THE JEWISH-MUSLIM MIXED MARRIAGES: SELF-IDENTIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF JEWISH-MUSLIM MIXED COUPLES AND THEIR CHILDREN IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

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_____

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık

Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

_____

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Saktanber

Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

_____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Aykan Erdemir

Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assist. Prof. Dr. İlker Aytürk	(B.U., ADM)	_____
Assist. Prof. Dr. Aykan Erdemir	(METU, SOC)	_____
Dr. Fatma Umut Beşpınar	(METU, SOC)	_____

I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Bürin Yıldıztekin

Signature :

ABSTRACT

THE JEWISH-MUSLIM MIXED MARRIAGES: SELF-IDENTIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF JEWISH-MUSLIM MIXED COUPLES AND THEIR CHILDREN IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

Yıldıztekin, Bürin

M.S., Department of Sociology

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Aykan Erdemir

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This thesis explores Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages with a particular focus on the mixed couples' and their children's self-identifications regarding religion and their experiences in a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey. By adopting a qualitative research design, in-depth interviews were conducted with 9 Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and 3 children in Istanbul and in Izmir. In addition, an official from the Turkish Jewish Community and an active member of the community were interviewed to determine the general perception of the Turkish Jewish Community regarding mixed marriage.

The Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' self-identifications with their Jewish and Muslim cultures and heritages reveal the importance of understanding individuals' self-perceptions about their own identities since their self-perceptions cannot be understood by primordial ascriptions. The children of these mixed couples' self-identifications provide important insights into the issue of the relative attractiveness of Jewish and Muslim identities in Turkey. The Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' and their children's experiences in the private and public spheres reveal significant aspects of being Jewish, being mixed-married and being a child of a mixed marriage in a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey.

Keywords: Turkey, Jewish, Muslim, mixed marriage, self-identification.

ÖZ

YAHUDİ-MÜSLÜMAN KARMA EVLİLİKLER: GÜNÜMÜZ TÜRKİYE'SİNDEKİ YAHUDİ-MÜSLÜMAN KARMA ÇİFTLERİN VE ÇOCUKLARININ KENDİLERİNİ KİMLİKLENDİRMELERİ VE DENEYİMLERİ

Yıldıztekin, Bürin

Yüksek Lisans, Sosyoloji Bölümü

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Bu tez, çoğunluğun Müslüman olduğu bir ülke olan Türkiye'deki Yahudi-Müslüman karma evlilikleri, karma çiftlerin ve çocuklarının din bağlamında kendilerini kimliklendirmelerini ve deneyimlerini odak noktası alarak incelemektedir. Nitel araştırma dizaynı benimsenerek, 9 Yahudi-Müslüman karma çift ve 3 çocuk ile İstanbul'da ve İzmir'de derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, Türk Yahudi Cemaati'nden bir resmi görevli ve cemaatin aktif üyelerinden biri ile de Türk Yahudi Cemaati'nin karma evlilik konusuna dair genel bakışını anlamak için görüşülmüştür.

Yahudi-Müslüman karma çiftlerin sahip oldukları Yahudi ve Müslüman kültür ve miraslar anlamında kendilerini kimliklendirmeleri bireylerin kendi kimlikleri hakkında sahip oldukları algıyı anlamanın önemini ortaya koymaktadır çünkü bireylerin kendi algıları ilksel atıflarla anlaşılamamaktadır. Karma çiftlerin çocuklarının kendilerini kimliklendirmeleri Türkiye'deki Yahudi ve Müslüman kimliklerinin göreli çekicilikleri konusunda önemli fikirler sağlamaktadır. Yahudi-Müslüman karma çiftlerin ve çocuklarının deneyimleri çoğunluğun Müslüman bir ülke olduğu Türkiye'de, özel ve kamusal alanlarda Yahudi olmanın, karma evli olmanın ve karma bir evliliğin çocuğu olmanın önemli yönlerini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Yahudi, Müslüman, karma evlilik, kendilerini kimliklendirme.

To My Family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are mainly four reasons behind studying Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in contemporary Turkey: Firstly, in daily life, individuals probably interact with many other individuals whom they would consider to be an outsider, if they knew that they had a different religious identity. These kinds of interactions can be considered as tangential connections since most of the time, individuals are not aware of other individuals' different religious identities and/or backgrounds. Thus it is difficult to consider these as actual connections. In this sense, the vital question seems to be: What is the most intimate connection that an individual can have with another individual who is from a different religious background? The answer to this question generates the basis of exploring the experiences and self-identifications of Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children, namely the mixed marriage.

Due to the impact of globalization, various kinds of communication opportunities, urbanization and migration, a great number of people from different religious backgrounds come into contact with each other. One of the most important impacts of these interactions occurs in the field of marriage. Consideration of a family as a micro-level institution is valuable for comprehending a very important dimension of the interactions between different religious groups and therefore, religious identities.

Secondly, one of the most important current debates within the Jewish world is about intermarriage. Jews constitute a religious minority group in many countries except Israel, their worldwide population is not high, and Judaism does not carry the intention of proselytizing in terms of gaining new adherents. Thus marriage and reproduction are vital issues in the Jewish world. In the light of these facts, it can be argued that one of the most critical debates within the Jewish world is intermarriage. The status of children who are born to a non-Jewish mother constitutes a particularly important dimension of the issue. Since

Jewishness passes through the mother's line, children who are born to a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father create a very significant debate about the criteria of being Jew.

Thirdly, the issue of intermarriage has been mostly studied in the countries that are predominantly Christian. Therefore, it is important to explore the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey, where the Jewish community is mostly known to be closed in the sense of mixed marriages. Lastly, religiously mixed marriage is a valuable ground upon which to explore the dynamic characters of the concepts of faith, religion, culture, tradition and identity.

The main goal of the current study is to understand and describe the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' and their children's self-perceptions about their religious identities and situations by portraying their lives in the private and public spheres and to explore the experiences, problems and strategies of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children in Turkey. Throughout the study, there can be noticed two strands in the research running parallel: By remaining within the boundaries of an individualistic approach, both the mixed couples' and their children's self-perceptions about their religious identities and their experiences with third parties such as the couples' respective families of origin are investigated.

I particularly would like to state that since the goal of the current study is to observe the micro processes of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children, and to reveal the micro patterns that appear between different religious identities in the context of marriage and family life, the study does not make generalizations in any sense.

In the literature, the issue of religiously mixed marriage has usually been perceived as a natural consequence of the weakening of individuals' religious identities, and from time to time it has been approached as a pathological event. Since mixed couples' and their children's voices are not frequently heard, with the help of in-depth interviews, the current study particularly focuses on their self-perceptions about their religious identities: In contemporary Turkey, what does being Jewish mean to Jews who are married to Muslims, and what does

being Muslim mean to Muslims who are married to Jews? How do the children who are born to these mixed marriages identify themselves in terms of religion in a predominantly Muslim country?

CHAPTER 2

STATE OF THE ART

2.1. Intermarriage in Sociological Thought

The overall goal of this chapter is to point out the main sociological themes, approaches, assumptions and concepts in the study of intermarriage. First of all, this exploration of the classical literature on intermarriage and on-going issues revolving around the subject of intermarriage helps to indicate where the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages stands sociologically. Secondly, it reveals some of the important gaps and shifts in the existing literature on intermarriage. Lastly, intermarriage is not a frequently studied subject in Turkey; therefore, an overview of the literature on the issue is considered to be valuable.

As Raymond M. Lee (1994) notes "(…) the first detailed sociological studies of intermarriage emerged in the United States in the years prior to the Second World War" (p. 1). Regarding the underlying reason of this emergence in the United States, Milton L. Barron (1951) points out as follows:

> In a multigroup society (…) the study of intermarriage may provide a precise, quantitative measurement of (…) sociological questions as the process of assimilation, the degree of internal cohesion in individual racial, religious, and ethnic groups, and the extent of social distance between groups of these types (p. 249).

Barron (1951) mentions that despite the fact that, in general, intermarriage is not a frequently studied area, there are three main areas on which sociological studies of intermarriage focus:

> (…) [The first area is] the aetiology of intermarriage: the factors social and social-psychological, which induce individuals to cross group boundaries in order to marry. (…) [The second one is the] patterns of incidence and

> selection: the frequency with which intermarriages occur, trends over time and regularities in group references for outside partners. (…) [The third area] examines the consequences of intermarriage in terms, for example, of marital breakdown or patterns of identification of children (Lee, 1994, p. 1).

Barron (1951) notes that individuals, in general, perceive intermarriages as "(…) a grave to the people's values of identity, homogeneity, and survival" (p. 250). According to Barron (1951), it is believed that intermarriage should not be practiced due to the fact that the different cultural backgrounds of the intermarried cause conflict, and this conflict influences the children of these marriages negatively. In Barron's (1951) view, this kind of argument has two problems:

> [Firstly,] there are occasionally only nominal differences at the most between intermarrying mates, [and] important cultural differences often stratify husbands and wives (…) of the very same religious affiliation (p. 250).

In addition to this argument, it may be asserted that early scholars who aim to create typologies to define intermarried individuals seem to have the same negative view of intermarriage. This negative view is illustrated later, but at this point, it seems useful to mention this dominance in the early studies of intermarriage.

After pointing out the general negative view about intermarriage, Barron (1951) summarizes American sociologists' and demographers' main findings in those three research areas. Regarding the first area, that is the aeitology of intermarriage, Barron (1951) states seven factors:

> 1) (…) unbalanced sex ratio and numerically small representation (…), 2) (…) cultural similarities and social proximity (…), 3) (…) the inefficiency of institutional control by church and state (…), 4) (…) postadolescence and the premarital years constitute an age of rebellion against the more conservative values of parents, which, coupled with the conflict between

> generations and the emancipation from family control brought on by extramural and secular experiences in education and economy (…), 5) (…) the cultural relativity with which they [young Americans] are indoctrinated (…), 6) (…) individualistic choice of a marriage partner imbedded in the "romantic complex" of American culture, 7) (…) self-hatred among many members of minority groups and the drive toward upward social mobility (…) (p. 250-251 quotation marks in the original).

Regarding the patterns in intermarriage, according to Barron (1951), most of the studies show that, "(…) intermarriages occur most often between ethnic groups, less often between religious groups, and least between racially defined groups" (p. 251).

Next, Barron (1951) identifies the third area in the study of intermarriage that is the consequences of intermarriage. According to Barron (1951), some scholars argue about the "detrimental biological consequences" whereas some others consider the issue from a negative point of view that is related to the social and cultural consequences (p. 252). Barron (1951) also presents a theory in the field of marriage and family. According to Barron (1951), scholars think that the different backgrounds of couples may cause marital dissatisfaction. Barron (1951) continues as follows: "(…) the element of mixture is a focal point for conflict in some cases of intermarriage in that it becomes the scapegoat for tensions which originate elsewhere in the marital relationship (…)" (p. 252). On the other hand, there is another view, which emphasizes the importance of the "total situation" regarding the consequences (Barron, 1951, p. 252). In this sense, "social ties" that the intermarried have with their social environment are vital (Barron, 1951, p. 252). Barron (1951) mentions as follows:

> Theoretically, no type of marriage contains within itself the germs of its own inevitable failure. Success or failure depends upon the total adjustment rather than upon the mere elements of difference (p. 252).

One of the most important themes in the study of intermarriages is children. Barron (1951) notes a few points that exist in the literature about the

difficulties children may face: "(…) lack of adequate identification and the status of marginality and outcaste (…)" (p. 252). With respect to children, Barron (1951) notes a defense mechanism of intermarried:

> (…) one sociologist [M. C. Elmer] speculated that, (…) to avoid the situation, one adjustment probably at work in society is the greater exercise of birth control so that the number of children born of such marriages is less than the number born of "pure" marriages (p. 253 quotation marks in the original).

According to Barron (1951), it can be asserted that there are five alternatives, which are practiced by intermarried regarding their children:

> An early European practice sanctioned by law in some countries and transplanted informally to the United States is for the boys to follow the religion of the father and the girls that of the mother. Another practice is for all members of the family –parents as well as children— to assume the religious affiliation of one of the parents. Still another is for one parent and all the children to join one denomination, while the other parent remains in his own. Next is the "compromise" alternative—that is, the parents become members of a neutral religious body like the Universalist or Unitarians and raise their children accordingly. Idealists try one of two other alternatives: either the children are exposed to both of the parents' divergent faiths or they plan to allow their children to make up their own minds when they reach the age of discretion (p. 253 quotation marks in the original).

Judson T. Landis (1949) (as cited in Barron, 1951, p. 253-254) approaches the issue from a point of view that takes the relationship between religion and gender into account. To illustrate the significance of the relationship between religion and gender in marital satisfaction, Landis (1949) gives the example of intermarriages of Roman Catholic and Protestant couples. In order to elaborate the issue, Landis (1949) considers the issue of religious upbringing of the children. In Catholicism, the mother-role has a strict characteristic whereas in Protestantism the father-role is a more flexible one. When a Roman Catholic

man and a Protestant woman marry, the intermarriage becomes more difficult than the other way around. There are two reasons behind this difference: Firstly, according to Landis (1949), in American families, it is the mother who seems responsible for the religious training of the children. Since the responsibility belongs to the Protestant mother, it is not easy for her to raise the children in a religious way which she does not believe. Secondly, Landis (1949) points out that the Catholic father has a more strong desire to be a church member; thus, the Catholic father, his church and also his family might have problems with the fact that the children are not baptized into Catholicism. What makes this example important is the fact that it points out the dynamic relationship between religion and gender roles. Hence, it seems important to not skip the meaningful parts of the relationship between religion and gender while interpreting the cases of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey.

Some of the gaps in the study of intermarriage, which are also useful guiding points for the current study, are as follows:

> (…) data about the consequences of Jewish-Gentile intermarriages [is absent]. (…) sociologist must also meet the challenge to do more research on a larger sampling than that implied in the college level, they must pursue studies of intermarriage among those people who are childless; they need to interview cases of intermarriage (…). More needs to be known, too, of the degree or lack of acceptability of intermarried couples by the individual's family of orientation. Other studies should be made of inmarriages and intermarriages which have not ended in divorce or separation (…) (Barron, 1951, p. 255).

Regarding the three research areas that are mentioned above, Lee (1994) claims that, "The literature on the aeitology of intermarriage is varied and extensive" (p. 1). Lee's (1994) investigation of the literature on intermarriage is based on this research area. Lee's (1994) argument about the aetiology of intermarriage seems to be correct due to the fact that when the early studies of intermarriage are examined, it becomes clear that the subject of the aetiology of intermarriage has a clear dominance on these studies. One of the earliest articles

about Jewish-Gentile intermarriages, "Some Sociological Aspects of Intermarriage of Jew and Non-Jew" written by Reuben R. Resnik (1933), can be given as an example of scholars' interest in the aetiology of intermarriage. Resnik (1933) argues four types of Jews who intermarry which are: "the emancipated person", "the rebellious person", "the detached person", and "the adventurous person" (p. 97). In Resnik's (1933) view, these concepts should be considered as analytical categories since a Jew can be both rebellious and detached. According to Resnik (1933), "The emancipated person (…) has freed himself from religious ties. With the freedom from his religious influence comes a greater tendency to intermarry" (p. 97). "The rebellious person" is:

> (…) for example, the political idealist who are "embittered against the social order represented by the state and by private property, perhaps disgusted with humanity and become propagandists for some revolutionary scheme – Bolshevism, Anarchy, Communism, or some other scheme for the distribution of values" (Resnik, 1933, p. 98 quotation marks in the original).

"The detached person" is another type "(…) who has broken away from the influence of his intimate associations such as the family, church, and close friends" (p. 98). According to Resnik (1933), "The minute he breaks away, the control that the *primary* group may exercise becomes disrupted and the break tends to diminish the influence" (p. 98 italics in the original). The last type Resnik (1933) describes is "the adventurous person", and in Resnik's view, this type of Jew considers marriage as "just another fling"; thus, the identity of the partner does not seem to be important to them (p. 98).

Next, Resnik (1933) argues what these intermarried Jews expect from intermarriage. In this sense, Resnik (1933) uses the following classification: "The desire for new experiences", "the desire for security", "the desire for response" and "the desire for recognition" (p. 98). According to Resnik (1933), regarding the first one, although some factors such as cultural background might have an influence on individuals' choice, this influence is not very strong. Resnik (1933) argues the second expectation as follows: "(…) Jews in some cases marrying non-

Jews because the former seem to feel a (…) social security when they are accepted in marriage by members of the non-Jewish group" (p. 99). According to Resnik (1933), the third desire is related to the sex factor meaning the partner's background is not important. Regarding the last one, Resnik (1933) says that, "The desire for recognition takes form in the devices for securing position and distinction in the eyes of the social group and, as a result, an enviable and advantageous social status" (p. 99). In this sense, Resnik (1933) gives the example of "(…) the rich Jews of France intermarrying with some of the decadent aristocracy of that country" (p. 99). What makes these assumptions vital is they, in a way, display the importance of the social image of a group -with respect to marriage-, which is interrelated with the social context of the time.

Resnik (1933) also argues that one of the most important aspects of intermarriages is the reactions of the family of origin. Resnik (1933) claims that, "Parental opposition is capable of accommodation", and states the following three situations, which may soothe parents' negative approaches (p. 100). The first situation is related to the existence of other intermarriages in family, according to Resnik (1933), "Parents may become reconciled when there are several intermarriages in one family" (p. 100). The second situation is related to the past experiences of the individual. Resnik (1933) mentions that parents may approach the decision in a more flexible sense, if "(…) their child's first marital venture with a member of their own group was unsuccessful (…)" (p. 100). In Resnik (1933) view, the third one is conversion. According to Resnik (1993), "Parental opposition may be tempered by having one mate change his religious beliefs to the beliefs of the objecting parents" (p. 100).

Next, Resnik (1933) argues the factors upon which the degree of conflict between the partners depends. According to Resnik (1933), these factors are "(…) the intimacy of contact between the two mates (…) [and] also (…) the similarity of a number of cultural traits" (p. 101). Resnik's (1933) argument about the similarity of cultural traits seems important:

> Where their cultural interests are the same, as in the case where a husband and wife may both be very

> interested in radical movements or where both meet, (…) in the "world of books," the conflict will undoubtedly become less or be removed entirely" (p. 101 quotation marks in the original).

Resnik's (1933) argument about the children of intermarriage is based on the assumption that, "The problems and trials of the intermarried couple, because of the close identification are carried over to and by the offspring of that couple" (p. 101). According to Resnik (1933), "If the parents become isolated as a result of their intermarriage, it is quiet likely we shall find the same problem faced by the child" (p. 101). Resnik (1933) mentions that if the intermarried find ways to join the activities of both groups, then the child may display the same trait. Also, Resnik (1933) points out the fact that the children are usually confused about their identity. In this sense, Resnik (1933) claims that, "(…) the parents of these children attempt to define the place of the child in the social world" (p.102). Moreover, "(…) the parents in the intermarriage (…) fail to see the situation in the light of the child's experiences and tend to interpret the child's experience in the light of their (…) own" (p. 102). Furthermore, Resnik (1933) states that the processes children go through influence the parents, too (p. 101-102). It can be argued that there exists a reciprocal relationship between the intermarried couples' and their children's experiences. Resnik's (1993) arguments with respect to children of intermarriages are useful in order to interpret the experiences of children of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey. Resnik's (1933) remarks about his own time's claims should be mentioned in order to notice the extreme points in the past literature on intermarriage:

> Some claim that the intelligence of the offspring [children who are born into intermarriages] is not below the average. On the other hand, some state that intermarriage would tend to give rise to a greater number of neuropathic offspring than where there is no intermarriage. Some have even maintained that a large number of persons of half Jewish origin have achieved distinction in various walks of life (p. 102).

Despite the fact that replacing individuals in strict classifications may not contribute much to the study of intermarriage since it does not allow much to be informed about the individuals' own perspectives, Resnik's (1933) article is important mainly in two respects. Firstly, since it is one of the earliest articles on the issue of Jewish-Gentile intermarriages, it provides a historical context of Jewish intermarriages regarding how society considers Jewish people and their intermarriages. Secondly, the article is a good example of some scholars' interest in creating typologies while studying the aetiology of intermarriage.

Other than the interest in creating typologies, the dominance of the theory of assimilation in the study of intermarriages can also be noticed. What Simon Marcson (1950-1951) tries to do is to challenge the theory of assimilation. Marcson (1950-1951), firstly, mentions the two types of intermarriage, which are "permissive intermarriage" and "proscribed intermarriage". According to Marcson (1950-1951):

> Permissive marriage is marriage of an in-group and an out-group, when these group affiliations are relevant to mate selection, and where no taboos exist in the culture's norms against such marriages. Proscribed intermarriage is marriage between an in-group and an out-group, when these group affiliations are relevant to mate selection, and when they involve tabooed deviations from the norms governing of selection of a mate (p. 76).

Marcson's (1950-1951) classification of types of intermarriage seems important in terms of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey. It creates the question of which category Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages fall into. It can be argued that these are only analytical types; therefore, it seems difficult to say they directly fall into either one. However, while interpreting the cases of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages, it is showed in what respects these mixed marriages fall into one or another.

Marcson (1950-1951) aims in his article to challenge the theory of assimilation in the study of intermarriage. This can be considered as a shift in the

area. Firstly, Marcson (1950-1951) mentions what is suggested by the theory of assimilation:

> It has been assumed that intermarriage occurred only when the attachments and loyalties to native customs, language, and culture were of insufficient strength to restrict fusion with out-groups. It was further assumed that the dissipation of these loyalties was a function of the process of assimilation. It was, therefore, concluded that intermarriage and assimilation were functionally interrelated, that is, that the intermarriage rate would rise as the group became assimilated. As a result, numerous writers have maintained that intermarriage was the crucial index of the assimilative process (p. 77).

According to Marcson (1950-1951), this theory of assimilation should be reformulated. In Marcson's (1950-1951) view, "Intermarriage is (…) not an index of assimilation", and he continues as follows:

> A group may become assimilated without showing a high rate of intermarriage. It therefore may not be regarded as a test of the degree to which the new culture group interacts with the old culture group. A group may acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other groups, and at the same time restrict its mate selection if the conditions facilitating intermarriage are not present (p. 78).

Marcson (1950-1951) mentions the conditions that assist the progress of intermarriage: "High education, middle class status, middle income, professional and proprietary occupations, second and third generations, rural nonfarm residence (…)" (p. 77). Marcson's (1950-1951) approach towards the issue of intermarriage seems to display two shifts in the area: First of all, since these conditions are related not to the individuals' psychological characteristics, but to social ones, it seems to be a shift in the aetiology of intermarriage. Secondly, since the theory of assimilation seems to dominate the area, Marcson (1950-1951) also brings a new focus to the area by challenging it. According to Marcson (1950-1951), if these conditions do not exist, but group is assimilated, then the intermarriage rates still may not be high (p. 77).

One of the most important classical concepts in the literature on intermarriage is "triple melting pot". Regarding the aetiology of intermarriage, Lee (1994) points out Ruby Jo Kennedy's (1944) concept of "triple melting pot" because, according to Lee (1994), the origins of structural pluralism and caste models in the study of intermarriages can be found in "triple melting pot":

> The increasing intermarriage in New Haven is not general and indiscriminate but is channeled by religious barriers; and groups with the same religion tend to intermarry. Thus Irish, Italians and Poles intermarry mostly among themselves, and British, Germans and Scandinavians do likewise, while Jews seldom marry Gentiles (Kennedy as cited in Lee, p. 2).

According to Lee (1994), Kennedy's (1944) assumption from which the concept of "triple melting pot" emerged is used by most of the scholars. Lee (1994) summarizes Kennedy's (1944) assumption as follows:

> (…) while acculturation had been extensive among the various ethnic and religious groups in the United States, barriers to assimilation in primary relations remained substantial, relatively permanent and immutable (p. 2).

In this sense, Lee (1994) argues as follows:

> Intermarriage viewed from the perspective of structural pluralism or caste models of intergroup relations becomes inevitably equated with the breaching of significant social boundaries. Explanations of the causes of intermarriage have therefore tended to focus on those conditions which permit the normative or relational ties of an individual to his or her own social group to become ruptured, attenuated or ineffective (p. 2).

It can be noticed that this perspective that Lee (1994) mentions above gives rise to the interest in creating typologies in order to find out: who intermarries and why? According to Lee (1994), "One source of a tendency to intermarry has thus

been seen to lie in the absence of normative constraints brought about by social disorganization or anomie" (p. 2). In this sense, Lee (1994) points out that:

> [Robert K.] Merton (1941) and [James S.] Slotkin (1942) have both (…) produced typologies of social types whose tendency to enter intermarriage is said to derive from a generalized absence of normative constraint. In Merton's view, (…) marriages between lower-class Blacks and lower-class Whites are manifestations of the retreatism typical of those on the fringes of social life. These marriages occur (…) among the pariah of society and those he terms "cultural aliens" as a consequence of their inability "to gear into the social structure and achieve 'respectable' status" (p. 2 quotation marks in the original).

Lee (1994) states Slotkin's (1942) argument:

> Slotkin in a study of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage in Chicago makes reference to those who are 'unorganized' or 'demoralized', criminal and delinquent elements whose proneness to intermarriage derives from the breakdown of the urban community (p. 2 quotation marks in the original).

In the same line with Merton and Slotkin, Lee (1994) shares the five "anomic situations" that Paul H. Bescanceney (1970) points, which give rise to the religious intermarriages in Detroit. These situations are "(…) war, remaining single when a majority of one's peers have married, rural-urban migration, educational mobility and rapid social mobility", and these cause anomie that is, according to Bescanceney (1970), "(…) a general state of normlessness (…) which renders ineffective religious norms encouraging inmarriage" (as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 3).

Other than the emphasis on the absence of normative constraints, according to Lee (1994):

> Rather more frequently, favourable orientations towards marriage with an out-group member have been seen to arise out of an individual's attempt to distance

> him- or herself from in-group ties either as a consequence of estrangement or emancipation (p. 3).

To illustrate the estrangement aspect of this approach, Lee (1994) mentions the scholars Jerold S. Heiss (1960) and Linton Freeman (1955) who both describe "A relationship between intermarriage and the shedding of primary group ties through conflict with parents (…)" (p. 3). According to Lee (1994), Heiss (1960) argues that:

> (…) compared to those who had entered intrafaith marriages the religiously intermarried in his sample were more likely to report dissatisfaction with parents when young, greater early family strife, less early family integration and a greater degree of emancipation from parents at the time of marriage (p. 3).

Similar to Heiss' (1960) argument, according to Freeman (1955):

> Among the intermarried (…) conflict with parents, and later with peers, had produced a generalized rejection of the in-group in adolescence. Out-group members became idealized by contrast and a search commenced for a marriage partner from within their ranks (as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 3).

According to Lee (1994), the emancipation process is discussed in the literature as follows:

> (…) emancipation appears to be a process which involves the principled rejection of in-group norms and values, especially where there are perceived to be narrow, sectional or inward-looking. Substituted for that which is discarded is a fresh world-view typically based around what the Levinsons have described as a 'desegregating, anti-ethnocentric orientation'. [It] permits (…) no display of antipathy towards out-group members, but does allow (…) a positive evaluation of 'mixed' relationships. (…) the emancipated are usually discussed in a way which suggest them to be relatively high in socio-economic status, cosmopolitan and politically radical (p. 3 quotation marks in the original).

Lee (1994) states a third approach towards the causes of intermarriage that is political radicalism. According to Lee (1994), political radicalism is studied by several scholars such as Joseph Golden (1959) and Rosalind Wolf (1971). Golden (1959) points out that, "(…) the U.S. Communist Party has been notable for the extent of interracial marriages found within its ranks and more specifically among its leaders" (as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 4). Moreover, Wolf (1971) mentions that for the individuals who were connected to the civil-rights and anti-Vietnam war movement "(…) interracial relationships were very natural, common, and valued positively" (as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 4).

It is also possible to define a fourth perspective in the aeitology of intermarriage that takes the pull factor into consideration. It refers to the fact that, "(…) the desire to obtain an instrumental gain from association with an out-group member as constituting a 'pull' factor against which normative constraints may be relatively ineffective" (Lee, 1994, p. 4 quotation marks in the original). Lee (1994) describes two possible pull factors, and the first one is as follows:

> (…) out-group members are sought as sources of sexual gratification free from the potential for entanglement that might be associated with an in-group partner. Marriages occur in such situations either because an affectional relationship eventually develops or through the woman becoming pregnant (p. 4).

The second pull factor is related to the possible mutual gain intermarried obtain from getting married to an out-group member. To elaborate this factor, Lee (1994) mentions Kingsley Davis and Merton's articles that both are published in 1941, and both of these scholars identify the same point which is as follows: "(…) an individual may trade high or low ascribed status against high or low achieved status" (Lee, 1994, p. 4).

In Lee's (1994) view, scholars dealing with the aetiology of intermarriage use a model of intergroup relations which can be summarized as follows: "(…) the dislocation of normative or relational ties as favorable conditions for out-

marriage (…)" (p. 4). In this sense, according to Lee (1994), scholars who study the aetiology of intermarriage have two basic assumptions:

> (…) they have frequently developed an underlying tendency to identify intermarriage as arising out of pathological circumstances. Second, one can also find embodied in the literature what Cohen (1965) refers to as an "assumption of discontinuity". Analysis (…) is couched primarily "in terms of variables that describe the initial states, on the one hand, and outcomes, on the other, rather than in processes whereby acts and complex structures of action are built, elaborated and transformed" (p. 4 quotation marks in the original).

What is especially important is Lee's (1994) useful conclusion about the overall picture of the basic approaches towards the subject of intermarriage:

> It is not difficult to conclude that a pathologizing tendency exists in the literature on intermarriage. One need only look at the catalogue of social types which the literature depicts as being prone to out-marry; these include the slumdweller, the social adventurer, the young person unable to relate to parents, the individual left single as his or her peers marry, and the radical who has cast off the prejudices of the conventional world (p. 4).

In order to illustrate this pathologizing tendency and also to show the shift in Merton's perspective of intermarriage, Lee (1994) elaborates on Merton's view. In "Structure and Anomie" that was published in 1938, according to Lee (1994):

> (…) [Merton] was concerned to undermine what he saw in the literature of the time, as an unacceptable equation of deviation and psychological abnormality. As a result he was very clear about two things. The types of response he had described [retreatism and rebellion] were not to be taken as forms of personality organization and, as a corollary to this, the assumption was not to be made that the mode of adaptation found in one sphere of an individual's life was to be found in any other sphere (p. 5).

However, Lee (1994) noted that in his other article "Intermarriage and Social Structure", which was published three years after "Structure and Anomie", Merton changes his previous view, and in his new perspective Merton considers intermarriage as the product of pathology:

> What Merton seems now to be saying is that a turning away from the goal of success, either through repeated failure to attain it, as in the retreatist mode, or through its principled rejection, as in rebellion, leads to a generalized rejection of goals and means which extends for the individual across a variety of roles. In this way, (…) malintegrated individuals are produced. For them, normative proscriptions mean little and, as a result, they are likely to find their way into intermarriage (Lee, 1994, p. 5).

Lastly, according to Lee (1994), in Bescaceney's (1970) approach:

> (…) there is a marked unwillingness to attribute increases in the rate of religious intermarriage to anything which might point to a positive evaluation of 'mixed' relationships (p. 6 quotation marks in the original).

Lee (1994) states that, according to Bescaceney (1970), individualism, romanticism and secularism fight with the religious values that support endogamy. Lee (1994) argues that Bescaceney (1970) does not explain why increasing intermarriage rates are the product of anomic situations, but not of these values (p. 6).

Lee (1994) mentions the two problems in using the pathological terminology in explaining the aetiology of intermarriage. First of all, Lee (1994) points out that:

> (…) historically in sociology a tacit alignment between sociologists and the guardians of moral probity has usually encouraged the exclusion or devaluation of the perspectives and experiences of those judged to have morally transgressed (p. 6).

Related to this point, Lee (1994) argues that the individuals who are the subject of these issues are only "fitfully heard" (p. 6). The second problem Lee (1994) mentions is from the literature on which pathologizing tendency has a dominance, "(…) one gains only a sense of radical discontinuities which exist between heterogamous and homogamous marriages" (p. 6).

Lee (1994) also points out the other flaw in the literature on intermarriage, which arises out of the fact that, "No thought is given in these studies to the ways in which predisposed individuals move towards intermarriage" (p. 6). Thus, according to Lee (1994), "The assumption seems simply to be that prior orientation and ultimate choice are synonymous" (p. 6-7). In this sense, Lee (1994) mentions four points, which can also be treated as the important gaps in the study of intermarriage. First of all, as Lee (1994) argues, there is a tendency to use several concepts such as estrangement or emancipated. Even though, as Lee (1994) mentions, these concepts may be useful to describe the causes behind intermarriage, he seems right in his criticism that, possible negative meanings of these concepts are usually implied. Lee (1994) describes this as follows:

> Those who are emancipated or estranged are always seemingly discussed in terms of what they are not or what they do not do, the identity they do not have or their lack of particular kind of involvements. Indeed, in the end, these couples cease in the eyes of some writers to be intermarried at all (p. 7).

Secondly, Lee (1994) mentions a very important gap in the literature. Before stating this point, Lee (1994) notes Freeman's (1955) perspective:

> To the extent that the emancipated, for example, have similar class positions, share their political views and have an orientation which minimizes group divisions, it is possible to argue that the marriages they contract are 'mixed' only in a superficial sense; that in important ways these are homogamous couples. Freeman, in fact, takes this sort of position with regard to those who have become estranged their in-group. The logic of the situation in which they find themselves (…) means that

> the estranged from one group marry the estranged from another group, producing a combination which is "ethnically heterogamous, homogamous with reference to mode of social adjustment and psychological background" (p. 7 quotation marks in the original).

According to Lee (1994), although Freeman's (1955) view can be correct, "(…) the question of what actually sustains the relationship in a positive rather than a negative manner is never raised". Lee (1994) continues as follows:

> One is not permitted to gain a sense of process in the relationship by asking how couples actually maintain the non-relevance of their putatively different backgrounds (p. 7).

Moreover, Lee (1994) says that, "(…) the interesting and obvious question of how potentially competing definitions of the relationship are handled by the partners is never asked" (p. 7). Furthermore, Lee (1994) points out that another important aspect of intermarriages is social environment. In this sense, he criticizes the narrow assumption of the aetiological literature about social environment. According to Lee (1994), most of the scholars consider social environment as having only one function for intermarriages which is: "(…) the production of a predisposition to out-marry" (p. 8). Lee (1994) argues that the scholars have to study other possible effects of social environment such as "(…) how far social audiences have an effect on the translation of predisposition into marital choice or on the new social unit formed after choice is made (…)" (p. 8). Moreover, according to Lee (1994), another important aspect of the issue should also be addressed which is "(…) understanding of how those who do have dissimilar backgrounds proceed through courtship to marriage (…)" (p. 9).

Another theme that can be considered as one of the origins from which the negative perspective the aetiology of intermarriage emerge is the "(…) emphasis on the supposedly dysfunctional consequences of heterogamy" (Lee, 1994, p. 8). Regarding the issue of religious intermarriage, according to Lee (1994), a dominant assumption in the literature is that these kinds of marriages increase the risk of marital dissatisfaction, thus marital breakdown. What gives

rise to this assumption is another assumption which can be cited from Lee (1994): "(…) partners from different backgrounds bring to their marriage potentially conflicting values which may lead them to irresolvable conflict" (p. 9).

At this point, it is useful to mention Lee's final remarks about the existing literature. According to Lee (1994):

> Existing theories relating to the aetiology of intermarriage are based on a model of intergroup relations which makes the central task of explanation the delineation of factors which lead to the disruption of an individual's ties to his or her own social group. Such a model produces a tendency for theories of intermarriage to embody assumptions of pathology and discontinuity (p. 11).

Lee (1994) also points out Peter Jacobsohn and Adam Matheny's (1962) concept of an "open marriage system". To make the term more clear, Lee (1994) firstly mentions the characteristics of a "closed marriage system":

> In a closed marriage system marital choice is in the hands of parents and the wider kin group. (…) marriage is tied to the transference of productive property. (…) the interest of the wider domestic group in the satisfactory disposal of such property is typically assured by concentrating control over the finding and selection of potential spouses in the hands of parents (who may often by aided by agents such as matchmakers). While the wishes of the spouse-candidates themselves may act as a constraint on the final choice of the mate, they are of secondary importance to the striking of a marriage bargain of mutual satisfaction to both sets of parents. The information about the parties necessary to the striking of such a bargain is of a public and impersonal kind of germane to the match rather than to those matched. Moreover, cycles of recruitment, selection and the presentation of the potential spouses to each other need take no longer in a particular case than is necessary to agree on mutually acceptable terms to the marriage bargain (p. 11).

Unlike the "closed marriage system", the "open marriage system" shows different characteristics. Lee (1994) summarizes the "open marriage system" as follows:

> What is formed by marriage in an industrial society is not usually a new or extended productive household unit. Instead, a new nuclear family comes into being which is structurally isolated in the sense of taking primacy over other kinship units as a site for the expression of obligation and affective devotion (Parson, 1943). The bases of solidarity in this new social unit are predominantly affectual and are seen to arise out of interpersonal attraction and compatibility between the potential spouses. Much of the information necessary for judgments to be made about the suitability of a spouse-candidate and the potential existence of the bases of solidarity just described resides intrapersonally and is capable of discernment only through prolonged interaction. This, and the necessity for preparing economically for the establishment of the new nuclear family unit, mean that marriage is usually preceded by an institutionalized transition period of courtship. In the absence of matchmakers and the like, the recruitment of possible mates is governed in an open marriage system indirectly by the way in which general mechanisms of what Parkin (1974) has called "social closure" limit the availability of potential spouses. A diminished role exists too for parents since, as Parsons (1943) points out, parental choice, if not parental preference, is incompatible with the autonomy and primacy which are to be claimed for the newly formed nuclear family unit. In any case parents usually lack the power of command over economic resources in an industrial society which would permit them to enforce their wishes. Parents may seek to increase the effectiveness of mechanisms of social closure by informal means (Sussman, 1953). However their role is more generally a reactive one, restricted to the expression of approval or disapproval of a presented spouse-candidate (p. 11-12 quotation marks in the original).

Despite the fact that both "open" and "closed marriage systems" are only analytical categories, which makes difficult to find their exact appearings in social life, they provide a good schema for exploring the effects of the social environment on the mate-selection processes in intermarriages. According to Lee (1994):

> (…) marriage in an open marriage system depends not so much of the striking of a marriage bargain but on the establishment of a marriageable relationship (Bolton, 1961). The formation of such a relationship (…) is structured by the nature of the open marriage system itself and is faced by couples as a career (p. 12).

Lee (1994) identifies four outcomes that arise out of the open marriage system, which are "initiation", "establishment", "self-disclosure" and "validation". Lee (1994) argues that, "They [potential partners] must find the means to sustain their interaction beyond the initial encounter" (p. 13). Regarding "establishment", according to Lee (1994):

> Partners must ensure the first [commitment] by aligning their present and future activities to facilitate the preferential inclusion of each other and exclusion of potential alternative partners (p. 13).

Next:

> (…) as the relationship proceeds, the partners must be able to assure themselves that the balance of rewards and costs accruing from the interaction is more favourable than that which may be obtained from an alternative source (Lee, 1994, p. 13).

The third concept, "self-disclosure", is also important, and Lee (1994) describes it as follows: "They [potential partners] typically come (…) from differing face-to-face contexts and with different "sedimented stocks of experience" (p. 13 quotation marks in the original). Here, what Lee (1994) argues is that:

> Progress in the relationship becomes contingent on the partners' ability to use courtship as a means of disclosing to one another biographical information, images of self, attitudes, values, interests and sentiments, projections of the future (…). These can serve as a basis for evolving assessments of personality, compatibility and the likelihood of marital adjustment (p. 13).

The last concept Lee (1994) argues is "validation". According to Lee (1994):

> An individual may enter many potentially marriageable relationships with no guarantee as to their eventual outcome. (…) there is little basis for an immediate or automatic claim that dyad be treated as a distinct social unit either by the participants or by those around them. Couples (…) face as a further contingency the establishment of such a claim (p. 13).

Although Lee (1994) uses these analytical tools in order to build the theoretical basis to explain courtships, these concepts also can be used to interpret the processes mixed couples experience. In Lee's (1994) view, these concepts are not the strict steps the individuals have to take in order to intermarry. According to Lee (1994), "(…) [these are] the outcomes of a series of processes at work in a relationship rather than its phases (…)" (p. 14). In this sense, Lee (1994) mentions that, "(…) [these] can be met concurrently, or recurrently, and that it is possible for them to be mutually contingent" (p. 14). While exploring the intermarriages, these concepts are meaningful.

Lee (1994) also mentions the importance of "stigmatizing labels" that the couples may face in his introduction to another theory that is used in the study of intermarriages: labelling theory (p. 14). Although Lee (1994) agrees with the assumption that intermarriages have many things in common with other marriages in which the partners do not have such different identities, and also with the assumption that the difference between partners may be considered "(…) as part of the routine business of negotiation leading to the meeting of contingencies", Lee (1994) mentions an important feature, which distinguishes intermarried couples from others: "(…) the degree to which partners may find it necessary to deal with the potential or actual application of stigmatizing labels". According to Lee (1994), these labels can be seen in courtship in two ways:

> (…) self-disclosure may lead to the revelation of potentially discrediting information [and] (…) those from whom validation is sought may choose instead to define the relationship as deviant (p. 14).

Moreover, Lee (1994) states the difficulty in dealing with the stigmatizing definitions:

> (…) where differences in social background are associated with socially organized patterns of openness and secrecy (…) and/or (…) where the social acceptability of marriage between individuals who differ in terms of some important categorical status is low (p. 14).

After defining the possible stigmatizing labels, Lee (1994) points out the importance of labelling theory in the study of non-conventional behaviour. As Lee (1994) notes, "Labelling or social interaction theory emerged in the 1960s to extend and revitalize the sociology of deviance" (p. 14). Even though the concept of theory gives a sense of agreement between different scholars, it is difficult to say that it actually exists. However, according to Lee (1994), most of the scholars agree that:

> (…) deviance is most adequately conceptualized as the outcome of a transactional relationship between actor and social audience. As a result of this relationship a stigmatizing label marking off the individual as a rule-breaker can come to be applied (p. 14-15).

In this sense, Howard S. Becker's (1963) explanation is useful:

> (…) deviance is not a quality of the act of the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label (as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 15 quotation marks in the original).

According to Lee (1994), the importance of labelling theory in the study of mixed relationships lies in its emphasis on –by David Matza's (1969) concept-bedevilling capacity of ban. Lee (1994) argues that:

> For labelling theorists, labels, which define lines of action or attributes as deviant, confront those who possess or pursue them as facticities. Reactions to deviance do not simply involve physical sanctions but more crucially elements of stigmatization and degradation. Those who break rules face, as a result of apprehension and the actual or potential application of a label, definitions of their moral worth which they cannot wish away. To use Matza's (1969) terminology, ban has a 'bedevilling' capacity (p. 16 quotation marks in the original).

Lee (1994) explains the usefulness of the concept of the "bedevilling capacity" as follows:

> It is an understanding of this point [bedevilling capacity of ban] which has the greatest potential usefulness to the study of how heterogamous relationships are formed. In part, to be devilled is to ponder the implications for one's own identity of stigmatizing conceptions and negative evaluations. The doctrine of ironic consequentiality ["The very effort to prevent, intervene, arrest, and 'cure' persons of their alleged pathologies may (…) precipitate or seriously aggravate the tendency society wishes to guard against" (Matza as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 16 quotation marks in the original)] tends to stress as an outcome of that reflective appraisal the appropriation of stigma and the reorganization of self-regarding attitudes in the direction of self-derogation. It is also clear, however, that if self-definitions can be embraced they can also be evaded (p. 16).

According to Lee (1994), "Evasion may mean precisely that – continued concealment". Lee (1994) also presents another interpretation of evasion which is "moral disassociation" (p. 16). According to Lee (1994):

> This term [moral disassociation] is used to refer, in the widest sense, to processes of legitimation and counter-definition through which the negative implications of moral worth contained within a stigmatizing label are suppressed or neutralized (p. 16-17).

In this sense, Lee (1994) mentions the scholar Michal McCall (1970) who argues three "boundary rules" which are "Crucial to the process of moral disassociation in relationships (…)":

> These are *inhibitory rules* which exclude elements to be found in the wider environment which are irrelevant or hazardous to the encounter. Also (…) [there] are *facilitating rules* which specify elements necessary for the maintenance of the relationship's interactional focus, and the manner of their rules. Finally, there are *transformation rules*. These allow external elements into the encounter but only in an altered form which makes them harmless (p. 17 italics in the original).

Joshua A. Fishman's (1963) argument regarding the study of intermarriage is critical to see the significant shift. According to Fishman (1963):

> (…) the major theoretical problem is not why intermarriage occurs (nor why it increases as the scale of social interaction increases, nor why it is greater in those areas in which minorities are proportionally smaller, nor why males intermarry more frequently than females), but why it is as infrequent as it is (p. 399).

Similar to Fishman's (1963) argument, John N. Tinker (1974) states another point which is the need of taking the issue of intermarriage into consideration from a wider perspective. According to Tinker (1974):

> (…) more research is needed (…) asking what the consequences of intermarriage are not only for couples, but for the groups whose boundaries the intermarriage breaches, and (…) for the plural of unified character of society as a whole (p. 422).

In the review of two studies that belong to Walter R. Johnson and D. Michael Warren (1994), and Lee (1994), Aaron Thompson (1994) agrees with Johnson and Warren (1994) that:

> (…) past literature on this subject has been overly studied from a negative viewpoint, often portraying the minority person as interested in marrying someone of the majority group purely for the increase in status (p. 1050).

According to Thompson (1994), both of these studies point out the same need in the study of intermarriage which is "new theoretical frameworks" (p. 1051).

At this point, it is useful to identify some of the more recent issues revolving around the study of intermarriage. One of the most detailed articles about intermarriage and homogamy is written by Matthijs Kalmijn's (1998). According to Kalmijn (1998), sociological relevance of the issue of intermarriage has two main bases. Firstly, in Kalmijn's (1998) view, intermarriage is a "(…) reflection of the boundaries that currently separate groups in society (…)". Secondly, it displays "(…) the potential of cultural and socioeconomic change (…)" (p. 397). However, Kalmijn (1998) argues that despite the fact that marriage patterns can be treated as social indicators, it also has weaknesses. These points are important to make in order to not to overstate strength of marriage patterns as a social indicator. Kalmijn (1998) states three main weaknesses. The first one is as follows:

> (…) if members of two groups do not marry one another, it does not necessarily mean that both groups are closed. It takes two to marry, and if one group is closed while the other is open, endogamy may still prevail (p. 397).

This point seems very significant because it shows the reciprocal relationship between different groups. Both of the groups' attitudes towards intermarriage should be examined in order to better understand the social closure of the groups better. Moreover, this points out another issue, which is that a group may be closed from the inside and/or from the outside. The possibility of both should be kept in mind. Kalmijn (1998) secondly argues that, "(…) marriage patterns result from both preference and opportunity" (p. 397). In this sense, "(…) endogamy does not necessarily point to a personally felt social distance toward a certain

outgroup". According to Kalmijn (1998), "Marriage patterns simply tell us which groups interact with whom, and while this is an important piece of information, they do not tell us why" (p. 397). The last weakness of treating intermarriage as a social indicator is related to the demographic trends. According to Kalmijn (1998), "Declining marriage rates, the rise of cohabitation, and the increase in divorce suggest that it is not always valid to treat marriage patterns as indicators of differentiation in society as a whole" (p. 397).

Kalmijn (1998) lists three social factors that give rise to marriage patterns:

> 1) (…) the preferences of individuals for certain characteristics in a spouse, 2) the influence of the social group of which they are members, 3) (…) the constraints of the marriage market in which they are searching for a spouse (p. 398).

