The dynamics of gender in the context of war

Towards understanding what scripts inform the way in which PKK female fighters perform gender in the recent war against the Islamic State

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Abstract

In this thesis, I examine the scripts which inform the way in which female fighters perform gender in the recent war against the Islamic state. It is assumed that gender is performed and that performances are informed by scripts that direct the female fighter's performances of gender. Gender here, is seen as a social construction, influenced by social environment and not predetermined by biological sex. Scripts are sets of meanings that inform the performer on how to perform and on how not to perform as a gendered person. I argue that various scripts inform the way in which the female fighters perform gender. These scripts come from both within as well as from without the PKK. Performances of gender are informed by the scripts of initiating gender equality, playing the subordinate role to men, performing the fearless and self confident woman, playing the peaceful and emotional victim, showing love for only the homeland, showing love for family and motherhood, being the protector and teacher of all women universally and uniting with all women universally. These different scripts inform the performances of gender in various and sometimes contradicting ways. Furthermore, while some scripts are being maintained in gender performances, others are being challenged or dominated by performances of other gendered scripts.

Acknowledgements

Map of areas controlled by the PKK
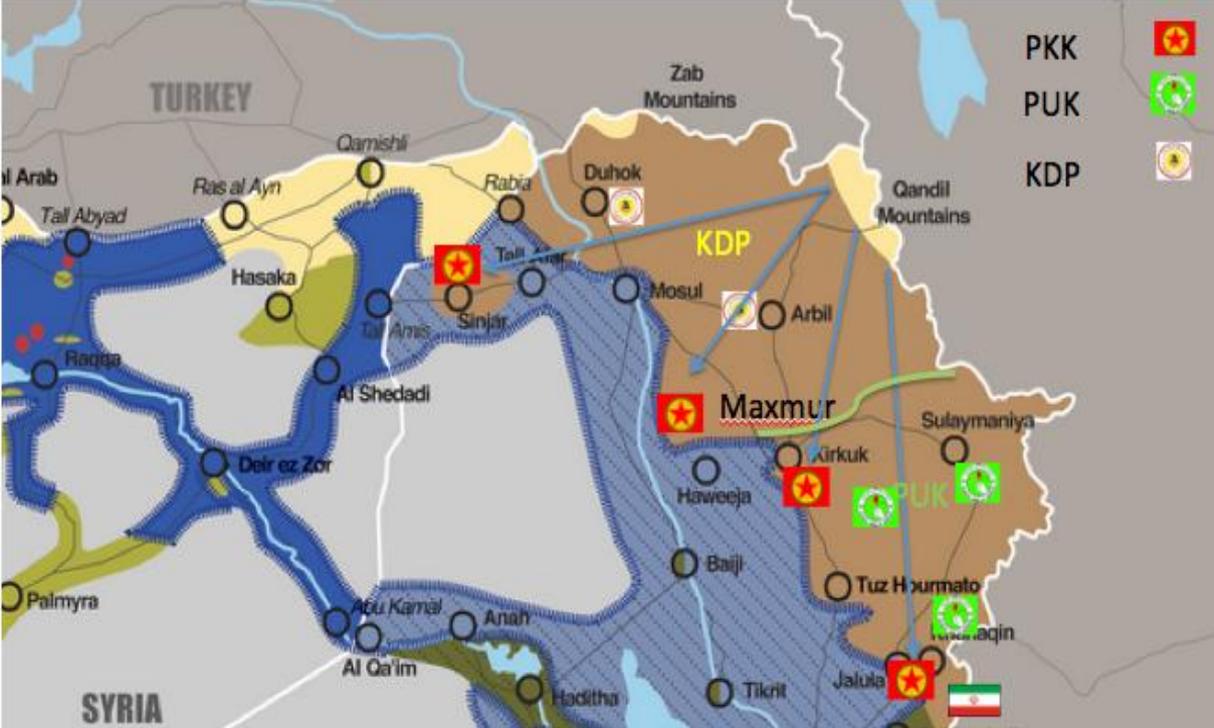
'All the world's a stage

and all the men and women merely players'

(William Shakespeare 1564-1616)

Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION

'Battle-hardened PKK women are striking fear into the hearts of Islamic State fighters, many of whom reportedly believe getting killed by a female will bar them from heaven. The women, fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party… have an intense interest in killing the bloodthirsty marauders who have beheaded Christians, raped women and sold females into slavery across a treacherous swath of Iraq and Syria' (Fox News, September 2, 2014).

Even though the PKK's armed resistance started in 1984 (Jong 2015:1), it is only since the rise of the Islamic State in 2014, that the PKK has gained more international media attention. This international attention is frequently given to the fact that the armed forces of the PKK consist of many women, who are actively engaged in fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. The above quote is an example of the various pieces that have been written since the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria. In many western media reports, it is emphasized that the PKK's female fighters are not passive supporters of the fight, functioning as cookers and cleaners for the PKK male soldiers, but that they are fighting in the war against the Islamic State with guns (Jong 2015:1).

Dirik however, in an interview for Al Jazeera (October 29, 2014) about the portrayal of the Kurdish female fighters in western media, argues that in many of these western reports, the 'glamorizing of all female Kurdish battalions' is emphasized, with little attention given to more than merely the sensationalist aspects of the struggle of the female PKK fighters. In these media reports, not much in depth information is given about what it means to be a woman within the PKK's guerilla organization, apart from them 'being brave 'and beautiful.' The PKK women are mostly seen, by these western authors, as 'behaving like men.'

The idea of female fighter behaving as men, is also represented in many articles written about female fighters in war. These authors see female warriors as either 'doing gender' or 'undoing gender.' Sason-Levy (2003:25) argues for example,

that when female soldiers behave aggressively or wear baggy clothing, that they are undoing gender. Unfortunately thus, female fighters in war and PKK fighters specifically, are both by news agencies and in academic articles, portrayed as 'pretending to be men.' In this thesis however, it is assumed that gender is fluid. Female fighters do not 'do' or 'undo' gender, by 'behaving like a man' or 'behaving like a woman.' Female fighters express their gender in different ways. Behaving as what is, by western authors, seen as manly or feminine, is not thus seen as manly or feminine in this thesis: it is the female gender expressed in its various forms (Gottschall 2002:20).

Female PKK fighters thus, have not been analyzed on a micro level of small-scale interactions by international media in a comprehensive way. In academic pieces as well, not much information is given about the micro level of action and interaction of the PKK female fighters. Many authors, when describing or explaining the daily actions and interactions of the PKK's female fighters, focus on the idea of female fighters as terrorists (O'Rourke 2009:37)(Yavus 2001:24). This thesis contributes to the knowledge about the PKK's female fighters, by shedding light on how these female fighters express gender on the micro level of social action and interaction.

The micro level of social action and interaction by the female fighters are explored through conducting dramaturgical analysis. Focusing on micro practices through performances is unique and new (Fuist 2014:427-442) and therefore provides an interesting angle for looking at gendered actions by female fighters of the PKK. Performance theorists argue that all the world is a stage, consisting of for example audiences, actors, props, settings, performance teams. This focus enables thus, to look at the actions and interactions of gender by the female fighters of the PKK in an analytic and comprehensive way. Butler (1990:1-136), Goffman (1959:46-61), Alexander (2006:29-90) and Fuist (2014:427-442), provide the tools to for analyzing gender performances from this performance angle.

In this thesis thus, the notion of female fighters 'doing' and 'undoing gender' through performing, is rejected. Acknowledging this however, does not mean that female fighters are, in their gendered performances, not influenced by expectations

of what is seen to be the appropriate gender performance for them as gendered persons. This highlights Butler's (1990:1) notion of gender as a construction. In this thesis, it is assumed that gender is constructed by ones social environment and not predetermined by biological sex. When female fighters perform gender, they have an idea of what is seen to be appropriate gendered behavior for them as gendered beings. As argued by Lloyd (1999:18), if we are to accept that gender performances have no calculable affects or origins namely, gender performances can be conceived as either meaningless (why bother) or spontaneous (it just happens). Critical reflection on the past, future and present is essential to the exploitations of gaps within norms that allow for transformation of gender performances and scripts to be made over time (Lloyd 1999:18).

One way of conducting these critical reflections, is by focusing on gender scripts. The definition of gender scripts is informed by Alexander (2006:59) and Lloyd (1999:18): '*meanings which entail codes and binaries of gender performances, which are in themselves informed by cultural background representations, in the effort to portray meanings in pursuit of a performance to be given*.' Analyzing gender scripts is important, because it is assumed that the way in which the PKK female fighters perform gender and the meaning they attach to their gendered performances, are guided by the concept of gender appropriate gender performances (Alexander 2006:59). The aim of this thesis is therefore to unravel the different, gendered scripts that inform the female fighters' gender performances. The puzzle of this thesis is therefore:

'What 'scripts' inform the way in which PKK female fighters perform gender in the current war against the Islamic state?'

Analyzing performance through the lens of performative scripts helps for the PKK female fighters' performances to be uncovered not only in their synthesis, but also in their contradictions. Furthermore, exploring the gendered scripts through looking at performances, enables to analyze how scripts are being challenged, maintained or strengthened in the performances of gender by the female fighters of the PKK. The latter is, as said by Lloyd, essential to the exploitations of gaps within norms that allow for transformation of gender performances to be made over time

(Lloyd 1999:18). This focus on gendered scripts helps to understand gender thus, not only as social, through analyzing performances only, but also as historical and contextual, by exploring the different scripts which inform the performances of gender.

Scripts here, are assumed to be constructed by people. However, this does not mean that people are aware of the gender scripts that they construct. Analyzing gender scripts can to contribute to raising more awareness of the different scripts that inform gender performances. Raising awareness of the different gender scripts and how they inform gender, can potentially even contribute to a change in these scripts . If, for example, the scripts inform performances in contradicting ways, this could create confusion and insecurity for the female performer. Being aware of this confusion and the problems that scripts might bring in the daily performances of the female fighters, can enable for a change to be made in the expectations based on binary gender divisions of male and female.

Performance theory thus, functions as an interpretive tool for understanding how gender is constructed in the day to day actions and interactions of the female fighters. First of all, the different parts of the gender performances have been analyzed by non-participant observation and documentary analysis. This analysis was needed in order to explore which parts of the 'performance toolkit' were most relevant in the gender performances of the female fighters. In the second phase of the research, secondary research was done, to find out what scripts informed the female fighter's performances. This enabled to look thus, not only at the social, but also at the historical and the contextual aspect of the PKK' female fighter's gender performances (Lloyd 1999:18).

The aim of this research is not to explore causal relations between scripts and performances, but to shed light on how scripts are embedded in performances. No statistically significant causal relationships between scripts and performances are being sought. Also, the findings of this research cannot be generalized into findings for a larger population. As argued by Mays and Pope (1995:3), participants in qualitative research are selected by the meanings of theoretical sampling, for their

ability to provide information about the area under investigation. Generalization in this research refers to the extent to which the theory might be explored for the experiences of other individuals in similar situations. The aim of this thesis thus to make a generalization to a theoretical understanding of scripted performances, rather than a making generalizations to an entire population. Furthermore, the expansiveness of this study and its subject matter could easily fill up multiple volumes with valuable analyses. Therefore, I attempt to limit the performance component of my inquiry only to the performances that are gendered and can be linked to gender scripts. Also, only female PKK fighters in the guerilla camps in Qandil and Makhmour were being studied, in April and May 2015. Furthermore, male PKK fighters were not analyzed, for the sake of the scope of this research

One of the challenges of this research was the limited time frame for data collection. Luckily however, access to many participants in the field was being granted easily and quickly. Furthermore, the PKK did not allow me to make pictures or videos, due to security reasons. However, being able to do fieldwork in dangerous areas such as that of the PKK guerilla camps in Iraq, enabled for new information on the PKK to be gained. As Nordstrom and Robben (295:1) argue, fieldwork is possible, even in the most dangerous contexts. According to them, more fieldwork could and should be done in dangerous areas. This research therefore contributes to the knowledge of the PKK not only through analyzing secondary data, but also through analyzing data through observation in a field that is not frequently visited by researchers (Bruinessen and Ray 2006:1).

The thesis is structured in the following order. The first chapter deals with the methodology of this research. The following chapters of the thesis each represent one or more gender scripts. The reason why for some chapters, there has been chosen to analyze two scripts is either because the two scripts are in direct opposition to each other. Within the chapters, both the scripts as well as how they inform the performances of gender, are described. The second chapter deals with the script of woman as subordinate to men/instigators of gender equality. The third chapter focuses on the script of the fearless and self confident woman. In the fourth chapter,

the script of women as peaceful and emotional victims is being analyzed. The fifth chapter deals with the script of women as loving/loving the homeland and the sixth chapter focuses on the script of PKK women as role models and teachers for all women over the world/uniting with all women over the world. The thesis will end with a concluding chapter.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Epistemology and ontology

Authors as Butler (1990:136) and Goffman (1959:58) argue that gender has no ontological status apart from the acts that compose it. According to them thus, one can only study structure through looking at the performances themselves, in which structure is embedded. Analyzing performances within their contexts, according to them, cannot help to measure their force, since the contexts in itself is an attempt to anticipate the performance. Actions thus always happen in unexpected ways. (Butler 1990:136). However, as Lloyd (1999:18), argued in, even if we accept that there are incalculable effects to all interactions, this does not mean that there are no calculable effects to performances. According to Lloyd (1999:18), critical reflection on the past, present or future is essential to the explanation of gaps that lie within hegemonic norms, since they can allow for social relations to be transformed. Studying gender only through performances themselves would therefore be meaningless (why bother) or spontaneous (it just happens) (Lloyd 1999:18).

