country to work in restaurants and shops during tourist season; the *geceköndü* (squatter settlement) outside the city apparently populated largely by Alevi from the central Anatolian province Çorum; and, the influx of Syrian refugees camping in and passing through Bodrum’s city center. Hence this question is necessarily part and parcel of the production of cultural intimacy.

### **Intimate Geopolitics**

Hatice Teyze’s imagination of *Bodrumluluk* and the *kına gecesi*’s failure to realize it demonstrates the way in which a single event can evoke multiple geographies. At the same time,

this was not only a matter of place, but also of bodies. That is, Hatice Teyze stated as we entered the *gecekond* that no one from Bodrum lived there. She reiterated this as we sat together looking out at the women dancing—no one at the *kına* was *Bodrumlu*. Thus it was not only the physical space of the *kına gecesi*, located in a *gecekond* on the outskirts of Bodrum proper, but also the people there.

The growing literature of intimate geopolitics takes as its core this connection between body and territory. Sara Smith, Nathan Swanson, and Banu Gökariksel argue that territory is produced through bodies, such that intimate geopolitics necessarily examines the “constitutive work of bodies in making territories and borders” (2016, 258). In this way, intimate geopolitics do not only upend hierarchies of scale showing them to be simultaneously present in the body (Mayer 2004; Mountz and Hyndman 2006), but they also create the discursive space for the examination of embodied nationalism. Women’s bodies to be essential to nation-building discourses and practices as women’s bodies engender both the literal and metaphorical reproduction of the nation (Yuval-Davis 1997, 23). Smith et al. show that bodies make territories, bodies as sites of intervention—particularly medical intervention—become territories (Mckinnon 2016, 286). This equation between body and territory ought not be mistaken for engendering stability or stasis in either of those concepts. Just as bodies make territories, so too do they contest them such that “embodied spatial practices” do in fact wield revolutionary potential (Swanson 2016, 301).

Sara Smith similarly emphasizes the ways in which women’s bodies in particular become implicated in geopolitical struggles. Her concept of “intimate politics” builds on the notion of women’s bodies as sites of political contestation (2012). In her inquiry into “intimate geopolitics” in India’s disputed Jammu and Kashmir State, Smith asks how the territorial

contestation is made manifest in the personal, romantic, sexual, and familial lives of Muslim and Buddhist residents in Ladakh (Smith 2012). In this way, she lays the foundation for understanding an embodied knowledge of geopolitics. She shows that the Muslim-Buddhist divide both separated families and engendered dramatic shift towards intolerance for inter-religious marriages. In an effort to populate the territory—thus “conforming” to modernist conceptualizations of the homogenous population housed in a bounded state—the Ladakh Buddhist Association not only “negotiated a ban on intermarriage” with the Ladakh Muslim Association, but also launched “campaigns about the religious and political repercussions of using birth control and attempts to ban tubal ligation at Leh’s Sonam Norbu Memorial Hospital” (2011, 1517). In this kind of political environment, Smith indicates that women’s decisions about reproduction do not only hinge on desire, economic cost, and bodily cost, but also on “what the choice means for territorial sovereignty” (2011, 1523). In this way, Smith shows the work of *populating territories* not only to rely on modernist discourses of sovereignty and bound territory, but also on conceptualizations women’s bodies as being symbolic of national and religious identity (2011, 1515). In this way, sexuality not only becomes part and parcel of the production of “embodied nationalisms” (Mayer 2004), but also geopolitical political economies.

### **Gossip as Everyday Biopolitical Regulation**

Intimate geopolitics, especially through its problematization of hierarchies of scale (Mayer 2004), constitutes one way in which biopolitics operates in daily life. Yet, while intimate geopolitics importantly pays attention to the ways in which the body and nation interface with one another, and in doing so work to constitute one another, they do little to illuminate the production of authoritative discourse and knowledge, nor how discourse is pulled into being.<sup>20</sup> The incitement to discourse is an essential component of Foucault’s conceptualization of

biopolitics (1978). His investigation into the question of how the Victorian era, characterized by repressive attitudes toward sex, saw the “veritable explosion” of discourses about sexuality (1978, 17) is foundational to biopolitics. He does not only show how institutions—namely medical and psychiatric—work to produce new subjectivities and, in doing so, elicit the production of particular discourses. As Foucault conceptualized biopower through institutional interaction, the question arises of how to understand this convergence outside of the institutional context. This question informs the exploration of what might be called everyday biopolitics.

Biopolitics of the everyday interrogates the ways in which mundane experience partakes of and plays a role in the reproduction of the technologies of biopower (Smith 2012, 1514). It does not only engage the lived and material consequences of state and institutional governmentalities, but also with the ways in which individuals navigate, produce and reproduce these in their daily lives, whether intentionally or otherwise. My particular interest in everyday biopolitics in Turkey is predicated on the production of discourse concerning the performance of national identity. In the last chapter, Fidan wove together critiques of government regulation of women’s sexuality to its regulation in *kına gecesi*, and thereby established a parallelism predicated on particular gendered political subjectivities vis-à-vis notions of secularism, Islamism, modernity, and tradition. Here, on the other hand, interlocutors demonstrated less direct engagement with sexuality than with the issues of pluralism and national reproduction at a moment marked by extreme anxiety about the very state of the nation.

As such, this lens of everyday biopolitics is interested in the imbrication of interlocutor’s biopolitical mentalities—also read as subjectivities—and state-level, nationalist discourses. I conceptualize everyday biopolitics in large part through the production of discourses on the nation in quotidian conversations. These conversations often took the tone of gossip. Gossip

becomes a crucial component of everyday biopolitics precisely because the politics of the production of authoritative knowledge is central to Foucault's conceptualization of biopower (2003).

Niko Besnier (2009), in his ethnography exploring gossip as part and parcel of the production of politics, responds to what he sees as a paucity of critical attention to theorizing gossip. He takes an approach he describes as putting the macro and micro, especially in the form of sociolinguistic analysis, into conversation one another. He proposes that at his field site in Nukulaelae Atoll gossip manifests as a genre of discourse in contradistinction to formal oration, which represents the site for the production of truth. Gossip, he posits, does not speak truth *per se*, but instead is intimate and collaborative. By locating gossip as a site for the performance of politics, Besnier's ethnography contributes to feminist discussions that challenge politics as a public phenomenon, showing both the prevalence and import of political production in intimate spaces (Mayer 2006; Mountz and Hyndman 2006). Yet, while he destabilizes the dichotomy of public and private as it relates to politics, because of his heavy reliance on a series of binary oppositions—local and global, micro and macro, public and private, oratory and gossip—his argument has the effect of reifying them rather than treating them as either constructed or heuristic categories.

Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002), writing on fantasies of the state in Turkey following the electoral victory of the Islamist Welfare Party in Istanbul, argues that rumor and humor underwrote secularist discourses of fear and anxiety. Individuals on the streets exchanged rumors of uncovered women being prohibited from boarding buses or forced to move to women-only cars on the metro. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's understanding of "flashes," she argues that both gossip and rumor make manifest discursive memories. In her delineation of the flows of

rumors—and she uses the term rumor and gossip interchangeably—through formal (news media) and informal (quite literally the word on the street) mediums, she disrupts the kind of clean division between concern for truth and its absence observed in Bensier. Navaro-Yashin's (2002) delineation of the geographies of rumor and their influence, thereby, does not only demonstrate that gossip need not be understood as isolated to a particular social, spatial, or political setting, but also that the truth value of gossip is necessarily malleable. Furthermore, she shows that it is not so much the veracity of such statements that is important as the affects they evoke. Here, gossip and rumor do not represent a binary opposition to truth, but rather an expression of political fantasies and anxieties.

### **Implications for Bodrum**

While the hotel was completely full on my first visit to Bodrum in the beginning of summer 2015, there was less demand for rooms when I returned in August. Reports that tourism had been down throughout the country as well as anxiety over the falling value of the New Turkish Lira dominated discussions in print journalism and on television news. Tourism, which had already been uncharacteristically low that summer began to plunge (Cumhuriyet 2015b; Cumhuriyet 2015c; Cumhuriyet 2015d). During this time, Arzu noted, quite somberly, that fewer and fewer English, Scottish and Irish guests were frequenting the hotel. When I asked her why, she said she had no idea, especially because, with lira being down, and the pound (although the Euro had begun to fall, it was still competitive with the Turkish lira) strong at the time, the exchange rate especially favorable. Instead of the older, working class guests and their families, the demographics of the hotel guests shifted toward younger couples from Spain and Italy, groups of Turkish men traveling together, and German-born Turks—whom Arzu not so

affectionately called *almancı*, a common and intentional corruption of the word *almanca* (German language) used to describe German citizens of Turkish descent.

“The hotel work is boring now,” is all she would say about the new guests except for a steady tide of complaints that erupted one day with some of her close friends. When they asked how the hotel was, she burst into a diatribe about the German Turks, how picky they were about their rooms—constantly complaining—and how irritating it is when they would speak to one another in German in front of her.

“I just hate that!” one of Arzu’s friends exclaimed.

Arzu continued, “I mean, they are Turkish, they know Turkish and they are in Turkey. Why don’t they speak Turkish?”

There was a deluge of complaints from the two women almost simultaneously. I made out the words arrogant (*kibirli*) and pretentious (*özenti*), before they concluded that *almancı* were not really Turkish.

This evaluation of German Turks, especially with respect to their language use, stands in stark contrast to Arzu’s reaction to hearing the Syrian refugees gathered along the main boulevard in the center of Bodrum speaking Turkish. On both sides there were men and women sitting on the ground. The men wore red and white keffiyeh and black pants with black suit jackets. The women resembled iconic if not stereotypical Turkish *teyzes* (aunties)—older women wearing long loose skirts or floral printed harem pants (*şalvar*), long-sleeve cotton shirts, and small scarves over their hair—but with their skin burned by the sun. They sat all along the small grassy lawns by the shore. One Turkish woman was talking with one of the refugee women who was sitting on an oasis of green grass. We were moving too quickly to hear if they were speaking Turkish. That night when Arzu and I were sitting at the reservation desk together two of the

guests, one of whom I've known since 2010 walked in after their day trip to Gümüş, where they had bathed beachside in the Aegean sun and tried unsuccessfully to find a table at a fish restaurant that Arzu had recommended. She asked Arzu who the people on the grass along the dock in the city center were. Arzu turned to me asking how to say *Süriyeli* (Syrian) in English. She explained that they are Syrian refugees. The woman from the Netherlands asked, "Why doesn't anyone do anything about this?"

Arzu replied in English, "They're everywhere. They are all over Turkey. There are too many." It's unclear whether she meant *too* or *so* as this is a common source of confusion in translations between Turkish and English.

"But the government should do something about it. In the Netherlands they help everyone to get jobs--"

"That's not entirely true," interrupted my Scottish friend.

"In the Netherlands they help them to get homes and jobs. They make sure they have food. Why aren't they working here?"

"They can't work. They don't speak Turkish," Arzu replied.

The following evening, walking back through boulevard tragically populated with sleeping refugees, we heard one woman say goodnight to another in Turkish. Arzu and her friend turned to one another astonished, "They speak Turkish! How interesting (*Çok ilginç*) They must have learned before they came here. It's so terrible, they're lying down in the streets."

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In these brief vignettes, language emerges as the mediating factor of foreignness. But, at the same time, they show that language does not necessarily warrant familiarity or inclusion. Rather, it becomes a source of exclusion and anomaly. When Arzu and her friends interpreted

the German-born Turks use of German in front of Turkey-born Turks as an unmerited act of hubris, and they asked why it was that they did not speak in Turkish if it were a language that they knew. Yet, this group of friends still defined the German-born Turks through their absence of Turkish-ness. In the case of the Turkish-speaking Syrian refugees, on the other hand, Arzu and her friend's confusion over the refugees speaking Turkish amongst themselves points to a modernist understanding of sovereignty and sovereign territory of the neat fit between a territory and the imagination of a homogenous population that inhabits it. In other words, it is reasonable to conclude that they expected these refugees to speak Arabic and thereby perform an Arab ethnicity. This assumption has the effect of rendering invisible the Türkmen minority in Syria that was also reported to have fled to Bodrum (Hurriyet 2015b). A similar invisibility was thrust on the German-born Turks whom Arzu insisted speak Turkish and yet whose very Turkishness she denied. In this way, the association of a political subjective type to a particular territory that typified the discourses I encountered in Bodrum and Gümbet demonstrate the productivity of place as a euphemism for people in discourses that embody individuals' complementary and conflicting relationships with the liberal nation-state.

### **Tourism and the Nation**

The question then becomes how does this territorialization—in Smith's (2012) sense—operate in Bodrum and Gümbet, given the preponderance of foreign tourists in Gümbet? As Arzu indicated, Gümbet is distinct from Bodrum. Gümbet is the primary destination for tourists—although tourists may venture into the city center, in my experience most of the English, Irish, and Scottish guests at Arzu's family hotel would spend their days by the pool, the beach, or on boat trips. However, it is not only the presence of foreign tourists that distinguishes Bodrum from Gümbet, but also the presence of the workers in the tourist industry, many of whom are

Kurdish and who reside in Gümbet for the duration of the tourist season, working as chefs, servers, and store clerks.

Upon my first visit to Bodrum in 2015, I found myself talking with Arzu's cousin, who acts as the hotel's manager, about the 6 June 2015 election in which, for the first time since 2002, the ruling AKP did not garner enough votes to form a single party government. I asked him what he thought of the results: the leftist Kurdish interest party, the People's Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokrat Partisi*, HDP) passed the 10 percent threshold, winning over 15 percent of the national vote, required to enter parliament as a political party. He paused a moment, and looked around the restaurant patio where we were sitting and said in a low voice, "It's because of the Kurds. They voted for the HDP."

This was the first allusion to anyone Kurdish working at the hotel. I knew that the two women who worked there as cleaners for over a decade were from a town in the Black Sea region known for being largely settled by Muslim populations from the Caucasus. The restaurant servers changed almost every year.

When I returned to the hotel eight weeks later, Kurdish-ness had grown all the more stigmatized. On July 20, a group of Turkish and Kurdish students, organizing the delivery of humanitarian aid to the war-devastated city of Kobane on the other side of the Turkish-Syrian border, suffered a suicide bombing attack. Within three days, the prime minister announced that the decision had been made to start military action against the so-called Islamic State (IS) on the border. Just days later the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper headline read, "Turkey bombs IS and PKK targets in Iraq" ("*Türkiye Irak'ta IŞİD ve PKK bombalaştı*"). The PKK, a guerilla insurgency in southeastern Turkey, retaliated by attacking rural police depots (*Jandarma*), effectively ending the two-year cease fire agreement established two years earlier with the initiation of peace talks

between the jailed PKK leader Abdullah Özalcan and the AKP. This resurgence of PKK violence against police and the Turkish military re-activated discourses construing Kurds as an intrinsic national enemy.