Kalmijn's (1998) explanation about what distinguishes the sociological perspective is as follows:

> Although these factors represent analytically distinct hypotheses, they have most often been regarded as complementary elements of a single theory, and that is what distinguishes the sociological perspective from economic or psychological theories on partner choice (p. 398).

Kalmijn (1998) discusses these three categories in detail which can be considered as a valuable summary of the theoretical bases of the study of intermarriage and homogamy. Regarding the "preferences of marriage candidates", Kalmijn (1998) states that scholars usually use the concept of the marriage market in order to explain the patterns of marriage selection. Kalmijn (1998) describes the concept of the marriage market as follows:

> Unmarried men and women operate within a marriage market where each individual considers a set of potential spouses. Potential spouses are evaluated on

> the basis of the resources they have to offer and individuals compete with each other for the spouse they want most by offering their resources in return. Several kinds of resources obviously play a role in the choice of a spouse, but sociologists have mostly focused on socioeconomic and cultural resources. When married, spouses pool these resources to produce family goods, such as economic well-being, status, social confirmation, and affection (p. 398).

Kalmijn (1998) elaborates the factors of socioeconomic and cultural resources. According to Kalmijn (1998), "Socioeconomic resources are defined as resources that produce economic well-being and status". In this sense, Kalmijn (1998) adds that, "Economic well-being is shared by the family members and status is granted to the family as a unit rather than to its individuals members" (p. 398). Kalmijn (1998) explains the rest of the process as follows:

> As a result, the income and status of one spouse contribute to the income and status of the other by raising the income and status of the family. People maximize their income and status by searching for a spouse with attractive economic resources. The outcome of this competition is that the most attractive candidates select among themselves while the least attractive candidates have to rely on one another (p. 398).

Kalmijn's (1998) point regarding the dynamic characteristic of this competition seems important which is as follows: "The nature of this competition varies with the role women play in society" (p. 398). Next, Kalmijn (1998) elaborates the second factor, which is "the role of cultural resources" (p. 399). Kalmijn (1998) explains its influence on mate-selection:

> While the importance of socioeconomic resources is based on a preference to marry a resourceful spouse, independent of one's own resources, the role of cultural resources is based on a preference to marry someone who is similar. (…) Similarity of values and opinions leads to mutual confirmation of each other's behavior and worldviews (…) and similarity of knowledge creates a common basis for conversation, which enhances mutual understanding (p. 399).

Kalmijn (1998) notes that this kind of approach is firstly used to explain the "(…) attraction between strangers in day-to-day interaction (…)", later it is used to examine marriages (p. 399). I regard the concept of cultural similarity as an important aspect of the study of intermarriage, and it is mentioned by many scholars in various ways. Similar to the concept of cultural similarity but slightly different from it is the concept of "individuation of life patterns", which can be described as follows:

> In each individual is a schematization of all habits which give them a consistency and unity. Each individual, more often unconsciously than consciously works out for himself an outlook upon the whole of life which becomes a form of philosophy. This schematization which may be called 'his pattern of life' determines the general attitude or bias with which he will approach any problem (Ernest R. Mowrer as cited in Resnik, 1933, p. 96 quotation marks in the original).

Since it is an important dimension, it is useful to understand how cultural similarity influences the marriage selection process. In this sense, Kalmijn (1998) argues as follows:

> Because cultural similarity leads to personal attraction, it is a prerequisite for getting involved with someone. Because of its instrumental effects, cultural similarity also encourages people to establish a long-term relationship. Since many activities in marriage are joint, such as the raising of children, the purchase of a house and other consumer durables, and the spending of leisure time, dissimilarity in taste would complicate these shared activities. More generally, people prefer to marry someone who has similar cultural resources because this enables them to develop a common life-style in marriage that produces social confirmation and affection (p. 399-400).

Regarding the socioeconomic and cultural resources, Kalmijn (1998) makes two different arguments. According to Kalmijn (1998), some scholars argue social characteristics' role in the process meaning "(…) homogamy or endogamy is the unintended by-product of individual preferences for resources in a partner".

Kalmijn (1998) also mentions a related point that is, "(…) endogamy is probably more the result of preferences for cultural similarity and not so much the result of competition for economically attractive spouses" (p. 400). Kalmijn (1998) states another perspective on the issue that regards the mate-selection as a filter process:

> In the first step, people develop a network of friends, acquaintances, and possibly marriage candidates with whom they share some objective social characteristic. In the second step, people find their spouse by interacting within these homogeneous networks. The second step is also the phase in which psychological characteristics come into play, but at that time, homogamy with respect to objective social characteristics is already insured (p. 400).

Next, Kalmijn (1998) mentions the possible effects of the social environment in which an individual lives with his or her spouse choice. According to Kalmijn (1998), "(…) mixed marriages may threaten the internal cohesion and homogeneity of the group, [thus] "third parties" have an incentive to keep new generations from marrying exogamously", and Kalmijn (1998) points out the ways by which third parties influence spouse choice: "group identification", and "group sanctions" (p. 400 quotation marks in the original). Regarding group identification, Kalmijn (1998) argues as follows:

> Identification either takes the form of an awareness of a common social history, what is sometimes called a "sense of peoplehood" (Gordon 1964), or it can take the form of a more psychological sense of being different from others. The stronger such feelings of group identification, the more people have internalized norms of endogamy, and the more likely it is that they marry homogamously or endogamously (p. 400 quotation marks in the original).

In this sense, Kalmijn's (1998) also points out the relationship between higher education and group identification. According to Kalmijn (1998), "Identification

with the origin group is believed to be weakened by higher education". The reason behind this weakening is as follows:

> Owing to the emphasis on individual achievement and universalistic principles in higher education, the college-educated may be less likely to identify themselves with their social and cultural roots (Shun-Shin Hwang et al. as cited in Kalmijn, 1998, p. 401).

Regarding the group sanctions, Kalmijn (1998) firstly points out that, "Even if people have not internalized norms of endogamy, they may still refrain from marrying exogamously because of the sanctions third parties apply" (p. 401). Kalmijn (1998) mentions the three strongest parties, which are the family, the church, and the state. According to Kalmijn (1998):

> They [members of the family] set up meetings with potential spouses, they play the role of matchmaker, they give advice and opinions about candidates, and they withdraw support in the early years of the child's marriage (p. 401).

Kalmijn (1998) adds that even though children may choose a spouse of which the parents do not approve, they lack any sanctions (p. 401). Kalmijn (1998) says that stronger sanctions may be supplied by the church. Kalmijn's (1998) argument about the competition of religious institutions for members is important. Kalmijn (1998) argues this fact as follows:

> Religious intermarriage entails the risk of losing members and may weaken church attachment in future generations. If interfaith marriages occur anyway, it is not always in the interest of the church to apply sanctions because the competing church may accept the marriage and hence gain members (p. 401).

Regarding the sanctions of the state, Kalmijn (1998) says that it has the strongest sanctions. Next, Kalmijn (1998) argues the third factor that influences the spouse selection process which is marriage markets. According to Kalmijn

(1998), this process is not only influenced by the factors, which arise from individual preferences or group processes, but also by marriage markets which Kalmijn (1998) calls "structural arrangements" (p. 402). Firstly, Kalmijn (1998) mentions that when the group is small, then the members of the group do not have high chances of marrying another member. According to Kalmijn (1998), structural arrangement is also related to the geographical dispersion of the group. Next, Kalmijn (1998) points out the third dimension of the issue:

> Unmarried people do not just wander around a region looking for a spouse; they spend most of their time in small and functional places, such as neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, bars, and clubs. Such "local marriage markets" are often socially segregated, and that is why they are important for explaining marriage patterns. In the sociological literature, three local markets have been considered most frequently: the school, the neighborhood, and the workplace (p. 403 quotation marks in the original).

More importantly, Kalmijn (1998) points out how scholars study the possible effects of these markets on homogamy. Kalmijn (1998) notes that scholars examine the formation of the markets by taking social characteristics into account. In this sense, for instance, "(…) colleges promote educational homogamy more than neighborhoods do, while neighborhoods promote ethnic endogamy and homogamy of family background more than schools" (p. 404). According to Kalmijn (1998):

> Most early studies analyzed a single sociological characteristic at a time or analyzed several characteristics one-by-one. Since partners choose each other on the basis of multiple characteristics, it is important to analyze more than one factor in marriage choice. In the last decades, several such multidimensional analyses have been done, although most are limited to two dimensions. Research on multiple dimensions has been guided by two hypotheses: the by-product hypothesis and the exchange hypothesis (p. 415).

Kalmijn (1998) also points out the by-product hypotheses. According to Kalmijn (1998), "(…) the various social dimensions on which individuals select one another are correlated, and because people are believed to take all these dimensions into account when choosing a spouse (…)" (p. 415). For instance, according to Kalmijn (1998):

> Kennedy's triple melting pot confirms the by-product hypothesis because it reveals that marriage boundaries between certain ethnic groups are in part of the result of differences with respect to religion (p. 415).

In Kalmijn's (1998) view, the second dimension of the studies is related to the exchanging characteristics while getting married. This theme is frequently studied regarding the ethnic and racial intermarriage. Moreover, it is also used to examine other characteristics such as physical attractiveness and cultural participation, for example: "Effects of the wife's noneconomic characteristics on the husband's socioeconomic characteristics are usually called crossing effects and are considered evidence for exchange" (p. 416).

Next, Kalmijn (1998) argues what the study of intermarriage contributes to the sociological knowledge:

> Sociological research on marriage choices has generated many insights in how modern society is differentiated. (…) Although some groups are more closed than others, examples of social groups who marry exogamously have not (yet) been found. Research on intermarriage also reveals how societies change. Overall, ascribed bases of group membership have become less important, while achieved bases of group membership, and especially those governed by education, have not lost salience. This is not to say that ascribed groups are mixing freely now. Ethnic, religious, and particularly racial boundaries still exist, but they are weaker than they used to be (p. 417).

Regarding the existing literature, Kalmijn (1998) states that most of it has a descriptive characteristic. According to Kalmijn (1998), marriage patterns are seen as social indicators that display the closeness of the groups. However,

Kalmijn (1998) further argues that some of these studies only describe the issue by stating the percentages, but this approach hinders the comparison of different groups whereas some other studies apply loglinear models, but the consequence of this method makes the data less understandable to society. Furthermore, Kalmijn (1998) points out the greater importance of studying the recently formed marriages than of the stock of marriages in order to treat the patterns as social indicators (p. 417-418).

Kalmijn (1998) also mentions the theoretical development of the study of intermarriages. According to Kalmijn (1998), despite the fact that there are various theories regarding partner choice, there are mainly three social factors: "(…) the preferences of individuals for resources in a partner, the influence of the social group, and the constraints of the marriage market" (p. 418). Kalmijn (1998) argues as follows:

> The multifaceted perspective that has been developed over the years gives sociological theorizing an edge over competing theories of marriage choice such as those developed by psychologists and economists (p. 418).

Kalmijn (1998) asserts that, "(…) the integration of empirical and theoretical work is less than perfect" (p. 418). In Kalmijn's (1998) view, there are two problems in the empirical aspect of the studies:

> First, many hypotheses are tested in an indirect fashion. The role of the third party control, for example, (…) little information is available on what these parties in fact are doing. (…) A second and related problem (…) is that many of the observed regularities and relationships can be attributed to all three types of causes ["(…) the preferences of marriage candidates for certain characteristics in a spouse, (…) the interference of "third parties" in the selection process, and (…) the constraints of the marriage market in which candidates are searching for a spouse" (Kalmijn, 1998, p. 395 quotation marks in the original], while little is yet known about the relative strengths of these factors (p. 418).

According to Kalmijn (1998), it is possible to develop the area by combining theoretical and empirical work. In order to accomplish this, one alternative lies in shifting "(…) the focus from the aggregate to the individual level (…)" (p. 418). According to Kalmijn (1998), in the existing literature it can be seen that many of the studies make comparisons between countries, groups, and suchlike. However, the individual differences are not studied frequently. In Kalmijn's (1998) view, the advantage of the individualistic approach is that, "(…) it facilitates the inclusion of a range of covariates for each of the three elements of the theory" (p. 418). Despite its advantage, Kalmijn (1998) argues that, "Because multivariate analyses of marriage choices use individuals as the unit of analysis, they provide a one-sided view of marriage" (p. 419).

Ruey-ming Tsay and Li-hsueh Wu (2006), focus on the heterogamy of marriage patterns due to the fact that, according to Tsay and Wu (2006), heterogamy shows the degree of social openness. According to Tsay and Wu (2006), both social stratification theorists and sociologists emphasize the importance of studying homogamy in order to examine social closure and rigidity. However, according to Tsay and Wu (2006):

> Heterogamy is a more powerful indicator of social openness than homogamy because certain types of heterogamy have to defy the expectations of and/or opposition from the marriage partner's family, community or society, and such instances can be conceptually interpreted as crossing the strongest social boundaries between social groups. Marriages crossing the boundaries of age, education, social origin and ethnicity have been regarded as the four major types of heterogamy (p. 165).

According to Tsay and Wu (2006):

> [Despite the fact that] the formative factors of assortative marriages have shifted away from homogamy in terms of ascribed status, such as social origin, race, ethnicity and religion, to homogamy in terms of achieved status, such as educational attainment

> and education, homogamy continues to dominate the marriage markets (p. 166).

After pointing out the important shift in the formative factors of homogamy, Tsay and Wu (2006) mention the theoretical arguments about marriage patterns. In this sense, according to Tsay and Wu (2006), most of the scholars, who examine the issue of marriage, regard the marriage market as a labour market. According to Tsay and Wu (2006), in these markets individuals "(…) offer their skills to match the needs of prospective employers" (p. 166). Tsay and Wu (2006) mention Becker (1981) who uses the job-search theory to describe the patterns in mate-selection. According to Tsay and Wu (2006):

> This line of research evaluates the opportunities that marriage provides to both men and women in terms of the degree to which the resources that they bring to the marriage market match. It elaborates on the mating patterns based on rational choice theory and argues that people will choose their best-matched spouse according to their bargaining power (p. 166-167).

Tsay and Wu (2006) point out the two basic assumptions in this approach. Firstly, the theory assumes that individuals act rationally, and also it suggests that each individual has complete information before selecting his or her partner. According to Tsay and Wu (2006), none of these assumptions can be treated as totally true. Thus, regarding the theory of the orthodox labour market, Tsay and Wu (2006) mention the criticism of sociologists that is "(…) the segmentation in the labour market might lead to different labour-capital relations" (p. 167). According to Tsay and Wu (2006):

> (…) we can apply a segmented market theory to the process of marriage selection. To some extent, people are confined to their social contexts, such as workplaces, that structure their opportunity to meet their future spouses. Different contexts may lead to different and segmented marriage markets, which then impose restraints on a person's choice of future spouse. To sum up, the marriage market is not a free market and people in the market do not have complete information regarding each trade (p. 167).

Moreover, Tsay and Wu (2006) point out "the structuring effect of the setting" which creates "(…) the trend towards assortative mating in terms of achieved status in modern society" (p. 167). Tsay and Wu (2006) illustrates this concept by giving the example of educational institutions: "(…) the theoretical statement implies a tendency to reach a high degree of educational homogamy because of the limits imposed upon choice due to staying longer in educational institutions" (p. 167). Besides this effect, according to Tsay and Wu (2006), structural sociologists have showed that individual's living environment may affect his or her mate-selection (p. 167).

Tsay and Wu (2006) also mention an important point, which is:

> (…) in the marriage market people tend to maintain social/status distance, and (…) assortative marriages are based more on achieved status than on ascribed status (p. 167).

The question of Tsay and Wu (2006) seems to be very important for noticing the shift in the study of intermarriages: "(…) what kinds of factors provide a bridge for crossing the social boundaries in the marriage market?" (p. 167). Tsay and Wu (2006) summarize the possible answers of this question as follows: "(…) those who have a high degree of autonomy are the persons who can pursue love in the marriage market" (p. 168).

Tsay and Wu's (2006) final remarks on the theoretical background of the mixed marriage seem to be important:

> The way in which the meeting of prospective partners takes place is an important factor that should be taken into account in explaining the emergence of a mixed marriage. The opportunity structure in marriage is socially constructed. People are living in a social environment that often imposes constraints on their opportunities to meet someone who has similar or opposing attributes. Even in an individualistic society, (…) social preference in terms of parental expectations may still exert a certain degree of influence on people's choice of partner. Whether they like it or not, their

> peers and even the whole society in order to come up with a socially appropriate decision (p. 168).

In this chapter, the main sociological themes, approaches, assumptions and concepts are explored in order to detect the significant shifts in the study of intermarriage and to detect the important gaps in the area. Hence, the sociological standing of the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages becomes clear. As discussed above, there are mainly three research fields in the study of intermarriage, which are the aetiology of intermarriage, patterns of intermarriage and the consequences of intermarriage. With respect to the aetiology of intermarriage, it is mentioned that in particular the earlier literature on the study of intermarriage perceives intermarriage as it arises out of a pathological situation. Moreover, it is noticed that in the literature there is a tendency to create typologies in order to explain why some of the members of a group intermarry. Furthermore, the transition from courtship to intermarriage is not frequently examined. The current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages does not consider intermarriages from a negative point of view; thus, it does not perceive intermarriages as a pathological event. In contrast to this perspective, the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages does not approach the issue by using strict categories. What it aims is to understand is how mixed married individuals and their children consider their own identities, experiences and situations. In this sense, what these individuals go through is tried to be understood by taking the whole story into account, meaning their lives before marriage, their courtship with their existing partners and their marriage lives. Regarding the second research area, the patterns which refer to who marries whom, the current study takes only Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages into consideration; thus, it does not examine this aspect of the issue deeply. However, in terms of gender the patterns that are noticed in the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey are revealed. The third area, the consequences of intermarriage, is an important dimension of the current study. In this sense, the self-identifications and experiences of the children of these marriages are particularly vital.

Despite the fact that the past literature on the study of intermarriage has important flaws, it still provides very important approaches and concepts. Thus, while interpreting the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey, some of these approaches and concepts are used. One of the most important characteristics of the current study is its individualistic approach, and each case of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages has its own character. Thus, in order to interpret each case, not a single approach, but a more eclectic theoretical base is used. Since the theoretical base of the study is elaborated in the following chapters, it is not discussed here in detail.

2.1.1. Jewish Intermarriage

In this part of the current study, the goal is to understand the on-going debates of intermarriage within Jewish communities. While exploring the issue from the eyes of Jewish communities, some of the dimensions of the current study are also clarified such as concepts that are used in interpreting the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey.

Before delving into the issue of Jewish intermarriage, Jonathan Sacks' (1999) argument seems to be a good introduction for the current chapter:

> The world is home to some 1.4 billion Christians, 800 million Muslims, and a mere 12 million Jews. Throughout the Diaspora, Jews are a tiny minority surrounded by large non-Jewish cultures. Israel is a tiny country surrounded by a vast of constellation of Arab States. Jews are less than a quarter of a percent of the population of the world. Our influence should be minimal (p. 51).

The small population of Jewish people around the world points out one of the underlying reasons of the heated debate of intermarriage within Jewish communities. However, Sacks (1999) argument aims to emphasize another dimension of the issue, and Sacks (1999) mentions it by citing the American writer Milton Himmelfarb's words: "Big things seem to happen around us [Jewish

people] and to us" (as cited in Sacks, 1999, p. 51). In a similar vein, Shulamit Reinharz (2009) points out the same importance of Jewish people:

> (…) Jews are international people, continuously on the move and influenced by a myriad of non-Jewish cultures along with contemporary features of modern society such as global communication and secularism (p. 2-3).

Moreover, "At the same time as Jews must be conceptualized as an interrelated group of people that transcend national boundaries, we cannot ignore the specificities of place" (Reinharz, 2009, p. 3). Thus, as far as Jewish people are concerned, it is important to remember that even though in a numerical sense they constitute a small portion of the world population, both their effect on the world and the world's effect on them are deep. The points mentioned above well display the importance of taking into consideration both the international and local scope in order to approach the issues revolving around the Jewish people thoroughly. Before exploring the debates of intermarriage within the Jewish world, Reinharz's (2009) final remarks provide a useful starting point to understand the reasons behind the sociological importance of studying intermarriages in today's world, and its critical dimension for Jewish communities:

> The freedom to marry whomever one wants is a cornerstone of modern society. And yet that freedom can diminish the strength of community and identity, which is necessary to sustain society and culture itself. Clearly, this dilemma ranks among one of the most important sociological concerns in need of study today (p. 12).

Before elaborating on the different approaches towards intermarriage within Jewish communities and the themes revolving around the issue, it seems useful to explore the meaning of family and marriage for Judaism. In Judaism, marriage and family are not considered as one of the aspects of the lives of Jewish people, but the essence of their lives (Mustafa Tekin, 2009, p. 225). As a general configuration, in Judaism it is expected that a Jewish person marries another

Jewish person, not someone who belongs to some other religion (Tekin, 2009, p. 227). From the point of view of Judaism, the main function of family is reproduction (Tekin, 2009, p. 228). Regarding the religious mission of family, it is discussed that the religious importance of family is connected to the idea of the Jewish people as chosen people (Tekin, 2009, p. 230). Tekin (2009) argues that family is regarded as the essential way of continuing the Jewish descent (p. 230). These explanations indicate that family constitutes one of the most important dimensions of Jewish life. Thus intermarriage is a significant issue within Jewish communities.

With respect to Jewish intermarriage, according to Sergio DellaPergola (2009), there are mainly two approaches, and one of them perceives:

> (…) the recent trends in Jewish family formation with great concern and consider it to be a leading factor in the identity drift and quantitative erosion of the Jewish population (p. 13).

In contrast to this perspective, "Others view the same trends as an opportunity for Jewish community growth and enhancing mutual relations with the broader social environment" (p. 13). In DellaPergola's (2009) view, intermarriage debates within Jewish communities have mainly three dimensions, which are as follows:

> The first concerns definitions, measurement techniques, and the ascertainment of facts. A second revolves around the role of out-marriage in relation to paradigms of Jewish assimilation and erosion, on the one hand, versus Jewish resilience and revival, on the other. A third debate of applied nature concerns the policy choices that the organized Jewish community should consider in dealing with the issue of out-marriage in order to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits—if any (p. 13).

DellaPergola (2009) also identifies localistic and comparative approaches. The first approach emphasizes the uniqueness of different locales

whereas the second approach claims that a comparative perspective is both possible and mandatory in order to understand the particularities of different Jewish communities (p. 13).

According to DellaPergola (2009), the terminology in the study of intermarriage should be clarified due to the fact that the debates in the area become more complicated. With the help of DellaPergola's (2009) attempt to clarify the terminology, the current study's terminology also becomes clear:

> *Intermarriage* is the most inclusive term to describe a marriage in which the spouses belong to two different groups according to a classification of any sort. *Interfaith* marriage is sometimes adopted but its limit is a focus on religious identities while often it is precisely the moving away from religious faith that may constitute a determinant of encounter among people of different backgrounds (p. 18 italics in the original).

In the current study, while interpreting the cases, the concept of intermarriage is not used because of the fact that it is an unnecessarily broad term for the purposes of the study. Albert I. Gordon's (1966) explanation may also help to clarify why the concept of intermarriage is not suitable for the current study:

> The term "intermarriage" is generally applied to those who married persons whose religious, racial or ethnic background is or was different from each other's, either prior to or after their marriage (p. 1 quotation marks in the original).

The current study does not comprise of the partners who converted to each other's religions. Thus for the scope of the current study the concept of mixed marriage is chosen:

> If one of the parties to the marriage has not formally converted to the faith of the other, such a marriage is more properly termed a "mixed marriage". We shall use the term "mixed marriage" to describe only those

> marriages in which separate religious ideologies are maintained by the parties subsequent to their marriage (Gordon, 1966, p. 1 quotation marks in the original).

DellaPergola's (2009) emphasis on the relationship between terminology and perspective is important. According to DellaPergola (2009), terminology shows the perspective from which observers consider the issue of intermarriage: "Appropriate terminology may reflect whether an observation is being carried out from a general and neutral perspective or from the more specific perspective of a given group" (p. 19). DellaPergola's (2009) clarification of the terminology ends with the following points which also can be considered as an example of terminology that can be used if the issue is studied from a specific group's perspective:

> We refer to *in-marriage* when both partners were born in the same group (…). *Out-marriage* applies to cases when one of the partners was born in the given group and the other was born in a different group. *Conversionary in-marriage* applies if the non-Jewish born partner converts to Judaism, which may occur before or after the marriage ceremony. *Conversionary out-marriage* applies if the Jewish-born partner converts to the group of the non-Jewish partner. Mixed-marriage applies to all cases in which each partner keeps to his/her original group identity (p. 19 italics in the original).

DellaPergola (2009) also mentions other concepts in the area, which are homogamy, heterogamy, endogamy and exogamy:

> In more technical language it is customary to use the terms of *homogamy* (sameness of matching) versus *heterogamy* (otherness of matching). *Endogamy* and *exogamy,* respectively within vs. outside matching, represent the same concepts in the sense of ideal expectation (p. 20 italics in the original).

Although the Jewish side of the issue in the current study has a more dominant place for several reasons such as intermarriage being a more debated

issue for Jewish people, it does not only include in-depth interviews with Jewish partners, but also in-depth interviews with Muslim partners. Thus it has a more neutral approach towards the issue. This is one of the reasons behind choosing the term mixed marriage for the current study. Moreover, the current study does not include any cases of conversion, thus the concepts related to the conversion are not suitable for the study. Furthermore, the concept of interfaith marriage is not useful for the current study because self-identifications instead of primordial ascriptions are taken into account.

Another theme in the debate of Jewish intermarriage is measurement. DellaPergola (2009) points out three dimensions of the issue, and one of them is the "(…) distinction between *individual* versus *couple* measurement" (p. 21 italics in the original). According to DellaPergola (2009):

> (…) individual measurement always provides lower out-marriage frequencies than couple measurement because in both cases the numerator is the same but the denominator is larger for the number of individuals and smaller for the number of couples (p. 21).

The second dimension points out another distinction with respect to measurement that is, "(…) between all *existing couples* or *individuals* in a certain population, regardless of age, versus the younger *couples* or *individuals married in recent years"* (p. 21 italics in the original). The last distinction is between "(…) people who were *born Jewish*, or of people who are *currently Jewish* (…)" (p. 22 italics in the original). These points display another dimension of the debate of intermarriage within Jewish communities.

DellaPergola (2009) also mentions the trends in Jewish intermarriage. According to DellaPergola (2009), in the 1930s:

> (…) most Jews in the world (about 65 percent) lived in countries where the rate of out-marriage was below 5 percent of all currently marrying Jewish individuals. Of these, 25 percent lived in countries where the frequency of out-marriage did not reach 1 percent. (…) No country

> had a Jewish community experiencing an out-marriage rate of 35 percent or higher (p. 26).

According to DellaPergola (2009), "The Jewish world around 1980 reflects the deep transformations (…)" (p. 26). DellaPergola (2009) states that, "(…) by the 1980s, a majority (63 percent) of world Jewry lived in countries where the out-marriage rate was higher than the 35 percent threshold" (p. 26). DellaPergola (2009) mentions the reasons behind these transformations as follows:

> (…) deep transformations following the *Shoah* and the destruction of European Jewry, and the independence of Israel and its being a country with a significant Jewish population size (p. 26 italics in the original).

Next, DellaPergola (2009) points out the recent trend that is, "Around 2000, Jews in Israel were virtually alone with an out-marriage rate still below 5 percent" (p. 26). DellaPergola (2009) also states the percentages in Turkey which is a very important piece of information due to the difficulty of obtaining figures for the exact population of Turkish Jewry or the intermarriage percentages of Turkish Jewry. DellaPergola (2009) notes that in 2000s, "(…) Turkey had an out-marriage rate of 25 percent to 35 percent" (p. 27). With respect to intermarriage trends of Jewish people, DellaPergola (2009) states as follows:

> This steady increase outlines the nearly irreversible trend toward social integration and acceptance of Jews among general society. On the other hand, it should be stressed that Israel's rising share and the Diaspora's parallel shrinking share of the world Jewish population tend to produce a gradual reduction in Jewish out-marriage world average levels (p. 28).

Regarding the factors giving rise to the out-marriage of Jewish people, DellaPergola (2009) argues that these factors have two levels which are macrosocial and microsocial. Macrosocial refers to the "collective environments" and microsocial to "the characteristics of the individuals" (p. 28). According to

DellaPergola (2009), there are mainly three factors forming the out-marriage: desirability, feasibility and availability. Regarding the desirability factor, DellaPergola (2009) argues the following points:

> (…) the early sources of Jewish thought and communal behavior tend to be strongly and consistently favorable to widespread, young, and endogamic marriage. In past generations, out-marriage was considered deviant behavior unless conversion to Judaism could be expected of the non-Jewish partner. Negative attitudes toward out-marriage diminished over time as the process spread among the Jewish public. (…) as attitudes toward marriage with non-Jewish spouses became more tolerant, out-marriage became less restrained and hence more frequent. By contrast, earlier negative attitudes of non-Jews toward marriage with Jews also tended to moderate over time: in fact, in some countries Jews were rated by non-Jews as highly desirable marriage partners (p. 28-29).

Considered as vital is DellaPergola's (2009) point about the attitudes of both Jewish people and non-Jews. Since marriage is a reciprocal process of two partners, both of the sides' attitudes toward each other should be taken into account. By taking the literature on the issue of Jewish intermarriage into account, it can be asserted that the arguments revolving around the issue of marrying a Jew have been transformed by varying social contexts. It seems like there has been a shift from the perspective of unwanted Jews to desired Jews in terms of spouse selection. In this sense, the social image of Jewish people constitutes an important dimension of the intermarriage. As DellaPergola (2009) mentions above, it can be assumed that while in the earlier times, marrying a Jewish person was not an attractive choice for non-Jews due to the social atmosphere of the era, later there occurs a shift in this view. Thus, while exploring the intermarriages, it seems very important to consider the issue from the perspectives of both of the groups. How do they approach each other? As mentioned in the previous part of the current study, a group may close itself in terms of intermarriage for two reasons: either because of its internal dynamics or because of the other group's attitudes towards them. From time to time, these two may intersect. It seems while Jewish communities have always had a kind of

negative attitude towards mixed marriages, other groups also have not considered members of the Jewish community as potential spouses due to the general atmosphere of the time and place.

The feasibility factor constituting the out-marriage refers to the "(…) economic means and resources available to form a new family, and more specifically, an in-marriage or an out-marriage" (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 29). According to DellaPergola (2009):

> In modern times, Jews often attain higher levels of educational attainment and a better than average occupational status, providing greater freedom of choice regarding the timing of marriage and the choice of partner. Because of their socioeconomic characteristics, Jews also are more attractive partners in the eyes of non-Jews (p. 29).

The two important dimensions of the availability factor are as follows:

> (…) the Jews constitute a small minority of the total population nearly everywhere (…). The likelihood of meeting a suitable non-Jewish partner is therefore enormously greater than that of meeting a Jewish partner (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 29).

Secondly, DellaPergola (2009) mentions the effect of urbanization:

> (…) the massive concentration of Jews in large urban communities transformed the rules and opportunities for family formation in general, and for spouse selection by identificational belonging in particular (p. 29).

Next, DellaPergola (2009) notes the importance of the characteristic of society in which the Jewish population lives. In this sense, DellaPergola (2009) argues two main societal types that are cultural conformity and multiculturalism. According to DellaPergola (2009):

> (…) ethnocentric (as opposed to pluralistic) societies could cope differently with issues of cultural and religious diversity, which in turn affected the amount of pressure exerted on minorities, including Jews, to conform (p. 30).

On the other hand:

> Within (…) a pluralistic mood—no matter how inconsistent regarding the attitude toward different population groups—Jewish communities enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy, if not positive sanction (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 30).

According to DellaPergola (2009):

> Out-marriage trends in general—and within Jewish society in particular—were significantly influenced by these different types of societal configurations and especially by the normative acceptance or rejection of community efforts to enhance in-group marriages (p. 31).

Other than the importance of general societal models, Jewish community models are also significant (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 31). The first dimension of this factor is related to the population of the Jewish community in a given area. DellaPergola (2009) states as follows: "The bigger the size of a community and the higher its share of total society, the higher are the chances for inside social interaction". With respect to the second dimension of the issue, DellaPergola (2009) mentions the following: "(…) from the point of view of institutional build-up, some communities function in a dense Jewish institutional environment while others barely have any viable Jewish community infrastructure" (p. 31). According to DellaPergola (2009), "Some Jewish communities are more centralized while some others are organizationally more fragmented" (p. 31). To sum up, in DellaPergola's (2009) view, "The more cohesive a community, other things being equal, the higher the likelihood of stronger internal interaction and the chances for in-marriage" (p. 32).

Before delving into the possible implications of intermarriages and Jewish community responses and policies, DellaPergola (2009) points out the importance of the factors of gender, age, cohabitation, residence, socioeconomic characteristics, Jewish identification, sameness and otherness, marital stability and acceptance with respects to intermarriage. Regarding the gender, DellaPergola (2009) points out the shift in the trends of intermarriage of Jewish women. According to DellaPergola (2009), in the past Jewish women do not practice out-marriage often; however:

> [Due to the] (…) emancipation of women and their achieving of growingly higher levels of education and more competitive jobs, marriage differentials narrowed (…). By the 1980s and 1990s the gender gap was disappearing (p. 32).

DellaPergola (2009) then mentions the importance of the marriage market with respect to age. In this sense, if the marriage market has imbalanced characteristics, then the individuals who want to marry may find themselves in a situation of choosing not marrying or marrying someone from another group. Moreover, DellaPergola (2009) states that, "Out-marriage tends to occur at a later age than does in-marriage" (p. 32). With respect to cohabitation, DellaPergola (2009) mentions its two possible effects. Since there is evidence that many Jewish and non-Jewish adults cohabit, this may lead to the increase in out-marriage. On the other hand, cohabitation may be treated as an alternative to marriage. Residence is another factor that may affect the out-marriage as follows: "A higher Jewish residential density is quite obviously related to a higher chance to find a Jewish marriage partner in one's own proximate space" (p. 32-33). Regarding the socioeconomic characteristics, DellaPergola (2009) points out the following:

> In the past, out-marriage was strongly related to upward social mobility, and was more frequent among the better-educated, wealthier, and more socially mobile. More recent data suggest that, on the contrary, out-marriage seems to be more frequently related to lower education and lower social class—which indeed is

> not very frequent among Jews. It seems plausible that the high cost of Jewish community services may cause some people to become marginalized vis-à-vis the opportunities of Jewish education, leisure, and culture. Those unattached people will consequently live mostly in a non-Jewish context and have greater opportunities to interact with non-Jewish peers (p. 33).

According to DellaPergola (2009) the most significant factor affecting the intermarriage is Jewish identification. In DellaPergola's (2009) view, "Out-marriage is more frequent among people who do not feel a powerful need to be connected with a Jewish community and a Jewish lifestyle" (p. 33). With respect to Jewish identification, according to DellaPergola (2009), "(…) Jewishness of the parental home is probably the most powerful factor (…)" (p. 33). Other than the importance of the parental home, Jewish education is also significant. Regarding the seventh factor, sameness and otherness, DellaPergola (2009) brings a different dimension to the issue. According to DellaPergola (2009):

> Couples that are heterogeneous in terms of group identification tend also to be more different than in-marriages in terms of other aspects of their socio-demographic profile, such as place of residence, education, occupation, or age (p. 34).

Thus, in DellaPergola's (2009) view:

> The presence of multiple heterogeneities (…) seems to contradict the expectation that diminished relevance of religious-ethnic identification among out-married couples would be compensated by greater affinity on other social or cultural grounds (p. 34).

Regarding the other factor that is marital stability, DellaPergola (2009) claims that, "Out-marriages tend to be more vulnerable to instability than are in-marriages" (p. 34). Lastly, DellaPergola (2009) mentions the reciprocal relationship between out-marriage and its social acceptance. In this sense, DellaPergola (2009) asserts that, "The development of positive (or at least non-

negative) attitudes to out-marriage has tended to precede the actual frequency of out-marriage among the same community" (p. 34).

DellaPergola (2009) also argues the implications of these marriages by pointing out that they do not only influence the partners, but they also have important effects on the Jewish community. From the point of view of group continuity, DellaPergola (2009) firstly mentions the debate of conversion: "One primary correlate of out-marriages is its possible direct effect on population size and composition through passages of individuals from one group to another" (p. 35). DellaPergola (2009) secondly argues the issue of identity transmission as follows: "Out-marriage significantly affects the pace of intergenerational reproduction of a population" (p. 35). Moreover, DellaPergola (2009) mentions the gender roles regarding the identity transmission. Religious training of the children of these marriages depends not on the Jewish inherent culture but on the gender roles of a given culture (p. 36). This emphasis seems very significant, and it is reminiscent of Landis's (1949) (as cited in Barron, 1951) argument in the previous part of the study about the relationship between religion and gender roles. DellaPergola (2009) also points out the corporate consequences of out-marriages. In this sense, the significant challenge out-marriages bring to Jewish communities is the rise of the questions of "Who is a Jew?" (p. 37).

According to DellaPergola (2009), Jewish communities worldwide do not display a unified character with respect to their approach towards out-marriages. Regarding the varying reactions, there can be seen three main approaches that are dismissal, euphoria, fatalism:

> (…) *Dismissal* is the attitude of those who deny the significance of a data-based reading of the situation, who find the data difficult to follow and therefore irrelevant to them, or who view the data as incompatible with their expectations and therefore inherently wrong. (…) *Euphoria* is the reaction of those who see in out-marriage a powerful instrument to enlist the non-Jewish partners into Judaism. Many of these also assume that such incorporation has actually occurred. (…) *Fatalism* is the posture of those who recognize the rising trend of out-marriage and the

> significant identificational stress which accompanies it, but believe nothing can be done on the matter (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 37-38 italics in the original).

Next, DellaPergola (2009) points out the main policies of the Jewish community regarding out-marriages:

> *Out-reach* aims at incorporating within the Jewish community not only the non-Jewish spouses and children of out-marriage but also the usually rather estranged Jewish side of it by offering them a friendly approach to Jewish community membership and meaningful terms of reference for actual participation. *In-reach* stresses the need to prevent out-marriage by strengthening the Jewish identification of the pool of the people who already belong (p. 38 italics in the original).

These all are important guiding points for the current study, which are used to interpret the attitudes of the Jewish community in Turkey towards mixed marriage. DellaPergola's (2009) final remark on the issue seems useful to understand the importance of the issue for the current Jewish communities:

> (…) the diffusion of out-marriage across Jewish populations globally and the conflicting attitudes towards its nature and consequences constitute fundamental issues for Jewish policy making and one of the major challenges world Jewry faces at the beginning of the twenty-first century (p. 38).

One of the most important readings regarding the issue of Jewish intermarriage belongs to Rabbi Arthur Blecher (2007). Blecher (2007) does not only summarize the past and on-going debates within Jewish communities, but he also contributes a very different point of view to the issue of Jewish intermarriage. Hence, it seems useful to elaborate on Blecher's (2007) arguments revolving around the issue of Jewish intermarriage.

Blecher (2007) sums up the dominant official approach of rabbis and leaders towards intermarriage as follows:

> Official disapproval of intermarriage is so unyielding that no Orthodox or Conservative rabbi and relatively a few Reform or Reconstructionist rabbis will preside at a mixed wedding ceremony (p. 163).

In the same line with the official opposition to mixed marriage, Jewish community, in general, also has a negative attitude to mixed marriages. According to Blecher (2007), "The Jewish community has come to believe that intermarriage violates ancient Jewish tradition, that it weakens Judaism today and that it threatens the future of the Jewish people" (p. 163). Blecher's (2007) arguments assert that these opinions reflect neither the actual facts in Jewish history nor in the present. In his book, Blecher (2007) mainly argues the situation in the United States, but since Jewish people are both international and local people, the arguments are important with respect to Jewish communities around the world. Blecher (2007) states the general view of American Judaism regarding intermarriage in five points which are as follows:

> 1) (…) Jews who intermarry betray their people and contribute toward its demise, 2) (…) American Jewry is "disappearing before our eyes" through intermarriage because non-Jewish partners have "no reason to be concerned with the perpetuation of the Jewish people", 3) (…) "intermarriage is now propelling a massive transformation of American Jewish life", 4) (…) intermarriage "represents a serious risk to the vitality of the Jewish community, Jewish continuity, and identity" and emphasizes that Jews must marry other Jews, 5) Other rabbis go so far as to describe marriage as "the silent holocaust of assimilation" that has caused millions of Jews to "disappear" (p. 163-164 quotation marks in the original).

Blecher (2007) firstly considers the issue from a historical point of view. Blecher (2007) claims that, "Intermarriage is as old as Jewish people" (p. 164). Blecher (2007) continues the argument by pointing out the content of the Torah: "Of the 613 commandments in the Torah, the first five books of Scripture that form the core of Jewish law, no commandment categorically forbids a Jew to marry a gentile" (p. 164). In order to elaborate the issue, Blecher (2007) points to the biblical and rabbinic periods. According to Blecher (2007):

> (…) intermarriage was not a major issue during the biblical period because women and children automatically assumed the identity of the male head of the household. This meant that if a non-Israelite woman became the wife of an Israelite, she was considered to be an Israelite, and all children born to the couple would be Israelite. Similarly, an Israelite woman who married a gentile was lost to the nation of Israel, as were her children (p. 165).

According to Blecher (2007), these change with the rabbinic period. Blecher (2007) elaborates on the process as follows:

> Jewish-gentile relationships did not become problematic for Judaism until the rabbinic period, around the time of Second Temple. As society became more sophisticated, Jewish law became more complex. The rabbis replaced the biblical understanding of marriage as a business arrangement between the man and the woman's family with a new concept: marriage as a *legal contract* between the man and the woman. Then, because a gentile was not subject to Jewish law, the rabbis ruled that a relationship between a Jew and a gentile could not be sanctified by Judaism. Jewish-gentile relationships were not forbidden, but they could not be legitimized (p. 165 italics in the original).

According to Blecher (2007), their legal status displayed a difficult characteristic due to another change which was as follows:

> The rabbis replaced the biblical policy of patrilineal descent, whereby Jewish identity was transmitted through the father, with matrilineal descent because of a purely practical necessity arising from legal situations in which the paternity of a child might be in doubt. The rabbinic courts decided to take a conservative approach: In questionable cases, the Jewishness of all children would be based on the identity of the mother of a child than the father. Basing the Jewish identity of the child on its mother rather than its father meant that children born to gentile mothers, even in families headed by Jews, were no longer counted as Israelites (p. 165-166).

Blecher (2007) mentions the situation after the change in Jewish law as follows: "The father was still the head of the household, but it was the mother who provided the Jewish or non-Jewish status, at least at birth" (p. 166). Next, Blecher (2007) argues the major impacts of this change. Since the children of intermarriage constitute one of the most important aspects of the issue, the major change and the following impacts of this change are very important to consider when approaching the issue:

> The rights of male heirs of Jewish men would be split: Property could pass from father to son in the traditional way, but religious rights might not. For example, if a man's wife was gentile, his sons could not inherit his Levitical or Kohanitic status—a status that still carries special ritual honors in many synagogues today—even if they were converted to Judaism as infants. And unless they were formally converted, they would not be required to recite the mourners' kaddish in the father's memory after he died. In fact, without the benefit of conversion by a rabbinic court, they would be barred from participation in much of the Jewish religious life, such as burial in the family plot in a Jewish cemetery. The requirement of formal conversion introduced a new dependency on the rabbinic courts. Religious rights that had been automatic for all Jewish offspring under biblical law would now be mediated by rabbinic authority (Blecher, 2007, p. 166).

Blecher's (2007) contribution to the debates on Jewish intermarriage is based on the argument that, "Jews who marry outside the community are not contributing to the silent holocaust—they are, in fact, contributing to the survival of Jewish people" (p. 176). Blecher (2007) mentions the in-marriage model as follows:

> According to the in-marriage model, a Jewish woman marries a Jewish man. If they have two children, then all things being equal, they replace themselves: Two Jews produce two Jewish children. If instead the Jewish woman marries a gentile man, while the Jewish man marries a gentile woman, and each couple produces two children, then two Jews will have produced four children (p. 172-173).

Blecher's (2007) argument provides a very different approach towards Jewish intermarriage. What Blecher (2007) also asserts seems important: "(…) very few offspring of Jewish-gentile intermarriage grow up without any Jewish identity at all" (p. 173). Moreover, Blecher (2007) argues that, "(…) in-marriage *reduces* the Jewish population" (p. 174 italics in the original). According to Blecher (2007):

> The overall Jewish fertility rate is too low even to replace the Jewish population, let alone increase it. (….) Mainstream Judaism insists that Jews should marry only to other Jews, and for generations in-marriage has been the norm. Unfortunately, this practice has a negative genetic impact. When an ethnic group is as highly inbred as American Jews have been—at least until a generation or two ago—health problems are more likely to emerge than for groups that are more intermarried. (…) By insisting on the tradition of in-marriage as the standard for the community, American Judaism is advocating a practice that, while facilitating the survival of Jewish identity, works against the physical survival of the Jewish community. The fear of assimilation through intermarriage has blinded the community to the health dangers of in-marriage (p. 175).

These points show a very important dimension of the issue: the significance of Jewish communities' approaches towards children of intermarriages. Blecher (2007) argues this as follows:

> Basic arithmetic shows intermarriage by itself does not reduce the Jewish population, even if partial Jews are discounted. If partial Jews are counted—and the United Jewish Communities does indeed include them in its calculation of the number of Jews in America—then intermarriage actually *increases* the number of Jews (p. 175-176 italics in the original).

Blecher's (2007) arguments are very different from the others that can be found in the literature. To sum up, according to Blecher (2007), "(…) when it comes to the physical continuity of the Jewish community, intermarriage is more helpful than in-marriage" (p. 176). Afterwards, Blecher (2007) aims to challenge the

myths giving rise to the negative attitudes toward intermarriage. There are five important myths which can be summarized as follows:

> The first myth, that the American Jewish community is in imminent danger of dying out, has placed intermarriage in the spotlight of an illusory struggle for survival. Sometimes intermarriage is portrayed as the *evidence* Judaism is disappearing in America. Other times intermarriage is portrayed as the *reason* Judaism is disappearing. (...) Whereas the myth of Jewish disappearance created a sense of alarm about intermarriage, the myth that Judaism is a four-thousand-year-old religion produces the belief that intermarriage in America today is strictly a modern phenomenon. (…) The myth of Old World Judaism has made the Jewish community intolerant of its intermarried members. Nostalgia for the fictional world of the shtetl produced the image of a pure Jewish world unthreatened by any melting pot of assimilation. (…) At the same time, the myth that Jews have always been reasonable—and never believed in such supernatural concepts as heaven, Hell, Satan or sorcery—produces a sense of Jewish uniformity and authenticity. As a result, American Judaism is highly intolerant of divergent concepts and unorthodox relationships. It rejects the religious expression of Jews who intermarry and is sensitive to the complex religious need of their children. Partial Jews—those who consider themselves in varying degrees both Jewish and gentile—are seen as a contradiction of Judaism. The myth that Jewish denominations in America are authoritative of Judaism has meant that intermarried Jews and their families suffer when Jewish religious institutions flex their muscles in an attempt to discourage intermarriage. (…) Finally the myth that rabbis are official leaders of Jewish congregations has given us considerable influence over the religious life of Jews in America. Interfaith households are no less affected because they often rely on the good graces of Jewish clergy for life-cycle ceremonies (…). Different rabbis have different rules for these situations, but in one way or another many rabbis treat interfaith families differently from families where both partners are Jewish (Blecher, 2007, p. 176-177-178 italics in the original).

According to Blecher (2007), the religious identification of the children is one of the first concerns of the Jewish community. Blecher (2007) discusses the changing trends in parental choices regarding the children's religious training.

Around the 1970s and 1980s, intermarried had the idea of choosing one religion for their children. In the 1990s, the choice of dual-identity gained dominance. According to Blecher (2007), "(…) the decision to raise their children with a dual identity is based not on the desire to pass on two distinct religious traditions but on the desire to avoid having to make a choice" (p. 182).