The above is in line with Alexander's (2004:1) idea of cultural background presentations which inform scripted behavior. Authors merely taking in a constructivist stance, such a as Goffman (1958:58) and Butler (1990:36), argue that there is nothing outside the text, if by 'text' we mean the discursive schemes through which the world becomes meaningful. Alexander however, advocates a 'total culturalization' of social analysis. He doesn't agree with the idea that meaning is fundamental to an object from which it radiates from the outside, to reach subjects who react to it as an already existing reality. To be more clear, Alexander does not believe that agency is a mechanical outcome of structure. Alexander does however, also acknowledge that structure influences individuals actions. He understands structure as 'soft', meaning that structures consists of narratives and binary symbolic codes enabling or constraining action via their internalization by subjects (Kurasawa 2004:59). According to him, culture can be read from within actions. One could thus

say that this thesis is written form a constructivist stance, however also acknowledging soft structure (Tuner 2004:33).

Turner (2004:33) adds to this by arguing that for many theorists, culture is seen as a weak program, in which the analysis focuses on the structures that create actions. Culture here is seen to be only researched through social structures only or its direct influence on actions. A strong program, however, makes culture the main topic rather than the 'superstructure' Alexander (2004:1) is one of these authors that promotes this 'strong program.' The aim with this program is to give a thick description of the symbolic meanings and mechanisms through which meanings are constructed, not only analyzing the performances, but also their contexts. This enables to focus on performative gender scripts. It is thus not the aim in this thesis to explain how scripts informed by culture cause performances, but to discover the different scripts through analyzing performances in their variety of occurrence.

2.2. Performances

In order to analyze the scripts that inform the way in which female fighter's gender performance, the performances themselves have to be analyzed first. The definition of a gender performance is informed by the integration of Alexander's (2006:19), Goffman's (1958:58) Butler's (1999:36) and Fuist's (2014:15) notion of performances. A performance is defined as: *a conscious or unconscious impression informed by a script, that a person or a team of individuals give to an audience, using means symbolic interaction and mise-en-scene in order to direct the performance.'* This first phase of analysis thus, explores the last part of the puzzle, namely: the way in which the PKK' female fighters perform gender in the current war against the Islamic State. I will further elaborate on this first phase below.

2.2.1. Sample units and setting

The participants who were analyzed in the first phase, were female PKK fighters in Makhmour and Qandil. Ex-PKK fighters were not included. Non-probability sampling was used (Curtis and Curtis 2012:291), since I purposefully selected the units according to the salient features of the puzzle, namely to analyze how gender is

performed by the PKK female fighters. Furthermore, there was no aim of making the research statistically representative, or to estimate incidence of phenomenon in a wider population. This links to the epistemological view of the thesis, which is analyzing meaning instead of looking for causal relations. Furthermore, the technique that was used to sample the participants, was snowball sampling (Curtis and Curtis 2012:291). Several female fighters were contacted before arriving in the field. While in the field, these participants introduced me to other female fighters by asking them about possible new participants, who in their turn brought me into contact with more participants.

The settings that was chosen for this thesis, were the guerilla camps in Qandil and Makhmour. The research participants were the female PKK fighters who were, during the fieldwork period, active as military members of the PKK. Ex-PKK fighters were not included. The reason for this was to be able to look at the performance of gender within the larger social context of the PKK guerilla camp as a 'meaning system', which is discussed more in the theoretical chapter (Alexander 2006:59). The focus on analyzing the participants mentioned above, led me to choose Makhmour and Qandil as the field of research, since these are the sites in which the guerilla PKK camps were located.

2.2.2. Naturally occurring data: observation

To be able to answer the question how gender is performed by the female fighters, documentaries have been analyzed. This was done in order to know more about how the different aspects of gender performances were being used in the female fighter's gender performances. Furthermore, the gender performances were studied by observation in the field, of which the setting and the participants were discussed above. An unobtrusive method was used, which involves the assessment of actual behavior rather than self reported behavior. The actual behaviors were, in this case, the gender performances.

As argued by Gephart (1999:1), commonly used methods in interpretive studies are both participant and non-participant observation. Curtis and Curtis

(2012:291) also draw a distinction between participant and non-participant observation, based on the extent to which the observer has some kind of role within the situation in question. Non- participant observation is mostly linked to unobtrusive research, since participating in observation could lead to skewed data. While doing fieldwork however, I have mostly taken the role of as 'observer-as-participant' (Norskov 2011:1) and sometimes even as a participant (Curtis and Curtis 2012: 291). It was not always possible to completely distance myself from interactions with female PKK members. The reason for this, is that my presence in the guerilla camp led to a lot of attention, which sometimes led me to be an audience member of the PKK's female fighters performances. Being an audience however, also meant being aware of the responsibility of giving neutral reactions to performances. Neutrality would namely, not be remained if I, by my reaction to performances as an audience, had encouraged the female fighters to give a certain gender performance (Goffman 1959:58).

Furthermore, as will be discussed later, to be present in a meaning system such as the meaning system of the PKK, can sometimes mean to be the performer instead of being the audience (Fuist 2014:15). The blurring of the boundary between audience and performer can be seen as an advantage, since it led to some fruitful results. Also, the blurred line between being a participant and non-participant was compensated for by the fact that the female fighters were not aware of me doing research on performances. This led to what seemed to be 'honest performances' and increased the validity. However, it also created the ethical problem of deception. The ethical problems of observation are further discussed later in this chapter.

2.2.3. Coding performances

In this research, there has been made use of grounded theory. The grounded theory approach in this thesis, is a method to understand the performances of gender in a more comprehensive way. It provided me with the opportunity to distance myself from the performances, in order to describe what happened during the observations in a more analytic way. It was thus, not only induction (using the grounded theory

method) but also deduction that was used in this process.(Curtis and Curtis 2012:291). Performance theory namely, was used as a tool to understand the gendered behaviors of the female fighters. Coding performances through using the grounded theory method, enabled to find out which tools of the performance theory toolbox were most relevant in the gender performances of the PKK. The performances were, by coding, made into concepts, relating to each other in a balanced way. An example of this is the concept 'dominance of female PKK fighters', that was created through coding, and in which the setting, the audience and the mise-en-scene were most relevant for this concept.

The grounded theory method exists of clearly defined and interrelated steps (Curtis and Curtis 2012:291). The first step that was taken, was that of open coding. Open coding means the selection and naming of categories from the analysis of data. The second stage of the analysis of data was axial coding. The data was put together in new ways, paying attention to the properties of the new categories. Relations between variables and values were being sought, with the aim of making explicit connections between categories. The last phase involved selective coding. The 'core code' was selected from all those identified in open and axial coding.

The concepts that were eventually created thus, were later (in the second phase of analysis) linked to background cultural representations. This studying of background cultural presentations enabled to discover the scripts that informed the performances of gender. This phase of analysis will be discussed later. First, there will be an elaboration on the ethical considerations of conducting fieldwork in the PKK guerilla camps.

2.2.4. Observation: ethical considerations

The risk of doing harm to the participants was diminished in several ways. First, the participants were, beforehand, told about the topic of the research, namely gender. Furthermore, most of the female fighters were very eager to collaborate in the research and often did not ask me what my research was about. The reason for this is most likely because the PKK does not get visitors very often. Lastly, when eagerness

to participate was not obvious, nonverbal cues such as nervousness or fear were being acted upon (Curtis and Curtis 2012:291.) An example of this is when one of the girls I was observing noticed me and seemed to be scared of me. I openly asked her what was wrong and she told me that she thought I was a member of the Turkish intelligence. Noticing this fear and talking about it led to a diminished risk of harm for this participant.

During observation in the field, it was quite hard to make sure there was no deception, since this research focuses on the *performance* of gender. As argued by Curtis and Curtis (2012:291), deception may be required in order to accurate results. The PKK is known to be very careful with their visitors, since they are afraid of secrets being revealed. (Westerheim:2007:12). When visiting the PKK, you are either a friend or an enemy: you are an enemy and you are excluded or you are a friend and you are included. This fact became obvious at the first day of fieldwork already, when was approached by one of the leaders of the PKK guerilla camp in Makhmour. He told me that I was lucky to be able to go to the guerilla camps and that this privilege was only granted to me, because I am a friend of the PKK. In this case, honesty about the actual aim of the research would probably have made me to be excluded from the camp. Deception was thus needed in order to create accurate results.

However, the lack of harmful consequences were outweighed by this deception, since no harm was done to the female fighters while conducting fieldwork (Curtis and Curtis 2012:291) Furthermore, other secondary and deception free data was used in the second step of analysis, which is discussed below. Secondary research is an approach that collects and analyzes data sources from other social scientists and other authors (Curtis and Curtis 2012:291). The observation data were compared with data found by other authors, with the end goal of discovering the gender scripts that informed the female fighter's gender performances.

2.3. Gender scripts

In order to understand which scripts inform the gender performances, the social text of the performances themselves had to be reconstructed. What was needed thus, was a Geertzian 'thick description' of the codes, narratives and symbols that create the textured webs of social meaning. In methodological terms, the achievement of thick description required the '*bracketing out of wider, non-symbolic social relations. specifying in detail just how culture interferes with actions and directs what really happens* (Alexander 2004:1).

In order to give this thick description, the second phase in the analysis involved the research on background representation that were built into the gender performances. Exploring the background representations was of great importance, since these background representations are turned into scripts that inform gender performances. The definition of a gender script is (Alexander 2006:59) '*a set of meanings which entail codes and binaries of what should not and what should be performed and which are in themselves informed by cultural background representations, in the effort to portray meanings in pursuit of the performance to be given.*' Collective background representations are thus, turned into scripts by reconfiguring the aspects of the background representation into direct signifiers for gender performances (Alexander 2006:59). It is thus not the cultural background representations which are themselves scripts, but which are turned into scripts in the pursuit of a performance to be given.

To be able discover the scripts, the performances of gender where being compared with secondary literature. As said before, secondary research is an approach that collects and analyzes data sources from other social scientists and other authors (Curtis and Curtis 2012:291). The concepts created by the coding in the first phase, were explored in detail through analyzing secondary literature. As said before, background representations and discovery of scripts through analyzing secondary literature, is in line with the interpretive stance. Meanings (instead of causal relations) namely, were analyzed, by discovering the deeper contextual layers of the gender performances. Document analysis was used in order to discover the

relevant scripts. These documents included: academic studies about the PKK's female fighters, news articles about the PKK's female fighters, opinion pieces about the PKK's female fighter's and statements, articles and books about gender and female fighters from the PKK itself and the PKK's leader Öcalan in particular.

Furthermore, political socialization theory was used to contextualize performances which represented the different gender scripts (Elkin 1958:5). For example, performing in a way that is informed by the script of the 'woman as being the instigator of gender inequality' means that the political socialization aspect of 'the clear division between the friend and enemy' is of importance in this performances. Political socialization theory in this thesis, also functions to introduce the findings about the performances of gender informed by the different gender scripts. In every chapter namely, when introducing how performances are being informed by their gender scripts, one of the relevant aspects of political socialization theory is highlighted.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Gender as a performed construction

Gender in this thesis, is seen as a construction. This idea derives from Judith Butler (1990:136), who decoupled gender from biological sex. Gender, according to Butler, is socially constructed and not biologically given. The sex with which people are born, does not determine the gender they will express during their lives. Social environment forms, constrains and enables people to express their biological sex in different ways, depending on the kind of social environment. Having in mind the idea of gender as a construction instead of it being fixed and unchangeable, it is interesting to see what versions of their gendered selves the PKK's female fighters perform in the PKK's guerilla camps.

Gender here, is a performance, since persons always want to 'perform the best gendered versions of themselves', as Butler argued (1990:136). Goffman, (1959:58), one of the founding fathers of performance theory in sociology, would agree with this. He argues that the 'self' is something with which we want to give a certain impression to the people around us. A person or several persons, according to Goffman (1959:58), give a performance before an 'audience' of other people, thereby creating their own little theatre. All the world, according to Goffman, is a stage. In social relationships, people recognize the performances of others and act towards them. Through performing, they are able to act cooperatively with each other. This means that they need to have a mutual consensus about the part they are playing at a particular moment in time. A proper ability to manage impressions, according to Goffman (1959:58), requires the ability to take the position of the other person and to view one's own possible behavior in relation to this position. It is assumed therefore, that PKK's female fighters reflect on their own possible gender performance and of what reaction that performance could trigger, before giving the actual gender performance.

3.2. Scripts and the meaning system

However, as said before, studying gender only through performances themselves would be meaningless (why bother) or spontaneous (it just happens) One has to take into account 'the past, present and future of these performances', since gaps in hegemonic norms could lead to a change in performances over time (Lloyd (1999:18). This links to the idea of gender scripts. In performances, it is assumed, an evaluation of performances takes place that is normative. People, in their performances namely, have an idea on what is right and what is wrong for a certain gender performance and try to act accordingly. This implies that there is a script which precedes a performance, entailing the 'rights and the wrongs', 'do's' and the 'don'ts for performing ones gender.

Alexander (2006:59) further clarifies this by arguing that just before performers find the courage to actually perform, they bring up past symbols and experiences and borrow from them in order to present the 'new scene of world history '(Alexander 2006:59). Alexander calls this the system of cultural collective representations, which form the background of every performance. As Alexander (2006:59) argues:

'there is walking and talking in front of our eyes. It is the need for walking and talking and seeing and listening to the walking and talking, that makes the pragmatics of performance different than that of the cultural logics of texts.'