Here the notion of enemy might appear to reference Carl Schmitt's distinction between enemy and friend. However, as Vliet observes in her challenge to the reproduction of liberal subjecthood that situates individuals firmly within bounded groups in anthropology, "The constitution of political space pivots on the question of how to respond not to the friend or enemy, as in Carl Schmitt's formulation of the political, but to the stranger" (2016, 45). The concept of the stranger undermines the facticity of assumed knowledge about who constitutes a friend or foe and, instead, brings to the fore the problem of knowing the stranger at all. Vliet employs the concept of singularity to circumvent the reproduction of direct relationships between the individual and the group. She writes, "Singularity is distinct from notions of individuality. It instead suggests a relation through which full identification is impossible" (2016, 56). This approach is especially useful to the examination of these discourses in Bodrum. First, as Vliet argues, melancholic anthropology does not unintentionally reproduce notions of the autonomous, liberal, rational subject in scholarship (2016, 49). Second, it enables the visualization of the different discourses that inform imaginaries of a political subject. Finally, melancholic anthropology's intense suspicion over the unproblematic association of the individual with group membership emphasizes the deficiency of explanations that resort solely to group membership, whether in the form of race, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation.

Vliet's use of the word stranger, furthermore, is especially apropos to the essentialization of people with place<sup>21</sup> described above: the word *yabancı* can refer to both foreigner and stranger. Furthermore, rather than just being someone from outside the country or someone who

is unknown, *yabancı* can refer to any individual who is not from the same hamlet, town, or city as the speaker. In this context, Kurds in Gümbet embody multiple indices of stranger—as migrants and as an ethnic minority in Turkey.

The resumption of the war between the Turkish state and the PKK shifted Hatice Teyze's geographic practices. In late August, sitting on the hotel's patio one afternoon, she said she no longer goes to the bazaar in the center of Bodrum because she is worried about the possibility of a terrorist attack. Shaking her head she repeated, "I cannot go" (*Gidemem*). I am not sure what prompted her next sentence, "Don't worry, Gümbet is safe. Everyone knows that there are so many Kurds here that the PKK will never attack."

In this exchange, Hatice Teyze interweaves geographic imaginations of locality and foreignness—what might be called stranger-ness (*yabancılık*)—with narratives of threat, danger, and safety. She shows that the affective qualities of a space are necessarily entangled with people(s) populating it: the space of the bazaar is a target because it is crowded and predominantly Turkish, while Gümbet is home, albeit temporarily, to tourists, Kurds, and some Turks. Yet, it is not so much the people or the place themselves, but the possibility, perhaps plausibility, of the calamities that particular constellations of people and place might beget.

Arextaga in her review of studies of the state in anthropology writes, "The difficulty in studying the state resides in the fact that the state—as unified political subject or structure—does not exist, it is a collective illusion" (2003, 401). This "illusion" also engenders the constitution of state enemies such that "the boundaries between fiction and reality become indistinguishable, endowing encounters between the state and terrorism with a phantom quality" (2003, 402). Like Vliet, Arextaga also underscores the need to understand the "*modus operandi*" that produce both state and the threat of the Other. In this way, the anxiety Hatice Teyze expressed demonstrates

the entanglement of phantasmal futurities with both current events and those that have marked both other epochs in her life and inherited collective memory.

Place-based discourse in Bodrum instantiates the imagination of normative subjects of the nation-state. Here, interlocutors in Bodrum and Gümbet reproduced modernist ideas of the liberal sovereign nation-state that fails to problematize the relationship between an individual and the nation. Vliet uses this critique of the liberal state in order to unravel the different conceptualizations of individual and human, itself, in order to understand the discursive construction of Israeli national subjects. Here, rather than subjecthood being predicated on an amalgamation of diasporic, religious, and universal humanist conceptualization of personhood, my interlocutors evince a particular nationalism founded on relationships to place.

Although the concepts of local and foreign that are in operation here might at first be understood as separate entities, articulations of anxiety about going to the city center for fear of a terrorist attack, of confusion over Syrian refugees speaking Turkish amongst themselves, and the lack of beauty (*güzellik*) in a mixed (*karışık*) henna night demonstrate the intricate entanglement of different scales (Mayer 2004). An intimate geopolitical shows how in daily life Arzu and her family and friends come into contact with global flows. Furthermore, the idea of the geopolitical local works to upend the naturalization of the nation-state as an organic entity and, in doing so, draws into focus the contested dynamics of the articulation of a identity.

In Bodrum, as Hatice Teyze's discussion suggests, the reproduction of the nation is predicated on the reproduction of *Bodrumluluk*, in distinction to Alevism. Arzu by contrast, conceded to the possibility of my writing that henna night as an example of when people from different cities in Turkey marry. She did not comment on this, confirm, or revise this position upon hearing that the bride was Alevi. However, several days later, after we attended the henna

night and wedding of a close friend of hers, she related to me that she wished that I could have seen a *real (hakiki)* Bodrum henna night and that when she eventually gets married I will have to come to Bodrum to witness it. She added that it was a week-long, although ideally a 10-day long affair. Thus while Arzu demonstrates a more pluralistic outlook in relation to the henna night that we attended in the *gecekodu*, she nonetheless situated Bodrum henna nights as being *real*, implicating the *gecekodu kına gecesi* as a fiction of nationalist pluralism. Amy Mills, in her exploration on memories of pluralism in the Kuzguncuk neighborhood of Istanbul, writes, “Nostalgic cultural memories [of cosmopolitanism] in Istanbul function to obscure difficult tensions in the past” (2010, 211). By contrast, the discourses of place in Bodrum function to obscure pluralist challenges to the homogenous nation-state in the present.

## CHAPTER 4

### WHAT TO WRITE AND HOW TO WRITE IT

Sabiha Hoca had called to say that she had written a text for me, and was on her way to the restaurant where we would have coffee in the mornings. We sat down at a courtyard table; she lit a cigarette and ordered a Turkish coffee, plain (*sade*) with no sugar.

She exhaled, directing the cigarette smoke away from the table, and turned back toward me, “I prepared an text for you explaining Mudurnu’s *kına gecesi* traditions. You can use the photos in there too. They were taken from when [the television show] ‘Nur Viral’ did their filming here. I wrote the essay using ‘would have’ and ‘used to’ (*-ardı, -erdi*), but when you write it you can use a the aorist verb tense.” The aorist carries connotations of authority and formality in Turkish.

This chapter examines the question of how to understand Sabiha Hoca’s instruction to reproduce her essay using the aorist in my ethnographic account, and its implications for how to conceptualize her expressions of nostalgia. The essay Sabiha Hoca gave me on my last day in Mudurnu was but one of several texts that marked my brief time there. The term *text*, here, is used loosely. It not only refers to the aforementioned essay and book, but also to my entextualizations<sup>22</sup> of the television show “Our Dinner Table with Nur Viral” (*Nur Viral: Bizim Soframız*), which featured an episode on Mudurnu customs and food; a recorded interview I conducted with Sabiha Hoca and her friend Mehtap Abla; as well as jottings of my more casual conversations with Sabiha Hoca as we wandered amongst Mudurnu’s dilapidated and refurbished Ottoman houses and drove to and from the surrounding villages.

I argue that the interstices of these different narratives demonstrate the need to conceptualize nostalgia not only as an emotion or discursive strategy, but also as affective embodiment, interwoven with gendered political subjectivities. While Sabiha Hoca articulated authenticity in Mudurnu as something that is spoiling, breaking, and ever more absent, these expressions of nostalgia were not only represented in her narratives but were also embodied. This research builds on Rebecca Bryant's argument that nostalgia is essential to the development of political subjectivity: "nostalgia appears to create the emotional ground that makes politics possible" (2008, 418). Bryant uses Judith Butler's understanding of subjection in which a subject is dependent on the very powers that subject it in order to come into being (1997, 4). This research, however, takes a different approach, although it is also concerned with the development of political subjectivities. Nostalgia, here, is embodied insofar as it is expressed somatically. I use Yael Navaro Yashin's understanding of affect not as subjective projections onto the outside world but as the product of human interactions with the material environment (2012, 172) in order to engage subjectivity with built and natural surroundings as well as with the body. Putting affect and embodiment in conversation with one another in the production of nostalgia shows the ways in which experience of the body itself is part and parcel of contemporary and historical social political processes and the production of political discourse, one of which Sabiha Hoca's essay represents.

Sabiha Hoca had endlessly derided the two *kına gecesi* we attended—one held in the Mudurnu's townhall and the other in a village schoolhouse over thirty minutes outside of town. She complained that they were too loud; there either weren't any or too few women in local dress; the brides and their families didn't know or care enough about local *kına gecesi* customs, or were not wealthy enough to carry them out properly; there were too many women wearing

headscarves, an indication of the encroachment of Islamist visibilities; and, that “our good old days” (*eski güzel günlerimiz*) had begun to ruin (*bozulmak*).

In juxtaposition to her critiques, this essay she gifted me seemed to be an effort to *correct* what we had seen. Yet, it was also a glimpse into her desire for me to portray a particular version of both *kına gecesi* and Mudurnu in my own textual rendering of them. The essay included much of the same information as a chapter explaining local renditions of rituals in a book by another local retired teacher, Kâmuran Esen, that Sabiha Hoca had given me my first night in Mudurnu. Sabiha Hoca’s essay read like a recipe: *kına gecesi* included the dress and the songs. She described the different characters required and the necessary behavior for a particular chain of events, which she punctuated with memories from her childhood. These memories qualified her nostalgia for the “good old days” by disparaging the poor status of women in the same unnamed era in which *kına gecesi* were “beautiful” (*güzel*).

Sabiha Hoca would interject the phrase, “Our beautiful old days have begun to ruin” (*Eski günlerimiz bozulmaya başladı*) throughout our conversations. While *bozulmak* can be translated as “to be ruined”, it can also describe something that has broken, rotted, or spoiled. It embraces both sudden (breaking) and gradual (spoiling, rotting) change. This gradual change is especially germane to Sabiha Hoca’s instruction to reproduce her essay using the aorist. In Turkish, the aorist (*geniş zaman*) explicates “the essential characteristics that makes the subject that particular subject” (Savaşır 1986, 140). That is, it describes an inherent nature of the subject rather than the subject’s action.<sup>23</sup> Sabiha Hoca’s instruction to write about *kına gecesi* in Mudurnu as though that representation were inherent to Mudurnu would thus appear to be contradictory to her indication that tradition had begun to spoil (*bozulmak*). However, rather than

these representations contradicting one another, they reference declining access to the authority of Kemalist appeals in a time of political uncertainty.

### **An Intertextual Approach**

These texts reference each other both explicitly and implicitly, through repeated motifs, concerns, and turns of phrase—such as Sabiha Hoca’s “Our beautiful old days have begun to ruin.” I use the concept of intertextuality in this chapter to show the ways in which these different texts are interwoven with one another, in order to present an answer to the question of how to understand Sabiha Hoca’s gift of the text. Mikhail Bakhtin describes intertextuality as a text’s references to other texts through the charged quality of words themselves. He suggests that words become charged in their ongoing usage as they “cannot fail to brush up against” one another (1984, 272). In this way, intertextuality lays the foundation for the concept emergence and how context and participants inform novel productions of meaning. Emergence is critical to Richard Bauman’s concept of performance (1984, 38). While Bakhtin used intertextuality to conceptualize the interwoven quality of texts with one another through the loaded nature of words, Bauman takes this a step further, integrating such “communicative resources” into the context of the verbal performance: the skills of the performer, the influence of the audience, and the performance’s place and time. Emergence demonstrates how texts (written and verbal) can acquire new meaning.<sup>24</sup>

Edward Said approaches concerns of context and emergence via his concept of the “worldliness of the text,” which he used to argue against literary criticism’s retreat into textuality and habit of treating a text as a world unto itself (1983, 3). The worldliness of the text points to a text’s contents’ imbrication in the world beyond the text as well as the text’s own physicality as an artifact. In this way, the worldliness of the text points to the text’s materiality both in terms of

what it communicates and the text as the medium of communication. The materiality of the production of texts, both in forms of the spoken and written word, and their intertextuality play a critical role in my approach to this this chapter.

However, the worldliness of Sabiha Hoca's essay does not only partake of the present and past, but also the future. Her direction to produce her text using the aorist tense in my ethnographic account of it demonstrates her concern with the future shape and content of the ethnographic text I would produce. In this way, my then unwritten ethnography haunted our conversations and the texts that both permeated and resulted from those conversations. As a result, imagination and anticipation of future texts also becomes part of her concern with representation of Mudurnu and its implications for how to understand her frequent recall of "the beautiful old days" (*eski güzel günler*). This haunting not only highlights the necessarily collaborative quality of ethnography, but also was a way in which Sabiha Hoca enacted her authority over the subject matter and her desire for me to present Mudurnu *kına gecesi* according to her particular understanding of local authenticity.

### **Finding Mudurnu**

I met Sabiha Hoca through a series of serendipitous, if not peculiar, connections. The uncle of a Turkish friend of mine was an especially influential man in Mudurnu. This friend contacted his uncle, Osman Bey, and told me that both his uncle and aunt would find *kına gecesi* for me to attend. They would be waiting for me to contact them during the month of Ramadan. I agonized over when to contact him, not only because speaking with a stranger in a foreign language over the phone is itself an anxiety-saturated, but also because I did not know whether Osman Bey would be fasting. I did not want to wake him were he sleeping during the day, nor

did I want to interrupt *iftar*, the meal at sunset that breaks Ramadan’s daily fast. I finally called early one Sunday afternoon and was greeted with a warm, “I have been expecting your call!”

When I arrived in Mudurnu. I met one of Osman Bey’s friends in the center of town—he wore a t-shirt emblazoned with Atatürk’s face across the front—and the two of us walked to a recently refurbished and renovated Ottoman mansion that the city has turned into a restaurant and bed and breakfast, where I learned I would be staying. I also learned that it would not be Osman Bey’s wife with whom I would attend to two *kına gecesi* that weekend, but Sabiha Hoca, a retired school teacher who had also volunteered for the municipality in efforts to preserve Mudurnu’s cultural heritage. Osman Bey apologized profusely that he and his wife only knew of two *kına gecesi* happening that week—I was “unlucky” (*şansız*) there would usually be more

I met Sabiha Hoca just a few hours after I arrived in Mudurnu. The bright greens and blues of her blouse and jacket, her silver bangles, and her hands adorned in rings were striking. When she asked what exactly I was looking for in the *kına gecesi*, I explained that wanted to learn more about the politics of the ritual, how changes in it speak to current events and transformations in gender roles in Turkey.

Inhaling her cigarette—she had also offered me one before lighting it, saying, “Good for you” (*Afferim size*) when I declined—she replied: “Very good. Very good. This is a *good* place to do that research. Nur Viral came to the city a year ago to shoot a documentary about *kına gecesi* and we put on a performance in this courtyard. Hopefully you’ll find what you’re looking for here. We will go to one *kına gecesi* tonight. Tomorrow there is another one in my village. Tonight the bride is here from Germany so I do not know how loyal or true to form tonight’s *kına gecesi* will be. But, the village *kına* should be good.”

