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**The Transformation of Kurdish Women from Victimization to Liberation through
Learning under Oppression in Turkey: A Phenomenological Study**

**By
Ebru Ilhan**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Educational Doctorate
In
Educational Leadership**

**Minnesota State University, Mankato
Mankato, Minnesota
October 2023**

October 12, 2023

The Transformation of Kurdish Women from Victimization to Liberation through Learning under Oppression in Turkey: A Phenomenological Study

Ebru Ilhan

This dissertation has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee:

Dr. Melissa Krull, Advisor

Dr. Bernadeia Johnson, Committee Member

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract.....	vi
 CHAPTER I	
Introduction.....	1
Historical Background	2
Purpose of the Research.....	4
Research Questions.....	5
Significance of the Research.....	5
Limitations	7
Definition of Key Terms.....	8
 CHAPTER II	
Review of the Literature	9
Historical Background of the Kurdish Struggle.....	10
Kurdish Women in Kurdish Society and Turkey.....	14
The Emergence of the Kurdish Women’s Movement	17
Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality and Social Movement Learning	24
Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality	26
Intersectionality, Women, and Social Movements	28
Social Movement Learning.....	31
Summary	35
 CHAPTER III	
Introduction.....	37

Research Conceptual Model	38
Rationale.....	41
Participants.....	42
Data Collection	42
Role of the Researcher.....	47
Data Analysis	48
CHAPTER IV	
Findings.....	51
Participants	52
Research Questions	52
Emergent Themes	53
The intersection of ethnic, gender, and religious oppression.....	56
Fear, anger, and resentment	60
Systemic oppression as a means of cultural assimilation	64
Concealing one’s identity, engaging in migration, and exhibiting resilience.....	66
Being inspired and empowered.....	70
Developing interest in learning about culture and gender	71
Retaliation, courage, and persistence.....	74
Identity, feminism, and pride	77
Collectivism and solidarity	79
The transformation from victimization to liberation	82
CHAPTER V	
Discussion.....	89

Intersectionality across Ethnicity, Gender, and Religion Resulting in Fear, Anger, and Resentment.....	90
Key Learnings and Gains as a Result of Oppression.....	93
Systematic Oppression and Assimilation.....	93
Enduring Oppression	94
Inspiration and Empowerment.....	96
Factors that Led Participants to the Kurdish Women’s Movement.....	98
Collectivism, Solidarity, and Transformation Toward Liberation.....	100
Research Findings and the Alignment to Intersectionality and Social Movement Learning Theory.....	102
Theoretical Conclusions.....	105
Summary.....	106
Recommendations.....	109
Limitations	111
References.....	113
Appendix A.....	122
Appendix B.....	123
Appendix C.....	125

**THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE KURDISH WOMEN FROM
VICTIMIZATION TO LIBERATION THROUGH LEARNING UNDER
OPPRESSION IN TURKEY: PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

EBRU ILHAN

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
EDUCATIONAL DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
MANKATO, MN
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the experiences of Kurdish women involved in the Kurdish women's movement in Turkey. By utilizing intersectionality and social movement theories, this phenomenological study explores how these women navigate learning processes under oppressive conditions. Specifically, the concept of intersectionality, viewed through the lens of critical race theory, will be employed to examine the multiple oppression Kurdish women face due to their ethnic, gender, and religious identities. The aim is to understand how their lived experiences and pivotal moments have influenced their current positions within social movements and the political sphere. This research applies the theory of social movement learning to analyze how learning has occurred for the women as members of the Kurdish women's movement. Each learning experience will be examined within a multidimensional context, considering time, space, and outcomes. The data analysis follows three chronological phases, as Hall (2009) proposed: childhood experiences within the family and neighborhood, the development of consciousness within the movement, and active participation in the movement.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This qualitative study will explore women's experiences of oppression, what they learned, and how their lives changed before and after engaging with a women's social movement. It will shed light on how women learn from their experiences as they concurrently face different forms of oppression, illustrating how women at the intersection of multiple oppressions learn how to survive, become more assertive, stand up, and raise their voices. This study will mainly focus on Turkey's Kurdish women who have participated in the Kurdish women's movement. Due to ongoing oppression against the Kurds in Turkey over the last century, Kurdish women have experienced discrimination based on their ethnic and gender identity, and these intersecting phenomena continue to empower them to fight for their rights.

I adopted two theoretical frameworks in this study: intersectionality and social movement learning theory. Intersectionality, in its broadest definition, is the interconnection of multiple identities such as racial, ethnic, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status (Gilborn, 2015). The concept of intersectionality in this study specifically addresses the interconnectedness of gender and ethnic identity of women to illuminate their experience of multiple oppressions. According to Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality states that women who are members of oppressed minorities are simultaneously subject to ethnic and gender oppression. From the lens of intersectionality, I will illustrate that Kurdish women experience double oppression in Turkey due to their gender and ethnic identities. Working within the framework of social movement theory, I will identify the common patterns the participants experience from

childhood through the present, as those patterns will reveal how learning occurred in each phase of life. I will also connect the dots between those experiences to find their way to the movement.

Social movement learning theory states that social movements are knowledge-generating environments, and the members learn in and from the movements. Through social movement learning, I will analyze women's lived experiences in the overarching Kurdish movement and its offshoot Kurdish women's movement in Turkey. I will identify each learning experience as a phenomenon within a multi-dimensional context of its time, space, and outcomes. The data analysis will consist of three chronological phases of social movement learning introduced by Hall (2009): childhood experiences in the family and neighborhood, development of consciousness in the movement, and active participation in the movement at the leadership level.

This qualitative research utilizes phenomenology, allowing me to examine the intersectionality experienced by the Kurdish women in Turkey and how it impacted their learning and decision to engage in a social movement. Through phenomenological research, which unveils lived experiences of individuals and helps us understand the meaning of those experiences, my participants shared their oppressive experiences beginning with early childhood. This allowed me to identify how these women experienced intersectionality, learning occurred within their experiences, and learning led them to participate in their movement.

Historical Background

Kurds are known to be the largest stateless nation in the world and the fourth largest nation in the Middle East, following Arabs, Turks, and Persians (Mojab, 2001).

Kurds mainly live in the south and east of Turkey, north of Syria and Iraq, and northwest of Iran. The division of the homeland on the imaginary map called Kurdistan by the international borders allowed. Kurdish culture to be very diverse, with different religions, dialects, and socio-political dynamics. However, one thing they have in common is the consistency in national oppression by Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria in the forms of genocide, ethnocide, and linguicide across Kurdistan (Mojab, 2001).

With the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, ethnic diversity was considered a threat to the cultural and political unification policy by the state (Efegil, 2011). This new era adopted the idea of a homogenous nation that imposed one language, ethnicity, and culture (Efegil, 2011). As the Turkish state initiated the reforms in different realms, the tension between the Kurds and the state escalated. Since the beginning of the 21st century, this ongoing conflict has resulted in a massive movement in different forms and degrees, through which the silenced Kurdish society has become very politically active (Bengio, 2016). As the Kurdish movement grew and influenced more people, more Kurdish women could participate, especially during the 1960s and 1970s (Caha, 2011). However, women's participation in the Kurdish struggle gained momentum during the 1980s.

The voice of the Black women's movement has inspired other women's movements (Hall & Modriguez, 2003), including the Kurdish women's movement, which sees an analogy between the two (Çaha, 2011). Research suggests that Kurdish women face multiple types of oppression, described theoretically as intersectionality. The definition of intersectionality is that women of minorities face multiple discrimination simultaneously (Crenshaw, 1989). The issues stemming from being women of an ethnic

minority included war, forced migration, rape, abuse, and humiliation. Intersectionality functions in two opposite directions; one is to identify the commonalities among women to enable unification, and the other is to identify the differences to organize a more effective and more potent coalition for the struggle (Roberts & Jesudason, 2013).

This study draws attention to the emergence of the Kurdish women's movement from the Kurdish movement. As intersectionality illuminates the impact of overlapping disparities on Kurdish women, their experiences elucidate the impact of multiple discrimination on their learning and decisions to participate in the Kurdish movement. Therefore, this study explores the connection between how learning occurs while experiencing intersectionality, leading women to participate in social movements and form their women's movement. It highlights the impact of learning on women's liberation and their participation in politics and public life as they experience gender and ethnic discrimination in 20th- and 21st-century Turkey.

Purpose of the Research

This qualitative study explores the learning experiences of women activists and politicians who actively participated in the Kurdish women's movement in Turkey. As members of an ethnic minority in Turkey, Kurdish women face intertwined gender and ethnic discrimination. I investigated how learning empowered women and contributed to forming their identity and political/social consciousness. Based on each of the interviews, I identified the common obstacles they encountered, what they learned from those oppressive circumstances, and how that learning helped them become participants in the Kurdish women's movement.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. If Kurdish women felt oppressed, what was it like to live under oppressive conditions?
2. What did they learn as a result of living under oppressive conditions?
3. How, if at all, did that learning contribute to their participation in the Kurdish nationalist movement and Kurdish women's movement?
4. What has their participation in the Kurdish women's movement taught them?

Significance of the Research

This study holds particular significance in light of the researcher's personal journey and the broader socio-political context. The researcher, hailing from Diyarbakir, a Kurdish town in Southeastern Turkey, was initially unaware of the challenges faced by Kurdish women until the emergence of ISIS brutality in Syria and Iraq in 2013. This global event drew attention to the valiant struggle of Kurdish women against ISIS, prompting the researcher, as a mother, woman, and Kurd, to question the origins of their extraordinary courage.

This awakening led the researcher to contemplate the status of Kurdish women in Turkey, where state-sponsored oppression against the Kurdish population, both men and women, became glaringly evident. It prompted a deeper exploration of the lives of prominent Kurdish women activists and politicians. This process of re-learning uncovered the extent of the researcher's prior ignorance about the local

circumstances and her assimilation into the dominant narrative. Acknowledging this reality was a challenging yet essential step toward self-liberation.

The researcher recognized the need to free herself from the nationalist narratives imposed by the state, a process that involved learning from the experiences of Kurdish women who had liberated themselves. Although history contains numerous instances of women leaders in political and military roles, overcoming the barriers set for women over the past four decades has proven to be a formidable challenge. Finding a place and voice in Turkey's predominantly patriarchal culture and political landscape has been an uphill battle. Nevertheless, Kurdish women have demonstrated resilience by actively participating in and significantly influencing both the Kurdish national and Kurdish women's movements.

Despite societal pressures, women's persistent involvement in these movements has intrigued the researcher. Therefore, this research endeavored to delve into the journeys of Kurdish women who have actively engaged in the Kurdish women's movement, with the aim of comprehending how they have cultivated qualities of strength, courage, persistence, and unwavering commitment.

This study aspires to not only shed light on the transformative journey of Kurdish women from victimization to liberation but also to inspire further research. The hope is that this research will pique the interest of fellow scholars, leading to a deeper exploration of the conditions under which individuals learn concepts such as oppression, social justice, and gender equity, and how these various dimensions of learning can contribute to women's liberation. Ultimately, it is anticipated that this

study will unveil the intricate process of transformation experienced by Kurdish women, illuminating their path from victimhood to liberation.

Limitations

The likelihood of my participants' ability to speak English fluently is very low. Most Kurdish women in Turkey speak Turkish and Kurdish. Because I do not speak Kurdish and Turkish was the only common language, we all understood that the interviews would be conducted in Turkish. Of course, this required a translation that was regardful of cultural meanings to present the data accurately. However, no matter how thorough the translation, it was still possible to miss the absolute meaning of what participants expressed in their mother tongue. To provide more lucidity in my translation, I asked my participants for confirmation of the clarity of my understanding during the interview.

The fact that the researcher and the participants live in different countries, interviews were conducted virtually. Between the time zones of Turkey and the United States, there is an eight-hour difference. Conducting interviews from a distance may have limited the researcher's ability to make deep and personal connections with the participants. This barrier may have impacted the transparency of the data the participants shared. If I had been with them in their own space, it would have been easier to establish solidarity and trust. Hopefully, having two rounds of interviews minimized any of these inconveniences.

I cannot generalize the data I obtained from five participants. I recorded observational data such as emotions, body language, reactions, and shared use of words or expressions to add richness and detail to the data.

Definition of Key Terms

Intersectionality: Multiple and intertwined layers of oppression based on gender and ethnic identity (Tariq & Syed, 2017).

Social movement learning: Learning experienced by individuals who participate in social movements and those outside social movements as a consequence of the existing social movement (Callaghan & Hayday, 2008).

Jineology (Study of Women): The term states that society cannot truly claim to be free unless it upholds women's freedom and fosters genuine awareness regarding women's rights (Duzgun, 2016).

TBMM: Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi in Turkish)

PKK: Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK-Kurdish Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan in Kurdish)

Pro-Kurdish political parties:

HADEP: Democratic People's Party (Halkin Demokrasi Partisi in Turkish)

HDP: Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi in Turkish)

BDP: The Peace and Democracy Party (Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi in Turkish)

DEHAP: Democratic People's Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi in Turkish)

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Kurds are the largest minority population in the world without a home state. They live in Kurdistan, a region spread out through Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Iraq; however, most Kurds live in Turkey. Kurds have been enduring persecution in these states for longer than a century. Living in oppressive circumstances impelled Kurds to organize their resistance, which later became a Kurdish nationalistic movement. Kurdish women also took part in the struggle for their rights and freedom. Over time, their active participation in the Kurdish nationalist movement developed into a Kurdish women's movement.

As described by the theory of intersectionality, Kurdish women are subject to double discrimination for being a member of an ethnic minority and women simultaneously. This study examined the experiences of five Kurdish women activists and politicians to understand their path from aggrieved to liberated and decisive. This study explored how Kurdish women learned from their experiences of oppression while being subjected to multiple layers of discrimination through the lens of intersectionality and social movement learning theory.

This chapter discussed three primary contexts: the historical background of the Kurdish national movement, the emergence of the Kurdish women's movement, and the theoretical framework of this study. The history of the Kurdish struggle and the emergence of the Kurdish women's movement is essential to understanding what Kurdish women experience today. After providing a brief overview of the Kurds and what they have been striving for, this review explored the emergence of the Kurdish women's

movement, women's participation in politics, and their impact on the Kurdish movement. It highlighted some prominent Kurdish women activists and politicians from the last four decades.

The last component of this section is the theoretical framework to analyze the qualitative data. As mentioned, this study adopted two theoretical frameworks: intersectionality and social movement learning. Intersectionality identifies where multiple oppressions intersect and explains that Kurdish women's experiences are impacted by being subject to oppression perpetuated by the Turkish state for their ethnic identity and by the patriarchal society for their gender identity. Social movement learning theory elucidates how women learn to unify and fight for their rights, family, and culture while actively participating in social movements. Examples from different women's movements worldwide will help readers fathom how the unique learning path occurs and empowers women. In summary, this study examined how experiencing intersectionality and active participation in activism and politics allow learning to occur and mold these women's lives.

Historical Background of the Kurdish Struggle

Kurds are known to be the largest stateless nation in the world and the fourth largest nation in the Middle East, following Arabs, Turks, and Persians (Mojab, 2001). Since then, the Kurds have endured a long history of genocide in their homeland spread over Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria (Ayata & Hakyemez, 2013; Shahvisi, 2018), especially after the forced division of their homeland in 1918 (Mojab, 2001). Mojab describes the oppression perpetrated by the state of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria in the forms of genocide, ethnocide, and linguicide faced by the Kurdish women living across these four

nations in which they have prominent distinctions in different realms of civics and politics.

Minorities had the right to speak their mother languages under the rule of the Ottoman Empire (Hassanpour, 2001). However, that ended with the implementation of the Kemalist modernization reforms that aimed to foster a homogeneous nation with one ethnicity, language, and culture after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 (Nilsson, 2018). For adapting the centralized republic with an exclusive Turkish national identity (Güneş, 2011), ethnic diversity was considered a threat to the state's cultural and political unification policy (Efegil, 2011). Since then, Kurds' demand for the "constitutional recognition of their national and cultural rights" has been perceived as separatism (Güneş, 2011, p.3), their identity has been denied, and the use of their language has been criminalized (Erel & Açıık, 2020). They could not name their children with Kurdish names or have an education delivered in the Kurdish language (Nilsson, 2018). Other than speaking and writing, using the Kurdish language in the media has been illegal to various degrees (Hassanpour, 2001).

The assimilation and modernization campaigns by the state created tension between the Kurds and the state authorities (Güneş, 2011). As the Turkish state campaigned for reforms in different realms, the tension between the Kurds and the state escalated, resulting in about eighteen rebellions in the 1920s and 1930s (Cansun, 2014). Unfortunately, these revolts were suppressed violently by the Turkish state, followed by forced deportation and migration to Western cities in Turkey (Erel & Acik, 2020). After the 1960s, the Kurdish struggle became a contemporary national movement (Güneş, 2011). Numerous Kurdish political organizations emerged under the influence of the anti-

colonial movement, the most important of which was the Partiya Kerkeren Kurdistan (PKK, Kurdistan Workers' Party) in the 1970s (Hakyemez, 2017). Of course, some events paved the way for the establishment of the PKK.

The realm of politics in Turkey was going through a turbulent period starting in the 1960s, which yielded several military coups in the subsequent years. Multi-party democracy initiatives were undermined by several military coups in the 1960s and 1980s, while elected governments were deposed by the army memorandum in 1971 and 1997 (Geri, 2016). The rise of the Kurdish national movement escalated the tension, resulting in the first military coup in May 1960 (White, 2000). Following the 1960 military coup, hundreds of right-wingers were executed or imprisoned in 1961 (White, 2000). White (2000) argues that although the coup's outcome was forming a more democratic constitution, the military could not ensure political and social stability in the country. Social and political unrest in the country intensified from 1968 to 1971, with political murders between the right and left and clashes between police and students (White). As a result, the military stepped in for a military coup on March 12, 1971.

As the Kurdish and Turkish leftist organizations continued to gain more strength and support, the Turkish state declared martial law in 1978, and the military junta seized power in 1980, which continued for the subsequent three years (Hakyemez, 2017). One of the army's significant operations was establishing a permanent state of emergency in the Kurdish regions (Hakyemez, 2017). Another primary outcome of this era was the establishment and operation of the military court in Diyarbakir (a Kurdish city), which sent 4,000 Kurds to Prison No. 5, where they were subject to lethal torture practices. Güneş (2011) gives details of the events in Diyarbakir Prison in his book:

To protest endemic torture, oppression, and violation of their fundamental human rights, prisoners organized a hunger strike in Diyarbakir Prison in December 1980, led mainly by PKK members and sympathizers. The resistance of the PKK members in Diyarbakir Prison continued throughout 1981 and 1982 and culminated in the suicide of Mazlum Dogan on the night of 21 March 1982, the self-immolation of four other PKK members (Eşref Anyık, Ferhad Kutay, Necmi Öner, Mahmut Zengin) on 18 May 1982 and the death fast that began on 14 July 1982 in which the PKK's four cadres, Kemal Pir (7 September), Mehmet Hayri Durmus (12 September), Akif Yilmaz (15 September) and Ali Çiçek (17 September) died. (p. 98)

Among all the oppressions experienced, the torture and death in Diyarbakir prison ignited the fuse. Güneş (2011) highlights the impact of what happened in Diyarbakir Prison on the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Army. With Mazlum Dogan's suicide, the resistance in prison gained momentum (Gunes, 2011). In return, the escalated violent suppression resulted in an armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army in 1984 (Erel & Açık, 2020). Due to this ongoing armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military, tens of thousands of people lost their lives (Kılınç, Neathery-Castro & Akyüz, 2018), and over a million people were forced to migrate (ECRI, 2011).