These background representations are turned into gender scripts, by reconfiguring the aspects of the background representation into direct signifiers for gender performances (Alexander 2004:17). Performances, according to Alexander, are scripted, since they contain a set of meanings which entail what should not or should be done in a gender performance. Scripts are informed by cultural background representations, in the effort to portray meanings in pursuit of the performance to be given. Analyzing background representations leads to learning more about the gender performance that is to be expected from these presentations

and thus about the script that informs a gender performance. It is therefore assumed that the female fighter's gender performances will be informed by their different gender scripts. Also, gender scripts can be maintained or challenged through performances. The goal of this research namely is to explore the script that *inform* the way in which female fighters perform gender.

Apart from drawing performances out of background representation, it is also assumed that performers are embedded within the shared meaning system of the movement itself. According to Alexander (2006:59), people collaborate together in the creation of a certain social or moral order, in order to construct sites were meaning is generated. He argues that individuals thus, together with others, create meaning systems. In social movements, references and symbols define collective identity as *'an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution'* (Alexander 2006:59).

When performers are able to convince the audience of their performances, drawing on cultural and collective background representations and using the symbols and codes belonging to the group, the performance is 'fused' (Alexander 2006:59). However, cultural societies are scattered: there is a dramatic increase in social spaces and societies (Turner 2014:33) This gives the cultural world problems of integration of performances, which could mean that performances can contradict each other and that audiences do not understand performances. Turner does argue that performers mostly feel a certain morality towards collective values, to keep up keep the moral order (the symbols and codes of a meaning system). However, scripts that are performed do not always have to derive from the codes and symbols of the collective group itself. As Turner (2014:33) argues, when background representations are used in performances that do not belong to the group in which they are used, this does not mean that people are not informed by gender scripts. He clarifies this idea by saying that all performances, even if they are not coming from within the symbols and codes of the group in which they are used, are rituals. They do not exist out of themselves and are therefore scripted.

Assuming the above, one can argue that it is not only the scripts formed by the collective representations of the PKK itself, but also the scripts belonging to for example Kurdish culture, that can inform the PKK female fighter's gender performances (Turner 2014:33). Not being able to use the right performative script belonging to the group, is what Alexander would call 'de-fusion'. The aim is however, not to conclude that non- PKK scripts are used and that therefore the performance is defused, but to look at this de-fusion more in depth. These non-PKK scripts are further analyzed in order to discover how *various* scripts inform the way in which gender is performed by the PKK's female fighters.

Taking performative scripts as a lens for studying performances thus, provides a tool for not only looking at performances and their meanings, but also to analyze them in relation to their varying contexts. Analyzing gender scripts enables therefore for performances to be explored not only in their synthesis, but also in their contradictions. Furthermore, exploring the gendered scripts through looking at performances, enables to analyze how scripts are being challenged, maintained or strengthened in the performances of gender by the female fighters of the PKK.

However, if one wants to analyze performative scripts, one needs to first analyze the performances themselves. Where Butler gives the tool for studying the female fighters' construction of gender, authors as Goffman (1959:58), Alexander (2006:59) and Fuist (2014:15) help to give practical tools for understanding the construction of gender through performance. Exploring performances through the lens of 'life as a theater' helps not only to deconstruct gender performances and to create concepts from which scripts can be explored. It also helps to discover which different parts of the 'performance toolbox' are important for different scripts.

3.3. Performances

3.3.1. Conscious and unconscious performances

First of all, Fuist (2014:15) is one of the authors that gives tools for studying performances. He does this by making the division between unconscious and conscious performances. Fuist argues that making the distinction between conscious

and unconscious performances is important, since looking at unconscious performances might tell something about the performer wanting to hide certain things for the audience. A conscious performance is given when a performer attempts to enact some aspect of his personality, ideas or other aspects to an audience. Performances are conscious if they are initiated by the performer(s). This means that conscious performers first signal themselves as a performer before they engage in the actual performance.

However, performances are not always conscious. According to Fuist (2014:15), audiences are 'an interactional achievement.' This means that individuals and groups may decide at any time that they are the audience of a performance and construct the another group or individual as the performer. The performer, by giving a performance unconsciously, does not consciously mean to convey what the audience is seeing at that moment, or she might not immediately know that she is giving off a performance.

While analyzing the PKKs gendered performances, analyzing both conscious and unconscious gender performances could give interesting results. Looking for differences in conscious and unconscious performances might hint for example, at how 'less PKK related scripts' are more unconsciously being performed. It is important however, to acknowledge that giving a conscious performance can have different reasons. Goffman (1959:58) elaborates further on this, by arguing that sometimes, and individual will act in a calculating manner, expressing in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke a specific response. Sometimes she will intentionally and consciously express herself in a particular way, because the tradition of the PKK in this case, require this kind of expression (and not because of any particular response that is likely to be evoked from the audience) (Goffman 1959:58).

3.3.2. *The team*

As said before, in order to analyze performances and the scripts that inform gender performances, one has to know how to explicitly recognize the different parts of the

performance. Goffman (1959:58) also gives tools for conducting this kind of analysis. He argues that sometimes, people perform together within a team of actors, in which this team has a mutual understanding of what their performance should be like. Teams are groups of people working with a shared goal in the interaction with their audiences. According to Goffman, there is 'a distinct world' that the team tries to portray towards the audience. Each team-mate is forced to rely on the good conduct and behavior of other team members, and they, in turn, are forced to rely on her. A team, then, may be defined as a set of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained (Goffman 1959:1-58).

Goffman (1959:58) elaborates further on the idea of team performances, by arguing that the team performance serves mainly to express the characteristics of the task that is to performed. It does not serve to express the characteristics of the performer herself. He argues that instead of a rich definition of the situation, reality might become reduced to a thin party line, which is known by the performance team. This resembles Alexander's (2006:59) idea of the PKK as a meaning system with its own symbols and references embedded in it. Goffman (1959:58), in addition to Alexander however, acknowledges that it is not only the organization's performance that can be given, but that performances can be derived from other 'scripts' as well. He argues, for example, that team members might make ironic remarks by which they ridicules the team performance and draws their performance from another script. However, as Goffman (1959:58) also argues, team members often feel loyalty to one's team and one's team-members. Therefore, they often provide support for the team's performance through their own performances.

Goffman (1959:58) also argues that any member of the team has the power to disrupt a certain team performance. Disagreement between members of a group could be downplayed. Furthermore, team behavior can be highly controlled, either by one of the members, or among several members of the team at the same time. When a member of the team makes a mistake in the presence of the audience, Goffman (1959:58) argues, the other team members must suppress their immediate

desire to punish and instruct the offender until the audience is no longer present. The reason for this suppression is that a corrective sanctioning would often only disturb the performance. Actors within a team therefore often pretend that nothing has changed or happened, in order to 'keep the peace'. For example, if a female fighter starts crying in the middle of her performance within the team, other people within the performance team might help her by drawing the attention to their own performance, instead of punishing her for her mistake.

3.3.3. Power in performances teams

In performance teams, a 'performance leader' is mostly brought forward. According to Goffman (1959:58), this so called performance leader is often selected as a way of neutralizing the threat of a team performance not being performed correctly. The leader is chosen, since this performance leader can be trusted to perform properly, without disrupting the team performance to be given. Sometimes, inexperienced performers are chosen to be the performance leader. Goffman argues that when inexperienced performers are given the power to perform over more experienced performers, the empowered person dominates the show while the other, more experienced people, 'direct the show.' When a team consists of different performance leaders within a team , the leaders cannot show disrespect towards each other. Also, performance teams might integrate the division between formerly applied status differences. A female fighter who is a commander for example, is not necessarily the performance leader in a performer team. Each member of a team may be required to appear in a different light, if the team's overall performance is to be satisfactory (Goffman 1959:58).

While analyzing the PKK's female fighters gender performance, it is thus salient to focus on power relations, since they influence and maintain gender performances. Apart from the importance of performance leaders, it is also possible that certain people are not allowed to attend a performance. Also, some performances may not be allowed by certain team members. Furthermore, it is important to look at the kinds of responses which are permitted from the audience

and to the powers that have the authority to interpret the performances independently of those that have the authority to produce them (Alexander: 2006:59).

3.3.4. Audiences

As West and Zimmerman (1987:26) point out, not only the actors themselves and their teams, but also the audiences are of crucial importance during performances. Performers can try to convince the audiences that their performance is 'the right performance.' Alexander (2006:59) argues that when actors within a group are able to fit the setting, behavior, props etc. together and are therefore able to convince an audience of this 'perfect fit', one could speak of fusion. Furthermore, the group in its totality has to be involved in re-fusion, which means recreating and re-convincing the audience of the perfect fit of all the aspects of a performance. Re-fusion thus, allows actors to convert meaning to the audience successfully.

Goffman (1959:58) also argues that when the performance is eventually given and when the actors create a performance and do not understand their given scripts, they fail to perform correctly. This means that they cannot convince the audience of the performance they give at that moment. Goffman's (1959:58) and Alexander's (2006:59) underlying ideas are that performers are seeking to convince audiences of the 'trueness' of their performance. Performances are thus seen as a strategy. For the PKK's female fighters, this would mean that for example, that one of the PKK women would give the performance of the 'fearless and brave' woman in order to gain respect from other female PKK members. Fuist (2014:15) argues however, that this 'convincing' is not always the goal of a performance. Furthermore, some audiences will never have their minds changed. Where Goffman (1959:58) relates to performances and audiences in the sense of success and failure of a performance, Fuist (2014:15) argues that we need to talk about performances more in terms of the enactment of meaning. In this thesis, this idea is taken into account, since only focusing on the success and failure of performances doesn't enable to elaborate more on the actual meanings of the gendered performances that are given by the PKK's female fighters.

Fuist (2014:15) also argues that apart from the idea of a group's goal of re-fusion of convincing the audience, one also needs to acknowledge that that performances have different effects. While one person might react to a performance positively, another person might react to this performance negatively. Performances project different meanings to audiences who are situated in different ways within a meaning system. Where Goffman (1959:58) would refer to the failure of a performance, Fuist (2014:15) would argue that misunderstandings in performances mean that people do not share the same position within a meaning system. A performance cannot be misunderstood, but it can be understood by different audiences in different ways (Fuist 2014:15).

Furthermore, it is not only the audiences who are affected by performances. Reactions to performances by audiences can also affect performances. As West and Zimmerman (1987:26) argue, performances may trigger evaluation, sanction, and critique from audiences. Reactions given to performances might be given in different ways. Foss et all. (2012:10) define these different reactions. The first reaction is support, in which people are comfortable with- or appreciate a gender performance. Audiences in these cases, have no desire to change the performance. The second reaction to performances is tolerance or resigned acceptance, in which those who interact with the performer, neither reject or accept the performance. The third type of reaction is rejection. In this case, audience members openly communicate their negative feelings about the performance. The performer can choose to adapt her performance based on the reactions of the audience. It is thus, not only the PKK's female fighters gender performances that affect audiences. Audiences of the female fighters can also affect the female fighter's gender performances.

It is also important to emphasize that audiences can change quickly and are fluid, as was hinted to before. A member of the audience might become the performer, for example. Fuist (2014:15) highlights this by arguing that sometimes, people who are the audience, suddenly draw the attention to themselves, thereby making themselves into performers. While analyzing the PKK's female fighter's gender performances, it might be possible, for example, that I am made into a

performer, by drawing the attention to myself. Fuist (2014:15) argues however, that it is not only the audiences who can make themselves to be the performers, but it can also be the performers who 'force' audience members to become performers. It is possible for example, that a male audience member is, by a female PKK fighter, forced to give his opinion about gender equality. Furthermore, audience members might be drawn into the performance team, because a member of the audience possesses aspects of the team which fits well with the symbols and codes of the performance team. An example of this is when a person is drawn into the team of female fighters, because she is a woman as well. Recognizing that audiences can change and are fluid, thus helps to not only see the female fighters themselves as performers, but to analyze the fluid relationship between female fighters as performers and audiences as well as other people in the field as possible performers and audiences.

3.3.5. *Means of symbolic interaction*

In order for the performer to be able to perform for the audience, the performer needs access a physical place to perform gender (a setting) and the means to be able to perform gender. The setting involves furniture, decor, physical lay-out, and other background items which supply the scenery for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it. A setting '*tends to stay put, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave*' (Alexander 2006:59). A performance thus, can only be given in a certain setting and has to be terminated when leaving the setting.

Furthermore, in order for the performer to be able to perform for the audience, the performer needs access to material things that allow the performance to be carried out. The female fighters in this case, need objects that can serve as representations of something and that can dramatize what they intent to perform. Goffman (1959:58) refers to this as 'props', which means for example the use of make-up, clothing or a rifle to convey meaning to the audience. The PKK's female

fighter's uniform for example, may be taken to refer to a stimulus which functions to emphasize the performer's social status (Goffman 1959:58).

3.3.6. Mise-en-scene

Apart from means of symbolic interaction, actors also express themselves through the use of mise-en-scene, which refers to the physical accounts that shape a performance. As Alexander (2006:59) argues: *if a text is to walk and talk, it needs to be sequenced temporally and choreographed spatially*.' According to him, time and space create certain aesthetic demands, namely when new roles emerge in which people are profiling themselves as specialized in putting a certain task into the scene. Goffman (1959:58) refers to this as manners. Manners, (or-mise en-scene), are by him, defined as '*the stimuli which function at the time to warn of the interaction role the performer will expect to play in the oncoming situation*' (Goffman 1959:58). When this idea is taken into account, a PKK's female fighter's aggressive mise-en-scene for example, may give the impression that she expects to be the one who will initiate the verbal interaction and direct its course. Furthermore, an apologetic manner may give the impression that the she expects to follow the lead of her female PKK friends (Goffman 159:58).