Yet, the village *kına* would turn out to be more disappointing for Sabiha Hoca than the first one that we attended in town.,=, and we would leave before the henna was lit.

### **Sabiha Hoca's Text and the First Henna**

Sabiha Hoca's essay begins not with the scene of a particular *kına gecesi*, but with a description of its different pieces and how they fit together: "women" (*kadınlar*) and "girls" (*kızlar*) sit on a bench; girls from either side wear *üçetek* (shining haram pants worn with a matching jacket and belt) while married women from the bride's side wear *bindallı* (an embroidered velvet cloak). A woman playing a handheld drum (*def*) and singing local songs (*mâni*) would call the different groups to dance:

First, the women wearing *üçetek* and *bindallı* would dance, then the women who wore normal cloths would dance. Of the women wearing local, customary dress, the bride's side would get up first and then the groom's. All of these details were paid attention to very closely as bitterness over mundane things would foment at weddings.

The juxtaposition of women's dress and women's movements continues throughout the essay. Sabiha Hoca follows a section explaining the ways in which the bride's face would be made up with small pieces of "a glimmering paper like a chocolate wrapper" to form a flower motif and her head adorned with a band full of embroidered flowers (*gelin tacı*) that would be fastened over a red cloth embroidered with sequins (*çatki*). She then explains the strict etiquette for dancing at *kına gecesi*. She writes:

Some women, actually most women, would feign reluctance about getting up to dance (*nazlanlardı*). Feigning reluctance, even, was like a tradition. When someone said, "Get up to dance," she would not rise immediately. To be too eager to dance was shameful.

Sabiha Hoca was especially critical of the lack of feigning reluctance demonstrated at the first *kına gecesi* we attended in Mudrunu's town hall.

The number of women on the dance floor waxed and waned throughout the night. As more and more of Sabiha Hoca's friends filtered in, Sabiha would be invited to stand up to

dance. Facing one another they would approach one another with small steps and then back away before approaching again and switching sides. Each time she sat back down, Sabiha Hoca would apologize to me, saying that it would have been rude (*ayıp*) for her to decline. When I asked if she enjoyed dancing, she replied that she used to teach the local dances, such as this one, to her students when she was still a teacher: she knew all the steps. I wondered if it was not joy or pleasure that she located in dancing, but rather joy in her knowledge and authority.

When the bride's mother entered the room after standing at the door to welcome the guests, Sabiha Hoca caught sight of her and said to me:

Did you see the mother? Mothers are all like that now. They look so pretentious. It's as if she were the one getting married. It wasn't like that in the old days. She wouldn't be so dolled up. Everything is for showing off these days.

She was not concerned that anyone would hear: we had to yell into one another's ears in order to communicate anything at all and even then there was no guarantee that our words would not be corrupted by the reverberations of the loud speakers.

Sabiha Hoca and I out at the room. Two long flag runners featuring the iconic red background and white crescent and star of the Turkish national flag framed the stage at the front of the hall. Between them hung a familiar picture of Atatürk, showing the founder of the Turkish Republic peering up, wearing a black suit with what looks to be a white orchid rising out of his breast pocket and sitting next to a woman in a wedding gown. Above the stage, large and shining letters read, "We have but one need: to be hardworking!" (*Tekbir ihtimacımız vardır: çalışkan olmak!*). Atatürk's signature—the same signature tattooed I saw on a restaurant server's arm—accompanied the quote. After I took a photo of the Atatürk quote and portrait, Sabiha Hoca projected into my ear, "Turkish women are so heavy aren't they?"

“I don’t think they’re that heavy” (*Bence fazla kilolu değil*), I replied, embarrassed that I had to reply to the question at all.

“I think they really are” (*Bana göre çok*).

We continued, sitting and waiting. A woman whose relation to the bride and groom I did not know, passed out juice boxes and small plates of crackers, sunflower seeds, and assorted nuts to each of the guests. Sabiha Hoca leaned over to me again and this time began narrating *kına gecesi* to me: “In the old days all the girls would be sitting down with drums (*defler*) in their hands and they would play them.”

A few minutes later: “Our traditions are being ruined. In the old days 25 to 30 women would have worn *bindallı*, but now it’s none.”

When the bride came out for the first time, Sabiha Hoca commented again: “The bride is too excited (*hevesli*) to get married. Normally, there wouldn’t be men [including the groom] here. It would be shameful. But because the bride came from Germany, she doesn’t know these things... It’s so nice of her to come back to Turkey to get married since she has relatives in Mudurnu.”

A few minutes later still, after the bride left to room to change into the dress she would wear while the henna was being lit: “In the old days, the women who wore headscarves would take them off [once they arrived at the *kına gecesi*]. Of course, there weren’t any men.”

She paused and pointed my attention to a young woman in a long teal, pleated dress the reached the floor. The top was embroidered in black, framing the dress’s collar and cuffs that reached from her neck to her wrists, which were covered in gold bangles that extended from her hands half way up to her elbows. She donned a headscarf that matched her dress. “You can tell that she is recently married from her bracelets. Look at how they covered her up! It’s such a

pity,” she continued, as though it had been the women’s husband or his family who had forced her to wear a headscarf and not her choice at all. I was too concerned that a follow up question about this woman would suggest that I doubted the veracity of Sabiha Hoca’s words to ask for clarification and I resigned to jotting her words down in my notebook.

The lights dimmed. We sat there, almost in the dark, as the DJ fussed about to get the songs that I heard at so many *kına gecesi* that summer, “Mother, Bring the Henna” (*Kınayı Getir Aney*) and “To the Highest Hills” (*Yüksek Yüksek Tepelere*), playing. But no one came out from the back room. “Where is this bride anyway?” Sabiha Hoca complained.

We craned our necks and saw the bride at the entrance with her friends taking selfies of themselves holding the large bowl adorned in white lace in which a mound of henna punctuated with lit candles sat. The bride and groom came out and sat in chairs in the middle of the room while women carrying lit candles walked around them in a circle, singing and humming along with the song. The bride’s face was covered with a green veil that matched the mesh green shawl (*yemini*) draped over the groom’s shoulders. It seemed as though, in a single moment, the entire room had crowded around the bride and groom to watch her refuse to open her hands, only to have them coaxed open with a piece of gold, and a thick circle of henna fixed to her palm. I could scarcely see, and, like so many of the other guests, reached my phone out over the other guests’ heads to take pictures and watched the unfolding events through the phone’s screen.

The lights came back on. Sabiha Hoca was anxious to leave. After informing me multiple times throughout the night that she would be ready to go whenever I wanted, once the henna was lit she said, “Let’s go. There’s nothing left to see.”

## Conceptualizing Nostalgia

Sabiha Hoca's criticisms of this *kına gecesi* belie a certain sense of nostalgia as she frames her complaints in terms of "the old days" (*eskiden*), although in these moments she did not necessarily express a *longing* for the past. In "the old days," women did not dance so much, were not so excited to get married, took off their headscarves, and ensured that no men would be present. These criticisms revolve around gendered political subjectivities of intimacy and sexuality. The essay she wrote, by contrast, emphasizes order and the embodiment of different subject positions—married and unmarried, on the bride's side or the groom's, in contrast to the "showy" *gösterici* quality of the *kına* we attended. Both narratives thus underscore the entanglement of nostalgia and sexuality.

Nostalgia has enjoyed multiple, and sometimes, conflicting theorizations in anthropology. Fred Davis conceptualizes nostalgia as a response to rupture and discontinuity (Davis 1979, 104; Tannock 1995, 456). However, Davis does not so much highlight nostalgia's affective qualities as its function, that is, to reestablish continuity. William Bissell, on the other hand, emphasizes the roles of discontinuity (2005, 216) and materiality (2005, 219) in his treatment of nostalgia. He argues that nostalgic longings for the colonial and revolutionary periods amongst his interlocutors in Zanzibar embodied specific critiques of the rapid and rampant neoliberalization of the economy. He writes, "In broad terms, colonialism was deployed as a figure to evoke images of economic bounty, the rule of law, a well-managed state, and a graciously maintained city. The revolution, by contrast, stood for stability, broad provisions of social welfare, discipline, and basic rights to housing, health, work, and wages" (2005, 236-7). Here, nostalgia is more so a response to the disintegration of political, moral and economic order in the present than an unproblematic *longing* for an irretrievable past.

In this way, Bissell's understanding of nostalgia is similar to Herzfeld's structural nostalgia: a "collective representation of Edenic order—a time before time—in which the balanced perfection of social relations has not yet suffered the decay that affects everything human" (1997, 147). Based on fieldwork in Crete, Herzfeld uses structural nostalgia to show how both state actors and marginalized groups utilize the same rhetorical strategies—references to a glorified past—to fortify their own legitimacy in the present (1994). Yet, while Herzfeld's structural nostalgia and Bissell's conceptualization of nostalgia share the idea of an invocation of the past as a commentary on the unraveling of social order in the present, Herzfeld situates structural nostalgia in the context of nationalism rather than affective experience, as Bissell does.

Esra Özyürek uses Herzfeld's structural nostalgia in the Turkish context to explain both secularist and Islamist mobilizations of Atatürk imagery in Turkey in the 1990s (2006, 154). She argues that by employing early republican discourses and images, both Islamists and Secularists located their visions for the country in Atatürk's intentions.<sup>25</sup> Here, structural nostalgia operates in a context of political contestation in which identifications of the dominant and marginalized groups—in this case secular and Islamist, respectively—are drawn into negotiation. In this way, Özyürek's application of structural nostalgia problematizes the stability of the originary binary opposition between state and marginalized group present in Herzfeld's model of structural nostalgia. The emergence of Islamist politics and Islamic visibilities, such as the headscarf, in the public sphere characterized tensions between secularism and political Islam in Turkey in the 1990s (Navaro-Yashin 2002; Özyürek 2006). Structural nostalgia, for Özyürek, then takes place in a charged political space and period in which the *structures* of power, hegemony, and marginality began to undergo a reconfiguration.

While the state of government-less-ness (*hükümeteşizlik*) in Turkey at the time of my fieldwork similarly engendered unique political tensions, this binary structure accommodates neither the conflicts and debates between the four political parties that won enough votes to enter parliament, nor Sabiha Hoca's relationship to them. Her nostalgia was a Kemalist one, informed by early Republican secularist reforms that strictly relegated Islamic visibilities to the private sphere. She took pride in the fact that Mudurnu routinely elected a CHP mayor despite the religious conservatism of the surrounding villages and another time confided that her only complaint of her brother-in-law was that he supported the AKP. However, the framework of structural nostalgia would have the effect of reducing Sabiha's nostalgia to her political affiliation with the CHP. Instead, her nostalgia manifests in bodily, affective experience, rendering Kemalist nostalgia both a matter of political affiliation and embodied experience.

### **Contested Intimacies**

What these different conceptualizations of nostalgia have in common, however, is the injunction that the object of nostalgia is key to understanding nostalgia's very constitution. She constructed this differentiation between past and present along the lines of intimacy, the intersectionality of both women's sexuality and the boundaries of the public and private.<sup>26</sup>

The establishment of the secular Republic of Turkey, building on late Ottoman debates that interwove gender with notions of modernity and cultural identity (Göle 1996, 13), and the emergence on Islamist movements in Turkey in the 1990s, mapped the boundaries of the public and private according to women's visibility (1996, 131; Çinar 2005, 36). The Kemalist, secularist movement (named after founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), whose ideologies characterized the early Republican period, used the public visibility of women as an emblem of Republican reforms. The production and proliferation of images of women in

bathing suits, entering beauty contests, and participating in athletic competitions functioned to visualize and define the embodied frontiers of the secular sphere in the early Republican era (Çinar 2005, 63). At the same time, “the Kemalist woman abandoned her veil and *çarshaf*, yet it was also at this time that she also ‘armored’ herself and remained ‘untouchable’ in public by veiling her sexuality” (Göle 1996, 79). In this way, women’s bodies were rendered as signifiers of the Republican reforms. The equation of the grounding of Kemalist ideological ideology and women’s unveiling thus shows not only how bodies *make* territories (Smith et al. 2016), but also represent them.

The rise of political Islam in Turkey in the 1990s challenged these configurations of public and private via the symbol and practice of veiling. During this time, female university students began to demand their right to wear headscarves on public university campuses (Cinar 2008, 902). In 1999, when Merve Kavakci, a newly elected parliament member entered the national parliamentary chambers donning the Islamic headscarf, she was forcibly removed and stripped of her office (Kavakci 2004, 66). The expansion of Islamic visibilities into the public sphere continued into the AKP, which began in 2002, following the election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to the office of Prime Minister in 2001. The AKP was the successor to the banned Islamist Refah Party, which the military forced to close in 1997 (Cinar 2008, 894). The AKP, by contrast, appeared to represent a more moderate Islamist political agenda (ibid.). Nonetheless, Erdoğan’s ascent to Prime Minister was still controversial as it represented the first instance in which the Prime Minister’s wife would wear a headscarf (2008, 903). The headscarf also was important to the AKP agenda. After several unsuccessful attempts to repeal to allow headscarves in public universities, the AKP successfully lifted the ban in 2011.

In the fall of 2013, the AKP removed the prohibition against women wearing the headscarf in public offices and in parliament. On November 1, 2013, the four women AKP MPs who entered parliament wearing their headscarves were reportedly met with applause. One of the members of parliament from the secular opposition party, CHP, however, protested the presence of veiled women in parliament by showing the Atatürk t-shirt she wore underneath her blazer (Hürriyet 2013). This development followed the summer that saw the eruption of the Gezi Park Protests denouncing the encroachment of Islamist sensibilities not only into the public sphere, but also the private—through stricter regulations on alcohol consumption and prohibitions against male and female university students living in the same household (Öztürkmen 2014, 59). Sabiha Hoca’s complaints about both the presence of headscarves at *kına gecesi* and the comportment of women thus partake of the unfolding of conflict between secularist and Islamic visibilities in Turkey.

### **Heading to the Village**

The second *kına gecesi* Sabiha Hoca and I attended was in the village where she had lived for three years as child. She credited her mother with their having been able to leave, saying that her mother and father fought for weeks about the decision. He had wanted to stay, but her mother insisted on leaving so that Sabiha Hoca and her brother and sister could get a better education. Although Sabiha Hoca credited her position as a teacher to this decision, she also emphasized own will to an education. On one of several drives to and from the village, she said that she had been accepted into university to study literature, but that her parents had decided to marry her off instead.

Earlier that day, I recorded a conversation with Sabiha Hoca and one of her acquaintances, Mehtap Abla, who happened to be sitting at a neighboring table in the *konak*

courtyard where Sabiha Hoca and I very quickly developed the habit of drinking coffee. Mehtap Abla also explained that her parents had her marry at the age of 18. As Sabiha Hoca and I wove through the winding roads and rolling hills, we saw dark yet blue and luminous clouds crawling over the mountains ahead of us. They had piled upon one another, towering over the valley, and casting expansive shadows while refracting the last glimmer of the day's sunlight.