By pointing out a theological inconsistency, Blecher (2007) asks the following question:

> It is especially ironic that many Reform, Reconstructionist and even Conservative rabbis will bless same-gender couples if both partners are Jewish, but not of interfaith couples. This is a significant distinction, because homosexuality is condemned in the Torah, whereas intermarriage is not. If by modifying a few words rabbis can conduct the equivalent of a Jewish wedding ceremony for a same-gender couple, why would they deny the same service to an interfaith couple? (p. 185).

Blecher (2007) also argues the problem arising out of "The issue of rabbinic officiation at life-cycle ceremonies for interfaith families (…)" (p. 187). In order to elaborate on the origin of the problem Blecher (2007) explains as follows:

> (…) the content of the Jewish wedding liturgy itself (...) makes reference to God's commandments to Israel and states that the couple is bound to each other under Jewish Law. If one of the partners is not a member of the House of Israel, they argue, how can the ceremony having any meaning? (p. 187).

According to Blecher (2007), this can be resolved "With the same modification—eliminating the words about Moses and Israel—the Jewish wedding ceremony could accommodate a marriage between a Jew and a gentile" (p. 188). Moreover, Blecher (2007) argues that these kinds of modifications might be made for other life-cycle ceremonies, too (p. 189).

According to Blecher (2007), there are two main directions American Judaism can take while approaching intermarriages. American Judaism either will consider these intermarriages as "*normal* Jewish households" in order to "decriminalize and depathologize" individuals in these intermarriages or American Judaism will not accept these intermarriages which eventually harms it (p. 189-190 italics in the original).

With respect to Jewish intermarriage, Blecher (2007) summarizes his basic arguments as follows:

> (…) intermarriage is neither a modern aberration of Jewish life in America nor a threat to its survival. It has always been a part of the history of the Jewish people as they have dispersed around the world. Jews who marry gentiles can no more be blamed for diluting Jewish life in America through assimilation than Jews who marry Jews can be blamed for diluting the vitality of the Jewish population through inbreeding (p. 191).

Deborah Dash Moore (2001) considers the issue of Jewish intermarriage from the point of view of identity politics, which also provides a new perspective. Moore's (2001) argument is based on the power dimension of Jewish identity. In this sense, according to Moore (2001), the debate deals with "(…) the boundaries of the Jewish community" (p. 45). This point is in the same line with Blecher's (2007) emphasis above on the importance of the question "Who is a Jew?"

Similar to Blecher (2007), although Moore (2001) arguments focus on American Judaism's attitudes to intermarriage, they still provide an important aspect of the relationship between Judaism and intermarriage. Moore (2001) discusses the Jewish communal rhetoric regarding intermarriage as follows:

> Many of those inside Jewish organizations desire to enhance their power by identifying an enemy. Since American society no longer produces enough influential anti-Semites and anti-Semitic movements (…), Jewish leaders have trained their rhetorical guns on intermarriage and what they claim are its attendant ills. These include a threat of demographic decline with the corresponding loss of political clout, the destruction of a

> unified Jewish people who can no longer marry within the group due to divisions over patrilineal descent, and the weakening of Jewish religious traditions and resulting assimilation (p. 45).

Moore (2001), similar to Blecher's (2007) debate on the physical survival of the Jewish people, argues that American Jewish leaders are interested in the issue of Jewish continuity, but they do not pay attention to the other important aspects of Jewish life (p. 45). Moore (2001) also mentions other dimensions of Jewish life, which are folk and elite norms. According to Charles Liebman (1973), the rules regarding intermarriage reflect the folk norms whereas the rules about Sabbath reflect the elite religious tradition (as cited in Moore, 2001, p. 46). In order to elaborate on the issue Moore (2001) points out Liebman's (1973) argument:

> More than twenty-five years ago, Liebman wrote about "the ambivalent Jew" who wanted to assimilate into American society and yet remain distinctively Jewish at the same time. Liebman pointed out that American Jews held onto a Jewish ethnic exclusivism even as they discarded Jewish religious traditionalism. "Why is intermarriage any more horrendous than violation of the Sabbath?" he asked. "In the catalog of ritual Jewish sins, there is hardly anything worse than desecration of the Sabbath. But obviously in the catalog of Jewish communal sins," he pointed out, "there is nothing worse than intermarriage" (p. 46 quotation marks in the original).

Moore (2001) also emphasizes what differentiates Jewish opposition to intermarriage from other religions' oppositions with respect to conversion: "Racial exclusivity (…) reappears in religious guise" (p. 48). Moore (2001) explains the process as follows:

> The possibility of conversion to Judaism (…) provided a convenient loophole around the issue of racial exclusivity. However, the vigorous debate over "outreach" exposes the flimsy construction of this loophole, in actuality a noose. Those most opposed to intermarriage turn out to be those most opposed to "outreach," to making conversion easy for gentiles (…). These same opponents of intermarriage also worry out

> loud about how converts will dilute Jewish life, weakening its ethnic dimension (p. 48 quotation marks in the original).

As discussed earlier, while exploring the issue of intermarriage, it seems important to take the social images of the groups into account. In this sense, the meaning of being Jewish is a dynamic issue with respect to the social contexts. Moore (2001) discusses the Jewish identity from this point of view:

> In the years prior to World War II when anti-Semitism thrived and Jews lived largely in semi-segregated urban neighborhoods, endogamy flourished and most Americans thought of Jews as less than white. (…) On various scales of attractiveness as neighbors, Jews ranked just above blacks and Asian in desirability (p. 48).

The importance of Moore's (2001) argument becomes clear by her following words: "If what it means to be a Jew has undergone such radical shifts (…), then it behooves us to look more closely at what is animating today's intermarriage debate" (p. 48-49). Afterwards, Moore (2001) asks the question of "Why are the Jewishly illiterate offspring of two Jewish atheists logged in as genuine Jews while the semi-practicing offspring of an intermarriage, especially if the father is a Jew and the mother is a gentile, are not counted as Jews?" (p. 49). Moore's (2001) arguments regarding the Jewish attitudes about intermarriage provide an important aspect; therefore, it seems worth citing the rest of her argument:

> Why do we pay more attention to blood than to behavior? Why do we zealously guard the privileges of ascending the *bimah* or the honor of leadership from Jews who have intermarried or from their gentile partners? Why is such extreme language invoked around intermarriage (…) when no one screams about Sabbath observance? (p. 49 italics in the original).

According to Moore (2001), the essentialist perspective in identity politics is partly responsible for this kind of approach toward intermarriage. In Moore's

(2001) view, "Plural metaphors of identity cannot compete with the demand for a single primary identity" (p. 49). Next, similar to Blecher's (2007) emphasis, Moore (2001) discusses the importance of approaching toward intermarriage not as though they are "evil", but as though they are "the complex fruit of a relatively free society" (p. 49). According to Moore (2001), this kind of approach might encourage "(…) the semi-practicing behavior of self-identifying Jewish children of a Jewish father and gentile mother" (p. 49-50). In Moore's (2001) view, this interpretation of Judaism "(…) is based not on commandment, but commitment; not on obligation, but choice; not on blood, but values" (p. 50). Moore's (2001) final argument about a more accepting and creative Jewish community is similar to Blecher's (2007) argument that since intermarriage is a fact, the attitudes of Jewish communities toward the intermarried and their children becomes the most important dimension of the issue with respect to Jewish continuity. Moore (2001) suggests the following: "(…) we [Jewish communities/people] should not be afraid of the future but try to create new forms of Jewish life and culture" (p. 51).

CHAPTER 3

TURKISH JEWRY

3.1. The Historical Origins of the Jewish Community in Turkey

The overall goal of this chapter is to point out the historical origins of the Jewish community living in Turkey, and also to touch upon the marriage and family life of the Jewish people in the Ottoman times. There are approximately 20,000 Jews in contemporary Turkey, most of whom live in Istanbul (Avigdor Levy, 2002, p. xx). When categorizing them as Jews, it would be wrong to consider them as a homogeneous group. In Turkey, there are mainly four groups creating the heterogeneity. The first one is the Sephardic Jews who make up the majority of the Jews in Turkey. They are the descendants of the Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and migrated to the Ottoman Empire (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 46). According to Minna Rozen (2002), Sephardic Jews in Spain had to choose "(…) between converting to Christianity or leaving Spain without their belongings (…)", and Rozen (2002) considers of their choice of leaving Spain as "(…) an adherence to Judaism (…)" (p. 47). Rozen (2002) mentions their immigration process as follows:

> The first expellees appeared in Istanbul at the end of the summer of 1492. Others arrived later after interim stops in Italy and North Africa. They were followed by their brethren who were expelled from Sicily and southern Italy. All suffered cruel experiences on the way. (…) Hardly anyone reached the shores of the Golden Horn with his nuclear family intact. In 1497, Portugal began the forced conversion of Jews without giving them the option of emigration. (…) Some of them managed to escape and reached the Ottoman Empire in a second wave of immigration from the Iberian Peninsula. (…) In 1506, after riots in Lisbon against the New Christians, they were given permission to travel. Many of them took advantage of this opportunity to leave for places outside Christian lands, with Istanbul being one of the most important destinations (…). (…) In 1521, the grace period granted to the would-be immigrants in Portugal ended; those who did not use

> the opportunity to leave the country were regarded by many of their brethren in the Ottoman lands as having accepted their Christianity not only *de jure* and *de facto*, but also emotionally. Apparently, therefore, the Iberian immigrants to Istanbul between 1492 and 1521 were motivated by strong religious feelings more than anything else (p. 47-48 italics in the original).

This wave of immigration of Sephardic Jews to the Ottoman Empire continued until the year of 1521 (Rozen, 2002, p. 48). The second group consists of the Ashkenazi Jews who are descended from the medieval Jewish communities of Germany and German-speaking borderland areas. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they had been expelled from Germany, France and Hungary and migrated to Ottoman Empire. The term Ashkenaz is the name for Germany in Medieval Hebrew (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 46). According to Rozen (2002):

> When the Spanish Jews reached Istanbul, they found the Ashkenazim already residing there. Although the Ashkenazim had come of their own free will, the Ottomans treated them the same way they treated the Romaniots, regarding them as *sürgün* ["(…) those who were transferred by force (…)" (Rozen, 2002, p. 12)]. During the sixteenth century, however, when the influx of Iberian Jews led to the separation of *sürgün* from *kendigelen* ["(…) those who came of their own will" (Rozen, 2002, p. 12)] and more Ashkenazim arrived, the Ashkenazi congregations were transferred to the category of *kendigelen.* Thus, all of the Jews who migrated from Christian lands to Istanbul belonged to the category of *kendigelen* (p. 49 italics in the original).

The third and the oldest group is the Romaniots. They have been living on these soils since the time of the Byzantine Empire (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 46). There are very few families of Romaniot Jews left in Turkey. Rozen (2002) mentions the appearance of Romaniot Jews in the Ottoman Empire as follows:

> Sultan Mehmed II, "The Conqueror," saw a symbolic meaning in his conquest of the former capital of an empire. He turned Istanbul into the capital of *his* empire—this time a Muslim empire, ruled by the

> Ottomans. One of his immediate goals was to repopulate and rebuild the empty city. For that purpose, Mehmed started moving people to Istanbul from other territories under Ottoman Rule. This transfer policy called *sürgün,* after the Turkish word for "those who were exiled". (…) The Jewish transferees came from many settlements in areas which are now in Greece, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria and Turkey. The transfer totally changed the map of the Jewish communities in the Byzantine period. All of the Jewish communities in Asia Minor vanished through the deportation of their entire populations to Istanbul. Some of the Jewish settlements in Greece, Macedonia, and Bulgaria similarly disappeared while others were diminished. The *sürgün* were brought to Istanbul over a period of some twenty years. Almost all of them were Romaniots, Greek-speaking Jews with a common culture. Their name derives from their origins—Rome being the self-perception of the Byzantines, and Rum being the name of Byzantium in the Turkish language—although almost all aspects of the empire, including the culture, were Greek-oriented, not Roman (p. 45-46 quotation marks and italics in the original).

The last group is the Karaites. They, too, are few, but they have a place in the current Jewish community (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 47).

According to Levy (2002), "The story of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey deserves to be better known" (p. xviii). Levy (2002) mentions that, "For hundreds of years the Ottoman Empire was home to one of the world's largest and most vibrant Jewish communities" (p. xviii). Moreover, Levy (2002) argues that, "[Turkish Jewry] is (…) one of the largest—and certainly the most vibrant—of the Jewish communities remaining in the Muslim world" (p. xx). Furthermore, Levy (2002) claims that, "The Jews of Turkey are well integrated in Turkish society, and at the same time they maintain close ties with the world Jewish community" (p. xx). After pointing out the historical origins of Turkish Jewry, it seems useful to touch upon Jewish marriage and family life in the Ottoman times.

3.1.1. Marriage and Family Life of Jewish People in the Ottoman Times

This part of the current study aims to point out a few main characteristics of family and marriage life of Istanbul Jewry during the Ottoman times. It does

not aim to give an extended analysis or summary of the subject. Regarding the goal of marriage, Rozen's (2002) explanation provides a good introduction to the subject:

> In the Talmud, marriage is highly recommended as a way of achieving personal happiness: "A Jew who is not married lives without delight, without blessing, without goodness." Marriage is also advocated as a way of avoiding sin: "Since a man marries a woman his sins dissipate." Marriage is even demanded, as an expression of maturity and the ability to contribute to human society: "Any Jew who is not married not a man." In the sixteenth century Istanbul, the concept of marriage was not only a reflection of the biblical or Talmudic notion of marriage. It was also the product of generations of experiences by the Jewish people, their contacts with other cultures and religions, and the conclusions drawn from that experience (p. 105-106 quotation marks in the original).

As Tekin (2009) argues in the previous chapter on Jewish intermarriage, according to Rozen (2002), "Marriage was a social institution meant to ensure the continuation of the world, in the sense of the family line and the Jewish people" (p. 109). Rabbi Marc D. Angel (2006) describes the Jewish marriage in the Ottoman times as follows:

> Early marriages were common among Sephardim until the beginning of the twentieth century. The bride's family was expected to provide a dowry as part of the marriage arrangements. The groom, by means of the Jewish marriage contract (*ketubah*), guaranteed financial security to the bride. Where bride and groom were both from poor families, these financial arrangements were often more symbolic than actual. It was not uncommon for the young couple to begin their married life living in the same home as the groom's parents. They would eventually move into their own home once they started to have children (p. 110).

Rozen (2002) argues the general trend of marriage at a young age and endogamy as follows:

> (…) marriage at a young age and endogamy among the Jews of Istanbul were not the expression of the influence of Muslim society or culture per se, but rather manifestations of the traditional Mediterranean culture that prevailed throughout the region. They were based on foundations much older than Islam: the supremacy of kinship as a social value, and allegiance to the paternal line of the family, which were part of both Jewish and Roman cultures. Deriving basically from Jewish sources and the surrounding cultures, including those of the people who accepted Islam, these principles persisted in Jewish society (p. 127).

Regarding virginity, Rozen (2002) states that:

> (…) virginity seems to have been a mandatory demand for a female at the time of her first marriage—not only as a proof of her chastity and modesty in the past, but also as an indication of her future behavior (p. 145).

What Rozen (2002) also argues is the situation of divorce or the loss of a spouse. Rozen (2002) notes that, "(…) divorce of the death of a spouse did not mean the end of wedded life for the Jews of Istanbul; most would find a new mate, and many of them would bear child with their new partners" (p. 145). Furthermore, with respect to polygamy and monogamy, Rozen (2002) stresses that religious influence is not very significant. According to Rozen (2002):

> (…) while most Jewish families in sixteenth-century Istanbul were monogamous, be they Romaniot, Ashkenazi or Iberian, the limitation on polygamy was not a communal matter but a private one—and a Romaniot or Iberian man who did not commit himself to monogamy was not bound to practice it. (…) The subject of polygamy still leaves us with one issue that needs further investigation. Would it be accurate to divide the Jewish Diaspora into two worlds, each inhabited by a different kind of Jew: The Jews of Islam and The Jews of Christianity? The answer is no. Polygamy seems to have been more a matter of geography and climate than of religious influence. Polygamy was more easily accepted in the lands of the Mediterranean basis, whether Muslim or Christian (p. 153-154).

According to Rozen (2002), the factors that affected "(…) the Jewish family life in Istanbul in the second half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century (…)" can be summarized as follows:

> (…) the realities of Ottoman urban life (crowded living conditions, poor public sanitation, endemic diseases); the traumatic breakup of the Spanish Jewish family; and longstanding traditions of the Mediterranean society and family. Preservation of the male line from one generation to another was the traditional goal of the family; this, in turn, determined the status of women and the norms of matchmaking and marriage, inheritance and division of property, child custody, and so forth. Legislation on these matters maintained this tradition in Istanbul; in most cases it tended to favor the male and the male branch of the family (p. 195-196).

Rozen (2002) also argues the following regarding the general configuration of Jewish households:

> The allegiances and strong connections between the links in the chain of the male dynasty, combined with the realities of Ottoman urban life, led the Jewish society of Istanbul to choose the option of marriage at a young age, often within the family, and the procreation of as many children as possible in order to endure the continuation of the line. The fortunate family included two parents, married children, grandchildren, and even servants and slaves. However, such a family unit was not very common, precisely because of the factors that produced the urban reality (…) (p. 196).

Lastly, it is useful point out a recent study on Armenian and Jewish communities in Ankara, Turkey that was conducted by Özgür Bal (2006). It provides important information about the attitudes of Jewish people in Ankara towards intermarriage. According to Bal (2006), while for the first generation of Jewish community intermarriage was an extraordinary practice and not approved, in the second generation the negative attitudes towards intermarriage changed. In addition to the attitudes of the first and second generations of Jewish community, Bal (2006) stresses that even though there has been a shift in their

perceptions with respect to intermarriage, there can be noticed “a potential problem” emphasis (p. 305-306).

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part of the study, the aim is to provide the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in contemporary Turkey with the relevant literature in order to build a useful ground to interpret the cases of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages. The plan of this part is as follows: As Reinharz (2009) mentions in the part of Jewish intermarriage of the current study, Jewish people are both international and local people. Given this, the first part of the literature review considers the recent studies on Jewish intermarriages in different countries. Since the current study aims to depict the appearance of the issue in a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey, it is important to look at its appearance in different countries. In so doing, some of the similarities and/or differences between various Jewish communities regarding the issue of intermarriage are caught. In this sense, some of the relevant research on the issue is taken into account. Next, some of the valuable findings in four researches that deal with the issues of Turkish Jewry, and of intermarriage in Turkey are pointed out. Then, four studies on the different aspects of intermarriage around the world are pointed out briefly since they provide some useful insights for the current study. Afterwards, several studies on the consequences of intermarriages are mentioned.

Before delving into the literature, there is one point that should be stressed: It can easily be noticed that most of the research on Jewish intermarriage takes Jewish-Christian intermarriages into account, which shows the importance of research on Turkish Jewry, who live in a predominantly Muslim country. Moreover, the absence of research on Jewish-Muslim relationships, with respect to marriage, also indicates one of the gaps the current study shall fill.

France is "(…) one of the largest Jewish communities of the Diaspora, with estimates ranging from 600,000 to 750,000 Jews" (Reinharz, 2009, p. 4). One of

the studies on Jewish intermarriage was conducted by Erik Cohen (2009) in France. In 2002, Cohen (2009) interviewed 1,132 "French Jewish heads-of-household" by phone (Reinharz, 2009, p. 4). According to Cohen (2009):

> Those with Jewish partners, in general, are more traditional and religiously observant, more involved in Jewish community, and have more authoritarian-based values and concerns more closely related to the Jewish community. Those with non-Jewish partners are more independent. They tend to be less involved with the Jewish community and have more universal values and concerns (p. 57).

In Cohen's (2009) view, "These differences will affect the children of these respective types of marriages and thus the nature of the Jewish community in the next generation" (p. 57). Another significance of Jewish intermarriages around the world, except for in the United States also appears in Cohen's (2009) study, which is that, "French Jewish men are more likely than are French Jewish women to marry non-Jews" (Reinharz, 2009, p. 4). The perception of the intermarried and their possible influence on their children is an important theme.

Another study on Jewish intermarriage was conducted in Canada by Gustave Goldmann (2009). Reinharz (2009) states that, "The estimated size of Canadian Jewry is 373,500" (p. 6). Goldmann (2009) tries to answer the following questions of "What is the intermarriage rate of Canadian Jews?", and also "Is the rate of intermarriage among Jews in Canada changing over time?" (Reinharz, 2009, p. 7). By analyzing the 1991 and 2001 Canadian censuses, Goldmann (2009) finds out that:

> Canadian Jews (…) have an increasing rate of exogamy over time, and they are more likely to produce children who declare themselves Jewish if the mother (in contrast with father) is Jewish (Reinharz, 2009, p. 7).

Similar to Cohen's (2009) study of the emphasis on the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish parents and their influence on children, Goldmann's

(2009) study also indicates the importance of the roles of the parents in the religious identification of their children.

Another important study on Jewish intermarriage was conducted in South Africa, which has an estimated Jewish population size of 72,000 (Reinharz, 2009, p. 8). Due to their different methodological approach to the study of intermarriage, Sally Frankental and Stuart Rothgiesser's (2009) study on Jewish intermarriage in South Africa is important for the current study:

> It would be valuable and instructive to conduct qualitative research with those individuals—both those contemplating intermarriage and those already married (or cross dating)—in order to better understand and appreciate the elements that influence their decision-making in the various specific contexts of their particular lives (p. 117).

Frankental and Rothgiesser (2009) conducted face-to-face interviews with 1,000 Jews in 1992. One of the most important findings of the research concerns the reaction of parents to their adult children's decision of intermarrying: "(….) parents' opposition to the intermarriage of their children had declined considerably" (Reinharz, 2009, p. 9). According to Reinharz (2009), this finding gives rise to the question of: "(…) do parents attitudes affect their children's behavior; or do adult children's behavior affect parental attitudes? Or both?" (p. 9). The methodology of Frankental and Rothgiesser's (2009) research, their findings on parental opposition, and Reinharz's (2009) question regarding this change in parental opposition are important insights for the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages.

After pointing out some of the important findings in various countries with respect to Jewish intermarriage, it is appropriate to mention a few studies that were conducted in Turkey. Since research on Turkish Jewry is not very rich, these studies are important for the current study.

Yahya Koçoğlu (2004) conducted research on the young people of the various minorities such as Armenians and Jewish people in contemporary

Turkey. Although, the respondents were not intermarried people, their opinions on the issue of mixed dating and mixed marriage provide some insight as to some of the thoughts of the Jewish community with respect to mixed marriage. The interviews provide important guiding points for the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey. The first guiding point is the tendency of Jewish people to distinguish the traditions they have which affect their lifestyles and religion (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 52; p. 67). This point is emphasized often by the respondents in the issue of mixed dating and mixed marriage. Another important question they have been asked is what their parents' possible reactions would be, if they decided to marry a non-Jew. The commonness in the respondents' answers show the relative closeness of the community with respect to mixed marriage. They particularly asserted that the marriage of a Jewish man and a Muslim woman would be even more difficult than a Muslim man and a Jewish woman (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 57). All the respondents considered themselves as Jews even though they did not consider themselves as religious. This point seems to indicate that Jewishness is more than only a religion for the Jewish people. It can also be asserted that because they are a minority group, for them it seems like Jewishness is providing a lifestyle and a kind of solidarity. One of the most interesting responses is as follows: "I am religious in my own way" (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 83). This shows the importance of paying attention to the self-perceptions of the individuals. Koçoğlu's (2004) interviews focus on the minorities' general experiences in Turkey. However, some of the questions he asked the respondents provide key points for the current study of mixed marriages.

Another study that deserves to be cited here belongs to Özgür Bal (2006). Similar to Koçoğlu's (2004) study, Bal (2006) considers not only one minority group, but two: Armenian and Jewish communities. Regarding the attitudes of Jewish people towards the issue of intermarriage, Bal (2006) argues the following:

> (…) intermarriage, was welcomed (…) on the stated conditions that 'their children would be happy', the

> potential 'other' side of the marriage would 'respect' for their difference and expression of identity, 'would be honest and loved by their children', and 'would be humane referring to the good manners of a person. (…) in some narratives marriage relations were utilized as tool to indicate the 'openness', 'progressiveness', 'liberalism', and 'democratic character' of the community through a point on inter-sex relations, or on rituals regarding marriage (p. 306 quotation marks in the original).

In Turkey, there cannot be found much research on the issue of mixed marriage. In this sense, Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör and Jeroen Smits's (2000) research focusing on Turkish-Kurdish intermarriages is important. Even though this research takes another kind of intermarriage into consideration, it is important in that it helps to see a dimension of the issue in contemporary Turkey. One of the most interesting findings in their research is about the relationship between educational levels and intermarriage. According to Gündüz Hoşgör and Smits (2000), Turks with lower educational level tend to marry a Kurdish spouse, whereas the Kurds with high educational level display the highest intermarriage rates. The crucial point about this finding is that, "(…) majority men and women may marry a minority spouse if they gain socio-economically from this" (Gündüz Hoşgör and Smits, 2000, p. 431). Even though the research on Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages does not –particularly- focus on partners' classes and socio-economical levels, when the literature is examined, it seems important to not to pass over the similarities and differences of the socio-economical and educational levels of the partners.

As part of the project of "Introducing Jewish Culture and the Jewish Community in Turkey", another significant study that is "Research on Perception of Different Identities and Jews in Turkey" is conducted in 2009. Phone-based interviews were conducted with 1,108 people, who live in different parts of Turkey in order to examine the general perceptions of people in Turkey about different ethnic and religious identities, with a particular attention to Turkish Jewry. For the limits of the current part, here, one of the most significant findings is pointed out: Individuals, who firstly identify themselves as Muslim, display the highest percentage (61%) of negative perception towards having a Jewish

neighbor (2009, p. 13). This finding also indicates the importance of the current study.

When the relevant literature in Turkey is examined, it can be easily noticed that the issue of intermarriage is a neglected dimension of the relationships between different groups, thus identities, and, in general, the research relevant to the issue of marriage focuses either on the relationships between different social factors operating in marriage and/or some psychological dimensions.

After pointing out some of the relevant research in Turkey, four studies of intermarriage around the world can be mentioned briefly since they provide some important insights for the current study. The first one was conducted by Gordon (1966) in the United States. Even though it is not recent, it still is valuable in showing the historical dimension of intermarriages in the United States, which is often referred to as the melting pot. Firstly, he focused on the college students' (5,407 students to be exact, in some 40 colleges and universities) thoughts about intermarriage by applying a survey to them. Then, he took the cases of the Protestants, the Catholics and also the Jews by using in-depth interviews. Gordon (1966) did not only examine the religious intermarriage, but he also looked at interracial and interethnic marriages. Moreover, he took the case of the children who were born to these marriages. By interviewing the couples and listening to their personal stories, Gordon (1966) aimed to understand the various processes they went through. It should be noted that Muslims were not a group that were taken into account. It may be related to the social conditions at that time. Gordon (1966) mainly aimed to highlight different kinds of intermarriages and bring attention to the intermarried. Gordon (1966) considered the intermarried as a minority group which had been "ever-increasing" (p. xii). With respect to Turkey, the same argument can be asserted that the intermarried constitute a minority group, and must be given attention.

To understand the historical and global context, the research that was conducted by David M. Heer (1962) in Canada can also be noted. Heer (1962)

focused on the trends in interfaith marriages in Canada from 1922 to 1962. The years of Gordon's (1966) and Heer's (1962) research are very close. This seems like more than only a coincidence. It must be that around those years, globalization had increased its speed, and the interactions between various groups had developed. Heer's (1962) study aimed to show the general trends in interfaith marriages rather than focusing on the personal stories. According to this study, the interfaith marriages would increase in the future (Heer, 1962, p. 250).

More recent research has been done in the Netherlands by Paul M. de Graaf, Jacques P.G. Janssen and Matthijs Kalmijn in 2005. This research focuses on the conflict dimension of intermarriage. The researchers analyzed the patterns in divorces that occurred between the years of 1974 and 1994. They tested the hypothesis of: When there is a religious and national difference between the partners, they are more likely to divorce. They found out that the marriages between Protestants and Catholics, and also the ones between Jewish and non-Jews confirm this hypothesis (Graaf et al., 2005, p. 71). In addition to this, marriages between Dutch and other nationalities are even more risky in the sense of divorce. This research shows the importance of paying attention to the majority and minority dimension of the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey while interpreting the cases. Even though there is only a religious difference between Jewish-Muslim mixed couples in Turkey, the feeling of being in the minority or majority may affect their relationships in some senses.

The fourth study that deserves attention was conducted by Matthijs Kalmijn (1991). Kalmijns (1991) examined several national surveys in the United States between the years of 1955 and 1989. Kalmijn's (1991) main finding was as follows:

> (…) the social boundaries that separate educational groups seem to be stronger than the boundaries that separate Protestants and Catholics. In addition, there is some evidence that interfaith marriages have become increasingly homogamous with respect to education, suggesting that education has replaced religion as a factor in spouse selection (p. 786).

In addition to this finding in Kalmijn's (1991) study, the other findings also are very important for the current study:

> (…) it is often claimed that the socioeconomic convergence of Protestants and Catholics has broken down their social barriers. The present study shows that this is not an important cause. (…) the dramatic increase in Protestant/Catholic intermarriage reflects a secularization of *cultural* differences between religious groups—a convergence between Protestants and Catholics in attitudes about marriage, fertility, child rearing and sexual matters. Convergence has played an important role, but it is confined to the cultural domain. Although geographic boundaries between groups have also declined, it is difficult to believe that this has played a major role in the absence of other forms of convergence. After all, marriage is a long-term, intimate relationship in which cultural similarity is of crucial importance. (…) the trend partly reflects the diminishing role that parents play in shaping their children's norms and values, as well as a decline in the extent to which parents directly interfere in their children's choice of spouse. (…) The general shift from ascriptive group boundaries to achieved characteristics like education suggests that marriage choice has become individualized. (…) I do not believe they [findings] show that the salience of religious practice and belief has changed. Although intermarriage is one indicator of secularization, it is not the only one, and different dimensions of secularization may change in different ways. (…) The weakening of religious boundaries in marriage choice can be interpreted as evidence that the traditional American "communal" religion has given way to "associational" religion (p. 797-798 quotation marks and italics in the original).

Kalmijn's (1991) findings provide very crucial insights into the interpretation of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey.

At this point, the last two studies that must be mentioned are about the consequences of intermarriages, which is not a frequently studied area. The first research is conducted by Kate McCarthy (2007). Before delving into the findings in the research, it seems significant to point out how McCarthy (2007) approaches towards the issue, and how she conducts the study. McCarthy (2007)

considers the interfaith families as "microcosms of pluralist society" (p. 188). According to McCarthy (2007):

> In these families, assumptions about and possibilities for a religiously pluralist civil society are embedded in the daily choices of women, men, and children trying to create a coherent relationships and spiritualities (…) (p. 188).

McCarthy (2007) aims to describe the various strategies these families apply in order to manage religious differences in daily life. McCarthy's (2007) arguments seem very important for the study of mixed marriage. McCarty (2007) mentions two factors affecting the mixed marriages:

> On one hand, the smaller a religious community in a given geographical area, the more likely its members are to marry religious others. (…) On the other hand, small religious communities are also motivated to generate higher levels of commitment among their inherent (p. 192).

McCarthy (2007) conducted face-to-face interviews with interfaith couples, and she also provided data via the interfaith discussion groups on the internet (p. 188). In so doing, McCarthy (2007) identifies three strategies that are used by interfaith families: "1) a form of respect for difference that I came to call deep tolerance; 2) flexible code-switching; and 3) creative recombination of religious belief, practice and identity" (p. 193). Regarding the first strategy, McCarthy (2007) argues the following:

> Rather than simply accepting that the religious other believes and does something different, and agreeing to put up with it, these partners struggle to understand those ideas and practices, and in many cases experience them so as to accommodate and appreciate their partners more fully (p. 196-197).

With respect to the second strategy, McCarthy (2007) points out the following:

> When bilingual people speak to one another, it is not uncommon for them to move back and forth between the two languages, depending on topic, audience, and other factors. They may find that certain concepts have no good translation in the other language, or they may switch languages to maintain privacy on a given topic. (…) This code-switching, as linguists call it, is a skill that helps bridge two distinctive cultural systems while maintaining their separate integrity. It is important that code-switching is not the creation of hybrid or pidgin language, but a flexible moving back and forth across two distinct languages. (…) their [interfaith couples'] interactions with each other and with their religious communities of origin [are] (…) a kind of religious code-switching (p. 198).

Regarding the last strategy of interfaith couples, McCarthy (2007) argues the following:

> To develop the kind of deep tolerance that has made their relationships work and the code-switching that has made their individual spiritualities intelligible to each other and their wider communities, interfaith couples have had to dismantle and reconstruct in new ways much of their inherited ritual, symbolic, and doctrinal traditions and even their religious identities. Creative ritual combination can involve blending elements of two religions in a single ceremony like a wedding, or it can mean combining two cognate events like a naming ceremony and baptism into a new, hybrid event (p. 201).

The last study, which is useful to mention for the current study is about children who are born to Jewish intermarriages. Pearl Beck (2005) used both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to find out children's approaches towards Jewish identity. Beck (2005) conducted ninety face-to-face interviews with "(…) people age 22-30 who grew up with one Jewish and one non-Jewish parent" in the United States (p. 6). Beck (2005) pointed out seven major findings in the research as follows:

> 1) (…) In terms of their religious identity, most of the people have remained on the same path as their parents. Nearly 70% of our respondents continued to

identify with the type of religious upbringing which they received and nearly 75% expect that their Jewish identity will remain stable with the next 5-10 years. (…) 2) (…) Fewer than one-quarter of the respondents described themselves as "religious". (…) 3) (…) Respondents embraced their dual identities and quite a few comfortably referred to themselves as "half and half". (…) 4) (…) Respondents expressed overall positive attitudes about their Jewish roots and particular pride in Jewish liberal values. However, they were generally ignorant regarding Jewish history and Jewish traditions. 5) (…) Only a minority of this population received formal Jewish education when they grew up. Instead, their Jewish information and impressions were derived from popular entertainment—especially viewing "Schindler's List" and "Fiddler on the Roof". Significantly, these two lachrymose cultural experiences depict Jewish life as fragile and moribund rather than as dynamic and attractive. 6) (…) Opposing anti-Semitism was one of the Jewish values endorsed by our respondents. It is possible that this view was related to actual or perceived anti-Semitic incidents which our respondents experienced as threats to their personal well-being. (…) 7) (…) During childhood, the bar/bat mitzvah represented the major contact between respondents and Jewish life. (Being raised by a Jewish mother, especially one that was strongly identified, greatly increased the chances of a person having a bar/bat mitzvah). Having a bar/bat mitzvah was found to be strongly related to subsequent involvement with Jewish life and with current Jewish identity (p. 41-42 quotation marks in the original).

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH QUESTION

In the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in contemporary Turkey, the central aim is to understand and describe Jewish and Muslim couples' and their children's perceptions about their identities and experiences with respect to their marriage, and family life. It is important to note that the current study does not aim to make generalizations about the subject in any respects. It mainly aims to understand and explore a social world, Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages, which is an unexplored subject in Turkey. Given this gap, it is important to find out what kinds of processes these individuals in these mixed marriages go through in contemporary Turkey. Given the dynamic character of religion and religious identities, it is also important to explore self-identifications of both partners with respect to their different identities: What does being a Jew mean to mixed married Jews, and what does being a Muslim mean to mixed married Muslims? The issue of Jewish intermarriage is mostly studied in predominantly Christian countries. By taking the debate of Jewish intermarriage within Jewish communities into account, it can be stated that its appearance in a predominantly Muslim country provides a different insight into the issue.

In this current study, religious identity is considered as a dynamic process; thus, throughout the study, a contextual approach towards religion is adopted. Therefore, in the current study, the aim is to catch the mixed couples' own perceptions. Since marriage is the most intimate relationship an individual can have with another individual, mixed marriage is a valuable ground to study relationships between different groups.

Regarding the three main areas in the study of intermarriage, which are the aetiology of intermarriage, the patterns in intermarriage and the consequences of intermarriage, the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages mostly addresses the processes individuals go through with respect to mixed marriage. In addition, the experiences of children in these marriages

constitute a vital part of the study. The current study does not aim to create strict typologies in order to examine the aetiology of intermarriage, nor does it try to display the current mixed marriage patterns in contemporary Turkey. What it aims to do is: exploring the self-perceptions and experiences of Jewish-Muslim partners with respect to their marriages and identities, and their children's experiences.

The first dimension of the research question focuses on the self-perceptions of the couples about their own identities and their experiences with respect to mixed marriage. Related to this, processes/problems the individuals face with and the strategies they use to overcome those problems are explored. The second dimension aims to understand the experiences/feelings/attitudes of the children of these couples: What kinds of experiences do these mixed children go through? How do they identify themselves?

Firstly, I explore how partners approach each other's religious views and/or practices, and how they create a common living together both in the private and public sphere. Secondly, I focus on their strategies to overcome the difficulties stemming from their different religious identities and their communities. The third dimension is related to the next generation of the family, religiously mixed children's experiences and the ways in which they are raised.

In the current study, all of the interviewees in the study were born in Turkey, and they are citizens of Turkey. The research consists of two kinds of couples. The first group is the ones in which the husband is a Jew and the wife is Muslim. The second one consists of the ones in which the husband is Muslim and the wife is a Jew. The second type of mixed marriage seems to be rarer, and among nine couples in the current study, there are three marriages in which woman partner is Jewish. Thus, although the two types do not have the same weight in the study, it still is important to take the both into consideration to be able to compare the similar and/or different patterns in each. It is valuable to see the gender dimension in mixed marriages: Are the Jews or Muslims more flexible in the sense of a Jewish or Muslim woman or man marrying a non-Jewish woman or man? Overall, the basic argument is held on the level of the couples' and their

children's own self-perceptions about their identities and experiences which matter the most in the research. Thus the central theme in the current study revolves around the question of "What happens after mixed marrying?"

CHAPTER 6

THEORETICAL, CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLODY

6.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Before pointing out the theoretical background of the current study, it seems appropriate to mention the difficulty of exploring the issue of intermarriage theoretically. As it has been pointed out in the first chapter, the studies on intermarriage mostly reflect the interest in the aetiology and patterns of intermarriage. The central question in many studies has been "Who marries to whom, and why?" It can be asserted that much research has only taken these first steps of marriage (such as mate-selection) into consideration, not the following process that is the marriage and family life. Thus theoretical approaches towards the issue of intermarriage mostly deal with these dimensions of intermarriage. Since not much research has been conducted, and developed theories have not yet emerged in the area on this dimension of the issue, it has been a difficult process to build the appropriate theoretical framework for the current study. Before pointing out the theoretical background, I, firstly, would like to mention the adopted anthropological approach in the current study with respect to studying Jews and Muslims. Regarding studying the Jewish identity, I adopt the following anthropological approach:

> (…) one critical contribution of that anthropology has made to the study of Judaism is to hold fast to the approach of aiming to understand local knowledge, and meanings from the participants' point of view (an emic view) rather than imposing their own interpretive or hermeneutic categories (an etic view). This has resulted in the eschewing of claims about what normative Judaism is in favor of a more open-ended search into what Judaism means to those claim it as an identity. In this sense, anthropologists have refused, at times, to accept definitions of Judaism that emanate from rabbis or community elites, looking instead to the variety of ways people relate to (or reject) tradition and change. Anthropologists allow these categories of belonging to surface from their informants, which

> sometimes leads to decidedly non-elite (…) definition of Judaism and Jews (…). This does not mean that anthropology necessarily rejects the concept of Judaism as a tradition (or the importance of tradition to Jews). Anthropological method and theory neither rejects nor diminishes the continuities in Jewish thought and practice across time and space. What it does suggest is the need for research which illuminates the discursive means through which definitions of 'traditional' Judaism are established, defended, and debated (Marcy Brink-Danan, 2008, p. 682 quotation marks in the original).

Herbert Gans's (1979) theory of symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity can be considered as complementary to the adopted approach towards Jewish identity. According to Uzi Rebhun (2004), "(…) Gans claims that the new ethnic behaviors and affiliations (…) are nonetheless merely symbolic expressions of concern with identity and group consciousness" (p. 350). Gans (1979) argues that:

> These forms of identification (…) reflect aspirations for self-fulfillment, but lack structural cohesion, are detached from the practice of an on-going ethno-religious culture (…) (as cited in Rebhun, 2004, p. 350).

Similar to the anthropological approach towards the study of Jews, Gabrielle Marranci (2008) suggests an important approach with respect to exploring Muslim identity. Firstly, Marranci (2008) mentions the following:

> It is the 'creative consciousness' of the individual Muslim that today is trapped into the cage of collective stereotyping of what Muslims should be or how they should behave (p. 93 quotation marks in the original).

According to Marranci (2008), the scholars are "(…) not interested in how Muslims formed their identities, (…) [they are] too busy trying to understand how Islam 'creates' Muslim" (p. 95 quotation marks in the original). From the point of view of Marranci's (2008) theory of identity, "(…) *what we feel to be* (…) determines our personal identity" (p. 97 italics in the original). In this sense, Marranci (2008) argues that, "(…) the anthropologist of Islam can effectively

study Muslims as human beings rather than living symbols of a religion" (p. 100). In Marranci's (2008) view, "(…) [scholars] need to observe the *dynamics* of Muslim lives *within* societies" (p. 100 italics in the original). Throughout the current study, the general approach that is adopted with respect to the Jewish and Muslim partners and their children does not display an essentialist perspective of the issue, but rather a more individualistic perspective that aims to understand how individuals perceive themselves. Following this approach seems logical in order to deal with the research question. The individuals' self-perceptions are important to understand the meanings of being a Jew or a Muslim. This provides a more broad comprehension of the dynamic character of the issue.

As mentioned earlier, there are not developed theories regarding the consequences of intermarriage. To overcome this problem, by taking the research questions into account, the most suitable family theory, symbolic interactionist theory, is chosen. Since the current study deals with Jewish and Muslim identities within the context of marriage, their relationships with one another, their children, and also with the social environment, the cases are mainly interpreted in the light of symbolic interactionist theory. In order to elaborate on the appropriateness of symbolic interactionism for the current study, the following characteristics of the theory with respect to family research are useful:

> Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical approach that is concerned with the ways in which individuals define the meanings of their situations, as well as themselves, in relation to other people with whom they engage in joint actions. (…) Each person's sense of herself or himself as a family member is thought to be derived from the communications that take place in everyday life. (…) Symbolic interactionist studies do not usually presume that there is only one way of conducting family life. (…) the emphasis is more like to be upon family unity rather than conflict within the family (David Cheal, 2002, p. 59).

The current study aims to understand how the couples and their children in Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages perceive their own identities and situations, and symbolic interactionist theory provides the current study with the appropriate bases. It is the individuals who are taken into account. It is their self-perceptions, which the research aims to touch upon. Moreover, since the current study of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages takes still-married couples into account, how they manage their marriages and family lives is one of the main issues in the study. Thus it can be noted that unity of the family is emphasized more than its conflict dimension. This point is important because the research is focusing on marriages that are managed. In this sense, it does not consist of the couples, for instance, who are divorced but the ones who –in a way- create strategies to manage the union despite the problems. In this sense, the reactions they are faced with throughout their marriage experience, their children's experiences with their extended family members, and moreover, the couples and their children's everyday interactions in public life (such as work, school life) are important dimensions to understand their self-perceptions.

The basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism with respect to family research are as follows:

> 1) The initial assumption is that (…) man must be studied on his own level. (…) 2) A second assumption is that the most fruitful approach to man's social behavior is through an analysis of society. (…) 3) A third assumption concerns the equipment with which the newborn enters life. The human infant is (…) neither social nor anti-social, but rather asocial. (…) 4) A last assumption is that the human being is actor as well as reactor. The human being does not simply respond to stimuli occurring outside himself. (…) The environment of the organism is a selected segment of the "real" world, the selection occurring in the interests behavior which the human being himself has initiated (Sheldon Stryker, 1959, p. 112-113 quotation marks in the original).

Thomas R. Chibucos, Randall W. Leite and David L. Weis (2005) also point out the main assumptions of the theory of symbolic interactionism that are useful for the theoretical bases of the current study. They are as follows:

> 1) (…) behavior can only be understood in terms of the meanings the actor attributes to it. (…) the reasons or meanings that underlie the behavior are more important to understanding than the behavior itself. (…) It is more important to understand the meaning and definitions actors assign to a situation than to understand dimensions of the situation itself. 2) (…) without social interactions, an individual will not develop an understanding of the meanings attached to symbols and behaviors in a society. This suggests a circular process. Individuals come to understand meanings through social interactions, and their understanding of meanings and ascription of meanings to behaviors then influence their participation in social interactions. 3) (…) humans are born with no social dimension. (…) all behavior must be understood as socially learned. (…) 4) (…) individuals are profoundly influenced by society. (…) 5) (…) symbolic interactionism (…) focuses on an individual's sense of self. In fact, symbolic interactionism is the only commonly used theory in family science that focuses on this construct. It [one's sense of self] reflects our experience of social interactions and our interpretation of how we are perceived by others through those interactions. (…) 6) Individuals' minds are the result of society but society is not the result of individuals' minds. This implies that society includes powerful social forces that are not significantly altered by individual interpretation of those forces (Chibucos et al., 2005, p. 237-238).

After elaborating on the theory of symbolic interactionism with respect to marriage and family studies, it is useful to operationalize the key concepts that are used in interpreting the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages. First of all, being consistent with the theoretical framework, the concept of identity is "(…) that individuals associate with their participation in a social role" (Chibucos et al., 2005, p. 238). The significant point is that:

> These identities, or self-meanings, become hierarchically organized by the level of salience they

> hold for an individual. More salient roles are more often invoked by individuals and may come to indicate a stronger commitment on the part of the individual toward that particular role (Chibucos et al., 2005, p. 238).

The other two important concepts are position and role. Stryker (1959) defines the concept of position as follows: "Positions are socially recognized categories of actors (…): father, sergeant (…). The significance of such categories is that they serve to organize behavior toward persons so categorized" (p. 114). Chibucos et al. (2005) describes the concept of role as follows:

> Roles are defined as shared norms applied to occupants of social positions. These shared norms become systems of meanings that allow individuals to anticipate how those in social roles will act and react. These norms also contribute to definitions of how people should behave in social roles (p. 238).

Another important concept is the self. Chibucos et al. (2005) explains the concept of self as follows:

> The self may be viewed as a process of behavior in which individuals come to determine and control their own conduct. It involves an individual building a set of roles for herself or himself and coming to value certain roles over others. (…) The self develops out of interactions between individuals and their environments, with each contributing to determinations of where attention and effort should be directed. (…) The self involves elements of both role taking (developing a perspective on how to behave in the social roles one assumes) and role making (actual patterns of behaviors in those social roles). (…) in many ways one's sense of self becomes a motivator in and of itself in that it contributes to the meanings assigned to various situations and behaviors (p. 239).

Interaction is the other important concept that should be defined: "(…) interaction is not the content of social encounters but, rather, the levels of meaning that exist in (…) social encounters" (Chibucos et al., 2005, p. 238). Also,

the term symbolic environment is a useful tool. Stryker (1959) explains the symbolic environment as follows: "(…) humans do not respond to the environment as physically given, but to an environment as it is mediated through symbols—to a *symbolic environment*" (p. 114 italics in the original).

By being consistent with the theoretical approach chosen, family can be considered as the unity that consists of married couples and their children who are in interaction. Also, the concept of marriage is considered as a social act. The term act refers to "(…) behavior by an organism stemming from an impulse requiring some adjustment to appropriate objects in the external world", and the term social act means "(…) is one in which the appropriate object is another individual" (Stryker, 1959, p. 113). Stryker (1959) mentions that, "(…) another individual does not "stand still"; he, too, acts with reference to the first actor" (p. 113 quotation marks in the original). Stryker (1959) continues as follows: "(…) every social act implicates at least two individuals, each of whom takes the other into account in the process of satisfying impulses" (p. 113).