Goffman (1959:58) also acknowledges, that there often is a consistency between the means of symbolic interaction and mise-en-scene. A PKK female fighter who is wearing a uniform for example, might give off a different performance than a female fighter who is wearing her 'normal clothes.' Coherence between these two aspects of a performance, according to Goffman (1959:58), represents an ideal type that provides a means of stimulating interest in and attention to the performances. However mise-en-scene and the means of symbolic interaction may also contradict each other, for example when a commander acts in a manner that is apologetic.

Goffman (1959:58) also argues that people, through their performances, always try prevent feeling ashamed. This feeling of shame is being triggered when actors do not give the 'right' performance. Emotions, according to Goffman (1959:58), only manifest themselves in the form of shame. Other authors such as Alexander

(2006:29-90) however, argue that performances are not all about the emotion of feeling ashamed. A performer might, for example, choose to not perform a certain version of herself, because this performance could lead to anger or fear (Fuist 2014:15). The emphasis on emotions beyond only the emotion of feeling ashamed can help to widen the vocabulary of mise-en-scene on which the analysis is drawn. It is assumed thus, that emotions can be performed in different ways, with different meanings embedded in them.

3.4. Political socialization theory

Using political socialization theory can be a good tool for looking at the performances of gender. The theory entails that in certain politicized groups, there is no separation between private and political spheres (Wasmund 1985:199). Private needs are subordinated to the collective political goal, to the extent that all politically engaging questions and social contact takes places almost exclusively with or among the politically likeminded. The private thus, becomes collective and the political becomes private, to a point that people are mirroring the organization's ideas, values and practices. Political socialization theory elaborates on the socialization of people in guerilla movements, by proposing five aspects within the socialization into a (guerilla) organization (Wasmund 1985: 199):

- a loss of desires, identity and interests, evolving from the pressure to adjust, dependence on a group as well as the assignment of roles.

- a collective culture of 'we-ness' and appreciation of guerilla peers

- a diminished idea of reality, accompanied with an atmosphere of being able to do anything.

- a clear division between the friend and the enemy, which is closely tied with ideology

- a culture of privileges and constraints, in which certain people get more than other people

So, not only is it important to understand the parts themselves and how PKK's female fighters give meaning to their situation through performance, but it can also be fruitful to understand the socialization context in which a performance is embedded (Elkin 1958:5). Political socialization theory helps to contextualize performances which represent the different gender scripts. For example, performing in a way that is informed by the script of ' a woman as being the instigator of gender inequality' would mean that the political socialization aspect of 'the clear division between the friend and enemy' is of importance in these performances.

4. WOMEN AS SUBORDINATE/ INSTIGATORS OF GENDER EQUALITY

4.1. Kurdish women 'pulling down men'

The PKK, in its mobilization strategies, treats gender inequality as an important problem to be solved. According to the PKK's discourse, the 'patriarchal Kurdish society' controls women and locks women into their homes.' The mention of 'namus', defined as men's control over a women's sexuality, is important in this discourse. It is argued namely, that this namus has to be removed. According to the discourse, it is not only Kurdish men who 'pull down women by 'enslaving them through gender oppression,' but also Kurdish women who let themselves be 'pulled down', by 'playing the role of enslaved woman.' Marrying women who 'pull down' for example, is seen a trap for men, because women 'would not hesitate to use their state (of being pulled down) to pull down men and even society as a whole' (Çağlayan 2012:1):

'Woman is like a slave, weak, and too unequipped and dangerous. ….that is, she craftily uses her own state of being-pulled-down in order to pull down the whole society. …..the reason why men are inadequately revolutionized is the relationships that they established with the woman reality. The fundamental measures of resistance or the fundamental measures of socialism are left aside in the process of developing emotions; instead, relationships were developed, which can lead to slavery'(Öcalan 1992:1).

4.2. The equality gender discourse and women's liberation

The discourse of women as being 'pulled down by men' enabled for the PKK to emphasize its ideology of women's liberation. According to the PKK's leader Öcalan, the 'namus' as control over the female body, has bad consequences for the homeland, since the' homeland is being raped' through this control over the female body. Controlling females bodies, according to Öcalan, prevents Kurdish people from being able to fulfill their responsibilities for the Kurdish homeland. In 1990, Kurdish

women, according to Çağlayan (2012:1) were 'armyficated,' which was associated by the ideology of women's liberation:

'The one who has an army oppresses. There is no concept such as an army of equality. Where there is equality, there are no armies. Armies appear where there is inequality; one is the oppressor's army, the other is the army of the oppressed. If, somewhere, there are only men's armies, this means that the reality of oppressed women is in question. Life vindicates us. As such we should see and know that women armyfication expresses a fundamental value for equality' (Interview Abdullah Öcalan in Esen 2002:13)*.*

Here, Öcalan thus argues that the 'armyfication' of women is an essential means for gaining equality between men and women. Women's equal participation in the movement and right to self-determination are interpreted as signifiers of the new society. Female fighters in the PKK have been, since the 1990's, frequently asked to avoid adjusting their lives to male fighters. Liberation for women in the PKK also means for them to 'be faithful to the homeland and fight for it.' The liberation of women is, in the PKK's discourse, even seen as the liberation of Kurdistan:

'It seems to me that men's relation to women is similar to that of an occupier. The level of women's freedom is also the level of society's freedom; that, in turn, is the country's freedom. (Öcalan 1999:27).

In order to wage a 'peoples war', Kurdish women thus need to actively participate in the struggle for peace for the 'homeland.' First of all, fighting for equality between men and women within the PKK is the most important condition for PKK women to be able to fight faithfully and second of all, women are seen to be 'needed in order to fight against male oppression of the enemy.' What is important is here, is that within the PKK itself thus, women are asked to actively free themselves from the so called oppression of men, by instigating this gender 'freedom' for themselves, in order to live together with men on an equal basis (Çağlayan: 2012:1).

4.3. Women as subordinate: Kurdish culture

According to Ozcan (2007:17), rights based consciousness has been created in Kurdish society since the 1990's, which is partly enabled by propaganda and socialization of the PKK in Kurdish society in Turkey. More and more political spaces are opening up for women and women are trying to gain more rights for themselves (Arat 2000:107). Kurdish women vote, protest and get elected to office (Pulitzercenter 2015).

According to Ellison (2009:68) however, Kurdish women are often asked to choose between feminism and the Kurdish struggle. The Kurdish struggle, according to her, has been privileged over gender concerns and has forced women to delay their demands until after the struggle. The situation for Kurdish women in general, she argues, is not very positive. Many Kurdish women experience violence by their husbands. According to her, the Kurdish woman supports and yells for the national struggle of her nation on the 8th of March (International Women's day), but she does not yell and support for the violence she faces at home. Protesting against violence at home, according to one of her respondents *'would be ridiculous'* (Ellison 2009:68).

Illkarakan (1998:9), in his work on Kurdish culture, adds to this by arguing that because of the activities of the PKK in Kurdish society, more gender consciousness has been raised. According to Ikkaran (1998:9) however, forced marriages still occur in Kurdish society. Women often feel unable to seek divorce if their husband and honor killings occur in large numbers. Violence by male relatives is used in order to restore the honor of the family and many women are abused by their husbands. Women are expected to be chaste, modest , docile and comply with the demands of male members of the family and men in general (Ikkaran (1998:9). Also, none of the woman that participated in Ikkaran's research (1998:9) and who were domestically abused by their husbands, had sought professional help or legal recourse. Women are thus, asked to take in a subordinate role to Kurdish men.

However, the role for women in the PKK is seen to be different than that of women in Kurdish society (Ellison 2009:68). In Kurdish society, PKK women are seen

as virgins by Kurdish women. They represent the power of Kurdish women and are seen as heroines struggling for the Kurdish nation. Agency and empowerment for women can, according to these women, only be gained through fighting in the Kurdish struggle. This struggle is important for many Kurdish women, since it is seen as the struggle against male oppression. The script that is given to female fighters by Kurdish female civilians thus, is different than the Kurdish women's own script to be performed, namely that of the subordinate woman (Ellison 2009:68).

4.4. Performing

4.4.1. Instigating gender equality

The PKK script for women to instigate gender equality, as mentioned above, informs the female fighter's performances in different ways. As argued by Wasmund (1985:199), the collective culture of 'we-ness' and appreciation of guerilla peers is an often seen aspect in guerilla groups such as the PKK. The PKK's female guerilla fighters are, overall, very eager to let their gender performances be informed by this script. The almost Spartan lifestyle of the male and female fighters as well as the fact that the fighters for the most part cut off from non-guerilla people, makes the PKK as a group the centre and medium for life. This dependency creates, among men and women in the PKK, a strong 'culture of togetherness.' The performances informed by the script mentioned above are performances that can easily be given by the female fighters, since they only have each other and are thus not dependant on the opinion of many audiences more than their own. However, the gender performances are also being informed by the script of the woman being subordinate to men, which is to be discussed later. First, there will be an elaboration on how the script of 'instigation of gender equality' informs the female fighter's gender performances.

Women are asked by the PKK thus, to take the leading role in forming gender mixed teams of performers with male fighters. As said before, a team is a set of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required and is a grouping in relation to an interaction or series of interactions, in which the relevant definition of the situation has to be maintained (Goffman 1959:58). In this case, cooperation between

men and women within the PKK is asked. However, PKK women also have to instigate performances of gender equality, thereby making PKK men audiences instead of team members. This is clarified with the following example.

Before and after meetings amongst PKK fighters, men and women shake each other's hands. Female fighters here, often consciously draw attention to this performance of shaking hands. Mostly, this is done by making the performance last longer than what seems to be usual or by giving men a firm and sometimes painful handshake, usually followed by a mise-en-scene (Alexander 2006:59) of the male fighter pulling an 'it hurts a bit but am glad we can shake hands' face. This handshake symbolizes men and women being able to cooperate with each other on an equal basis. One could say thus, that the ritual of shaking hands is understood by the PKK fighters as an important means of interaction within the collective meaning system of the PKK as an organization (Alexander 2006:59). Men here, are a team members, since the symbolic gesture of the handshake symbolizes equality between men and women and creates a team of men and women shaking hands. Male PKK fighters are also the audience however, since female fighters draw attention to themselves instigating the performances, making the male fighters their audiences (Goffman 1959:58). These male audiences, in their turn, mostly react on the performance by accepting (Foss et al. 2012:10). This reflects the script which entails that is especially women who should not let themselves be oppressed by men, being the instigators of the performance of equality between PKK men and women.

Another way in which the female fighters perform the script of 'instigator of gender equality', is by drawing the attention of a 'non-PKK audience.' One example is the fact that during my time in the field, female PKK fighters frequently asked me if I wanted to play volleyball with them. These conscious performances were mostly instigated by pointing at the volleyball play and saying: 'jin y zlam', meaning men and women in Kurdish. Even after deciding not to join, these same women kept asking me the same question several times. By doing this, they repeatedly tried to remake me the audience , in which the performance that was given off was one of 'women as gender quality instigators'. The volleyball play here, functioned as a

symbol of equality between men and women. Even though I, as an audience, did not obviously show acceptance (Foss et al. 2012:17) for the performance that was given, this did make the female fighters stop trying to draw my attention to the volleyball play that was going on.

Not only the mise-en-scene however, but also an important prop maintains and reinforces the performances informed by the 'equality script.' This prop is the PKK's guerilla uniform. Apart the fact that it the uniform is easy to fight in (Vice News , 2014), it is also symbol of equality between men and women. In their mise-en scene, as Alexander argues (2006:59), performers need objects that can serve as representations of something and that can dramatize what they intent to perform. In this case, the uniform dramatizes the equality between men and women. Men and women in the PKK, wear the same uniform, without a distinction on gender being made. It is however, not the male PKK fighters who seem to be empowered by their uniforms, but the female fighters. It helps them in instigating the gender equality performances. In their mis-en-scene, the female fighters often show almost an euphoria when asked about the uniform, which represents gender equality for them. As Goffman (1959:58) argued, there is often a consistency with the means of symbolic interaction and the mise-en-scene. In this case, it is the uniform that is consistent with the female fighters being able to instigate performances, to ensure equality between men and women within the PKK.

4.4.2. *Solving the scripted contradictions?*

As said before, gender inequality is still prevalent in Kurdish society and women are asked to play the subordinate role to men in Kurdish. The PKK however, tries to empower women through making them responsible for instigating gender inequality within the PKK, which is also an idea that is supported by many Kurdish women. One can argue thus, that these two scripts are contradicting. This contradiction is both solved and unsolved within the PKK's guerilla ranks.

The problem of the contradictory script remains unsolved in the following way. When commanders with much experience and authority are not around, men

and women often unconsciously sit separately from each other and do not talk to each other. Some women act shy and apologetic when being around men. This is in stark contrast with the way they are expected to perform their scripts by the PKK, which was mentioned before. Social power is thus important there, since performances of the 'subordination script' tend to be given more when performers without much social power are and authority around. These people with more social power are thus, not allowed to join in the performance of the 'subordinate script.' Also, the subordinate script is not allowed to inform performances when female fighters with much social power are present.

The contradiction between the two scripts is also being solved through performances. Team leaders are of great importance here. The team leader is made responsible for instigating the 'equality script' through performance, so that the rest of the performance team does not have to perform in the same way. Not every female fighter namely, seems to be ready to instigate performances of gender equality. They still have to get used to living together with men and look very insecure when being confronted with men. Goffman (1959:58), as said before, elaborates on this by arguing that inexperienced performers are sometimes chosen to be the performance leader. When these inexperienced people are given the power to perform over more experienced performers, the empowered person dominates the performance while the other more experienced people 'direct the show.' This idea of an inexperienced performance leader is reflected in the instigation of the equality performance as well. In their gender performances, younger female fighters with little social experience with men and more eagerness than others to show that they are equal to men, are often made the performance leader.