Sabiha Hoca took a deep breath, "The village we're going to is very backwards (*gerici*). I hate weather like this." She paused and continued, "Do you remember what Mehtap Abla said? My parents gave me away when I was 18 too. This weather always reminds me of the day I got married. The clouds were just like this. I can feel it in my heart. Thank God my husband was a good man. He saw that I was upset and told me there was no reason to cry, but I cried the rest of the night." Sabiha Hoca continued, not about her wedding night, but about the kindness of her husband and the "backwards-ness" (*gercilik*) of the village.

When we arrived at the *kına gecei*, the sun had completely set and the night was illuminated by scattered halogen street lamps and the reverberations of the same music Sabiha Hoca so abhorred at the first *kına gecesi* we attended. Friends from her childhood greeted her, embraced her and kissed her. We were offered Styrofoam cafeteria trays filled to the brim with potatoes and chickpeas sautéed in a tomato base, rice, yogurt, and flour helva, for which Mudurnu is famous. Inside the schoolhouse, folding chairs populated the room, leaving a small space for dancing in the center. Even just sitting under the fluorescent lights of that pale yellow-painted room, we began to sweat profusely. It was hot and humid and the music was so loud that it somehow amplified the intensity of the heat.

We found several empty seats behind the bride and her friends in *üçetek*. The bride would get up to dance intermittently, in her red *bindallı* and *gelin tacı* strapped over her hair. One of the young women in *üçetek* wore a headscarf, during the *kına gecesi*, with the *gelin tacı* fixed over it.

Sabiha Hoca leaned over and tapped her shoulder, “My dear, it’s very hot in here. Why don’t you take off your headscarf? We’re only women here after all.”

“Thanks, *Hocam*. I prefer to keep it on.”

“You know best,” (*Sen bilirsin*) Sabiha Hoca replied.

Sabiha Hoca did not stay inside long. The air was so heavy that she clutched her chest and said she would be waiting for me outside. I followed her out some time later. The henna was still yet to be lit and more women began to gather outside as the room could scarcely accommodate all of the guests. Sabiha Hoca’s childhood friends asked her when she would finish *her* book, a reference to *The Diary of Grandmother Fatma from Mudurnu*, which was written by another Mudurnu resident and had come out earlier that year with what I understand to have been much anticipation. They asked when her next short story would be published and if it would be in print or online—she had recently become disillusioned with publishing online after she found one of her stories reproduced, word-for-word, in a weekly paper not only without her permission, but under a different name.<sup>27</sup> She insisted that her manuscript would be finished soon and instructed the women to read *The Diary of Grandmother Fatma from Mudurnu* so that they could find the passages about the character Fatma Nine’s physical ailments, which Sabiha Hoca had encouraged the author, Kâmuran Esen, to include.

### **Problematizing the Public-Private Dichotomy**

Sabiha Hoca’s frustration with the presence of veiled women at these *kına gecesi* underscores the complexities of distinctions between public and private at that historical

moment. These disinctions are necessarily entangled with Islamic visibilities—once so contested in the public sphere, have also emerged as controversial in the private. That is, with no impetus to cover one’s head in the private sphere, amongst only other women, in this setting covering invokes political connotations. In this way, just as the AKP era saw the encroachment of political discourse into the private lives of women, so too did this encroachment manifest visually, through the embodied practice of veiling, and this time at *kına gecesi*.

Cinar (2008) identifies the redrawing of the boundaries of public and private as a source of political agency. She writes that while secular reforms in the early Republican period ushered in a new gendered national identity manifest in the visibility of women in public, it also demonstrated the political influence of state more so than women’s agency. These reforms enabled “the state to constitute itself as a secular political agent capable of producing a public sphere in accordance with its own foundational norms and principles” (2008, 202). Suzanne Brenner, similarly understands the ability to redraw the boundaries of public and private as a source of political agency: their configuration is intimately tied to differing, if not contentious, conceptualizations of morality (2011, 487). In this way, both Cinar and Brenner ground their arguments in gender as an analytic category, that is, how state and civil society actors enact different conceptualizations of gender via different configurations of public and private. Brenner explicitly draws on Gal and Kilgmen’s understanding of how state-making processes and transformations in democratization can be realized through gender as an analytic frame, that is, “how men and women are differently imaged as citizens” (2000, 3).

Thus Sabiha Hoca’s frustrations also showed problematizations of the public/private dichotomy in the opposite direction—in addition to the public appearing in the private, so too had the private begun to appear in public. She at once expressed that “in the old days” women



Photo 5. Mudurnu *çatki*



Photo 6. Mudurnu *gelin tacı*

would take off their headscarves because they were only amongst women—rendering the space private—while at the same time emphasizing the need for me to take notes on, photograph, and publish her nostalgic imagination of the *kına gecesi*. My presence rendered the ritual more public, at least partially and albeit asynchronously—hence the haunting of my ethnographic entextualization. Furthermore, her work with the municipality to raise money to renovate the abandoned Ottoman houses and to transform Mudurnu in to a hub for heritage tourism—much like the central northern Anatolian town of Safranbolu, which is itself a UNESCO World Heritage site—further draws local variations of rituals such as *kına gecesi* into the public eye.

The episode of the television show<sup>28</sup> “Our Dinner Table hosted by Nur Viral” (*Nur Viral: Bizim Soframız*) that was filmed in Mudurnu featured a segment of women explaining the different aspects of local material culture relevant to *kına gecesi*. Tourist shops reproduced some of these items as souvenirs. In one shop I saw the *çatki*, the long red veil put over the bride’s

head during the *kına gecesi*, was hanging from the ceiling. Its gold sequin pattern had been sewn on by hand by one of the shop's owners. Another store nearby sold dolls dressed in red *bindallı* with miniscule *gelin tacı* attached to their heads—they were brides ready for their henna to be lit. The same store also carried *gelin tacı*. Sabiha Hoca arranged one for me to photograph, placing it over a white knit sweater one of the other women had been wearing. In the essay she would give me later, she included more elegant photos of the *gelin tacı*.

Thus the two *kına gecesi* we attended were neither exclusively public nor exclusively private: the configuration of the boundaries of *mahrem* that, through the sale of *kına gecesi* trinkets at souvenir shops also located *kına gecesi* as a public face of local distinction, were layered.

Susan Gal, advocating a semiotic approach understanding the distinction between public and private, argues that although the frontiers between each are subject to change and reconfiguration, such a conceptualization of “unstable boundaries assume[s] a single dichotomy” (2002, 82). The public/private dichotomy thus becomes a “fractal distinction” in which the relational concepts of public and private are nested within one another, generating public spaces within private ones and vice versa (2000, 81). Furthermore, the public-private dichotomy does not only refer to a particular, ideologized demarcation of space, but to “social facts,” including “institutions, bodies, activities, interactions, and relations” (2000, 80-1). The Turkish case shows that Islamic and secular visibilities, as mapped onto women's bodies via the headscarf and its absence, have been instrumental to configurations of public and private.

Yet, these practices and their contestations have also played crucial roles in the production of gendered political subjectivities (Secor 2002, 8), as these discourses enable different possibilities of agency (Mahmood 2001, 209). Judith Butler understands processes of

subjection through a Foucauldian lens, integrating it with psychoanalysis and asking how subjects come to differentiate their internal and external worlds. For Foucault, power not only subordinates a subject, but also brings the subject into being (Butler 1990; Foucault 1978). Thus Butler argues that through passionate attachment to these dual processes the subject comes into being. While this approach is concerned primarily with discourse.<sup>29</sup> Navaro-Yashin argues that affect is the product of “interactions with spaces and materialities” and, as such, “affect is to be researched not only as emerging out of human subjectivity (or the self) but also as engendered out of political engagement with space and entanglements in materialities” (2012, 134). Her theory of affect arises out of ethnographic research in Northern Cyprus in which Turkish Cypriot refugees from the island’s south came to inhabit houses in the north whose occupants had hastily fled to the south themselves. She argues that the objects that had been left behind, as well as houses riddled with bullet holes, are not affective in and of themselves, but rather that it is the interaction between people and the built and natural environments that produces affect (Navaro-Yashin 2012, 172). Thus while Butler argues that agency is constituted through discourse, Navaro-Yashin shows that her interlocutors “put ruins into discourse” (ibid.) such that the affective interaction with material objects informs discourse.

Sabiha Hoca demonstrated more affective entanglements. At one of the tourist shops that Sabiha Hoca showed me—the same one in which she delicately placed the *gelin tacı* on top of a white sweater for me to photograph—both she and the store owner pulled out a local *yemini*, a form of headcovering that I had seen some of the older women in town wearing. It was a long white tapestry—nearly three by five feet—framed in a red border, with green, yellow and blue accented fauna motif at either end. Sabiha Hoca wrapped it over her head and shoulders and

pivoted back and forth for all of the women in the shop to see. “This is so much more beautiful than a headscarf, isn’t it?” (*Başörtüsünden ne kadar daha güzel, değil mi?*) she asked smiling.

The local *yemini* also made an appearance in Esen’s *The Diary of Grandmother Fatma from Mudurnu*. The first half of the book, taking the form of a fictional diary, details the everyday trials of an aging woman, Fatma Nine (Grandmother Fatma). Written almost exclusively in dialect, Fatma Nine mourns the loss of the days when her family would all spend the holidays together in Mudurnu (Esen 2015, 10). The character recounts her dreams—one in which she, much to her husband’s dismay, is elected as Mudurnu’s mayor (2015, 15)—her feuds with her husband (2015, 32-3); physical and emotion ills that are often intertwined (2015, 46, 58); and frustrations hearing politicians claim to care about the interests of women but who do not field any women candidates (2015, 21). The Mudurnu *yemini* appears when Fatma Nine’s son and daughter-in-law successfully convince her to join them and their children on holiday on the beaches of Turkey’s southern Aegean coast. She complains immediately of her surroundings via women’s dress, “They are all walking around half naked!” (2015, 43). The diary entry continues:

I wear a Mudurnu *yemini* my head over of a smaller scarf. The children and grandchildren say to me, ‘Take off your Mudurnu cloth, you’ll get nauseous from the heat. You’re wearing a small scarf underneath it anyway!’ they say. But look who’s talking! It’s impossible! You say, what kind of *mahrem* is that. I cannot adjust to this, my dear diary, how can I take off my scarf? God above sees everything. Would I become a fashion icon after the age of 70? What do they expect me to do, let all of the times I’ve done my prayers and fasted be for naught? (Esen 2015, 44)

This character’s refusal to take off her *yemini* at the beach, however, differs from the young woman at the second *kına gecesi* Sabiha Hoca and I attended. Not only does the space differ—a women-only *kına gecesi* and a beach on the Aegean coast—but so too does the form of head covering. Whereas Sabiha Hoca’s protests to the latter recalled mainstream associations of the

headscarf (*başörtüsü*) with the AKP's conservative Islamist ideology, Fatma Nine's refusal to remove her *yemini* is part and parcel of an imbrication of Islam and local custom.

In the diary's opening passage, Fatma Nine details the experience of looking through an old photo album with her husband. She grieves over her the days when relatives still lived in Mudurnu and had not been lost to either *gurbet* (the state of being in exile or away from one's homeland) or *hasret* (a longing often translated as nostalgia), writing that she has even had begun to forget the voices of those friends and family whose faces appeared in the albums (Esen 2015, 10). Fatma Nine's this forgetting was further complicated by her observation that she has also been forgotten:

Holidays came and went, New Year's celebrations have come and gone, and no one has asked about how we are or about our memories. No one has wondered, have you died or are you still around?... But if it comes time for an election, they will come to solicit our votes. (Esen 2015: 40)

Forgetting thus becomes the theme that links these characters. Fatma Nine has begun to forget while she too has become an object of others' forgetting.

While she says that she can no longer remember relatives' and friends' voices, her own voice becomes an object of scorn from her grandchildren who insist that she speak standard Turkish with them because they cannot understand the vocabulary of the local dialect. This transformation also occurs in the diary's later passages (Esen 2015, 66). It changed the way in which I moved through the book. Particularly as a non-native speaker of Turkish, with every word I did not recognize I would turn to the back of the book where Esen provided definitions of local terms in standard Turkish. If I found the word in the glossary, I knew it was a part of the local dialect's vocabulary. If not, I would retreat to a standard Turkish dictionary. Some words I found in neither; I understood them to be written in local dialect but only just enough for native speakers of Turkish to understand without the assistance of a glossary. In these instances, I

would double check my understanding with native speakers. This made the process of reading painfully slow as even familiar vocabulary was rendered unrecognizable. Yet, the experience also compounded the sense of alienation that permeated not only my reading of the book, but also my understanding of Sabiha Hoca's interaction with *kına gecesi*.

### **Recalling “The Beautiful Old Days”**

From the beginning of my conversation with Sabiha Hoca and Mehtap Abla, they compared the “good old days” (*eski güzel günlerimiz*) to the current *kına gecesi* in which “traditions had been left by the wayside” (*gelenekler kenarında bırakılmak*). Sabiha Hoca began saying that children these days are braver than in generations before and that, for this reason, they can refuse their parents' wishes. As many times as she had tried to convince her daughter to wear a *bindallı* to a *kına gecesi*, her daughter has always refused exclaiming, “Come on, Mom, what is this!” (*Anne bu ne ya?*) In addition to younger generations' “bravery” (*cesaret*), Sabiha Hoca blamed television for corrupting tradition:

I think of it like this, with the arrival of the television, the computer and the internet, when people see something from a *kına gecesi* that they like, one way or another they go and adapt it or something else. No bit of authenticity survives, such that there really isn't much of a difference between a Hakari *kına gecesi* and a Mudurnu one.

Hakari is a province on Turkey's southeastern border with Iraq and Iran, and thus represents one of the furthest geographical points from Mudurnu that is still within Turkey's national borders. While this observation could perhaps easily be explained away as an anxiety of globalization, its salience arises out of its manifestation in terms of place, a similar discursive strategy that Hatice Teyze used in Bodrum. That is, like in Esen's work where the character of Fatma Nine refuses to take off her Mudurnu *örtü* on the Aegean beach because it threatened the dissolution of her bodily practices of piety (daily prayers, fasting), Sabiha Hoca too alerts us to the imbrication of

body and place. The quotation above further emphasizes this connection to place such that it becomes the arbiter of “authenticity” (*özgün*) and “tradition” (*adet*) for Sabiha Hoca.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Sabiha Hoca located the disintegration of tradition in the body and mind, attributing the erosion of tradition to a pervasive exhaustion:

“Maybe people are tired: their minds are tired and their bodies are tired. Maybe this is the reason.”

Mehtap Abla interjected, “There is no remembrance!” (*Hatır yok!*).

Sabiha Hoca continued, “For example, now, when a *kına gecesi* starts, that Trakya song plays: ‘Let them not build a house when she goes to the highest hills.’ Whatever *kına gecesi* you see on television, it’s the same. And look! They started to do that here too, that Trakya song.”

“Nowadays just two or three songs are played over and over. I mean what is this?”

“You don’t like it either?” Sabiha Hoca did not so much ask Mehtap Abla as she did enthusiastically agree with her.