As a complement to the theory of symbolic interactionism, in some cases, the multiple perspective model is used. Craig W. LeCroy and Mark R. Rank (1983) discuss that, "By utilizing more than one theory in (…) interpreting results, a fuller understanding of family behavior may be achieved" (p. 441). LeCroy and Rank (1983) suggest the following:

> Social exchange theory, symbolic interactionism, and conflict theory may be viewed as possessing complementary aspects which, when taken together, may present a fuller understanding of social behavior (p. 444).

The multiple perspective model is as follows (LeCroy & Rank, 1983, p. 445):

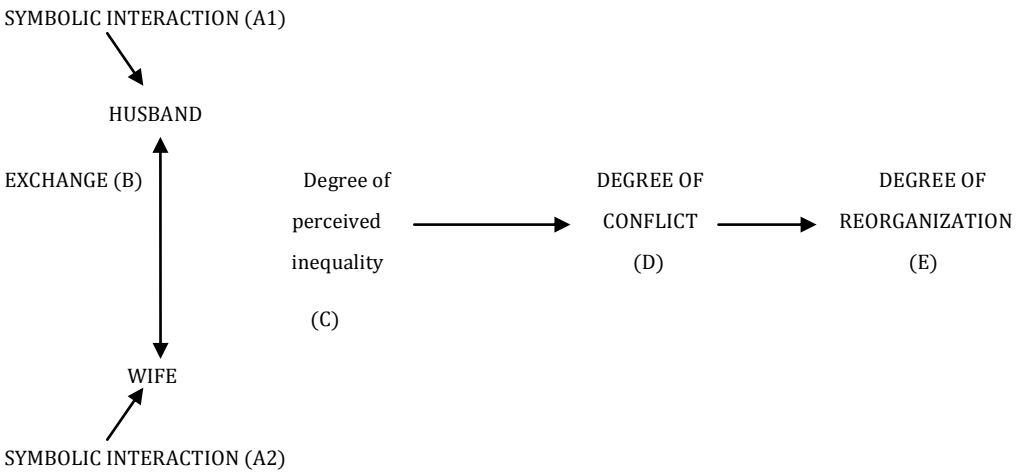

Figure 1. Multiple Perspective Model

LeCroy and Rank (1983) explain the multiple perspective model as follows:

> (…) while social exchange theory answered some questions (i.e., what motivates individual behavior), it left others unanswered. (…) while individuals enter into exchanges with others, are motivated to maximize rewards and minimize costs, social exchange fails to emphasize the process whereby individuals define what is a reward, and what is a cost. Symbolic interactionism addresses this issue. (…) it implies that definitions of rewards and costs are rarely static, which in turn creates changing exchange relationships. As exchange relationships change, the potential of conflict arises. (…) conflict theory offers a second complementary viewpoint to social exchange theory. As an exchange is perceived to be inequitable, conflict is introduced into the relationship. This leads to reorganization either within exchange, or reorganization by leaving the exchange, and thus the process begins again (p. 444).

Although the multiple perspective model is used as a complementary element to the theory of symbolic interactionism, the current study remains in the borderlines of the theory of symbolic interactionism since the central theme in the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages is the self-perceptions of these individuals. In this sense, not primordial ascriptions but self-perceptions are taken into consideration in terms of being a Jew and Muslim. Being born to a Jewish mother

is usually the criterion that is used in order to determine who the Jew is, and similarly, in the case of being a Muslim, to be born to a Muslim father is important. By being aware of these considerations, the current research aims to catch the individuals' own interpretations: How do they feel and consider themselves and their situations?

6.2. The Methodology of the Research and the Data Collection Technique

The aim in this part is to point out the methodological dimension of the study. Understanding the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in contemporary Turkey is the basic aim of this qualitative research. Being consistent with the theoretical background that is symbolic interactionism, Martin Sökefeld's (1999) suggestion in terms of "methodological reorientation" is useful in terms of the methodological stand point of the study: "(…) giving real importance to the actual individuals we work with while studying culture" (p. 431). The "(…) fundamental methodological principle of symbolic interactionism (…)" is as follows: "(…) the investigators see the world from the point of view of the subject of his investigation" (Stryker, 1959, p. 113).

With respect to data collection technique and being consistent with the selected theoretical approach, the fundamental technique used is in-depth interviews. The aim is to catch the micro stories/personal stories of each, individual experiences and the meanings they give to their situations and their interpretations about their own lives. Life stories are important to see what kinds of cultural, educational, economical and social backgrounds these individuals are coming from. In-depth interviews are useful to catch the answers of the research questions. While conducting the in-depth interviews, there was not a highly structured question list, for it might have limited the interviewees' responses. This did not mean that they were met without having any questions in mind, but by keeping the questions in mind, various modifications were made depending on the flow of the interviews.

CHAPTER 7

BEFORE INTERVIEWING WITH THE MIXED COUPLES AND THEIR CHILDREN

7.1. Preparing for the Field: The European Day of Jewish Culture, an Unexpected Call and a Secret Interview

Since 1999, in the first Sunday of September, Jewish communities -in many European cities- organize an activity called the "European Day of Jewish Culture", which aims to share the Jewish culture with other people. In Turkey, the Jewish community has organized the same event since 2001. On this day, there are exhibitions, panel discussions, concerts and some other activities such as visiting synagogues or live representations of Jewish practices such as a wedding ceremony in the synagogue.

The most significant activities I attended during this day of September, 6th, 2009 were visiting Neve Shalom, Italian and Ashkenazi Synagogues, and attending to a panel discussion/open forum about "the Art of Living Together". I also had the chance to see a representation of a circumcision ceremony. Moreover, at the end of the day- since it was also the time of Ramadan- I attended the fasting meal of Ramadan that was organized by the Jewish community to which a rabbi and an imam attended. The importance of the first activity lies in the fact that it is usually difficult to visit the synagogues at will. They are very strict in terms of giving permission to visit synagogues; thus, that day was a good opportunity to see the general atmosphere in the synagogues, and also to interact with many Jews. One of the most interesting parts of visiting Neve Shalom synagogue was the announcement, which was made continuously while we were leaving it. The announcement was mainly warning Jewish people to not to spend too much time in front of the synagogue as a targeted group.

Since the theme of the panel discussion was "the Art of Living Together", it was very fruitful for my research, too. Towards the end of the open forum, the issue of mixed marriage was brought up, and one member of the audience said

the following words with respect to mixed marriage: "We will disappear because of these mixed marriages!" To me, this illustrated the opposition some of the Jews have to mixed marriage.

The representation of a circumcision ceremony was also very important to observe as it is a traditional Jewish life-cycle ceremony. In these ceremonies, Jewish people seem to be very organized and careful in terms of making the ceremony perfect. I think the representation of the circumcision ceremony was an example of this care.

The last activity I attended was also a very valuable experience both for Muslims and Jewish people. Jews, Muslims, a rabbi and an imam came together to attend a fasting meal for Ramadan. Both the rabbi and the imam prayed together, and also made short speeches about the importance of being respectful to other religions. At the end of the day, I again understood the importance of my study.

My second important experience before conducting the interviews was at the time of when I was trying to reach the interviewees. Since I describe the difficult process of finding suitable interviewees in the next part of the study, for now, I would like to share the unexpected call I got from a very important person. In order to find the interviewees, I contacted many people whom I thought might know couples. One day, my cell-phone rang, and it was a number I did not recognize. The person did not immediately introduce himself, but rather he told me that he heard about my research, and shared his own thoughts about why it was both an important and difficult topic. Towards the end of the talk, I asked for his name, and he revealed that he was the honorary president of the Jewish community in Turkey. I still remember the excitement I deeply felt when I heard the name because not only it was a very nice support to receive, but also he was the author of a book, which I read pleasurably.

My third prominent experience before making interviews with the couples and children was a secret interview with a Jewish woman. I especially describe it as secret because she was very nervous about talking to me about the

Jewish community with respect to mixed marriage. She was an active member of the Jewish community whom I reached through a mutual acquaintance. Since she was an active member of the community, I thought it would be useful to get some opinions about the issue before making the interviews. She provided me with some information about the on-going debates and issues within the Jewish community in Turkey regarding mixed marriage. One of the first things she shared was: "Some of the mixed marriages go well, some do not; Jewish people, in general, are not happy with these marriages". What she argues about the reasons behind this is similar to the respondents' arguments in Koçoğlu's (2004) research about the "cultural difference" Jews and Muslims have. Moreover, she emphasized the relative impossibility to convert to Judaism in Turkey, and also the importance of the mother's religion in terms of being Jew. The general opinion about the criterion of being Jewish seems to be the mother's religion; if the mother is Jew, then the child is directly considered to be a Jew.

Afterwards, she talked about her own experience with her daughter regarding mixed marriage. She told me that her own daughter had Muslim boyfriends throughout her early ages, and said that, "I struggled to prevent her to marry a Muslim". She continued: "She had a hard time in understanding my struggle, but now –as being married to a Jew and having a son- she agrees with me".

She also told me that she tried to find me a Jewish-Muslim mixed couple with whom I could interview, but they all gave negative replies to her. Although she was a respected and active member of the community, the couples she knew did not want to interview with me. I asked her the reason they gave, and the answer was important: "They all went through very difficult processes, and they did not want to remember those times". According to her, all mixed couples go through difficult times. Also, she argued that, "All Jewish parents would like to have the rituals, such as their children's wedding in the synagogue". Throughout the interview, her emphasis on the concepts of "tradition" and "ritual" were significant.

One of the most important things that she pointed out was the two possible opposite impacts of mixed marriage on Jews' identities. According to her, after mixed marrying, Jews either become very attached to Judaism or unattached to it. She also pointed out an example of adopting Jewish traditions to mixed marriages, and she talked about circumcision ceremony which originally is organized in the synagogue, but for these mixed marriages sometimes the ceremony is organized in the houses, and a rabbi goes and prays.

Lastly, she added that, "It is hard to categorize them [Jewish-Muslim mixed couples]". After conducting the interviews, I understood how right she was. Despite the common points the mixed couples and their children display, it can be asserted that they all are unique in their own way.

7.2. Reaching the Interviewees

In this part, I would like to share the process of reaching the interviewees. While interpreting the cases, I also note my experiences during interviews; thus, in this part, I would like to focus on the previous steps I went through such as reaching the couples.

The current study has mainly a two-fold difficulty. It can be argued that research on marriage and family life is -by itself- a difficult topic to study. In the similar line, studies dealing with the minority identities are also a tough issue. Since this study covers both, the issue of mixed marriage of a minority displays its difficulty in all levels of the research. Reaching the couples was one of the most difficult parts of the study, in this sense; creativity and patience are the key elements to be successful. In order to reach the mixed couples, I mainly used three ways: asking the Jewish community, the people I know who I thought might know these mixed couples due to their active social life, and searching the relative articles and interviews in the press. I, in many correspondences, came across the same comment: "This is a tough issue!" Moreover, another problem occurred that is the selection of the couples with respect to criteria. The sheer difficulty of reaching the couples made it unreasonable to apply strict set of criteria in selecting them. Although from the point of view of methodology, this was a difficulty, it can be argued that since these mixed marriages are relatively

rare, this was inevitable. Also, these different cases of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages may be interpreted as the richness of the topic. For instance, not all of the couples have children. This provided the opportunity to touch upon the similarities and differences between the ones who have a child and the ones who do not, and to examine the effect of the child on the mixed marriage. Other examples for this richness are provided by couples, who are newly married and do not have any children and longer marriages with children.

Another sign of difficulty and complexity of the issue was that I was planning to interview with 5 couples for each (Muslim husband - Jewish wife and Muslim wife - Jewish husband). However, since Jewish woman and Muslim man mixed marriages are rarer than the other way around, I interviewed with 3 couples of which the woman partner was Jewish. Also, I thought each mixed couple would be a gate to another; however, only one couple was able to get me in contact with another mixed couple. Thus the snowball technique was not very useful in order to reach the couples.

Interviewing with the children was also another difficult dimension of the study in terms of both the couples' permissions and the children's reactions. I planned to interview only with children who are eighteen years old and older because in Turkey, eighteen is usually the age that young people start college and feel more like individual. It is also an age of an individual, who has gone through various processes and stages of feeling the consequences of being a child of a religiously mixed family. In total, I interviewed with 3 children, and, fortunately, two of them were 19 years old whereas the other one was 13.

In addition to the difficulty of reaching the couples, another difficulty was related to the process of meeting and interviewing. With all the couples and children I interviewed, we were strangers when we met. Also, since I planned to interview with each member of the family individually, it was a difficult process to determine the appropriate time and place for each. Sometimes, the mixed couples invited me to their homes. The invitation was a potential advantage in that I could see their home lives, and it simplified the process of setting up a meeting. It also gave the opportunity not only to have an idea about their socio-

economical levels, but also the general atmosphere of their homes. In most cases, I interviewed with the couples during the week time, and at their working places. This meant that there was limited time. With respect to all of the interviewees, we first met for the interviews. Thus it was a challenging process to gain their trust and ask them very delicate questions. One advantage of the study, even though the theme was delicate, was that all of the interviewees allowed me to use an audio recorder. This was advantageous in that it allowed me to catch their own words, to be able to make eye-contact with them, and also to better concentrate on the interview. Despite the difficulties in reaching them, and the many rejections I got from other couples, I can say that the couples and children who accepted the interview were welcoming despite their possible reservations.

Depending on the progress of the opportunities, it would have been useful to find chances of spending more time with them to observe their relations with each other and/or other people in various events such as family gatherings with the extended family. In doing so, it would have been valuable to get the thoughts of the members of the extended family about the issue. However, other than meeting for the interviews, not many opportunities emerged. For the current research, I conducted in-depth interviews with 9 couples and 3 children in the cities of Istanbul and Izmir in March, 2010.

It is mostly known that, in general, the Jewish community is not a group that can be reached easily. However, I reached a very important official from the Turkish Jewish Community (the official is not from the Chief Rabbinate of Turkey; he is from the Turkish Jewish Community, institution). It was a great chance to interview with him, and to get the opinions of the community on the issue of mixed marriage. This interview is as important as the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' and their children's because it directly displays the official opinion of the Jewish community in Turkey. It is interpreted in the next chapter before the analysis of the mixed couples' and their children's interviews. Before the discussion of the data, socio-demographic data of the interviewees can be seen. Lastly, I would like to mention that any personal data, which may identify the interviewees (such as names and surnames), is not revealed.

TABLE 1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF MIXED COUPLES AND THEIR CHILDREN

Couples, City, Marriage Date	Number of Children, Birth Date, Occupancy	Religious Background	Birth Date and Place	Educational Level	Occupancy	Income of the Household
1, Istanbul, 2009	No children (two sons from the first marriage of the man)					
Woman Man		Jew-Sephardic Muslim-Sunni	1961, Istanbul 1950, Istanbul	High School Conserva-tory	Trade Actor	Above 4.000 Turkish Lira (T.L.)
2, Istanbul, 1998	One son, 1997, Student					
Woman Man		Muslim-Sunni Jew-Sephardic	1957, Ankara 1958, Izmir	Master's Master's	Trade Lecturer	Above 4.000 T.L.
3, Istanbul, 1987	One daughter, 1991, Student					
Woman Man		Muslim-Sunni Jew-Sephardic	1961, Iskenderun 1955, Istanbul	University University	Private Sector Trade	Above 4.000 T.L.

Table 1 (cont'd)

4, Istanbul, 2004	No children					
Woman Man		Muslim-Sunni Jew-Sephardic	1978, Ordu 1975, Istanbul	Distance Education Distance Education	Private Sector Private Sector	2.000-4.000 T.L.
5, Istanbul, 1988	One son, 1995, Student					
Woman Man		Muslim-Sunni Jew-Ashkenazi	1960, Trabzon 1957, Istanbul	University University	Trade Trade	Above 4.000 T.L.
6, Izmir , 1989	One daughter, 1999, Student – One son, 1991, Student					
Woman Man		Muslim-Sunni Jew-Sephardic	1963, Izmir 1956, Izmir	High School High School	Coiffeur Private Sector	Above 4.000 T.L.
7, Izmir , 2009	No children					
Woman Man		Jewish-Sephardic Muslim-Sunni	1981, Izmir 1979, Istanbul	Master's Master's	Trade Trade	2.000-4.000 T.L.

Table 1 (cont'd)

8, Izmir, 1986	Twin sons, 1997, Students					
Woman Man		Muslim-Sunni Jew-Sephardic	1963, Çorlu 1960, Izmir	University University	Private Sector Translator	Above 4.000 T.L.
9, Istanbul, 2006	No children (expecting a child)					
Woman Man		Jew-Sephardic Muslim-Sunni	1976, Gaziantep 1967, Istanbul	Master's University	Private Sector Private Sector	Above 4.000 T.L.

CHAPTER 8

THE TURKISH JEWISH COMMUNITY AND MIXED MARRIAGE

Conducting an interview with a very important official from the Turkish Jewish Community is an important way to find out how the community approaches the issue of mixed marriage in a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey. Moreover, listening to the general perception of the community provides the current study with the useful background to understand the processes, which the mixed couples and their children experience. Furthermore, it displays where the Turkish Jewish Community stands with respect to the intermarriage debate in the Jewish world.

I reached the official through the honorary president of the Turkish Jewish Community, and we, firstly, talked on the phone. At that time, I thought that he was only an active member of the community who could help me to find mixed couples to interview. I did not know that he was a very important official from the community. He told me that the subject I chose is a very difficult one because the mixed couples constitute a closed group. The question he particularly posed to me was whether the mixed couples' names would be revealed or not.

Later, during one of my interviews in Istanbul, we had a chance encounter because he was working in the same office as the couple. We again got in touch, and met on a Saturday morning in a special Jewish-owned club for the young members of the Turkish Jewish Community. He invited me to this club by adding a note to his e-mail that was, "You will see what we [the Turkish Jewish Community] do to prevent mixed marriage". Before the interview, he asked me to not to take any photos and to arrive at the exact time he told me, because if I had arrived earlier than he did, they would not have let me in.

I was there at the exact time he told me. At first, I could not find the entrance since the door of the club was not easy to notice. There were two men

waiting outside in black suites. I understood that they worked for the club, and I told them that I was looking for the club. One of them accompanied me and let me in. When I entered, I told them that I was there to meet the official. He already left a message at the door, but they still asked for my ID. It felt strange that I was being asked for my ID. After they checked my ID, I was inside, and the official and I were able to meet.

He firstly showed me around a little. There were many young Jewish people, and all of them were busy with different activities. Some of them were using computers whereas others were taking dance lessons. The place was very clean, shiny and comfortable. After looking around shortly, we started to talk in a private room. In general, the interview with the official consisted of two dimensions. The first dimension was about the general characteristics of Turkish Jewry and the community whereas the second one was focused on the issue of mixed marriage. From time to time, these two dimensions intersected. It was a valuable interview to understand the dynamics of the Turkish Jewish Community better, and to find out how these various dynamics may influence the issue of mixed marriage.

I was lucky that he allowed me to record the interview, and as soon as we sat down, he pointed out the importance of studying, particularly, Jewish mixed marriages. I consider these points as important to understand the significance of the current study from the eyes of the community. Firstly, he said that Jewish people constitute a very strict group in the sense of mixed marriage. Secondly, he discussed the importance of the present era since, according to him, the Jewish community's strict perception of mixed marriage has been transforming because of the characteristics of the modern world and globalization. He told me that the Jewish community has thus been becoming focused on the issue of mixed marriage more and more. Thirdly, he noted that Turkish Jewry is important, since it is an organized Jewish community that lives in a predominantly Muslim country. Lastly, he mentioned that Turkey is also going through a time of change, and he mentioned that it is important to take the issue of mixed marriage into consideration in this societal atmosphere.

Before sharing a story about mixed marriage, which seems to me important symbolically, he discussed the history of the Turkish Jewry by mentioning some of the key points such as the long history of Jewish people on these soils and some negative memories of Jewish people in Turkey like the Wealth Tax in 1942. At this point, the two important emphases in his summary, which seem to be vital, are as follows: the idea that they are not foreigners in Turkey, whereas the other emphasis was on their social image, and how that they think they are perceived a closed group, but he noted that there are historical reasons behind this such as the Wealth Tax. It can be argued that mixed marriage is one of these dimensions that give rise to their introversive social image. He mentioned that religion has never allowed Jewish people to intermarry, and from time to time, depending on the era, this opposition became stronger. This seems to be displaying the importance of the era, and the social image of a group while studying mixed marriage. As mentioned in the previous chapters, a group may be closed from the inside and/or outside.

An interesting anecdote he shared seems to illustrate well the general opposition of the community regarding mixed marriage. These kinds of stories can be considered as an important supportive element of a group's opposition. They are usually short and effective; therefore, they are easy to share, and difficult to forget. It does not matter whether they are true or not; the importance is hidden in their potential to function as symbols for the opposition. The story is as follows: In Heybeliada (an island in the Sea of Marmara), one of the young Jewish girls and a young Muslim officer ran away together and got married; then, other young Muslims were encouraged by this. This constituted a breaking point for the community, and it has been said that because of this incident, in one or two years Jewish people left the island.

Before delving into the issue of mixed marriage, he explained some of the prominent dimensions of the Jewish community. He pointed out the importance of the psychology of minorities to describe the Jewish community. According to him, among the Jewish community, there are some families, which he called "leader families". He discussed the process as follows: Until the founding of the

Republic of Turkey in 1923, religious leaders' families had been the leader ones, after the founding of the Republic of Turkey, rich families started to function as leader families. According to him, one of the most important effects of these leader families can be noticed by examining the residential areas of the Turkish Jewry: Every twenty years, Turkish Jewry changes its residential areas, and they move to the same neighborhoods, which these leader families live in. Some examples of such residential areas are: Balat, Kuzguncuk, Ortaköy, Pera, Osmanbey, Şişli, Gayrettepe, Nişantaşı and so forth. According to him, even within the Jewish community, when a marriage situation emerges between two people, the parents directly ask where the potential bride's or groom's parents live. It can be noted that a family's area of residence seems to be a very important dimension in Turkish Jewry's respective lives.

In his explanations of the dynamics of the community, the other important point was about the separation, which occurred within the Turkish Jewish Community at the beginning of the 20th century. He considered these groups as "religious" and "seculars". His emphasis on the two groups within the Jewish community was used to point out the change in the Jewish peoples' lives. According to him, the lifestyle of the Jewish people has been transforming, and a small portion of the community still lives strictly within the limits of the Jewish traditions. He added that religious Jews do not have high socioeconomic levels, and they are mostly underrated by the secular Jews. This separation within the Jewish community is not surprising since in every group different attitudes and values may emerge. The significant point in his argument seems to be the seculars' relative triumph over the religious Jews. He pointed out that despite the relative secular Jewish lifestyle in Turkey; mixed marriage is still not practiced often. This helps to show how controversial the issue of mixed marriage can be for Jewish people.

The explanation he gave for the relatively low mixed marriage rates was centered on the importance of these kinds of clubs, which only young Jewish people can join: young Jewish people meet other Jews in these clubs, and they choose each other as spouses. This practice is reminiscent of the "closed

marriage system" Lee (1994) argues. The Turkish Jewish Community seems to be aiming to control the process by creating a limited marriage market in which young Jewish people choose other Jews as their spouses. It is debatable whether these clubs are really effective in spouse selection or not, but it seems like these kinds of clubs constitute a significant dimension of the Turkish Jewry's togetherness. A point he shared that belongs to an Israeli sociologist seems important to me in the sense of the organization of the Turkish Jewry. The Israeli sociologist's argument is that in other countries, Jewish people usually come together around religion and synagogues; however, in Turkey these kinds of clubs function as the meeting point of the Jewish people by emphasizing the importance of Jewish culture. This point seems to be significant that although religion can be considered as the origin of the Jewish solidarity, the most important element which strengthens and maintains the solidarity seems to be the Jewish culture and lifestyle. While studying Jewish people it seems vital to take the various dynamics that generate the Jewish culture into account. With respect to the importance of these Jewish youth clubs, although it –in a sense- helps Jewish young people to feel as a part of this solidarity, it does not seem to be very effective in terms of spouse selection due to the fact that young people start to attend these clubs at the age of 3 and 4 and continue until the age of 13 or 14. According to the official, it is at these ages that they start to get bored in these clubs, and they want to experience the outside world. Since 13 and 14 are very early ages at which choose a spouse, it seems unlikely that partners will be chosen from these clubs.

Another important argument in the interview was the effect of the foundation of Israel. According to the official, before the foundation of Israel in 1948, a general feeling of statelessness was common in the community; thus, the idea of community had been central to them since it provided them with a feeling that they were not alone. To me, this does not point out the fact that they do not consider Turkey as their homeland, in fact I think the Turkish Jewry see themselves as patriotic. During my interviews with the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples, most of the Muslim partners considered their Jewish partners as having more patriotic feelings than themselves; this was a common point in many

interviews. In general, Jewish people seem to consider Turkey as their homeland, and the opposite interpretations of this issue might be a distorted perception of their feelings. According to the official, one of the effects of the foundation of Israel is that the Jews in Turkey started to feel as though they had another destination, which may welcome them if a problem occurs in Turkey.

In order to display the transformation within the Turkish Jewish Community with respect to mixed marriage, the official gave the example of his own family's attitudes towards the issue: "My son was born in 1984, and to him mixed marriage is not a big disaster, not a problem at all, but for me it still is a problem, and for my parents it was the end of the world". Despite this relative transformation, it seems like a general negative attitude towards mixed marriage continues because, according to him, the general attitude of the Jewish community towards mixed marriage is strict, and the community is having problems with mixed marriage. With respect to "permissive" and "proscribed marriage types" that Marcson (1950-1951) argues, even though there can be noticed a relative flexibility in practice, the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages seem to be closer to the category of proscribed marriage. In Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages, the taboo dimension of proscribed marriage seems to become apparent with respect to the perception of the community about mixed marriage. A Muslim and a Jew may marry with a civil wedding ceremony. In this sense there is not any difficulty; however, the Jewish community still largely considers these marriages as deviations. It is safe to assume that the taboo is felt by the mixed couple and the parents of the mixed married Jews symbolically. He also shared very important information with me, which also shows the good timing of the current study: "This year, for the first time, a hundred years after the foundation of the community's existing organization, we accepted two mixed married Jews into the governing body". He added that, "They [mixed married Jews] exist, and their numbers will increase. The world is trying to understand them, and we have to understand them, too".

To understand where the Turkish Jewry stands with respect to mixed marriage in the Jewish world, DellaPergola's (2009) arguments, which are

discussed in the previous part of Jewish intermarriage, are useful. In this sense, it is safe to assume that the Turkish Jewry considers these mixed marriages from the point of view of the erosion of Jewish people. They do not consider these mixed marriages as an opportunity. Moreover, with respect to the response of the Turkish Jewish Community, fatalism seems to be explanatory with the exception of one point: "Fatalism is the posture of those who recognize the rising trend of out-marriage and the significant identificational stress which accompanies it, but believe nothing can be done on the matter" (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 38). It seems to me that the response of the Turkish Jewry falls into the category of fatalism with the exception that they are not pessimistic in the sense of reaching mixed married Jews. They seem to be pessimistic about the increasing numbers of mixed marriages, but they also seem to want to reach the mixed married Jews. The official's following words seem to summarize the general perception of Turkish Jewry with respect to mixed marriage:

> What I argue may not be the perception of every Jewish family, but it is the perception of a great majority of the community that we perceive mixed marriage like an illness as if a sickness, a disaster appears in the family. If your son loves a Christian or a Muslim girl, this is a sickness and a problem, but a problem, which you may not overcome. If you ask, why is it a problem? Because there is a heritage, which is 3.000 years old that passes on from a family to another. By being aware of or not – we, the officials of the community, know why- Jews have a strong desire to transfer this heritage to the future generations. What is the heritage? Only a culture, an identity… Nothing else. There is the fear of losing this.

With respect to which gender more frequently intermarries, the official observes that, "We, particularly, lose Jewish males". According to him, some of the reasons behind this are as follows: Jewish females' characters are strong, and they are the ones who organize the family. This demanding characteristic they have causes a negative attitude of the Jewish males toward them. Jewish females are raised in this way, and also their power comes from the traditions. Young Jewish males are uncomfortable with their attitudes, and they look for lovers, who do not treat them like their mothers, but like their lovers. He also pointed

out another dimension of the issue that is the social image of Jewish men in Turkish society from the eyes of potential partners. He discussed the attractiveness of Jewish males as spouses by describing the dichotomy between the secular population and the more conservative population in Turkish society. He said that, "These secular people say that they prefer their daughters to marry a Jew instead of marrying (…) [a conservative Muslim person]". According to him, Jewish males are also popular due to the fact that they treat women well; they do not engage in violence, they care about their children and so forth. With respect to the gender difference in mixed marriages, he added that while Jewish men say that Jewish women are demanding, aggressive and persistent, the spouses, who are married to Jewish women, interpret these characteristics in positive ways. He said that, according to them, their Jewish wives are hard-working, intelligent and so forth. He also said that in the United States, when the question of "Why did you intermarry" is posed to mixed married Jewish women, the general answer they give is "I waited for so long. I was at the age that I had to marry. I could not catch a Jewish man's attention, and I intermarried with the condition that my child be a Jew". In this study, it is important to understand the role of women in Judaism with respect to family. According to the official, "Yiddish Mama is a phenomenon; she is a very strong mother". As Tekin (2009) argues in the previous part of Jewish intermarriage, one of the points that was repeated by the interviewees was the importance of family for Jewish people. This seems true for the Turkish Jewry, too. In order to explain this and its connection with the mixed marriage, the official gave the example of the Sabbath:

> Every Friday evening, no matter what, is a festival evening for us. (…) Every Friday, no matter what, the family comes together (…) either they are religious or not. [The family comes together] usually at the house of the oldest member of the family. (…) No one talks about bad things. (…) The family has a dinner together. They pray a doxology.

He added that, "The biggest nightmare of the Jews whose children are mixed married is this Friday evening". According to him, Jewish parents have difficulty explaining the importance of Friday evening to Muslim partners, and they worry

about whether their children will continue this tradition or not. He considered this fear as "the fear of losing tradition".

He also pointed out another dimension of the issue, which is conversion. He mentioned that Islam allows men to marry with a woman from another religion whereas it does not allow women to intermarry. Moreover, according to him, the important point regarding the different attitudes of Judaism and Islam with respect to conversion gives rise to another anxiety: what if a Jew converts to Islam after marrying a Muslim? In Islam, to convert someone to Islam is interpreted as a reward whereas Judaism has a totally different perception of the issue. However, despite the thought of the Jewish community, in the current study not a single Jewish partner had even thought of converting to Islam; on the contrary, more strongly considered was the idea of the Muslim partner to converting to Judaism in order for their children to be accepted as Jews. With respect to conversion, Judaism seems to have very stricter boundaries than Islam. It seems like in Judaism, there cannot be noticed a desire to proselytize. This generates a difficulty for these children of mixed marriages. Even though they may choose to be a Jew, as long as her or his mother is not Jew, it seems almost impossible for her or him to be accepted by the community as a Jew. In this sense, the boundaries seem to be very rigid. On the other hand, this rigidity brings about another dimension, which is related to the Jewish people. With respect to Judaism, according to the official, "It is not possible for an individual to leave her or his religion, (…) if you were born as Jewish; you are a Jew no matter what you do". All the mixed married Jewish interviewees shared the same perception about their Jewish identities.

As discussed earlier, another important theme in the literature on intermarriage is children. In the Turkish Jewry, the attitude towards the children of the mixed marriages seems to reflect the Orthodox perspective, which takes the mother's religion into account in terms of being accepted as Jews. The official argues this as follows: "It is the mother, who continues religion; since you are her child, you are what she is. You are the continuation of her". He said that, "If your mother is not Jew, then you are not either". He pointed out a very important

dimension of the issue, which is the attitude of the community toward a Jewish child who is born to a mixed marriage. Even though her or his father is not a Jew, if her or his mother is theoretically she or he is considered as a Jew. However, according to him, "Other Jews do not accept them as real Jews easily". This point can be interpreted with the help of the concept of the "symbolic environment" that Stryker (1959) mentions. The children of these mixed marriages seem to deal with the symbolic Jewish environment since there is always a risk of not being accepted as a real Jew. Jews, at the age of 9 or 10, take courses, and at the age of 12 and 13 the bat-mitzvah or bar-mitzvah is organized, and they become adults. Thus they become a part of the community. Angel (2006) explains the bar-mitzvah as follows: "When a boy reache[s] the age of thirteen, he [is] deemed to be a bar-mitzvah—a man subject to the responsibilities and privileges of observing the commandments of Judaism" (p. 109). In the current study, the children of the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages do not seem to consider the bar-mitzvah as becoming an adult Jew. The children seem to be attracted to the ceremonial dimension of the bar-mitzvah and/or the bar-mitzvah is perceived as the central point in terms of the children's connection to Jewish identity by their parents. The official also described the process of accepting these children to the Ulus Jewish High School in Istanbul. In the case that the mother is Jewish, if the Muslim father submits a deed of consent, the Turkish Jewish community will accept his child to the Jewish school.

With respect to the children of mixed marriages, while he was explaining the formal processes the children go through, he, particularly, emphasized the possibility of difficulty with social acceptance, which these children may experience. This possible attitude of Jewish people towards the children of mixed marriages is relevant to Moore's (2001) suggestion in the previous part about Jewish intermarriage that importance rests "(…) not on commandment, but commitment; not an obligation, but choice; not on blood, but values" (p. 50). It seems like the question of who a Jew is vital with respect to the debate on the identities of children of mixed marriages; for instance, he pointed out that religious Jews do not accept these children as Jewish. Also, the religious Jews do not send their children to the Jewish youth clubs because the children of mixed

marriages can also come to these clubs. The religious Jews have the fear that their children may choose one of these children as their spouse in the future. He said that this part of the community also has problems with the general secular lifestyle of Jewish people in Turkey. This displays the different levels of strictness within the Turkish Jewish Community. Furthermore, regarding the children, if the mother is not Jewish, challenges concerning how to raise the children are more abundant, and in Turkey, the number of this kind of Jewish mixed marriage seems to be higher than the other way around.

On the subject of conversion, the official's final remark also seems important which is that in general converting to Judaism is a very difficult process. They request very difficult processes and accomplishments from the candidates, which even many of the Jewish-born are not aware of. They are expected to take courses about Judaism, live as a real religious Jew, and as long as they do not become a real religious Jew, they are not perceived as Jews. In Turkey, conversion to Judaism is not possible, individuals who want to convert to Judaism travel to Israel or to the United States.

With respect to the attitudes of the community toward mixed marriage, according to the official, it is the parents who mostly deal with the negativity. He said that the community does not blame the mixed married Jews. They blame the parents because they think that, "It is the parents whose [Jewish] identities became weaker, that's why it [mixed marriage] occurred". According to him, "These parents experience embarrassment and closure as if they have a kind of sickness or fault". He pointed out that the parents also lose connection with the traditions, and the reaction of the community is not a direct one, but rather it is like a reflection of feeling pity for them. Given these revealing insights, it is safe to assume that in most cases the parents of the mixed married Jews feel more negativity from the Jewish community than the mixed married Jews themselves.

In order to describe the possible process that Jewish families go through with respect to mixed marriage, the official gave his own experiences as an example. When he was young, he had Muslim girlfriends. However, since he has always been an active member of the Jewish community, he felt that he would

have to make sacrifices regarding his Jewish lifestyle; thus, he decided to not to intermarry. He described the effect of his activeness in the community on his son. He shared that his son reacts to his activeness by saying: "You are exaggerating". His son also had a Muslim girlfriend, and he said that he kept his relationship secret for a year. He then shared it with the family because his girlfriend wanted to be accepted by his family, to attend the Sabbath meal and so forth. He mentioned that not he, but particularly his wife, had a very aggressive reaction to this relationship by saying: "She cannot come to this house". He said that they broke up, but one year later they again started to date. Now, they are not sure if they still have a relationship. He explained his feelings as follows:

> His mother was very determined [on not allowing him to date a Muslim girl], I was, too; however, I confess that if he had been persistent, I would have not wanted to lose him, and I would have changed my mind, but my wife would not have.

He added an explanation for the reaction of his wife: "My wife is not religious, but she is very conservative with respect to the traditions". This distinction between the concepts of religion and tradition seems to be very important. Both in Koçoğlu's (2004) study and in this interview, the influence of the traditions appears to dominate, not that of the religion. Even though it may seem difficult to determine which parts of the Jewish life are about religion, and which parts are about tradition, it seems more important to figure out what tradition means for Jewish people. For instance, he did not explain his wife's reaction to their son's Muslim girlfriend in the light of religion, but in the light of being conservative with respect to the tradition. He continued his words from the point of view of a Jewish father:

> I understand my son very well; however, accepting and understanding are very different things. If you ask me why I am opposing to it, I am afraid that his life would be difficult; why would it be difficult? Not for him, but particularly for his children. The child will never know what she or he is. On one side, even though he does not reveal his real feelings, there is a very conservative

> family, who has a tendency to live a lifestyle to carry an identity; on the other hand, there is a family who lives in their own country and a mother who can keep up with globalization. The child will notice that her or his father is in an impasse position.

After pointing out his own and his son's experiences regarding mixed dating, he mentioned how Jewish people perceive themselves: "Every Jew believes that she or he carries in her or himself, not superiority, but distinctiveness". He continued as follows: "They have an (…) old heritage. They come out of long standing traditions and identity [and] very important sorrows. The ancestors suffered a lot, and they passed on these to you". Related to this, he also shared an anecdote from a South African Jew's speech that he makes in Turkey once a year. He said that his speech always ends with the same sentences which are as follows: "There is no Jewish history, there are Jewish memories". Although these words emphasize the importance of traditions for Jewish people, I think that it also points out the importance of today. It seems to be that the interactions between people in daily life give people's thoughts their shapes. This is one of the reasons I consider listening to the mixed married and their children's perceptions as vital. Today's daily interactions will be tomorrow's memories; thus, it seems important to find out what Jews think today. Memories are powerful elements in people's lives since people transfer these to the next generations. Then it is important to catch what Jewish people experience today.

In order to discuss what distinguishes the lifestyle of Jewish people, he pointed out some of the daily interactions and practices of the Turkish Jewry. According to him, Jewish people enjoy their own culture, which he described as a vivid one. These points also provide important insights into the question of "What does Jewish culture mean for Jewish people?" It seems to be revolving around two points, and one of them is the idea of being a family whereas the second one is related to an active social life such as the meetings for the festivals and looking for a familiar face when they go to somewhere. He gave the example of Büyükada (an island in the Sea of Marmara): "There are maybe hundreds of people on the island, but when you ask a Jew [who has visited there], she or he may say that she or he has not seen anyone". According to him, this is the result

of the feeling of living within the family. He said that the ideas of living in the family and in the community are similar. He argued that a mixed married Jew senses a lack of this feeling. With respect to Jewish culture, he also gave an example of how Jews choose which neighborhood in which to live:

> A Jewish couple never lives in Ümraniye and Fatih; they do their best to live somewhere close where another Jewish couple lives (…) but, when you marry a Muslim girl, you cannot explain [this] (…) because you, yourself, do not know why. This is how you have lived. It is very difficult to explain this. Maybe I am exaggerating, but I am sure it is what happens. This is a way of life.

It seems that the concept of family is very significant for Jewish people both on micro and macro levels. In their own personal lives, their families seem to be the central dimension of their lives. In Turkey, on the macro level, the idea of being a family also seems to be an important element for allowing Jewish people to feel togetherness:

> You may or may not know every Jew in person, (…) but they all are from the same family. (…) The biggest fear you have when your child makes a mixed marriage is that, she or he will leave this feeling of being a family behind. (…) They usually leave it, and they feel the lack of it.

He, then, shared some of the conversations he has had with some mixed married Jews. They all are negative anecdotes, and mainly reflect mixed married Jews' various regrets. One of them is as follows: "The night my wife told me that she was pregnant, I could not sleep. It was not because of joy, but because of the question of what she or he will be". The official I interviewed was not only a very important person within the Jewish community; he also was the head of the unit that was created for the mixed married Jews. The aim of the unit was not to lose connection with the mixed married Jews in Turkey. He explained their goal as follows: "We invited some of the mixed married Jews to meals to tell them that you are from us, we need you, and you need us". It seems like the community mostly adopts the in-reach policy that aims to prevent mixed marriage with the

help of the clubs mentioned earlier. However, this attempt to organize a unit for mixed couples reveals the out-reach dimension of their policy, which has the goal of reaching the mixed couples and their children. He explained the motivation behind the unit as follows: "We noticed that (…) we were losing our capital (…) not only money, but very important members [of the community] (…) make mixed marriages, and for the community, they are human capital (….)". He said that the mixed married Jews were very happy with the unit because, according to him, they were feeling very excluded. One of the most interesting anecdotes he shared was about a mixed married Jewish woman's feelings about her own daughter:

> [Her] daughter is 17 years old, and she started to date a Muslim boy, and [she said that,] "I understand what my mom felt". She started to cry. She was very worried about the possibility of her daughter choosing a wrong person. It is thought that it is more difficult to make a wrong choice within the family [the Jewish community].

The words he shared at the end of the interview revealed the importance of conducting interviews with the groups whose voices are not frequently heard:

> I wanted to support you. (…) Because, especially, given your previous accomplishments, I thought you would be successful. From the outside, we have a distorted image. (…) Maybe we seem very snobbish, selective and wry. (…) They believe that we direct the world. I consider this study as a contribution to revealing our true image. The truth is different. Of course, there is a feeling of being proud of our identity, and of feeling special, but they all have reasons coming from the past.

He shared his own opinion with respect to mixed marriage which is as follows:

> I am very sad. I am using the word of losing willingly. I feel sad for the ones we lose. I believe that they have a more difficult and less colorful life. I believe that we have a more colorful life. I want to do my best to accept them back. With respect to their wives, (…) to make their wives understand us and be accepted by us, I want

> to do my best. I really mean it. Not only me, but almost all the secular officials really want this, but there are some strict rules that prevent us. There are very strict rules in Judaism.

He added, "I, myself, do not practice even a single one [of the rules], but I know I am tied with these rules". This perception points out the importance of studying not the practices of Judaism, but rather the self-identifications of Jews who claim to be a Jew. Being a Jew does not seem to be connected to adopting religious practices very tightly, but rather it seems to be connected with the self-perceptions of Jewish people. This argument can be interpreted in the light of the theory of symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity. It seems that being Jewish involves "(…) symbolic expressions of concern with identity and group consciousness" (Gans as cited in Rebhun, 2004, p. 350). At this point, the theory of symbolic religiosity seems to be useful for discussing the perceptions of individuals who are born as Jews, whereas for the converted Jews, as discussed above, it seems like the Jewish world expects from them not the symbolic tie they feel with Judaism, but the practice of religion. Moreover, it can be argued that in general the Jewish world seems to have a distant position to conversion, and it questions the sincerity of the candidates. During my interviews, when I posed the question about their perceptions of the concept of conversion to the Jewish partners, I noticed that all of them have negative attitudes towards the idea of converting. The relationship between Judaism and conversion seems to be a valuable research topic. The official also shared an anecdote which displays the dilemma that the officials in the Jewish community face:

> We had a big problem. One of the columnists [a Jewish woman] made a mixed marriage, and when a Jew marries or has a child, in the newspaper [Shalom] we publish the news with big fonts. (…) We did publish the news [in the same way]; (…) we received an unbelievable [negative] reaction from the community. But we did not reflect these to her. They said that, "You are encouraging the others by congratulating these young people!"

He summarizes the general characteristic of the Turkish Jewry as follows: “The daily Jewish life is Reformist, but the community and the rabbis are Orthodox”. Overall, it seems like while Turkish Jews adopt a modern lifestyle, their negative perceptions about mixed marriage can be considered as Orthodox.

CHAPTER 9

THE 9 CASES OF THE JEWISH-MUSLIM MIXED COUPLES AND THEIR CHILDREN IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

The overall goal of this chapter is to understand and to analyze the 9 cases of Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children in the light of the relevant sociological knowledge of intermarriage that was discussed in the previous chapters, particularly from the point of view of the theory of symbolic interactionism with the help of the multiple perspective model (LeCroy & Rank, 1983). Each case has its own characteristics including several common points. In order to discuss both the distinctiveness of each case as well as the common points they share, I firstly discuss each case individually by analyzing each partner's and -wherever possible- their children's interviews separately. In the discussion part of the study, I point out the prominent common points in these 9 cases.

I would like to mention that my goal of using labels as "Jewish Woman Spouse" at the beginning of the each part is not to place the interviewees in strict definitions or categories -this would oppose the main aim of the study-; rather, I aim to make the design of the data analysis clear by pointing out the religious backgrounds of the partners. Lastly, regarding the confidentiality of the interviewees, the real names and surnames of the interviewees are not included in the study. Instead, the interviewees are given letters in alphabetical order from *A* to *U*.

9.1. Couple 1: Jewish Woman Spouse, *A*

A is one of the three Sephardic Jewish women in the study who are married to a Muslim. With respect to gender, this kind of Jewish mixed marriage is rarer than the other way around; thus, it was an important opportunity to conduct an interview with this couple. Before exploring their life as a mixed couple, I consider pointing out how their lives were before marriage as important, because it helps to understand the backgrounds of the individuals.

A described her family of origin in a positive way, and she said that she had a happy childhood. For instance, she pointed out that her parents did not go through a break up such as a divorce, and she considered her father to be a fond person. She said that her mother is more conservative with respect to traditions whereas her father is different in that sense. As discussed in the previous chapter, in general, Jewish mothers tend to have more conservative values, and they also have a dominant role in the family. One of the things she especially emphasized was the patriotic character of her father: "He had never thought of an alternative future in another country". This emphasis on the patriotism of the Jews can be noticed in almost all of the interviews. In some of them, Jewish partners mention this characteristic for their Jewish parents whereas in others the Muslim partners point to their Jewish spouses. In addition, with respect to her parents' attitudes towards her friend choice, she said that, "My father had never got involved with our friend choice (…), but my mother was different". Regarding her religious training, she said that she had never received a religious education in the synagogue, and regarding the Sabbath, she said that, "It was a problem in the family that I did not respect it too much". Another issue in Judaism is the bat-mitzvah, and she said that she did not have it because she noted that it is a new trend in the Jewish community that has been in practice for only the last 15-20 years. She added that while the bar-mitzvah is a must for the Jewish males, bat-mitzvah is a trend; thus, it is not a must. She has not experienced the practices of Judaism much since her childhood. At this point the important questions are as follows: Does she consider herself as a Jew? What does being a Jew mean to her? Before elaborating on this, I would like to mention some of other important points regarding her perception of the Jewish community. She said that:

> There was a club in Şişli (…), which young Jewish people were going to. Not always, but I used to go there, too. (…) I never liked the fact that there was only the Jewish community there. I have always wanted to live within a more complex society [, and] I am still the same.

This point is in the same line with the finding in Cohen's (2009) study of Jewish intermarriage in France. Cohen (2009) argued that, "They [mixed married Jews] tend to be less involved with the Jewish community and have more universal values and concerns" (p. 57). It can be asserted that these are also valid for the mixed married Jews in contemporary Turkey. She added that after her experience in the Jewish club, her social environment became predominantly Muslim. She does not enjoying living in a closed symbolic environment because she thinks that if Jewish people want to live like that; then, there is no meaning of living in Turkey. Even though she had a happy life in her family of origin, she pointed out that her social ties with her friends have always been stronger than her ties with her family. At this point she shared the following words regarding her social ties with the Jewish community:

> I have never been able to adapt to the Jewish community. Neither in my childhood years nor afterwards (…). I have always been discomforted with their style of living in closed way since my childhood years (…). In the past, [the community] was much more closed, (…) now it seems different, more open. I do not like privileges.