The 1990s were very challenging years for the Kurds. Al-Ali and Tas (2017) report that "more than three thousand Kurdish villages were forcibly evacuated, and more than three million Kurds displaced" (p. 359). The Kurdish politicians and journalists faced persecution, which included extra-judicial killings (Zeydanlioğlu, 2008). Among

the victims were Vedat Aydın, human rights activist and chairman of the HEP (People's Labor Party - pro-Kurdish party); Musa Anter, the Kurdish writer, and journalist; and some prominent Kurdish businessmen including Behcet Canturk, Savas Buldan, Hacı Karay, and Adnan Yildirim (Güneş, 2011). The PKK's shift from armed conflict to legal-political struggle and the multiple unilateral ceasefires declared by the PKK was not enough to end the armed conflict (Al-Ali & Taş, 2017).

According to Al-Ali and Taş (2017), political actions are more effective than armed actions in constructing a democratic discourse. The PKK concluded that it had to redefine its aim and strategy. The change in fundamental ideology and the capture of the founder and leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, coincided. Around his arrest in February 1999 (Güneş, 2011), he announced that violence was not the way (Al-Ali & Taş, 2017). The PKK's ongoing transformation from a violent resistance into a democratic movement that utilized political structures and dialogues also included the shift from the national level to the individual level: the socialist independent Kurdistan versus a "freed socialist personality for the Kurds" (Güneş, 2011, p. 127). As the movement adopted legal-political development in its agenda, it also added gender equality and rights as one of its core tenets, increasing women's mobilization while challenging the male authority within the movement (Al-Ali & Taş, 2017). The following section highlighted Kurdish women's daily lives while identifying their difficulties and pressures.

Kurdish Women in Kurdish Society and Turkey

Division of the homeland by international borders allowed Kurdish culture to be diverse, with different religions, dialects, and alphabets. Consequently, the lives of

women in different regions of Kurdistan differ from each other. However, they have one thing in common that unites them: the experience of “national oppression, brutally perpetrated on the Kurds in the forms of genocide, ethnocide, and linguicide” (Mojab, 2001, p.45). Kurds have faced oppression in their homeland and have had to defend their land and culture, and women have always been part of this struggle.

The Kurds have a long history of women taking active roles in the military and politics. Academic research documents that Kurdish women can take political and military positions, even at high ranks, despite the predominantly patriarchal Kurdish society over the centuries (Bruinessen, 2001). Earlier Kurdish history is replete with female religious, political, and military leaders (Bengio, 2016). The first renowned woman leader is Asenath Barzani from the 17th century. Also known by her Hebrew name Osnat Barzani, she appears to be the first woman of her time as a religious leader and lived between 1590 and 1670. To date, she is known to be the first and only female rabbi in pre-modern Jewish history. In Asenath Barzani’s time, another famous Kurdish woman who appeared as a politico-military leader was Khanzad (or Xanzad) (Bengio, 2016). Fatima the Black, a third historically significant figure, was a combative Kurdish female leader in the mid-1800s. She was the chieftain of a tribe in modern-day Marash, Turkey, and commanded a Kurdish contingent during the Crimean War (Bengio, 2016). In the early 1900s, Mayan Khatun appeared to be one of Kurdistan’s most essential Yezidi female leaders (Bruinessen, 2001). She ruled her tribe after her husband’s murder from 1913 until 1957.

These women leaders’ lives do not indicate that gender equality existed across the community at the time (Bengio, 2016). Reaching high status was only possible by birth

or/and marriage, but once women reached leadership positions, their gender was not a barrier to success (Bruinessen, 1993). Bengio (2016) also drew attention to the fact that the women leaders in early history came from aristocratic families as either daughters or wives of a man, while most women in Kurdistan were still subject to gender discrimination due to the norms of a patriarchal society. These female leaders belonged to the aristocracy and were highly educated; thus, they had the resources to sharpen their leadership skills. The presence of these females in history should not indicate that gender equality existed in Kurdish societies.

Kurdish women have faced similar oppression to the surrounding ethnic groups (Mojab, 2001). In fact, over the last century, more struggles have been added to Kurdish women's lives due to genocide, ethnocide, and linguicide in their homeland. According to Nilsson (2018), Kurdish women are subject to oppression for being members of an ethnic minority and women. Kılınç et al. (2018) stated that the ongoing conflict throughout Southeastern Turkey situates women in more vulnerable positions, enforces patriarchal societal norms, and gives men more power to dominate women. Some practices, such as honor killings (Shahvisi, 2018), early marriage, and withdrawing girls from school, are still prevalent (Kılınç et al., 2018). Between 1975 and 2005, a total of 181 women were killed by a family member in Urfa, one of the Southeastern provinces of Turkey (Belge, 2008). The records reveal that from 2009 to 2011, more than two hundred women were murdered annually throughout Turkey (Corbin, 2014; Navai, 2011).

According to Mojab (2001), the obstacles Kurdish women face arise from “the patriarchal policies of Kurdish nationalist parties, the misogyny of Islamic groups, the political repression of central governments, continuing war, and a largely disintegrated

economy and society” (p. 47-48). Çaha (2011) echoes Mojab’s statement that in addition to the issues based on their gender as oppressed women of the ethnic minority, Kurdish women posit that they experience numerous problems, including war, forced migration, rape, abuse, and humiliation. Ahmetbeyzade (2012) identified the resources of the multi-layered discrimination Kurdish women face from the Turkish state, the feudal/tribal system, and the patriarchal norms. The research concludes that patriarchal norms, socioeconomic status, and ethnic conflict are the factors that are intertwined and contribute to gender inequality (Kılınç et al., 2018).

The Kurdish women’s movement, which initially emerged from the national Kurdish movement, addresses ethnic and gender discrimination (Erel & Açıık, 2020). The escalated conflict between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state has resulted in the massive participation of women in politics (Erel & Açıık, 2020). The politicization of women has reduced the pressure of the patriarchal society upon women and even promoted more education for girls (Kılınç et al., 2018). While this section revealed the position of Kurdish women in social life, the following segment illuminated the emergence of the Kurdish women’s movement and some of the most prominent women activists and politicians with their contributions to the movement.

The Emergence of the Kurdish Women’s Movement

The Kurdish movement continued to grow and influence more people, including women, as more Kurdish women could find room to be politically active in the 1960s and 1970s during the leftist movement (Çaha, 2011). Over time, their Kurdish identity has been replaced by the Kurdish female identity as they confronted gender and ethnic discrimination (Çaha, 2011). Kurdish women have actively participated in the guerilla

war and political arena. Women's participation was observed in the leftist guerilla actions as "genderless militants or sisters" in the 1970s. Still, since the 1980s, they have engaged in the political sphere of Turkey, embracing their ethnic and gender identity. (Cansun, 2014, p.12). This section summarized the emergence of the Kurdish women's movement while highlighting some of the significant women and organizations.

The history of Kurdish women's activism goes back to the early 1900s. The first women's organization, the Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women, was established in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1919 (Mojab, 2001). The goal was "enlightening Kurdish women with modern thinking and promoting fundamental social reforms in the life of the family and helping Kurdish orphans and widows of the forced migrations and massacres" (Mojab, 2001, p. 46). Kurds suffered from linguistic and cultural genocide in the 1920s and 1930s in Turkey and Iran. They struggled for autonomy in Iraq and Syria. In response, they established the Kurdish Republic and formed the first "women's party" in 1946 in northwest Iran (Mojab). Though feminism was not a familiar concept to the Kurds then, this was an essential step in allowing women to participate in politics. However, women's status did not progress for the following several decades.

In addition to the women's struggle in the political ranks, there was also a daily struggle carried out by ordinary women. Women's mobilization among Kurdish women started to revive in the 1990s with the formation of informal local groups. Nilsson (2018) argued that Kurdish women form their social network system to support each other. Women's solidarity in these small groups keeps their men safe while providing these women a safe space to share what they and their families experience (Nilsson). Although most Kurdish women avoided places outside of their circle to stand up and speak, they

could raise their voices in these groups. One of those women's groups is Saturday Mothers (*Cumartesi Anneleri*). They gathered for 200 weeks in a busy square at the center of Istanbul every Saturday until 1998 to draw public attention to their children who went missing under police custody (Diner & Toktas, 2010).

Another distinguished organization, KAMER, was founded primarily by Kurdish women who conceded that the first place where Kurdish women face violence is at home (Diner & Toktas, 2010). Although addressing domestic violence has been challenging for KAMER, it has become a significantly effective feminist organization, establishing its branches in 23 predominantly Kurdish cities in Turkey (Diner & Toktas, 2010). Some other women's organizations that challenge the oppression women experience are DIKASUM, Kardelen, Selis, and VAKAD (Diner & Toktas, 2010). By the early 1990s, these informal women's assemblies became more structured at the local, regional, and national levels (Erel & Aık, 2020). They are open to women who wish to join, work independently, and function locally and nationally (Erel & Aık, 2020). These women's assemblies addressed local issues such as domestic violence and organized local events. Neither regional nor national women's assemblies can intervene in the decision-making processes of the neighborhood women's assemblies. Still, the neighborhood assemblies can contact the regional and national assemblies to ask for help and support. These neighborhood women's assemblies elect those who will be district representatives to join the national conferences. Significant outcomes of these assemblies include providing women a practical resource to address and challenge gender oppression while promoting a multi-gender political structure for the political parties that advocate for Kurdish rights.

A Kurdish woman in an empirical study explained how these assemblies are helpful in their lives:

This is how all of us, Kurdish women, have tried to keep our husbands alive by keeping quiet about everything. Instead, we get together and talk about all the things we have gone through and share our worries about how it is going to end (Nilsson, 2018, p. 645).

Among the political parties in Turkey, pro-Kurdish parties included the highest number of women as party members and as MPs in the parliament (Yüksel, 2006). Increasing women's participation in Turkey's politics strengthened their confidence while increasing the recognition of women's rights (Erel & Açık, 2020). The Peace and Democracy Party (in Turkish, Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi-BDP), initially established in 1990, had many women who held leading roles (Bengio, 2016). Implementing a quota on women's representation started with the People's Democratic Party (In Turkish, Halkın Demokrasi Partisi, HADEP) in 2000 at 25% (Erel & Açık, 2020). The quota mandated by the DEHAP party was 35% from 2003-2005. The BDP instituted a minimum 40% women's representation quota requirement in 2008 (Bengio, 2016) and increased it to 50% in 2011 (Erel & Açık, 2020). After the election in 2011, BDP had 34.3% women's representation, with 11 women MPs out of 32 total in the TBMM, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Sahin-Mencutek, 2016). In 2014, the BDP had nine women deputies versus twenty men deputies in the Turkish parliament, with the highest percentage of woman/man ratio of 31.03% (Jalil & Katman, 2015). As a party, not only having the highest women representation compared to the other parties in the National

Assembly, the BDP also adopted a new model: co-chair position of the party at the leadership level.

The Kurds have succeeded in representing themselves in Turkish politics and making their voices heard. While leading other parties with many female party representatives allowed women to share all the leadership positions with men, including the presidency as co-chair (Bengio, 2016). It is essential to introduce some of these pioneering women who have contributed remarkably to the Kurdish women's movement via active participation in activism and politics. Among those, the notable women are Sakine Cansiz, Leyla Zana, and Gultan Kisanak.

Sakina Cansiz is known to be one of the two women out of the total twenty-two founders of the PKK and one of the pioneers of the organization's emphasis on women (Düzel, 2018). She joined the guerilla movement after her years of imprisonment in 1979. During her years in Diyarbakir Prison No. 5, 34 inmates died from torture (Letsch, 2013). In the mid-1990s, Sakine moved to Europe, overseeing the PKK's European branch ("Kurdish PKK co-founder," 2013). In an interview with Al-Ali and Tas (2017) just before her assassination, Sakine Cansiz talked about why and how she joined the movement:

Our Kurdish identity and language already exist, whether the Turkish state accepts it or not. But our fight is not just against the power of the state. It is also against societal codes, which have been created by and for the state. These codes act against minority rights. They are made by men and work against the rights of women... Of course, the state and men do not want to give power away easily. They force minorities and women into slave conditions. That is why I went to the

mountains to fight against the state. At the same time, I am fighting for Kurdish rights, our fight is against the patriarchal structure of the state. Today we are working for peace. And peace should include the rights of different ethnic groups like Kurds and also the rights of women. Until both are achieved, it is not possible to claim that we have peace. And without these, I will continue to fight, whether the state is Turkish or Kurdish. (p. 363)

Sakine Cansiz and the other women activists, Fidan Doğan and Leyla Şaylemez, were assassinated in the Kurdish Information Center in Paris on January 10, 2013. Their funeral ceremony took place in Diyarbakir, where tens of thousands of people attended (“Kurdish PKK co-founder,” 2013).

Leyla Zana is one of the most remarkable women in late Kurdish history. Her husband, Mehdi Zana, was an important political figure when they married (Mojab, 2001). While he was serving an 11-year prison sentence for his political actions, Leyla Zana “fought courageously for her husband, working with the lawyers in court, visiting him in jail, representing him before the press and foreign observers, and speaking at public rallies” (Mojab, 2001, p.106). In those years, Leyla Zana learned Turkish and the dynamics of the legal system and politics, through which she was radicalized and politicized. She was the first Kurdish female deputy from the pro-Kurdish party, HEP, elected to parliament in 1991 (Mojab, 2001). Her time in the parliament did not last long due to her use of both Kurdish and Turkish during the swearing-in ceremony at the National Assembly in 1991 (Bengio, 2016). She was immediately sentenced to ten years in 1994 (Gunter, 2013). Zana’s fame became international when the European Parliament awarded her the Sakharov Prize for her fight for human rights and democracy to resolve

the Kurdish issue (Bengio, 2016). Leyla Zana was the first but not the last woman deputy in the parliament to be the voice for the Kurds and women.

Gultan Kisanak is another well-known woman in the Kurdish women's movement. She had been imprisoned at the Diyarbakir prison when she was 19 (Cansun, 2014). Kisanak revealed that the torture she faced in Diyarbakir prison motivated her to become a journalist and politician. Kisanak was the co-chair of the BDP, mayor of Diyarbakir, and then the elected member of the parliament. She defines the co-chairmanship system not as a superficial so-called one but as a long-standing political system based on egalitarianism and representation (Al-Ali & Tas, 2017). She was detained in 2016 and sentenced to fourteen years in 2019 for having ties with and supporting the PKK, a designated terrorist organization, according to the Turkish state (Reuters, 2019).

The fact that these three women have different levels of education yet still made outstanding contributions to the Kurdish women's movement introduces the question of the correlation between education and the achievement of leadership roles in the movement. One of the consequences of the long history of the conflict is the high illiteracy of Kurdish women (Yüksel, 2006). Therefore, Kurdish women's potential to take up active roles in public offices and organizations was underestimated (Erel & Acik, 2020). According to 2013 statistics, the educational level of female party members was 8.2% illiterate, 15.8% writers and readers, 64.7% elementary graduates, 4% middle school graduates, and 7.3% high school graduates (Erel & Acik, 2020). This data reveals that a high level of formal education is not prevalent among Kurdish women.

While existing research posits that education plays a crucial role in fostering democracy, facilitating cultural democratization (Acemoglu et al., 2008), and cultivating political awareness while mitigating apprehensions associated with questioning authority (Friedman et al., 2016), it is noteworthy that a substantial number of Kurdish women, who possess limited formal education, have actively participated in and made significant contributions to both the Kurdish national and women's movements. Given this observation, the central inquiry arises: if not exclusively contingent on formal education, how does the learning process unfold to enable Kurdish women with diverse educational backgrounds to effectively convene and challenge the authority of the state and society concerning their gender and ethnic rights?

The myriad literature pertinent to the Kurdish women's movement from anthropology, sociology, and political science does not address how these women grow in knowledge and awareness of their reality. As I posit that learning empowers women, my goal is to describe and interpret the lived experiences of each participant from the lens of intersectionality, identify the forms of learning as they have faced double discrimination, and shed light on the contribution of learning to their politicization, mainly through the lens of social movement learning theory.

Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality and Social Movement Learning

My understanding of the correlation between oppression and liberation of Kurdish women began with readings from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2021), which made me curious about the Kurdish women's participation "in developing the pedagogy of their liberation" (p. 45). Freire (2021) defines the pedagogy of the oppressed as a tool that allows the oppressed to understand that they, along with the oppressors, are

parts of dehumanization. According to him, liberation only occurs when there is “no longer oppressor nor no longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom” (p. 49).

Humans act and reflect in theory and practice, which Freire (2021) defines as “praxis” and “transformation of the world” (124). Transformation of an oppressive structure, in other words, revolution, is achieved through what Freire called transformative action. According to this theory, people gain fundamental roles in the transformation process, essential for the steadfast commitment to liberation as they are the subject of that change. The oppressed should be able to act and reflect on a revolutionary transformation rather than keeping the status quo in which only leaders operate as thinkers and the oppressed as activists. In that case, it leads to the manipulation of the oppressed by the leaders and a contradiction between their methods and objectives.

Freire defines revolution as a cultural action that results from its educational nature. Education transforms cultural action into a cultural revolution in which the oppressed society experiences an ongoing liberation with its men and women at the same time. For Freire, the purpose of literacy was to teach individuals how to manage their lives, and that could only work when education allowed self-reflection, understanding of the world with its power dynamics, and transformation of life and self. Critical pedagogy plays a significant role in this process since it enables the learners to analyze their situation critically, understand the oppressive forces, and consequently form their consciousness. Liberating education occurs because of the “acts of cognition” rather than information transfer (p. 79). The quality of liberating education benefits revolution in all

its phases and precludes it from turning into a counter-revolution that results in a stratified and institutionalized bureaucracy. The nature of this education keeps the revolutionary process dynamic through which people and leaders learn collectively how to dialogue and use power. Freire (2021) offers an excellent analogy for this: “People learn to swim in the water, not in a library” (p. 137).

Learning the dynamics of pedagogy under oppressive circumstances was enlightening. My understanding of learning in an oppressive society was deepened by theoretical thought, some of which were specific expositions to women’s liberation through learning. Intersectionality, which emerged from critical race theory (CRT), explains how oppression situates women of minorities at the intersection of gender, ethnic, religious, and racial identities simultaneously. Another learning theory this study will utilize is social movement learning which helps us understand how social movements function as learning sites in which members learn from each other and the movement.

The following section discussed how intersectionality emerged from CRT for the foundational understanding of race, power, and domination. Then, subsequent sections dived into the details of intersectionality and social movement learning and how they illuminated the pedagogy of women who experience multiple oppressions, consequently enabling liberation.

Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality

Critical race theory (CRT) examines the financial, historical, and social factors of racial and ethnic issues in societies to understand how racism and power are intertwined (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical race theory states that race is a product of social

construction, and racial diversification is created to reinforce power over minorities through *White Supremacy* (Gillborn, 2015). Understanding how oppression is perpetuated requires comprehending how power is utilized, in other words, how power reveals the reality of exploitation and abuse of nature and people in given situations (Hall, 2009).