One of the girls mentioned above for example, in her mise-en-scene (Alexander 2006:59), consciously emphasized the fact that she was talking to a man, by drawing the attention to her performance of talking to this man. She did this by trying to catch my eye multiple times, smiling at me (as an audience), while talking to one of the male fighters. The girl, by performing her script, integrated the possible differences between the different team members, by consciously and actively trying

to direct the audience towards the performance. Other, more experienced female 'performance team members' watched her performance closely and sometimes gave her directions. This was done by them in using the mise-en-scene (Alexander 2006:59) of whispering in her ear and giving her acknowledging looks. These women were thus, the directors of the play, while the younger girl, eager to perform her script, was the performance leader. The 'women as subordinate to men' script is avoided here thus, by putting people in power who are desperate to overcome their former (oppression based) script.

4.5. Conclusion

The PKK expects women to be instigators of gender equality. However, women in Kurdish societies are asked to play the subordinate role to men. Both these scripts inform the way in which female fighters perform gender. Generally, the female fighters are very eager to let their performances be informed by the PKK related script. However, the script of 'woman as subordinate to men' also informs their gender performances. The chance of female fighters being informed by their script of the woman as subordinate to men however, is being limited by choosing performance leaders.

5. WOMEN AS SELF-CONFIDENT AND FEARLESS

5.1. The PKK: self-confident and fearless women

It is however, not only the equality between men and women that is seen to be important for guerilla women in the PKK. In 1995, the PKK's ideological framework was supplemented. Gunes and Zeydanliogl (2013:13) argue that this ideological framework emphasizes the importance of the Kurdish golden and more specifically Mesopotamia, a matriarchal society covered by fairness, attachment to the land and equality between men and women. However, when taking a closer look at the PKK's ideological writings, one can also see that according to the ideological principle, women would have a greater revolutionary potential. An important aspect of this ideological framework is that, women 'had been the main actors in the development of the ancient Kurdish civilization' (Gunes and Zeydanliogl 2013:23). In the ideological framework for example, there is a reference to Isthar the Godess and the Kurdish word of 'star', to emphasize women as main actors (Öcalan 1999:24):

'When we came to Mesopotamia, the lands, which are the symbols of plenitude, were the lands between the Euphrates and Tigris. Production developed with the unity of land and woman. In the history of humanity….Animals were domesticated, seeded plants were cultivated, and women did the majority of these jobs. Ishtar was the goddess of this culture. ….For me, Ishtar is Star. In fact, Star in Kurdish is Sterk. Star means star in the European languages. The greatest women originated from these lands, namely from Mesopotamia. We are their followers. We are in an amorous movement going back in history. ….the goddess of love, the center for civilization is Mesopotamia' (Öcalan 1999:27).

Women thus, are referred to as leaders. Being a woman like Ishtar is seen to be the greatest woman. And because women 'were more peaceful in the Mesopotamian society', women in the present time 'have to fight even harder to get back their peace' (De Jong 2015:1). De Jong argues that today it is the Kurdish woman who is seen as a vanguard for the PKK's struggle. They are asked to show more fearlessness and self confidence than men. It is women who are seen to be responsible for carrying the

'burden of humanity', since they were also the carriers of the peaceful society of Mesopotamia (Casier and Jongerden 2012:1).

De Jong (2015:1) also argues that women are not only asked to show fearlessness and self confidence because they have peacefully ruled during the Mespotamian age. He also states that according to the PKK's ideology, women are also seen to need a lot of strength and a strong will in order to change their 'pitiful situation.' The pitiful situation that is meant here is the assumed oppression of Kurdish women by men. Women in their 'pitiful situations', so it is assumed, tolerate everything that is done to them. They have to liberate themselves from the passivity that is attributed to them.

5.2. Kurdish society and the PKK: heroines

As said before, the role for women in the PKK is seen to be different than that of women in Kurdish society. In Kurdish society, PKK women are seen by Kurdish women as representing the power of Kurdish women and heroines, struggling for the Kurdish nation. Agency and empowerment can, according to these women thus, only be gained by fighting in the Kurdish struggle. PKK women are seen as powerful, fearless and self confident, in reference to women within the Kurdish community, who are seen to have no agency. If a girl or a woman chooses to join the PKK, much is expected from her. She is expected to become a different person. Getting the chance to 'be free' is enough reason namely, to experience this freedom by being the heroin, fighting for the Kurds and for Kurdish women more specifically. (Ellison 2009:68).

5.3. Performing

5.3.1. Maintaining the script?

Where in the first script of instigating equality, women are asked to form performance teams with men as well as making men their audience, women are here, by the PKK, explicitly asked to distance themselves from men. Men here, are audiences instead of performance team members. PKK women, namely, have to be

more self confident and fearless than men. As Goffman (1959:58) argues as well, audiences are important, since their reaction can trigger certain performances from the performer. In the performances informed by this script, male PKK fighters, who are often made into the female fighter's audiences, always accept or at least tolerate the performance of the 'female as more fearless and self confident.'

An example of this is when during the filming of a documentary (Notes from a Kurdish Rebel, 2012), male and female fighters came together to talk with each other and the interviewer. Several PKK women stood next to each other, arm in arm, while the man who was also present, was standing opposite to these women. Apart from the fact that the women explicitly distanced themselves from the man who was present and presented themselves as if they are one group of strong women, they also start joking about the man. The guerilla man in his turn, tried to solve this situation by starting to make jokes about himself. In this case, the audience's reaction was one which showed acceptance of the female fighter's performances. The female fighters thus, were not influenced by negative audience rejections and were able to play the 'self confident and fearless woman' part without resistance (Foss et all. 2012:10).

In the performance of gender informed by the script of the woman as fearless and self confident, setting and social power matters. Female fighters with the most eagerness to show their self confidence and strength, have the most power to perform this script. However, not only women with more social power but also women with less social power are informed by the script. Some women are only informed by the script (in their performances) when the setting is informal and when performers with more performative power are not around. One example is a woman who first whispered to her female commander in an interview room and did not correct her or other people for their mistakes. After leaving the room and the people with more performative power, she sat down in the grass with me and other, less clearly present , PKK members. Her mise-en-scene changed completely, since she started correcting my male translator for handing her over a lighter. She also corrected him and several PKK men for laying down on the ground without asking.

While she was, at first, in the background and not able to show her self confidence as a woman, she was now able to. By doing this, she was informed by her gender script. She namely, performed more self confidence than the man she was punishing, in order to be, 'the vanguard of the PKK's struggle' and to liberate herself from the passivity that is attributed to her as a woman' (De Jong 2015:1). So first of all, her performance was influenced by change from the formal setting of the interview room to the informal setting of the lawn. Second, her performance was influenced by the change in presence of performers with more performative power.

The script of the woman as fearless and self-confident however, is not always being emphasized by female fighters who experience a positive change in performative power. The absence of these dominant performance team members sometimes leads the performance to be guided less by the script of being self-confident and fearless. When I had an 'interview' with several female fighters for example, it struck me that one of the female fighters did not laugh and that she spoke without batting an eye. In her performance, she was informed by the script of being self confident and fearless, not showing her weaknesses or 'softer side' to the audience.

After a few minutes of talking, the girl left the room. When I went outside for a minute, I saw the same girl again. She was playfully throwing small stones to another PKK member, while giggling about the fact that she was not always able to throw the stones in the right direction. Goffman (1959:58) argues that team performances serves mainly to express the characteristics of the task that is to performed. It does not serve to express the characteristics of the performer herself. He argues that instead of a rich definition of the situation, reality might become reduced to a thin party line, which is known by the performance team. The girl assumed that a performance of the 'fearless and self-confident' woman was being expected from her by her team members during the 'interview'. The performance team in this case, consisted of female fighters who had more performative power than she had. The girl however, solved this problem of not having much performative power, by not blinking a eye, thereby trying to convince the audience

of her seriousness and self confidence. While eventually being away from the 'dominant' performance team however, she did not take the chance to emphasize her performance influenced by the script of her being self confident and fearless.

5.3.2. *Diaries as a props*

An important prop however, which both challenges and emphasizes the performances influenced by the script, is the diary. Writing in diaries is very common for women in the PKK (Huffington Post, October 20 20150). Female fighters write in each other diaries in order to empower each other for the fight against ISIS. These diaries contain stories about strength, power and devotion. At the one hand, this is in line with the script of women as fearless and self confident, since thestories in the diaries are about strength and self confidence. At the other hand, reading their own diaries and writing in each other's diaries is a way to escape from the scripted performances of the self confident and fearless woman that is expected from them. This is explained below.

While being at one of the PKK's women's guerilla houses for, the setting of the performance consisted of a simple house consisting only guns, pillows, blankets and cups. The house was close to the frontlines. However, no shooting could be heard, the house was surrounded by a endless looking expanse of sand and visitors were rarely seen. When talking with women in the house, these women often took out their diaries in order to a performance to be given off with a personal overtone, proudly showing the different stories that they had written for each other. This would logically signify a gender performance of the fearless and self confident woman, being close to the frontlines. The diary here however, can also be seen as a way in which the female fighters challenge their script of having strength and self confidence, by showing their dependence on each other and their need for empowerment from other PKK fighters.

As said before, a setting involves furniture, decor, physical lay-out, and other background items which supply the scenery for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon (Alexander 2006:59). A setting tends to put so that those

who would use a particular setting as part of their performance, cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place (and must terminate their performance when they leave) (Alexander 2006:59). The female fighter's setting, which consisted of remoteness and a lack of visitors, made it possible for them to use diaries as props and thus to challenge this script of being self confident and fearless.

5.4. Fighting ISIS and script reinforcement

As argued by De Jong (2015:1), the script of the woman as strong and self confident is even more emphasized in the struggle against ISIS. According to the PKK (De Jong 2015:1), the oppression of women is unnatural. The PKK often emphasizes the victimhood of women attacked by ISIS. In an interview with Cemil Bayik, one of the PKK's top leaders in 2015, this victimhood of women is emphasized. He argues that the PKK is an enemy of women and that attacking women equals attacking humanity:

'Daesh attacked women, it attacked, enslaved, kidnapped and sold women as you have seen. So Daesh is against, is the enemy to humanity and to human values because it is against and is an enemy of women. If a movement claims it defends humanity and human values it should have a stance, a position, against this policy, approaches, of Daesh of enslaving and selling women. If any movement claims they are defending human values they should go and fight against Daesh.'

Gunes and Zeydanliogl (2013:13) add to this by arguing that in the fight against ISIS, women are seen as the most important actors in the struggle: their participation is seen as the best weapon of making the enemy's weapon ineffective. Because women are attacked namely, 'other women are responsible for attacking this enemy that attacks female values'. Women are therefore asked to fight the hardest to win from the enemy, hereby emphasizing the need for women to be even more self confident and fearless when being close to enemy lines:

'We have a motto, a slogan, 'Woman, Life, Freedom'. That is the main reason women are fighting for their own freedom. That is the main reason they are fighting Daesh. The one

which represents life and freedom is women, and now Daesh is against women and against life, it is a duty to go and fight against Daesh. At a time when Daesh is against women and life, it is the duty of women more than men to go and fight against this enemy.'

5.5. Pictures of martyrs as props

This emphasis on strong-mindedness, strength and self confidence in fighting the enemy is reflected in the difference between performances in Makhmour and Qandil. Makhmour is at the frontlines, where female fighters are directly confronted with ISIS. The camps in Qandil are not as close to the frontlines with ISIS as the guerilla camps in Makhmour are. Women in Makhmour are, overall more eager to perform gender in a way that shows their strength and self confidence in relation to men. One of the examples can be highlighted with the example of pictures of martyrs, which are important props in the performance of gender informed by this script.

According to Akkaya and Jongerden (2012:1) the PKK needed a symbol that could be associated with Ishtar. This symbol would function as a link between the Neolithic age and the present day. They argue that the first female PKK martyr 'Zilan' became to be this symbol, by bombing herself in an attack on the Turkish government. Zilan was characterized as the 'freedom goddess of the modern age' and the founder of the new society. According to Akkaya and Jongerden (2012:1) the real-life consequences of the mission symbolically given to women is to follow Zilan's path and undertake sacrificial acts. Female martyrs therefore, are a symbol of the fearless and courageous female sacrifice for the 'homeland.'

In the women's houses in Makhmour, pictures of female martyrs are often hanging on the walls, symbolizing the strength, self confidence and courageous sacrifice of women for the homeland. The fact that no pictures of male fighters were hanging on the walls in Makhmour, showed that female martyrs there were given priority over men. In their gender performances, female fighters in Makhmour often pointed at the pictures, trying to convince me as an audience of the strength and power of women in the PKK. In Qandil however, no pictures of female martyrs were hanging on the walls. In Qandil, there was no such emphasis on the performance of

strength and self confidence by female fighters compared with male fighters as there was in Makmhour. Female fighters in Makhmour thus, were scripted to perform more self confidence and fearlessness than female fighters in Qandil. In Makhmour, pictures of female martyred PKK fighters functioned as a prop for female fighters to perform their 'courageousness' and fearlessness', by comparing themselves with these women through their gender performances.