It can be said that *A* has never had strong social ties with the Jewish community, and the strong social ties she mentioned seem to be mostly with Muslims. One of the characteristics of the community discomforting to her is the fact that, as the official mentioned in the previous chapter, there is the trend of Jewish people clustering only in certain residential areas. She mentioned this trend, too, by saying that, "Jewish people move [these trendy residential areas; thus,] there is a system as such". This is one of the points she discussed with respect to her perception of the community. Regarding the issue of being aware of the minority position they have, she shared the following thoughts:

> I am aware of this social reality since I know myself. (…) Most of my friends' names were changed. I have always been opposed to this. (…) It has been said that Jewish people are cleverer and miser (…). I always find categorizing people repulsive. (…) [It is more like] a

> fear. Jewish people are not usually around; they live in a repressed way. At our house, these things have not been experienced. Our names were not changed.

With respect to her connection with the Jewish identity, she argued as follows: "You are what you are. You were born like this [being Jewish]. You may adapt to your religion or not, but I am always a Jew. Not a single day, did I think of changing it". I consider her feelings about being Jewish as important. This perception of hers is reminiscent of one of the interviewees' perceptions about being a Jew in the study of Koçoğlu (2004): "I am religious in my own way" (p. 83). I think it is a clear example of the importance of paying attention to the symbolic dimension of claiming an identity. If only the dimension of practicing Judaism was taken into account in terms of Jewish identity, it would easily be asserted that she probably does not consider herself as a Jew. However, her own perception about being a Jew points to a different fact: Despite not practicing Judaism in her life, she claims herself to be a Jew very strongly. She emphasized the strong symbolic tie she has with her Jewish identity by mentioning that she never considered changing it. Her perception also reveals the importance of Brink-Danan's (2008) suggestion while studying Jewish identity: "(…) a more open-ended search into what Judaism means to those who claim it as an identity" (p. 681). With respect to *A*'s own perception about being a Jew, Gans's (1979) theory of symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity seems useful for understanding her self-identification. It seems like her Jewish identity "(…) reflect[s] aspirations for self-fulfillment, but lack of structural cohesion, are detached from the practice (…)" (as cited in Rebhun, 2004, p. 350). She said that, "In this era we do not have the luxury and time to practice all the halakhic laws, especially in Turkey".

Although *A* embraces her Jewish identity, she did not enjoy some of the things she observed in the community while she was growing up. She explained one of these as follows: "What I was getting angry at was the idea of chosen people. Who chose them? This idea was always making me angry. (…) Why [adopt the idea of] choosiness?" Furthermore, she seems to be unhappy with the fear Jewish people feel in Turkey. It seems like this feeling is mostly connected to

being a minority: “I have never been afraid. I have never considered myself as a minority”. She summarizes her ethnic and religious identity as follows: “I am both a Turk and a Jew. But I am more Turk because I live in Turkey”.

Her perception about conversion is in the same line with both the general point of view of the community about conversion, and her own feeling about her Jewish identity. She shared an anecdote that is about one of her Jewish friends, who was together with a Muslim woman, and her idea of converting to Judaism. *A* shared the attitude of the Jewish community, which she agrees with: “(…) If someone denies her or his own religion, she or he would deny the religion [, and] she or he converts more easily”. Regarding conversion her ideas were very clear: “It does not matter if you believe or not; we are born like this. I do not approve of it”. She said that neither she nor her husband have thought of converting nor has either asked the other to convert. It can be asserted that both the community’s and mixed married Jews’ perceptions about conversion correspond. It seems like the relationship between Judaism and conversion is very significant. In general, conversion is an important dimension of religions because it, in a way, displays the possibility of becoming an adherent of a religion, the possibility of being accepted by the community as the real adherents of a religion, and so forth.

With respect to her parents’ attitudes toward her spouse selection in her younger ages, she said that, “My father never interfered with it; (…) but I always feel that my mother was not happy with [me marrying a Muslim]”. She discussed that she never liked this negative view of her mother, and according to her, maybe this feeling affected her spouse selection. She said that, “I always wanted my husband to be a Muslim”. She discussed the possible affect of the Drahoma [dowry] in Jewish males’ respect to her Jewish wives, and she continued as follows: “They have a lifestyle; they do not want their wives to work (…). (…) They have a showy lifestyle, unfortunately it is true, and this has always bothered me”.

Her mixed marriage with *B* is her second marriage. While she was telling me about her first marriage, she shared an important detail about Jewish marriages. She was 19 years old when she married a Jew from Ankara in the

synagogue. After 7 years, they got divorced; however, her husband did not go to the synagogue to declare that their marriage was over. Thus, *A* said that she still appears to be married with her first husband in the records of the synagogue, and she cannot marry a Jew if her husband does not declare their divorce. She said that it is similar to the imam nuptial except the fact that she said all of the marriage records can be seen in every synagogue in the world. Thus it seems like Judaism has a sanction dimension in terms of remarrying.

A and *B* met 10 years ago at a gathering of friends. They firstly were very good friends for 4-5 months; then, it became a more close relationship. She said that, "I knew from the very beginning that he was not a Jew". She also pointed out her social environment, and this displays the possibility of she had meeting a Muslim partner. She continued: "I have very few Jewish friends from the community, and the ones I have are real friends". *A* and *B* can be considered as a newly married couple since they got married in May 2009 after being together for 10 years. Regarding the decision of marriage, she pointed out that *B*'s opinion was different than hers. She considered cohabitation as a marriage; however, *B* thought that since they are living in the Republic of Turkey, it is better for them to get married. *A* shared one of her motivations behind the marriage decision as follows: "I always wanted to have his surname". They got married in the consulate in Barcelona, Spain without any guests. The simplicity of their marriage ceremony can be interpreted in the light of several things such as since it is a mixed marriage, it was impossible for them to get married with a Jewish wedding ceremony. Also this was the second marriage for both of them. *A* was 39 years old, and *B* was 50 at the time of marriage. For these reasons, they might have preferred something simpler. During my interviews, I noticed that the wedding ceremonies of the mixed couples are usually simple. *A* added that she did not have any reservations about getting married to him in terms of religious difference. It seems like she did not have any reservation about getting married to a Muslim because she noticed the important similarities they have. This can be interpreted in the light of Kalmijn's (1991) finding in his study that is as follows: "(…) the dramatic increase in (…) intermarriage reflects a secularization of

cultural differences between religious groups (…)" (p. 797-798 italics in the original).

With respect to having a child, she said that they already have two sons from the first marriage of *B*, and also, according to her, they were not young enough to have a child. She also mentioned that *B* thought of having a child with her since he thought that she would have been a very good mother. Regarding the reaction of her family, she said that at the beginning of their relationship her father died, but her other family members (not her family of origin, but mostly her cousins) liked *B* very much, and in fact they had been very supportive in her decision. Regarding her mother, she said that, "I do not know her real feelings". This is a common point of the Jewish partners, that they are not sure of their parents' real feelings. In terms of the negative reaction of their symbolic environment, she said that they have not felt any negative attitudes towards them. She does not have close ties with the community; therefore, she was not sure whether the community had a negative reaction to their marriage. She added that maybe her mother's and aunt's friends may have negative comments about her decision to marry a Muslim. Regarding *B*'s symbolic environment, she said that it is not a common incidence that an artist gets married to a Jew. She noted that his friends have also been supportive, and treated her very well. According to her, his friends from the art community were curious about their marriage.

With respect to *B*'s family, she said that her relationship with his sons have always been good, and regarding his father, she said she has never met him because he died before their relationship began, but she met his mother occasionally, and she was supportive of their relationship. In general, she thinks that their symbolic environment has always been supportive because their ages are not very young, and they have had experiences before. She added that since they have not thought of having a child, this might have also prevented some of the possible negative views. Furthermore, she mentioned that she has always had reservations about having a child because during her young ages, she came across many single women who were having difficulty with raising a child alone.

With respect to her marriage to *B*, she added that if they were younger, she would have wanted not one but many children from him, and she said that she would not have any sanctions about her or his religious identity. Lastly, *A* is not the first person in her family of origin who is mixed married; her brother is also married to a Russian Christian woman. She said that her mother did not have any reaction to his decision of mixed marrying. With respect to their child, she noted that both her mother and her brother want the child to be a Jew.

She mentioned that she read the Qur'an, and keeps a Qur'an in her car. She shared that she noticed many similarities between Judaism and Islam. With respect to religious symbols and festivals, she said that they have Mezuzahs at the door, and she noted that *B* also likes to have them. She also gave the example of Hanukkah, and she said that if she and *B* remember it, they light the candle. She continued that, "It is neither very important nor irrelevant; we light it because we enjoy it". She shared that six years ago they invited their families and friends for Passover to their home. Moreover, she said that not every Friday, but some Fridays, they also attend the Sabbath together. She concluded that overall the relationship between her family and her husband is close. It seems like sharing some of the Jewish events with her Muslim husband make her more close to Judaism. This does not mean that there is a deep transformation in her perception of the practical dimension of Judaism even though she claims that she is a Jew very clearly, but rather she simply likes attending the Jewish events with her Muslim husband, and she enjoys her husband's respect for Jewish traditions. She went on to say that there can be noticed both Jewish and Islamic traditions in their home. She said that *B* used to fast in Ramadan, but according to her, he had more physical motivations rather than religious feelings. She shared that she has always been interested in Islam by giving the example of her habit of saying "Bismillah" [in the name of God]. She said that she is not sure where she got this habit, but later she explained it with the effect of her great aunt, who converted to Islam, and she said that she spent time with her when she was a child. This also can be interpreted in the light of the effect of the majority since Jewish people in Turkey are living in a predominantly Muslim country. Thus this habit can be considered not in religious terms, but in terms of the culture of the majority in

Turkey. She also shared that when *B* fasts in Ramadan, she feels very proud of this. She added that, before marrying to him, she used to prepare fasting meals for her Muslim friends because she likes her Muslim friends and respects their practices. These are some of the scenes from a Jewish-Muslim mixed marriage house, which can be interpreted in the light of McCarthy's (2007) concepts. The mixed marriage of *A* and *B* seems to be reflecting the strategy of "deep tolerance" that McCarthy (2007) argues in her study. It seems like they not only accept each other's different traditions, but they also accompany one another to these events. Moreover, they also seem to be using the strategy of "religious code-switching" that McCarthy (2007) describes because they seem like they can get involved with each other's traditions, and they see the meaning in these by keeping their distinct identities.

One of the prominent themes in the literature on intermarriage is cultural similarity of mixed couples. *A* shared that, "We have many common points. (…) We are very good friends. (…) We think about a very few things differently". This similarity is reminiscent of the assumption of cultural similarity:

> (…) people prefer to marry someone who has similar cultural resources because this enables them to develop a common life style in marriage that produces social confirmation and affection (Kalmijn, 1998, p. 400).

When I posed the question of what marriage and family mean to her, she shared as follows:

> [They are] very sacred… The marriage decision is very important [, and] family is very important; it represents your whole life, your roof. (…) I am very fond of my own family -although they are not very fond of me-, my husband, and his family, too.

With respect to their mixed marriage, she noted that:

> I like the idea of managing a relationship by being from different religious backgrounds. (…) This is (…) related

> with the person I chose. My husband respects my family, me and my religion. If he was not this much respectful, I would have reacted negatively.

Of being a mixed couple she added that, "I think we are a good example", and she said that they have never used their religious differences to hurt each other during their discussions. Her general feeling about the perception of the Jewish community with respect to mixed marriage is as follows: "I think they [Jewish people] do not perceive mixed marriages in a good way. (…) I feel this way (…)". With respect to the perception of other people in the society she said that they have sympathy for the idea of managing a marriage with religious differences. She said that people do not mention this directly, but she said that she feels it. Moreover, she noted that she does not see any disadvantage in being married to a Muslim; on the contrary, she said that they have the chance of getting information about two religions. She added that even though partners have different religious identities, and they are fond of them, they still can manage it. According to her, in Turkey, people have not reached this point yet. She also said that people should not be prevented from mixed marrying because of religious differences. She shared her perception about mixed marriage as follows: "I think it is a humanistic act; (…) it must be an example for the world (…)".

In general, it seems like the processes she has gone through can be interpreted in the light of the multiple perspective model (LeCroy & Rank, 1983, p. 445). Although *A* always has perceived herself as a Jew, while she was growing up she considered some of the attitudes the Jewish community has towards society to be negative, such as it being closed (A2). She considered the closure the community displays as a kind of inequality (C). Moreover, during her childhood, she had not lived in a strict Jewish environment, she experienced a marriage with a Jewish person, and her first marriage seems to be having a negative effect on her (A1). Thus her symbolic environment became dominated mostly by Muslim friends. With the affects of all of these, her exchange with the Jewish community transformed (B), and she had a symbolic conflict both with some of the characteristics of the Jewish community. On the other hand, she still perceived herself as a Jew (D). In this sense, her decision of having a mixed

marriage can be considered as a reorganization of her life in terms of the cohesion between her attitude toward the Jewish community, her Jewish identity and her relative closeness to Muslims (E).

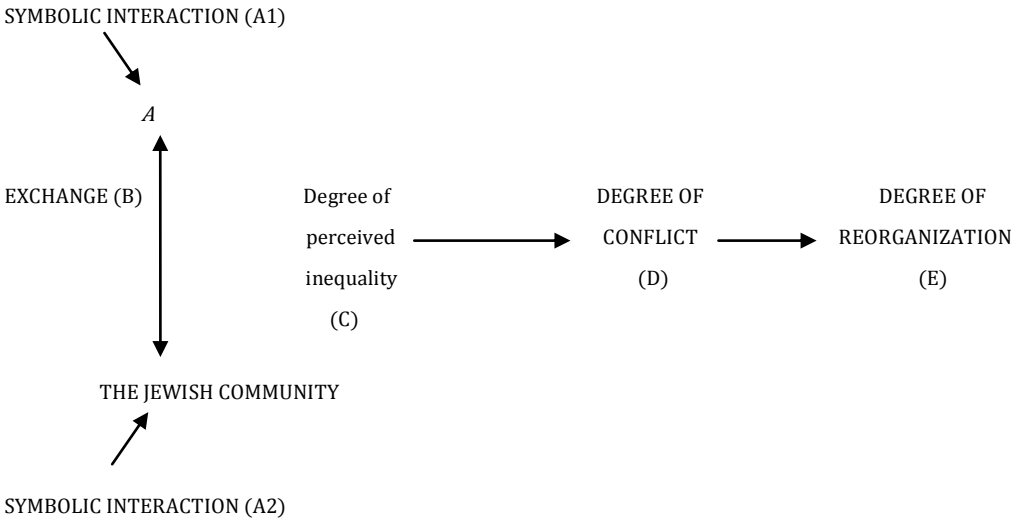

Figure 2. Multiple Perspective Model

The significant point in her process is that neither her relatively weak connection with the Jewish community nor her decision to marry with a Muslim mean that she does not embrace her Jewish identity. This fact provides a very important example to notice the dynamic characters of religion and identity.

9.1.1. Couple 1: Muslim Man Spouse, *B*

B's first encounter with non-Muslims occurred during his school years. Since he mostly attended to private schools, he said that he had many non-Muslim friends while he was growing up. With respect to the religious atmosphere of his family of origin, he said that his family was not fond of Islam, and he added that they were not strict in terms of his friendships with non-Muslims. He said that it was only his grandmother who fasted in Ramadan, and performed prayer. In this sense, he mentioned that he had not received any religious training while he was growing up. He said that he has always been

aware of the existence of minority groups in Turkey, and he did not have any problems with them.

In general, he described the general attitude of his parents towards his decisions in life as follows: "My family had never manipulated me with regard to anything (…)"; thus, they did not interfere with his spouse selection, and he added that the religious identity of his future spouse has never been a criterion for him. Before mixed marrying to *A*, he had not any dating experience with a non-Muslim person, and this is his second marriage. His first marriage was with a Muslim woman and lasted for 13 years.

His description of meeting *A* can be interpreted in the light of four processes that couples go through. Although Lee (1994) argues that these are not stages in a relationship, but rather they are processes, it can be noticed that they are also useful to interpret how the mixed couples' relationships develop. In this sense, at first, *A* was not attracted to him because of his outspokenness; then, as Lee (1994) argues, "(…) they [potential partners] must find the means to sustain their interaction beyond the initial encounter" (p. 13). With respect to this, later she interpreted his style in a positive way, and their relationship had started. Regarding the common lifestyle they have, it can be asserted that this provided an important element in the transformation of their relationship from friendship to a more special level that generated the process of "establishment". After their discovery of each other's views, attitudes and tastes, the third process occurs which is "self-disclosure". Lastly, in terms of "validation", it can be asserted that they did not have a very difficult process with their family of origins because both *A* and *B*'s relationships with each other's families seem to be good. In terms of deciding to marry, it can be asserted that *B* had not considered cohabitation as an alternative to marriage. Although for him, marriage is only a "show off", he said that the social atmosphere in Turkey affected his desire to marry. He argued how he felt as follows:

> Both within the Jewish community and for Muslims (…), people do not perceive an unmarried couple in a positive way. I did not want her to be exposed to such a

> feeling. (…) I also knew her family (…). I also wanted to transform from their perception of the man she lives with to the man whose surname she carries.

For *B*, family means an atmosphere in which individuals live in accord. Even though he is the first member in his family who is mixed married, he mentioned that since he is an actor, he got to know many mixed married couples during his tours.

With respect to the religious activities that they attend together, *B* argued as follows:

> They have two festivals that are Yom Kippur and Passover. They want the family to be together at the festivals. They do not separate me. I have never felt nervous. (…) I tried to relate to their traditions. For instance, they put Kippa on their heads while they pray, and I did the same. I also went to their synagogue.

He gave an example of the result of living with a Jewish spouse: "I had not known this before: She always touches the Mezuzah before leaving home. I think it is a matter of faith. (…) We do have Mezuzahs in both of our houses". In the light of McCarthy's (2007) study, her concept of "deep tolerance" seems insightful in terms of his efforts both to understand and participate in his wife's Jewish life. He said that he observes their prayers, their ways of being, and he does not only observe, but he also participates in their festivals. According to *B*, Judaism and Islam have many similarities. He noted that they both advise the same universal values such as being honest and respecting others' rights.

The significant point occurs in terms of his ideas of conversion. While his Jewish wife is very clear about her opposition to any kind of conversion in terms of religion, he seems to be thinking differently about it: "I have never thought of converting, but anyone who wants to convert can do it. People should be free to convert". He also described his perception of religion as follows: "It is a relationship between a power that we suppose to exist and the individual". With respect to his relationship with Islam, he said that he used to fast in Ramadan

mostly with the motivation of resting his body. He also said, because of his perception of the existing government in Turkey, he ceased fasting. It seems like his perception of his Muslim identity is affected by his perception of the societal atmosphere. In the light of the theory of symbolic interactionism, it can be asserted that individuals are both the actor and reactor in terms of their identities. While *A* is clear about her Jewish identity, *B*'s attitude to Islam seems to be different, and he shared that, "Religion is not a subject that interests me". It seems like the idea of being Jewish penetrates the lifestyle of Jews whereas being Muslim is understood mostly in terms of religion. Even though *A* also did not seem to be interested in religion like *B*, she claimed the strong tie she has with her Jewish identity very clearly. However, it seems like he was not interested in claiming being Muslim as his religious identity. In general, he emphasized the importance of being a good person in life; however, he seems to be more distant to Islam than Judaism in terms of his opinions about them. In general, his perception of life and people seems to revolve around the issue of being a good person that Cohen (2009) points out, which are the universal concerns of Jews who are married to non-Jews. This seems to be true for mixed married Muslims, too.

Also, he shared his general observations both about his own wife and the Jewish people. According to him, Jewish people, including *A*, have a strong desire to work. However, from his perspective, working is not a must in life as long as you satisfy your basic needs; you do not have work beyond that. According to him, gaining money for Jewish people is very significant, and he connected this to the unfortunate history of Jewish people. He said that they usually do not own property, but rather they keep cash in order to move quickly in the case of a possible threat. He also added that with the help of his mixed marriage he was introduced to many Jewish people, and after mixed marrying with a Jewish woman, he noticed that Jewish people are "more of a world people" who are more tolerant and objective than Muslims are. One of the common points in the interviews, which occurred with this couple, too, was that Muslim partners especially emphasize the patriotic character of their Jewish partners. He mentioned something that was also pointed out by *A* that Jewish people have a

general fear in Turkish society. According to him, they do not like to react to anything aloud.

With respect to mixed marriage, he shared that, "The thing is to be able to go into the same bag". In this sense, he argued that mixed couples learn a lot of things about each other's lives and behaviors, and he shared that if he was married to a Muslim, he would never have this much information about Jewish people. He said that this provides them with a broad spectrum of experience and knowledge. It seems like since the Turkish Jewry live in a predominantly Muslim country, whether they are married to a Muslim or not, they are familiar with Muslim traditions and lifestyles. However, for the Muslim partners the process seems to be more surprising and new. Lastly, *B* shared that these mixed marriages should not be exceptions in the society: "If we look from a correct perspective, then why would it be wrong to get to know each other? To be able to perceive the world from a broader perspective (…)".

After conducting the interviews with *A* and *B* separately, the three of us had a short conversation together before I left. The discussion was mainly about the gender difference in Jewish mixed marriages. It seems like in Turkey, being in the same line with the general trend in all countries except the United States, Jewish males practice mixed marriage more than Jewish females do. *A* and *B* have different explanations for this difference. According to *B*, Jewish women do not get involved in mixed marriage because of the socioeconomic reasons meaning they do not want to leave the high socioeconomic conditions, and reciprocally they are controlled by this whereas *A* connected this gender difference to the suppressed situation of Jewish women. *B*'s assumption is reminiscent of the rational choice theory (Tsay and Wu, 2006). These are only assumptions, but gender difference seems to be another important theme with respect to Jewish mixed marriage.

9.2. Couple 2: Muslim Woman Spouse, *C*

C was born in 1957 in Ankara where she lived until going to the United States for her college education. With respect to her introduction to Islam, she said that there were 3 sources from which she gained her early sense of Islam.

The first one was the effect of her grandparents' practices since they were living together. One of the prominent scenes she remembers is the time of Ramadan. She shared that she was not forced to fast; however, she shared that she enjoyed the atmosphere of the house during Ramadan. The second source she mentioned is the routine education in schools, and the third one was her personal daily observations. Regarding her first encounter with minority groups, she mentioned that, "*D* [her husband] is the first Jewish person I met (…)". She said that while she was growing up in Ankara, her family used to have contact with an Armenian friend, and also there were many Americans with whom they were in touch. She described her early general perception about Turkey as follows: "(…) I used to boast about the idea that we are such a country that embraced everyone without any discrimination of religion, language or race, for many years". She mentioned that while she was growing up she was thinking of Turkey as follows:

> (…) we are comprised of different things [cultures] that continue from the Ottoman times; we have different cultures; the most important richness we have is this. The most important characteristic of the Republic of Turkey is its embracing of them all (…) and we used to think that everyone is an equal citizen.

With respect to her possible spouse selection, she argued that the criteria such as religious or ethnic identity had never been an issue for them. She said that the only criterion was for him to be a good person who can make her happy. This is in the same line with Bal's (2006) finding about the conditions that soothe Jewish parents' anxieties about their children's intermarriages: "(…) intermarriage, was welcomed (…) on the stated conditions that 'their children would be happy' (…)" (p. 306 quotation marks in the original). It seems like most of the interviewees' parents cared about their children's happiness more than their potential spouses' religions.

With respect to her own perception about spouse selection she said: "I would not want a Muslim [as her spouse]. I would want him to have a different culture, either in one way or another. (…) I would not want to marry a typical

Turkish man (…)". She said that during her years in the United States, she has relationships with Americans.

C and *D* met in the United States 25 years ago through a mutual friend. With respect to *D*'s Jewish identity, she recalled:

> He was someone from the minority; (…) for me it was only *D*. While I was chatting with a friend, she asked "What religion is *D*?" (…). I replied that I did not even ask. There were people around who were wondering and asking. (…) I found out about his identity when she said that, "He must be a Jew since his name is *D*".

C and *D* have been together for 25 years, and they got married in 1998 because they had a child. For *C*, while marriage is not mandatory in life, togetherness in terms of family is significant. They only organized a simple civil marriage ceremony. This simplicity seems to be a common point with all of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples I interviewed. There can be different reasons behind this simplicity; however, it seems like they mostly prefer something simpler.

When I asked her whether they made any decisions with respect to their son's religious identity, she said that there is circumcision both in Judaism and Islam; thus, he was circumcised. She added that except for this they did not make any decisions. Regarding the third parties, meaning their families of origin, she said that they have always got along well with each other. However, with respect to others' reactions to their decision of marriage, she shared the following anecdote:

> There are some carpenters with whom I have been working together for so long. We have been very close. (…) I told them that I was getting married (…), at that time they said nothing. (…) One or two years later, during one of our chats, they said that, "(…) when we heard that you were getting married a Jew, we got really sad; we thought of how we could dissuade you from it". (…) They are religious. They are very hard-working; (…) you never notice it from the outside, but they are religious. (…) They said that, "What a terrible opinion it

> was to have!" (…). The matter was humanity. Now, they like him.

Moreover, even though she emphasized that her relationship with his family and also the relationship between the two families have always been positive, before their marriage the dynamics in *D*'s family were a little bit different:

> His father was the president of the community in Izmir. (…) It came to pass that he was introduced to Jewish women during our dating. This is for sure. It did not make a difference for me. (…) You know that his parents love you very much, you have a good relationship, but they do not know where your relationship will go to. (…) But, from the inside they prefer for him to be with and marry a Jewish woman or from the outside, there came many things [for instance] *D* is an eligible bachelor since it is not easy to find a Jew (…). We had the same thing, too, but not because the person is Jewish or Muslim, but for marriage (…). Of course, there were times I got sad.

With the help of the concepts of "closed" and "open marriage systems", which Lee (1994) argues, it can be asserted that the Jewish parents' relationship with their children in terms of marriage seems to be operated mostly by the rules of a "closed marriage system". Another important point in *C*'s relationship with his Jewish family of origin reveals a common point in many Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages. She argued as follows: "They treat me in a way that usually the bride maybe should treat them in that way". She continued as follows: "When I hear about other people's relationships with their mothers-in-law, then [I] start to think (…) how lucky I have been". In many interviews, I notice that Jewish families do not react to their potential brides or grooms in a negative way even though they may have reservations about their child's potential decision. Besides other possible reasons, it seems like a micro example of their general attitude of keeping silence. Moreover, she added that during the first years of their relationship, she used to ask *D* about the details of the rituals in order to not make a mistake.

With respect to their son's religious identity, she said that when he was born, the religious identity part in his ID was left blank since they wanted him to decide his religious identity, and she argued their general attitude towards him as follows:

> I want him to know the traditions of both sides. What I like the most in Judaism is (…) the ceremony, traditional dinners; these kinds of things do not exist [in Islam] any more, the festival is perceived as an opportunity for holiday. (…) We want him to learn some of the things from both of the sides. There is not a decision as such, but [by attending these] (…) we have the chance to get together, have a good time, and both we and he [their son] experience it.

This attitude they have towards their son can be interpreted with the help of Resnik's (1933) arguments about the dynamic relationship between mixed couples and their children. Resnik (1933) argues that if parents find ways to attend the activities of both groups, then children may adopt these ways, too. Since *C* and *D* like to attend family gatherings to celebrate religious festivals, their son also seems to be enjoying spending time with both of his grandparents. She added that as long as they are not invited to attend to these kinds of gatherings, they do not organize anything at their homes in terms of celebrating an important day in Judaism and Islam. Also, they do not have any religious symbols in their homes such as a Mezuzah or prayers.

Regarding the relationships with their symbolic environment, she said that they are mostly asked questions about their son's identity such as how they figure out the issue of his religious identity, how they could leave the religion part empty in his ID, and so forth. It seems like having a child constitutes an important ground where the partners' different religious backgrounds gain prominence. This does not necessarily mean that the place of their religious identities in the hierarchical organization of their identity transforms towards being in an upper position or the opposite. It seems difficult to make any generalization about the effect of the child on the mixed couples' own identities. The key point that she shared was mostly about the meaning of being a mother:

"After having a child, (…) many things have changed, your whole life changes, your perception about everything changes". The significant point is to catch the possible effect of having a child on the dynamics of mixed marriages. It can be argued that having a child in any kind of marriage may transform the existing dynamics. In this sense, it is important to notice the transformations that occur in mixed marriages, too. From the point of view of the theory of symbolic interactionism, an infant is born neither social nor anti-social, but asocial (Stryker, 1959, p. 112). The questions coming from the symbolic environment to them seems to be revealing the fact that having a child constitutes the question of what the child's religious identity will be. In this sense, it does not matter that religious identity has salience in their identities or not; the important point seems to be that when the mixed couples have a child they have important steps to take starting with the decision of deciding or not deciding. If they chose to decide her or his religious identity, then what would she or he be?

According to *C*, their son envies the bar-mitzvah; in this sense, she argued that not the religious dimension of it, but rather mostly its ceremonial dimension attracts him: "His goal is to experience the bar-mitzvah. I think he has to live it. Why not? In the end, he is a half-Jew (…). I think it can even be a modified one, (…) if they accept it; it can be a traditional one. We do not know". The suggestion of a modified bar-mitzvah can be interpreted in the light of McCarthy's (2007) concept of the strategy of "creative recombination" that mixed couples adopt. Even though the modified ritual she thought of is not a combination of Judaism and Islam, it can be asserted that it still can be considered as a combination since it brings together the modern ways of celebrating an event and the bar-mitzvah. In addition, it seems like this decision is an important element of his future choice regarding being a Jew. His interest in the bar-mitzvah is in the same line with the religiously mixed children's ideas in Beck's (2005) study: "During childhood, the bar/bat mitzvah represented the major contact between respondents and Jewish life" (p. 42). In this sense, it seems like the bar-mitzvah has a symbolic importance in terms of being a Jew. She said that he has not made a final decision yet because firstly he needs to go through several steps. She added that they are not sure if they can organize the bar-mitzvah for him or not.

With respect to their son's relationship with Islam, she stated that he is not interested in Islam at all. She said that the concepts such as terror and Jihad affect his opinion: "I think that he does not want to be identified with a Muslim identity". She also pointed out his early desire to be a Christian, and she discussed this in terms of the movie industry showing the symbols of Christianity, and according to her, these symbols affect children. She noted that he knew many things about Christianity before he knew anything about Judaism and Islam. These seem to be revealing the relative attractiveness of the three basic monotheistic religions. Since this point is discussed both in the analyses of the interviews with the children and in the discussion part of the study, it is not discussed here in detail. Furthermore, she mentioned that he might have understood the difference they have from the names and/or from the rituals that they have been attending since his childhood. She emphasized that he observed these differences mostly in the homes of grandparents. It seems that it is not in his family of origin, but mostly through the interactions with his extended family members that he got the sense of the difference in his parents' religious backgrounds. She added as follows:

> He presumably enjoys this [having parents from different religious backgrounds]. (…) He does not participate in the religion course in the school since the religious part in his ID is empty.

She said that she has never had the idea of him being a Muslim. She shared her general opinion about their son's situation as follows:

> (…) I always think that he is very lucky. He can do something none of us can do. (…) Maybe he will either choose none of them or one of them. We do not know what he will do. But, it is not something that can be done except in mixed marriages. This is an important chance. I hope he appreciates this.

On the subject of her perception about her Muslim identity, she shared that during her childhood and youth years it was not an issue that she paid

attention to. She considers herself as a Muslim Turk since she said that she has no other choice. Regarding conversion, she said that they have never talked about it because neither she nor her husband are very religious. She added that if they were, it would have been an issue. According to her, religion is something that is only written on her ID, and something coming from her family. She described her own perception of religion as follows:

> I have always believed that religion is not important. I think personal faith is significant. Even though I enjoy the ceremonial dimension of it, I could not believe anything in my life. I am not someone who may hold on to something blindly.

C said that these mixed marriages can be considered as the appearance of the individuals' perception of life, which considers people by taking their persona into account. She considered the concept of marriage as difficult; in this sense, she said that the dimension of being mixed does not make it easier or harder. She added that, "Every relationship is unique". She said that this mixed marriage enriched her: "It is nice to get introduced to new traditions, and to get to know them this close. (…) It contributes many things to me. I also went to Israel; you see them, you talk to them (…)". She continued as follows:

> You have a new family (…) who is very well educated. They are a different section [of the society]. (…) You feel very close to them. You have many things to talk about and to share. I think we are closer to each other in terms of culture than to Muslims.

This emphasis of hers is in the same line with Kalmijn's (1991) finding about the increase in Protestant and Catholic marriages: "(…) marriage is a long-term, intimate relationship in which cultural similarity is of crucial importance" (p. 798). Kalmijn (1998) also argues that, "(…) people prefer to marry someone who has similar cultural resources because this enables them to develop a common life-style in marriage (…)" (p. 400). It seems like the concept of cultural

similarity is useful in terms of understanding the motivations behind the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' decisions of marriage, and their harmony in married life.

She said that what matters the most is the relationship between two people. Moreover, she mentioned the importance in getting to know the others closer:

> What to get know each other actually means is to resolve the conflicts; sometimes you are scared because you do not know the other (…). Thus the things our carpenters said are very important. With the help of our marriage, their perspective has broadened. (…) Maybe he goes and tells about this to his wife, maybe he will tell about this to his children (…). (…) At least, they do not perceive these things negatively.

She also shared that from time to time, since her Jewish husband is someone who shares his opinion with the public, he receives reactions from people about his ideas, and they react as follows: "(…) you are a Jew, how can you say these about my country?" At this point, I would like to add that she was wondering about what her husband will say about their mixed marriage. In the other interviews, the couples also started to wonder about what the other couples say.

Although it is unprepossessing, the issue of being buried in different cemeteries was the last point in the interview. She said that they sometimes talk about this in a humorous way; however, she mentioned that sometimes she asks about a mixed cemetery. At this point, she said that she mostly thinks about their son in that she does not want him to be separated while visiting them. She said that she also would like to be buried in the same cemetery regardless of their religious identities. She also pointed out the lack of knowledge she has about Jewish funerals; she said that in that case she might ask for help from others. Even though it was not a pleasant theme to talk about, it seems like life-cycle ceremonies constitute an important subject in the mixed couples' minds.

9.2.1. Couple 2: Jewish Man Spouse, *D*

The interview with *D* was mostly focused on the dynamics of being a Jew in Turkey. I consider listening to a mixed married Jew's perception about it as significant since it provided important insights into the study. *D* was born in Izmir, and he was there until he went to Istanbul for education at the age of 14. He said that his friends had been mostly from the Jewish community, but his family had also very close Muslim friends. He mentioned that even though they felt that they were –in a sense- different from the majority, this feeling was not prominent. He added that they were speaking Turkish at home; thus, his knowledge of Ladino has always been limited. With respect to the atmosphere in his family, he said that they were living in the same apartment with his grandparents, and they used to celebrate Jewish festivals, to be together for the Sabbath; according to him, these all were the pieces of their folklore. He mentioned that he never became a member of groups such as Jewish youth club. He continued as follows: "(…) maybe it is because of the belief by which we grew up that it is not the only thing that describes our identity. In this sense, I do not like the idea of community; to me it seems like religion is something different". He said that from the moment people are born, the mechanism starts to function, that teaches that you belong to a different religious group, and the elements he mentioned, which constitute this symbolic environment are their different names and rituals. He had the bar-mitzvah, and he said that it is a ritual that reveals the transformation from childhood to manhood. With respect to his previous relationships in terms of dating, he said that almost all of his girlfriends were Muslim.

Regarding his encounter with their minority position in the society, he argued as follows:

> There are always small codes that are not noticed by the majority, which the minority recognizes. (…) Someone may say something without knowing your identity. There are also some things that penetrated the genetic structure such as not being around much. But, we did not build our life on this difference. Sometimes they ask "What is your name?", and I say "*D*" [, and] they say that,

> "You speak Turkish very well" [, I then say,] "Yes because I am the citizen of the Republic of Turkey". Even though the Republic of Turkey has the claim to be secular in its definition of citizenship, it is a Muslim country.

In this sense, *D* described the general atmosphere of his family of origin:

> We –in a sense- grew up as Kemalist. We used to get angry when someone did not speak Turkish well. Thus I think there had been a sense of feeling different. At the same time, I am not sure if this also means getting angry about this and feeling bad about it (…); I do not think so. As I said we –in a sense- grew up as Kemalist. Later, of course, it changed. Like in the evolution of Turkey, I started to think that this actually is richness, and I got sad that I did not learn Ladino.

On the subject of his family's attitudes toward the idea of him mixed marrying, he said that the transformation in Jews' perspectives can even be noticed within his own life time. He mentioned that while he was growing up, mixed marriage was a big event; however, according to him, lately the community has become secular, and he said that this transformation has occurred very quickly. When he asked his family about mixed marrying, his grandfather said that he would reject him if he mixed married. Toward the end of his life (1981), *D* said that his grandfather said that if he wants to make a mixed marriage, at least he should make sure that she believes in God. According to him, this transformation reveals the relative openness the Jewish community has gained. He also mentioned that there is the possibility that for his mother it was also a problem.

C and *D* firstly did live together, and then they got married because they had a child. This –in a way- seems to be revealing that from the point of view of mixed couples, cohabitation is not perceived as a substitute for marriage, particularly if there is a child. He said that marrying someone from a different religious background was not a problem for him whereas he said that he was not very fond of the idea of marriage.

Another theme that was prominent in the interview was his argument about the effect of this marriage on *C*'s awareness in terms of the problems of minorities. On this topic, he shared an anecdote that at one time *C* was helping *D* about a job meeting, but when employers heard his name, they did not want him to come. He said that his wife, *C* was very surprised by this, and got sad. He also shared another memory that reveals the possible effect of being married to a person from the minority group on the spouses' sensibility:

> One day while she was dining, someone was saying negative things about Jewish people; she could not bear it, and she said to them with anger, "What is wrong with the Jews? I am married to a Jew!"

This anecdote can be considered as an example of Lee's (1994) argument about stigmatization: "(…) partners may find it necessary to deal with the potential or actual application of stigmatizing labels" (p. 14). It seems like partners may face the consequences of stigmatizing definitions not in terms of their mixed marriage, but in terms of the negative perceptions of other people about their partners' identities.

Regarding their son's religious identity, he said that they have never talked about this seriously since they are not religious people. They think that he might choose his religious identity on his own, but he added that they have not taught him much except making him familiar with both of the traditions by attending to rituals together. He said that maybe they were a bit lazy about this. *D* described their general attitude toward their son as follows:

> Within the secular faith atmosphere at home, his negative perception has begun to become stronger about being discriminated because of being a part of the minority or to be a part of any kind of group. We, of course, tried to give him this kind of morale, I mean, not to discriminate people with respect to their religion, (…) ethnicity [, and] to be a good (…) person by saying in the end, the main theme of all religions is this.

This is in the same line with Cohen's (2009) finding about the universal concerns and values mixed married Jews have. Not only mixed married Jews, but the family as a unit seems to be having universal values such as the importance of being a good and honest person. Regarding the future of their son, he shared that, "Will he have problems in the future? It depends on the conditions of Turkey. I hope he will not".

With respect to the relationship between his parents and his wife, he mentioned that before they got married, they already got used to the idea of him getting married to her. Her different religious background has never been a problem that prevents humanistic relationships. He pointed out that his family likes her character very much, but he added that maybe his mother thought that it would have been better if her family was also Jewish. He mentioned that after a while, since he was getting older, the concern his mother had was much more about him being late for marriage instead of his decision to marry a Muslim.

His opinions about conversion reflect the relative closeness of Judaism regarding it. He mentioned that conversion has never been an issue between them, and he pointed out the relative closeness Judaism has in terms of conversion:

> It is very difficult. (…) Because Judaism, unlike Christianity and Islam, does not aim to proselytize, it wants to keep itself in a distinct and special place. It is very difficult to convert to (…). (…) the ones who want to convert (…) push very hard [to convert].

Since he spent many years in the United States, his arguments about his relationship with American Jews can be considered as important in terms of the fact that Jewish people are both local and international people. Since they are a minority in many countries, various cultures that they live in may cause different appearance and meanings of being a Jew, and although they mostly live in different countries, there might be a common point that brings them together even if their attitudes about religion differ. He mentioned his relationship with American Jews as follows:

> (…) The United States is interesting. When you meet an American Jew, you see that you have nothing in common. You are a Jew, and he is, too. (…) Your cuisine is different. (…) What brings us together? To be born into the same religion? If you are not religious, what then? [On the other hand,] there were more things I had common, but this was not because of Judaism, but because of their cosmopolitism.

Regarding being a Jew in Turkey, I consider his following words as important since it is a predominantly Muslim country. Also, the perception that sees Jewish people and Israel as the same is a problem since the relationship between Turkey and Israel has been unsteady lately:

> This is always the same principle from the beginning. Depending on the era, [identity] can either be prominent or not; that is maybe you do not act as who you are, but if someone reminded of you who you are, then you would react (…). Nowadays, it happens; this does not mean changing my lifestyle, but here the community is always criticized because of what Israel does, I am very bothered; to me it is very unfair, and I perceive it as disturbing. But, my reaction is not like "I am a Jew, what's the problem?" But (…) I used to be more outspoken about Israel in terms of criticizing it. Now, even though I say something as *D*; (…) there are people who perceive your words as they are coming from a Jew; the community received reactions. (…) This is the only transformation in recent years that: I started to feel more responsibility for the Jewish people living here.

D identifies himself as a Jewish Turk by adding that being Jewish is not the only thing that identifies him. He mentioned that from the point of view of some people it may be, and if so he communicates with them in that way. He said that being Jewish is an important part of his identity because, according to him, there are people who perceive him mostly by his Jewish identity. Although, since the concept of identity always points out the other, it seems like others' perceptions have a special importance in terms of reminding a Jew of his identity whether it is important for him or not. This also can be interpreted as a consequence of being a minority in many countries since, as in the case of *D*, his attitude towards his

own identity is influenced by the general societal atmosphere. The processes that *D* goes through as a Jew in Turkey reveals the importance of the theory of symbolic interactionism in terms of studying identities: *D*'s own perception about his Jewish identity can only be understood on his own level by catching the dynamics that influence his perception. In this sense, taking the societal atmosphere of Turkey into account is inevitable to understand these dynamics. As Chibucos et al. (2005) points out, it is more important to understand not the content of the behavior, but rather the reasons behind the behavior. Moreover, it is a clear example of the reciprocal relationship between the society and the individual identities, according to Chibucos et al. (2005):

> This suggests a circular process. Individuals come to understand meanings through social interactions, and their understanding of meanings and ascription of meanings to behaviors then influence their participation in social interactions (p. 237).

With respect to the meanings of marriage and family, he said that he has never got along with the idea of getting married well; however, he emphasized that family is very important in terms of feeling the solidarity. Regarding mixed marriage, he argued that most of the Jews are liberals, have high socioeconomic levels, and do not have many children; thus, the religious identity of their partners do not constitute a vital reference point for them. This opinion is in the similar line with Kalmijn's (1991) argument that, "(…) marriage choice has become individualized" (p. 798). *D* pointed out that he has respect for the ones who care about the continuation of the descent; however, he mentioned that it is not the principle that operates his life. He argued that the social characteristics of Jews such as their high educational level increase the speed of assimilation.

Regarding Turkey, he said that in the past mixed marriage was perceived with dislike, but the community in Istanbul was the first to change its negative perception about mixed marriage. He argued that this is related to secularism and progressiveness. This is reminiscent of the conclusion in Bal's (2006) study that is as follows:

> (…) in some narratives marriage relations were utilized as tools to indicate the 'openness', 'progressiveness', 'liberalism', and 'democratic character' of the community through a point on inter-sex relations, or on rituals regarding marriage (p. 306 quotation marks in the original).

In addition, regarding the gender difference in Jewish mixed marriages, he asserted that the reason behind it might be that there may be more suppression of women. Furthermore, he said that even though he chose individualism instead of communalism, he mentioned that it is not good that the communities are disappearing because it is a loss of richness. He said that this occurs because of assimilation, and he also mentioned that the Jewish community is getting older. Thus the situation in Turkey becomes difficult. However, according to him, this is inevitable.

Both *C* and *D* allowed me to interview with their son, *E*, who is 13 years old. While I was designing my study, I thought that I would interview with children who are at least 18 years old. During my interviews with *C* and *D*, I got the feeling that I may speak with *E*, too. Although, it is most possible (and expected) that his ideas about his religious identity will transform in time (since the concept of identity is a process), to be allowed to talk to him was a great opportunity. I also considered his age not as a disadvantage, but rather as an advantage since I think it is an age that children usually share their true feelings without social filters.

9.2.2. The Child of *C* and *D*: *E*

E was born in 1997 in Istanbul. Currently, he is a student at a private high school. I interviewed with him at their home, and I have to say even though his parents allowed me to interview with him, I was a little concerned since he was not a grown up, and I did not want my questions to bother him or make him puzzled in a negative way. I firstly wanted to ask him the basic things to make him relaxed such as his hobbies. I would like to share one of the answers he gave because I think it is an important signal of the positive atmosphere at their homes. He considered spending time with his parents as a hobby, and he added

that he loves it very much. Regarding his relationship with his grandparents, he said that he likes both of his grandparents very much, and with respect to his friends, he said that he mostly has Muslim friends. He has one friend whose parents' are also mixed.

With respect to his parents' different religious identities, he said that he always has been aware of it, and he emphasized that, "Religion is not important; the thing is to be human". I think this is a clear example of the effect of his parents' universal values and concerns on his perception. He said that, "I have the opportunity to get to know different cultures". He said that he has not made any decision regarding his religious identity, and he added that his parents do not apply any pressures about this. Since as his parents, *C* and *D* argued that religion does not constitute an important part of their identities, Beck's (2005) finding about religiously mixed children seems to be true for this case, too. Beck's (2005) insight as follows: "In terms of their religious identity, most of the people have remained on the same path as their parents" (p. 41). *E* said that he enjoys attending rituals with his parents such as going to a dinner to celebrate a Jewish holiday. Beck (2005) also argues that these children embrace their dual identities. In this case, it seems like *E* does not embrace the dual identity, but he embraces his situation.

E is planning to go to the United States for education because he said that the lifestyle in the United States is nice, and also he said that he likes the diversity there. He seemed to be very reactive about the fact that Turkish Jews are blamed because of the politics of Israel. *E* said that once he had argument with one of his friends because he said that, "He [his friend] was an anti-Semitic". This point is also in the same line with Beck's (2005) argument that:

> Opposing anti-Semitism was one of the Jewish values endorsed by our respondents [religiously mixed children]. It is possible that this view was related to actual or perceived anti-Semitic incidents which our respondents experienced as threats to their personal well-being (p. 42).

The reactions Turkish Jews receive or feel with respect to the debates between Turkey and Israel seems to be affecting his attitude toward the Jewish identity.

9.3. Couple 3: Muslim Woman Spouse, *F*

F was born in 1961 in Iskenderun. She was the smallest child of the family, and her father was a marine in the military. She noted that even though they had limited economic resources, her childhood and youth through to the end of high school was enjoyable. With respect to the religious atmosphere in their home, she mentioned that she did not experience any pressure regarding religion. In addition, she considered the time of Ramadan and Kandil as enjoyable events. She summarized the general attitude of her family of origin towards religion by noting that there were not any thoughts such as denying it or protesting it, and there was nothing that can be called extreme.

Regarding the social environment, she said that although there were Americans around, she did not have any non-Muslim friends due to the fact that she grew up in the atmosphere of military. She noted that she used to know almost nothing about the minorities in Turkey while she was growing up, and the only thing she recalls now is the saying about Jewish people regarding the importance money has for them. More importantly, she argued that the concept of enemy was not taught to them in terms of religious minorities, but mostly of in terms of Greek people.