Critical Race Theory was influenced by “the two insights of the previous movements, critical legal study, and radical feminism” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 5). From the feminist viewpoint, it explains that gender roles are constructed in society and endorse patriarchy insidiously when interacting with power. Intersectionality, emerging from CRT, defines “the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and disability” (Gillborn, 2015, p. 278). It has become another framework in research to examine the issues pertaining to social justice and democracy in the 20th century (Chun, Lipsitz, & Shin, 2013). Intersectionality, introduced by the Black legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), describes the situations in which women experience multiple oppressions simultaneously. Intersectionality acknowledges women’s synthesized experience of multiple oppressions. This concept explains how racial inequality in societies impacts the development of women’s identity, resulting in multiple overlapping identities (Crenshaw, 1989), while racism and sexism serve the purpose of oppression (Shahvisi, 2018).

Intersectionality aims to give identity a political definition and unite groups around shared beliefs and experiences rather than common phenotypes or biological characteristics (Chun et al., 2013). Intersectionality creates a platform that promotes self-reflection to admit owned privilege and interaction for actual change (Roberts & Jesudason, 2013) instead of a “homogenous safe space” in which individuals would be reluctant to change (Cole, 2008, p. 443). One example of such a platform, Asian

Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA) in the United States, identifies itself as a gender- and race-based movement (Chun et al., 2013). AIWA believes that the experiences at the intersection of linguicide, ethnocide, gender discrimination, and other forms of discrimination give women strength and tools to strive to solve the issues.

If we understand how intersectionality emerged from CRT as a sub-theory and has become an essential tool for researchers who study gender and social issues, the next question would be in what ways intersectionality plays a role in the transformation of oppressed women into crusaders in social movements. Since intersectionality illuminates the impact of overlapping disparities on women, I argued that it also deepens our understanding of the impact of the double discrimination Kurdish women face for being women and Kurds on their learning and decisions to participate in the Kurdish women's movement. Therefore, this literature review explored the connection between intersectionality and social movements.

Intersectionality, Women, and Social Movements

Defining intersectionality as a framework and identifying its potential for the formation of women's movements or participation of women in the movements is the fundamental concept of this study. In academic research, intersectionality can be viewed as "abstract and complicated" (Chun et al., Y., 2013, p. 920). According to Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is a tool to unveil the dominant view of discrimination and the unification of the oppressed in return, a significant indicator of social movement development. Roberts and Jesudason (2013) argue that when the reality of dynamics between the dominant and marginalized groups is uncovered, the outcome can be the emergence of solidarity and resistance as the intersectional approach plays a positive role

in disclosing commonalities among people who experienced the same matrix of domination.

Intersectionality has two roles. It helps women unify based on the identities and experiences they have in common. On the other hand, intersectionality also reveals differences, enabling women's organizations to be stronger unifications for the struggle (Roberts & Jesudason, 2013). According to Bell Hooks (1984):

Women are divided by sexist attitudes, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices. Sustained woman bonding can occur only when these divisions are confronted, and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate them. Divisions will not be eliminated by wishful thinking or romantic reverie about common oppression despite the value of highlighting experiences all women share. (p. 44)

Groups that do not adopt the understanding of intersectionality risk failing to generate effective changes that will benefit everyone equally. A workforce can be an excellent example of when Black women cannot benefit from all opportunities. Another example is Tariq and Syed's (2017) qualitative study on women's experience in the United Kingdom's workforce. This study reveals that the challenges South Asian Muslim women experience in the UK workplace are manifold, and the legal regulations do not always provide resolution, which impacts these women's careers negatively but does not keep them trying and moving forward in their careers. The authors conclude that although the responsibility of the organizations and government is significant, the impact of religious and cultural responsibilities on women might play an essential role in women's advancement in Western societies.

Women join social movements or form their movements for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to a trauma or a disaster experienced early in life, encouragement from another person, solidarity, a desire to serve a good purpose, and an instinct to defend and improve the lives of family, people, women, and environment (Henderson & Jeydel, 2014). West & Blumberg (1990) categorize the factors motivating women to participate in social movements as the economic survival for their children, racial/ethnic discrimination, human rights in broader concepts, and gender (women's) rights. They also suggest that overlapping factors may lead to a greater struggle. For example, even though Black women have been the victims of sexism, they have participated in the African American Civil Rights Movement with a remarkable contribution (Hooks, 1984).

Intersectionality helps us understand how women learn from their experiences while facing multiple forms of discrimination. How do women learn in and from social movements? As the theory of intersectionality illuminates the impact of experiencing multiple discrimination on women's decision to join social movements, how does the link between learning and lived experiences form while participating actively in the movement? The term interconnectedness was a philosophy developed by Dewey (1938) to illuminate the correlation between experience and learning, which later became a theoretical foundation for many studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Hall (2009) agrees on the linkage between intersectionality and learning, suggesting that learning in social movements can be defined by various learning theories. However, critical social theories are the major ones to utilize. The following section discussed social movement learning theory, starting with defining social movements. It

illuminated how learning occurs in social movements by giving examples from various social movements in different parts of the world.

Social Movement Learning

Previous studies suggest that social movements are the sites for educational projects, some of which, for example, transformed/empowered abused Canadian and Chilean women into anti-violence advocates/activists (Lange, 2008). Another study proves that education encourages women to question authority and enhances political awareness and participation (Friedman et al., 2015). Then how does learning occur in social movements?

Hall (2009) states that learning in social movements is intentional and incidental. Hall adds that “without an understanding of the role of learning and knowledge creation, I contend that it is complicated indeed to explain the power and potential, which social movements represent” (pp. 46-47). Hall scrutinizes social movement learning in multiple categories, such as informal learning by movement members, intentional learning that is a product of and organized by social movements, and formal and informal learning.

Henderson and Jeydel (2014) describe social movements as groups of people working together to change the state, government, or society based on their common interests. Snow et al. (2004) conceptualize a broader and more inclusive description: “Collectivities acting with some degree of organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture or world order of which they are a part” (p.11). Additionally, Della Porta and Diani (1999) introduce the four characteristics of social movements as an “informal interaction network, shared beliefs and solidarity,

collective action focusing on conflict, and use of protest (p.14–15). Considering all these features and characteristics, it is apparent that social movements are dynamic sites that aim for a change or transformation.

Research confirms that learning and knowledge are essential for social movements to cause change (Hall, 2009). Social movements promote learning and consequently generate knowledge. They allow knowledge to be constructed, identities to be defined, and oppression to be named (Lange, 2008). Academic literature provides extensive data about various social movements around the world. One area of this research has studied the environmental protests of Clayoquot Sound. In 1993, approximately 10,000 people gathered to protest the clear-cutting of the rainforest in Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia, Canada (Walter, 2007). More than half of the protesters were women, and some were children (Wine, 1977). The engagement in Peace Camp and the blockades of the Clayoquot Sound Movement fostered learning. It ignited activism, working in tandem to promote transformation by exemplifying the principles of educative activism and transformative learning (Walter, 2007). They also discovered their potential to make a change and the power dynamics between the provincial government, corporations, and the global market. They practiced decision-making in crisis, civil disobedience, non-violent conflict resolution, and leadership. The Clayoquot Sound struggle was an intense site where the learning and activism practices resulted in transformative learning at the collective and individual levels for the protesters and the public (Walter).

An example of a women's movement as a learning site is the Ada Songor Salt Movement from Ada, Ghana. The goal of this movement is to preserve the 400-year-old

traditional practice of artisanal salt production, practiced mostly by women (Langdon & Garbary, 2017). The powerful tool this movement has been utilizing for many years is retelling their ongoing traditional stories in which animals and trees talked in the presence of spirit (Langdon & Garbary). These age-old stories that had been told generation by generation presented knowledge about the history and cultural values and led the Ada people to learn what was good using images and symbols (Langdon & Garbary). Randall (1997) describes the retelling process as a collective learning experience. The power of retelling both oral and written stories that originated from Ada's people promoted an ongoing education in depth (Langdon & Garbary)—supporting Choudry's (2007) statement that social movements are knowledge producers, active participation in the Ada Songor Salt Movement allowed constant progress in analysis and a set of conclusions (Langdon & Garbary).

The Anti-Neoliberal Indigenous Movement in Aotearoa, New Zealand, is an example of a movement that focuses on learning from pedagogies of decolonization for transformative social change (Choudry, 2007). This movement represents global campaigns and mobilization for the self-determination of the Indigenous people (Burgmann & Ure, 2004). All the efforts of the committed activists and supporting community members, such as conferences, media, direct actions, and more, generate knowledge, resources, and ways to implement self-determination policy as an outcome of this anti-neoliberal struggle (Choudry). As Choudry points out, the acknowledgment of neoliberalism as colonialism originated from long-term conscious education and mobilization campaigns, which echoes Holts' (2002) definition of the *pedagogy of mobilization*. Holts states that learning is embedded in the formation and maintenance of

a social movement. This pedagogy eventually leads non-Indigenous people to reconsider what they already know. This movement exemplifies how a social movement does not only promote learning for the participants but also broadens the awareness in the community.

As a women's movement, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA) utilizes an extensive education campaign to improve the lives of immigrant women. It perceives the importance of identifying the needs of immigrant women workers and does not only provide education in English as a second language but also offers education to women on "their rights as workers, as women, and as immigrants" (Chun et al., 2013, p. 926). Chun et al. study on AIWA's actions reveals that education does improve its members' lives.

The voice of the Black women's movement has inspired other women's movements (Hall & Modriguez, 2003), including the Kurdish women's movement, which sees an analogy between the Black women's movement and their own (Çaha, 2011). Mojab (2001) suggests that knowledge of individuals' cultural, social, and political situations is an essential component of consciousness in the women's movement. Nilsson's (2018) research reveals that although it causes resistance in the family, women's education is a significant contributing factor to resolving the Kurdish issue in the long term. Participants of the same research state that they view education as a "strong weapon against the oppressive state" (p. 648).

Hall (2009) argues that for transformation to occur, it is necessary to understand power and its relations. Thus, the exploitation or abuse of the environment and people will be more visible and easier to understand (2009). Hall identifies social movements as "magic power" for their ability to "create change among persons who are not even

members of the movement in question” (2017, p. 67). He also adds that his knowledge of gender and environmental issues results from his active participation in the movements. According to Hall, learning in/from social movements are a form of educational discourse without identified and structured time and space settings. It can be life-long and take place outside of schools. Hall (2009) identifies the three learning phases for members of suppressed groups as (a) the childhood memories in the family, neighborhood (town or village), and school; (b) joining the movement, growing consciousness, self-transformation; and (c) contribution to the struggle.

Summary

This study illuminated what Kurdish women’s movement members learned from their experiences starting from early childhood through their current position in the movement. Therefore, this research adopted phenomenology as its methodology. It gave Kurdish women a voice to share their experiences that had impacted their lives, views, and decisions before and after joining the movement. As the lived experiences of these oppressed women revealed whether there was a correlation between intersectionality, women’s learning, and their participation in a social movement, I hoped to explore how learning impacted them at different stages of their transitioning from being oppressed into liberated politicians and activists taking active roles in the Kurdish women’s movement from the lens of intersectionality and social movement learning.

Research demonstrates the impact of learning on women’s decisions to join social movements and their roles in the struggle in various social movements. This chapter’s discussion of the history of the ongoing Turkish-Kurdish conflict, the formation of the Kurdish national movement, and the emergence of the Kurdish women’s movement

places the participants' experiences in context. The overview of intersectionality and social movement learning defined how learning occurred while facing double discrimination at the intersection of ethnicity and gender.

CHAPTER III

Introduction

Kurds are the largest minority in Turkey. Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, there has been an ongoing conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurds. Due to this conflict, thousands of people have lost their lives. This conflict significantly impacted Kurdish women by positioning them at the intersection of ethnic and gender oppression. However, things started to change over the last several decades. Kurdish women have been raising their voices for their ethnic and gender rights since the 1990s. With the following questions, I explored the lives of members of the Kurdish Women's Movement to understand their learning experiences of oppression at the intersection of gender and ethnic discrimination while transitioning from victimization to liberation:

1. What was it like to live under oppressive conditions if Kurdish women felt oppressed?
2. What did they learn as a result of living under oppressive conditions?
3. How did experiencing oppression contribute to their participation in the Kurdish women's movement?
4. What has their participation in the Kurdish women's movement taught them?

In this study, I explored the impact of oppression on Kurdish women's lives to answer the four main questions above. I studied their lived experiences under oppressive circumstances to understand how oppression was experienced and learned, beginning from the early stages of life within the framework of intersectionality. Once the experience of oppression

was described, I explored how oppression affected their decision to participate in the Kurdish women's movement.

Finally, I identified the knowledge they gained from participating in the movement to understand how learning occurs in the Kurdish women's movement. By utilizing the phenomenological research model for this qualitative study to answer these questions, I described the transformation of the victims of oppression into fearless women fighting for women's liberation in the Kurdish women's movement.

Research Conceptual Model

As one of the qualitative research approaches, phenomenological research sheds light on the "lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" to identify the common phenomenon the individuals' experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75). Phenomenology aims to understand the meaning of lived experiences that make us wonder, think through, and reflect (Van Manen, 2016). Van Manen explains the philosophy of phenomenology as the way of understanding "the world as we experience it reflectively" in our daily life (p. 28). Understanding these experiences is essential "to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 79).

Rather than explaining, the phenomenological study aims to identify the essence of experiences (Moustakas, 1994). One of its methods is to borrow other people's experiences to become informed and more experienced; thus, we can understand the essence of those experiences (Van Manen, 2016). According to Kant (1966), three subjective resources of self-hold objects of knowledge (things we try to learn): a sense that provides empirical phenomenon through perception, imagination essential for

knowledge production, and apperception which is the consciousness of identity. Since there must be a relevance between knowledge and experience, a connection between individuals and the things they learn is required, and therefore our “knowledge, such as joy, excitement, or sorrow, actually exists and is unquestionable” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 44). Brentano (1973) clears any doubts about phenomenology as a science with his statement: “Experience alone is my teacher” (p. 15).

Phenomenological research raises questions about the experiences that impact us in a way that we look back, wonder, and reflect (Van Manen, 2016). The researcher’s excitement, curiosity, and personal history enable us to focus on the heart of the problem (Moustakas, 1994). The question must seek to understand and describe participants’ shared experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research questions aim to capture descriptive data rather than empirical. Simply, phenomenological research asks: “What is this or that phenomenon or event like?” (Van Manen, 2016, p. 298). I formulated my research questions according to the following features of the phenomenological research question as outlined by Moustakas (1994):

1. It will emphasize divulging the true meaning of participants’ lived experiences.
2. The question will ask to disclose the qualitative measurements of experiences and behaviors.
3. It will not focus on identifying causal relationships.
4. It will aim for full engagement and involvement.
5. It will require carefully rendering and developing a spacious and extensive description of lived experiences.

Once the research problem is formulated, the phenomenon was defined as “the experience of learning” identified by van Manen (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 79). As the shared lived experiences of Kurdish women who have encountered gender and ethnic discrimination constitute the core of this study, the philosophical assumption of phenomenology was utilized to connect the experience with the objective reality. Based on the philosophical assumption, some relevant phenomena for this study are feelings, including fear, grief, resentment, resilience, hope, and perception of experiences such as oppression, violence, struggle, and freedom. Rendering each experience vividly and carefully disclosed how the participants viewed and perceived those phenomena. Therefore, I reiterated my assumptions that all these Kurdish women experienced gender and ethnic discrimination. This study attempted to reveal how their lived experiences became conscious and tied to an object or thing, in this case, being an activist.

The philosophical assumption in phenomenological research requires the researcher’s consideration of bracketing (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Bracketing is an essential component of data analysis. For the thorough disclosure of the participant’s perceptions of a phenomenon, the phenomenological method suggests that the researchers bracket their personal experiences (van Manen, 2014). Therefore, researchers decide how the study will present their understanding (van Manen, 2014).

By following the guidelines of phenomenological research within the frame of intersectionality and social movement learning theory, this study aimed to shed light on the lives of Kurdish women and identify their learning experiences while encountering oppression in various forms simultaneously. It unveiled the impact of ethnic and gender discrimination on different phases of their lives and how oppression transformed them

from ordinary victims into decisive crusaders. It unpacked participants' lived experiences and gave these women a voice to describe the meaning and impact of their experiences to find out the similar patterns and experiences unique to each participant.

Rationale

I have always been interested in learning about women's positions in the civil rights movement. Given my Kurdish ethnic background, Kurdish women active in the Kurdish nationalist movement and Kurdish women's movement particularly have fascinated me and made me curious about their experiences. After extensive reading about all the qualitative research methods, such as narrative, ethnography, or case study, to discern which method would help me answer the questions above, I decided that phenomenology would be the most appropriate choice. Phenomenology allows researchers to "return to experience to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essence of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). With this method, I obtained the common or shared experiences of my participants and described how learning occurred through those experiences before and after they joined the Kurdish nationalist and women's movement.

With this phenomenological study, I analyzed the lived experiences of Kurdish women at the intersection of ethnic and gender discrimination within the framework of intersectionality and social movement learning. As Simone de Beauvoir, the pioneer of gender phenomenology, explains how "women take responsibility for themselves by making life-altering decisions" (van Manen, 2016, p. 125), my study discovered the connection between the Kurdish women's experiences, their learnings as the outcomes of those experiences, and their subsequent decisions.

Participants

Following Polkinghorne's (1989) recommendation that the appropriate sample size of phenomenological research is five to 25 participants, I selected a purposeful sampling of five Kurdish women who have been members of Kurdish women organizations or political parties as activists or politicians in Turkey. To obtain meaningful data about their shared lived experiences of oppression, these women had to meet the following criteria: Being Kurdish, having lived in Turkey, and having active participation in the movement. There are no criteria for age, religion, and level of formal education.

My participants are members of pro-Kurdish women's organizations and political parties that aim to defend Kurdish women's rights. These are legal organizations, and their websites are available to the public. To recruit my participants, I navigated these websites to find the public information of the members and their contact information. Once I obtained the email address(es), I sent an email invitation for participation (Appendix B). The email included the consent form (Appendix C) that provided an overview of the study and the steps of the workshop.

Data Collection

Because knowledge is learned through an experience in connection to a phenomenon or object, I assumed that the participants' experiences would reveal how learning occurred in oppressive circumstances. Although data can be collected from various resources such as observation, poetry, and journals in qualitative research, interviews are the primary method for data collection in phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this study, interviews were the primary method to collect

data. Following the guideline by MoMoustakas (1994), the interviews were topical-guided, semi-structured, extensive, informal, and interactive. It is worth reiterating that all the participants should have had common or shared lived experiences (Cresswell & Poth, 2018), and therefore the participants in this study were Kurdish women from Turkey who have been active participants in the Kurdish women's movement. However, there were no requirements on age, education, or marital status to allow different voices to be heard.

The strategies identified by Cresswell and Poth (2018) guided the validation process from the three different lenses. The evidence was corroborated from the researcher's lens by connecting the dots between multiple data sources, methods, and theories (Cresswell & Poth). During each interview, I observed their emotions, body language, reactions, expressions, and usage of words/languages. Anytime I identified a piece of evidence in data, I coded it as a new theme. Thus, once all the themes were located, I could provide validity by triangulating them.