Mehtap Abla elaborated, “I mean, really? Is that something that’s actually suitable for us? For people from Trakya, fine, it fits them. But we don’t have anything like that. We just don’t have it!”

Sabiha Hoca moved the conversation into the ways in which women would dress up for *kına gecesi*. “I know from our mothers, “ she said. “Our mothers would wear sparkling dresses hemmed at the knee, even above the knee! They would have gotten perms for their hair, our mothers and aunts, and put gold or diamond earrings in their ears. Do you understand? Even down to their rings, everything was elaborate (*özen gösterdi*). They would cover their heads with scarves (*yemini*), not headscarves (*başörtüsü*), those are a [political] symbol because we are just women there so there is no need to cover up.

“Now, because those rules have been left by the wayside, we only go to *kına gecesi* ceremonies these days because we have to go. I never want to go (*canım hiç te gitme istemiyor*), but now, say, my sister’s son is getting married and if I don’t go to the bride’s *kına gecesi* my sister will be cross with me. Now, we only go to remember *kına gecesi*. Because I know our beautiful old days, this spoiling of tradition makes me uncomfortable. Have I explained myself?”

Mehtap Abla continued, “Now when I go to *kına gecesi*, I enter where the mother-in-law is welcoming the guests, say, ‘Congratulations,’ see two or three close friends and then ‘Goodbye!’ (*Allahaşmarladık!*), and I’m leaving. I have been seen there. Not being seen is shameful (*ayıp*), but neither can I permit myself to stay.”

In this dialogue *kına gecesi* emerges as an ambivalent site of memory. It at once shows “there is no remembrance” and that *kına gecesi* was a place she only visited now for the sake of remembering—and being seen. Although Sabiha Hoca used the word *rahatsız*, which literally translates to uncomfortable, I understood it to mean *painful*—to be more severe than discomfort—as Sabiha Hoca shuddered when she said it. Thus, the source of memory that fails to reproduce those same memories also becomes a source of visceral discomfort, if not pain. Sabiha Hoca framed her mother’s days in terms of dress, that is, the presentation of their bodies: skirts were cut above the knee and their hair permed and exposed, although they would cover their heads with a *yemini* when going to and from the *kına gecesi* celebration, which Sabiha Hoca reiterates this in the essay she gifted me.

### **Embodied Nostalgia**

Sabiha Hoca shows her entextualizations of *kına gecesi* to be rooted in nostalgia for Kemalist secularist reforms’ production gendered visibilities in public and private. Dress and cultural artifacts played a critical role in the articulation of her nostalgia. Thus, whereas Navaro-

Yashin's conceptualization of the interaction between people and material environments as generative of affect diminishes the distinction between interior and exterior worlds (2012, 151), affect in Sabiha Hoca's case does not only emanate from her interaction with material objects, but also from her memories and imaginations of them. This would appear to relegate the production of affect to cognition. The production of affect for Navaro-Yashin is similarly rooted in cognition. She notes that people in the same space may not experience the same "affective tension" (2012, 212). Instead, she proposes, "tangibilities transmit affect, but this affect is mediated and qualified by knowledge that the people who have come into contact with them have about the context for the objects" (ibid.). As a result, "affective tensions" do not so much represent a form of knowledge or knowing but are dependent on knowledge for their apprehension.

Importantly, Sabiha Hoca's nostalgia *also* manifested somatically. She stepped outside of the second *kına gecesi* we attended in the village because the air was so thick that she could not breathe. She had done the same at the first *kına gecesi* we attended: although the room had not been not ventilated, neither was it suffocating, and she left me alone to peer out at the young women she said were too "eager" (*hevelsi*) to continue dancing to the music she so disliked. She later told me that she had problems with her lungs. She had had a cancerous tumor there that had been removed. She insisted that it was unrelated to her smoking and I did not press the matter. She discovered the tumor when she had fallen down the stairs in her home not long after her husband passed away over 15 years ago. Whenever she mentioned him, she would say, "I lost him so early" (*Çok erken kaybettim*). She showed me the stairs down which she fell. They led up to a small room where her grandchildren sleep when they visit and it is from the windows in that room that she tends to her hanging gardens.<sup>30</sup> The stairs were narrow and spiraling, but glowed a

beautiful cherry-stained pine color. I remember her pointing to the precise spot where her arm had twisted back, where she hit her head, and how her body lay when she thought that she would surely die. Her doctors found the tumor conducting X-rays of her chest. She said it was the loss of her husband that had made her sick.

When she was driving to her village for the second *kına gecesi* and noted that weather perfectly resembled the weather on the night of her wedding, she said that such weather always makes her shiver (*üşümek*). Late one night, after spending hours at her home talking and drinking coffee, when she walked me back to the bed and breakfast, she pointed my attention to the path we were walking on. Smooth white stones in the shape of bricks lined the walkway beside a small brook. Grasses, weeds, and wild flowers rose up between them. “My heart always shudders when I walk on these stones because my grandfather laid them” (*Bu kaldırım taşı üzerinde yürüyünce kalbim titriyor*). In this way, Sabiha Hoca shows that her memories are not just verbal narratives articulated in the present, but are also embodied and, therefore, are felt, affective experiences. The centrality of embodiment and bodily experience thus problematizes the distinction between the internal world and the materiality of built and natural environments that Navaro-Yashin both relies on and deconstructs. That is, Sabiha Hoca’s narratives point to the materiality and tangibility of the body as part and parcel of both the production and apprehension of affect.

Sabiha Hoca often used the aorist when discussing *kına gecesi* and articulating it in the form of a recipe through the use of language also used to describe the body. When I mentioned that some of the women I spoke with throughout the summer—Arzu’s grandmother in Bodrum for example—did not remember their *kına gecesi* at all, she replied, “It’s because *kına gecesi* doesn’t leave a mark” (*kına gecesi iz bırakmıyor çünkü*), Sabiha Hoca replied. The term to leave

a mark, *iz bırakmak*, also means to scar. While such memories do not leave a mark, Sabiha Hoca's narratives of the way her heart shudders when her memories are triggered by the natural and built environment shows they are embodied.

While I have characterized nostalgia for Sabiha Hoca as a form of affect that is embodied and concerned with both the tangibilities of *kına gecesi* and configurations of public and private via politicized bodily visibilities, the precise object of Sabiha Hoca's nostalgia remains ambivalent. She expresses disdain for the lack of structure of the *kına gecesi* we attended and the more general abandonment of tradition. However, neither does she advocate for a return to those days. In the essay she gifted me, she writes that as a child she was frustrated seeing practices that were attempts to ensure that the bride's first child would be a boy. In another passage, she states that because the girls who were not yet married would wear *gelin tacı* and the mothers of young men would look amongst them to find a suitable bride for their sons, they (the girls) were trapped "in a prison of eyes" (*göz hapsinde*).<sup>31</sup> Thus while the elements of *kına gecesi* that she described in this essay serve to *correct* the impressions I had gained in Mudurnu, she did not long for a return to that time, as they became subjects of criticism. Caroline Seymour-Jorn describes a similar disposition toward nostalgia in her ethnography on the ways in which the work of women writers in Egypt engenders a form of cultural criticism. In her description of Ibtihal Salem's use of colloquial Egyptian dialect in her novels, Seymour-Jorn notes that while Salem's work is permeated with a longing for the "collective belonging that existed in pre-1970s Egyptian cities," the author's nostalgia is not "naïve" (2011, 65). That is, rather than longing for an era, nostalgia takes the form of a critique of "the failures of Nasser's revolution and of the Sedat-era political and economic policies" (2011, 81).

This is an important insight into conceptualizations of nostalgia. Gediminas Lankauskas writes that nostalgia has become such a popular trope in studies of memory and history that it does more to obscure the “complexities, contradictions and ambiguity of memorial practices in social life” than it does to illuminate them” (2015b, 40). In his research on commemorative performances of the Soviet period in Lithuania, he suggests that rather than constituting a form of nostalgia, these practices “externalize socialism” not in order to possess the past or a sense of home, but to dramatize losing it (ibid.). He, consequently, calls attention to attempts to forgetting and the externalization of memory as having been wrongly labeled nostalgia. Bryant, in her exploration of Greek and Turkish women Cypriot writers’ renditions of nostalgia notes two almost opposite discourses on nostalgia. While these have been conceptualized as nostalgic and anti-nostalgic, respectively, she, like Lankauskas, proposes that this language fails to capture the simultaneous nuance and commonalities of nostalgic experience for Greek and Turkish Cypriots. That is, they share a longing for sites of social belonging (2008, 403): “If nostalgia casts the homeland as paradise, that paradise may be lost [as in the Greek case] or a paradise yet to be achieved [as in the Turkish case]”(2008, 416). The question then becomes, what to make of Sabiha Hoca’s nostalgia, if it can indeed be labeled as such? For, she did not desire a return to the past but used it as a reference for, what were to her, more authentic conceptualizations of *kına gecesi*. Rather, her nostalgia reflects a loss of authority.

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Said’s concept of the “worldliness of the text” intertwines intertextuality in materiality. A response to the retreat into textuality, “the worldliness of the text” shows that texts are entangled in the world through both their content and the very artifact of the text. The ethnographic material presented here expands Said’s understanding of worldliness to include the tangibility of

the body itself. During my brief time with Sabiha Hoca, the body—particularly women’s bodies’ imbrication in Turkish politics, both historically and at the time of writing—became a prominent trope through which Sabiha Hoca rendered her criticisms of *kına gecesi* and her interpretation of its proper performance. She was especially frustrated with the presence of veiled women at the *kına gecesi* and fondly described how her mother’s generation even would wear dresses hemmed above the knee. The body—particularly the configuration of intimacy of which women’s bodies partook—was both the subject of Sabiha Hoca’s criticisms of the *kına gecesi* we attended as well as one of the mediums for expressing her affective interactions with the natural and built environment: that is, her shortness of breath and the shivering of her heart.

Sabiha Hoca’s disparaging remarks on *kına gecesi* celebrations centered on the configuration of the boundaries of intimacy. Her focus on the headscarf, in particular, was striking. In the essay she wrote—in what I understood as a fond tone—she described how her mother’s generation would wear dresses hemmed above the knee and expose their hair. In this way, Sabiha Hoca uses contrasting Kemalist secular and Islamist visibilities of women’s bodies, particularly the headscarf, to identify political transformation as it represented a sign of the encroachment of political Islam and changing configuration of public and private at *kına gecesi*, which ceased to be an intimate, women’s event.

Sabiha Hoca’s imagination and memory of what is absent as well as its entextualiation and her instructions for its reproduction demonstrate the entanglement of gender, body, subjectivity, and place in the production of nostalgia. Her criticisms and negotiations of public and private did not only engage in historic and ongoing debates over secular and Islamic visibilities in the public sphere, but they also intersected her work to make Mudurnu a destination for historical tourism. However, in spite of Sabiha Hoca’s concern for the loss

(*bozulması*) of local customs, her nostalgia does not represent structural nostalgia, or the loss of moral order (Herzfeld 1997, 22). That is, while she criticized the *kına gecesi* we attended for what she saw as the waning of social order, in the essay she composed she also inveighed against that same social order for its belittlement of women. In this way, Sabiha Hoca's concern with producing an "authentic" (*özgün*) image of Mudurnu does not only underscore the problems of visibility and change, but shows that neither the decaying (*bozulan*) present nor the authentic (*özgün*) warrant universal praise. Her nostalgia thus shows itself also to be an expression of irreconcilable ambivalences.

As a result, for Sabiha Hoca, nostalgia was neither an unproblematic longing for a pristine past nor the longing for social order, as structural nostalgia would suggest. Instead, nostalgia was a dual alienation—from both the past and the present—that manifested in visceral and embodied discomfort. Her indication that I ought to translate her essay into the aorist, then is not only a function of a aorist's use to describe a subject's "essential character" (Yavaş 1980, 104; quoted in Savaşır 1986, 139). In addition, it is also part and parcel of a language of authority—literature on *kına gecesi*, including Esen's book (Esen 2015) on Mudurnu—and a language of forgetting and the discursive strategy she described as the result of *kına gecesi* not leaving a mark (*iz bırakmamak*). In this way, Sabiha Hoca's criticisms articulate *kına gecesi* as occupying an ambivalent space of remembering and forgetting. These become all the more fraught and loaded in the context of shifting practices of Islamist visibilities in public and private spaces, such that writing with the authority the aorist represents is also foundational to Sabiha Hoca's nostalgia.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The time of research coincided with emergent and unfolding turmoil in Turkey. Current events haunted the research, manifesting plainly at certain points and in others receding. This was perhaps best exemplified in Hatice Teyze's statement that she no longer went to Bodrum's city center for fear of a terrorist attack—something which I did not hear her mention a second time. In this way, women's narratives of and surrounding *kına gecesi* demonstrated affective responses to and engagements with the unfolding political unrest in Turkey at the time. These affects were ingrained in narratives of *kına gecesi*—in the hate and rejection of the ritual in Istanbul, in anxieties about terrorism in Bodrum as they interfaced with sense of place, and in frustration for the spoiling of custom and nostalgia for both authority and Mudurnu's particularities. In this way, *kına gecesi* was inseparable from national and geopolitical politics. Over the course of the summer, it emerged as not only site but also a medium for translating deeply emotional, fear ridden, and exhausted relationships with the nation-state. *Kına gecesi*, as it intersects with national politics, shows an array of different reproductions and contestations of the nation-state.

These different encounters with *kına gecesi*, and the narratives and criticisms surrounding the particular ritual events I attended, demonstrate that while in each case *kına gecesi* is imbricated in politics of nationhood and belonging, they respond to different facets of these politics. As a result, the examination of national politics through *kına gecesi* engenders a “provincialization” of the nation-state, following Chakrabarty's “provincializing Europe.” Here, “provincializing Europe” is in part a matter of fragmentation, that is, of the deconstruction of the notion of a single Europe owing to the imagination of different Europe's in different parts of the

world. In addition, the provincialization of Europe is the work of disassembling historicism, the idea of a linear achievement of progress with Europe at the forefront, by way of abstract universals as they manifest in concepts of modernity, capitalism, and secularism. Historicist readings of the life of these concepts in postcolonial settings, Chakrabarty argues, rely on the notion that “modernity or capitalism look not simply global but rather as something that became global over time, by originating in one place (Europe) and then spreading outside it” (2001, 7; emphasis in original). That is, the idea that secularism, for example, emanates from Europe spreads across the world over time has the effect of generating understandings of secularism in postcolonial settings as partial, not yet fully formed, and temporally lagging behind Europe. In response, Chakrabarty urges for “plurality” in conceptualizations of secularism, modernity, and capitalism, in contrast to viewing them as incomplete or not yet fully formed in postcolonial locales. Importantly, this plurality is a part of the kind of cultural translation he advocates. Here, he favors, “local, particular, one-to-one exchanges” that more so resemble “bartering as opposed to trade through use of money (universal)” (2001, 83) Thereby, in examinations and explorations of these abstract universals, he circumvents reliance on them altogether. That is, he argues for the need to directly translate from one context to another rather than assessing the completeness of incompleteness and any of these notions’ manifestations.