5.6. Conclusion

Both Kurdish civilian women as well as the PKK expect the female fighters to be self confident and fearless. This script influences the performance of gender by the PKK female fighters in different ways. Men are, first of all, often constructed as audiences and react on these performances by accepting it or tolerating it. Women with much eagerness to let their performance be influenced by this script, have the most performative power. Performers without much performative power, still however being eager to let their performances be informed by this script, are able to do so in more informal settings and when more powerful performers are not present. Furthermore, the performance of this script links to the team, expecting the performance to be informed by the script of the woman as self confident and fearless. Also, more self confidence and fearlessness is expected in proximity to the enemy, which is being performed through the use of pictures of martyrs as props.

6. WOMEN AS EMOTIONAL AND PEACEFUL VICTIMS

6.1. Kurdish society: peaceful and innocent women

According to Gunes and Zeydanliogl (2013:13), Kurdish culture still consists of a micro culture of masculinity in everyday forms of patriarchy. This culture functions to reinforce the imagery of masculine power, strength, blood, death, war and the heroic soldier Masculine cultural themes like honor, adventure, patriotism are emphasized for men. Women are identified as natural, fragile, weak and vulnerable, in need of men's protection. In Kurdish culture, it is commonly argued that women 'must be protected from people who can violate their boundaries'. Gunes and Zeydanliogl (2013:13) add to this by concluding that different authors in Kurdish journals argue that women are timid, emotional and non violent, while men are seen to be war prone and violent. Furthermore, Rasul and Hamim (2015:15) argue that in many Kurdish sayings, the victimhood of women in emphasized. Women here, are often portrayed as waiting for their husbands, who are fighting in war and who would save them from the 'dangers of the enemy.'

6.2. The PKK: passive, peaceful and emotional victims

As said before, women are linked to nature and peace by the PKK. This discourse functions to make guerilla women perform more fearless and more self-confident than guerilla men. The discourse also functions to make sure that women actively engage themselves in the performance of the struggle for gender equality within the PKK. The idea of women being close to nature and peaceful is thus used to make women active agents within the PKK (De Jong 2015:1).

Linking women to peace however, does not only function to make sure that women perform fearless and self confident in order to 'restore peace', but it also functions for the PKK to keep women in their passive, emotional and victimized roles. This can be explained by analyzing the way Öcalan (2013:28) talks about women. In one of his articles he argues that:

'Sexism is not a function of biological differences. To the dominant male, the female is an object to be used for the realisation of his ambitions.'

Here, he argues that gender is something that is learned by social environment and not something that is naturally given to people. Men, according to him, use their own sex difference to objectify women. There lies however, a paradox in his argumentation. Arguing that gender is constructed, is a way for Öcalan (2013:29) to challenge the 'male enslavement of women.' In another statement in this same article, however, he argues that women are *biologically* organic, natural beings and willing to live in a peaceful manner:

'*It is not coincidence that the first powerful authority that was established was authority over woman. A Woman represents the power of the organic, natural, which has not experienced oppressive and exploitative relations.'*

Apart from the naturalness and the peacefulness of women, women are also seen as emotional creatures. According to the PKK, women's emotional labor in the ancient past, established a peaceful natural society, which was eventually destructed by men:

'*Woman's divinity and sacredness was first demeaned and then erased….. the emotional intelligence of woman that created wonders, that was humane and committed to nature and life, was lost. In its place has been born the cursed analytical intelligence of a cruel culture that has surrendered itself to dogmatism and detached itself from nature; that considers war to be the most exalted virtue and enjoys the shedding of human blood* (Öcalan 2013:4).

At the one hand thus, women are scripted to actively fight against 'slavery and oppression', mentioned in the first two chapters. However, women are, as can be read above, also seen as *biologically* more emotional and peaceful, linking the female genderr to victimhood. While the 'slavery of women' thus, has to be challenged by fearlessness, self confidence and being the instigators gender equality, the idea of women as passive and emotional victims is maintained. Women's power here is thus not only seen as the power which is related to the former scripts, namely the power to actively challenge their assumed oppressive situations. Women's power is here , seen as the passive: the natural, related to emotionalized victimhood.

This victimhood, as said by Donmez (2012:318-341), is closely related to the PKK's music. He identifies four main themes in the PKK's music: the feeling of injustice and subordinate position of the Kurds, emancipation from the enemy, the suppression of women and the need for their salvation, feelings of subordinalisation and a call for the uniting of all subordinates societies. Since women are seen to be close to nature and seen as peaceful and emotional, they are also seen as being close to music. This music namely, unifies the collective symbols of victimization of the PKK guerilla in its totality. The songs, mentioned by Donmez, also emphasize bravery of women in their battles. This bravery however, is often represented as a wasted bravery, because women are 'peaceful by nature' (Donmez 2012:318-341) (Guerilla fighters of Kurdistan 2015).

6.3. Performing

6.3.1. Maintaining the script?

In their gender performances, the female fighters are informed by the scripts mentioned above, which relate women to nature and peace, in the sense of them being emotional victims instead of active, fearless and self confident fighters. As argued by Wasmund (1985:199), in a organization as the PKK, there often is a culture of privileges and constraints. Women within the PKK in this case, are given much responsibly, since they have to be fearless and self confidant, as well as instigating the performance gender equality. However, they are also given privileges in the sense of their responsibility of musical performances within the PKK, which are often being given within the PKK guerilla camps.

When being in one of the guerilla camps for example, which in this case consisted of a simple house in the mountains, surrounded with sandbanks, one of the male fighters of the PKK asked a guerilla girl to sing. In her performance, the girl's facial expressions as well as her voice created a peaceful atmosphere, which relieved the tension of being in a guerilla camp close to the frontlines. The girl's mise en-scene emphasized her intention to be seen as a passionate and emotional victim of the war. After her performance, numerous female fighters followed her example, all creating

an atmosphere of serenity and peace, mixed with emotions of victimhood and sacrifice. The women's gender performances were thus, being informed by the scripts mentioned above, telling them to 'play the emotional and peaceful victim.'

Performances informed by the script of the woman as a peaceful and emotional victim are also being maintained by teams of performers. As Goffman (1959:58) argues, team members have to cooperate to give a certain performance. During musical performances by female fighters, other female PKK fighters are not only audiences, but also form teams with the female singers. In one of the musical gender performances for example, informed by the script of an emotional and peaceful woman, the performer made a 'mistake.' She namely, started laughing during her performance. This change in mise-en-scene created a 'break' in the performance. Her team members however, did not correct her for this mistake. As said by Alexander (2006:59), the use of mise-en-scene warns of the interaction role the performer will expect to play in the oncoming situation. The girl in question used a mise-en-scene of laughing and also tried to trigger a team performance of laughter as a new mise-en-scene. Her performance thus, warned of the interaction role to be played in the future. This interaction role would not be informed by the script that she was supposed to be informed by, namely the script of the emotional and peaceful victim.

Her performance team members suppressed the immediate desire to punish the offender, which Goffman (1959:58) highlights as an often used reaction to mistakes in performances. The reason for this suppression, according to Goffman is namely, that a corrective sanctioning would often only disturb the performance. Actors within a team therefore often pretend that nothing has changed or happened, in order to 'keep the peace.' The female performance team's mise-en-scene namely, did not change into laughter, for which they were invited by the performing girl. The female team members suppressed the desire of sanctioning, but 'kept a straight face', which led the performing girl to continue her song, informed by the script that she was intended to be informed by: that of the peaceful and emotional victim.

6.3.2. Challenging the script: audiences and script confusion

The script of the woman as a peaceful and emotional victim however, is also being challenged in the female fighter's gender performances. At one point during a musical performance given by one of the female fighters for example, the PKK female audience members reacted to this performance by rejecting it (Foss et all. 2012:10). They were laughing at the girl who was singing. Her singing however, would not logically lead to rejection or merely a tolerance of the performance, since her musical performance was at least not bad. The male PKK fighters for example, listened closely to the song that was being sung.

This rejection of the girl's performance highlights Fuist's (2012:1) idea that of misunderstandings in performances. These misunderstandings, according to him, mean that people do not share the same position within a shared meaning system. A performance cannot be misunderstood, but it can understood by different audiences in different ways. The girl's musical performance was informed by the script of woman being the peaceful and emotional victim. In this case, the audience of PKK female fighters understood the performance of the girl however, as one that was not informed by the script of a woman being fearless and self-confident, and therefore a wrong performance This led the female audiences to react on the girl's performance by rejecting it.

This reaction by the female audience members was seen by the girl who was performing her song. As argued by Foss et all. (2012:10), audience reactions can lead to a change in performance. In this case, the girl saw that her audience members, the other female fighters, were still in their scripted performance of the fearless and self confident woman. After seeing this, the girl changed her mise-en-scene. While at first, her mise-en-scene consisted of the scripted performance of the woman as an emotional victim, it was followed by a mise-en-scene in which she tried to convince the audience that 'she was not caught up in the song she was singing, because she had other more important things to do.' This was done by suddenly rushing through the song without showing much dedication given for her performance anymore. This change in performance thus, was informed by the script of the woman as

fearless and self-confident, influenced by the reaction given by her performance team.

6.4. Conclusion

Women are, both in Kurdish society as well as by the PKK, scripted to perform gender on the basis of emotionalized victimhood and peacefulness. This script is reflected in the gender performances of the female fighters through music. In these performances, team members try to keep the performances in line with the script of women as emotional and peaceful victims. Performance team members however, also try to disturb the performance informed by this script, being informed by their script of performing self confidence and fearlessness.

7. WOMEN AS LOVING/ LOVING THE HOMELAND

7.1. Love and family in Kurdish culture

Kurdish society is rural, traditional and few freedoms are given to women. As said before, their place in the family is largely dependent on men. Also, women's duty is primarily to raise children (Taşdemir 2007:91). Taşdemir points out that for Kurdish women in general, the number of their pregnancies is extremely important. Kurdish women are praised for the number of children they have. The ideal woman in Kurdish society, is the one whose role is that of giving birth to sons who will become martyrs for the nation. Women are thus given value for their biological role: they represent an objectified function whose role is described as the biological and cultural guarantors of the nation. Women reproduce the nation and transmit their cultural values to children (Taşdemir 2007:91). This relates to the idea that was mentioned before: Kurdish women as peaceful creatures. Mothers are seen as the most peaceful, since they bring children into the world and 'nurture them with great effort.'

Furthermore, Kurdish family structures are hierarchical and children of Kurdish families are overall not given much freedom of movement. Many Kurdish children are not being sent to school by their parents (Ergil 2000:14). As said before, forced marriages occur often and domestic violence is not an exception. Women are expected to show respect and love to their family and to avoid dishonoring them. For many children of Kurdish families, there is a desire to break free from authority (Özeren et all 2014:23). According to Mugge (2012:2), many young women in Kurdish society see the PKK as an acceptable form of escape from their daily lives. A Kurdish father can block his daughter from working and from going to school, but it is not easy to criticize her decision to fight for Kurdish freedom. Doing so could raise questions about a family's real loyalties, which in turn could put the family at odds with the PKK. Such comments could raise questions inside the PKK about the loyalties of the girl who would join the PKK, possibly endangering her life (Mugge 2012:1).

7.2. Motherhood and the PKK

De Jong (2015:1) argues that it is not only Kurdish culture, but also the PKK that links women to motherhood. This relates to the script mentioned before, for which it was argued that women are assumed to have certain characteristics, such as an abhorrence of violence and a closeness to nature. This closeness to nature is, according to the PKK, closely related to motherhood. (Jong 2015:1). The family is seen as the cradle from which a new Kurdish society can arise. It is therefore seen as the center of liberation. It is women as mothers who are given a primary responsibility in deciding the outcome of the struggle. Due to the ability to give birth and their close association with earth and nature namely, women are believed to be in the secret possession of life (De Jong 2015:1).

7.3. The PKK and love for the homeland

However, the traditional family is also criticized by the PKK. As said before, the PKK is against the 'family in which patriarchal attitudes oppress women.' In 1992, Öcalan wrote a piece of women and the family. In this work, he explicitly targets the traditional family. He argues that the family is where women's labor is exploited and where women perform reproductive functions without getting anything in return. It is here that he argues that the state makes women responsible for the growth of the population through the institution of the family. According to him, the family normalizes oppression and slavery in society. By keeping women locked into their homes, a 'a war is waged against them':

*'Kurds' horizon was limited to the family because they were socially, politically, and economically oppressed as a result of an alliance between the 'colonizer' state and the comprador Kurdish sovereign classes (*Öcalan in Jongereden and Akkaya:2012:1).

The family strucuture, according to Öcalan, is thus, a barrier for women's indivudualization and for the development of women's national feelings. The message is therefore for women to detach themselves from their families. Leaving the family is seen as the only way to create 'new and free 'Kurdishness'. Sexual love

and the family founded on such sexual feelings are to be replaced by the new family of the nation and love for the country. This invention of a new family can only be gained for women by participating in the struggle of the PKK's guerilla forces. The new women, according to the PKK, is 'a woman who is trustworthy and the founder of a new society':

When I say "woman must be trusted", I refer to a woman who has owned her identity, has become herself before anything else, has enlivened herself, has taught others how to live with the proper power to govern and organize, the woman with her valuable approaches; this is the free woman I know. There is no need hold back from this woman. Some regard such women dangerous. On the contrary, I adore such women. (Öcalan 1999: 86).

The duties and responsibilities, and the promises of the new woman are expressed as the 'love-victory dialectics.' Martyrdom for example, such as that of Zilan in 1996, who was murdered in a battle against the Turkish army, is mentioned as the realization of this the 'love-victory' dialectics:

'Zilan is love. ... a realization of love. ... Living big, loving big. Fighting big. These are tightly connected. If it becomes actualized, love will develop and be respected…..our great politics is our great love. …..it is a search for a definite life. It is an enormous will to "freedom." It is a reaction against life under the existing order' (Öcalan 1999: 28, 97).