The second lens is the participant's lens. Among the various strategies in this category, participants' feedback was the one that applied to this research. During each interview, I shared my initial analyses with the participants. I asked them for feedback on the accuracy of my understanding and interpretation. I asked if they had any suggestions as well. Their participation in validating the analysis ensured that their experiences were represented and analyzed accurately.

The third lens of the validation process is the readers' or reviewers' view. In this study, having a research writing advisor and doctoral supervisor other than the researcher and participants provided an additional layer of reliability. They checked my work at each step to ensure that I was thorough and accurate, especially during the data analysis

and conclusion sections. They let me know when they had any concerns or questions. I shared my writings with them and asked for their feedback. Their knowledge of the qualitative approach and familiarity with the research topic provided guidance that helped me sustain credibility.

Phenomenological research requires a safe space for the participants to share their experiences. I aimed to provide a safe environment where the participants could feel relaxed and comfortable giving honest and extensive answers (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, the participants would find comfort in sharing their experiences that are likely sensitive, personal, and even painful. After the pre-interview meeting, briefly discussed in the previous section, each participant who wanted to participate in this study received an informed consent form electronically. With this document, each participant knew her rights to freely attend and leave the study and ask questions they may have at any time. The document explained how the interviews would be recorded and kept. It stated that each participant would be given a pseudonym, and any information about their real identity would be confidential.

I sent the interview questions to my participants ahead of time. Thus, they could prepare for the interview. They decided which remote platform to use among any password-protected, web-based video conferencing tool such as Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp. After being approved by the participant, each interview session was recorded on my personal computer and phone, which both required my login information. If any participant preferred being interviewed solely over the phone, I would accommodate that method. In that case, the participant would be put on a speaker phone in a private room, and the audio recording would be done on another password-protected device. The data

would be stored in a safe and private device throughout the study and deleted once the research was completed.

The interviews lasted approximately one hour. By offering a trustworthy space and sustaining their confidentiality, I hoped the participants would find the time and space to share their experiences openly and comfortably. Since phenomenological research does not ask to learn participants' beliefs, opinions, and views (van Manen, 2016), I asked broad, open-ended questions to explore the essence of the participants' lived experiences. The interview questions sought to explore the Kurdish women's oppressive lived experiences in different life stages, how and what they learned from those experiences, and how their learning helped them join the Kurdish women's movement, more specifically taking active participation in the political party, women organizations, or local community groups. According to Hall, the first phase is childhood, revealing what these women experienced in the family, community, and formal schools early in life. The second phase is the youth phase, when their awareness and consciousness are developed, and self-transformation begins as they start participating in the movement. The last phase is when their activism, dedication, and commitment contribute to the movement and their transformation from oppressed victims to liberated women.

Based on the three phases, the interview had the following questions:

Lived experiences during childhood:

1. As a young child, did you experience any type of oppression in your family, neighborhood, and/or school? If yes, please describe.
2. If you experienced gender discrimination, in what ways did that occur?

3. If you experienced ethnic discrimination, in what ways did that occur?
4. How did those experiences make you feel?
5. How did you process and perceive the oppression you experienced or witnessed?

Lived experiences during youth and adulthood:

1. As a young adult, did you experience any type of oppression in your family, neighborhood, and/or school?
2. If you experienced gender discrimination, in what ways did that occur?
3. If you experienced ethnic discrimination, in what ways did that occur?
4. How did your experience of oppression make you feel?
5. How did you process and perceive the oppression you experienced or witnessed?

In the movement:

1. What made you decide to join the movement?
2. How does your participation in the movement make you feel?
3. What have you learned from your participation in the movement?

General final questions:

1. What did change in you and/or your life after your experiences?
2. What did you learn as the outcome of your experience of oppression?
3. In what ways and in which directions did your experience of oppression affect your life?
4. What decisions did you make, and how did those decisions change your life?
5. Is there anything you would like to add?

Role of the Researcher

Phenomenological research requires that the researcher integrates their understanding and interpretation of the data in the analysis. As a Kurdish woman and scholar, I retained objectivity while analyzing and synthesizing my data. I lived most of my life isolated and assimilated far from the Kurdish community in Turkey. I have not experienced the oppression the participants may have experienced; therefore, I have little to relate to their experiences. The practice and knowledge of counseling I gained from my master's degree in counseling will help me listen objectively while diligently attempting to leave my biases and assumptions behind. Unlike the participants, not having oppressive experiences naturally helped me control the intrusion of my biases.

My existing knowledge about the history of the Kurdish-Turkish conflict helped me research literature on the topic. Also, phenomenological researchers incorporate their perception and understanding into interpreting the findings. However, allowing personal biases to interfere with the research process is not acceptable for validity. Therefore, I bracketed out my view throughout the research process for both data collection and analysis. During the data collection, I recorded the interviews on my computer and cell phone while listening and taking notes simultaneously. In the data analysis process, I created a verbatim transcript for each interview to code. Thus, each participant's voice was heard.

I genuinely introduced myself to the participants. As a scholar in the United States, my academic background might have intimidated them or created power dynamics that made them see me as their superior. Also, they would know that as a Kurdish woman, I never participated actively in the Kurdish women's or nationalist movement.

The likelihood of my Kurdish identity comforting them would be high; however, my academic status without any activity in the movement might have created a trust issue.

Data Analysis

This study on Kurdish women's lived experiences of multiple oppression in Turkey sheds light on the learning experiences of Kurdish women currently engaged in the Kurdish women's movement. As the primary data collection method, interviews were conducted with five Kurdish women who are activists or politicians.

The data analysis of this study followed the guidelines discussed by Crosswell and Poth (2018) and Bryman (2008). The audio recordings were transcribed in Turkish and then translated into English. In this step, I paid special attention to translating Turkish into English to ensure cultural-specific meanings were added. I read the translated transcription line by line and looked for any major themes or unusual events. By considering horizontalization, which gave each statement equal value, I highlighted and labeled any statement, phrase, or sentence that revealed the connection between the experience and phenomenon for coding. That gave me numerous codes, some of which could be similar and repetitive. After identifying all the non-repetitive (significant) statements, I grouped all the codes into themes. These clusters of themes later led to the development of textural descriptions to identify the participant's experience and structural descriptions. Based on the textural and structural descriptions, I formed a composite description to provide the phenomenon's essence by integrating all the individual textural and structural descriptions. In the final step, I integrated all the descriptions to offer my understanding and interpretation of the essence and meaning of the experiences and present it in a written format. My report divulged the

interconnections between the themes and the correlation between the research questions and the codes.

My study analyzed the data within the framework of two theories, intersectionality and social movement learning. Intersectionality reveals that women endure more discrimination than men of the same oppressed group. This concept describes a combination of multiple forms of discrimination, which could be based on gender, ethnicity, religion, and racial identity. Considering that Kurdish women are members of an oppressed minority in Turkey, intersectionality helped me understand how Kurdish women experienced the intersection of multiple types of oppression in Turkey. Intersectionality shed light on the lived experiences of the Kurdish women from childhood until their active participation in the Kurdish women's movement to unpack the oppression they faced, what they learned under the discriminative circumstances, and how those learned experiences have brought them to their current positions. While exploring the participants' learning experiences under oppressive circumstances, I sought to answer the question: Did the intersection of gender and ethnic discrimination create counter effects and consequently allow these women to learn the importance of fighting for their ethnic and gender rights?

Social movement learning explained how Kurdish women experienced learning in the Kurdish women's movement. It also identified how women experienced persecution at different life stages from childhood through participation in the movement. I discussed how these women experienced intersectionality, what they learned from their experiences, and how their learnings positioned them in the Kurdish movement by analyzing their lives in three stages identified by Hall (2009). These stages were

childhood, joining the movement, and active participation/leadership in the movement. The childhood phase included the memories in the family, neighborhood, and elementary school; joining the movement focused on growing consciousness/awareness and self-transformation; and the last phase discussed their contributions and dedications to the movement, especially their leadership role.

In summary, this phenomenological study focused on the lived experiences of oppressed Kurdish women and how those oppressive experiences impacted their lives through learning. Capturing the essence of the experience and describing it was essential to make the connection between the individual, experience, and phenomenon. This study disclosed the pattern of experience, learning, and decision to act for each participant from the lens of intersectionality and social movements learning. Thus, I could report what these Kurdish women have gone through and transformed from victimization to liberation through intersectionality and social movement learning.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

This research explored the lived experiences of Kurdish women who have been oppressed and participated in a social movement, specifically the Kurdish women's movement. The study examined how oppression has affected the lives of Kurdish women and motivated them to become activists and politicians. By investigating their lived experiences in oppressive conditions, I sought to understand how oppression is experienced and learned within intersectionality and social movement learning. I examined how women who were once victims of oppression have been able to transform into liberated individuals through their experiences.

The qualitative research conducted in this study adhered to the principles of a phenomenological approach. The recruitment method utilized purposeful sampling, as participants needed to meet specific criteria. To recruit Kurdish women participants, the researcher contacted several organizations via email to invite them to participate in the study. Five Kurdish female activists from Turkey volunteered to participate in this study to share their transformative experiences of oppression. The interviews were extensive, semi-structured, interactional, and topical-guided. The language of the interviews was Turkish, spoken by both the participants and the researcher. The interviews were conducted virtually since the researcher and the participants lived in different countries.

This chapter showcased the data collected from interviews with Kurdish women who played an active role in the Kurdish women's movement, which was a revolutionary act that emerged in the early 1990s during the armed conflict between the Turkish State and the Kurdish guerilla party called PKK (Goksel, 2019). The Kurdish women's

movement aims to fight against gender issues for women's liberation (Al-Ali & Käser, 2022). I analyzed the themes that emerged from their lived experiences by conducting in-depth interviews with these women. These themes were illustrated with quotes from the participants, giving voice to their experiences and shedding light on the complex realities of life under oppression. The themes identified were categorized according to the main research questions and supported by relevant quotations from the participants, offering a comprehensive understanding of their lived experiences.

Participants

The study involved five Kurdish women who self-identified as activists and active Kurdish women's movement members. All participants resided in Turkey, with ages ranging from mid-20s to mid-40s. The participants chose WhatsApp as an online platform for virtual interviews. Turkish was the language of the interviews.

Research Questions

This chapter provides an account of the results of the phenomenological study, which aimed to address the following four research questions:

- Q1. What was it like to live under oppressive conditions if Kurdish women felt oppressed?
- Q2. What did they learn as a result of living under oppressive conditions?
- Q3. How did experiencing oppression contribute to their participation in the Kurdish women's movement?
- Q4. What has their participation in the Kurdish women's movement taught them?

Emergent Themes

In this study, we explored a diverse range of themes across ten distinct categories, each thoughtfully grouped under specific research questions. Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of our research endeavor, highlighting four primary research questions and the corresponding themes associated with each question. This organized framework serves as a valuable reference point, allowing readers to grasp the thematic landscape of our investigation with clarity and precision.

Table 1

Identified Themes and Related Research Questions

Research Question	Themes identified
Q1: What was it like to live under oppressive conditions if Kurdish women felt oppressed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The intersection of ethnic, gender, and religious oppression 2. Fear, anger, and resentment
Q2: What did they learn as a result of living under oppressive conditions?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Systemic oppression as a means of cultural assimilation 4. Concealing one's identity, engaging in migration, and exhibiting resilience
Q3: How did experiencing oppression contribute to their participation in the Kurdish women's movement?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Being inspired and empowered 6. Developing interest in learning about culture and gender 7. Retaliation, courage, and persistence
Q4: What has their participation in the Kurdish women's movement taught them?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Identity, feminism, and pride 9. Collectivism and solidarity 10. The transformation from victimization to liberation

Note. For each research question, the themes were identified as the collectively shared answers to interview questions and clustered for each research question.

The information provided in Table 1 invites the reader to delve into the nuanced exploration, shedding light on the multifaceted dimensions of the inquiry of this study.

The study's interviews yielded ten noteworthy themes, subsequently categorized into four clusters to address each research question effectively.

Q1. What was it like to live under oppressive conditions if Kurdish women felt oppressed?

The Intersection of Ethnic, Gender, and Religious Oppression: The participants recounted their firsthand experiences of oppression as Kurds and women. Moreover, several of them shared accounts of the religious oppression they had encountered.

Fear, Anger, and Resentment: During the discussion, participants expressed the emotions that arose due to the oppression they encountered. The prevailing sentiments they revealed included fear, anger, and resentment.

Q2. What did they learn as a result of living under oppressive conditions?

Systemic Oppression as a Means of Cultural Assimilation: The participants expressed their learning that oppression is both unjust and pervasive and functions as a tool for assimilation.

Concealing One's Identity, Engaging in Migration, and Exhibiting Resilience: The participants discussed the typical strategies they employ to endure oppression, which included concealing their identity, migrating to new locations, and demonstrating resilience.

Q3. How did experiencing oppression contribute to their participation in the Kurdish women's movements?

Being Inspired and Empowered: The participants conveyed that their family members, other Kurdish families, and women had been sources of inspiration and empowerment for them.

Developing Interest in Learning about Culture and Gender: Several participants shared a heightened interest in delving deeper into their cultural heritage and individual identity.

Retaliation, Courage, and Persistence: The participants expressed how their emotions evolved from initial fear and resentment to eventually feeling brave and retaliated.

Q4. What has their participation in the Kurdish women's movement taught them?

Identity, Feminism, and Pride: The participants reported that their awareness and understanding of cultural and gender identity had improved, resulting in a feeling of pride in their identity.

Collectivism and Solidarity: The participants shared how they developed a strong understanding of collectivism and solidarity.

The Transformation from Victimization to Liberation: The participants discussed the transitions experienced when moving from being victims to attaining liberation.

Examining the participants' experiences showed that their lives were entangled with various forms of oppression. The first two prominent themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data shed light on the profound challenges they encountered and the emotional toll it exacted. These individuals grappled with an intricate web of oppressive circumstances, which caused feelings of fear, anger, and resentment. Their stories underscored the pervasive impact of living under such conditions and illuminated the complex dynamics of navigating a world where multiple layers of oppression

intersect. The first theme provided a deeper exploration of the participants' lived experiences under the oppressive conditions, and the second theme highlighted the emotional responses that emerged as they contended with oppressive realities.

The Intersection of Ethnic, Gender, and Religious Oppression

This theme addressed the impact of the transformational experiences of Kurdish women on their liberation under oppression. It revealed the intersection of multiple forms of oppression these women faced at the same time. Intersectionality is a concept that formalizes the web of numerous intersecting oppressions experienced by women (Crenshaw, 1991). It describes how different forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, intersect and interact to produce unique experiences of discrimination and privilege for individuals with multiple marginalized identities (Cho et al., 2013, p. 789). Based on the intersectional approach, it was crucial to ascertain whether the participants encountered any discrimination. Upon inquiry, the participants confirmed that they faced oppression based on ethnicity and gender. Moreover, three participants disclosed that they had also experienced religious oppression.

Ethnic Oppression

Throughout the participants' lives, ethnic oppression has taken various forms, including alienation, violence, and forced migration, and has been outside their homes since childhood. Participant X recounted her family's oppression in their home village during her childhood, leading them to leave their home without any alternative options. Some of her statements revealed her family's living conditions under oppression:

They used to take my father to the police station for interrogation all the time, and one day my dad at the end decided to move us to another village.... Many years

later, we understood that hell started for us all the way back in that village.... It felt like we were in a different world because we had nobody there as if we were one-cursed home.... I think I have been in the movement since the raids on my house by the state forces and soldiers during my childhood.

Participant S recounted her experiences of ethnic oppression as less severe, stating that “I faced ethnic discrimination during my childhood, but it was not as intense as what many others had faced. The discrimination I faced was not physical violence, but rather emotional abuse that significantly impacted my personality development.” However, later in the interview, she recollected the violence her father had undergone, which she described as her first traumatic childhood experience:

My father had gone missing for an extended period after a mass shooting by the state forces at the funeral of a Kurdish journalist and politician who was a close friend of my father. For a long time, we had no news of his whereabouts. We did not know whether he was alive.

Some disclosures from the participants confirmed the existence of ethnic discrimination in the subsequent years of life. Participant R’s lived experience as a young woman provided evidence of the ongoing ethnic oppression in her life.

This pressure mechanism occurred in university, too... My parents panicked when they received a letter saying I would be kicked out of university because of my “so-called” participation in the illegal protests that I did not join. I was 18, a freshman. Just because my name is R (a distinct Kurdish name), and my hometown is Dersim (populated highly by the Kurdish and Alevi people) on my ID, they (university officials and police) included my name in their list.

Gender Oppression

Besides ethnic discrimination, gender discrimination also manifested in the participants' lives. The primary form of gender-based discrimination experienced by these women involved the location of its origin. In contrast to ethnic discrimination, according to most participants, gender discrimination emerged within the domestic sphere and was perpetuated by a family member, namely the mother. Participant X stated that "gender discrimination came from my mother... She used to say, "Do not go out, do not play with the boys." Similarly, to that, Participant R shared:

The issue of her (her mother) constantly trying to keep us at home due to such gender roles started from a very young age... There were certain sanctions for being a girl with such strict rules about not going home late, not talking to the boys too much, going out on the weekends.

Participant K described the view of gender in her family with a story. "Yes, there was some gender oppression in my family, even though I consider them democratic. My parents hoped their firstborn child would be a boy, and they mourned after the third child, me, was a girl. They did not name me for 23 weeks due to their disappointment that I was a girl." When talking about her experience of gender oppression, it was as if Participant N was describing the experience of all women: "You are trying to exist as a woman in this spiral. You (refers to women in general) grow up with the codes of femininity taught to you the moment you were born." In addition to the family as the origin of gender oppression, Participant R's answer to the question about her experience of gender oppression revealed further types of this experience:

Of course, I experienced gender oppression. It is almost impossible not to face gender oppression as a woman in a patriarchal society and culture, even in leftist organizations. Women's words were usually given less weight than those of men. Women were seen as emotional and weak.

Religious Oppression

Although all participants acknowledged encountering discrimination based on both their ethnicity and gender, three of them also reported experiencing discrimination due to their religious identity, representing a third layer of oppression. This non-Sunni heterodoxy is called Alevism, which is believed to have emerged from the Babai Revolt in 1240 CE in Anatolia and then spread over the Balkans in the 1400s (Ertan, 2019). Participant N had to accept that her religion was an issue at a young age: "My father always told us to hide that we are Alevi." Participant R shared how her teacher in the religion classes denied her religion.

As an Alevi, I recall how religious classes became sites of rigid indoctrination, where I was compelled to recite prayers and perform rituals in Sunni Islam....

Although roughly half of my classmates were also Alevi, we could not openly acknowledge our religious identity. Instead, we could only discuss it among ourselves in private.

The participants' responses during the interviews provided insightful accounts of their experiences of oppression, revealing a notable convergence of ethnic, gender, and religious forms of oppression coinciding. These findings align closely with Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality (1991), which emphasizes the interconnected nature of various oppressions. Within this context, Participant K shared a poignant anecdote from

her college years, recounting an incident where she and her friends were subjected to discriminatory labels assigned by fellow students solely based on their identities. She highlighted the challenges of being at the intersection of multiple forms of oppression. “They pointed at us and said, ‘She is Alevi... She is Kurdish... She is not fasting (during Ramadan).’” Participant N affirmed Participant K’s account of intersectionality, stating, “As a woman with Kurdish and Alevi identities, life can be difficult due to the compounded effects of discrimination.”