The narratives of *kına gecesi* presented here, alternatively, demonstrate the need for the provincialization of the nation-state and national politics. The same ritual was used to invoke the current government’s pronatalist policies and agendas, distinctions between urban modernity and Anatolian backwardness, imaginations of homogeneity in the face of pluralism, and Kemalist nostalgia. This not only highlights the ritual’s malleability and elasticity, but also the ways in which those universal abstract concepts to which Chakrabarty refers, in this case namely

secularism and modernity, are drawn into the everyday and manifest materially, geographically, and somatically.

This notion of provincializing imaginations of the state echoes Navaro-Yashin's understanding of "faces of the state." In her ethnography of the fantasies of the state in Istanbul after the first major Islamist electoral victory in 1994, she argues that "the public" effectively reproduces the state through its different critiques, and as a result "keep dressing the state in a variety of garbs" (2002, 4). Navaro-Yashin uses fantasy in lieu of Foucauldian approaches to discourse to study politics, stating that it better "enables us to study the enduring force of the political" (ibid.). It is a rich conceptual tool, in this perspective, because of its relegation to the world of the unconscious, such that psychic attachments to the state are formed at the same time they are deconstructed in discourse. However, according to Butler, these psychic attachments to discourse are part and parcel of the process of subjection through which subjects (and their subjectivities) are brought into being. That is, psychic attachment emerges as salient to both subject formation and affective engagements with the state and state discourses.

*Kına gecesi*, I contend, is part and parcel of the production and reproduction of the nation-state, and it is through to biological, cultural, and political reproduction that the politics of this particular ritual are realized. In this way, *kına gecesi* both intersects with the current government's biopolitical discourses that emphasize motherhood as a career for women, and urge married women to have at least three children, as well as with the historical precedent of women carrying the "burden of authenticity" (Yuval-Davis 1997). This burden of authenticity can be seen in both contemporary discourses admonishing women for immodest, in appropriate behavior (such as sharing apartments with men to whom they are not married, or being admonished for smiling in public), and also in the early Republican period wherein the new

secular state sought to differentiate itself from its Ottoman predecessor through gendered embodiment. In this way, *kına gecesi*, as a pre-wedding ritual rich with reproductive imagery, highlights the different ways in which gender is implicated in national reproduction, both biologically and culturally (Yuval-Davis 1997, 116). Thus, while this research agrees with Navaro-Yashin's argument that these different critiques reproduce the state in different "garbs," it also emphasizes the fragmentation and provincialization of gendered engagements with the nation-state through these critiques, stressing that they do not so much appeal to ideology as they do to material, affective experience.

Secularism emerged as an important site for provincialization in this research. In the first and third chapters, secularism was mobilized both explicitly and implicitly, respectively. In Chapter 1, interlocutors situated secularism in opposition to tradition whereas in Chapter 3 secularism was constructed as a tradition being lost. More specifically, in chapter 3, Sabiha Hoca's frustration over the headscarf being worn in the space of an all-woman *kına gecesi*, was also a frustration with the presence of the headscarf as a symbol of Islamist politics in a space that did not warrant Islamic head covering, owing to the exclusive presence of women. Furthermore, her indication that the *Mudurnu yemeni* was more beautiful than the headscarf constructs a distinction between folk custom and political religious symbol. This distinction was also drawn in the 1980s and 1990s during the debates over whether to allow female students who covered their heads to enter public university campuses wearing their headscarves. That is, the *yemeni* was understood as Turkish whereas the headscarf emerged as the symbol of political Islam. Here, the distinction between secularism and Islamism emerges not so much through appeals to abstract ideology, but rather through embodiment and affect—Sabiha Hoca found these henna nights suffocating and excused herself and went outside.

In this way—through discussions of secularism—these chapters speak to fragmentations in conceptualizations of modernity. In chapter 1, *kına gecesi* was constructed as something backwards, that Istanbul secularists would not celebrate because *kına gecesi* was not secular. While on the one hand this might signal that *kına gecesi* is instead a religious celebration, interlocutors used secularism as an index of the modern, thereby generating a traditional/modernity dichotomy in which secularism and modernity were interchangeable, rather than a secular/religious one. At the same time, while I was told Istanbulites did not celebrate *kına gecesi* because it was not secular, I was also informed that the ritual could be made modern. Here, making modern took the form of holding *kına gecesi* at hotels or other public venues, often hosting both men and women, and turning the henna night into a theme party. This particular vision of modernity had three implications. First, the rejection of *kına gecesi* was aligned with the secularizing reforms of the early republican era. However, Selin's indications that Istanbulites do not and would not celebrate *kına gecesi* were interspersed in her story of a *kına* she had recently attended. It was exceptionally lavish, and held at the Fuad Pasha hotel, located on the coast of the Bosphorus in an upscale Istanbul neighborhood. The bride had not wanted to do the ceremony, but acquiesced to her husband's family's desires "to feel tradition," as Selin put it. She characterized modern *kına gecesi* through their venues and use of different themes to transform them into theme parties. Second, within this context, modernity signaled a commodification of the ritual. Finally, the themes she described—an Ottoman harem and India-theme complete with saris—suggested not so much imaginations of the nation, but rather, orientalist ones. As such, invocations of modernity show the convergence of both purchasing power and Orientalist fantasy.

Tensions between Orientalism and Occidentalism and their implications for thinking about modernity have permeated much literature on secularism in Turkey. Yeğenoğlu, for example, understands Turkish secular reforms in the early republican period as the appropriation and internalization of Orientalist discourses that characterized backwardness' through women's veiling. In Atatürk's 1927 speech in which he also introduced the Hat Law prohibiting men from wearing the fez and in its place promoting the brimmed hat, he is quoted as saying:

In some places I have seen women who put a piece of cloth or a towel over or something like it over their faces... when a man passes by. What is the meaning and sense of this behavior? Gentlemen, can the mothers and daughters of a civilized nation adopt this strange manner, this barbarous posture? It is an object of ridicule. It must be remedied at once. (quoted in Çinar 2005, 63)

This section of the speech dealing in particular with women's dress and practices of covering highlights the utilization of secularizing reforms as civilizing technologies. Karadaş situated the dichotomy between culture and civilization, employed in the quote above, in Orientalist underpinnings of Turkish nationalism in the transition between Ottoman and republican periods. He writes that this distinction "conceptualizes the theoretical framework of Turkish nationalism by 'otherizing' and the Eastern—including the Ottoman—civilization" in favor of Western civilization (2010, 57). Furthermore, the secularizing reforms of the early republican period have also been argued to be "self-situated in the dichotomous Orientalist discourse of East vs. West, [such that] the Kemalist regime equated modernity with westernization, and disavowed traditional values and religion" (Nereid 2011, 707). This reading shows some continuity between the Orientalizing discourses in secularizing reforms of the early republican period and Orientalist imaginations in articulations of "modernized" *kına gecesi* celebrations. It thus begs a question for future research, namely, how is Orientalism implicated in secularist imaginations and mobilizations?<sup>32</sup>

The provincialization of the abstract universals, however, does not only entail their fragmentations, but also their materialization—that is, their manifestation not in terms of ideology or political philosophy, but in everyday practices and encounters. Kandioti took up this distinction in her questioning of the utility of the secular-Islamic dichotomy (2012, 514). Although she does not reference Chakrabarty, her argument resonates with his call to sidestep abstractions as she argues that ideologies of secularism and Islamism in fact have become empty signifiers, mobilized in distinct ways at different points in Turkish history and for different purposes. She recounts two dominant narratives on secularism in Turkey. The first, which she refers to as the “master narrative,” is built on the differentiation between state and society and the notion of a “unified Muslim habitus entering into conflict with Western modernity” (2012, 515; italicized in original). It has two important implications: first, the neoliberalizing political economic reforms beginning in the 1980s opened up the space for multiple forms of participating in civil society (e.g., Islamic feminist, Kurdish feminist, Islamist, to name a few); and, second, “the contention that these groups are claiming their place in the public sphere not in defense of tradition, but in search of an alternative, indigenous modernity that expresses itself in Islamic idiom” (2012, 516). In this way, “the master narrative” of secularism has the effect of “othering” Islamic identities, and in doing so situating the emergence of political Islam as an alternative modernity to secularism.

The second narrative of secularism in Turkey, one which Kandiyoti advocates, demonstrates what she calls the “consistent ambivalence of the state vis-à-vis religion” in which “Turkish nationhood and claims of national belonging were never divorced from being Muslim and Sunni... but the manner in which this was incorporated into official state ideology underwent significant transformations through time” (ibid.). In this way, Kaniyoti shows that

moral anxieties have not conformed to “lofty ideals of progressive republicanism,” but rather emerged in response to political encroachment on daily practices and routines (2012, 521). In other words, rather than translating these moral anxieties through secularist and Islamist ideologies, Kandiyoti shows their foundation in the everyday rather than in the abstract. In this way, abstraction emerges as a political tool, both insofar as it enables appeals to Islamism and secularism (Çinar 2005) and it is part and parcel of historicist discourses.

### **Unfolding Conflict**

These different engagements with secularism and modernity, I argue, emerged as part and parcel of political anxieties over the future of the nation-state. As such, this research is not necessarily about *kına gecesi* and its intersections with notions of the state, secularism or modernity. Instead it tries to understand how these notions were made manifest in the context of growing political unrest. I arrived in Turkey just days before the June 7, parliamentary elections. This election was historic in two ways. First, it was the first parliamentary since 2001 that the AKP did not secure enough votes to form a single-party government. The AKP’s 2001 victory came after a series of coalition governments throughout the 1990s along with military’s forced closing of the Islamist Welfare Party in 1997. Unlike earlier Islamist parties, the AKP ran on a platform of neoliberal economic development and restated the goal of joining the European Union. While the AKP reportedly won votes in the subsequent 2007 elections from secularist supporters for its economic progress—pulling Turkey out of the 2001 economic crisis and initiating large-scale infrastructure projects throughout the country—the Gezi Park protests in 2013 had the effect of reinvigorating leftist politics, largely absent in the mainstream since the 1980 coup d’état. Second, the June 6 election was the first election in which the left-leaning Kurdish-interest HDP passed the 10 percent national electoral threshold necessary to entering

parliament as a party. In the past, HDP politicians would run as independent candidates to circumvent the 10 percent threshold requirement and form a de facto party within parliament. On June 6, 2015, the HDP won 15 percent of the national vote, trailing closely behind the right-leaning, Turkish nationalist MHP at 17 percent (Cumhuriyet 2015a).

After going with Barış and Sevgi to the polls that morning, I spent the evening with Nazlı, an old friend from Afyon and her family. We ate dinner in the kitchen with the television on. But because of the prohibition against airing the election results before counts are near complete, and had turn the channel to children's programming for her two-year old son. Between bites of watermelon, her husband popped in to ask if we'd seen the result. She flipped the channels and we saw Selahattin Demirtaş, co-chair of the HDP, giving a victory speech saying that the HDP would not form a coalition government with the AKP. While Demirtaş referred to the results as a victory, political pundits affiliated with the CHP, Atatürk's founding party, counted the results as a loss for the President and his government. In referring to the AKP's work to transform Turkey's parliamentary system into a presidential one, the same pundit noted, "This was a victory for parliamentary democracy." However, Nazlı's husband, Fahti, cautioned me that in light of the election results, and no matter what kind of coalition was formed, nothing would actually change. "Our system is different than yours," he said, making a nod to the 2016 presidential campaign season in the United States then just beginning.<sup>33</sup>

Less than three weeks later I found myself in Istanbul in the midst of the first instance of police intervention in the Gay Pride Parade in its history. The march in fact began with tear gas and water cannons. Permits for the demonstration had been rescinded shortly before it was scheduled to begin, citing that it was inappropriate to hold such a march during the fasting month of Ramadan. At 5 p.m., when the march was scheduled to start, police in Taksim Square began to

clear the area with tear gas and water cannons, effectively starting the parade. Blocking off the main route, we were forced down a different avenue. It was after much of the march had ended when I unwisely tried to make my way back to the Taksim metro that the deployment of tear gas and water cannons picked up. Clouds of tear gas hung in over this corner of the Beyoğlu neighborhood and all the roads to Taksim appeared to be blocked.

The next day, various theories about why there had been police intervention were put forward. One acquaintance proudly exclaimed that the intervention in the Pride Parade was a last show of force after the electoral loss. That evening I met Fidan for the first time. We had in fact rescheduled our interview so that she could attend the Pride Parade and began our interview with a discussion of it. She wasn't able to make it at all. By the time she got to Taksim, the meydan had already been blocked off and she was turned away. I asked her what she thought of my acquaintances take on the police intervention in the parade. She disagreed immediately, saying, "No: this is a sign of more of the same."

The events that followed would beg the question of what constitutes "the same." After the terrorist attack in Suruç claimed by the so-called Islamic State, the government resumed the decades long war with the Kurdish separatist guerrilla organization, PKK, effectively ending a two-year cease-fire in which time peace negotiations had also begun. The PKK retaliated against the military occupations of cities in eastern Turkey and round-the-clock curfews with attacks on police stations and military outposts (*jandarma*, gendarmerie).

I watched these events unfold in the media in different cities. In Istanbul, shortly after the attack in Suruç, there was a bomb threat on one of the Metro lines that ran north south on the European side. I had never seen the metro so empty, and had never so easily found an empty seat on the trains. At the first retaliations from the PKK, I was in Ankara visiting an old friend and

her family for the weekend. Setting the table for dinner with my friend's mother, we stood still, staring at the television broadcast of the funeral of a police officer. The screen showed his coffin draped in a Turkish flag being loaded into the hearse. His wife, sobbing, climbed into the back of the narrow vehicle with him, and pulled herself close to the coffin while other mourners tried to comfort her and pull her out. We watched silently, until my friend's mother said softly, "I guess we are going to war." This was one example of the silences that permeated my interactions and encounters that summer. These silences tended to cluster around moments of shock and the aftermath of violence.

It was in this context that Hatice Teyze expressed anxiety about going to the Bodrum city center for fear of a terrorist attack. This anxiety, in concert with her criticisms of the *kına gecesi* we attended, demonstrated the territorializing effects of bodies and their role in the production of affect. The framework of intimate geopolitics helps to unpack this interaction with Hatice Teyze. It emphasizes the ways in which bodies inscribe territories such that regulations of the body are also regulations of territory. In this way, intimate geopolitics echoes Yuval-Davis' understanding of how "gendered bodies and sexuality play pivotal roles as territories, markers and reproducers of the narratives of nations and other collectivities"(1997, 39). Thus whereas secularizing reforms of the early republican period sought to inscribe the values of the new state onto women's bodies, in Bodrum bodies and their associations with place inscribed different geographies of conflict and cultural difference into the space of the city and its surroundings. The presence of Kurdish workers in the tourist enclave of Gumbet, according to Hatice Teyze, made Gumbet immune to a terrorist attack, but had the opposite effect on the city center. Furthermore, the city center also saw steady influxes of refugees on their way to the nearby Greek islands, thereby inscribing the space with the ongoing civil war in Syria. Strikingly, Hatice Teyze used

similar rhetoric to disparage the *kına gecesi* we attended—it was held in a squatter settlement, on the outskirts of Bodrum, and supposedly not attended by anyone from Bodrum. I argue that this symmetry in rhetoric is part and parcel of the same anxiety about the reproduction of the nation-state—about worry over the future during a period of political liminality.