On the subject of her potential spouse selection, she said that it never came to her mind that one day she would marry a Jew. This was not because of her opposition to it, but rather this was an irrelevant subject for her. She moved to Istanbul for her college education, and after her graduation she stayed in Istanbul to work. *F* and *G* met in Istanbul through a friend they both knew, and they got married one year later. With respect to the elements that shaped her marriage decision, she listed several things. First of all, since she was a college graduate at that time, she had the feeling that she knew what she expected from a spouse. Secondly, she said that she found *G* very intellectual, qualified and polite. According to her, in her decision these were the most important factors. Moreover, she added that socioeconomic subjects were irrelevant to them since

they were newly starting life as adults. Despite *G*'s many qualifications, she shared that she had concerns, too. The thing she emphasized was that at first she did not think about dating with him because she said that she considered him as a foreigner. His name, which is an uncommon name in Turkey, constituted the symbolic dimension of her perception. She said that because of his different religious background, at first she was concerned. Later, she pointed out that they spent almost every day together until their marriage. She also spent much time in his family's home such as attending the Sabbath with them. She said that even though she was sure that his family loved her very much, they kept searching for Jewish candidates for *G*. This is the same experience that another interviewee, *C* went through. *F* said that *G*'s family did not react very negatively to their marriage decision because, according to her, his mother did not want to lose her son. She added an interesting point which was his uncle, who was the oldest person in their family, was married to a Christian woman. She said that because he also went through very difficult times in that sense, he approved of their decision; thus, his existence and approval helped them. This process can be considered as the examples of the processes that are "initiation", "establishment", "self-disclosure" and "validation" which Lee (1994) describes. Although these are not the stages of a relationship in development, but rather reoccurring processes in a relationship, it seems like they are useful to understand the processes *F* and *G* went through. In this sense, the prominent point seems to be the similarities the potential partners feel despite their different religious backgrounds. As Lee (1994) argues the potential partners come into contact with a "sedimented stock of experiences". Thus, it can be argued that not only mixed couples' previous experiences in relationships are significant, but also the experiences/perceptions/prejudices they have about their own religious identity, and the religious identity of their potential partner (p. 13). In terms of "validation", in *F* and *G*'s case, it seems like the vital point was the existence of the mixed married uncle. Moreover, she said that it was he who paid Drahoma [dowry] to *G*'s family for her because of the clear disapproval of her own family. After all her interaction with his mother-in-law has always been positive, but the reaction of her family of origin was very hard:

> Very bad…. They reacted to it very badly. (…) We did not see each other for 10 years. The reason was only religion. My family was living in a small place, and to the people around they said they would have difficulty to say that, "*F* is married to a Jew". That was what they brought to me. "How can we say such a thing?"

She said that her mother met *G*, but her father did not. To me, it seems like it reveals the different roles the parents may play in their positions of mother and father in Judaism and Islam. In terms of Jewish spouses' families, it seems like it is usually the mother who has a more negative attitude toward mixed marriage (or at least the Jewish spouses consider their mothers' true feelings as being more negative). Whereas, in terms of Muslim spouses' families, it seems like the role of the father is dominant. *F* added what her father once said to them over the phone:

> Do not do this. I am not opposed to his religion or anything (…) Just marry someone else. Do not marry my daughter. We cannot explain this to other people; we are living in small place.

F's family's opposition to their decision seems to be largely motivated by the possibility of receiving negative reactions from their social environment. It seems like even the possibility of a negative reaction may affect people's perceptions strongly. In general, it seems like neither their strong attachment to Islam nor their opposition to Judaism caused their disapproval of her mixed marriage. For instance, one of the anecdotes that she shared shows that the attitudes of the family towards religion did not have a strict characteristic or at least they did not pressure *F* in terms of religion:

> One summer all of my friends decided to go to the Qur'an courses. I insisted on attending to it. None of my sisters did it. My parents did not oppose to it. Once the teacher questioned my name by saying, "What kind of a girl name is this?" I shared this with my parents, and they said that, "You will not go again to that bigoted teacher". I remember of myself thinking that there might be bigoted people in the mosques.

According to *F*, her older sister's marriage has also affected her parents' perspective about her decision of mixed marrying. Her sister was married to a religious Muslim, and he shared that her sister's husband was very negative about her mixed marriage. She said that he warned her by saying that if she married to a Jew, she would not see her sister again. *F* said that his negative attitude –in a way- affected her family's opinion, too. While her older sister's husband was very negative about this, her younger sister and her husband supported their decision. I consider these interactions as vital to see the influence of the symbolic environment in people's thoughts, and to notice how the attitude towards social interactions may be generated. She added that:

> I do not think my mother's and father's true feelings were opposition to my marriage to a Jew, (…) but people are affected by their social environment very much. My mother and my father were affected very much by them [her older sister's husband, and his family]. We all experienced the difficulty.

The multiple perspective model that LeCroy and Rank (1983) argue is useful in terms of interpreting these interactions. It is evident that the possible negative reactions of the symbolic environment of *F*'s family affected their perceptions about *F*'s mixed marriage decision (A1). However, the interactions *F* had with her potential Jewish husband and family given her the feeling of she could marry him (A2). At that time, *F* was a woman who had been living in Istanbul for many years. Thus she felt relatively free of her parents. The social exchanges between them were relatively limited, and also the opposition of her family to her decision transformed their relationship (B). In this sense, the concept of inequality can be interpreted as the opposite opinion they have with respect to her mixed marriage (C). In their case, the degree of conflict was not to see each other (D). Both *F* and her family found the ways to reorganize themselves. *F* did not give up her idea and married to a Jew whereas her family reorganized themselves by not seeing her again (E). The multiple perspective model is as follows (LeCroy & Rank, 1983, p. 445):

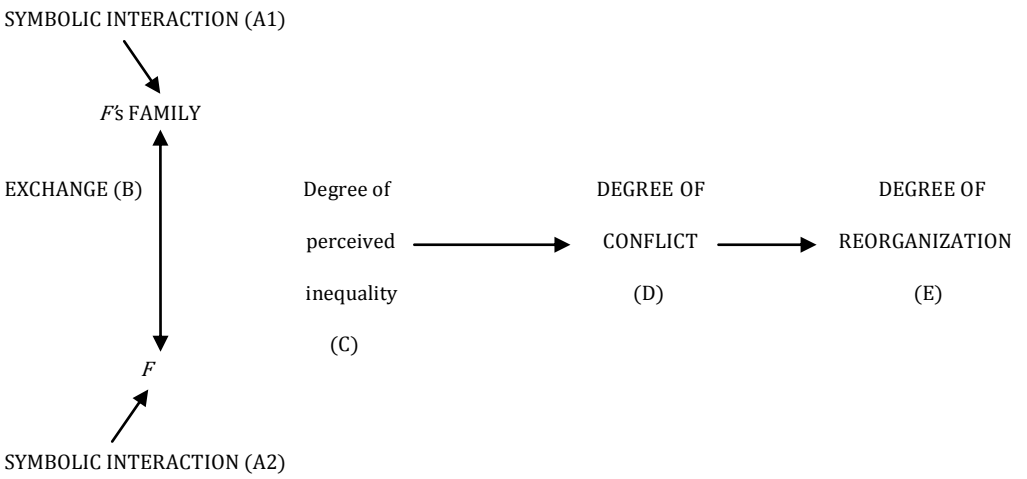

Figure 3. Multiple Perspective Model

Despite the opposition they received from her family, *F* said that she knew that it was going to be a good choice, and they got married in 1987 only with a civil marriage, without any people attending from either family. She said that after marriage –at that time *G*'s father was not alive- they lived together with her mother-in-law for two years, and she mentioned that:

> During those two years, we did not even say a heartbreaking word to each other. (…) She [her mother-in-law] went through a depression; she spent six months in the hospital, and I took care of her.

Another difficult process they went through is related to the issue of conversion. To me, these kinds of experiences are valuable grounds to reveal the dynamic relationship between the mother's position, the role mother plays, and mother's sense of self. Since self is related to "(…) an individual building a set of roles for herself or himself and coming to value certain roles over others", it seems like the relationship between the mother role and religion is also important (Chibucos et al., 2005, p. 239). She said that during her pregnancy, she thought of converting to Judaism for their daughter's religious identity. She emphasized that her only goal was to make the conditions smoother for their daughter. After examining the processes in converting, she said that since it

could not be done in Turkey, she had to go abroad, and they found it very difficult and expensive. She added that they also talked to people who were converted, and she said that they did not recommend her to do it. She said that the reason behind this was not related to the attitudes of the Jewish community after conversion, but it was mostly because of the negative internal processes they went through such as feeling like "quitters" and "criminals". Because of these reasons, she said that she gave up the idea of converting to Judaism.

With respect to their daughter's religious identity, she said that since she spent almost 10 years with her Jewish grandmother, this might be an element in her choice of being a Jew. She argues the situation as follows:

> I want her to have a faith. This will support her through difficult times. It is not very important what it is. I can say we have developed this kind of faith. Since she felt like a Jew, I prepared meals for Passover. She fasted, she took Matzo with her to school [, and] she wore a Hexagram (…). This was something she felt; thus, I supported her. However, (…) when she said, "Mom, pray for me", I prayed the prayers of Islam. (…) She was feeling that way; she wanted it. Maybe she found it different, and it attracted her.

F's words "(…) we have developed this kind of faith" are significant. Not only is it reminiscent of the "creative consciousness" of Muslims that Marranci (2008, p. 93) mentions, but it also provides an example of one of the strategies McCarthy (2007) argues which is "religious code-switching":

> This code-switching, as linguists call it, is a skill that helps bridge two distinctive cultural systems while maintaining their separate integrity. It is (…) a flexible moving back and forth across two distinct languages (p. 198).

It seems like *F* and her daughter use the strategy of "religious code-switching" that McCarthy (2007) argues. She continued that the community invited her to the synagogue for education. She said that she could not do it as a Muslim mother, but she explained this with her busy schedule. She said that she would

agree with the idea, if her father and grandmother took her to it. She also added that it was the period when the synagogues were bombed, and many children were killed. She said that this also affected them, and it made them concerned. Regarding the future, she added that, "We are not happy with the affairs in Turkey. She is half Jewish half Muslim. We do have fears (…)". She also added one paradox their daughter is in, which is related to life-cycle ceremony, where to be buried. In this sense, since her father is Jewish, it is written Jew on her ID, but the community has problems with it. However, she said that the community said they would help them about it. Regarding their situations as partners about the same issue, she said that they also had no chance to be buried to the same cemetery. Their daughter is planning to go the United States because of these negative things. She said that they also considered moving to the United States, but she said that *G*'s sister lives in France, and they have noticed the difficulties she has gone through such as feeling "incomplete". Lastly, in terms of her family of origin's attitudes about their daughter's religious identity she argued as follows:

> They do not see a right in themselves to say anything about this. (…) Of course, there is a distance between them. (…) *H* [their daughter] is not like their other grandchildren. To them, she is a grandchild with whom these subjects are not mentioned. (…) Maybe they do not know how to approach her.

With respect to the possible effect of the religious difference they have with her Jewish husband regarding their relationship, she noted that, "We did have debates about almost everything, but we have not had a debate about religion. Religion has never become prominent". In their homes, there is a Mezuzah at the entrance door, and she said that, "Maybe I touch it more". She said that they used to celebrate mostly Jewish festivals, and attend to dinners. She noted that she has not only learned Jewish festivals and meals, but also she had learned to perceive things through the lenses of non-Muslims. These can be considered as examples of one of the strategies McCarthy (2007) mentions: "deep tolerance" which means not only accepting the differences, but also

understanding and participating in them. She noted that there were times that they criticize both Muslims and Jews. Despite the peaceful relationship between them, she added that, "Sometimes I might be patriotic. (…) When he says something about this country, there might be moments when I perceive him as a foreigner". Overall, according to her, "To understand something, it is wrong to have a look from a distance".

In their social environment, she said that they mostly have Muslim friends, but they also have non-Muslim friends. In addition, they also have friends who could not make mixed marriages because of their families' disapproval. She added that there are times when they talk about moving to Israel if they feel a threat in Turkey with respect to their family. She provided an example of the moments they felt concerned:

> (…) Yesterday we were at the deed office in Eyüp. (…) My husband answered the phone-calls by saying his name. (…) I felt concerned. (…) They hostilely looked at us. These things exist in the country.

She also shared that there were times when someone sees her ID, and asks if it is Spanish or not; and what kind of a surname she has. She said that she only says that it is Spanish, and she does not mention the Jewish dimension of it.

With respect to her idea about the attitude of the community towards mixed marriage, she said that the community thinks that it is inevitable. She particularly emphasized how she feels as a woman in a mixed marriage with a Jewish man:

> In their society women have a very important place. They have a high opinion of women. They pay attention to women's opinions (…). (…) They express it (…). (…) You know you have a place in this family.

She shared her own perception about marriage and family as follows:

> I think of the two together. I believe that family is very important. I think it is a very strong thing. I believe in family. I believe in its strength. If two people are together with their child, I believe that they will overcome many difficulties. (…) I consider having a family and being married as very important. (…) I think it is not meaningful to protest it; on the contrary, it is necessary to take the advantages of it. (…) I think it is necessary to protect the family.

The turning point they had with her family of origin occurred with her older sister and her husband's decision of moving to Istanbul. She said that since they needed help to live in Istanbul, they got together after 10 years, and then *F* and *G* visited her family. To me her voice was full with sadness and expostulation. She mentioned the following point:

> The thing I feel the saddest about is that for 10 years, (…) a person must wonder about with whom her or his child is together with. I question them for this without making them sad; (…) you did not wonder if he is normal (…). This is what affects me the most. (…) It is not necessary to get together, but you have to oversee her or him. This is your child. (…) I have disappointment at this point, and it continues. (…) They also saw that they made a big mistake after meeting *G*.

She also shared a very interesting anecdote which was as follows: After the big earthquake in Turkey in 1999, her family's house collapsed. She said that she and her husband brought her family to their home, but her mother-in-law said that since she was going to France to spend time with her daughter, they could stay in her home (it is the home where *F* and *G* met, and since they now live in that house, I conducted the interview there, too). She said that it was because of the earthquake that the two families met. In terms of her family's opposition to her mixed marriage, she noted that, "First you should get to know someone before religion". Even though she seemed sad about the process they went through, she added that:

> I also perceive them [their families of origin] not being together as an advantage because they are two different structures. (…) There are some differences with respect to education and culture. (…) There might have occurred problems (…).

Her attitude toward religion is as follows: "I am someone who prays, but except for this, I do not have a connection with it". She continued as follows: "I think having faith helps people through their difficult days". She also added that, "It was religion that separated me and my family".

She considers herself "Türkiyeli", and she added that, "I am a Republican, secular person". She believes that, "Religious faith is between the individual and the God or the power in which she or he believes". With respect to religion, she mentioned the following: "I do not believe in religion. I think religions separate people". She perceives the concepts of religion and faith as different things: "I think religion separates people whereas faith brings them together".

9.3.1. Couple 3: Jewish Man Spouse, *G*

G was born in Istanbul in 1955. He emphasized that the general atmosphere in their house was very liberal. Since they were living in a neighborhood in Istanbul, which was not one of the residential areas most Jewish people live, he recalled that he did not have any Jewish friends until he started high school, which had a cosmopolitan population. Regarding the religious atmosphere of their home, he said that he did not experience a loaded religious practicing; however, they used to celebrate the festivals, and practice the Sabbath at Friday evenings. According to him, the motivation behind these was mostly the sense of tradition or the habit his family had. He said that he used to go to the synagogue at Saturdays, and this had an effect on him. He argued that he was taught Judaism both in terms of religion and the community. He got a basic education there about the Jewish festivals, songs, and so forth. He also had the bar-mitzvah. He said that, "All of these (…) did not generate the feeling of being more special in me". He connected this to the characteristics of the neighborhood they lived in; according to him, it paved the way for him to know many different

people. Thus as a family unit they did not mostly interact with Jewish people, but they were in touch with many people from different backgrounds.

Regarding his first encounter with the social reality of them being a minority, he shared the following anecdote: When he was in elementary school, his teacher used a word, giaour, meaning non-Muslim, but it has a negative connotation, which is infidel. He said that he used this word at home, and asked his father about it. He recalls now that his father got upset about it. According to him, in every country minorities have problems. He said that the same is true for Turkey, too. However, he added that in Turkey, Jewish people have relatively few problems. He said that lack of knowledge is the problem. However, he added that people who have little knowledge might create even bigger problems: "At the mechanisms that generate the tie between government and citizens (…) we always experienced difficulty with having a foreign name". He emphasized that he always has difficulties with respect to his foreign name appearing on his ID: "People cannot match my name and my ID". With respect to changing uncommon names to Turkish, which some Jewish people do, he said that he is very opposed to it because, according to him, if someone is uncomfortable with her or his identity, she or he must change her identity. It seems like his minority position has become prominent mostly by the effect of his negative experiences with his uncommon name in the public sphere.

Regarding his family of origin's attitude toward his marriage, he mentioned that, "Every Jewish mother would like her son or daughter to marry a Jew. I mean, she would like to organize the wedding in the synagogue". He said that he had no Jewish girlfriends. He added that his family got to know all of his girlfriends, and they always treated them well. As for being a Jewish man, he shared the general processes with respect to marriage:

> (…) Because the girl's family pays Drahoma [dowry] for him (…) the man is perceived as a valuable individual. (…) The community is small; thus, to (…) make a Jewish man marry a Jewish girl, support is needed, and (…) organization. (….) I felt this. (….) My mother was more conservative. (…) This did not go beyond being small

> advice. (…) To be honest, I was loyal to these suggestions. (…) But it did not manage.

The general experience that Jewish men go through with respect to marriage seems to have the characteristics of both "open" and "closed marriage systems", which Lee (1994) describes. It is difficult to assert that the marriage system they experience has only the characteristics of one. It seems like Jewish families do not react to the potential Muslim bride or groom negatively. However, they do try to organize meetings with Jewish girls for their sons. With respect to mixed marriage, it seems to be that both the "open" and "closed marriage systems" operate for Jewish people. On the one hand, since they live in a predominantly Muslim country, and they interact with people in the public sphere, their choices are affected by the "open marriage system"; on the other hand, their families try to generate the atmosphere of a "closed marriage system".

F and *G* cohabited before marriage, but he said that they wanted to make their relationship official. According to him, the process from cohabitation to marriage was not easy. He shared that his mother reacted to it and even went through a depression not only because of this, but he said that their marriage was one of the factors. He said that he was very determined about it, and once she realized this, she did not struggle with him. He summarized his mother's reaction as follows: "It was as it should be". He also added the positive effect of his uncle's existence for them. This seems to be as a clear example of Resnik's (1933) argument about the conditions that may soothe parental opposition: "Parents may become reconciled when there are several intermarriages in one family" (p. 100).

Regarding *F*'s family's reaction, he mentioned that they went through a difficult process, and he –in a way- connected this to the possible general standing of *F* in her family. According to him, she was already "the odd one of the family" meaning that she made different decisions than her sisters such as going to Istanbul for college and settling there to work. Despite his parents-in-law's opposition to their decision, his perception of their reaction deserves attention:

> After 1999, everything had turned around. We started to get to know each other. (…) Why did I love them [his parents-in-law] so much? (…) They are very direct people. (…) Thus now I think that the reaction they showed was a normal result of their honesty (…).

One of the interesting points is about the registrations in the Jewish community. He pointed the following: "(…) for the [Jewish] community, I do not appear to be married, I still seem unmarried [, and] (…) they do not care about my marriage".

Regarding the religious identity of their daughter, he mentioned that, "There was a silent agreement about her being Jewish". However, he also added that:

> You cannot make decisions about this. Because you have to experience the consequences of your marriage (…); you do not have choices about this in Turkey. From the point of view of civil law in Turkey children take their fathers' religion; I mean, in *H*'s ID it is written Jewish because her father is Jewish, but for the Jewish law children take their mothers' religion.

He noted that, "*H* is not Jewish for the Jewish community, but for the Republic of Turkey she is a Jew". According to him, the only alternative would have been for her to accept being a Muslim, but they thought that her name would not match with a Muslim identity. Despite the difficulties they face publicly in terms of her religious identity being accepted, he shared his own observation:

> She enjoys being a Jew. Among her friends, she seems to feel like she has a title. (…) for instance, she takes Matzo with her, (…) she knows when the festivals are. She lets both us and her friends know about these.

He said that his daughter might have an opportunity abroad to be accepted as Jewish, but according to him, in Turkey this is almost impossible. He added that the community might hesitate accepting her as Jewish. He also added the same point *F* mentioned: "If she died, where would she be buried?" Another theme was

about her marriage in the future. According to him, there is a paradox in that situation, too: "If she wanted to marry a Jew, she would be in our position". He added that she will resolve these. With respect to her possible spouse, he pointed out the importance of the atmosphere in which someone grows up, and he added the following:

> In the end, *H* grew up in (…) Turkish society, (…) I prefer her to be with someone who grew up in the same way. (…) This is a very logical thing. (…) It is more difficult to match someone who grew up with a different tradition. (…) I hope she goes to the United States, (…) but marries a Turk. I always prefer this. Her relationship would be easier.

It seems like for him the country someone grows up in is a prominent element with respect to her or his spouse selection. He does not seem to pay attention to the religious background of her potential spouse, but rather the culture seems vital. This can also be interpreted in the following way: he would have considered marrying a Jew from another country as more difficult than marrying a Muslim from the country he was born in. He thinks that where you are born and grow up is the most important point to be able to match easily with someone.

Like with other Jewish interviewees, in general, he seems to be –in a way- opposed to conversion: "I have never thought of converting". Regarding *F*'s idea of converting to Judaism for their daughter, he shared that it was a mistake to consider it. He said that the community did not accept the idea; thus, he showed them a very clear reaction. He continued as follows: "After this, I never allowed this subject to be mentioned again". This seems to be reminiscent of McCall's (1970) argument about the "inhibitory rules" in relationships:

> These are *inhibitory rules* which exclude elements to be found in the wider environment which are irrelevant or hazardous to the encounter (as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 17 italics in the original).

It seems like after their attempt to convert, they excluded the subject of conversion as a conversation topic from their life.

Regarding the general atmosphere in their home in terms of religion, he said that they perceive festivals as a celebration. For instance, if it is a Muslim festival, then, they go to her family. He mentioned that he likes this. This is an example of the strategy of "deep tolerance", which McCarthy (2007) argues. The partners do not only accept the differences they have, but they also understand and participate in these.

He added that he grew up in the company of Muslims, and he knows the Jewish community well, too. But his wife's encounters with the minorities have been more limited. In this sense, he made an observation about the effect of their marriage on *F*'s awareness:

> I already experienced many things [such as] people insulting Jews, and they still continue. However, she did not know these. After marrying me, (…) we started to experience these together, she was very surprised [, and] I remember this. (...) maybe she was hearing of these, but she did not know what they meant. She married someone from a community that she had no idea of. (…) Maybe she had heard of these, but you would not pay attention. However, when you start to live with someone who is the target, she started to experience these directly. She even started to react to these.

It seems like Muslim partners become aware of and/or are more sensitive to the things they hear about the minorities after marrying a Jew. In this sense, it seems like the daily difficulties they face in the public sphere are not directly related to their mixed marriage, but to the negative things other people say about Jews.

In the existing literature on intermarriage, it is often argued that having similar perceptions is important for couples. In this sense, the perceptions of *F* and *G* of the concepts of marriage, family and religion seem to be almost the same. His perception about marriage and family is as follows: "I find the institution of marriage very right. (…) I also mean to be a nuclear family. (…) I

also find to have a child right. (…) I do not find right to struggle with it". According to him, marriage and family lead people to a more happy and updated life. Regarding his perception of religion he argued:

> We definitely think of God and religion separately. (…) We both believe in God; we believe the existence of a power, this is also a feeling that comforts people, but religions are made by people.

Regarding his perception of being a Jew, he said:

> Right now, I am enjoying it. It makes me feel a bit special. (…) I sometimes say (…) there are many genius [Jewish] people, (…) but that is it. [There is] nothing more. Also, of course, this is a more mature period for me compared to my youth, with regard to religion, too.

Another important point he argued can be considered as an example of the "transformation rules" McCall (1970) argues: "These allow external elements into the encounter but only in an altered form which makes them harmless" (as cited in Lee, 1994, p. 17). Both Judaism and Islam, beyond being the origins of individuals' religious identities, have important places within the societal debates. Thus for mixed couples it seems significant to argue about these in a manner, without hurting the other. In this sense, *G's* words are important in terms of noticing a strategy that they adopt in the private sphere. Their strategy can be interpreted as a "transformation rule":

> I say things about Jews that I do not approve or like; she mentions the same points for Muslims. However, we do not usually do the opposite. This is like a gallantry agreement. It is not something intentional, but rather it happens naturally.

With respect to the Jewish community's attitude toward mixed marriages, he mentioned the following:

> Because they do not accept *H*, for instance a Jew is lost. (…) We [Jewish people] do not have the expansionist soul; thus, (…) they will disappear. Probably they are aware of it, but they do not have anything they can do.

He also shared that there were many mixed couples who were considering getting married and came to them for advice. He summarized the two points they shared with these couples as follows:

> We said them: If you come here to ask these, it means that you already decided you are searching for approval to apply it more easily. This exists in human's nature. (…) There is an important rule: Do not make your parents intervene in this, even after the child is born. There also will be handicaps for sure. (…) Respect… We advised this very much. (…) Here, it means more because you may slip things from your mouth.

He perceives his own mixed marriage as follows:

> The biggest enemy of a relationship is monotony. (…) In mixed marriage, tiny cultural differences bring color to it. I think religiously mixed marriage have even more colors. (…) We still have many colors.

He mentioned the importance he sees in these mixed marriages:

> (…) we crossed the rules of religion's categorization. Thus to me, by marrying we created a more holy, important event than the ones who are married to someone from the same religion. (…) When you look at its social, legal dimension, it is a lame thing, but the shame does not belong to us. (…) We married to each other just as two people beyond everything.

He continued as follows:

> My marriage is very enjoyable. (…) Of course, there are problems, and we have fights. (…) Firstly, we have a child, and we believe that she grew up nicely; she –of course- always keeps us alive (…); one of the glues of

> this marriage is the fact that we are from different religions.

He also added that if divorce occurs in a mixed marriage, the difference in religion must not be used as a scapegoat:

> There are of course ones [mixed marriages] that are managed very well, and the ones which are not. (…) One of the reasons behind it is not the religious difference because (…) different colors make it manageable. If the marriage ends (…) it is not the real factor, people might use it.

9.3.2. The Child of *F* and *G*: *H*

I consider the interview with *H* as an important part of the current study. First of all, reaching the mixed couples is already a difficult process and to have the permission to interview with the children is another difficulty in these kinds of studies. *F* and *G* had no problems about me interviewing with her; thus, it was an important opportunity. Secondly, her choice in terms of her religious identity can be considered as a very valuable ground to apply "(…) a more-open ended search into what Judaism means to those claim it as an identity" (Brink-Danan, 2008, p. 681).

H was born in 1991 in Istanbul. She is a high school student in a private school, and she is planning to go the United States for her college education. Since she is 19 years old, it can be asserted that she already has experienced some of the consequences of being a child of mixed marriage. First of all, she noted that by the effect of her parents' characters, she grew up in a free atmosphere. With respect to her friends, she said that she has Jewish, Muslim and Armenian friends, but she added that when only young Jewish people get together, she does not prefer to spend time with them. She said that, "It is known that I am a Jew [among her friends]".

Regarding her relations with her mother's family, she argues that they never ask her about anything about her religious choice. She spent more time

with her father's mother, and she mentioned that she always has had more access to Jewish life. She emphasized that she has never considered various Jewish festivals as religious exercises, but as cultural things. She said that she has always embraced her situation by adding that when she goes to her mother's side, she experiences the Muslim culture, and with her father's side she experiences the Jewish culture. Her embracement is in the same line with Beck's (2005) finding that the children respondents in his study "(…) embraced their dual identities (…)" (p. 41). It seems like *H* embraces the Jewish identity, and also the situation she is born into.

Regarding her choice of being a Jew, she shared the difficulty she experiences as follows:

> Because my father is a Jew, my mother is Muslim; actually, the fact that I am Jewish is mostly my choice. Because being a Jew comes from the blood; thus, it is after the mother, but according to the Turkish Law, you take the religion of your father. (…) I am Jewish in a strange way. (…) Thus it takes time to explain this to other people.

She emphasized that, "In my ID it is written Jewish, but by my choice". She perceives her connection with Judaism as follows: "(…) I do not consider myself as a fanatic Jew. (…) I mostly consider religion as a cultural activity, and (…) I am a materialist in terms of religion". She continued as follows: "In Turkey, the Jewish youth (…) usually identify themselves before anything else as a Jew. (…) I do not identify myself firstly as a Jew". Moreover she mentioned that, "I am not a religious person. I consider describing people with regard to their religion as ridiculous". Regarding mixed marriage, according to her, hypothetically, if she married a Muslim, then it would be a mixed marriage. Regarding the process she went through in terms of choosing being a Jew, she argues the following:

> I guess they made a decision. (…) I cannot make the exact distinction now. (…) However, now, I know that I want to be a Jew. I know I will choose being a Jew. (…) But no one has imposed anything on me.

She also said that:

> (…) Since I grew up with my grandmother [her father's mother], (…) I grew up within that culture more. I also did not see my mother's side much. (…) I think there may be this behind it. It is a very interesting question; I really do not know how I chose it. If you ask me now, I may say that I might choose Judaism.

She added that it was written Jewish in her ID before her decision, but while they were renewing her ID, they asked her about it, and she still wanted to be registered as Jewish. She said that she did not have the bat-mitzvah, and she added that it is not mandatory.

With respect to her perception of the difference she sees between Judaism and Islam in Turkey, she discussed the following:

> In Turkey they [Muslims] are either very fanatic (…) or they do not believe in religion. (…) When I say Muslims, the fanatics come to my mind (…). I do not feel anything negative toward them, but I find them very fanatic. (…) I had two choices. (…) When you are a Jew, there are privileges in terms of being included in a minority. The Jewish community provides you with scholarships. (…) There are [also] prejudices about Jewish people.

In this sense, she said that people do not make the distinction between the politics of Israel and Jews in Turkey. Overall, according to her, Judaism is a "cultural activity". She added that, "(…) it is mostly a choice". Beck (2005) argues that by the effect of popular entertainment, children perceive Jewish life not as "dynamic and attractive", but as "fragile and moribund". However, it seems like *H* perceives Jewish life in Turkey as a culture that is "dynamic and attractive" (p. 42). Overall, she considers herself as a "Jewish Turk".

With respect to her first encounter with her situation of being a child of mixed marriage, she shared as follows:

> I had always known this difference, but the time when I really recognized it was with the religion course at school. I was exempt from it, but I wanted to attend to it because I was curious about it. (…) What I dreamt of, is it to be a cultural course. We directly talked about Islam. (…) I did not attend to it again.

Regarding the advantages she feels in terms of being born to a mixed marriage, she argues as follows:

> (…) It has advantages intellectually (…) because you do not only understand the advantages of Islam, but also of Judaism. (…) Most of my Muslim friends do not know much about other religions. (…) I was suggested to be examining them both.

9.4. Couple 4: Muslim Woman Spouse, *I*

I is born in 1978. She grew up in the Black Sea region, and she had a peaceful childhood without fluctuations. Regarding her social environment, she said that she had no Jewish friends, and almost all of her friends were Muslim. With respect to the atmosphere in her family of origin, she said that her family was not "a typical Black Sea family", because families in that region are mostly known as conservative yet hers was not. She connected the difference of her family to the characteristics of her parents. She said that if they were conservative, they would have not allowed her to marry a non-Muslim. She mentioned that there are no other mixed marriages in her family. She pointed out that they have many relatives living abroad, mostly in Europe, but none of them has a mixed marriage. She said that her family did not set for her any criteria regarding her spouse selection while she was growing up, and she thinks that this is related to their general trust they have for her decisions. She mentioned that before her marriage, she also had Alevi and Kurdish boyfriends.

I and *J* [her husband] met in the office when they started to work together. Regarding the development of their relationship, she said that she had reservations at first because of the possible problems, which could occur in terms of their different religious backgrounds, but she wanted to give it a try. In terms

of her family, she noted that his name was being heard at home, and her parents were feeling the existence of their relationship between them. It seems like *I* and her family mostly had a silent dialogue about it. With respect to her first meeting with his family, she said that she did not have any concerns about her different religious background, but she had concerns for whether she would be loved or not by his family. After meeting them, she said that she started to attend the Sabbath, and she added that she was fascinated with it. With respect to her friends' comments about Jewish people, she shared that she got upset, and she protected *J*. She also recalled that one of her friends reacted to him being Jewish with the question of "Will he be circumcised?" She noted that they used to say Jewish people are miser. In general, she added that she is very opposed to any kind of generalizations.

On the subject of her decision of marriage, she mentioned that the characteristics of *J* such as him being compatible and farsighted, and also his optimistic attitude, affected her. She said that not from her friends, but rather from *J*'s Jewish friends, they received some reservations about their relationship that were revolving around the issue of making the right decision and the possible problem they might have about their future child's religious identity. She said that after everyone got to know each other, these kinds of thoughts left their places to good relationships.

The process she shared about their marriage ceremony seems to be revealing a common strategy in mixed marriages that can be stated as: "Keep it simple". The difficulty they faced was with the opposing traditions Jews and Muslims have in terms of dowry. She noted that while in Judaism, the groom's family is given Drahoma [dowry] by the bride's family, in Muslim tradition it is the opposite. She said that each family wanted to apply its own tradition by emphasizing that they had good intentions. However, she and her husband noticed the possibility that a crisis may occur between the families, and so they decided to only make a civil marriage without a ceremony. She said that they –in a sense- made self-sacrifice. She said that she would have wanted to have a ceremony, but she also thinks that this way was the best.

Regarding their social environment now, she mentioned that they mostly have Jewish friends, who are mostly *J*'s old friends. She also shared that they are sometimes asked why they do not have a child, and they are asked if they are worried about her or his religious identity. She shared that she dislikes these questions. With respect to conversion, she seems to be having opposition to it:

> My husband always says that everyone should keep the religion she or he is born into. No one has said anything to me such as converting. (…) I do not find it right. (…) I practice the things I want. (…) Everyone is responsible for her or his faith.

Regarding the religious identity of their future child, she said that they have no decisions about it, and pointed out the paradox these children go through, especially when the mother is not Jewish:

> Actually, you cannot let her or him decide. For Judaism, the child takes mother's religion; however, in Islam it depends on father's religion. (…) I do not think it will be something important while raising her or him. (…) It is not that important for me.

She summarized her perception of religion and also the religious atmosphere in their home as follows:

> For instance, I do not pray five times in a day. (…) But, for example, I do fast. I feel good when I fast. I practice the things that I believe. (…) My book is different, I pray our prayer; my husband reads another book and prays; however, in the end, the thing we pray for is common. We have faith. In the end, we both believe in something although through different ways. (…) We praise. (…) For example, when I fast, he accompanies me. (…) I have been keeping Passover since our engagement because you are in the same house. In the end, you chose this marriage. (…) The life is common. You have to be compatible with each other. (…) I do not find it [eating bread while her husband does not] ethic. This would disturb me conscientiously. (…) Thus I pay attention to these very much; maybe I am careful about it more than they [Jewish people] are.

This seems to be providing an example of Marranci's (2008) argument about the "creative consciousness" of Muslims (p. 93). In the case of *I*, since she is in a mixed marriage, it seems like although she does not consider herself as religious, she does not cease to consider herself as a Muslim (mostly by emphasizing the strong faith she has). She has found ways both to practice the things she believes in Islam while being respectful to her husband's Jewish religious practices. Moreover the atmosphere that she described seems to call upon the concepts of "deep tolerance" and "religious code-switching" that McCarthy (2007) argues. *I* does not only accept her husband's different religious background, but also she understands and participates in these practices. In addition, their perception about each other's practices seems to be a clear example of the strategy of "religious code-switching": "This code-switching, as linguists call it, is a skill that helps bridge two distinctive cultural systems while maintaining their separate integrity" (McCarthy, 2007, 198). She said that she has a strong faith, but she does not consider their religious difference as a problem. She said that people may practice different religions in the same house. She mentioned that she enjoys the praising tradition in Judaism and Christianity very much, and she considers this tradition as a difference from Islam. She also mentioned that, "This marriage is not about religion. He could be a Muslim, too. This is all about being human". Regarding their mixed marriage, she discussed the following: "I perceive it as richness for myself. (…) We both celebrate Jewish and Muslim festivals. (…) It is like continuously a mood of festivity". She considered her perception about religious issue as "universal". This perception of hers is reminiscent of Cohen's (2009) finding that mixed married Jews have more universal values. In this sense, it seems like mixed married Muslims also consider themselves to have a universal perception. She also mentioned that they are comfortable with each other about talking religious issues.

Regarding the concepts of marriage and family, she attributes the following meaning: "tranquility and harmony". With respect to their harmonious relationship with *J*, she considered the possible effects of their families' positive attitudes toward their marriage as important. She mentioned that, in general, their families are very different:

> We both have very good families. Both of us. While my family has lived in a very different atmosphere, my husband's family has also lived a different life. My family has lived a rural life whereas my husband's family attended to French schools. They are saloon people. (…) When they come together, (….) they get along very well. This is our luck.

She considers the good intentions both families have, to be at the core of the harmony they have accomplished despite their differences. She also discussed her own perception about the attitude of the Jewish community towards mixed marriage:

> They actually do not want it. Because they went through difficult times in the past, they became more closed naturally; and, they want to reproduce in their own group. But I do not find it right. (…) You have to marry someone from this village. You cannot marry someone from the next village. You can meet someone (…) but you cannot marry him because he is not from your village. You have to choose from that village. I think this destroys the charm of love.

9.4.1. Couple 4: Jewish Man Spouse, *J*

J grew up in Istanbul, and he spent his summers in Büyükada. Since Büyükada has a remarkable Jewish population, and he also attended a Jewish high school, and even though he had Muslim and Armenian friends, most of his friends have been Jews. In terms of the religious atmosphere in his family origin, he said that they used to celebrate the Jewish festivals, but he did not consider his family of origin as conservative. *J* summarized his family of origin with respect to Judaism by saying that everything was as it should have been. He said that they were not very different from other Jewish families in Turkey. Regarding his bar-mitzvah, he shared that at that time he was not very aware of it, but later he understood its importance. He mostly argued this in terms of the effort his parents put into it.

With respect to his experiences as a Jew in Turkey, he mentioned that he has never perceived himself as different from the rest of society. Moreover he

noted that he has not experienced the negative consequences of being a Jew in Turkey, but there have been times that he felt the positive consequences of it. When I wanted him to elaborate on these positive dimensions, he shared that Jewish people are mostly known as hard-working people; thus, he has had some advantages in terms of business.

Regarding the socialization he went through in his childhood in terms of spouse selection, he said that his family was never strict about it, and he claimed that if they were, then it would have affected him. He said that the important thing for him was to be happy. With respect to his decision of marrying *I*, he shared the following reasons:

> Regarding her character, behaviors and expectations from life, I thought that she is compatible with me. (…) She could have been a Jew. (…) Marriage is not easy because I see many people around who are getting divorced. (…) People have no tolerance for one another. I now notice that I made the right choice. (…) It is important to have the same perception. She could have been someone who is Christian.

He noted that at the beginning of their relationship, he wanted *I* to share it with her family because he was not sure about their reactions to her relationship with a non-Muslim. He mentioned that there are other mixed marriages in his family. He said that his parents did not react much; however, he added that maybe they felt differently from the inside. This interpretation is in the same line with most mixed married Jews' thoughts. He described their marriage process as "something simple". He argued that Jewish parents usually have the desire to raise their grandchildren with religious traditions, and they want them to feel that they belong to somewhere. Regarding their child's identity in the future, he shared his opinion as follows:

> It does not matter. (…) My child can be a Muslim. (…) Normally, not many people would say this. Everyone would want her or him to [follow] their religion. (…) It is not important. She or he will choose.

While studying Jewish people, it is important to take into account the dominant atmosphere they live in. As Reinharz (2009) argues Jewish people are both local and international people. One of the important things, which Reinharz's argument points out, is that despite the common points Jewish people have, they, and also their interpretations about Judaism, are influenced by the local culture in which they live. Since Jewish people mostly live either in predominantly Christian or Muslim countries, his following description seems to be an important example of their individual experiences in terms of being a religious minority:

> Honestly, I have experienced Islam more than my own religion; since we are living within this society you know everything about it. (…) Thus it is like living with a dual religious identity. (…) When I hear the call to the prayer, I get happy. (…) I feel like really belonging to here. Maybe others did not say this, but I am different.

He mentioned that he tries to accompany *I* while she is fasting, and she does the same, too. This strategy they both adopt is a clear example of "deep tolerance" that McCarthy (2007) argues. His emphasis on the praising dimension of religion is in the same line with his wife, *I*: "We fast not because of religious necessity, but to thank to God for the things God has given us. I find fasting logical, we both do". He noted that there is a Mezuzah in their house. Overall, he shared that, "She is one of us, and I am one of them". Regarding the issue of conversion, his opinion is in the same line with other Jewish interviewees:

> I do not want her to convert; I do not convert either. Even if she wanted it, I would not want her to convert. Because I believe that the individual lives as she or he is born.

With respect to the meaning of being a Jew to him, he shared the following: "I was not very aware of it when I was a child. This is how we are born and how we live". Also, he shared the meaning of marriage and family for him as follows:

> It is the unity of fate. Sharing and living everything together. (…) I cannot think of myself without her. She is the person with whom I would like to share everything I experience. (…) It is like I am living for her. To me, marriage means her. (…) [It is] living together without keeping anything secret.

In terms of feeling the minority status he has as a Jew in Turkey, he mentioned that:

> The first time I felt my difference was during my military service. I was together with many different people. They made me feel that I am different, but not in a negative way. There were also Armenian and Jewish people there. They were all from Istanbul; (…) they were another group. I used to prefer to be with people from the East. I preferred to get to know the lives and people I do not know.

In general, he shared that there are times that he keeps his identity secret. He said that most of the people lack knowledge about the Jewish people; thus, their attitudes toward Jewish people may be prejudicial. Overall, he summarized his own perception about his religious and ethnic identity as follows: "I am a Turk, but my religion is Judaism. I do not feel like belong to anywhere else". *J*'s perception of his Jewish identity seems to be revealing the importance of paying attention to Jewish people's opinions and feelings about their religious identity:

> What it [anthropology] does suggest is the need for research which illuminates the discursive means through which definitions of 'traditional' Judaism are established, defended, and debated (Brink-Danan, 2008, p. 681-682 quotation marks in the original).

By pointing out that people might have different choices, he added that:

> I know many people since they feel like they must marry within the community, they must choose from a small community, and there are times they feel pressure. I think the important point is everyone should be able to

> do what she or he wants to do; then, it means she or he is free.

He added that people who consider mixed marriage should be strong in order to deal with the possible reactions. One of the mixed marriages he knew was a Jewish-Armenian mixed marriage, and he said that they had serious problems.

9.5. Couple 5: Muslim Woman Spouse, *K*

K's mother was born in Bulgaria, and her father in Romania. They came to Turkey separately; they met, and they got married in Turkey. Regarding her family of origin, *K* firstly emphasized their different roots. *K* grew up in Istanbul, and she attended a high school that consisted of many non-Muslims; thus, she mentioned that her childhood was full with people from different backgrounds. She added that her parents used to have many non-Muslim friends, too. With respect to the religious atmosphere at her family of origin, she noted that it was written Islam in her parents' IDs; however, she remembers no one in her family, who was religious. She summarized the religious atmosphere as follows:

> They firstly thought for us to believe in God. (…) The only religious education I got was when I started to understand and question these things; my father bought me a book explaining Islam and religions. He wanted me to read it and ask him the things I wanted to ask. (…) I was 12 or 13. Thus, we were raised as Muslims, but we did not live depending on the religious pressure or religious rules. We were not used to living with respect to religious rules, but we celebrated the festivals.

In this sense, she continued as follows: "(…) it was mostly said that if you are a good and honest person, then you are an acceptable person for God. (…) All the religions want people to be good". With respect to her parents' attitude toward mixed marriage, she shared that one of the daughters of her family's friend married to Jew, but she said that their experience was very painful. She remembers that this was an issue that her parents talked about. She said that especially her father did not approve of the idea of mixed marriage. She added

that when she was 13-14 years old, she knew that her father would not like the idea, if she married a Jew.

Regarding the beginning of her awareness of the issue of minorities, she shared an anecdote, which she said that she remembers very well:

> (…) I had a bad experience; it was very painful for that time. (…) My friends around the age of 13 (…) started to go there [Jewish clubs], and I found myself in the situation of not being able to go there. (…) That was when I understood that they were different, and I was different. (…) I went through a traumatic process.

K and *L* had been childhood friends since their families used to live in the same neighborhood in Istanbul. She said that for a long time they were only friends, who came across each other from time to time. She noted that he was not someone whom she considered dating. After her graduation from college, they again came across, and she described it by saying that, "It was the right time and place". They got married in 1988. She said that they had a civil marriage, and organized a cocktail party. She mentioned that the only thing she got concerned about was her family. However, she added that at that time she was a grownup, who had graduated from college, and started to work. Thus, she said that if she had been 18 years old, her parents would have reacted to her decision differently. She said that her father talked to her about this only once:

> He only said that there is this many Muslims living in Turkey, and this many Jewish people. (…) How did you accomplish this? (…) He talked to me about the things I may face and problems I may have.

She said that she was aware of his unhappiness at the time, but according to her, when he met *L*, he liked him. Regarding her encounter with *L*'s family, she said that she did not have any concerns about their different identity. She added that since she was familiar with their culture, meeting them was not like being introduced to a "totally different world". On the subject of the relationships between the two families, she noted that:

> My husband's family is not religious either. (…) Thus both of the families were not very distant to each other in terms of culture except religious difference. (…) My husband's mother's side (…) came from Russia. My mother grew up in Bulgaria. (…) My mother and his mother used to chat in Russian. On the other hand, there is a Muslim family [, and there is] a Jewish family. (…) Although we are from different religions; (…) in terms of (…) lifestyle (…), we got along very well. Thus (…) we did not experience anything bad in terms of our religious difference.

On the subject of their friend's reactions to their mixed marriage, she shared the following:

> These depend on how someone perceives her or his own situation. I always perceive this as something natural. Maybe even though they felt something, but maybe they could not reflect it on me; (…) they even maybe had sympathy for it.

She mentioned that although they have friends from different backgrounds, their social environment is mostly Muslim. She shared some of the negative things she experienced after her mixed marriage in terms of *L*'s Jewish identity. She shared these as follows:

> For instance, you go to the bank. [They ask you] name, surname. (…) You come across with questions such as "Is your husband foreign?" (…) In Turkey, there are people, who live in Turkey, and they are not Muslims (...). His name is *L*, he speaks Turkish very well, (…) but they ask him "Where are you from?" (…) It happens in the business, too. No one has the notion of (…) there are people, who live in Turkey (…) with different identities. They directly think that he is a foreigner, and they are surprised as if this cannot happen. (…) I get angry with these. In fact, in Turkey, there are many non-Muslims, their names are different names, but they are Turks, they do their military service [, and] they are educated here. (…) Not with bad intentions, but they do not know such a thing.

In the same line with other Muslim spouses, after marrying to a Jew, she seemed to become more sensitive in terms of these prejudices in the society. In the light of the theory of symbolic interactionism, it can be said that Muslim partners' attitudes towards the negative incidences revolving around the Jewish identity becomes one of prominent factors in terms of their behaviors and attitudes in their social interactions. As Chibucos et al. (2005) argues that, "These identities (…) become hierarchically organized by the level of salience they hold for an individual" (p. 238). Even though Jewish identity is not one of their identities, it seems like their husbands' Jewish identity has an effect on the Muslim spouses' everyday interactions and perceptions. As Chibucos et al. (2005) points out:

> (…) behavior can only be understood in terms of the meanings the actor attributes to it. (…) the reasons or meanings that underlie the behavior are more important to understanding than the behavior itself (p. 237).

Moreover like other Muslim spouses, *K* considered her Jewish husband as more patriotic than herself. She said that he claims and protects his Turkish identity very much.

K and *L* have a son, who is 15 years old. She shared her early opinion regarding the child's situation as follows:

> Things did not develop as I thought, but I always think that having parents from different religions is an opportunity for the children in life. Different cultures, different identities… Honestly, regardless of any religion, I did not want him to get a religious identity and education. (…) If my husband was Muslim, I still would not approve of him to getting a religious education.