Fear, Anger, and Resentment

The findings of this phenomenological study shed light on the emotional impact of oppressive experiences on participants. These findings are consistent with previous research on the psychological effects of oppression (Hooks, 1984; Jack & Ali, 2018). The experience of fear can be a typical response to the threat of harm or punishment, while anger and resentment may emerge in response to feelings of injustice and powerlessness (Hernandez & Reicherter, 2019). Understanding the emotional toll of oppression is critical to developing interventions that promote resilience and healing among individuals affected by these experiences (Fanon, 1967; Freire, 1970). The participants reported experiencing fear, anger, and resentment in response to oppressive experiences.

Throughout the interviews, fear emerged as a prevalent emotional response. Participant S reported feeling fear in connection with her experiences of oppression on multiple occasions, spanning different periods of her life.

I remember our house was being raided rapidly. My siblings and I were careful and watchful to survive and avoid conflict. I am still afraid of police and soldiers, from my childhood memories of raids, surveillance, murder... I was called to

interrogation because I participated in the education houses where we provided study halls to students after school. I was petrified and nervous.

A mother herself, participant S had a significant worry not only for her children but also for all the Kurdish children:

Even if not for ourselves, we were concerned about our children because they are part of this. We are not alone in this, and sometimes I wish I were alone... The fear that something will happen at any moment is overwhelming.

Participant K endured oppression during her childhood. She reported that during her elementary school years, she lived in constant fear due to the physical abuse inflicted on her and other students with the same ethnic and religious identity by the teacher. It was not easy for her to recall those memories of elementary school. She struggled to find the words while recounting her memories, and her voice shook. She described her experience of violence as a trauma: "What I have gone through was a trauma for me." As per her recollection, "We were forced to speak in Turkish, did not know it well, and anytime we made a mistake, we got bitten or cursed by the teachers in return... I often prayed for time to pass so I could go home from school as soon as possible due to experiencing fear or discomfort in that environment."

In addition to their own experiences of fear, several participants expressed that the oppression encountered by their predecessors also instilled fear in them. Participant K said, "Our parents could not defend us because they were afraid." Just as Participant K reported experiencing fear in the family, Participant N also shared her own experience of fear in the context of oppressive situations: "As I recall, my father cautioned us against

revealing our Alevi identity in public due to the prohibition imposed by authorities, and this was the first instance when I felt fearful.”

Several participants reported experiencing anger as another emotion ignited by oppression. Participant N expressed how her experiences of fear and anger were intertwined and profoundly impacted her. She conveyed how “the sense of alienation I felt during my childhood was like a deprivation of love, and this loss triggered strong emotions of anger and fear. As a result, these feelings dominated my emotional landscape.” Participant R recalled “being very angry when I was a teenager.” In contrast, Participant X said, “I have been carrying that anger since childhood.” Participant N’s anger, on the other hand, was towards her father, who tried to hide their religion by pretending to be Sunni Muslim: “My father used to display the Qur’an at home because of the fear during the years following September 12 period (military coup and junta in 1980). That made me angry.” Even though the Quran is not the book Alevi people follow, Participant N’s father tried hiding their religious affiliation with Alevism and pretending to be Sunni by making the Quran visible at home.

Several participants experienced an emotional resentment characterized by humiliation, embarrassment, sadness, hopelessness, and shame. The participants got emotional as we discussed their feelings. Several participants found it effortless to recall events, but recollecting their emotions proved to be more challenging. Participant X had a difficult time describing her feelings. She said, “I do not know how to share my feelings.” It was not easy for Participant S to talk about her feelings either. She articulated her feelings and reported, “I get very emotional in this kind of conversation... I am always hopeless, cannot see the future or make plans for the future.”

Participant K alluded to her childhood while explaining her emotions, stating that “a child would feel an intense sense of unease, unhappiness, and hopelessness in the presence of oppression.” Participant N also shared feelings of hopelessness and a sense of worthlessness:

We belong to a society often marginalized or overlooked in the broader context... Being raised in an environment where we feel like we do not fit in, where our mere presence is seen as a threat by others, and where our family has had to resort to self-assimilation to survive can lead to a sense of detachment and devaluation of oneself. This detachment can be described as a form of non-attachment... I have often experienced a sense of pessimism and sadness as I harbored doubts that this country would progress in a positive direction.

Participant R shared how her experiences of oppression impacted her self-confidence: “During my school years, I developed feelings for a boy. I recall feeling distraught when he witnessed my name being ridiculed, which resulted in me becoming introverted and struggling to articulate myself... Afterward, I became a young woman with no self-esteem and ability to express my feelings.”

The following three themes addressed the key learning participants gained due to oppression. Understanding the learnings from living under oppressive conditions is crucial, as it can better understand how individuals process oppression and adapt to challenging environments. Examining the insights gained from these experiences can provide a deeper understanding of the adaptability of individuals who have faced difficult circumstances. The interviews uncovered two prevalent insights: first, the systemic nature of oppression as a means of cultural assimilation, and second, the strategies individuals

employ to endure oppression, including concealing their identity, migrating, and cultivating resilience.

Systemic Oppression as a Means of Cultural Assimilation

The participants conveyed the emergence of their understanding and awareness regarding oppression. They shared their realization that the oppression they experienced was a systemic effort to eradicate their culture. This finding resonates with the observations made by Mojab (2001), who discussed the assimilation endeavors of Middle Eastern states targeting the Kurdish population. During her visits to the prison to visit her older brother, a political prisoner, Participant X realized how widespread oppression was: “I saw better that there were more families like mine after visiting prison many times.” She also stated, “The reason why we were forced to migrate from our village is systematic, originating from the state.”

Participant N shared how assimilation began in their family when she was a child: “My dad wanted us (N and her sister) to speak Turkish very well. That is how the first assimilation and alienation began.” Furthermore, she described how assimilation operates in the life of a Kurdish family: “I grew up in two different worlds. One within our house where our identity is partially concealed by a Turkish blanket, and another outside where we must present ourselves as someone else and behave accordingly.” She also talked about systemic oppression: “You understand that you cannot live in a system that leaves you breathless and wants to destroy you with everything.”

Participant R elucidated how she came to comprehend the origins of oppression: “I realized that the root cause of all the problems was the system, not the individuals involved, and this realization made me uncomfortable.” Participant R also recalled

systemic oppression in higher educational institutions: “The pressure mechanism showed itself in university, too.” Participant K narrated her encounter with comprehending oppression: “Because they imposed Turkish on us, I started to question why we had to watch all the movies in Turkish. I started to see discrimination more clearly; they were Turks, and we were Kurds.” According to Participant K, the school systematically imposed oppression on other children of Kurdish origin: “The teacher was not abusing only me. I realized my friends also faced the same discrimination, which was wrong, especially at a young age.”

Participant K understood that assimilation showed itself in the curriculum within the school setting: “Everything we learned in history classes was incorrect... we were aware that this was an assimilation strategy.” She talked about her college years and how she became more aware of the patriarchal structure in higher education. She questioned the book selection on women and found it intentional. She stated, “I noticed that the women’s studies section in the library had books on motherhood, family, how to raise children, women in the eyes of women but nothing about women’s consciousness.”

The participants’ accounts revealed a profound awakening to oppression and the systematic efforts to erase their culture. Through personal encounters with prisons, education, and societal expectations, the participants recognized oppression’s widespread nature and profound impact on their lives. They understood that the root cause of their struggles lay within the system rather than individual actors. This realization brought discomfort and a growing awareness of the need for change. The participants’ narratives shed light on the systematic imposition of assimilation, ultimately reinforcing the

importance of preserving cultural identity and challenging oppressive structures to pursue a more inclusive society.

Concealing One's Identity, Engaging in Migration, and Exhibiting Resilience

The participants' second significant learning point from their experiences of oppression was the discovery of strategies to navigate and survive oppressive circumstances. They discussed adopting coping mechanisms that allowed them to preserve their dignity, autonomy, and sense of belonging. Through the interviews, three predominant strategies emerged as the most common mechanisms for navigating oppressive environments: concealing one's identity, engaging in migration, and demonstrating resilience. These strategies were instrumental in their ability to endure and navigate oppressive conditions successfully.

Concealing One's Identity

Based on the interviews, concealing one's identity was commonly employed for surviving oppressive circumstances. Participant R said, "We had to grow up hiding our Kurdish and Alevi identity." In a different period in life but similarly, Participant K had to hide her identity when she was in college to fit in: "Nobody else was mentioning their Kurdish ethnicity, so I only revealed my hometown, Adiyaman. Even then, students from the western regions of the country refrained from greetings."

After her family moved to Istanbul for a respite from oppression, Participant S struggled to adapt to her new life. She reported:

I felt depressed and disconnected from the other children, finding it difficult to engage with them and make friends. To fit in, I concealed my ethnic identity and pretended to be someone I was not, constantly hiding from my friends, neighbors,

and classmates. Despite my efforts, I still felt like an outsider and longed to belong.

Participant N's previous statements about her family shed light on their challenges due to assimilation efforts. She highlighted how her father discouraged them from learning Kurdish, emphasizing the suppression of their native language and the imposition of Turkish. Measures her father took not only limited her linguistic abilities but also symbolized the erasure of their cultural identity within the confines of their home. Participant N's description of growing up in two different worlds further emphasizes the struggle of navigating between their true selves and the expectations imposed upon them by society. Within the household, their Kurdish identity was partially concealed, while outside, they were compelled to present themselves as someone else and conform to the dominant culture. This dichotomy underscores the profound impact of assimilation on their sense of self and the constant tension between authenticity and societal expectations that Participant N and her family face.

Migration

Multiple participants openly shared their migration experiences during specific stages of their lives. This finding aligns with the research by Nilsson (2018), who documented the immigration of Kurdish individuals in the 1980s and 1990s due to the ongoing conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdish population. Participant X recounted how her family had to leave their village during her childhood due to constant harassment by the police. She explained, "My father was frequently taken to the police station, and eventually, he decided that the only option was to move to another village."

Participant K decided to migrate to ensure survival and pursue education. She said, “I had to go to Europe to continue my education. I had to stay there for a while.”

Participant S talked about her family’s migration from her hometown to Istanbul.

In the 1990s, my father decided to relocate our family to Istanbul, citing the political climate as a primary factor. As a lawyer, he also sought to avoid undue pressure and continue practicing his profession without interference. After we moved to Istanbul, my father fled to Europe and sought asylum, leaving us behind for four years. We were lonely during his absence... [Years later], my family forced me to move to Germany and study (at a university) there so I could help the family unite.

Resilience

Another common strategy to endure oppression that emerged from the interviews was resilience. Through their experiences, the participants identified their views and approach to adapting to and managing oppressive circumstances, demonstrating their resilience. Participant X discussed how her resilience built up after seeing what her family members and other Kurdish people were going through: “We [she and her siblings] understood [after father stood up against the state forces] that we were not wrong, we were defending our rights.” She stated that her experiences of visiting her brother, who was in prison for political reasons, impacted her: “Seeing other families in prison gave me sadness, anger, and courage at the same time. Seeing that we were not the only family was giving me strength/courage”. She added, “Resilience comes with the oppression I shared... Now, I cannot stand anything systematically enforced.... I became less tolerant of the views/words I disagreed.... I learned not to give up no matter what.”

Participant K described her journey of developing resilience and cultivating a critical perspective toward her surroundings during her formative years. She stated, “I used to tell my friends that we had to react to what they did to us... We formed a small group in middle school and sang songs in Kurdish, so the resistance started on a small scale then.” Participant S, sharing a similar viewpoint, expressed her perspective on oppression and the righteous nature of resilience. She acknowledged the immense pressure and cruelty experienced by their society, which had long yearned for freedom and identity:

There is significant pressure and cruelty in our society.... Our freedom, as a society that has been thirsting for this freedom and this identity for so many years.... We are on the right track and must keep demanding our civil rights.... All the things that happened taught me that we need to be hopeful.... If these contradictions have awakened you, you will learn to fight early.

Participant R reported how she developed a new understanding of pressure and social perspective:

I occasionally express gratitude for the demanding situations I have encountered. Without them, my life could have been dulling and confined to the mundane cycle of daily activities. It positively impacted my life. In other words, I became a person who can look at life from a different perspective, think about society rather than herself, and worry about other people’s problems. My social view expanded.

The following three themes shed light on the factors that motivated the participants to join the movement. They shared three prominent factors that significantly influenced their decision to take a stand and raise their voices. These factors

encompassed the inspiration and empowerment they derived from others, a heightened interest in learning about their culture, and a sense of retaliation, courage, and persistence to join the Kurdish movement.

Being Inspired and Empowered

The participants engaged in heartfelt discussions about the invaluable sources of inspiration and empowerment they found within their families and among other Kurdish families and women. They shared how these support networks played a significant role in their journeys of growth and resilience. Participant K shared her experience of inspiration and empowerment from her college years: “During Ramadan, we visited the campus cafeteria and asked for food, but were initially denied. Despite this, we persisted and insisted on eating there. Our small group grew to over 200 people”. Participant R attributed her inspiration to a variety of sources, including other Kurdish women, her father, and her fellow members of a leftist youth party she was involved with before joining the Kurdish women’s movement:

Over time, my relationships with the women and professionals at the Kurdish magazine and in jineology deepened, allowing me to gain insight into the women’s movement and eventually prompting me to contribute as an individual.... The influence of my father’s socialist views and my experiences with the party community steered me towards the path [Kurdish women’s movement] that I am now following.

Participant S shared a significant incident from the 1990s that provided her profound insights into patriarchy and feudalism among men. She recalled a courageous Kurdish mother who spoke out about her daughter’s suicide after being raped and

suffered the consequences: “I saw the feudal men when a Kurdish mother courageously spoke out about her daughter’s rape in Kurdish, and then her husband intervened and slapped her, reminding her to “behave” because she was a woman.” This incident left a lasting impression on Participant S, highlighting the oppressive power structures prevalent in society.

Participant X drew inspiration from her family, particularly her father and brothers. Witnessing her father’s bravery in standing up against oppression and confronting state forces, she internalized the notion that they were not at fault but instead defending their rights. She stated, “Learning that my father stood up against the local forces to defend his rights made his children so proud and made me realize we were not at fault. We are defending our rights.” She grew up with brothers who were deeply committed to the struggle and who consistently encouraged and empowered her. She emphasized her brother’s influence on her, stating, “My brother inspired me to question my own identity.”

Developing Interests in Learning About Culture and Gender

Several participants shared developing a collective interest in learning about their culture and gender. The interviews revealed that their experience of oppression concerning their culture, language, and identity sparked a deep curiosity and interest in exploring and preserving their heritage. In some quotations, these three themes appeared interconnected.

Participant S embarked on a unique journey characterized by a distinct exploration of her culture. Driven by a deep interest in understanding her roots and identities, she moved back to her homeland, Diyarbakir: “I decided to get to know my

culture and society better. That is why I returned, and during the learning process, I decided to stay.” Participant S’s unique journey of self-discovery and connection to her culture through her decision to return and stay in Diyarbakir highlights the transformative power of embracing one’s roots and seeking a deeper understanding of identity. She also reported how her learning of culture led to developing the concept of women’s identity and the women’s movement:

Within the past 15 years of my life, particularly during my 30s, my journey began by initially focusing on my ethnic identity and later expanded to encompass a profound exploration and understanding of the women’s movement and the concept of woman identity.

Participant X shared her strong desire to learn more about her culture, specifically the Kurdish language: “My Kurdish identity became important to me. I got interested in the Kurdish language. I went to a language organization and discovered the uniqueness of Kurdish, my language.” She shared her developed awareness about the importance of cultures in general.

I realized that my language, while unique and special to me, is not inherently superior to any other language. This revelation extended beyond language to encompass cultures as well. I learned that no culture holds superiority over another. Each culture carries its value, richness, and significance, deserving equal respect and appreciation.

Participant X continued by explaining how her interest in improving her language led her to become a language teacher, which drew her into the struggle, reporting:

In retrospect, I realized that the strength I found for my involvement in the Kurdish national movement was due to women's ongoing struggle. My journey led me to join Kurdi-Der (Kurdish Language Research and Development Association), where I eventually became a Kurdish language teacher and embarked on a personal journey of self-education in Kurdish literature.

Expanding my engagement allowed me to broaden my scope of activism and embrace a broader realm of struggle.

Participant K shared how she delved deeper into gender issues, seeking a profound understanding of women, stating, "I found some Kurdish articles and journals. I started to read about women for the first time in Kurdish journals.... All these experiences led me to learn more, understand better, and later share with those who did not know and educate them." Participant X's learning about her gender identity emerged through realization. The fact that her father ignored her gender had the opposite effect on Participant X, arousing her interest in her female identity. She shared: "I realized that my dad did not acknowledge my gender, which later made me focus on my woman identity. . . I realized that I had my rights as a courageous woman." Participant S shared the meaning of feminism with her as a mother. She stated, "I wanted to focus on raising my daughter with a deep awareness of feminism."

In conclusion, the findings from the interviews shed light on the collective interest that emerged among them in learning about their culture and gender. The experience of oppression related to their culture, language, and identity catalyzed a deep curiosity and eagerness to explore and preserve their heritage. The interconnectedness of these themes became evident through the participants' narratives, showcasing how their exploration of

culture led to the development of concepts surrounding women's identity and the women's movement. Additionally, the participants' journeys of self-discovery highlighted the transformative power of embracing one's roots and seeking a deeper understanding of identity. As they delved into their cultural heritage and language, they discovered the importance of valuing diverse cultures and languages, rejecting notions of superiority or inferiority. Furthermore, their exploration of gender issues led to a profound understanding of women's rights and the embrace of feminism, shaping their perspectives and influencing their activism. These experiences exemplify the transformative potential of personal growth and education in the face of oppression, ultimately contributing to a broader realm of struggle and societal change.

Feeling Retaliated, Courageous, and Persistent

The participants conveyed how their emotions transformed from initial fear and resentment to eventually experiencing retaliation, courage, and persistence. The quotes presented below have been previously discussed but are reiterated here due to their continued relevance to this section. Participant X shared her feelings of courage and retaliation: "Seeing that we were not the only family was giving me courage.... Retaliation comes with the oppression I talked about." She talked about her significant decisions: "My three major decisions that gave my life a direction are getting out of my shell, refusing to go to college, and joining the movement."

Participant S described her experience of retaliation. Her life took a slightly different course. She decided to move to Diyarbakir after she had become a young adult. Her decision to return stemmed from her longing to return to her homeland: "I came back after years because of the longing I felt for our homeland." She explained the other

purpose of her return: “I decided to return home to be able to join the Kurdish movement to fight against oppression.” She felt the need to persist and join the movement, similar to Participant X, who cited her personal, familial, and societal experiences with oppression: “The oppression I experienced as an individual, as a family, and as a society is why I am here today.” She added, “I cannot pinpoint the exact moment I joined the movement, as it was a gradual process, and I started as a volunteer translator.”

While talking about her retaliations, Participant N identified herself as “the one who multiplied the objections and always quarreled.” She explained her feelings:

Once you face conflict, you learn to fight at an early stage... I conflicted with all aspects of my identity, but the most distressing was my femininity, which I could not conceal. My body had become an embodiment of my identity Participant X’s experience, getting inspired by others impacted Participant R’s decision to join the movement: “Both my father’s socialist background and my experience with the members of the leftist party I used to belong to have led me to become involved in the Kurdish women’s movement.”