In this statement, Öcalan compares Zilan's sacrifice as a sacrifice for love. Fighting for the PKK and PKK's politics are to be actualized, which is related to love. The only condition for love namely, is freedom, in which freedom means the liberation of the 'homeland' from enemies who are 'trapped in an oppressive system' (Casier and Jongerden 2012:1).

According to Öcalan (1999), the new family should thus be a product of *deserving* love. The PKK is therefore build on an organizational ruling in which love, affection and desires have to be held back. It is forbidden to speak much about life before the PKK, including family (*Wall Street Journal*, July 24, 2015). Relationships and sexual encounters in the PKK are forbidden (International BusinessTimes, April 30, 2015), since only love for the homeland is allowed, which 'would go hand in hand

with victory' (Öcalan 1999: 84). An example of the fact that sexual love should be, according to the PKK, replaced by love for the homeland is given by Öcalan in 1999:

'Love that doesn't melt within the larger political organizational event constitutes a problem….to love on the right basis is a work of great justice, great beauty, great effort and great victory. One who doesn't provide these cannot love. Love without carrying the organization forward, without improving all kinds of actions, without a strong character is turpitude….I am saying that love of those who are focused on victory is valuable. Love has to be entirely focused on politics and on the march to victory' (Öcalan 1999: 27).

This discourse was widely used in the PKK in the 1990's and which is still embedded in the PKK's policy. The slogan 'who fights becomes free, who is free becomes beautiful, who becomes beautiful is loved' (Öcalan 1999: 28) is one that is known by almost all PKK members. The PKK's war is often framed by the organization itself as a 'revolution of love.' Love is an ideal for the future and not something to be obtained in the present, because 'without victory, there is no love'. And since women are closer to nature, they have to fight against their own feelings of love even more than male PKK guerilla members (Akkaya and Jongerden 2012:1).

Women thus, are seen to be close to nature, both in Kurdish culture as well as by the PKK. In Kurdish culture, families are tightly bound together and women are respected more when they have more children. Women are by the PKK seen as close to nature and important because of motherhood. However, the PKK restricts women from having children and emphasizes that women are not to show their desire to have children. Women are thus, by the PKK, scripted to have no love other than love for the homeland. In their gender performances, the female fighters are informed by these scripts in several ways.

In their gender performances, female PKK fighters mostly show a great devotion to their PKK script of showing only love for the homeland. PKK men and women for example, only communicate with each with the idea of being a 'heval', a friend. In their gender performances, no female fighters perform gender in a way that reveals their desire to show love to men instead of the homeland only. Overall,

this is the same for the PKK's expectation of not showing love for parents (the traditional family) or the desire to have children. According to Wasmund (1985:199), involvement in a guerilla organization such as that of the leads to a loss of desires, identity and interests, because of pressure to adjust, dependence on a group as well as the assignment of roles. Looking at the female fighter's gender performances however, reveals that this loss of identity, desires and interests is not always the case for the female fighters. This will be explained below by focusing on 1: the desire to have children and 2: emotional attachment to the 'traditional family', both expressed through gender performances.

7.4. Performing

7.4.1. Motherhood and performances

The different scripts mentioned above, relating to motherhood, inform the female fighter's gender performances in contradicting ways. One example of this is the desire to have children. In Qandil, I stayed at a guesthouse, owned by a traditional local family, who had one child. The girl was five years old and loved to run around the house to attract people's attention. One of PKK's female fighters with whom we had been talking during the day was with us as well. She repeatedly looked at the child, who was playing with a doll she got from her parents.

A few hours later, when everybody in the house (including the little girl) was either watching television or observing the child's behavior, the guerilla woman grabbed the doll and looked at it for a while, with a sad face. Her action grabbed the attention of the people around her. By doing this, the PKK guerilla woman unconsciously turned herself into a performer: she did not initiate the performance knowing that she would give such a performance to an audience. As argued by Fuist (2014:15), sometimes people who are the audience, suddenly draw the attention to themselves, thereby making themselves into performers. In this case, it was the little girl who was, at first, the performer. However, by holding, twisting and turning the doll and by the mise-en-scene that was used by the guerilla woman, she thus turned herself into a performer.

After she realized that she was performing however, she did not choose to stop drawing the attention to the doll as a prop. Also, she continued talking about herself and her desire to have children, however arguing that love for the country is more important than having children. Foss et all. (2012:10) argue that one of the reactions that can be give to a gendered performance, is support. This reaction emphasizes the audience being comfortable a gender performance. Audiences here, have no desire to change the performance. In this case, all the audience members in the room were supportive of the performance that was given by the guerilla woman at that moment, namely that of performing her desire to have children. This made it possible for her to continue with this performance.

One could think that the woman's performance, turning into a conscious performance, signified a performance influenced by the script of not showing love for the country. This could be argued by emphasizing the fact that the woman argued that love for the homeland was more important for her than the desire to have children. It was the unconscious performance in her mise -en-scene that was given by her, however that revealed something else. Her mise-en-scene namely, symbolized her desire to have children and the difficulties she had with not being able to have children as a guerilla woman.

It was only after a few minutes, possible because of the awareness of her own mise-en-scene, that she turned the attention away from herself. As said by Fuist (2012:2), audiences can change quickly and sometimes people are forced into being the performer. In this case the PKK woman turned the attention away from herself as a performer by making me, the audience into a performer. She namely, asked me the question, if I wanted to have children.

The woman, in her performance, was informed by the script that was mentioned before. In Kurdish society, as said before, having children, talking about children and living for children is seen to be more than normal. The PKK has the same image of her as a mother, since women are seen to be 'close to nature' and therefore able to raise children for the homeland . However, the PKK has taught her only to have love for the country. While her uniform clearly stated that she was a

PKK fighter (her means of symbolic production), and that she was therefore only allowed to show love for the homeland, her mise-en-scene did not support the performance that she was scripted to give in accordance with this uniform.

The setting played an important role in the performance mentioned above. As argued by Ergil (2000:17), female fighters mostly live in the mountains and are dependent on each other. Alexander (2006:59) argues furthermore, that performers cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave. The fact that the setting, in this case, was a cozy family house, with pictures hanging on the wall and without much reference to the war situation that was going on, led her to be able to give this specific performance. Going out of the house and back into the mountains would mean for her to be more aware of not showing anything other than love for the homeland.

The above is closely related to the idea of the performance team and social control. As said by Goffman (1959:58), performers closely watch each other and form team, in which a distinct world' is being portrayed to the audience. Each team-mate is forced to rely on the good conduct and behavior of his fellows, and they, in turn, are forced to rely on him. In this case however, the team of performers that was usually around her, the other PKK guerilla members, were not present. This made it possible for the female fighter to let her performance be informed by a script which was not related to the PKK. So, not only the setting, but also the absence of her performance team members made it possible for her to perform gender in a way that showed her desire to have children.

7.4.2. Family ties and performances

The scripts that are mentioned above also informed performances in these sense of showing love for the 'traditional family'. When I was talking with one of the female fighters in Makhmour for example, I asked her a question about family. The girl, at that moment, was consciously performing gender, in which she performed the scripted behavior of a woman as having no love other than love for the homeland.

She, from the moment we met each other, was very eager to tell me her story. She liked being in the centre of attention. However, her mise-en-scene which first showed pride of her being cut off from her family, turned into sadness. Using this mise-en-scene however, was not what she wanted her gender performance to be like at that moment. While at the one hand, she was trying to convince me of her having no problems with her having cut the ties with her family, thereby performing in accordance to the script of 'having no love other than the love for your country', in her mise-en-scene she unconsciously gave of a different performance. This performance was informed by her script of showing love for the family instead of showing only love for the homeland.

When the woman mentioned above, realized that she had given a performance that did not involve the use of a symbol belonging to the shared meaning system of the PKK, she changed her mise-en-scene. In this, she was supported by her female fighter's performance team. A team, as argued by Goffman (1959:58), has a mutual understanding of what their performance should be like. He argues that a mistake in a performance is often not corrected by one of the team members, since these team members want to give the impression that everything is going well in the performance that is given at that moment. Goffman also argues however, that team members help each other out when performances are not being given 'correctly'. In this situation, the girl was helped by her team members. Her team members turned me into a performer (Fuist 2012:2), by asking me the question if I was happy with my own family. The question was followed by few sentences which stated that families are oppressive, including my own . This change in performance and audience helped the team of performers to shift the attention away from the performative actions of their own team, to my performance.

After a while however, the girl who had made the performative mistake, started to draw attention to herself as a performer again. She continued to the team performance by blaming me for not taking care of my own family, turning her sadness into anger. The girl, by doing this, tried to correct her former performance, showing an idealized version of herself (Goffman 1959:58) as the female fighter as

having no love other than love for her homeland. By giving this performance, she would get respect from the other PKK people surrounding her: her team members of the PKK were acceptant of her new performance. This mise-en-scene was not seen, by her team members, as being informed by the script of showing love for the family, but it was seen to be informed by the script of showing love for the homeland only. So in her performance, the girl both challenged the PKK related script by showing love for her family as well correcting her performance, informed by the PKK script of showing no love other than love for the homeland.

7.5. Conclusion

Women are, in Kurdish society, seen as mothers. To have many children is to be respected more. Furthermore, family connections are tight and hierarchical and women are expected to show love to their families. The PKK also sees women as mothers, however forbidding PKK fighters to show any love other than love for the homeland. Female fighters are informed by these scripts in different ways. Overall, they often let their performances be informed by the PKK related script of showing only love for the homeland. There are however, exceptions to this. The script of woman as mothers and women as only loving the homeland create contradicting performances. In this case, this was enabled by the absence of team members and the setting of the performance. Furthermore, the performance informed by the script of showing only love for the homeland created a contradiction in performances, by letting performance be informed by showing love for the family. In this case however, this contradiction was being solved with the help of performance team members, who guided the performer to a more PKK informed scripted performance.

8. PKK WOMEN FIGHTING WITH/FOR ALL WOMEN

8.1. Uniting all women

According to the PKK, all over the world have to bond with each other. By the KJK for example, which is closely related to the female military unit of the PKK, it is argued that women must take possession of the identify of being mothers, that they must commemorate martyrs together, that they must rise up in unity against the 'system' everywhere in the world and they must take the opportunity of celebrating International Women's Day everywhere in the world, in unity with each other. This day is celebrated in the Qandil mountains by the PKK every year and is widely promoted. Video's, photo's and news articles about the event are posted on the PKK's own website and in newspaper articles every year. By celebrating the event and by promoting it, the PKK finds new allies in international (women's) organizations (Firat News Agency, March 8 2014)(Zagros Median, March 8 2012).

By the representatives of the KJK (Kurdish Communities of Women), it is also argued that women should have a 'universal experience of organization.' This organizing should be done with the purpose of social liberation for women. To be a free woman, according to the KJK, is to be aware of the universal experiences of all women. If women are, according to the KJK, aware of this universal bond, they can implement the principles of freedom and equality for all women (KJK 2011:1).

'Jineology', coming from the Kurdish word 'jin', which translates into 'woman', is seen by the PKK as important for organizing the experience of women worldwide. 'Jineology' is, according to the KJK, a women's science. The idea of 'jineology' is that men 'have always had power over science' and women therefore 'deserve their own ideas to be represented in science.' The critique of recent woman's movements on gender issues, according to the KJK, is not sufficient for analyzing and evaluating the history of civilization and modernity. The KJK assumes that within the social sciences, there are almost no 'women themes', The reason for this is, according to the KJK, that civilization and modernity's hegemonic mentality and structures of material culture have denied discussions on these themes. 'Jineology',

according to the PKK, is about all aspects of life, exploring these expects from the perspective of women. The new scientific field of jineology represents, according to the KJK, the common values that women all over the world share with each other. It is argued that a new movement for women can arise out of the introducing of 'jineology' as a new scientific field. Such a movement would be a movement for all women (Komalen Jinen Kurdistan 2014:1).

8.2. Women as teachers, protectors and role models

The idea of PKK women as protectors of all women is also represented in the PKK's discourse and ideology. As was said before, PKK women are expected to be courageous, fearless and self-confident, in order to save women who are being enslaved by ISIS. PKK women here, are seen to be the protectors of women in the Middle East, which is emphasized by Öcalan (2013:5) in his ideological texts as well. It is not only women in the Middle East however, that are to be protected by the PKK's female fighters, but it is the protection of '*all women and the Kurdish people against any kinds of assaults and attacks*' which is seen as a mission for women in the PKK. On several occasions , the PKK portrays itself as improving the rights of all women over the world. Women in the PKK are thus, seen as protectors. They are seen to be protectors of all women, since they' improve the rights of all women over the world' by fighting ISIS (BBC News, August 16 2015)(KJK 2011:1).

Women in the PKK are also, by the PKK, seen as role models and teachers of all women. This can be seen in the PKK's discourse on the connection that is made between capitalism and gender. Capitalism, according to the PKK is '*the actions of opportunist individuals and groups who establish themselves into openings and cracks within society as the potential for surplus product develops*' (PKK Online 2015:1). The danger of capitalism is, according to the PKK, that these 'opportunists will legitimize themselves as the new masters of society.' Capitalism is gendered, since it represents 'the oppressive male in an institutionalized form.' It is, according to the PKK, exploitive in nature and represents a male warfare being waged against women, who are the victims of this warfare (PKK Online 2015:1).