She said that when he was born, they first wanted to leave the part of religious identity blank on his ID; however, in accordance with civil law in Turkey it was written Jewish. She explained the process he went through in terms of him finding out his situation as follows:

> Since he was little, I told him about this to not to make him learn this suddenly. (…) There was a cartoon (…) that was about Judaism; (…) I told him that, "Your father's grandfathers are coming from (…) this culture". Then, there was again a cartoon about Islam (...). (…) "Your mother side is like this; your father is like this. You are coming from these roots". (…) He is very happy about it. Because, for instance, when he was little, he used to say there is this and that in my blood.

Their son had the bar-mitzvah. This made their son's case interesting since it is mostly known that the Jewish community does not organize the bar-mitzvah for the children of mixed marriages when mother is non-Jew. Since his father is Ashkenazi, this might be a result of the difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews in Turkey. This is open to debate. *K* explained the process as follows, which can also be seen as an example of Resnik's (1933) argument that is "(…) the parents of these children attempt to define the place of the child in the social world" (p. 102):

> It was not very easy. We made it in Turkey, in the synagogue. The community used to be closed about it (…) but I think because mixed marriages increased, the community here became smaller; they are more flexible about this. (…) Honestly, I was not very eager about it, I even had an opposition to it, but my husband wanted it so much. He said that this is one of his identities; he might need this in his life. Then, I found it right, too. He can always claim that he is a Muslim, but if this was not made, he would not have been able to claim that he is Jewish. I thought that we must give him this opportunity. (…) My husband made an effort. (…) He got education, then, they made the ceremony.

She added as follows:

> Until the bar-mitzvah, he used to say that his father is Jewish, his mother is Muslim. Now, after the ceremony, he finds himself closer to Judaism. Actually, he does not seem to want to be put in a [category], but when there is a need, he says that he is Jewish. When he is with some of his friends, it is like he decides it depending on the situation (…). But in the long run, I do not think he will

> be living or choosing his spouse regarding religious rules. But he has such an identity, and he knows it.

As a Jewish-Muslim mixed couple, *K* and *L* seem to consider the bar-mitzvah as pivotal for their son mostly in terms of their son to claim Jewishness as an identity. As *K* mentioned in the narrative above, they seem to think that if the bar-mitzvah had not been organized, their son would not have been able to claim that he is Jewish. These points seem to be revealing one of the meanings the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children attribute to the bar-mitzvah. In the same line with Beck's (2005) finding, "During childhood, the bar (…) mitzvah represented the major contact between respondents and Jewish life", and it can be asserted that having the bar-mitzvah ceremony has an important effect on children's perceptions of their religious identities (p. 42). *K* also mentioned that:

> If the girl he marries or the atmosphere he lives in is predominantly Muslim, he might be closer to that side; if it is predominantly Jewish, he might be closer to that side. I honestly do not know it.

With respect to his spouse selection in the future, she noted that for her the most important point is his happiness. All of these points seem to be remarkable in terms of revealing the dynamic character of the concept of identity.

She mentioned that the school he is currently attending has a cosmopolitan atmosphere; however, he also attends water polo, and she said that there exists a more homogenous atmosphere. She remembers that from time to time he had difficulties such as his friends were saying that he is not a Turk because his name is an uncommon name in Turkey. She remembers him shouting to his friends: "I am a Turk!"

With respect to the traditions of Judaism and Islam, she said that if it is a Jewish festival, they all go together to his mother's home, whereas in Muslim festivals they go to her family. In the same line with other interviewees, this is a clear example of the strategy of "deep tolerance" McCarthy (2005) points out. They also have Mezuzah at their homes. She mentioned that she and her

husband can talk about the societal events without feeling any concerns meaning their different religious backgrounds do not constitute a barrier to their discussions. Regarding the concepts of marriage and family, she shared her own perception as follows: "He is me. I am him. (…) we all are one. (…) my son is a totally different thing".

Regarding the connection she has to her Muslim identity, she mentioned that when she was 16 or 17, she tried to fast, and read the Qur'an. According to her, they were times when she was also interested in philosophy and psychology, and also in religions. She added that she read many things about other religions, too. She said that she was born a Muslim. She summarized her perception of religion and Islam as follows:

> I was born like that. (…) I am not atheist or anything; I believe in God very much. I always pray. I praise, but while praying with the words I do not understand, I do not feel relaxed; I pray as how it comes from the inside. I do not believe that between the God and the person there must be anything. Thus my belief (…) in God does not have to be within the limits of some rules. (…) I do not like the extremism. (…) I am opposed to anything that is extreme not only in terms of Islam, in terms of Jews, too.

Her perception about her Muslim identity and connection to Islam seem to reveal the importance of the concept of "creative consciousness" which Marranci (2008) points out (p. 93). From the point of view of Marranci's (2008) theory of identity, "(…) *what we feel to be* (…) determines our personal identity" (p. 97 italics in the original).

On the subject of the attitude of the Jewish community toward the issue of mixed marriage, she argued the following:

> They have a group that lives very close to each other. (…) That group has been together since childhood, and they have lived together. You cannot be one of them, and they do not accept you either. (...) If my husband had been someone who was in that group, I would have been unhappy. (…) I would not have been comfortable.

> (…) However, people who live outside of this are families like us. (…) In addition, (…) my husband is Ashkenazi; thus, (…) they do not live in that community; they are few [in terms of population] (…).

Cohen's (2009) argument about the universal values and concerns mixed married Jews have seems to be a common point in the current study, too. This seems to be true not only in terms of Jewish spouses, but also for Muslim spouses. Regarding the importance she sees in her mixed marriage, she shared as follows:

> In a society where when people hear the names they are not familiar with, (…) they ask where they are from. I wish this kind of marriage (…) becomes more apparent; thus, people can see that these things occur here. (…) While there is much going on between religions (…) [and] people talk about these, Jews [and] Muslims. (…) I wish they could see that people with two different religions can build a good life together; they may think that it is possible to live on the same soil.

9.5.1. Couple 5: Jewish Man Spouse, *L*

L was born in 1957 in Istanbul where he has spent most of his life, and he also has been in Israel and France. Regarding his social environment while he was growing up, he shared that he used to have friends from different identities, and he added that he was not raised within the Jewish community. In this sense, he mentioned that his family did not have any pressures on him. On the subject of the religious atmosphere in his family of origin, he said that his parents were not religious, but they used to celebrate the Jewish festivals, and they followed the traditions. Since his father was a journalist in Israel, they lived in Israel for 2-3 years, and he attended to school there, and learned Hebrew. His bar-mitzvah was made in Israel at the Western Wall. He described his bar-mitzvah as "far from vanity [and] simple". He mentioned that it means a lot to him, and he added that he could not organize their son's bar-mitzvah there, but he noted that, "(…) I made a nice ceremony here".

On the subject of his encounter with their minority status in Turkey, he mentioned the following:

> In Turkey, (…) the minority is always a minority. (…) We feel that we are minorities; government always considers minorities in a different status. I mean, have you ever heard of a non-Muslim (…) who is minister? (…) In fact if a military officer gets married to a non-Muslim, he might not progress. (…) We try to live here without jogging on. (…) This is how it is for all non-Muslims. (…) My grandfather died young; he (…) went to military service at the age of 43-44, and he died after one or two years after he came back. (…) We do not bring these issues, but they are real.

L also shared that in everyday interactions, he usually uses a similar Turkish name instead of his original name. It seems like names are very important elements in everyday interactions; they have a significant symbolic function. Most of the Jewish interviewees, almost all of them, mentioned the difficulties they face in terms of their uncommon names. In the public sphere, it seems like the possible consequences of being a Jew (maybe it is true for other minorities, too) starts with the most personal, but also the most public thing someone has: a name. He continued that, "Turkish society is becoming more and more conservative".

Regarding his family's attitude towards his marriage, he mentioned that they always wanted him to marry a Jew. He added that they are a small community, and it is difficult to choose a spouse within the community regarding personal criteria. He said that mixed marriages did not exist in his parent's time, however, in his generation, it has started. He said that before his marriage with *K*, he had relationships with non-Jews. Regarding his relationship with *K* and his decision of getting married, he shared the following:

> After being together for a while (…) and [feeling] the happiness of being together, for the future we guessed positive things, and they came true. For both us, it was not very easy to make families accept it.

He continued as follows:

> My family is a little bit different. We are Ashkenazi. In general, in Turkey the majority of Jewish community (…) is Sephardic. (…) I mean, it [Ashkenazi] is more open-minded. As far as I understand there is not that much conservatism like in Sephardic Judaism. (…) They [his parents] were not happy at the beginning, but it was how they raised me. (…) I never forget that when I said this to my grandmother, she said that, "I prefer her to be a Muslim than Sephardic". (…) In Israel (…) they do not marry. Here, (…) among 20.000 Jews, (…) 2.000 Ashkenazi remain.

Regarding him meeting her family of origin, he said that his wife, *K* made the necessary preparation, and he did not have concerns. He added that if there were serious negative reactions or attitudes, they would not have been able to accomplish this. However, with respect to the community's attitude towards mixed marriages, he said that:

> They are not very happy about this. In the end, they lose supporters. Here, the Jewish community, naturally, wants Jews to marry Jews, and they want traditions to continue. Even though our wives are selfless about it, for the community it is a loss, but they do not have anything they can do.

He said that both his brother's Muslim wife and his own wife are helpful in terms of celebrating the Jewish holidays. Regarding their mixed marriage, he also shared one of the difficulties:

> What we did was not easy (…). Also, it is not easy to describe this to the child. (…) When we die, our graves will not be in the same place. There is no way. Either of us has to convert. After now, we will not do it. (…) I am thinking about our son; it will be bizarre.

Regarding their son's situation, he mentioned the following: "(…) first he had some difficulty understanding it, but now he is happy for this cultural richness". In terms of the bar-mitzvah, he said that:

> (…) it is not difficult in Turkey. It was actually easier than our marriage, since in Islam the child's religion is her or his father's religion; thus, they seem Jewish. As long as both parents accept it, like every Jewish child, in the end of the education [, the bar-mitzvah is made].

It seems like their son mostly perceives himself as Jewish. It seems like Blecher's (2007) argument about the religiously mixed children seems to be true in terms of the children of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey. Although it is difficult to make any generalization, it seems to be that as Blecher (2007) argues: "(…) very few offspring of Jewish-gentile intermarriages grow up without any Jewish identity at all" (p. 173). In this sense, in his religious identity, it seems like being Jewish has dominance. At this point, in the same line with Blecher (2007) and Moore (2001), it can be asserted that the key point seems to be the attitudes of Jewish community toward these children. Regarding conversion, he mentioned that they had an attempt for his wife to convert Judaism for their son:

> (…) we wanted him to be a Jew since he will always carry *X* [he mentioned their surname here], which is a typical Jewish surname, and it would be bizarre to say he is Muslim with that surname. (…) Once we made an attempt, thanks to my wife that she approached it positively, and then we saw that it is difficult. (…) It was for the child.

The meanings he attributed to marriage and family are as follows:

> (…) it is the most important element people hold onto. Without marriage and family, life has no meaning. I mean, let me not say marriage, being together and sharing, because it [marriage] remains as something on the paper (…).

On the subject of his perception of his Jewish identity, he shared as follows:

> (…) Jews are successful people. You cannot choose this. Maybe my son chose it; actually we imposed it to him. It

> is not only his decision, but we told him about it, and he accepted it. I am very happy to be a Jew. (…) By the effect of my father, we are tied to Israel and Judaism, but we are not (…) fanatics. In today's conjecture (…) Islam does not seem very sympathetic abroad. In addition, I think there is a privilege that being a minority brings. Also, the Jewish community helps each other.

These points seem to be revealing the significance of paying attention to individuals' own perceptions about their identities. Although at several points he noted that neither he nor anyone in his family is religious, yet they feel a strong connection to their Jewish identity. This point is in the same line with the comment of one of the Jewish respondents in Koçoğlu's (2004) study: "I am religious in my own way" (p. 83). Moreover, Gans's (1979) theory of symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity seems to be useful at this point: "These forms of identification (…) reflect aspirations for self-fulfillment (…)" (as cited in Rebhun, 2004, p. 350). It seems important for people to feel well when they mention their identities in the public sphere. It is clear that *L*'s perception about his Jewish identity is nourished by the successes Jewish people display in the society.

He shared that these mixed marriage have an importance. He shared his opinion as follows:

> I think in today's world communities must merge, not oppose to each other. If these things happen, they will merge. (…) I wish the richness in the Ottoman times still exists now. (…) There are many things those cultures bring.

Since *K* and *L* work together, *K* joined us when the interview was over. The theme was revolving around the issue of the Jewish minority in Turkey. *L* said that:

> The Jewish community here has never perceived itself different or distant from Turkey. All the Jews who stay here always perceive themselves as Turks, and they do all the duties the other Turks [do such as] military service and pay taxes.

At this point, *K* again emphasized that, "(…) *L* is more patriotic than I am". He said that:

> (…) we made a one year trip by van abroad, and we put a Turkish flag in our car. I am also French, but there was not French flag; there was Turkish flag. We are proud to be Turks, but I am not sure if the government is proud of it. (…) This upsets all non-Muslims here. (…) Hrant Dink was killed because of his religion.

K said that, the saddest thing is that in Turkey people do not have the concept of non-Muslims existing in Turkey, and she added that things would be better if people accepted the existence of these people. She also mentioned that they are the citizens of the Republic of Turkey; they are Turks just they have different religions.

In the end of my interview with *K*, I asked her about interviewing with their son, and her attitude towards it was positive. She said that, "Actually, I will wonder what is said; share it with me, too. (…) His perception about this subject might be interesting". When *K* and *L* talked about this together; they decided against it. Since –in a way- these issues are fragile both for the mixed couples and their children, it is important to have the permission from both parents. *K* shared their final decision as follows:

> We have talked about it. Let's not do it. First I thought it is possible, but (…) it will not be good for him to be questioning with himself. I actually wonder so much what he will say (…).

Also, *L*'s brother is married to a Muslim, and *K* and *L* reached them for me. However, they did not want to be interviewed.

9.6. Couple 6: Muslim Woman Spouse, *M*

M and *N* was the first couple I interviewed in Izmir. *M* was born in 1963 in Izmir. Regarding the religious atmosphere in her family of origin, she mentioned that her family used to celebrate the festivals and fast. She said that

she remembers her grandmother praying five times a day, and she mentioned that she used to enjoy observing her. She said that his father was flexible in terms of religion. Overall, she considered her family of origin as "open-minded" people. On the subject of her social environment while she was growing up, she said that she had both Jewish and Christian friends. Regarding her family's attitude towards her mate-selection in the future, she said that religion was never a subject, but rather her happiness. She mentioned that, "It never occurred to me that I would marry a Jew. (…) they were closed, and they used to marry with themselves. (…) It was a big surprise for me, too". She said that they met through a mutual friend, and she noted that she did not have any concerns about his different religious identity in terms of marriage. On the subject of her parents' attitude towards her decision, she said that they only said to her that, "You might have problems, but it is your decision". *M* has two sisters, and they are married to Muslims. She is the only mixed married person in her family. Regarding her relationship with *N*'s family, she said that she did not have any concerns because she was already used to their culture, and she considered them as positive people. With respect to the attitudes of her social environment towards their marriage, she said that they were faced with many different questions such as why she did not marry a Muslim, but especially a Jew. She added that, "I had already decided. (…) They did not affect me at all". *M* and *N* had only a civil marriage without any ceremony in 1989.

Even though *M* noted that she did not have any concerns about having a child in terms of their different religious backgrounds, she pointed out that the only thing she thought about was the difficulties their child would go through. *M* and *N* have two children. Their son is 19 years old, and their daughter is 11 years old. Regarding their children's religious identities, it seems like they thought that since she is not a Jew, there is no way to make them Jews in terms of the acceptability from the Jewish community. She shared the process as follows:

> It was apparent. We both knew. Because religion passes through the mother in Judaism, not the father's, it was apparent that they cannot be Jews. We did not make an attempt to do it, and it was unnecessary. I first

> thought of leaving the religious section [in their children's IDs] blank, but (…) the children would be confronted with many things in their school life (…). To prevent the question mark that might appear in their minds due to the blank in the religious section of the ID; I registered them as Muslims. (…) Now, my son questions me as to why I registered [him as a Muslim]. (…) I mean to register them as Jews is meaningless; it is not accepted [by the Jewish community].

She said that their son started to question these things at the age of 7-8. She added that this did not last very long, and she said that he did not have negative feelings about his situation. Regarding his spouse selection in the future, she said that the most important thing for her is his happiness; she does not seem to have any religious criteria about it.

With respect to conversion, she mostly shared *N*'s opinions which are as follows: "My husband is against it. (…) Both for himself and for other people… Because he thinks that you cannot convert by saying you convert (…). You were born Jewish, and you are Jew. (…) It is very difficult to be a Jew". This is in the same line with almost all the other Jewish interviewees' perceptions about conversion. Regarding their home atmosphere in terms of religion, she shared that she enjoys these differences. She said that *N* is careful about Jewish festivals and practices, and she is respectful of his practices. They celebrate both of the festivals, and she added that *N* also accompanies Muslim festivals, too. She interpreted this as follows: "They [Jewish people] have internalized these [Muslim festivals]". It can be argued that since Jewish people live in a predominantly Muslim country in Turkey, it is not surprising that they are used to all the Muslim festivals. It seems like the strategy of "deep tolerance" McCarthy (2007) argues can be noticed in this couple's family life, too: not only accepting the religious difference, but also understanding and accompanying one another to these. She added that their children are familiar with the Jewish festivals, and she emphasized that she wants them to get to know both of the sides. Also, she said that they have a Mezuzah in their home. In addition, she shared her own perception about marriage and family as follows:

> They are very holy things. (…) A good marriage is the nicest thing that can happen to someone. (…) If there is friendship between you and him, and if you can share the life, then it is good.

On the subject of her relationship with Islam, she said that there are many interpretations of Islam. Her perception of her Muslim identity and/or Islam seems to be revealing the assertion that as Marranci (2008) mentions, it is more important to examine "(…) how Muslims form their own identities (…)" than focusing on "(…) how Islam 'creates' Muslims (…)" (p. 95 quotation marks in the original). She shared her own interpretation about her Muslim identity as follows:

> Everyone interprets it on her or his own. (…) If being Muslim means practicing your religion, I do not do it. (…) Your heart should be clean, [you should be] be honest, and [you should not] be unfair; these are the things coming from the inside. This is how I interpret it, and my grandmother always taught me like this. This is Islam: do not be unfair.

She also said that she wants to start to pray five times a day since she considered it as "meditation", and she also noted that she does not perceive fasting as something logical. She continued as follows: "There are three religions and three prophets, who came to do good things, and to direct people to a road since the road is one; they are the guides".

In the public sphere, in the same line with other Muslim spouses, *M* has come across many people especially in the official places, who are surprised because her husband is a Jew. It is remarkable that both the Jewish and Muslim couples mention the negative consequences they experience in official places. It is a normal consequence that in daily life your different religious identity or personal life cannot be known as long as other people recognize a sign or an individual shares it; however, the vital point is when their different identities are revealed, they receive negative reactions. She shared her own observation in terms of people's perceptions of Jews as follows:

> There is [reaction] to Jews, (…) not to Christian people, but to Jews. (…) I think these are prejudices our people have, they do not have difference from us, but an image has been generated. (…) I think they are more civilized than we are.

Another point she shared seems important in terms of noticing the possible result of mixed marriage. She shared the transformation she recognizes in herself as follows:

> I used to think differently; I think it is possible of other people, who are distant from them, to think the same. I used to have prejudice a bit, but then, you see that you are changing. I have changed in a positive way. I started to perceive people objectively. (…) I became more positive because they are people who you can talk to, (…) they do not approach with prejudice, they know to listen to (…) we react immediately; we do not know how to listen to other people. I learned from them to listen and to be careful [, and] I still do not learn it very well.

She mentioned her perception about the attitude of the Jewish community towards the issue of mixed marriage: "They accepted it because their population has decreased. (…) Within 20 years, (…) they changed since they have no other choice". Furthermore, she shared her observations about the other Muslim spouses, who are married to Jewish people:

> There are some women I know [, and] one of them is very close to converting. There are women, who enjoy Judaism very much and want to be a Jew; since the mother is going in that direction, their children are Jewish, too. (…) There are also others, who are like us, that everyone accepts each other. (…) One of my friends converted officially whereas I think one of them is very enthusiastic about Judaism. (…) I see my way as normal, but maybe they perceive my [choice] as abnormal.

In some of the interviews, the issue of Israel-Palestine came up. It seems like most of the Muslim spouses emphasize the importance of perceiving the

conflict from both of the sides. *M* also shared her own perception about it by telling me about the trip they made to Israel:

> We went to Israel two years ago. I was wondering about Jerusalem. (…) we saw many Palestinians, who threw rocks in snowballs to all the cars with Israeli plates. I said that I cannot get out of the car; they said that (…) it is normal. (…) There are Palestinians, who come to Israel to work, and they go back in the evening. (…) There are Arab neighborhoods. (…) It is a very interesting place. (…) Christians, Muslims, Jews… (…) They are all there.

In addition to these, regarding mixed marriage, she also shared that:

> Every marriage is difficult. I do not believe that mixed marriage makes it more difficult as long as everyone respects to one another. (…) If you respect them [, and] they respect you, too; there will not be any problems. I think it all depends on your attitude (…). (…) She or he might resent you.

At the end of the interview I asked her if I could interview with their son and daughter. I was not sure about interviewing with their daughter since she is only 11 years old. She talked to their son, *O*, who is a college student in Istanbul, and his approach was positive. Regarding their daughter, she said that it is possible for me to interview with her, but she added that since she is very young, she is not sure whether she has an idea or not. She shared that from time to time their daughter asks things, and she tried to answer them. She said that, "I am curious about what she will say". She added that there was a time when she was saying, "Then, let me be a Christian". While our interview was over, the decision about me interviewing with her was not made. However, it became clear while I was interviewing with her father, *N*.

9.6.1. Couple 6: Jewish Man Spouse, *N*

N was born in 1956 in Izmir. He said that even though his family was not very comfortable in terms of socioeconomic resources, he had a nice childhood,

and he had a broad friendship atmosphere. He graduated from high school, and due to the political chaos at that time, he did not have a college education. He shared that this has always caused sadness for him. Regarding the religious atmosphere in his family of origin, he said that they were very connected to the traditions, and they used to celebrate the Jewish festivals without skipping even once, but they were not religious. *N* shared that he only has a brother, who moved to Israel in 1978, and married there with an Iranian Jewish woman. He added that he did not feel the necessity of moving to Israel.

With respect to his past relationships, he said that he had many girlfriends, who were not Jewish. His family wanted him to marry a Jew, in terms of continuation of the descent, and he became engaged to a Jewish girl, but it did not work out. He considered this as a "forced engagement". He said that although the only criterion on his mind was for her to be a good person, he did not oppose to parents, and he tried to manage a relationship with his Jewish fiancé. This experience of *N* can be considered as a scene from a "closed marriage system", which Lee (1994) mentions. In general, he considered his parents as flexible people; it can be added that although it was not a marriage, his unhappy experience was also effective in his parents' positive attitudes towards *M*. In this sense, Resnik (1933) argues that parents may approach the decision of mixed marriage in a more flexible sense, if "(…) their child's first marital venture with a member of their own group was unsuccessful (…)" (p. 100). Their relationship did not last, and he said that later his parents did not have any problems with his Muslim wife, *M*. He mentioned his perception about the attitude of the Jewish community towards marriage and mixed marriage as follows:

> (…) things are not like in the past. When I was a child, there was a thought that (…) [Jews] are to marry someone from the community. The families used to oppose it, but during my youth or while we were preparing ourselves for this event [marriage], no one was opposed to it because (…) it was important that families must match. In the past, (...) the families (…) were paying Drahoma [dowry] (…). In the past, even though people had monetary troubles, everyone used to have a saving. The ones who did not have [a saving] (…) still arranged it. Then, the event became like the [issue

> of] equivalent forces. I will marry her, but (…) does her family's socioeconomic resources are compatible with us? The bride's side always wanted the groom's side's [socioeconomic resources] to be high. This balance canalized the event [marriage] to other places. (…) How will he support my daughter? (…) The people who were rich were finding their equivalent. It still is the same. (…) We went through a try (…); (…) we could not work it out. [After this] I did not start to search [for other candidates] (…).

His perception seems to be focusing on the prominence of the socioeconomic dimension of marriage. This is reminiscent of the line of marriage research that considers it as a labor market. Tsay and Wu (2006) argue that:

> This line of research evaluates the opportunities that marriage provides to both men and women in terms of the degree to which the resources that they bring to the marriage market match (p. 166).

On the subject of their home atmosphere in terms of religion, he shared that both of them accompany to each other's festivals, and the children grow up in this atmosphere. Their home atmosphere in terms of religion seems to be providing an example of the strategy of "deep tolerance" that McCarthy (2007) describes. He said that, "I can say that we have never had a conflict about this". *N* said that they a Mezuzah at their house, and he described its importance for him and his connection to his Jewish identity as follows:

> It is like a habit. [It is] like Besmele [in the name of God]. (…) It relieves me spirituality. I am not religious. (…) in Passover, I am careful in terms of traditions, (…) I do the necessities, (…) [and] also there is Kippur, (…) I fast on that day. (…) I have always fasted. I have never skipped it. (…) It is like a habit. I am relieved spiritually. (…) It is a personal choice.

The connection he perceives between "in the name of God" and Mezuzah seems to be reminiscent of the strategy of the "religious code-switching", which McCarthy (2007) points out: "This code-switching (…) is a skill that helps bridge

two distinctive cultural systems while maintaining their separate integrity" (p. 198).

Regarding their children's religious identities, he mentioned as follows: "It [being Jewish] depends on the mother; my children are not Jewish". He continued as follows:

> What it is written in the child's ID (…) is not very important for me. (…) Now, my son asks me questions such as "Why you named me *O*, but not my grandfather's name?" (...) "Why could not I be a Jew?" He says, "I wish I was a Jew". I do not have any pressure on them (…). I am not sure if he is a Jew for the God or not. For me they are Jews, but for their mother they are Muslims (…). I talk to my son; he is 19 years old, and he says that, "I have no religion". Neither this nor that, (…) I cannot be opposed to it; (…) he can think as he likes. (…) I registered them as Muslims. For us [Jewish people], it is the mother who is important. (…) She [their daughter] attends to the religious courses; I do not make such a thing [pressure on her]. (…) She will get to know; she might be a Buddhist or have no religion. I will respect her.

The meanings he attributed to marriage and family are as follows:

> Marriage is a very nice institution. (…) I am very devoted to my family. (…) I love my children so much; I am very fond of my children, my wife. (…) From now on, our mission is to give our children a good education. (…) [We want] to build them a future. (…) My family is holier than anything else.

With respect to the importance he sees in mixed marriages, he mentioned the following: "I think this is a mosaic. (…) Today you see Americans married to Chinese, (…) African to French. (…) I think it is important for people to be good". With respect to the social transformations in Izmir, Turkey that he has observed since his childhood, he mentioned as follows:

> We spent our childhood in good relations. (…) Now, you live in the same apartment [, but] you do not know

> [your neighbors]. We used to know our neighborhood. Since we have witnessed those times, (…) we ask why it is as it is.

Regarding the meaning of being a Jew for him, *N* shared his feelings as follows:

> It [his Jewish identity] is very important, it still is important. (…) I am (…) very happy about my identity. (…) Until the end of the elementary school, my name was *X* [he mentioned his original name here] (…), but in junior high school I had a girlfriend. She called me *N* because at those times they could not pronounce my name properly; this was the only trouble in daily life. Everyone used to pronounce it differently.

I saw their daughter while interviewing with *N*. She was playing with one of her friends around. Even though the parents were neutral about the interview, I decided to not to interview with her. I was ready for the interview, and she was there playing with her friend. Although reaching the mixed couples and their children is very difficult, I thought that instead of seeing this as an opportunity, it would be better to take the different dimensions of the issue into account. Thus it was a decision that occurred within the dynamic atmosphere of the field. I would like to mention that maybe I just did not want to –in a way- interrupt her play and ask her about the fragile things that she is not totally aware of, just to hear a few words about her situation. When I went back to Istanbul after completing the interviews in Izmir, their son, *O* and I met for the interview.

9.6.2. The Child of *M* and *N*: *O*

O was born in 1991 in Izmir. He is currently a college student in Istanbul. He shared that he had a nice childhood, and since his parents were working, his grandmother took care of him until his second grade in the elementary school. He said that his relationships both with his mother's and father's sides of the family have been well. With respect to his friendship environment, he noted that he mostly has Muslim friends. He said that he has not had any non-Muslim girlfriend.

The start of the religion courses in school made him aware of his situation of being a child to a mixed marriage, and afterwards he started to think about these issues by asking "What will happen?" in terms of his religious identity. It seems like he experienced the time of confusion about his religious identity, which Resnik (1933) argues regarding the children of mixed marriages. *O* said that he asked some of his teachers about it, and he continued that:

> In Judaism, it passes through the mother; in Islam, it passes through the father. I am in the middle. I would be neither Jew nor Muslim. (…) I would prefer it [the religious section in his ID] to be blank; now it is written Islam. I used to think about these [by asking] why it is as like this. Then, I gave up. I thought that I will be what I believe in.

He noted that, "I have examined both of them a bit; I wish I did not because (…) I could not believe in any of them. I do not believe now". He added that he is planning to go to the United States, and he thinks about changing the religion section in his ID to Judaism; he added that it is a difficult process. He said that, "Being a Jew might provide me with advantages". He also shared his own perception about Judaism as follows: "They are very close since it only passes through the mother. (…) It is very hard to convert".

Regarding the bar-mitzvah, he said that he did not have it, but he unsurely shared that his father made an attempt to it; however, the Jewish community did not accept it since his mother is not a Jew. He shared that he neither perceives himself as Jewish nor Muslim. On the subject of the negative experiences he has, he said that they have not been related to his situation of being the child of a mixed marriage, but because of the reaction he has to the concept of religion, not to the concept of faith: "The other day, in the dorm, one of my friends said that if you eat without saying Besmele [in the name of God], you will not be full; (…) the evil eats it. I find these ridiculous". He said that he has some difficulties regarding himself meaning he said that, "Because I say I do not believe any of them".

He said that even though he could be exempt from it, he attended to religion courses in school. He mentioned that the high school he attended was a private one, and he continued as follows: "There were many Jews in school, but I did not have friendships with them. Because they used to constitute group, (…) I do not like to separate into groups".

He said that if a subject comes up, he shares his situation with other people, and he mentioned that he likes his situation, but he said that he is not interested in it. He noted that he sees himself closer to agnosticism. He shared his plan for the future as follows: "I have the idea of going to the United States. (…) I would like to make a movie that criticizes religion. I cannot do anything here; it is not possible in this country". He added that he is planning to stay in the United States since he has the dream of becoming a director. Regarding his spouse selection in the future, he said that he has no criterion in terms of religion.

He mentioned that his parents' mixed marriage might be perceived negatively in the society. Regarding his sister, he shared that she is not aware of these issues yet, but he added that she is growing up in a flexible atmosphere in terms of religion. He said that they used to go to their grandmother for the Sabbath. He said that:

> I feel lucky, but it [mixed marriage] is something that should exist. It should be allowed since I think many Jewish families do not allow it. (…) It should be done. (…) The rule of passing Judaism from the mother should be exceeded.

He shared that he has a friend, whose father is Christian, and whose mother is Muslim. He said that he chose to be Christian. He mentioned that, "I think it is all about expediencies. Why would someone be Muslim? She or he would be Christian and receive different reactions". He said that he has experienced both the traditions of Muslims and Jews, and he shared as follows:

> It is nice, but it did not contribute to me much. Maybe why I became like this is because there are two

> religions. If my father is Muslim, too, maybe I would not be like this. We do not have religion; maybe that is why I am like this.

Towards the end of the interview, he said:

> Two months ago, I said that everything would be easy if I chose Judaism for when abroad. If I also add my grandfather's name to my ID, (…) I may do such a thing this summer. For being Muslim, I thought that I may not [be a Muslim] because… [of the disadvantageous social image of Muslims] .

At the end of the interview, he said that in the summer he will examine the ways to change the religious section in his ID from Islam to Judaism. In the same line with Blecher's (2007) argument, it seems to apply to the case of *O* that, "(…) very few offspring of Jewish-gentile intermarriage grow up without any Jewish identity at all" (p. 173). The reasons behind their closeness to Jewishness can be discussed; however, it seems like these children consider being a Jew instead of being a Muslim. In the light of the theory of symbolic interactionism and with the help of the assumptions that are discussed by Stryker (1959), since each individual has to be examined "(…) on his own level (…)" it seems important to focus on the opportunities and choices these children have (p. 112). In this sense, the meanings these opportunities have in the eyes of the society, such as the social image of Jews and Muslims, seem to be affecting their choices. Since as the theory of symbolic interactionism claims, individuals are born asocial; the identities they embrace are connected to their societal meanings. As Stryker (1959) argues, "(…) humans do not respond to the environment as physically given, but to an environment as it is mediated through symbols—to a *symbolic environment* (p. 114 italics in the original). Thus, it can be argued that although their social environment is shaped in a predominantly Muslim country, the meanings they perceive in terms of being a Jew and being a Muslim seem to be derived from perceptions of advantage and disadvantage.

9.7. Couple 7: Jewish Woman Spouse, *P*

P and *Q* was the second couple I interviewed in Izmir; they are a newly married couple since they got married in 2009. *P* was born in Izmir in 1981. She considered her childhood to be comfortable and happy, and she considered her parents as "open-minded" people. Regarding her friendship atmosphere, she shared that her social environment has always been "mixed"; she added that she used to accompany her friends while they fasted, and she said that the religious meaning of it was not very important to her, but she used to find sharing it with her friends enjoyable. Also, she said that for some time she attended to the Jewish clubs in Izmir, and she met many Jews there. She said that her experience in the United States as an exchange student in high school had broadened her perception since she met many different people from around the world.

On the subject of the religious atmosphere in her family of origin, she shared that they used to celebrate the Jewish festivals, and she mentioned that they still celebrate these. She mentioned that the Jewish festivals are very similar to Ramadan. These kinds of comparisons are made by other interviewees, too. It seems like the partners use the strategy of "religious code-switching", which McCarthy (2007) describes, often. She added that her parents did not have a strong connection to the religion dimension of Judaism, and that her parents did not have any practices. Regarding her grandparents and Jewish people in general, she said that:

> My grandparents are a little more fond of religion [than her parents], but this is not mostly because they are religious, but rather because of the traditional situation. (…) as a minority here [in Turkey], and moreover, since Judaism passes through birth and marriage, people have a more conservative attitude with the effect of the psychology of protection.

P seems to be distinguishing between the concepts of tradition and religion while sharing the attitudes of her parents' and grandparents' toward their Jewish identity, which is in the same line with the responses in Koçoğlu's (2006) study. In general, it seems like Jewish interviewees in the current study have 3 basic

concepts in their minds, and they distinguish them from each other. They are: religion, tradition and faith.

On the subject of her spouse selection in the future, she said that even though her parents did not have any pressures on her, she used to hear several things from the "broad environment" meaning other Jewish people, and she used to listen to her friends' stories. She said that before marriage, she had non-Jewish boyfriends. *P* and *Q* met 15 years ago through a Jewish friend whom they both knew. Two to three years ago their relationship developed, and they started to cohabitate. She said that since they were living together, their families mostly directed them to marry and she mentioned that, "(…) since everything was like marriage; we said, why not? As a matter of fact, we were sure about each other". She mentioned that they did not receive any negative reactions from the families. She shared that her general opinion in terms of the reactions of Jewish families may display as follows:

> In general, I think not the Muslim side, but rather the Jewish side is more conservative about this issue [mixed marriage]. My family was flexible. I was actually expecting something [negative attitude] (…) from my grandparents. For instance, I know that for my cousin they do not want this. He had girlfriends from other religions; I remember they were waiting for him to break up, and they were asking him when he will get back to reality.

She said that they had a nice and enjoyable wedding ceremony. She shared the meanings she attributes to the marriage and family as follows: "It is like going fishing instead to a boat race". She shared that they attend to each other's religious festivals in terms of going to the parents or to the grandparents. The strategy of "deep tolerance" can be noticed in this mixed couple, too (McCarthy, 2007). She said that they did not have any troubles with each other about their different religious identities after marriage.

With respect to the religious identity of their child in the future, she shared her ideas as follows:

> I am definitely opposed to her or him having a religious identity on a paper; I was thinking to make mine blank, too. (…) It is not because I am ashamed of it [her Jewish identity] or anything; on the contrary, (…) I am proud of it, but the fact that its being descriptive on an ID, same for the child, too. We decided that, she or he sees both the sides' traditions (…). (…) she or he can choose it in the future. It is all about her or his decision; let's say [we do not want to] intentionally pressure her or him.

Since she is the Jewish partner, and *Q* is Muslim, she argued that the Jewish community would not have any problems with accepting their child as Jewish. She added that for Muslims since the father's religion is important, they accept her or him as a Muslim. It seems like they would like to leave the religious section in the ID blank, and they will be letting their child decide on her or his religious identity.

On the subject of her perception about her Jewish identity, *P* shared as follows:

> In elementary school I did not have any connection to it since I did not see things in my family much. Then, towards the junior high school, I was introduced to it more with the Jewish groups. (…) They keep it very secret. I attended there for a year when I was a child. (…) it seems nice to you, there plays music (…); (…) they teach some things about religion. (…) After a while I got bored of the doctrine part of it, and after one year, I said that it is not compatible with me. (…) Some of my friendships from there still continue. But they exceed there (…). Because of the feeling of closeness and secrecy, I denied it for a long time. Now, again, as someone who looks from the outside, it interests me. (…) Thus first I liked it [, and] then I reacted to it; now I started to like it very much. I say luckily, I have this; I am a part of it (…).

The narrative above is a clear example of the importance of adopting the approach of "(…) a more open-ended search into what Judaism means to those claim it as an identity" (Brink-Danan, 2008, 682). Moreover, her perception about her Jewish identity reveals the dynamic character of the concepts of religion and identity. Furthermore, since *P* is a photographer, during the

interview, she also shared the projects she did, and the ones she is planning which will display the Jewish culture. It seems significant to catch the attractive parts of Jewishness to Jews, who embrace it as an identity. This, as Brink-Danan (2008) argues in terms of the anthropological approach to studying Jews, does not mean to overlook the importance of the tradition for Jewish people, but it means to examine "(…) which definitions of 'traditional' Judaism are established, defended, and debated" (p. 682 quotation marks in the original). Furthermore, the self-perception of the Jews seems to be pointing Gans's (1979) theory of symbolic religiosity and symbolic ethnicity. In this sense, as Gans (1979) argues, "These forms of identification (…) reflect aspirations for self-fulfillment, but lack structural cohesion, are detached from the practice of an on-going ethno-religious culture (…)" (as cited in Rebhun, 2004, p. 350).

Cohen's (2009) finding about the universal values and concerns of the Jews, who are married to non-Jews, can be seen in her words, too. She mentioned the importance she sees in mixed marriages as follows:

> I like multicultural (…) things very much, not only about religion, but things like international art activities (…). I think these things may change lots of things in the world. (…) If you change one person's view, this is something good. If you can make people to see you behind (…) your identity, it is something good. Of course, it does not mean we married for a social mission, but it has a nice dimension, too.

9.7.1. Couple 7: Muslim Man Spouse, *Q*

Q was born in Izmir. With respect to his encounter with Jewish people, he said that he has always Jewish friends; thus, he has been familiar with them. Regarding the religious atmosphere in his family of origin, he mentioned that they used to celebrate the festivals, and he continued as follows:

> There was not a special interest in religion. There was no refusing. It was a Muslim family. We can say that our family was a traditional one, but (…) everyone had

> her or his own opinion; (…) no one says anything to one another. However if it was [the time of] festival, we used to go to the prayer (…); this was all.

Regarding his relationship with his Muslim identity, he shared as follows:

> In my childhood, it was going to pray for two times a year or, during the festivals to wake up early and go to the mosque with my father collectively [, and] pray; then coming back [to home and] seeing that my mother prepared breakfast, then visiting grandparents. This was being Muslim for me.

With respect to his family of origin's opinion about his spouse selection in the future, he noted that his family had never set a criterion for him in terms of religion, and he continued as follows: "Actually, maybe what happened was (…) that they would never think that I would marry a Jew. (…) It did not occur to my mind either". He said that he had no Jewish girlfriends before marriage. On the subject of the decision of marriage, he shared as follows:

> We are more like friends; I mean, there was something coming from the childhood since she is my childhood friend, then (…) you became partners, but friendship also continues. (…) We enjoy similar things. (…) In general, we have a common way of perceiving life.

The commonness in living life that *Q* shared seems to be an example of Kalmijn's (1998) argument about the effect of cultural resources in terms of spouse selection, and also for the marriage life. Kalmijn (1998) points out this as follows: "Similarity of values and opinions leads to mutual confirmation of each other's behavior and worldviews (…) and similarity of knowledge creates a common basis for conversation, which enhances mutual understanding" (p. 399).

With respect to his relationship with *P*'s family, he said that he had no concerns about meeting them, and currently they have a good relationship. On the subject of other people's attitudes toward their mixed marriage, he said that he went to military service before marriage, and he shared that his other soldier

friends used to ask him several things such as "What will your family say to this?" Regarding his family's attitude towards his decision, he said that he thought maybe his grandfathers may react to it, and he mentioned that since this would be the first mixed marriage in their family, his family of origin first thought about it not especially as a problem, but mostly as something different. He added that after they met her, everything settled.

On the subject of their child's religious identity in the future, he shared his opinion as follows:

> We do not have any [desire] to make her or him Muslim or Jewish. In their Jewish festivals by explaining it or (…) maybe I will take him for the prayer, she or he will observe Passover, to let her or him decide because this is most appropriate way. (…) We are not religious people. Of course we all do have faith. (…) We adapt to all [both the Muslim and Jewish festivals].

He said that conversion was never a subject that they talked about, and he mentioned that they do not have a relationship with the Jewish community. He noted that the only interaction they have is with *P*'s family in terms of coming together for the festivals.

The points he shared reveal the importance of Marranci's (2008) approach in terms of studying Muslim identity. According to Marranci (2008), "(…) the anthropologist of Islam can effectively study Muslims as human beings rather than living symbols of a religion" (p. 100). *Q* said that he does not fast, and he added that, "I think, this is not faithlessness". In terms of faith, he shared his own perception as follows: "[It is] to treat people well [, and] not to harm anyone. My opinions are this way, but I am definitely a Muslim, I have faith; (…) and *P* is Jewish". This also seems to be pointing out the difference that may occur in individuals' minds regarding their perception of religion and faith. It seems like *Q* perceives religion and faith as separate concepts.

With respect to the issue of mixed marriage, he argued as follows:

> People should see that this is possible. For some people this might be a problem. (…) If we were people who were more connected to religion, (…) we would not understand each other. (…) Although they are different religions, (…) it is related to the place religion has in our lives.

The last words in the narrative above seem to be revealing a significant point in terms of mixed marriage. Even though mixed couples come from different religious backgrounds, the parallelism in their approaches to their religious identities seems to be the vital point in terms of managing their different religious identities.

9.8. Couple 8: Muslim Woman Spouse, *R*

R and *S* was the third and the last couple I interviewed in Izmir. *R* was born in 1963 in Çorlu. Regarding the religious atmosphere in her family of origin, she said that they used to celebrate the festivals, but she noted that it was not an atmosphere in which religion was a prominent element. She considered her family as "very secular". She noted that while she was a high school student, the school used to ask children's parents whether they want their child to attend the religious course or not; she said that her parents did not want her to attend it. She shared that she went to Istanbul for her junior high school education, and she attended to college in Istanbul, too. She emphasized the importance of the education she got while she was telling about her life.

In terms of her spouse selection, she mentioned that her parents never set a criterion to her regarding religion. She added that religion was not a criterion for her either; she said that she has never perceived people by their religious identities. She noted that she had many Christian and Armenian friends while she was growing up. In terms of her relationships before marriage, she said that all of her boyfriends were Muslims.

R and *S* met when she was a college student, and *S* was working for a newspaper. With respect to the religious difference they have, she shared as follows:

> I did not have any concerns about this difference while making a decision like that [getting married]. From my point of view, I noticed the factors, which religion may generate, later in my life; maybe (…) I was very young or it was about my world-view. I am not sure. (…) But, honestly, I have never thought that religion would be a problem between us.

However, *R* said that she received a negative reaction from her family of origin. She shared it as follows:

> My family did not react to it well. They were not happy about (…) this choice. [The things they said were the] religious, cultural difference, and they were of the opinion that I would never be accepted by this community. Also, I am the only child; thus, it was something that was ruining the picture on their mind. (…) there had been struggles for a year. *S*'s family, at that time his father, did not like it. The difference was that my family reacted to it very much; (…) it ended when we insisted on marriage. His family had never displayed a reaction to me directly, never, never... I mean, we were –in a way- very lucky. We can also consider his family as a secular Jewish family; thus, in our lives religious practices were not beyond festivals. (…) there was mostly something on a cultural basis.

The process *R* went through with her family can be interpreted in terms of the multiple perspective model that LeCroy and Rank (1983, p. 445) describes:

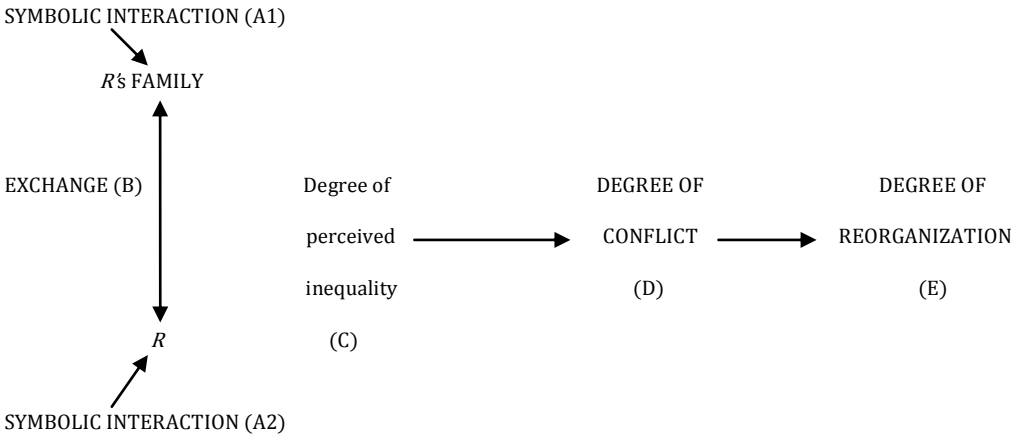

Figure 4. Multiple Perspective Model

From the point of view of the multiple perspective model, it can be argued that in the course of time the meanings *R* and her family attribute to reward and cost in social life have changed. Marrying a Jew seems to be –in a way- a kind of reward to *R* with the effect of the symbolic environment she was living in (A2) whereas her family perceived this choice negatively meaning they thought that *R* and *S* might have problems, and she would not be accepted by the Jewish community (C). Moreover, although *R* considered the religious atmosphere in her family of origin as "very secular", they reacted negatively to her decision. One of the factors that affected their perception could be the question of "What will other people say to this?" (A1). A struggle occurred between *R* and her family in terms of her choice (D). They resolved this struggle by insisting on their decision of marriage (E). She said that there was no one who was mixed married in her family.

She also shared her experiences with the social environment and her relationships with *S*'s family after marriage as follows:

> I did [experience negative things]. I have never received anything negative from my family, I mean [from] *S*'s family. I have never received anything negative from them. This is very important because I was very young. When I graduated (…) we decided to move to Izmir, and I had never got education in Izmir; thus, I did not have any circle here. These are important factors. A new city… How do you interrelate to a city? (…) I left my entire environment there [in Istanbul]. Here, I think *S*'s family's protection was also very important. For instance, (…) when people spoke Spanish [Ladino], she [her sister-in-law] translated it to me. (…) Let's say, of me becoming estranged or feeling myself isolated, she minimized these for sure. Of course, I received reactions because later (…) you understand that actually people do not like it [mixed marriage]. (…) When I came here 20 years ago, we were the only ones, who were mixed married in such an atmosphere. Last night [at a gathering], there was a mixed marriage in every family (…) including the rabbi's grandchild.