She described her persistence as part of the Kurdish women’s struggle: “My motivation for joining the movement was not due to personal victimization, as neither I nor my family had suffered severe oppression. Instead, my decision was rooted in my worldview and the theories I follow. When discussing retaliation, she recalled the day she was falsely accused of committing a crime on the university campus. However, at that time, she was visiting her family back home in Istanbul and was not even present on campus: “What happened that day was what politicized me.” She talked about her

retaliation: “I have decided to fight for change. When confronted with pressure, I oppose it, channeling my anger into a powerful force for action.”

Participant K recalled the retaliation she felt during her school days and how it led to her persistence: “I was still feeling angry when I began resisting, but instead of letting it make me sad, I embraced my identity and found community with like-minded people. I also took it upon myself to educate those less informed.” She shared how experiencing oppression turned into a reaction:

As I witnessed sexism in university, I became aware that it also affected me personally. Sexism prompted me to research gender inequality in the workplace and share my findings with my friends. Together with other women in similar situations, we formed groups, such as women’s clubs, to support and empower each other. Additionally, we organized public events, such as celebrating International Women’s Day on the streets.

In conclusion, the narratives shared by the participants highlighted a transformative journey from initial emotions of fear and resentment to a place of retaliation, courage, and persistence. They drew strength and inspiration from witnessing the struggles of others and their collective longing for justice and freedom. Each participant found their unique path, whether it was through embracing their identity, engaging in activism, or seeking knowledge and education. Retaliation became a means of resistance, with the participants channeling their anger into powerful forces for change. Together, they formed communities, organized events, and fought against gender inequality and oppression.

Building upon Choudry's (2007) definition of social movements as knowledge producers, the subsequent section explored the insights and personal growth acquired by participants in the Kurdish women's movement. Below are the three themes that address the last research question, which asks about the transformational impact of the participants' activism from the lens of social movement learning. The analysis identified three primary areas as key learning takeaways and transformations of the participants due to their participation in the Kurdish women's movement. The first significant learning is about cultivating a profound awareness and understanding of identity, feminism, and a sense of pride. The second learning revolves around developing a robust comprehension of the significance of collectivism and solidarity. The third key learning is the participants' experiences as a transformative journey from victimization to liberation as a critical learning outcome.

Identity, Feminism, and Pride

The participants' narratives revealed that their engagement in the women's movement facilitated a profound transformation in their awareness of pride for their cultural and gender identities. As they became actively involved in the movement, they experienced a remarkable shift in perspective, which brought about a newfound sense of pride in their identity. This section explores the participants' lived experiences as they shared their accounts of how their engagement with the women's movement empowered them to embrace their cultural heritage and recognize the significance of their gender identity.

Participant X's experience in the women's movement proved pivotal in her journey of self-discovery. As she engaged with a Kurdish language organization, a profound realization unfolded within her—recognizing a language distinctly her own:

I embarked on a journey of self-discovery when I joined the Kurdish language organization, where a significant realization awaited me. I possessed a distinct language, one that was uniquely mine. At that moment, I gained a deep understanding of my cultural identity with a profound sense of belonging. I realized that my language, while unique and special to me, is not inherently superior to any other language. This revelation extended beyond language to encompass cultures as well. I learned that no culture holds superiority over another. Each culture carries its value, richness, and significance, deserving equal respect and appreciation.

Participant S, who returned to her homeland years later to join the movement, revealed, "Upon my return, my involvement in the Kurdish women's movement played a pivotal role in shaping the perspective and understanding of woman identity that I hold today." She explained her learning and experiences in the Kurdish women's movement: "Within the past fifteen years of my life, particularly during my thirties, my journey began by initially focusing on my ethnic identity and later expanded to encompass a profound exploration and understanding of the women's movement and the concept of woman identity."

Participant N described the impact of knowledge of Kurdish history: "Knowing one's history instills a sense of pride and passion." She shared her years in prison: "Being imprisoned for 14 years provided me with a transformative experience, as prison turned

into arenas of resistance for political women.” Participant K expressed her feelings about her identity: “At times, I find myself expressing gratitude for being a woman, a Kurd, and an Alevi, embracing the interconnectedness and appreciation of my multifaceted identity.”

When questioned about their learning encounters within the movement, a prevalent aspect mentioned by the participants was the significant growth of their awareness and emotions resulting from their active involvement. The personal stories shared by participants in the women’s movement unveiled a deep-seated change in their comprehension and recognition of their cultural and gender identity. Their testimonies revealed the empowering influence of the women’s movement as it enabled the participants to embrace their cultural heritage and acknowledge the importance of their gender identity.

Collectivism and Solidarity

Another significant aspect of learning within the women’s movement was the participants’ profound development in understanding the concepts of collectivism and solidarity. Through their shared experiences and reflections, they demonstrated remarkable growth in understanding the importance of working together as a collective and standing in solidarity with one another. Their narratives shed light on the transformative power of embracing a collective mindset and fostering a deep sense of unity and support among the participants. Participants’ experiences introduced their journey toward developing a solid understanding of collectivism and solidarity and the significance of these concepts in their personal and collective growth.

During the interview, Participant S consistently employed the first-person plural pronoun “we” instead of “I” when responding to most questions. Participant S explained this linguistic choice: “I prefer using ‘we’ because it embodies a sense of collectivism, encompassing all women rather than focusing solely on myself as an individual.” By consciously adopting the inclusive pronoun “we,” Participant S aimed to emphasize the collective nature of her experiences and convey a sense of unity among women. She continued to talk about the support and solidarity women experienced in the movement.

I believe a woman is home to another woman.... We are the source of strength for each other. The Kurdish woman struggle is like a heritage with a long history and memory.... The women leaders inspire us; we learn from each other and form this strong bond that connects us.... Political sisterhood is what I am talking about, what brings us together, not the roles designed by society like motherhood [not emotional bonds]. We have a common goal, which is political, that brings us together.... The women’s movement makes me feel like I am strong. I am understood and respected. We listen to each other, discuss things thoroughly, and take feedback easily... solidarity, I am not alone.

Participant N highlighted the collective efforts and solidarity among political women prisoners, who actively resisted within the prison walls. Reflecting on her 14-year experience, she emphasized the transformative nature of imprisonment, stating, “Prisons became a battleground for political women to engage in resistance.” From her perspective as a woman, Participant N described the prison as a space where resistance thrived and where women were able to assert their agency in the face of adversity:

Women cease being the property of their husbands and instead become the state's property. Consequently, women face more significant challenges in expressing their true selves while incarcerated. Creating one's own space, carving out personal time, and constructing an individual world becomes the ultimate act of resistance. Within this context, women within the prison actively resist by establishing their organization. This achievement stands as a testament to their strength and determination.

Participant R expressed her profound experience of embracing collectivism, where her focus shifted from personal concerns to more significant consideration for others. She shared how her priorities underwent a considerable transformation: "My concerns have become less about myself and more about others... I now prioritize avoiding offense, striving to collaborate effectively, and engaging in collective endeavors." Through this shift in perspective, Participant R emphasized her commitment to working harmoniously with others and making meaningful contributions within a collective context. Additionally, she expressed the sense of safety and security she experienced while discussing other women in the movement: My relationships with other women underwent a profound transformation. I realized the incredible value of building friendships with women and witnessing their remarkable growth and change. Shared experiences have been vital in cultivating solid bonds and nurturing connections with fellow women." By highlighting the impact of shared experiences, Participant R emphasized their significant role in establishing meaningful relationships among women within the movement.

The Transformation from Victimization to Liberation

The participants in this study courageously shared their experiences, shedding light on the significant changes they encountered during this transformation process. Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin (2013, p. 918) defined the transformation of the women who are the members of the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA): “transformation from a subordinated state of voicelessness and devaluation into an empowered state of self-representation and self-activity.” This section addressed the intricate and empowering shifts as the participants transitioned from being victims to embracing a newfound sense of liberation. Because of living under oppressive circumstances for many years, starting early in life, this study identified the participants as victims. By collectively sharing their experiences as women and political agents within the movement, they offered a profound insight into the personal transformations characterized by personal growth, resilience, and empowerment.

Participant K eloquently expressed her sentiments when describing the transformation from victimization to liberation experienced by women within the movement. She shared, “Being a part of the women’s movement is an exhilarating experience. It is inspiring to witness the immense power that emerges from women who were once silenced, introverted, and confined to their homes. Now, we can boldly express ourselves and assert our existence, a profoundly empowering status that we have fought hard to attain.” Participant K’s words beautifully capture the profound sense of liberation and empowerment women in the movement have attained through their collective efforts: “I feel happy. There is nothing better than a woman making herself visible. When a woman is silent, the whole society is silent. When a woman speaks, she liberates the

whole society. Therefore, I am happy.” Participant K expressed her perspective on gender equality: “The objective of the Kurdish women’s struggle is not to be hostile towards men or to overpower them. Our goal is to achieve parity with men, to create a shared existence, and to fight alongside one another.” She further highlighted the transformative impact of the women’s movement, stating, “The women’s movement has empowered me to stand confidently, to embrace self-worth, and to engage in resistance.”

Participant K described the transformative impact of her involvement in the Kurdish women’s movement on her emotions and awareness. She shared her journey by saying, “My path towards resistance began when I felt anger, but I refused to let it turn into sadness because I found happiness in my identity. I started surrounding myself with like-minded individuals and took it upon myself to explain things to those with limited knowledge. I felt motivated to dive deeper into reading and learning, gradually enhancing my awareness.” She emphasized, “These experiences compelled me to continuously seek knowledge, understand more, and eventually share my insights with those who lacked awareness, thus contributing to their education.”

Participant R offered a comprehensive account of the Kurdish women’s movement, delving into its multifaceted aspects. Describing the impact of the movement on her transformation, she articulated:

The essence of the Kurdish movement is often misunderstood as being solely based on victimization. However, from an ideological and political standpoint, the Kurdish movement encompasses much more than mere political action. It critiques the nation-state, challenges traditional notions of women’s roles, and offers unique perspectives on culture and faith. These issues are of utmost

importance, as they were the primary catalysts for my transformation and commitment to this cause.

Participant R conveyed her sense of liberation by expressing, “I believe that I have been able to break free from the influence of the state, which has enabled me to become a more liberated individual.” She gained a crucial insight from the movement regarding the underlying causes of gender-related pressures, particularly those emanating from her mother:

I understood that nothing occurred in isolation, including the forces exerted by my mother. Everything is interconnected in a system that revolves around patriarchal, capitalist, industrialist, anti-ecological, and nation-state ideologies. Constantly constrained by societal norms, my mother could not fully process or express her emotions as a woman. She lived her life according to the teachings of society. I learned that these mechanisms of oppression are not rooted in individual malice, jealousy, or personal ailments but rather systemic issues. Consequently, the approach to resistance naturally transforms. This realization stands as the fundamental lesson I have gleaned.

Participant R succinctly summarized her growth within the movement by stating, “Through my interactions with various individuals and engaging in conversations within the party I was involved in, I experienced significant personal development.” She went on to articulate her transformation, sharing:

I am only now truly beginning to embrace my humanity. It feels like I am constructing and nurturing my own emotions. As a result, there is a noticeable distinction between what used to make me laugh and what brings me laughter

now. Similarly, there is a contrast between what used to make me cry and what evokes tears in me today. However, this change does not impose itself upon me or elicit negative feelings; instead, it empowers me and makes me feel like an individual continually growing more robust and rooted.”

She shared her perspective on learning, influenced by the women’s movement, stating:

Initially, with a positivist mindset, I believed I could only teach these women in the neighborhood (Diyarbakir). However, I soon realized that their depth of knowledge surpassed my own, which profoundly impacted me. It was a transformative experience to acknowledge that I am not merely a teacher but an individual open to learning and continuously striving to learn. I discovered a wealth of knowledge beyond what the formal education system offers through interactions with people living in places like Istanbul and Izmir. It feels as though I am reinventing myself each day.

Participant N expressed the profound impact of freedom on her emotions by stating, “Upon tasting the water of freedom, I discovered the depth of my passion.” She highlighted the valuable contributions of the women’s movement in empowering women prisoners to cope with their captivity, stating, “Through a multitude of resistance methods and more, Kurdish women established a resilient tradition within prisons that transcended the confines of captivity.” She shared her realization prompted by her involvement in the Kurdish women’s movement, stating, “Upon joining this movement, I came to a profound understanding that as a woman, I had been chained. . . . Through this transformative process within the movement, I gained a sense of personal empowerment, self-awareness, and self-possession.”

Participant N shared her profound understanding of the interconnection between self-awareness, freedom, and the teachings of the Kurdish women's movement. She conveyed, "The Kurdish women's movement teaches women who they are. Self-knowledge is the greatest act of freedom." She elaborated on the stages of her transformation within the Kurdish women's movement:

You gain the courage to raise your hand, asserting your presence. Gradually, you begin to make your voice heard, and in this process, you truly hear your voice for the first time. Education is crucial in this journey as you equip yourself with knowledge. Ultimately, you learn how to communicate your ideas and make others listen to you effectively. The Kurdish movement creates an inclusive space that enables women to explore and excel in all these dimensions.

Participant S contributed valuable insights on the profound influence of the women's movement on Kurdish women's liberation, aligning with the perspectives shared by other participants. According to her, the Kurdish women's movement brought about a comprehensive societal transformation, not limited to women but also men. She observed a notable shift among Kurdish men, witnessing their increasing openness to women's voices, willingness to express their emotions, and eagerness to empathize with their struggles. She said, "I witnessed a remarkable change in Kurdish men as they embraced women's empowerment by encouraging them to speak up, express their emotions, and share their sorrows."

Participant X shed light on the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms within the family and society. During the interview, she highlighted the disregard for her gender identity during her childhood and the constraints imposed upon her during her youth.

When asked about the impact of her involvement in the Kurdish women's movement on her life, Participant X eloquently expressed how her position within her family has changed remarkably—from a restricted young girl to an empowered woman. Through her active involvement in the movement, Participant X has gained respect within her family, resulting in a newfound sense of freedom. In her own words, she explained, “I have transitioned from being a mere child within the family to a respected member. For instance, I have earned the respect of individuals I could once label as ‘fascists.’ We owe our change to the transformative power of the movement.” Additionally, she pointed out a pressing societal issue: the prevalence of underage marriages. She emphasized that “As long as society continues to endorse and legitimize the marriage of minors, it hinders the attainment of true individual freedom.” To her, societal liberation must precede personal liberty, stating, “As long as society continues to permit underage marriages, our freedom remains constrained. Thus, our collective liberation must take precedence.”

In conclusion, this analysis of participants' accounts provided valuable insights into the lived experiences at the intersection of gender, ethnic, and religious oppression. The narratives shared by the participants shed light on the profound impact of these intersecting forms of oppression and the emotions they evoke. The participants described experiencing fear, anger, and resentment in response to the oppressive forces they encountered. They highlighted systemic oppression, noting its role in assimilation and the suppression of cultural identity. Despite enduring such adversity, the participants demonstrated remarkable resilience by concealing their identities, migrating to new locations, and persisting in facing challenges.

The participants found inspiration and empowerment from their families, fellow Kurds, and women who shared similar experiences. A notable outcome of their journey was a heightened interest in exploring their cultural heritage and individual identities. Over time, their initial feelings of fear and resentment transformed into courage and a sense of retaliation against oppression. Moreover, their understanding of identity, feminism, and pride in their cultural heritage grew, leading to a sense of empowerment. The participants also emphasized the importance of collectivism and solidarity as they developed a strong sense of unity in their struggles. Ultimately, their narratives highlighted a transformative process wherein they transitioned from victimization to liberation. These findings underscored the significance of addressing intersecting forms of oppression and promoting inclusivity, cultural understanding, and gender equality for a more just and equitable society.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Intersectionality has emerged as a concept that has garnered academic attention by highlighting the acknowledgment of intersecting marginalized identities (Shahvisi, 2018). Within this framework, Kurdish feminists have discerned parallels between their struggle and the experiences of Black women in the United States, which share commonalities in marginalization and the neglect of their concerns within mainstream feminist movements (Al-Rebholz, 2013; Ozcan, 2011). Nonetheless, scholarly research on the transformative effects of learning under oppression, specifically for women in marginalized societies, still needs to be expanded in scope and quantity.

According to Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin (2013), intersectionality functions in three distinct manners. Firstly, it operates as a framework to examine the interconnected spheres of gender, family, work, and nation. Secondly, it is a reflexive approach to establishing connections between social movement theory and practice. Lastly, it operates as a guiding structure that facilitates the development of novel identities and fosters new forms of democratic engagement. Based on a phenomenological approach, this study postulated that Kurdish women, who find themselves subject to various forms of oppression, acquire the knowledge and skills to cope with, challenge, and combat such oppression collectively, which is a transformative process that molds them into resolute activists and politicians through the acquisition of learning experiences.

This research endeavored to examine the transformative lived experiences of Kurdish women, which also explored the linkage between intersectionality and social movement learning theory. The previous chapter delineated the themes that emerged

from the interviews, elucidating the progression of awareness, resilience, retaliation, and subsequent involvement in the Kurdish Women's movement, chronologically. In this chapter, the researcher established the correlation between these themes to unveil the transformative journey of these women toward liberation through learning.

Intersectionality across Ethnicity, Gender, and Religion Resulting in Fear, Anger, and Resentment

Q1. What was it like to live under oppressive conditions if Kurdish women felt oppressed?

The first research question aimed to shed light on the lived experiences of multiple oppressions to understand how intersectionality operated in these women's lives. The interviews for this study uncovered a range of oppressive experiences, which varied in form and severity, encompassing acts such as physical assault, assassination, false accusations, and intense interrogations. While the research initially anticipated the presence of ethnic and gender-based oppression, it became apparent that religious oppression also significantly influenced several participants' lives. The participants primarily experienced ethnic and religious oppression from external sources such as state officials, law enforcement, school administrations, and teachers, whereas gender oppression came from family members. These entities played a significant role in perpetrating oppression based on ethnicity and religious identity.

Due to their Kurdish identity, the participants encountered ethnic oppression early on. They experienced this oppression firsthand and witnessed their family members facing similar mistreatment. The intensity of ethnic oppression the participants experienced in their families varied from the murder of a grandfather to the imprisonment

of a brother, from a tortured father to a father who went missing for years. Despite the gravity of these incidents, Participant R initially asserted that her experiences of oppression in life were not as profound as those endured by many other Kurdish individuals. Nevertheless, as the interview progressed, she elaborated on her grandfather's assassination and her father's escape, recognizing oppression during her formative years. Although she did not personally confront it, the consequential impact of oppression on her life became evident.

Even though this study aimed to focus solely on informal learning through experiences under oppression, ethnic and religious oppression in the formal school system from elementary to higher education emerged in several interviews. Friedman et al. (2016, p. 1) argue that education can serve as a tool for "cultural indoctrination and social control," fostering obedience to authority. As Celiker (2013) highlighted, Turkish education has played a significant role in the Turkification process imposed on young female Kurds. Participant K's account of her time as an elementary school student is compelling evidence of the assimilation efforts targeted at Kurdish students. The impact of oppression she faced as a child traumatized her, and its remarks are still visible, emotionally and physically. Participant R's experience of oppression set a number of barriers for her during the university years. Because of her distinct Kurdish name, Participant R faced oppression numerous times during her university years. Participants' experiences as students served as evidence of the assimilation that Kurdish students may face in schools.