### **Racializing Affect**

Fear and anxiety haunted the research, and surfaced intermittently in discourse. In this way, trepidation about the political situation also permeated narratives of *kına gecesi*. The women I spoke with related to the ritual in affective terms—hating it, acquiescing to it for the sake of family, wanting to *feel* tradition, and outright disparagement. These affective relationships with the ritual, I argue, also underscore particular engagements with, and reproductions of fragmented imaginations of the state at a time when the shape of the state itself was uncertain.

In Chapter 1, Fidan and Merve outlined a theory of *kına gecesi* founded on its connections to the government's pronatalism. They unpacked the symbols of the ritual, and ritual dress, stating that the red belt wrapped around the bride's waist, in addition to her red *bindallı* were symbolic of virginity, and the action of the bride's male relative tying the belt around her indicative of patriarchal control over women's sexuality. It was this control that they identified as the logic that "lies beneath" the *kına gecesi*, and that Merve cited for both her rejection and hatred of the ritual. While Fidan did have a *kına gecesi*, she emphasized that it was at her sister's request and that the ritual was something out of place for her family, describing them as "relaxed" about sexual activity outside of marriage. By contrast, since the mid-2000s rhetoric from the government has stressed the need for biological reproduction within the bounds of marriage in the glorification of women's roles as mothers, the three-child recommendation,

demonization of birth control, and the limiting of access to abortion. In this way, the fragment of the state that Fidan and Merve isolated and imagined was precisely its recent regulations of women's sexuality. In this way, through their rejection of the logic that lies beneath the ritual, Merve's rejection of the ritual, and Fidan's adjustment of her celebration to exclude the red belt symbolizing virginity also represent rejection and contestation of the state.

Yet, in another conversation with Fidan, this time in the company of Selin and Can, the rejection of *kına gecesi* took a different turn: rejection because *kına gecesi* is not a secular ritual. Here, Selin chided *kına gecesi* as “backwards,” “low brow,” “and rude,” adding that it was not something secular Istanbulites did. In her description of a *kına gecesi* she had recently attended in which the Istanbulite bride was marrying a man whose family was from Anatolia, she noted that his family wanted to “feel” tradition. Yet, this *kına gecesi* was nonetheless made “modern”: it was held at a posh hotel named for one of the authors of the Tanzimat reforms; *rakı* was served to the guests; both men and women were guests; and the bride turned the celebration into a theme-party focusing on India. Here, modernity and secularism were conflated with one another in such a way as to deny the existence of Islamic modernities. Her construction of secularism in Istanbul thus mobilized Kemalist narratives of secular Turkish nationalism. In this way, by drawing on the discourses of the early republican state, she effectively relegated the Islamism of the current government to traditionalism. Selin's rejection of *kına gecesi* for its supposed appeal to low culture in concert with Fidan and Merve's admonishment of the ritual for its reinforcement of patriarchal control thereby lay the foundation for understanding why Kadıköy was the wrong place to study *kına gecesi*—that is, the place of Kadıköy was imbued with these embodied contestations of these varied fragments of imaginations of the state.

In Bodrum, discourses on *kına gecesi* demonstrated the fraught quality of reconciliations of homogeneity and pluralism. In Hatice Teyze's criticisms of the *kına gecesi* we attended for the absence of Bodrum residents in attendance, Bodrum music, or a Bodrum bride—in addition to the venue of the *kına gecesi* in a squatter settlement home to migrants from central Anatolia—the place of Bodrum was central. In other conversations with Hatice Teyze, the place of Bodrum also emerged as precarious, inscribed with multiple, ongoing conflicts. On the one hand she told me that she no longer went to the city center for fear of a terrorist attack. Yet Gümbet, the tourist enclave where she worked was safe because, as she put it, everyone knew there were so many Kurds working in the tourist industry that the PKK would not attack it. As a tourist hub, Gümbet also hosted Turkish and international tourists—as well as Turkish foreign nationals—further complicating the imagined geographies inscribed in the area. Further still, Syrian refugees dotted the boulevards of the city center, recalling the war in neighboring Syria. Hatice Teyze's anxieties thus underscore an affective relationship with the state via the threat of terrorism manifest in the renewal of armed conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK. This anxiety that also serves as cause for her rejection of the *kına gecesi* we attended in the squatter settlement.

Sabiha Hoca perhaps most often spoke in affective terms. She stated that she only ever goes to *kına gecesi* any more to remember the “good old days,” not because she enjoyed *kına gecesi*. When she spoke to me of her memories, she interwove place, landscape, and physiological experiences: the shivering in her heart and the tightness in her lungs. She often complained of how Mudurnu's traditions were spoiling, saying that no one wore the customary dress anymore, nor did they play Mudurnu music. At the two *kına gecesi* we attended together, Sabiha Hoca was most critical of presence of the headscarf. She stated that at an all-woman event, there was not cause for women or girls to wear headscarves. Her mother's generation, she

said, would wear their Murdurnu scarves outside and then take them off inside the *kına gecesi* to reveal short skirts and permed hair. In this way, her nostalgia for the “good old days” is also reminiscent of Selin’s mobilization of secularist rhetoric, insofar as Sabiha Hoca’s criticisms appealed to Kemalist rejections of the headscarf. However, where tradition was something backwards for Selin, it was something to be praised for Sabiha Hoca as she saw its unraveling not only related to globalization, but also to the encroachment of symbols of Islamism into *kına gecesi*.

Each of these chapters shows the importance of place in deliberations of *kına gecesi*. While the Kadıköy neighborhood of Istanbul was characterized through its absence of *kına gecesi*, discourses in Bodrum and Mudurnu relied on essentialization to both characterize *kına gecesi* and disparage those that were attended. As a result, in each instance, the character of the place was constructed as part and parcel of *kına gecesi*. This observation echoes one friend’s indication that *kına gecesi* is at its base regional, that is, a function of place. Furthermore, it recalls Navaro-Yashin’s observation that renditions of locality are essential to the construction of political discourse in Turkey (2002). In addition to being political, the chapters presented here demonstrate affective entanglements with place. Place, as Basso argued, “may be employed to convey tacit messages” (1996, 74). In this way, place does not simply recall narratives, but instead “express only what their animators enable them to say” (1996, 108).

In the context of this research, discourses on place were part and parcel of articulations of cultural essentialisms. Heatherington, in her examination of environmental advocacy in Sardinia, noted, “Perceptions of innate cultural difference in central Sardinia are deeply biologized,” (2013, 160) in such a way that this difference is “informed by a global hierarchy of value” (2013, 172). While cultural difference was biologized in central Sardinia, place emerged as the central

marker of difference. In Turkey, such difference was encapsulated in the attributions of affective qualities to *kına gecesi* and the conflation of people and place. Fidan and her cohort, for example, inscribed Kadıköy as devoid of *kına gecesi* in such a way that they rendered Anatolia “backwards,” and “rude.” Hatice Teyze admonished the *kına gecesi* we attended for its corruption of place, as it was held in a squatter settlement whose residents had migrated from central Anatolia. Sabiha Hoca, similarly lamented the lost of Mudurnu’s uniqueness, saying that with globalization *kına gecesi* was becoming the same all across the country.

Here, place becomes important to the production of distinction and difference. Yet, affect is also strongly implicated in this process as place becomes a loaded index for a particular character. Ulla D. Berg and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas examine this aspect of affect in their discussion of affect as a tool for the construction of racial difference in Latin America and Latino populations in the United States. They show that, since the colonial period, Latinos have been stereotyped through their representation with excessively emotive language (2015, 658). In this way, the attribution of affect emerges as part of the production of racialization and, thereby, cultural difference. This insight helps to explain the ways in which discourses on *kına gecesi* can do the work of othering—resorting to Orientalisms and essentializations in the articulation and production of difference.

### **Concerns over Representation**

While interlocutors used sense of place to produce social difference, sometimes along essentialized lines, their concern with these different affective attributes also underwrites a concern for how they themselves would be represented in this text. In this way, while the unfolding of political unrest in Turkey haunted my research, so did the text that I would be writing. I attempted to reflect this preoccupation through the structure of the thesis. Each chapter

revolves around a particular question of representation. Kadıköy was situated as the *wrong* place for *kına gecesi*. In Bodrum, Hatice Teyze insisted on finding a YouTube video for me to watch in order to see a Bodrum *kına gecesi*, telling me at the same time to forget the *kına gecesi* that I saw. Sabiha Hoca wrote me an essay detailing what she thought I should have seen. She had also instructed me to reproduce it in the aorist verb tense, rather than the past tense in which she had written it, effectively instructing me to imbue the text with the authority with which that genre of time is used.

I think that this concern for representation is two fold. On the one hand, attention to the representation of *kına gecesi* reflects its intersections with both cultural and biological reproduction. *Kına gecesi* occupies a critical site for both forms of reproduction as a pre-wedding ritual laden with symbolism pertaining to virginity and fertility. Yet, the cultural and biological reproduction within which *kına gecesi* is embroiled is also part and parcel of its production vis-à-vis imaginations the nation-state. That is, the biopolitical agenda of the current government represented by its pronatalist discourse demonstrates the focus on biological reproduction of married Turkish couples. At the same time, Yuval-Davis demonstrates that the co-configuration of gender and nation does not only rely on biological reproduction, but also cultural (1997). Here, the legacy of juridical and biomedical constructions of women's citizenship and sexuality become especially salient as women have born the burden of authenticity, and have been the measure of progress and symbol of the instantiation of secularist and Islamist ideologies. In this way, *kına gecesi* also represents a site for engagement with—and perhaps rejection of—the weight of authenticity.

Authenticity, however, much like imaginations of the nation-state, is a fragmented concept. In women's narratives it emerged particularly as being tied to place, where place also

became a euphemism for the affective qualities ascribed to the people who inhabited it. Thus place and affect became part and parcel of both engagement with the nation-state, but also the articulation of difference and political belonging. In some instances, it emerged as a way of othering.

Interlocutors' concern over representation, in this context, is anything but vain. It is instead a recognition of the power of discourse and its othering effects. These discourses of racializing affects interface with imaginations of the nation-state, generating different categories of belonging and exclusion. In this way, *kına gecesi* emerges as a critical site for the production and reproduction of these configurations. As a ritual entangled in biological and cultural reproduction, it became a medium through which women generated fragmented imaginations of the nation-state, in doing so, gave voice to affective anxieties about its future during a period of governmentlessness (*hükümsizlik*).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Hava*, air and atmosphere in both the metaphorical and literal senses.

<sup>2</sup> Gediminas Lankauskas differentiates political liminality from the ritual liminality in Arnold Van Gennep's or Victor Turner's sense. He argues that while ritual liminality is a transitional period in which end or otherside is known, political liminality is bookended, in part, by uncertainty (2015a).

<sup>3</sup> My interest in *gurbet* led me to *kına gecesi*. In 2011 I began collecting *gurbet* songs. While I noted that women were mentioned in the songs primarily in the context of marriage, a friend pointed me in the direction of *kına gecesi* saying that the songs sung for the celebration were also *gurbet* songs. She mentioned "To the Highest Hills" in particular. Alternatively, some songs sung at *kına gecesi* are classified as *ağıt*, songs of mourning (cf. Artun 1998).

<sup>4</sup> cf. Navaro-Yashin 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Çengiz Çetin, in his survey of Turkish wedding rituals also emphasizes *kına gecesi*'s link to fertility. But rather than isolating its connection to Islamic imagery, he situates the ceremony as common across Anatolian folk practices, albeit in different forms. As such, he argues that Anatolia has a strong history of fertility imagery being part of wedding rituals, some pre-dating Islam (2008, 113).

<sup>6</sup> Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics problematizes the Eurocentricism in Foucauldian biopolitics. While he defines biopower as "that domain of life over which power has taken control," he also begs the question of the "practical conditions" under which biopower's domain over life condemns its subjects to death. Mbembe thus conceptualizes necropolitics through the creation of "death-worlds," which he understands as "new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*," and uses necropolitics to characterize spaces of colonial domination (2003: 40; emphasis in original).

<sup>7</sup> At the same time, interlocutors would relay that they don't often talk about *kına gecesi* or weddings as they are "ordinary" (*sıradan*) events. If ordinary were to be interpreted as everyday or quotidian, to which the Turkish *sıradan* alludes, these discourses also have the potential to problematize the sacred/profane dichotomy that characterized structural functionalist interpretations of ritual.

<sup>8</sup> Fidan explained that I was interested in how the practice of *kına gecesi* interfaced with the realization women's rights and gender politics in Turkey. I think this explanation was as much to save face for Fidan herself as it was for me.

<sup>9</sup> A friend who grew up in Kadıköy recently relayed to his disquiet and surprise over transformations in area owing to the massive influx of new residents. While Fidan attributed the growing desire to live in Kadıköy to the politicization engendered by the Gezi Park Protests, this friend focused on the shops. He said that so many chains have moved into Kadıköy that many of the teahouses and restaurants he knew growing up have been priced out. There was one that was still around. As a teenager, he would pass his time drinking tea and coffee there while reading. His last time visiting Istanbul he returned to the shop to say hello to the owner and was taken aback by what he described as the shrieks of upper middle class young women saying "me next." The owner explained to him that in order to meet the rising price of rent in Kadıköy, his sister began reading customers' futures in the grounds of their coffee cups. She apparently had a particularly keen gift for this. He used this example to explain how the make up Kadıköy has changed since he was young—it was much more upper middle class now. Furthermore, he heard English in Kadıköy on this visit more than ever before. Taksim, the former magnet for tourists and expats in

Istanbul, known for its rich nightlife, had emptied and in turn flooded Kadıköy and carried with them global chains like Starbucks.

<sup>10</sup> Çinar (2005) argues that Republican ideology's production of the public sphere was also mapped onto women's bodies.

<sup>11</sup> Kandiyoti attributes this use of habitus to Nilüfer Göle's *The Forbidden Modern: Veiling and Civilization in Turkey* (1996).

<sup>12</sup> Karadaş (2010) situates his argument in the context of Ziya Gökalp's addition of culture to material-spiritual dichotomy in Partha Chattarjee's conceptualization of anticolonial nationalism (1993).

<sup>13</sup> While Foucault and Asad share a conceptualization of power as production, Asad's emphasis on the productivity of law, especially in concert with emphasis on the production of secular subjects—particularly women—in the early republican period of Turkey (cf Çinar 2005 and Özyürek 2006) beg the question of social life of law in Foucault's accounts and how it might have informed his occlusion of European colonialism in his exegeses on the development of biopolitics.