Öcalan links capitalism to the experiences of women in western countries. According to him, the western capitalist society denies women any hope of change. The woman is only rendered important through 'constant rape'. In western societies, so he argues, the woman mother culture has been destroyed. Women in western countries are at the service of the male oppressive system. They are seen to be under the servitude of men. These women 'let themselves be oppressed and do nothing in order to come out of this so called oppression' (Öcalan 2013:3). In opposition to this, the PKK represents itself as a civilized system, based on gender equality. According to the PKK, its own guerilla women are the leaders and examples of this new society. Women all over the world namely, are being oppressed, which emphasizes the importance of female guerilla members as role models, teachers and examples for non-PKK women all over the world (PKK Online 2015:1).

While at the one hand, Öcalan calls on women to rise up together with all women in unity, because of they have been oppressed by the other gender, he also calls on women to 'shatter the bonds between themselves.' These bonds namely, are based on the victimhood of women:

'the first thing for you to do is to find the bonds that bind women, and slash them. (Öcalan in Çağlayan 2012:1).

There is a paradox here thus. At the one hand, as can be seen above, the PKK calls on women all over the world to bond together, because they have been victimized by men. At the other hand however, the PKK also calls on women to slash the bonds between them, for the same reason of them being victimized. Celebi (2012:105) adds to this by arguing that in guerilla organizations in which gender is seen as important, the guerilla struggle is eventually more important than the feminist struggle. He argues that women are able to be international actors, because of their struggle in the guerilla group, which focuses on women's issues. He also argues however, that women's issues are secondary than that of national survival. He states that for the PKK, it is not the struggle of women that is seen to be the most important, but the struggle to win from the enemy. PKK women therefore, have to be protectors, role models and teachers of all women over the world more than having the duty of

uniting with all women on a large scale. The struggle of women is equated with the struggle against the enemy. In this case , the Kurdish struggle is seen as a struggle for women: to win the war from the enemy is to win the war for all women. Furthermore, Casier and Jongeren (2012:1) argue that women within the PKK have a double responsibility. At the one hand they are responsible for liberation of their homeland, which means being a role model for all women over the world. At the other hand, PKK women are made responsible for the liberation of their own gender, creating a possibility to bond with women on a universal basis.

As can be seen above, women in the PKK are scripted to be both role models, teachers and protectors of non-PKK women all over the world, as well as to bond with them on the basis of the 'universal oppression of women'. In the first script, the universal victimhood of women is being emphasized. Women here, are therefore responsible for bonding with each other. The other script entails however, that PKK women should be role models, protectors and teachers of non-PKK women. Here, the importance of the bonding based universal victimhood of women is being ignored. As argued by Wasmund (1985:199), in guerilla organizations, there often exists a collective idea of omnipotence: the ability to do everything. In this case, this is represented in the performances informed by the scripts mentioned above. At the one hand, the female fighters perform their teacher, protector and role model scripts in relation to non-PKK women and at the other hand they try to bond with them on the basis of gender oppression. What this exactly looks like, is discussed in detail below.

8.3. Performing

8.3.1. From audience to performance team: 'jineolgy' as a prop

In the female fighter performances, there seems to be confusion about how performances should be either informed by the script of the PKK woman as a role model, teacher and protector or the script of uniting all women, creating a universal bond between them. In one of these cases, I as an audience, was considered as an audience first and was later incorporated into the performance team. While being at one of the PKK' guerilla female houses, one of the female PKK fighters started talking about 'jineology.' After a few minutes talking about the new scientific field, she showed me and my translator her book on 'jineolgy'. In her gender performance, she was informed by the script of the PKK woman as a role model and teacher for all women. She was, at that point , a performer, while I was her audience (Goffman 1959:58). The book on 'jineolgy' here, functioned as a tool to be able to perform her role as a teacher and role model. Her performance was conscious as well, since the girl was aware of the performance that was given by her, consciously using the book as a prop to convey her performance to the audience (Fuist 2014:15).

However, as Fuist (20114:15) argues, audiences and performers can change and the relationship between them is fluid. In this case, the girl's performance changed into being informed by the script of her as a teacher to that of her as the creator of a universal bond between women. While at first, I was considered as the audience, I was later incorporated into the performance team. This was emphasized by the girl' mise-en-scene, which functioned at the time to warn of the interaction role of her to be played: that of creating unity on the basis of the female gender. The girl started to sit closer to my translator, in order to let him know that he had become the audience of the performance that she intended to give. She started pointing at the book, trying to convince him of the importance of 'jineology.' While giving this performance, the way she looked at me revealed her intention of, as Goffman argued (1959:58), 'portraying a distinct world' to the audience. This distinct world, was seen by the girl, as a world that was 'only known by her and me'. As

Fuist (2014:15) argues, the audience can sometimes be drawn into a performance team. This can be instigated by the performer. In this case, the girl as a performer incorporated me into her performance team, which made me to be co-responsible for the team performance to be given, projecting a definition of the situation was to be maintained at that moment. This definition was for me and her to stay incorporated in same performance team, on the basis of the 'bonding of women based on the universal oppression of women by men.' The girls performance thus, was first informed by the script of her being a role model for- and teacher of non-PKK women and later turned into a performance of her and me as a performance team, informed by her script of uniting all women on the basis of male oppression.

8.3.2. Team to audience: the gun as a prop

It was not always the case however, that I as an audience was eventually incorporated into the performance team of PKK women. In some cases, I was fist drawn into the performance team and later turned into the audience, informed by the script of PKK women protecting all women. One of the examples is when one of the female fighters drew my attention to a gun that was lying on the floor in one of the houses of the guerilla camps. In her performance, the prop functioned as a means of being able to perform gender informed by the script of the PKK woman uniting all women. In her performance namely, she unconsciously (Fuist 2014:15) instigated for me and her to go and fight together.

The fact that her performance was unconsciously given however, was emphasized by the way her face seemed to freeze after instigating this performance of gender. The girl did know that she was drawing the attention to herself, however not with the intention of giving a performance informed by the script of uniting all women. After she realized that she, according to herself, had made a 'performative mistake' , her mis-en-scene changed. However, the gun was still used to be able to give a certain performance. The meaning of the gun as a prop changed. She namely, turned her performance of gender into one informed by the script of the PKK woman

protecting all women. She argued that if the Islamic State would attack, she would protect me from them.

For the girl thus, her performance of gender as being a protector was seen by her as more important than that of one informed by the script of uniting all women. Her team members played an important role here as well. Goffman (1959:58) argues that instead of a rich definition of the situation, reality might become reduced to a thin party line, which is known by the performance team. This resembles Alexander's (2006:59) idea of the PKK as a meaning system with its own symbols and references embedded in it. By giving this performance thus, she intended to give a performance which signified the symbols and the codes of the meaning system of the PKK as a whole. Giving a performance informed by the script of uniting all women however, was not seen by her as informed by the symbols and references belonging to the meaning system of the PKK. Therefore, her performance changed to one being informed by the script of uniting all women together, to a performance informed by the script of her as my protector.

8.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, it was argued that by the PKK, women are expected to be role models, protectors and teachers of all women all over the world. At the other hand however, the PKK expects women to unite with all women over the world, on the basis of their shared victimhood. In their gender performances, the fighters are informed by these scripts in contradicting ways. 'Jineolgy' here, is an important prop which functions to perform gender informed by the script of PKK women as role models. It was later turned into a performance informed by the script of the unity of all women. Furthermore, the gun also functioned as a prop. It was used first, as a prop for a performance informed by the script of uniting all women against the enemy and changed into a prop which functioned to perform gender informed by the script of PKK women protecting all women.

9. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this thesis was to explore what scripts inform the way in which the PKK's female fighters perform gender in the current war against the Islamic State. In this thesis it is argued that the female fighters use various scripts in their performances of gender. These gender scripts vary from both PKK related to non-PKK related scripts, informing the PKK's female fighter's gender performances in different ways.

In the first chapter, it was argued that in Kurdish culture, women are expected to play the subordinate role to men. The PKK at the other hand, argues that women have to be instigators in establishing gender equality within the PKK. These scripts inform the gender performances in several ways. First of all, female fighters maintain the gendered script through performance. They do this by drawing the attention of a non- PKK audience, as well as forming performance teams with men, who are at the same time their audiences. The uniform is an important prop for instigating gender equality. Furthermore, the script of the woman as subordinate informs the fighters performances, by both challenging this script as well as maintaining it. The script is being challenged by choosing performance leaders who function as role models for the performance informed by the PKK script of instigating gender equality to be given.

In the second chapter, it was argued that women who join the PKK, are by female Kurdish civilians, mostly seen as heroines, which makes them responsible for being courageous, strong and fearless fighters. And where the PKK first of all makes women responsible for instigating gender equality within the PKK, it also makes them responsible for detaching themselves from men in being more courageous, fearless and self confident than guerilla men. In their gender performances, female fighters are informed by this script. Setting and power matters here. When women with much performative power are not around and when the setting is more informal, performers with little performative power sometimes take the responsibility of performing this script. This is however, not always the case. Furthermore, by writing in their diaries, PKK female fighters challenge the script. Pictures of martyrs also function as an important prop for the women to be able to let

their performances be informed by the script of being courageous, fearless and self confident. This prop is important in performances within a setting which shows that the enemy, ISIS, is close.

In the third chapter, the script of the woman being an emotional and peaceful victim was discussed. Both in Kurdish society as well as in the PKK, women are seen to have these character traits. By the PKK, Kurdish female fighters thus, are expected to be courageous, fearless and self confident. They are however, also informed by the script mentioned above. In their gender performances, female fighters are often given the responsibility to give musical performances. These performances are in stark contrast with the script of the woman being courageous and fearless. In their performances which are informed by the script of playing the emotional and peaceful victim, performance team members try to challenge the performance influenced by script, by ridiculing these gender performances. At the other hand however, performance team members also try to maintain the performances influenced by the script of being a courageous and fearless woman.

In the fourth chapter, it was argued that women in Kurdish society are seen as mothers and have tightly bound, hierarchical and strict family structures, in which they are expected to show respect and love for their families. The PKK also argues that women are close to nature and mother figures, since they are the so called reproducers of the nation. However, in the PKK, love relationships and sex is forbidden, as well as keeping in contact with non-PKK family members and friends. In their gender performances, the PKK's female fighters often let themselves be informed by the PKK script of only showing love for the homeland. This is not always the case, however. Performances are also informed by the script of showing love for family and children. In the first case however, this performance was quickly changed into a more PKK informed performance. In the second case, the performance was made possible by the setting and the absence of performance team members.

In the fifth chapter, it was discussed that by the PKK, women are expected to be role models, protectors and teachers of all women all over the world. At the other

hand however, the PKK expects them to unite with all women on the bases of shared victimhood. In their gender performances, the fighters are informed by these scripts in contradicting ways. 'Jineolgy' here, is an important prop which functioned to perform gender informed by the script of PKK women as role models. It was later turned into a performance, informed by the script of uniting all women. Furthermore, the gun also functioned as a prop. It was used first, as a prop for a performance informed by the script of uniting all women against the enemy and was later changed into a prop which functioned to perform gender informed by the script of PKK women protecting all women.

As can be seen above thus, female fighters are informed by various scripts. These scripts are sometimes contradicting, such as: subordinate/instigator of gender equality, loving/loving the homeland or being a role model for all women/uniting all women. In some cases, these contradicting scripts create confusion, which is reflected in the PKK fighter's gender performances. Sometimes, the PKK women choose to be informed by one script over the other in their gender performances. At other times however, scripts tend to go well together, such as the script of women as victims and emotional peace loving creatures, which is emphasized in both Kurdish culture as well as by the PKK. This does not mean however, that these scripts inform the performances of gender without the female fighters challenging them. Scripts thus, inform the female fighter's gender performances not only by maintaining them but also by reinventing them through gender performances in different ways.

As was said before, analyzing scripts through looking at performances helps to discover possible gaps between what is expected and what is done, in order to see if and how social relations could possible change over time. The gender performances of the female fighters show that scripts at micro level show considerable innovation. This innovation is positive, since it means that it eventually is the women's willingness for active struggle that can determine which meanings will be fixed and which meanings will not.

However, raising awareness on the different gender scripts and how they inform gender, can also contribute to a change in these scripts. As is argued in this

thesis, some of the scripts inform performances in contradicting ways, which creates confusion and insecurity for the female performers. Being aware of this confusion and the problems that scripts bring in the daily performances of the female fighters, enables for changes be made in the expectations based on binary divisions of the male and female gender.

As said before, there should be a change in the way gender is being studied by most researchers. The focus on gender in research should shift from the angle of what is 'manly or feminine behavior' to the angle of what is seen to be manly or feminine behavior. To analyze gender in the sense of doing gender or undoing gender namely, only functions to maintain the gendered bias of the opposite sexes. Gaining more understanding of gender scripts and how they inform the performance of gender, can lead to more awareness of how people restrict themselves and others through the gender binary divisions they create.

Secondly, the research findings suggest, thus, that female fighters let their performances be influenced by gender scripts in innovative ways. These sites of disjuncture are a particularly promising location for the study of change of gender scripts. Seeing these sites of conjuncture as process enables for longitudinal research to be conducted. Longitudinal research could possibly lead to interesting results on how female fighters change their performances overtime, thereby also changing gender scripts over time.

Thirdly, this research was restricted in time and the possibility exists that certain relevant gender performances have not been analyzed. Further research over a longer time span can possibly lead to more comprehensive results about the performances of gender given by the PKK female fighters.

Fourthly, analyzing performance of gender by male PKK fighters and the scripts that inform the performances of male PKK fighters, will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of gender performances within the PKK. In this thesis, male PKK fighters have been studied merely as audiences. Future research on PKK men as performers can therefore lead to more information about gendered

performances from their perspective, instead of only the perspective of the PKK female fighters. This is particularly interesting since most media articles, as said before, focus on the female PKK fighters instead of male PKK fighters.

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