External sources were primarily responsible for ethnic and religious oppression, whereas participants considered their homes safe environments, relatively free from

ethnic oppression. However, when it came to gender-based oppression, the participants reported that it predominantly originated within the family, particularly from their mothers, which suggests that gender oppression was more prevalent in the domestic sphere. The ways gender oppression occurred in their lives were indicators of the norms in their patriarchal society.

Despite the composed and confident demeanor of the participants, their eyes and voices revealed a depth of emotion while discussing their painful experiences. Verbalizing their feelings, stemming from past ordeals, posed a challenge for the participants. However, their feelings gradually became more apparent as they delved into their memories of oppression. Participant X initially struggled to articulate her emotions in oppressive situations. However, during the interview, she was able to identify her feelings.

In the initial phase of this study, the focus was on analyzing the lived experiences of oppression. The main objective was to explore how various forms of oppression intersected and affected the participants' emotions. The first research question aimed to understand if the participants had experienced multiple forms of oppression and, if so, how they learned and perceived these oppressive experiences. This question sought to provide insight into the specific experiences of Kurdish women facing oppression and the broader implications of living under such circumstances. The research findings aligned with Nilsson's (2018) conclusions, which highlighted the existence of intersecting ethnic, gender, and religion-based oppression among Kurdish women. The findings of this study supported that the participants experienced the intersection of multiple forms of oppression, and they learned about these oppressions firsthand through their lived

experiences, which led to the development of emotions such as fear, anger, and resentment.

Q2. What did they learn as a result of living under oppressive conditions?

Key Learnings and Gains as a Result of Oppression

The second research question delved into the essential insights gained by the participants through their lived experiences of oppression. Interviews confirmed that these key learnings encompass a recognition of systemic oppression for cultural assimilation; overcoming oppression by concealing one's identity, engaging in migration, displaying resilience; and finding inspiration and empowerment. According to the participants, their collective exposure to oppressive environments had instilled in them the understanding that the purpose of oppression was to cause the assimilation of Kurdish culture.

Systemic Oppression and Assimilation

The interview findings revealed that participants acquired a firsthand understanding of oppression through personal experiences and by observing the suffering endured by others. Participant S recounted her initial encounter with oppression, specifically physical violence, during her childhood, when she witnessed the hardships faced by her father. This particular event held significant significance in her life, as she vividly recalled the armed attack targeting the Kurdish civilians during Vedat Aydin's (Kurdish politician, human rights defender, and a friend of Participant S' father) funeral and how my father and his friends had to flee to survive. The source of this armed attack, carried out by state forces, clearly indicated the origin of oppression. This case was something I heard from her for the very first time. To learn more about it, I searched this

case online and understood the severity of the tragedy better.

Participant R experienced a profound transformation in her outlook as she delved into the intricacies of systemic oppression. Through her journey, she comprehended that the oppression prevailing in Turkey was deeply rooted in systemic structures. This realization was pivotal in reshaping her perception, enabling her to avoid harboring anger towards individuals and fostering improved communication with them. By recognizing that the oppression in Turkey was systemic and originated from the state, the participants gained valuable insights into its functioning, particularly its role in cultural assimilation. This revelation sheds light on the process through which oppression is acquired and learned, underscoring the profound impact of understanding its systemic nature.

Scholars have engaged in extensive discourse regarding using education to foster assimilation. Friedman et al. (2016) assert that the educational system in the United States reinforces societal class divisions by conditioning individuals to submit to authority within the hierarchical framework of the contemporary corporate structure. Additionally, they contend that the curriculum in Kenya is designed to cultivate a sense of nationalism among its populace. Participant K's insight about the history classes delivering selective content revealed the sense of nationalism as an instrument of assimilation in the form of oppression in Turkish schools.

Enduring Oppression

As participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the origins and perpetuation of oppression, they also shared insights into various strategies they employed to endure it. A prevalent theme from the interviews was the collective practice of concealing one's identity, name, ethnicity, or religion. Participant N vividly described

existing in two distinct worlds—the external realm and the confines of her home. In the outside world, she had to assume a different persona. In contrast, at home, she was free to express her authentic self, albeit within the boundaries of assimilation enforced by her father. Her evocative use of the term “blanket” aptly captured her father’s efforts to shield his family by concealing their true identity. Participant N’s life circumstances revealed the need to take precautions to avoid oppression.

As a young child, Participant S found herself concealing her ethnic identity to assimilate into her new neighborhood and school in Istanbul following her family’s relocation. This act of self-concealment served as a means to avoid potential feelings of alienation or discrimination. She tried to fit in and adapt to her new social environment. Despite her awareness of the disparity between her ethnic identity and her friends in the neighborhood and school, this pretense did not bring her genuine happiness. She still could not establish a sense of belonging. Participant K recounted the oppression endured by Kurdish students during her college years, prompting them to conceal their Kurdish identity as a means of self-protection against hostile attacks.

Forced migration emerged as another significant collective experience among the participants, highlighting it as a prevailing consequence of oppression. The decision to leave one’s homeland was often imperative to safeguard their family from oppressive conditions or due to the absence of viable options for social and economic sustenance. This recurring theme of forced migration permeated the interviews, underscoring its significance in the participants’ lives.

Participant X’s family, burdened by immense oppressive pressure, reached a breaking point where her father decided to relocate them from their village. Experiencing

relentless interrogations, beatings, and torture, he eventually decided to move his family out of their home village. Based on the dire situation Participant X vividly portrayed, the state enforced these forced migrations on the Kurds to cause assimilation.

A notable discovery stemming from this investigation, which focused on understanding oppression, revolved around resilience. Through in-depth interviews, it was evident that Kurdish women who had lived under oppressive conditions had remarkably developed resilience as a direct consequence. The experience of enduring oppression instilled in them a remarkable ability to persevere and maintain hope, refusing to succumb to despair. Their encounters with oppression became transformative, teaching them invaluable lessons about the importance of tenacity and the refusal to give up in the face of adversity. Thus, resilience emerged as a compelling outcome resulting from the profound impact of oppression on these remarkable Kurdish women.

Inspiration and Empowerment

This study revealed that inspiration and empowerment were fundamental to the participants' learning processes. These transformative experiences emerged from various sources, including interactions with other Kurdish women and family members. Observing other women's struggles, engaging in meaningful conversations with them, and even reading about the experiences of Kurdish women all contributed to significant learning, processing, and reflection for the participants. The interviews illuminated that gaining insights into the lives, stories, and hardships of others served as a source of inspiration and encouragement for their journeys of transformation.

Participant S shared a poignant memory that left a lasting impact on her. She recounted an incident in which a grieving Kurdish woman fearlessly expressed her

sorrow and openly spoke out about the rape and murder of her daughter. Reflecting on the events that unfolded during the 1990s, Participant S expressed a deep sense of pride for the mother's courageous act of addressing the incident in Kurdish. She stated, "I felt very proud of her." This memory remained vivid and held immense significance for Participant S. In addition to this, Participant S also grew up observing her father's active involvement in political matters. She further revealed that her grandfather, who was engaged in politics, was tragically assassinated in front of her children. The influence of family members was also evident in the experiences of Participant X. She shared how her brother's encouragement played a crucial role in her questioning of her own identity.

In conclusion, this research explored the essential insights gained by participants through their lived experiences of oppression. The findings revealed several key learnings and experiences that shed light on the nature of oppression and its effects. The participants recognized cultural assimilation as a tool used in systemic oppression. The practice of concealing one's identity, forced migration, and resilience as a means of survival were common themes among the participants. Moreover, participants found inspiration and empowerment through interactions with others, learning from their stories and struggles. These encounters sparked profound realizations and led to a broader social perspective. The impact of oppression varied, with some participants expressing gratitude for its transformative effect on their lives.

Q3. How did experiencing oppression contribute to their participation in the Kurdish women's movement?

Factors that Led Participants to the Kurdish Women's Movement

The purpose of the third research question was to shed light on how the intersection of multiple oppressions drove Kurdish women to participate in the Kurdish women's movement. The aim was to identify the impact of intersectionality on the decision to join the women's movement. According to Chun et al. (2013, p. 923.), "Every person is a crowd, characterized by multiple identities, identifications, and allegiances. However, the process of racial formation set in motion by dominant racial projects brings individuals together in particular groups with shared links and fates." Echoing Chun et al., this question investigated how experiencing oppression contributes to the involvement of Kurdish women in both the Kurdish nationalist movement and the Kurdish women's movement. The interviews revealed the factors influencing the participants' decisions to join the movement due to facing oppression. These factors encapsulated the development of an interest in acquiring knowledge about culture and gender; a sense of retaliation, courage, and persistence driving their participation in the movement; and a deep sense of pride in their ethnic and gender identity.

The participants collectively exhibited a strong desire to embrace their identities as Kurdish women, which drove their pursuit of more extensive knowledge about their cultural heritage. Consequently, their engagement in learning activities related to their culture, gender awareness, and language fostered an enhanced understanding of the Kurdish national and women's struggle. Participant K's curiosity prompted her to engage in scholarly literature about women and gender, demonstrating her desire to explore more about her ethnic and gender identities. Participant X's desire to enhance her linguistic prowess prompted her enrollment in a Kurdish language school. Participant X knew that

Kurdish was a distinct language separate from Turkish. However, her participation in the language school heightened her realization of possessing an exclusively unique language. That is how her journey started in the Kurdish women's movement. Throughout the interview, she expressed her wish to conduct the conversation in Kurdish, as she believed it would allow her to articulate herself more effectively. She emphasized that Kurdish was a linguistically rich language. There was excitement in her voice and pride in her eyes when she talked about her language.

The participants discussed their experiences of hiding their identities as a means of self-preservation during a previous stage of their lives, driven by the pervasive fear of enduring oppression. However, the participants added that they gradually acquired a sense of defiance, bravery, and perseverance, which they attributed to the hardships they had endured due to oppression. Participant S attributed her choice to return to her homeland in later years to the profound effects of oppression experienced by both herself and her family. She explicitly conveyed that her decision stemmed from the persistent oppression endured by the Kurdish community in her homeland and her aspiration to contribute to the Kurdish women's movements actively. In explaining her motivation, she aptly remarked that her return was due to oppression and the Kurdish women's movement. Moving back to her hometown was the beginning of her new chapter in the Kurdish women's movement. Participant N and Participant R also had the same motivation to decide to join the movement. Participants' statements suggested oppression had a counter effect rather than pressing the oppressed individuals.

A significant aspect that influenced the participants' choice to join the Kurdish women's movement was the development of a profound sense of pride in their identity as

women, accompanied by a wholehearted embrace of feminism. During the interviews, it became apparent that the participants had acquired a deeper comprehension of the significance and distinctiveness of their gender identity. This newfound understanding evoked a powerful feeling of pride, fueling their determination to engage in the movement actively. Furthermore, their experiences and observations regarding gender inequality catalyzed their wholehearted acceptance of feminism. Recognizing the prevalent issues surrounding gender disparities, they became staunch advocates for gender equality, propelling them to align themselves with the Kurdish women's movement.

This study provided empirical evidence affirming that the participants' lived experiences, marked by their subjection to oppression, played a pivotal role in their active involvement in the Kurdish women's movement. The participants' journey was characterized by continuous growth in knowledge and awareness of their multiple identities, bolstering their courage and fortitude. Furthermore, their deepening understanding of Kurdish feminism fueled an unwavering determination to actively contribute to the ongoing struggle for transformative change. Consequently, they embarked upon a transformative journey, transitioning from victimhood to becoming proactive agents in effecting meaningful change, discussed in the next and final section.

Q4. What has your participation in the Kurdish women's movement taught you?

Collectivism, Solidarity, and Transformation Toward Liberation

The final question of this research focused on the valuable insights gained from the active involvement of participants in the Kurdish women's movement. The aim was to illuminate the transformative journey undertaken by these individuals in their pursuit

of liberation. According to Hall (2009), social movements represent a collective endeavor by a specific group of people aimed at challenging, altering, or influencing the realms of politics, society, or policymaking, thereby impacting the world of governance. Hall's definition underscores the importance of collectivism and transformation. Consequently, the participants emphasized the heightened awareness they developed regarding the significance of collectivism and solidarity and how their engagement in the social movement brought about personal growth and liberation.

The notion of collectivism and solidarity emerged as a prominent theme emphasized by the participants, permeating their language and expressions. Participant S consistently employed the inclusive pronoun "we" instead of "I" when articulating her thoughts and perspectives. Participant S responded with a lighthearted laugh during the interview when questioned about this linguistic choice, indicating that she had encountered the same question before. She explained that her preference for "we" over "I" stemmed from a desire to reject individualistic tendencies and embrace a collective identity. Participant S conveyed a profound understanding of solidarity, describing it as the belief that "a woman is a home to another woman." This symbolic representation reveals her perspective on the interconnectedness and mutual support within the collective female experience.

The primary aim of this research was to shed light on the transformative journey of Kurdish women, transitioning from a state of victimhood to becoming courageous activists and politicians. It is pertinent to reference Freire's (2021) argument that education possesses political dimensions, as it can either domesticate or liberate individuals. Additionally, Alison (2003) posited that the participation of Tamil women in

the liberation movement led to profound changes in their roles and behaviors, ultimately radicalizing and reshaping their perspectives on women's liberation. Furthermore, Langdon and Garbary (2017, p. 15) noted that the involvement of women in the Ada movement in Ghana facilitated collective learning, enabling these women to transform themselves into "Yihi Katseme" or "Brave Women." In line with these scholars, the findings from the interviews conducted in this study affirmed that the learning process within the Kurdish women's movement played a pivotal role in empowering and emancipating these women, thereby facilitating their transformation toward liberation.

Research Findings and the Alignment to Intersectionality and Social Movement

Learning Theory

This section underscored the importance of the findings derived from two theoretical frameworks, intersectionality and social movement learning, which constitute the central focus of this research. As Paulo Freire's (2021) analysis provides a broad purview of learning under oppression, these two frameworks intertwine sequentially, providing a comprehensive explanation of the transformative process of liberation through learning from lived experiences under oppressive circumstances. This research employed the lens of intersectionality to investigate whether learning occurred due to the lived experiences of oppression and social movement learning to determine whether learning occurred due to their active participation in the Kurdish women's movement.

Freire (2021) shared an analysis of marginalized individuals' learning experiences to awaken their cognitive faculties, creative abilities, and consistent critical reflection skills. He proceeds by stating that this awakening is crucial to uncover, demystify, and comprehend the power dynamics responsible for their marginalization and subsequently

initiate a process of liberation through practical action. Concurrently, drawing upon the work of Chun et al. (2013), intersectionality is a conceptual framework for comprehensively examining the interconnected dimensions of gender, family, work, and nationality. The research outcomes aligned with Crenshaw's (1991) notion of intersectionality, as they reveal that the five Kurdish women in the study encountered multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. Their lived experiences played a pivotal role in their understanding of diverse manifestations of oppression. The research findings further confirmed that participants' ethnicity, gender, and religious identity were the subject of oppression.

Consequently, the participants comprehensively understood the nature of oppression, its operational mechanisms, power dynamics, and coping strategies. They deepened their knowledge regarding the significance of ethnicity, gender, and religious identity. Building upon Choudry's (2007) definition of social movements as knowledge producers, Kurdish women gained a sense of empowerment through the shared encounters and intersections, motivating their voluntary participation in the Kurdish women's movement as active agents. They recognized that they were not alone, and the movement provided them with a platform to effect meaningful changes. By actively engaging in the Kurdish women's movement, they collectively contributed to advancing women's rights, forging a sense of solidarity. A poignant statement from the interviews encapsulated the empowering nature of women supporting one another: "A woman is a home to another woman."

At the end of the interviews, the participants discussed where they are today. When they described the changing effect of the Kurdish women's movement, they also

talked about their transformation toward liberation. They were victims of yesterday and courageous activists of today. With the enhanced knowledge of self-identity, systemic oppression, and the strength they gained from one another, these women were fearless, proud, empowered, strong, supported, and liberated. According to them, being in the movement is an exhilarating and inspiring experience. Considering the whole lifespan of each participant, they demonstrated a shared pattern that begins with painful memories of oppression and ends with their liberating transformation.

In conclusion, this research demonstrated the significance of employing intersectionality and social movement learning as theoretical frameworks for understanding the transformative process of learning and liberation among marginalized individuals, particularly Kurdish women. This research revealed how intersectionality provided a comprehensive lens to examine the interconnected aspects of gender, ethnicity, and religion contributing to oppression. It unveiled the adverse effect of oppression, which led these oppressed women to take collective actions. The research emphasized the empowering nature of social movements, with the Kurdish women's movement serving as a platform for collective action and advancing women's rights. Through active engagement in the movement, the participants experienced a personal transformation, gaining a sense of empowerment, solidarity, and liberation. Their narratives reflected the profound impact of the movement on their self-identity, resilience, and newfound strength. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on transformative learning and highlights the importance of intersectionality and social movement learning in fostering liberation and empowerment among marginalized individuals.

Theoretical Conclusions

My aim with this study was to find out what the Kurdish women learned from their lived experiences of oppression and how learning affected their transformational decisions and acts. I also hoped to learn from my participant's stories to enhance my understanding of oppression. The research findings indicated that when people collectively experience oppression, it can lead to a transformative process toward liberation for those individuals. Social movements that emerge in response to oppression create a platform where those who have been oppressed can actively fight against their oppression, transitioning from a state of victimhood to one of liberation. This underscores my conclusion that oppression has a counterintuitive impact on the oppressed. Rather than suppressing them, oppression can spur the formation of social movements and motivate oppressed individuals to participate. The participants joined the Kurdish women's movement because they simply faced oppression and wanted to fight it.

Another insight I gained from this study is that achieving transformative change necessitates a collective acknowledgment and nuanced understanding of oppression, which, in turn, cultivates solidarity and fosters a shared aspiration for liberation. During interviews conducted with the participants, a profound revelation emerged: their personal experiences of oppression led to a collective awareness of the intricate power dynamics ingrained within a multifaceted system of oppression. These experiences catalyzed recognition of the systemic underpinnings that permeate various aspects of their lives. For example, their insights enabled them to discern that gender-based oppression, even within familial contexts such as the relationship between a mother and a daughter, can be traced back to the patriarchal structures embedded within the state and society. This

recognition highlights the profound influence of systemic forces on individual experiences of oppression, which is a significant learning outcome for the participants.

Last but not least, I also gained a crucial insight: the severity and breadth of oppression contribute to the persistence of the Kurdish women and consequently to the efficacy of the resultant struggle. Collective victimization of the oppression created its movement. In other words, the potent force of collective struggle within the Kurdish women's movement is rooted in the widespread oppression experienced by Kurdish women as they confront various forms of discrimination and marginalization. This collective struggle, born from shared experiences of oppression, exemplifies the transformative potential of unity and solidarity in striving for social change.