<sup>14</sup> These examination of abortion laws casts an important light on Erdoğan's designations of birth control as a form of treason. Not only does it embed such discourses in historical context, but also works against their orientalizations and global feminist fantasies of rights as these codes, along with the Swiss Civil code in 1926, were indeed adopted from Europe.

<sup>15</sup> Kabir Tambar is careful to note: "In both ethnic and linguistic terms, there is no single Alevi community. The term 'Alevi' is attributed to groups that cross ethnic lines, including Turks, Kurds, and Arabs. This preliminary typology can be segmented further. Among Kurdish Alevis, linguistic distinctions can be drawn between Zaza and Kurmanji speakers. Turkish Alevis are also internally differentiable on tribal and regional grounds."

<sup>16</sup> The folklorization of Alevism underwent a subsequent vivification in the 1980s and 1990s. A military junta control of the government in 1980 when growing sectarian violence between rightist and leftist factions threatened to escalate into a civil war. The junta and the democratically elected Turgut Özal government that followed in 1983, inaugurated what is called the Turkish-Islamic synthesis in a new constitution. Here, a Turkish Islamist (Sunni) Muslim was articulated as an essential element of belonging to the Turkish nation. During this time, the right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), drawing on early Republican Nationalist writing, rearticulated Alevi customs and traditions as part of Turkish national heritage. Whereas during the founding years of the Turkish republic, anthropologists were dispatched to Anatolian villages to record Alevi songs and customs as relics of a more ancient Turkish past, the MHP, in the 1980s reintroduced this rhetoric that historicized Alevi ritual and identity as emblematic of the national past and, hence national heritage.

<sup>17</sup> Tambar, on the other hand, does write of gender segregation in the context of Alevi religious practice. Hence, this becomes an example, perhaps, of different ethnic and regional differences in the practice of Alevism.

<sup>18</sup> The CHP is also the party of Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and, at the time of writing, is the main opposition party in the Turkish Parliament.

<sup>19</sup> One friend who had gotten married in 2014, relayed to me while visiting with her in 2015 that she decided not to do a *kına gecesi* precisely because of the regional differences between she and her husband. While he is from the Aegean region, her family is from the central Anatolian city of Kaseri. She said that because the families would have different expectations of the *kına gecesi* and how it is

performed, no one would have been happy with it. As a result, she and her husband decided not to celebrate *kına gecesi*.

<sup>20</sup> For exception see Mickinnon 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Tracey Heatherington refers to this as ecological essentialism: that is, the naturalization, often stereotyped, of the equation of person with place (2013: 173).

<sup>22</sup> Bernard Perley defines entextualization as “writing down face-to-face exchanges into textual form” (2012: 185)

<sup>23</sup> G.L. Lewis elaborates the nuances of *geniş zaman* with the example, “yaparım,” the first person singular of the verb to do (*yapmak*). Rather than meaning “I do” or “I am doing,” which both imply time-mediated the activity, *yaparım* is better represented in English as, “I am a doer” (1967: 117).

<sup>24</sup> It is important to note the intertextuality does not necessarily engender a one-to-one correspondence between meaning in how texts reference one another. The comparison between the productions or performances of such texts, what Briggs and Bauman refers to as the intertextual gap, engenders “intertextual difference” (2009: 228). The intertextual gap does not only refer to the interstices engendered in the comparison of texts, but also to the relative fit between those utterances and the expectations of their genres. That is, “The process of linking particular utterances to generic models thus necessarily produces an intertextual gap” (Briggs and Bauman 2009: 227). Bernard Perley uses the concept of the intertextual gap to demonstrate how the different generations of entextualization of Maliseet stories since the 19<sup>th</sup> century has severed them “from their aboriginal contexts” (2012: 191). Dennis Tedlock exemplifies the importance of the intertextual gap in his discussion of the distinctions between Zuni storytelling he formally recorded and an instance of storytelling that emerged when the grandchildren of an interlocutor entreated him to tell a story in his family home (1983: 286). Although Tedlock does not use the concept of the intertextual gap explicitly, his juxtaposition of these events emphasize the dialogical quality of oral performance and the impact of the act or recording and the presence of a tape-recorder upon them (1983: 301). These applications show that while the intertextual gap becomes visible in the comparison between texts and their relationship to genre, this concept also demonstrates that utterances are utterly grounded in the present and historical contexts in which they are rendered.

<sup>25</sup> Kandiyoti takes issue with this interpretation of the proliferation of state images in private spaces in the 1990s. Referring to Özyürek’s interpretation of the miniaturization of Atatürk as the realization of Kemalist secularist ideology in private spaces, Kandiyoti writes, “Özyürek sees this as an entirely defensive and reactive move aimed at protecting the memory of Kemalist modernization from recent attacks of Islamists...This sensitive analysis fails, however, fails to exhaust all plausible explanations of the mora anxieties of the 1990s.” She argues instead that encroachments on “habits and practices that punctuated their daily lives and leisure” that mobilized protests and recalls of Kelamism (2012, 521).

<sup>26</sup> Nilüfer Göle is cautious about the direct application of the public/private dichotomy in Turkey. Instead, she suggests that the concept of *Mahrem*, which “refers to intimacy domesticity, secrecy, women’s space, [and] what is forbidden to a foreigner’s gaze,” more accurately captures the “distinctiveness of the domestic sphere in a Muslim context”(1996: 7).

<sup>27</sup> The weekly paper that she was referring to was the satirical publication *Penguen*, which features both comics, short stories, essays, and creative nonfiction. When she told me about this, she violently disparaged the publication, saying that she would never allow herself to be seen with the publication in

hand. She added that she would not be caught dead with the publication in her purse. I had one of the most recent copies in my bag.

<sup>28</sup> The television show *Nur Viral* airs on the Beyaz television channel, which has a reputation for nationalist programming.

<sup>29</sup> Butler has been critiqued from the corporeal feminist lens, which argues that her work reduces subjectivity to discourse and in doing so ignores the body in the production and expression of subjectivities (cf. Grosz 1984; Moi 1999). The pertinence of this critique relies in part on the definition of discourse and the question of what discourses' material expressions might be. Edward Said, for example, argues that discourse is both verbal and material (1983). Navaro-Yashin's work on (2012) affect becomes particularly relevant here as she imbriates materiality and subjectivity with one another.

<sup>30</sup> She often commented that wedding parties would take their pictures in front of her home because of the draw of her flowers.

<sup>31</sup> "Young women were aware that they were being watched from all sides at *kına gecesi* ceremonies. For this reason, they behave carefully and would sit very lady like. Those girls who had reached marrying age and who were wearing local dress would be in a *prison of eyes*. Everyone's eyes would be on the arms and necks of these unmarried and married women, wondering, who has more golden jewelry? From the gold that adorned these women at *kına gecesi* ceremonies, it was certain who the wealthiest families in the village were. Wearing gold was the only luxury of village women. The only place where they could show themselves off was *kına gecesi*."

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Göle 2012.

<sup>33</sup> April 16, 2017 Turkey held a referendum to determine whether the system of government would remain a parliamentary democracy or transition to a presidential democracy, a move supported by the AKP and MHP. The "Yes" vote to establish a presidential democracy won by a narrow margin and at the time of writing these results been contested by the CHP.

## APPENDIX A

### **Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP)**

The Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), also referred to as AK Parti where *ak* is a Turkish work for light or white, is a right of center, conservative Islamist party. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan established the AKP following the military's forced closure of the Islamist Refah Party in 1997 on the premise that the party's agenda was a threat to the country's secularist principles (Özkan 2014, 35). Erdoğan had been a member of the Refah party, but following its closure distanced himself from its leadership, then-Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. The AKP swept the 2001 parliamentary elections, enabling it to form a single-party government. The AKP's neoliberal economic agenda and stated intention to continue pursuing membership to the European Union in the context of the 2001 economic crisis in Turkey have been credited as the source of the AKP's electoral success in 2001 and 2007 (Öniş 2012, 138). In 2007, the parliament elected Abdullah Gül as president, which had largely been a symbolic, non-partisan post. Gül's election was controversial as for the first time in the history of the republic both the Prime Minister's and President's wives donned headscarves. Women parliamentarians gained the right to wear the headscarf in parliament in 2013 (Tajali 2014, 74). Following another landslide victory in 2011 parliamentary elections, in 2014, Erdoğan left his post as Prime Minister to run for the office of the presidency in what would be the first direct democratic election of the president, which had previously been selected by parliament. In his stead, Ahmet Davutoğlu then took the position of the Prime Minister and official head of the party. Davutoğlu was the Prime Minister during the time of research. He resigned in May 2016 and was replaced with Binali Yıldırım who was the Prime Minister at the time of writing.

### **Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party, CHP)**

The Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) was the party of founder of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and as such is the oldest political party in Turkey. It was the only recognized party during the early republican. In 1931, the party published its six "arrows" or principles, which defined not only party values but also a particular vision of the Turkey republic: Republicanism, Populism, Nationalism, Secularism, Etatism and Revolutionism (Kiriş 2012, 411n10). After the establishment of a multiparty system in the decades following Atatürk's death in 1938, the CHP emerged as is a center-left, secular party, and at the time of writing was the main-opposition party in Turkey. However, is has been unable to form a single-party government since the transition to a multi-party system. During the time of research, the head of the party was Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who took this position in 2011 in anticipation of parliamentary elections.

### **Halkların Demokratik Partisi (The Peoples' Democratic Party, HDP)**

The Halkların Demokratik Partisi is a left of center, Kurdish interest political party founded in 2012. The party is often rumored to have connections with the outlawed Kurdish guerrilla insurgency, the People's Worker Party or PKK. The HDP is also thought to be an outgrowth of the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP), a left leaning Kurdish party often imagined to be the political branch of the PKK, and representing the interests of the

Kurdish ethnic minority in Turkey's southeast. The first political party to publicly to acknowledge Kurdish identity in Turkey was the Workers' Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP), founded in 1961 by union leaders (Celep 2014, 168). The Party was shut down in 1971 and after being reinstated in 1975, closed again by the 1980 military coup. Celep argues that contemporary leftist Kurdish politics began in the early 1990s, with the electoral victory of the People's Labor Party (*Halkın Ekmek Partisi*, HEP), gaining 22 seats in parliament (2014, 170). The party was closed in 1991 after elected deputies "switched to Kurdish language during their oath-taking in November 1991 and later displayed symbols associated with the PKK" (ibid.). The HEP was succeeded by a number of Kurdish interest parties that would also be shut down. During the time of research, the co-chairs of the party were Figen Yüksekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş. Following the removal of immunity from criminal charges for members of parliament after the attempted coup in July 2016, both Yüksekdağ and Demirtaş were arrested for alleged links to the PKK.

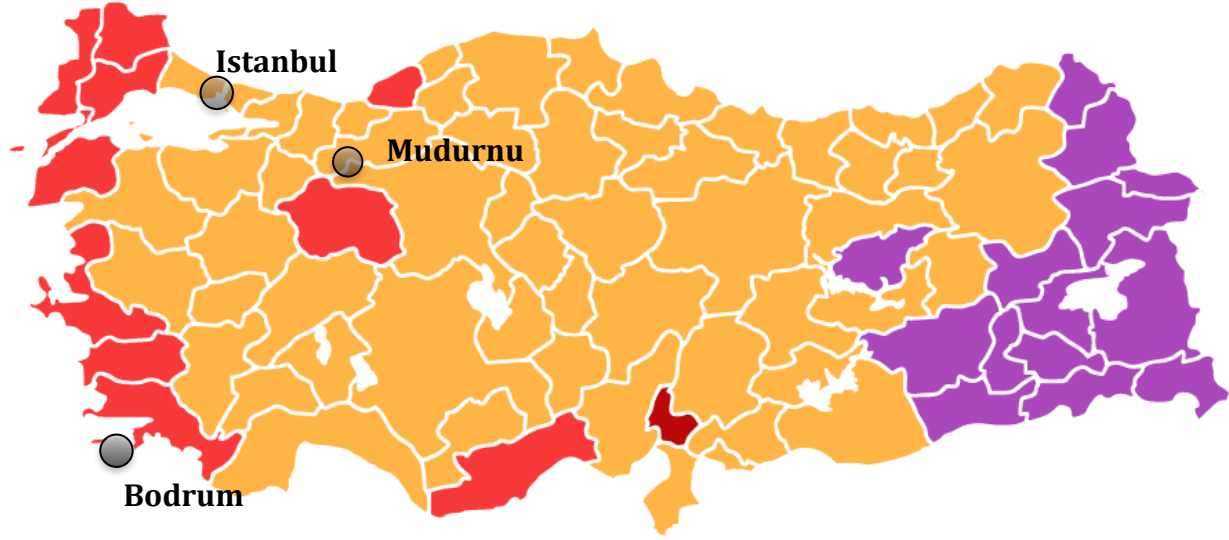
### **Millet Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Action Party, MHP)**













What would become the Millet Hareket Partisi was first formed in 1965 under the name Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi (Republican Nationalist Peasant Party) by Alparslan Türkeş (Yavuz 2002). The party was critical of both communism (in and outside of Turkey) and capitalism, arguing that there was a so-called third way predicated on Turkishness. In the 1960s, the party drew support from the pan-Turkist movement, although lost many these supports in 1969 when the party decided that its symbol would be three crescent moons rather than the Turkic mythological figure of the grey wolf. In 1975, the party "began serving in various coalition cabinets" (Landau 1982, 595). During this time, the party and affiliated groups were antagonistic toward leftist groups, contributing to the mounting sectarian violence that culminated in the 1980 coup, when all political parties were disbanded. The MHP was reinstated following the end of the military junta in 1983. The junta pulled MHP ideology into the mainstream in the formulation of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis which articulated a nationalist reading of Islam in an attempt to forge national unity (S Kaplan 2006, 82) and curtail the influence of leftist politics. Devlet Baçehli replaced Türkeş as the leader of the party in 1997. In 1999 elections, the MHP would become one of the largest blocks in parliament, benefiting from Turkish nationalist sentiment to the exclusion to Alevis and Kurds. Throughout the AKP, the MHP remained a minor party. In the June 2015 elections, the MHP won over 15 percent of the national vote, and at the time of writing is closely allied with the AKP.

## APPENDIX B

### Map of Turkey and Areas of Research

#### June 7 Election Vote Distribution (Cumhuriyet 2015a)



S. NO.	PARTİ	OY ORANI	TOPLAM OY	MİLLETVEKİLİ
1	 <b>AKP</b>		%40,98 19.112.385	 258 · <b>M.V. Listesi</b>
2	 <b>CHP</b>		%24,82 11.591.200	 131 · <b>M.V. Listesi</b>
3	 <b>MHP</b>		%16,27 7.598.240	 80 · <b>M.V. Listesi</b>
4	 <b>HDP</b>		%13,44 6.283.921	 81 · <b>M.V. Listesi</b>

Color	Party	Votes Won	Percentage Won	Parliament Seats Won
Yellow	AKP	19,112,385	40.98%	258
Red	CHP	11,591,200	24.82%	131
Dark Red	MHP	7,598,240	16.27%	80
Purple	HDP	6,283,921	13.44%	81

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