Summary

This study aimed to explore the transformative journey of Kurdish women, moving from victims of oppression to becoming activists and politicians through the power of learning. Building upon the insights of Tariq and Syed (2017, p. 512), who emphasized that marginalized women are not mere "voiceless victims" but proactive agents of change, this research sought to illuminate the empowering evolution of Kurdish women engaged in the Kurdish women's movement. A recurring pattern emerged by delving into the lived experiences of five participants, illustrating that their transformative process commenced early in life as they navigated the intersectionality of various identities. This process nurtured their knowledge and propelled them to become proactive agents driving change within the women's movement, continually expanding their understanding and striving toward liberation.

This study uncovered distinct sources of oppression experienced by the

participants: ethnic and religious oppression originating from outside the home and gender oppression stemming from family members. The understanding of oppression against the Kurdish and Alevi communities developed early in their lives, while recognition of gender oppression came later when they reached young adulthood. The participants' comprehension of intersectionality and power dynamics played a crucial role in identifying the sources of oppression. They realized that the oppression was systemic, which elucidated why they faced it because of their gender, ethnicity, and religion, and even why their mothers enforced gender expectations upon them.

By exploring the participants' lived experiences chronologically across their lifespans, the study revealed that their understanding of cultural oppression emerged earlier. In contrast, comprehension of gender oppression and the formation of gender identity occurred later. Throughout this journey, they navigated oppression with various emotions, including fear, anger, and resilience, while simultaneously learning to endure it. The influence and empowerment of their family members, other Kurdish families, and Kurdish women played significant roles in shaping their perspectives. During this transformative period, the participants strongly desired to deepen their knowledge of their culture and its significance, which led to acts of defiance, courage, and persistence. They acquired a profound understanding of their identity and concepts, such as jineology (Kurdish feminism), which instilled a sense of pride. As a result, they actively engaged in various segments of the Kurdish nationalist movement and Kurdish women's movement. The participants acknowledged that their involvement in the movement was a collective action and transformed them through solidarity and mutual support.

Today, the participants feel more courageous, strong, and hopeful. Participant X

aply stated, “The Kurdish freedom movement gave me endless courage... It taught me how to fight and turn my anger into the struggle to be the power of the solution.” This powerful testimony highlights the transformative impact of the movement on individual empowerment. Remarkably, Participant S observed, “I saw the Kurdish men change... The Kurdish women’s movement did not only transform women, it transformed the whole society, including the men.” This statement underscores the far-reaching influence of the Kurdish women’s movement, extending beyond its direct participants and catalyzing societal transformation.

An essential aspect of their learning within the Kurdish women’s movement revolved around their women’s identity. Participant S reflected, “Within the past 15 years of my life, particularly during my 30s, my journey began by initially focusing on my ethnic identity and later expanded to encompass a profound exploration and understanding of the women’s movement and the concept of woman identity”. This essential learning indicates a significant evolution in their understanding as they embarked on a journey of self-discovery, embracing their ethnic heritage and delving deeper into the principles and ideals of the women’s movement. Overall, these testimonies illustrate the profound personal growth experienced by the participants as they actively engaged with the Kurdish women’s movement, resulting in increased courage, transformative change within society, and a profound exploration of their own women’s identity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, which shed light on the transformative journey of Kurdish women from victims of oppression to activists and politicians through the power of learning, several recommendations emerge for further research and practical implications. Firstly, it is recommended that future studies expand the scope of participants and include a larger sample size to enhance the generalizability of the findings. By including a diverse range of participants from different regions, socioeconomic backgrounds, and age groups, a more comprehensive understanding of the transformative process can be achieved, allowing for a deeper exploration of the factors that contribute to the empowerment of Kurdish women.

The researcher recommends that a future study focuses on the educators within the Kurdish women's movement to explore their collective learning policies, structures, and practices. Understanding the pedagogical approaches utilized by educators involved in the movement can provide valuable insights into effective methodologies for empowering Kurdish women and fostering transformative learning experiences. This research can shed light on these educators' strategies, challenges, and successes, ultimately contributing to developing best practices in women's empowerment education and exploring the needs and gaps within the Kurdish women's movement's educational initiatives. This research can inform the development of targeted interventions and policies that address the identified gaps, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of educational initiatives.

Additionally, future research should investigate the pedagogy of oppression and its impact on Kurdish students within formal education, particularly in public schools.

This line of inquiry can explore how educational systems perpetuate or challenge oppressive structures and dynamics and how these experiences affect Kurdish students' empowerment and agency. By examining the curriculum, teaching methods, and classroom interactions, researchers can identify strategies to promote inclusive and culturally responsive education that fosters empowerment and challenges oppressive practices.

Finally, this study revealed that the Kurdish women's movement also impacted the transformation of men. Therefore, a future study focusing on exploring the experiences and perspectives of men whom the Kurdish women's movement has influenced will be beneficial. This research can show how the movement challenges traditional gender roles and norms and promotes gender equality and empowerment among men. Researchers can gain insights into their transformative processes, challenges, and strategies to challenge patriarchal structures and support women's rights by conducting interviews or surveys with men who have engaged with the movement. Understanding the transformation of men through the Kurdish women's movement can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the movement's broader societal impact and inform strategies for engaging men as allies in pursuing gender equality and social justice.

By conducting research in these areas, scholars can further advance our understanding of the pedagogy of oppression in formal education and contribute to the development of more inclusive and empowering educational practices. Additionally, exploring educators' collective learning policies and practices within the Kurdish women's movement can provide valuable insights into other contexts and movements

aiming to empower marginalized groups. Finally, investigating the needs and gaps within the movement's educational initiatives can inform the development of tailored interventions and policies to enhance the impact and accessibility of educational programs for Kurdish women.

Limitations

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study relied on a small group of participants, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. The range of experiences within the Kurdish women's movement might have been partially captured with only five participants. Including a larger sample size would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the transformative journeys and the factors influencing them.

Another limitation arose from the geographical distance between the researcher and the participants, which made virtual interviews the only possible way to conduct the interviews. While virtual interviews allowed for remote data collection, the absence of physical presence may have affected the depth of rapport established and hindered the observation of non-verbal cues typically present in face-to-face interactions. Furthermore, technical issues or limitations associated with virtual communication platforms could have impacted the quality and richness of the data collected. Also, translating participants' narratives introduced the possibility of biases or inaccuracies. Despite efforts to preserve the original meaning and essence of the stories, nuances, and cultural connotations may have yet to fully transfer to the translated versions.

Lastly, it is vital to acknowledge the potential biases that the researcher, a Kurdish woman, may have brought to the study. Personal experiences, cultural background, and

prior knowledge can shape the interpretation and analysis of data. While the researcher made conscious efforts to minimize biases through reflexivity and adopting a critical lens, it is crucial to recognize that the findings may have been influenced by the researcher's perspectives and inherent biases.

These limitations underscore the areas where future research can build upon the present study. Future studies can enhance the validity and reliability of research on the transformative journey of Kurdish women by including a more prominent and diverse sample size, conducting in-person interviews, employing professional translation services, and involving researchers from various backgrounds.

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Appendix A

Research Questions

Based on the three phases, the interview will have the following questions:

Lived experiences during childhood:

1. As a young child, did you experience any type of oppression in your family, neighborhood, and/or school? If yes, please describe.
2. If you experienced gender discrimination, in what ways did that occur?
3. If you experienced ethnic discrimination, in what ways did that occur?
4. How did those experiences make you feel?
5. How did you process and perceive the oppression you experienced or witnessed?

Lived experiences during youth and adulthood:

6. As a young adult, did you experience any type of oppression in your family, neighborhood, and/or school?
7. If you experienced gender discrimination, in what ways did that occur?
8. If you experienced ethnic discrimination, in what ways did that occur?
9. How did your experience of oppression make you feel?
10. How did you process and perceive the oppression you experienced or witnessed?

In the movement:

11. What made you decide to join the movement?
12. How does your participation in the movement make you feel?
13. What have you learned from your participation in the movement?

General final questions:

14. What did change in you and/or your life after your experiences?
15. What did you learn as the outcome of your experience of oppression?
16. In what ways and in which directions did your experience of oppression affect your life?
17. What decisions did you make, and how did those decisions change your life?
18. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix B

Recruitment Email to Women's Organizations

Subject Line: I need your help! Would you like to contribute to my research on the Kurdish women's movement?

Dear (Organization's Name) members,

My name is Ebru Ilhan. I am a doctoral student at Minnesota State University, Mankato (USA) working on my dissertation. I am reaching out to (ORG NAME) because I need your help.

I am conducting research about Kurdish women's lived experiences under oppression. My goal is to study how Kurdish women lived under oppressive circumstances, what they learned from their lived experiences of oppression, and how that learning has shaped their path to being today's activists and /or political agents as active participants of the Kurdish women's movement.

I need volunteers to participate in my research study. Participation will involve two individual interviews with each participant on Zoom. The first interview will take an hour, and the second interview will take half an hour. There are no major risks involved in this research for participants, but I anticipate minimal emotional or social risk in this study. We define minimal risk as harm not beyond what is encountered in everyday life. Participants' anonymity will be protected, and no real names will be used in the research. Should a participant experience any form of stress or discomfort during this process, I will allow the participant to either break from the process or discontinue without receiving any penalty.

To be eligible, you must:

1. Be 18+ years old
2. Have lived in Turkey
3. Identify yourself as Kurdish and a woman
4. Have participated in /contributed to the Kurdish women's movement

I need at least 5 participants for my research. I would greatly appreciate your sharing this message with the members of your organization and asking if they are willing to participate. Anyone willing to participate in the study can reach out to me individually by calling or texting me on my WhatsApp number (15073415942) or emailing me (ebru.ilhan.2@mnsu.edu), or I can reach out to them directly if you provide me with their names and contact information. Once participants are selected, I will send each participant the Informed Consent Form for more details via their choice of communication, either by phone (WhatsApp) or email.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Ebru Ilhan
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Department of Educational Leadership
7700 France Ave
Edina, MN 55435
Email: Ebru.ilhan.2@minnstate.edu
Phone/WhatsApp: 1-507-341-5942

Appendix C

Consent Form in English

Dear Participant,

This research is being conducted by Ebru Ilhan, a doctoral candidate under the guidance of Dr. Melissa Krull in the Department of Educational Leadership at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. Participation is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. You may discontinue participation at any time before the data collection is complete without penalty.

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of learning about oppression through lived experiences on Kurdish women's lives to explore the process of their transformation from victimization to liberation. This is a qualitative study that adopts the phenomenological approach to allow the researcher to collect data about the lived experiences of Kurdish women under oppressive conditions. This research may not have direct benefits for you but will benefit academia since there is limited research on this research topic. This study will contribute to the very limited body of knowledge about Kurdish women in Turkey who experience gender and ethnic discrimination and participate in a social movement founded on raising awareness about and supporting Kurdish women in Turkey.

You will be expected to attend your scheduled interviews on time and answer the questions. Data will be collected through interviews and the researcher's observation. There will be two sets of one-on-one interviews, and the spoken language will be Turkish. The first interview will be hour-long, but the second interview might take less than an hour. The aim of having a second interview is to ask participants for confirmation on the analysis and/or for clarification on their answers. The researcher will observe participants' emotions, body language, choice of words, etc. Since you are residing in Turkey, the interviews will be conducted remotely via an online digital platform, Zoom. The audio of each interview will be saved by the researcher on a device that requires the researcher's log-in information and won't be shared with anyone. Each audio recording will be transcribed and then translated into English. A transcriptionist (or transcribing service) will be (or may be) used to transcribe the voice-recorded data collected in this study. The researcher(s) will ensure the protection of your confidentiality and privacy with the transcriptionist(s) involved. The audio recordings of all the interviews will be erased/deleted once the research is complete.

Your participation in this research may involve some risks, but the risks you will encounter as a participant are not more than those experienced in your everyday life. Neither your identity nor your answers will be shared with anyone. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed. However, your name will not be associated with the research findings, and only the researcher will know your identity as a participant. You may also experience emotional and/or social discomfort when answering the questions during the interview.

Date:

Initial of Participant:

IRBNet ID Number: 1952587

Please, do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before or during your participation. Include the statement.

- If you have any questions about this research study, contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Melissa Krull at melissa.krull@mnsu.edu. If you have any questions about participants' rights and research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board, at (507) 389-1242.
- If you wish, student researchers can have contact information, but they must be identified as working under the direction of the Principal Investigator. As a doctorate candidate, I am a student researcher who is working on this research under the direction of Dr. Melissa Krull. My contact information is (507) 341-5942 and ebru.ilhan@mnsu.edu.
- If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.
- If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

You have a right to ask for a copy of your consent form. You can reach out to Dr. Melissa Krull via email (melissa.krull@mnsu.edu) to ask for a copy of your consent form!

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Date:

Signature of Participant:

IRBNet ID Number: 1952587

Regards,

Ebru Ilhan
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Department of Educational Leadership
7700 France Ave
Edina, MN 55435
Email: Ebru.ilhan.2@minnstate.edu
Phone/WhatsApp: 1-507-341-5942

Consent Form in Turkish

Degerli Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, Amerika Birlesik Devletleri'nde yer alan Minnesota Eyalet Üniversitesi Mankato'nun Eğitim Liderliği Bölümü'nde, Dr. Melissa Krull'un rehberliğinde doktora adayı olan Ebru İlhan tarafından yürütülmektedir. Aşağıdaki bilgiler, bu araştırmaya katılmak isteyip istemediğinize karar vermeniz için paylaşılmıştır. Katılım gönüllüdür. Katılıp katılmama kararınız Minnesota Eyalet Üniversitesi, Mankato ile olan ilişkinizi etkilemeyecektir ve katılmayı reddetmeniz herhangi bir ceza veya menfaat kaybı içermeyecektir. Veri toplama işlemi tamamlanmadan önce herhangi bir ceza olmaksızın katılımınızı sonlandırabilirsiniz.

Bu araştırmanın amacı Kurt kadınlarının mağduriyetten özgürlüğe donusumlerini keşfetmektir. Bunun için, araştırmacı Kurt kadınlarının baskı altında yaşadıklarını, deneyimlerinden neler öğrendiklerini, ve öğrendiklerinin hayatlarının ilerleyen aşamalarını nasıl şekillendirdiğini anlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Bu araştırma Kürt kadınlarının baskı altında yaşadıkları hakkında veri toplayacak fenomenolojik bir çalışmadır. Bu araştırmanın size doğrudan katkısı olmayabilir, ancak bu araştırma konusuyla ilgili sınırlı araştırma olduğundan akademiye fayda sağlayacaktır. Bu araştırma, Türkiye'de cinsiyet ve etnik ayrımcılığa maruz kalan ve buna karşı mücadele eden Kurt kadın hareketi ile ilgili bilgi birimine katkı sağlayacaktır.

Siz katılımcıların önceden planlanan görüşmelerinize zamanında katılmanız ve soruları yanıtlamanız beklenmektedir. Veriler, görüşme esnasında paylaşacağınız bilgiler ve araştırmacının yapacağı gözlem yoluyla toplanacaktır. İki ayrı bire bir görüşme yapılacak ve konuşma dili Türkçe olacaktır. İlk görüşme bir saat sürecek, ancak ikinci görüşme muhtemelen daha kısa sürecek. İkinci görüşmede, araştırmacı yaptığı analizleri katılımcılarla paylaşacak ve doğru olup olmadıklarını soracak. Aynı zamanda katılımcılardan net olmayan konulara açıklık getirmelerini isteyecek. Araştırmacı, katılımcıların duygularını, beden dilini, kelime seçimlerini vb. gözlemleyecektir. Katılımcılar Türkiye'de araştırmacı ABD'de yaşadığı için, görüşmeler internette Zoom üzerinden yapılacaktır. Her görüşme alınacak, araştırmacı tarafından sesli kaydedilecek, kayıtlar araştırmacıya ait oturma açma bilgilerini gerektiren bir cihaza kaydedilecek ve kimseyle paylaşılmayacaktır. Her ses kaydı Türkçe metne dokülecek ve daha sonra İngilizce'ye çevrilecektir. Bu çalışmada toplanan ses kaydı verilerinin yazıya dökülmesi için bir bilgisayar programından (SONIX) ya da bir yardımcıdan (transkripsiyon hizmeti veren kişi) faydalanılacaktır. Araştırmacı(lar), transkripsiyonistlerin de gizliliğin ve mahremiyetin korunması kurallarına uymalarını temin edecektir. Tüm görüşmelerin ses kayıtları araştırma tamamlandıktan sonra silinecektir/imha edilecektir.

Bu araştırmaya katılımınız bazı riskler içerebilir, ancak bir katılımcı olarak karşılaşacağınız riskler, günlük yaşamınızda deneyimlediğiniz risklerden daha fazla değildir. Ne kimliğiniz ne de cevaplarınız kimseyle paylaşılmayacaktır. Araştırma tamamlandıktan sonra bulgularınızı sizinle paylaşmaktan mutluluk duyarım. Ancak, adınız araştırma bulgularıyla ilişkilendirilmeyecek ve katılımcı olarak kimliğinizi yalnızca araştırmacı bilecektir. Görüşme sırasında soruları cevaplarırken duygusal ve/veya sosyal rahatsızlık yaşayabilirsiniz.

Tarih:

IRBNet Kimlik Numarası: 1952587

Lütfen çalışma ile ilgili her türlü soruyu katılımınız öncesinde veya sırasında sormaktan çekinmeyiniz.

Aşağıdaki açıklamalar bu onay formuna dahildir:

- Bu araştırma çalışmasıyla ilgili herhangi bir sorunuz varsa, melissa.krull@mnsu.edu adresinden Baş Araştırmacı Dr. Melissa Krull ile iletişime geçin. Katılımcıların hakları ve araştırmayla ilgili yaralanmalar hakkında herhangi bir sorunuz varsa, lütfen (507) 389-1242 numaralı telefondan Kurumsal İnceleme Kurulu Yöneticisi ile iletişime geçin.

- Dilerseniz öğrenci araştırmacıların iletişim bilgileri olabilir, ancak Baş Araştırmacının yönlendirmesi altında çalıştıkları belirtilmelidir. Doktora adayı olarak bu araştırma üzerinde Dr. Melissa Krull başkanlığında çalışan bir öğrenci araştırmacıyım. İletişim bilgilerim (507) 341-5942 ve ebru.ilhan@mnsu.edu.

- Çevrimiçi anketlerin oluşturduğu belirli gizlilik ve anonimlik riskleri hakkında daha fazla bilgi isterseniz, lütfen Minnesota Eyalet Üniversitesi, Mankato Bilgi ve Teknoloji Hizmetleri Yardım Masası (507-389-6654) ile iletişime geçin ve Bilgi Güvenliği Müdürü ile konuşmayı isteyin.

- Çevrimiçi anketlerin oluşturduğu belirli gizlilik ve anonimlik riskleri hakkında daha fazla bilgi isterseniz, lütfen Minnesota Eyalet Üniversitesi, Mankato Bilgi ve Teknoloji Hizmetleri Yardım Masası (507-389-6654) ile iletişime geçin ve Bilgi Güvenliği Müdürü ile konuşmayı isteyin.

Onay formunuzun bir kopyasını isteme hakkınız vardır. İzin formunuzun bir kopyasını istemek için Dr. Melissa Krull'a e-posta (melissa.krull@mnsu.edu) aracılığıyla ulaşabilirsiniz.

İlgilendiginiz ve zaman ayırdığınız için teşekkür ederim!

Tarih:

Katılımcının İmzası

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