On the subject of the similarities their families have, she noted as follows:

> His family is also a very well educated family. Thus, when I compare his and my father -except the religion-, there are very important similarities regarding culture [such as] their approach to life and to family. Thus the atmospheres we were raised were not very distant from each other.

The narrative above seems to be displaying that in Turkey, not only the cultural similarity between partners', but also the cultural similarity between the partners' families may help to overcome the possible problems they may face. In this sense, it can be argued that the influence of the third parties in marriages still is significant.

One of the common points seems to be the simplicity of the marriage ceremony. She said that they only had a civil marriage and shared as follows:

> We had a normal civil marriage. (…) There were people attending it from both sides, but from *S*'s side only a few people came. (…) I did not perceive it as something that a few people came from this side, many people came from this side; of course Muslim Turks were more curious about the person I found.

With respect to conversion, she shared her own perception as follows:

> My personal view of conversion is that I find it very wrong. I consider it as hypocritical. I mean converting due to the marriage... If you are a faithful person, and if you are searching for a faith, in the end of various etudes, by saying, "This is the most appropriate religion for me", you can convert, but honestly, I find converting just to marry someone very hypocritical. This was never a subject between us. As a matter of fact, I would not marry someone who requests this from me.

The meanings she attributes to marriage and family:

> When there are children, it is family. When there are no children, it is the situation of living together with someone you want. We had children after 11 years. For 11 years, we have had a very nice relationship, but

> when we had children, then I thought that we are a family.

Regarding having child, she shared that, "I know that when I first came [to Izmir], in the atmospheres in which I felt very lonely and excluded, I was thinking of how my children will be treated in the future". She continued that, *S* relieved her anxieties by saying things such as these reactions only belong to the people who display it. The concern she mentioned seems to be in the same vein with Resnik's (1933) point that is as follows: "(…) the parents in the intermarriage (…) fail to see the situation in the light of the child's experiences and tend to interpret the child's experience in the light of their (…) own" (p. 102). They now have twin sons, who were born in 1997. On the subject of their religious identity, *R* shared the process as follows:

> Firstly, we left the religious section in their ID blank when they were born. It was by chance. I think actually Turkey is not secular because it is written. For our law, it passes through the father, for Judaism it passes through mother. (…) When we went to take the IDs, one of them was written as a Jew, the other one was as Muslim. (…) They asked whether to register both of them as Jews; this cannot happen either since religiously [they are not Jews]. (…) They started to live like this. (…) there was not any problem between the families; (…) the children did not notice the religious difference until they went to school. In school they were asked questions such as "Why your surname is *X*?"

The narrative above seems to be revealing the official confusion the mixed couples may face in Turkey. She continued as follows:

> One summer, that is the year before the start of the religious course (…) we went to France with them, and while we were visiting a church, we began to describe to them some things such as there are three religions, there are other people outside these religions. (…) [We told them that,] "Your father was born Jewish, and I was born Muslim". We always describe these to them by saying we were born like these.

The last point in her narrative above seems to be mentioning an important dimension of the current study. Since identity is a never-ending process, the mixed couples are considered as coming from different religious backgrounds. Thus the meanings they attribute to their religious identities currently constitute an important part of the study. She mentioned that for a long time, they could not attribute any meaning to the differences *R* and *S* have; they used to ask her questions like "Why are you considered as Muslim [, and] our father is considered as Jew? What is the difference?" Regarding their experiences at school, she shared as follows, which seems to be revealing the significance of the public sphere:

> One of them said that, "I could not attend the religious course because my father is Jewish" whereas –they are in different classes- the other one said to his teacher that, "There are two religions in our home, we will choose in the future; thus, we do not want to attend it now". (…) They did not attend it, and we explained to them this is a special right for them; if you want you can attend it, but it is not mandatory.

She mentioned that with the effect of the questions and comments they receive in school, they asked several things such as "Is Judaism something bad?" She said that she is not sure how they feel now, and she added that, "There is not a dominant thing; sometimes they think they will be Jew anyway because they do not attend to other rituals, they actually do not attend to Jewish rituals either". She mentioned that, "We say that you do not have to belong to a religion, if you want you can choose it in the future. (…) You are lucky that you did not have to be something from the beginning". She also shared their experience with the Jewish community in terms of circumcision. Their experience seems to be revealing one of the difficulties these mixed couples face in terms of life-cycle ceremonies. This is reminiscent of Blecher's (2007) point that is "The issue of rabbinic officiation at life-cycle ceremonies for interfaith families (…)" (p. 187):

> I wanted the children to be circumcised. There are 3 main reasons behind my wish. Firstly, (…) there is an accepted truth that (…) this is hygienic (…); secondly, it

> exists as a procedure in both religions [; and] thirdly, they will live in Turkey, although there is something identically, I did not want them to explain this to people, too. (…) The first one was the most important in my mind. At that time, this was discussed a lot in our friendship environment. [They said that,] "You let them decide about their religion, why do you do this?" I told them, "I am their mother [, and] I decide this". (…) I wanted the rabbi to do it since he knows it very well, and he does it in the 7th day; (…) he did not do it. I got very angry with him. Maybe he was right (…). Despite this, after birth we circumcised them. Then, we explained this. They became very happy because their friends go through this by listening to many stories.

They newly turned 13 years old, and it is an age that is important in terms of the bar-mitzvah. *R* shared their idea as follows:

> We cannot do the religious dimension of it. This must be searched, but in fact I do not approach to its religious part positively. (…) We told them that (…) we can make a big birthday party or we can go on a trip. They find it interesting. There are many Christians, but not many Jews in their schools. (...) We can do the fun part of it, but we will not do the religious part.

Their idea seems to be in the same vein with the strategy of the "creative recombination" that McCarthy argues (2007): "(…) interfaith couples have had to dismantle and reconstruct in new ways much of their inherited ritual, symbolic, and doctrinal traditions and even their religious identities" (p. 201). In their case, *R* seems to be planning to create a new way of celebrating their sons' age of 13; thus, they use a similar strategy for the "creative recombination" not for themselves, but for their sons.

On the subject of the difficulties their twin sons have, she mentioned as follows:

> [Their] father perceives himself as an atheist. He says that, "I am culturally a Jew, but I do not have any religious faith". I do not believe in religion, but honestly, I do not call myself atheist. Thus (…) as it is in other homes, we do not explain [things to children] via the

> fear of God. (…) in school, when they were younger, (…) with the effect of the incoherent things people say about religion, they had a difficulty such as "If we do not do these, will something bad happen to us?" I was more concerned about what kinds of anxieties would not belonging somewhere create for them? As a mother, my concern was this.

In this sense, she emphasized that if the social environment they live in were a "classical Jewish atmosphere", then they would have some problems. She continued as follows: "(…) because they would be not declared Jews".

Her perception about her Muslim identity seems to be revealing the importance of Marranci's (2008) suggestion that is: "(…) to observe the *dynamics* of Muslim lives *within* societies" (p. 100 italics in the original). Regarding her connection to her Muslim identity, she mentioned as follows:

> During my childhood years, honestly, I was not very aware of this. (…) it was a very secular atmosphere. (…) however (…) when we first started to question everything, I decided that it would not be an identity for me [, and] this decision has not changed. (…) this is a cultural thing. Existing by this faith, transforming this to an identity is something different, but for instance, calling people in the festivals is something different. You carry these cultural things. This is different.

According to Marranci (2008), "(…) the anthropologist of Islam can effectively study Muslims as human beings rather than living symbols of a religion" (p. 100). It seems like *R* does not identify herself with a religiously Muslim identity; however, she emphasizes the importance of the cultural dimension of Islam such as celebrating the festivals.

In terms of being married to a Jew, she shared that she has learned a lot:

> I think the most important thing is cultural; for instance, I learned how to be contentious soul, not giving up and not being fatalist, which my husband carries from Jewish culture. This is important; this is really something cultural. Moreover, I learned how communities run. I did not have an idea about the

> structure of a community. I observed how the community treats people, who are not one of them or internalizes them. (…) I find them [the Jewish community in Izmir] conservative. (…) I think Izmir is not a democratic city in any sense.

She noted that mixed marriage is not more difficult than other marriages; she thinks that it is the opposite. She shared as follows:

> Due to the education my husband received [, and] the structure of his family, and maybe as a cultural richness, I believe that he is very sharing. I see that in the Muslim environment, this is not like that. (…) they have a family structure, which values women, and I have been very happy about it. This is an advantage.

She shared the importance she sees in mixed marriage as follows:

> I think the children we raise are important since they really are growing up without prejudice. They grow up by experiencing the positive sides of this kind of mixed marriage. This is very important; I mean, for instance, in Passover night when they go to their aunt, they eat the Passover meal (…), but when it is a Muslim festival, they go to the grandparents, they kiss hands there. This is richness for them. (…) They grow up by internalizing these [the differences].

R said that she would ask their twin sons about the interviews. She displayed a positive attitude to the possible interview with their twin sons by saying that, "I am wondering how they perceive it"; however, due to the problems that occurred about time and place, I did not have the chance to conduct an interview with them.

9.8.1. Couple 8: Jewish Man Spouse, *S*

S was born in 1960 in Izmir. Until the age of 13-14, he said that his friendship environment had consisted of both Jews and Muslims; however, after these ages it consisted mostly of Jews since he mentioned that it was easier to get

permission from his parents to go out when he was with Jewish friends. When he started to college, he said that his friendship environment changed.

Regarding the religious atmosphere in his family of origin, he shared his perceptions as follows:

> The festivals were celebrated, but my father and my mother were not religious. (…) The religious practices of Judaism, especially in Turkey, penetrate into daily life more. I mean, (…) Jewishness and religion are very close things; they are not very different things. Let's say, in the [Jewish] communities other than Israel, Jewishness and religion cannot be interpreted separately. Even at the home of someone, who was the least religious, at least the festivals are practiced (...). This was true for my father, too.

He shared his bar-mitzvah as follows:

> It is a process that progresses naturally. At that time it had the practice that -now it has diversified- you memorize a prayer (…), it was prayed in the synagogue; then, there was celebration. For a child at that age, the fun part of it (…) was more important.

In terms of his spouse selection, he noted as follows: "My mother died at a very young age when I was a sophomore; thus, we did not have any contact regarding it. (…) My father said some things when I came to marriage age". *S* noted that religious identity was not an important criterion for him in terms of spouse selection. He said that before marriage, he had other girlfriends who were not Jewish. He shared the marriage decision as follows: "It was mostly my wife who preferred to marry, because at that time I used to advocate the idea that there is no need to marry". He mentioned his father's reaction as follows:

> At first, he did not like it. He did not display an active opposition. However, he mentioned that (…) he was a bit uncomfortable with it. We got married in Istanbul while we are actually from Izmir. As a passive reaction, he did not invite many people to marriage except the closest relatives. (…) I do not think he received [any

> reaction from the Jewish community] because I do not think he reflected this to the community. (…) If we think the attitude of my father about the marriage ceremony, at first, I think he did not reflect this to the outside much.

The process which *S*'s father went through seems to be revealing one of the strategies the parents may apply in order to prevent negative reactions from other people. This process can be interpreted with the help of the multiple perspective model (LeCroy & Rank, 1983). In the light of the multiple perspective model, it can be argued that although as *S* mentioned that her father was not religious, it seems like he considered the reactions that may come from the Jewish community as a cost (A1) whereas for *S* it was not an issue (A2). Thus the perceptions of *S* and his father differed (B). It seems like the conflict between them did not reach to a high level such not seeing each other (D); however, as *S* argued that his father displayed a "passive reaction" that was not inviting many people except their closest relatives to the wedding ceremony. This can also be interpreted as a strategy that was used to prevent the possible reactions and negative attitudes from the community (E). The multiple perspective model is as follows (LeCroy & Rank, 1983, p. 445):

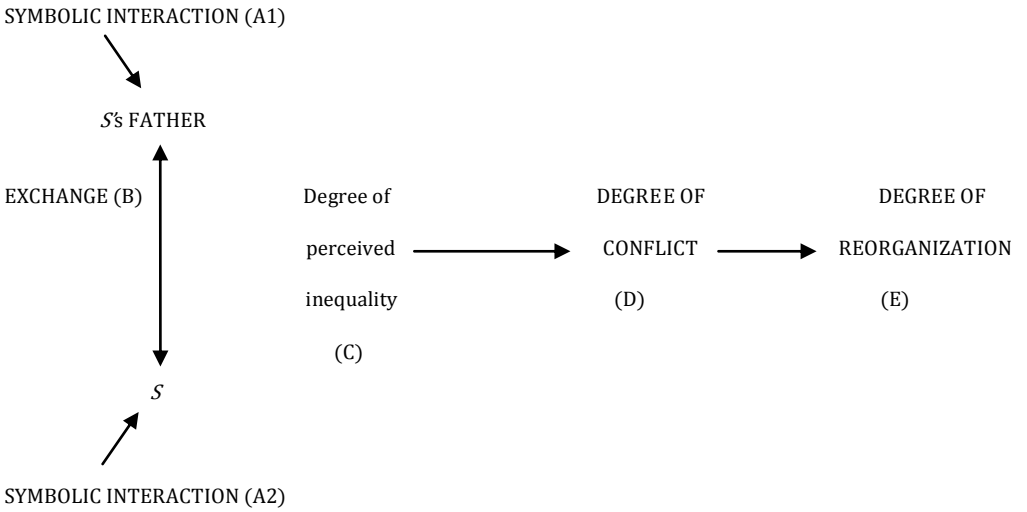

Figure 5. Multiple Perspective Model

He said that there had been questions from other people such as "What will the families' approach be to this?" They got married in 1986, and he added that:

> (…) when we got married, that was 24 years ago, (…) mixed married people (…) within Jews were few; there was no one in our family. As a matter of fact, at that time in Izmir, there were 2-3 mixed marriages within Jews. Now, it exists [in every family].

With respect to the attitude of the Jewish community in Izmir, he shared his own observations as follows:

> The Izmir community is approximately 2,000 people. Thus (…) people cannot find someone to marry. There is also the demographic problem besides (…) the integration with the society, weakening in rules. In fact, I can transfer information that the majority of young people in Izmir go to Istanbul just because of this reason; they try to study and work there. (…) Not only because Istanbul is the business center [, but] (…) because the Istanbul community is larger than the Izmir community.

He shared the meanings he attributes to marriage and family as follows: "Marriage is nothing more than a formality; it is not that important. Family (…) is something that is full with love". In terms of having children with *R*, he said that:

> I have had no concerns about it. As a matter of fact, from time to time, there have been approaches from other people such as they need an identity, but I think the opposite. I mean, I think that they do not need it at all. Thus (…) I did not feel any concerns. In fact, I think that this situation may not be a hardship for them; I think that it may enrich them. (…) However, after they were born, during the circumcision debates, a situation occurred in terms of what it will be or not.

He shared the process they have gone through so far as follows:

> Last year, (…) we informed them. (…) Until last year, we did not mention it at all. Inside the house, because

> religious practices are not applied; (…) they did not feel it much. (…) The questions have started such as "Why is our surname *X*?" Last year, we talked to them (…). At once, one of the children adapted to it more easily. (…) [Their other son] is more carefully thought-out; he thinks more about his social relations (…) he thinks more profoundly; at once, he became more concerned such as what I will do. I felt like that. (…) we did not give them any religious education [; thus,] they could not settle this into their minds. (…) as a family, we also are Italian citizens; we have dual citizenship. (…) While the children were explaining things to their friends, they preferred to explain it via this way. (…) I did not want to give them religious education to them on purpose because it would be too early. (…) the children (…) do not know [the concept of religion]. (…) when they got afraid at night, I have never said that, "Think of your God, God will help you", I always prefer to say that "Night and day are the same, there is no need to be afraid of". At once, this generates a difficulty for children; you see that since the other way is easier. Since the concept of religion has no place in their minds, they do not have any positive or negative judgment, they do not have an opinion such as Judaism is negative in Turkish society; actually in reality it is like this, but I did not want to transfer this to them to not to make them concerned. Thus, they find easier to explain things via Italian-Turk situation. It is easier to explain because (…) they learn these in school; there is French, American, English [and] Turk… Thus, when they are asked of why your surname is *X*, explaining it by saying, "Because our grandfather is Italian" has been easier for them, and they said like that. (…) At the same time, we are Sephardic, but (…) from my father's father side, there is an Italian citizenship. (…) The children are Italian, too. They are dual citizens, too. However, at the same time, we are Sephardic Jews, this is also true. (…) There is a time when it was lived in Italy; this citizenship was gained because of this.

The narrative above seems to be revealing important points. Firstly, it shows the importance of name in terms of social interactions in the public sphere. It can be argued that this is a common point that arises out of the experiences of many interviewees. In the case of the children of *R* and *S*, it seems like the children's first encounter with the concept of their father's Jewish identity, and their situation of being children of a mixed marriage occurred when they were asked about their uncommon surname in school. Secondly, since –as a family- they

have a dual citizenship, *S* argued that the children prefer to explain their uncommon surnames not via their father's side Jewish identity, but their citizenship of Italy. This seems to be revealing the dynamic character of the concept of identity. In terms of the bar-mitzvah, *S* said that they will not organize anything. During my interview with their mother, *R*, she said that since the children do not approach to the bar-mitzvah negatively, she noted that although they cannot organize the religious dimension of it, they plan to organize a party for their new age of 13, the bar-mitzvah. It can be asserted that the mothers, who are coming from a Muslim background, do not approach to these kinds of Jewish ceremonies for their children negatively; on the contrary, they try to find a new way to organize it. Also, on the subject of their twin sons he shared that, "As a comment, I can say that, these difficulties will start in 1 or 2 years when their environment widens (…)".

He shared a transformation he observed in the Jewish community in terms of mixed marriages and children as follows that is reminiscent of the suggestion of Blecher (2007) that is not opposing to the mixed marriage, and also accepting the children of these mixed marriages as Jew due to the fact that according to Blecher (2007), "(…) when it comes to the physical continuity of the Jewish community, intermarriage is more helpful than in-marriage" (p. 176).

> Judaism passes through mother; thus, in our situation, normally, the children are not accepted as Jews. (…) However, (…) [in the last years,] there is a tendency both in the world and Turkey, since mixed marriages reach the level of threatening Jewish community, with the fear of disappearing, now, [they are] accepting the children whose mothers are not Jews, as Jews; (…) they do it. (...) traditionally, this is not valid. In fact, they -at one point- sent a letter that is informing [us] that there is a Hebrew course. (…) At that point, they made an attempt to include [us] in the community again because it did not happen before. Before I was even accepted as single since this kind of marriage is not valid. (…) To prevent this [disappearing] a bit, (…) there is a tendency to accept children whose mothers are not Jews, as Jews.

He shared his personal connection to his Jewish identity as follows: "Since my young ages, I have been a faithless person. (…) I have been faithless since the age of 17-18". With respect to his experiences in terms of his Jewish identity in Turkey, he shared as follows:

> This is the atmosphere, which you were born into. (…) during childhood (…) you feel that there is something that makes you experience difficulty. (…) It exists in every step, but in daily life for the last 10 years, it is more flexible. However, in Turkish society, not only about Jews, largely, there is still a tendency to find foreigners odd. I mean, when you do something official with the government… In militarily service, (…) I do not know how it is now, but all the non-Muslims used to make military service in the status of unfavorable until my term. I made my military service in 1985; since '85 was after the September 12, the conditions were worse.

He said that he may call himself a "Türkiyeli Jew". *S*'s following narrative seems to be a clear example of the importance of the anthropological theory and method in terms of studying Jews that is:

> (…) research which illuminates the discursive means through which definitions of 'traditional' Judaism are established, defended, and debated" (Brink-Danan, 2008, p. 681-682 quotation marks in the original).

S noted that:

> I am an atheist, but this does not mean that I am not a Jew. I mean, I am an atheist, but in the end, the cultural background is [Jewishness]. (…) I do not live this or feel as such, but (…) there is nothing to deny this (…). However, if you ask me "Do you believe in anything?" No, I do not. But this is the cultural background.

In terms of the attitudes they observe in the public sphere regarding their mixed marriage, he mentioned that:

> If we do not tell them about this, people hesitate to ask. If we do not relieve them, people hesitate to ask. This is a problem that belongs to our society, which is there is an accepted identity; there is a right and good identity. Even though you do not feel like that, they feel that there is something wrong, and they hesitate to ask. This does not happen in another society. We have this problem.

Regarding the possible effect mixed marriage has on society, *S*'s opinion seems to be an example of one of the assumptions of the theory of symbolic interactionism that is "(…) society includes powerful social forces that are not significantly altered by individual interpretation of those forces" (Chibucos et al., 2005, p. 238). *S* shared as follows:

> (…) seeing these things may make people think that these can be. However, I do not think its contribution would be much. (…) In Turkey in many studies, the most unwanted neighbor is still Jews. (…) I think, our major problem is because of the education system, (…) [there must be] a deep transformation.

9.9. Couple 9: Jewish Woman Spouse, *T*

T was born in Gaziantep in 1976. However, she said that they moved to Istanbul when she was one year old, and thus she grew up in Istanbul. In terms of the religious atmosphere in her family of origin, she shared that, "We used to celebrate the festivals. However, we are flexible. My father cannot be considered as a very faithful person. (…) it was mostly via its tradition dimension".

With respect to her friendship environment, she said that until the age of 15-16 her friends were mostly Jews; she said that it was then diversified. On the subject of her encounter with her Jewish identity in the public sphere, she said that:

> (…) in the past, these things were not mentioned often. (…) *X* [she mentioned her high school here] was a school in which there were many minorities; thus, everyone knew each other. In fact, they used to give us

> holiday for the festivals. In the college, I met people who had never met a Jew before.

In terms of the bat-mitzvah, she shared that:

> I had the bat-mitzvah when I was 12 years old. In fact, I am one of the first girls who did it in *X* [she mentioned her neighborhood here]. Before that it was not done for girls. (…) It is not mandatory.

The narrative above can be considered as an example for the dynamic character of religion and its celebrations. In terms of her spouse selection in the future, she shared that, "(…) they [her family] would prefer that I marry a Jew (…)". In this sense, she noted that:

> In younger ages, it [potential husband's religious identity] would be [a criterion], but I decided that limiting myself like this would be meaningless. I thought that the important thing is his good personality. Thus I then decided that my happiness was more important.

T and *U* met in 2003 through people they knew in common, and they got married in 2006. She shared that since no problems occurred regarding their families about their decision of marriage, she did not have any concerns about the marriage decision. In terms of the reaction she received from the Jewish community, she said that, "They were not very happy about it".

At the time of the interview, *T* was pregnant, and she shared her opinions regarding having a child as follows:

> At the beginning, I was very opposed to having a child. (…) it was mostly the social conditions in Turkey that made me concerned more [than the religious difference]. If it was a boy, we planned to make him circumcised by the Jewish tradition, too. We talked about these. (…) In fact, our community approaches to it more positively; they are not as strict as they were in

> the past. They accept the children of mixed marriages, too.

She noted the strategy that they will adapt in terms of her daughter's religious identity as follows:

> I do not know whether the religious difference will create a problem for the child or not. We will live and see. (…) We will teach her everything. We want her to get to know the traditions of the both sides. (…) There will not be any orientation. Even though the families do not let us decide it, (…) the things she sees in each grandparent's home will be different. In the end, all of these will be a gain for her. She will grow up with two cultures.

T also shared that:

> Regarding children, there is a concern, which is "Will she experience any difficulty?" But this exists about everything. Just to be born into such a world is a problem. You think about whether this might be a problem for her or not. Besides other concerns, there is this, too. I think raising a good person is more important than her religious identity, but I am not sure about Turkey. (…) For instance, people do not want Jewish neighbor. Here, relationships [with neighbors] are good, but I think no one knows that I am a Jew. (…) This is because they do not know [Jewish people]. For example, (…) the owner of the house is a conservative man. If he knew I was a Jew, probably he would not want us, but is he [owner of the house] happy [to have them as tenant]? Yes, he is.

With *T* being Jewish, it seems like the couple would not experience difficulties in terms of their child's religious identity regarding the attitude of the Jewish community. However, *T* still seems to be concerned about the possible reactions their daughter may receive from the society in Turkey. This concern she shared is reminiscent of Resnik's (1933) argument, which is as follows: "(…) the parents in the intermarriage (…) tend to interpret the child's experience in the light of their (…) own" (p. 102). It seems like *T* considers their daughter's

possible interactions with the society in the future via her own experiences as a Jew living in Turkey. Moreover, the argument she shared in the narrative above that is about the people's negative opinion about having a Jewish neighbor is based on the study that was mentioned in the literature review part of the current study. One of the most significant findings in the study is that individuals, who firstly identify themselves as Muslim, display the highest percentage (61%) of negative perception towards having a Jewish neighbor (Anonymous, 2009, p. 13). Furthermore, with respect to raising their daughter by paying attention to her, having a good personality can be considered as an example of Cohen's (2009), who discusses that, "They [Jews with non-Jewish partners] (…) have (…) universal values and concerns (p. 57).

In terms of the religious atmosphere they live in now, *T* shared that, if there is a Jewish festival, they go to *T*'s family; if there is a Muslim festival, then they go to *U*'s family. This can be considered as an example of the common strategy in Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey that is the strategy of "deep tolerance" that McCarthy (2007) mentions. She said that they are careful about attending to the festivals meaning going to parents. In terms of the possible problems that may occur between them, she said that they have not had any problems regarding their religious differences. She mentioned that, "He [her husband] believes that all of the religions are common". She noted that they can discuss any religious issue comfortably with one another, and she added that, "We are very comfortable about [talking about] the issue of Israel, too". Regarding the religious symbols in their home, she shared that, "We do not have a Mezuzah, but we have Hanukkah candles. (…) About Islam, there is a script [in Arabic calligraphy] that says the God. (…) there are books about religion".

In terms of the social environment now, she noted that there are a few couples with whom they are in touch, and she continued that, "(…) Jews usually hang out collectively; (…) we are not like that; we are mostly in our shell". She also shared her own experiences regarding her Jewish identity in the public sphere in Turkey. She said that:

> Honestly, since my name is *T* (…), I did not have troubles much. (…) When it was necessary, [for instance,] the office I was working was very conservative, and I did not tell them [that she was a Jew].

The experiences the Jewish partners go through in the public sphere are mostly connected to their uncommon names. It seems like the name is a very significant dimension of identity in the public sphere since it is easy to reach it. Individuals either create a question mark in their minds about that person's identity or if they are familiar with the name in question, they do not pay attention to it. In terms of her perception about her Jewish identity, she shared that:

> Being a Jew must not be perceived only as a religion. They say that, "Her or his religion is Judaism"; that is not it. This can also be considered as a 5.000 years old race. Both religiously and traditionally, there is a difference for sure. This must be seen as a different identity. I do not have any difference from other young people living in Turkey, but I have different traditions. This is how I think.

The narrative above seems to be very significant in several ways. Firstly, her own perception about her Jewish identity can be interpreted as a valuable example of the necessity to catch an individual's own perceptions about their Jewish identities. Examining the issue by using dichotomies seems to be a barren way to follow such as individuals who deny or accept their Jewish identities. It seems vital to catch the meanings individuals attribute to their identities. In Koçoğlu's (2004) study, there is the tendency of Jewish people in Turkey to distinguish the traditions they have which affect their lifestyles and religion (Koçoğlu, 2004, p. 52; p. 67). In the same line with this, as *T* pointed out above, she seems to be interested in her Jewish identity in terms of traditions, but she does not seem to be connected to her Jewish identity religiously. As it was discussed in the literature review chapter of the current study, this narrative seems to indicate that Jewishness is more than only a religion for the Jewish people. Furthermore, the narrative above seems to be displaying the importance of the anthropological

approach while studying Jewish identity. Brink-Danan (2008) argues it as follows:

> (…) anthropologists have refused, at times, to accept definitions of Judaism that emanate from rabbis or community elites, looking instead to the variety of ways people relate to (or reject) tradition and change. Anthropologists allow these categories of belonging to surface from their informants, which sometimes leads to decidedly non-elite (…) definition of Judaism and Jews (…) (p. 681).

She added that:

> I feel myself to be a Jew more traditionally. More than religion, my traditions outweigh. I am a Turkish Jew. Firstly, I am certainly someone, who lives in Turkey, and I also think that I have an additional identity.

T also said something, which reveals that the concept of identity is dynamic:

> When I was young, I was joining the clubs; I was more active [, and] then I decided that these clubs were not compatible with me. (…) There was not any weakening, but maybe I ceased to fast. Yet, with my family, I have always adopted the traditions.

As mentioned in the current study, particularly in the past studies on intermarriage, there is an implication that the weakening in mixed couples' religious identities generates mixed marriages. It can be argued that separating both the Jewish and Muslim partners into two strict categories such as the ones who deny and accept it and placing this into the aetiology of intermarriage are not fruitful ways to follow. The narrative above and below seems to reveal the importance of individuals' self-identifications. *T* continued to tell about her Jewish identity as follows:

> I am certainly not in the mood of questioning. I am happy to be [a Jew]. This is something innate. It is not

> possible to change it. Even if I converted, I am always this. I think its responsibility must be taken. I think a person should know who/what she or he is.

She shared her own perception about the possible difference between mixed marriages and the others as follows:

> Maybe they are easier. When both sides are Jewish, the families may socialize [with one another] more. Honestly, our families are not in the same frequency. This would be easiness. Maybe for the child, it would be easy, but I have not experienced any disadvantage so far.

On the subject of mixed marriage, she shared her general opinion as follows: "We are a few examples. To change the mentality in Turkey, there must be many of these". She added that:

> People should listen to their hearts. I mean, when choosing the person she or he will live together with for many years; it is needed to distance from prejudice a bit. This is an important decision. It is a decision that a person must make by her or himself. But I think it is not something frightening. She or he must be brave. (…) it may happen suddenly.

She noted that, "It had been many years since I lost all my hope in the community. I was guessing that this [mixed marriage] would happen (…)". In terms of the effect of her mixed marriage on her opinion about Muslims, she shared that:

> By living in Turkey, I have had an idea about Muslim people automatically, but maybe for him some things have changed. In the end, we can say that he is a modern Muslim Turk. He cares both about his religion and nationality like me. We are actually an interesting mixture!

One of the interesting points during the interviews is that couples wondered about the other couples' perceptions and experiences. *T* also shared that she wonders what the others [mixed couples] say.

9.9.1. Couple 9: Muslim Man Spouse, *U*

U was born in 1967 in Istanbul. He considered the symbolic environment he grew up in as "multicultural":

> There were Rum, Armenian, Jewish and Alevi people. I cannot say that these are different ethnic origins; I think everyone is the citizen of the Republic of Turkey, but they have different faiths. We grew up with them. (…) Everyone in my family is Muslim, but their relationships have always been with these people.

He shared the religious atmosphere in his family of origin, and related to this his own perception about his Muslim identity as follows:

> I am faithful in my own way. My mother's side (…) fasts in the Ramadan, celebrates the festivals (…) the religious obligations were implemented properly (…). These were stronger in my father's side. Particularly, my grandmother is more different. For instance, in addition to these, she used to pray five times a day, but (…) when she was going out she was wearing her lady's suit, and a chic head scarf (…). She was not (…) like the ones now. (…) When I stayed with them for the summer, (…) it was my grandmother who taught me how to pray five times a day. Some of the things were from my grandmother, mother, (…) grandfathers, by sharing (…) they raised both me and my sister. (…) Until recently, I, with heart, (…) used to go to the Friday prayers, I used to fast [, and] I did not skip in my own way. I consider myself as a faithful person. But (…) this is a very broad concept, but it is as it is.

Regarding his family's general attitude toward his potential spouse selection, he noted that:

> (…) the family's approach to people was from a broad perspective, and our friends were from different

> religions; here the essential thing is nation, homeland. Who are you? You are a citizen of the Republic of Turkey, you are a Turk. It does not matter what you believe; what matters is being human. (…) More than Muslims, I have always have Rum, Armenian, Jewish friends when I was a child (…) we grew up without these lines.

He said that this is his second marriage, and he mentioned that his first wife was coming from a Muslim background. He said that there were disparities between them, and they decided that they were not compatible people; thus, they got divorced. In terms of getting married to *T*, he noted that what affected his decision is as follows: "We saw that we enjoy the same things, we were talking about the same things (…)". He added that, "I thought that she would be my wife in the future because she was adaptable (…); with my first wife (…) there were disparities in several points (…). This encouraged me". He added that:

> The important things are that (…) it must be someone with whom you can talk (…) [and] to perceive things from the same point (…) when I get angry, she keeps silence; when she gets angry, I keep silent. In fact, relationship is keeping the equilibrium.

The narrative above seems to be revealing the importance of the parallelism partners have in terms of perceiving life, which Kalmijn (1998) argues as follows: "Similarity of values and opinions leads to mutual confirmation of each other's behavior and worldviews (…) similarity of knowledge creates a common basis for conversation, which enhances mutual understanding" (p. 399).

In terms of him finding out *T*'s Jewish identity, he mentioned that:

> It was our second or third date; (…) something happened I do not remember it now exactly, maybe it was the time of Ramadan or something; she suddenly (…) said that, "I am a Jew!" I said that it does not interest me. (…) I did not know it before. (…) I said that, "I did not ask you which religion you believe in" (…) in the end, I said that, "You are a citizen of the Turkish Republic, your name is *T*, you speak Turkish, (…) the God is the same, the prophets are the ones who

> accept one another". I said that, "If you want an approval, I approve it".

This narrative seems to be remarkable to notice the need *T* felt to declare her Jewish identity to *U*.

In terms of the reactions he received from his family of origin regarding his decision, *U* shared that:

> I introduced her to my family in different times. (…) My mother approached to it more distantly because in Rums and Armenians there are more mixed marriages, but since Jews are more closed, there are a very few mixed marriages among them. She said that, "How will it be?" (…) My father did not prolong either. Maybe the reason behind this is that my grandfather's first wife (…) was Armenian. (…) My mother said that, "It might be difficult; they have a closed life, do not get sad (…)". I said that I do not think there will be such a problem. Until now, what my mother-in-law has made me feel that I am not different than her son.

U's narrative above is important to see the social image of Jews in the public sphere. His mother does not seem to be concerned about the religious difference, but she mainly seemed to be concerned about the closure of Jewish people in terms of marriage. Kalmijn (1998) states that:

> (…) if members of two groups do not marry one another, it does not necessarily mean that both groups are closed. It takes two to marry, and if one group is closed while the other is open, endogamy may still prevail (p. 397).

As discussed earlier in the current study, both of the groups' attitudes towards intermarriage should be examined in order to better understand the social closure of the groups better. Moreover, this points out another issue, which is that a group may be closed from the inside and/or from the outside. It seems like the Jewish community in Turkey is known as a closed group in terms of mixed marriage.

U also shared his perception about Islam and other religions. His narrative seems to be important in terms of noticing that marrying someone from a different religious background does not necessarily mean that religion is an irrelevant concept in the partners' lives. The vital point seems to be catching the meanings the mixed couples' attribute to religion. On that *U* commented:

> I am someone who likes to deal with religion. When we look at the inside of Islam, there are some fractions. There are some ways. Personally, I examined the Mawlawiyah, (…) Nurculuk, (…) the Nakhshibendi; I had friends in those cults. Alevism –of course- is more different, but I do not have profound information. I examined the Bektashi order closely. (…) Thus, when I examined all of these, personally I always reached the same point that there are ways within Islam, too, but actually in real Islam there is not anything like a cult, but there is the truth. To me, it seems like the Bektashi order is the most close to this. (…) the only conclusion I arrived is that God exists, and there is only one God. I believe in God. In Islam, (…) you say God and God's books (…) and prophets; thus, to be a good Muslim, you need to accept Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. You have to perceive all of them equal and respect them since they are the ambassadors of God. Thus I think to be a good Muslim, one must (…) have an idea of (…) the Torah, the Bible [and] the Qur'an. Since in the end, (…) if there is one God, (…) the rules are the same.

He said that he did not experience anything negative directly in terms of his religious or ethnic identity; however, he shared a recent incident they went through as follows:

> Here, everyone is a tenant. I think the owner of the apartment is a valuable person. (…) one of *T*'s couple friends was looking for a place; (…) they are Jewish. (…) We (…) talked to the owner of the apartment, and we had a nice chat. Two days later, the housekeeper said that, "The owner changed his mind (…) because their names are foreign". (…) I told him they are the citizens of the Republic of Turkey, and I got very angry. (…) This person is someone who was a politician. You discriminate against your citizens by their (…) religion (…). I got upset, and honestly, I was hurt, I was not expecting this because we have a very good relationship. (…) This was something I got upset about

> and I was hurt. (…) He said that, "They are non-Muslims. There have not been such tenants before in the apartment". (…) In the end, it did not happen.

Related to the narrative above, one of the important dimensions of the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey seems to be arising out of the majority and minority issue. Since Jewish people are a religious minority group in Turkey, the Jewish partners are familiar with Muslims and Islam in Turkey whereas the Muslim partners' awareness about the problems Jews experience seems to be increasing due to mixed marriage. He shared one of his observations about his Jewish spouse as follows: "(…) in some situations, I feel some of her concerns about people outside; I (…) have never experienced these; thus, (…) I cannot notice some things".

Since *T* is pregnant, one of the important subjects during the interview was on the subject of their daughter's religious identity:

> She will be the citizen of the Republic of Turkey. (…) I think faith is a personal issue. Religion must never be dominant over someone's nationality (…). (…) when you look at (…) England or the United States, she or he says that she or he is English or American (…). (…) This [faith] is a very personal issue that is between the God and individual. In my opinion the religious section in the ID must not exist. However, if it will exist, there are two things. Firstly, she will get to know all the religions (…); on the other hand, in daily life, depending on the course of the events in the country, (…) if she experiences an important difficulty, I think that maybe we will register her as Muslim. This would only aim to protect her. I think the flow of Turkey is not very secular or democratic.

Although they plan to not to direct their daughter to a predetermined religious identity, they seem to be concerned about the negative experiences she may go through. Thus depending on the situation in Turkey, *U* said that they may register her as a Muslim. This also seems to be revealing the dynamic character of the concepts of religion and identity.

His description of his self-identification in terms of Muslim identity seems to be an example for Marranci's (2008) emphasis while studying the Muslim identity. Marranci (2008) points out that, "(…) *what we feel to be* (…) determines our personal identity" (p. 97 italics in the original):

> When I look at my childhood or at my youth, religion has always been my privacy. I mean, it is something, which is between the God and me. (…) In my own way, I am someone whose faith is strong. When I have the chance, I like to implement the religious obligations not because they are mandatory, but I implement these by joy, at heart. Besides this, religion is something that makes things easy in individuals' lives. (…) It is a discipline. It is a doctrine. It is important where you look at it from, I mean, (…) are you only enjoying being together with the God or not?

Moreover, he shared some of the dimensions of his marriage in terms of religion:

> It [his attitude towards his Muslim identity] is the same. It is just; there is a responsibility that work and marriage bring. After marriage, I started to skip some of the things a bit, such as going to the prayer in Fridays or fasting. The speed of life is the first reason. The second reason is, until now, while I was fasting in Ramadan (…) my mother used to wake up and prepare Suhur [pre-dawn meal]. *T* does not have that habit. (…) either she has to wake up and prepare Suhur for me, or I myself need to wake up earlier. We will see in the future.

In the narrative below, his perception about mixed marriage regarding religion can be considered as an example of the "creative consciousness" of Muslims, which Marranci (2008) mentions (p. 93). Since *U* considers himself as a Muslim, it firstly shows that mixed marriage does not necessarily mean that mixed couples' religious identities disappear. At this point, his "creative consciousness" can be noticed that he does not consider being a pious Muslim and religiously mixed marriage as opposite situations, but he seems to be focusing on keeping the different religious identities as vital after mixed marriage. Moreover, he pointed out that he attends to the Jewish rituals

whenever there is a need. This also can be interpreted as a clear example of McCarthy's (2007) "deep tolerance". *U* shared his own perceptions as follows:

> (…) according to religious functionaries, it must not happen; (…) enlightened Islam religious functionaries do not see a problem in it since when we look at the population in the world, the majority is Christian or Muslim whereas the minorities are Jews, Buddhists and the other religions (…) they try to protect their own populations. (…) if someone's mind, conscience (…) are free, I find it [opposing to mixed marriage] illogical a bit. If you love someone (…) and she or he is sure that she or he will not forget where they are coming from, this must not be a problem. Everyone should be free in her or his relationship. Although –in my own way- I am someone who is a pious Muslim in some issues. If there is something such as a funeral or their [Jews'] special days, I go (…) I try to implement the ritual (…); I do it because I really like it. This is something nice, these are not bad things. This is how I think. Maybe it is a bit marginal.

With respect to the narrative of *U* above, lastly, it can be argued that it seems to be an example of "the individuation of life patterns" that is as follows:

> In each individual is a schematization of all the habits which give them a consistency and unity. Each individual, more often unconsciously than consciously works out for himself an outlook upon the whole of life which becomes a form of philosophy. This schematization which may be called 'his pattern of life' determines the general attitude or bias with which he will approach any problem (Mowrer as cited in Resnik, 1933, p. 96 quotation marks in the original).

On the subject of the importance of mixed marriage, he noted that:

> In Turkey, there are too many ignorant people who neither knows herself or himself nor what she or he believes or what she or he wants to do. (…) In Turkey everything is so mixed up. (…) for me it is important to be a Turk (…) but religion and faith is between the God and me. Thus for me, being a Turk is important. If *T* was English, maybe I would have married her. (…) It is nice to have faith, but beyond that it is not that important. (…) Would this [mixed marriage] be a

> message? Yes, it would be a message, but to the ones who understand it. On the other hand, many impertinent people may bother you, (…) [and] your peace might be disturbed. Thus, I consider myself as brave, but I am not Don Quixote, I mean, to appear and tell people that we made such a thing (…). (…) actually we have many common habits, both of them [the Torah and the Qur'an] are the books of the God.

From the narrative above, even though mixed couples think that their marriages are important on a micro level, the concerns mixed couple have can be noticed in terms of declaring their situation in the public sphere.

U continued as follows: "Islam and Judaism have many common things. There are (…) circumcisions, not eating pork, holy nights, fasting (…); in fact, the origins are the same". This can be considered as the "religious code-switching" McCarthy (2007) argues that is not creating something new in terms of religious identity, but rather "(…) moving back and forth across two distinct (…)" religions (p. 198).

He also mentioned that:

> There is anti-Semitism in the world. (…) Honestly, I perceive this as people's (…) prejudice. (…) In every society, there are both good and bad people, but those bad people must not be generalized to the whole community. (…) Also, regarding that what makes someone bad?

This couple was the last couple that I conducted an interview with. Towards the end of the interview, when we were talking about the first thoughts that appeared in their minds when they heard of my desire to interview with them, *U* honestly mentioned that, "I prepared aggressively". This was important to hear because it –in a way- seems to be a sign of their feeling of the possible negative perception of people about mixed marriage. He said that after meeting and starting to interview, he enjoyed talking about their experiences. Lastly, *U* shared his feeling as follows:

It is a nice thing; people may mixed marry to enrich their own lives, but maybe what I think is a utopia. I mean, when radical approaches emerge, these things will be interrupted. Secondly, after a point, there is always the possibility of (…) emerging something new as a result of mixing. Maybe this is the necessity of the times. (…) I think it is enjoyable as long as you approach to it in high spirits.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSION

The basis of the study is to understand and to describe the most intimate relationship that may occur between individuals from different religious backgrounds: mixed marriage. It explores Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages by focusing on Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' and their children's self-perceptions about their religious identities and their situations in a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey. It also explores the mixed couples' and their children's experiences both in the private and public spheres. At the beginning of the study, the mixed couples' religious backgrounds were taken into account while considering them as Jews or Muslims, and in the study, the meanings they attribute to their Jewish and Muslim identities were elicited. After elaborating on the 9 cases of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriage in contemporary Turkey separately, in this last chapter of the study, I aim to discuss the common points that were extracted from the narratives of the mixed couples and the children. This chapter of the study is titled "discussion" since the study neither reaches any final conclusions about the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey nor makes any generalizations on the issue of mixed marriage in any sense.

Since the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples grew up with different religious backgrounds, it seems important to point out the general religious atmosphere in their families of origin. Regarding this, it can be noticed that the Jewish spouses did not consider their parents as religious, but they mentioned that their parents used to embrace both their Jewish identity and the traditions of Judaism mostly in the form of celebrating the Jewish festivals. Similar to the Jewish spouses' consideration of their families of origin, most of the Muslim spouses also did not consider their parents' as religious, but they mentioned that they used to celebrate the Muslim festivals. They also noted that in their families, it was neither the case of transforming the Muslim identity into a lifestyle nor denying it. Overall, it can be argued that neither the Jewish nor the Muslim spouses' families displayed any extreme standpoints in terms of religion.

On the subject of the religious criteria that the Jewish and Muslim spouses had in terms of spouse selection, in general they mentioned that their potential spouses' religious identity had never been a criterion for them. Regarding this issue, several prominent points were noticed in the narratives: some spouses said that the overriding criterion for them was her or his spouse to be a good person whereas some Muslim partners discussed that the possibility of a marriage with a Jew had occurred neither to them nor to their families of origin; thus, the religious criteria had never been an issue. Also, while the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples were revealing the important factors that affected their decision of mixed marriage despite having different religious backgrounds, one prominent point was the positive characteristics, attitudes of their partners (these were mostly mentioned by the Muslim woman spouses for their Jewish spouses) such as him being intellectual and polite, and in general they discussed the common perceptions they have in terms of lifestyle. Even though the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples have different religious backgrounds, it seems like the parallelism in their perceptions about many issues and also the similarities in their lifestyles constitute the central factors for them regarding their decision of marriage. In addition, feeling happiness while spending time together during dating and also being able to talk with one another were the two other prominent factors the spouses discussed as the effective factors in their decision of marriage. The other remarkable points in their narratives were that one of the couples decided to marry since they think that in Turkey a conjugal relationship is perceived more positively than an unmarried couple who cohabitates; also some of the Muslim woman spouses mentioned that despite the negative reactions they received from their families of origin, one of the factors that helped them to overcome the reactions and facilitated their decision of mixed marriage and also nourished their determination was the fact that they were grownups at the time of the marriage; thus, they told that as grownups, who had relative economic freedom, they knew what they expected from marriage. In addition, one of the mixed couples decided to marry since the Muslim spouse was pregnant whereas one of the Jewish woman spouses pointed out that she had lost hope regarding marrying a Jew from the community; thus, she noted that she was

predicting that she would marry a Muslim. Also, it seems like the existence of other mixed marriages within a family may be an auxiliary factor regarding decision of mixed marriage. The last remarkable point was that one of the mixed couples decided to marry to resolve the conflict which appeared between the Muslim woman spouse and her family of origin due to their mixed relationship.

In terms of the attitudes of the families of origin towards their decision of mixed marriage, it can be mentioned that although the Muslim spouses witnessed efforts of their Jewish partners' mothers trying to find their sons a Jewish wife, the Muslim spouses particularly noted that they did not have any negative reactions from their Jewish spouses' families directly. This attitude of the Jewish families can be considered as an appearance of one of the general attitudes of Jews in Turkey that is being silent in the public sphere. The Muslim spouses also noted that they were sure that they were liked by their Jewish partners' family. One of the common points in the narratives of the Jewish spouses was that they have never been sure about their mothers' actual feelings about their mixed marriage decision. Their emphasis on their mothers' perception seems to reveal the importance of the mother's role in Jewish families whereas the negative reactions of the Muslim families regarding mixed marriage seem to be mostly coming from the fathers. This seems to be pointing toward the gender difference in terms of the roles of women and men in Judaism and Islam.

The reactions of the Muslim families seem to be arising out of several concerns. The first concern seems to be the difficulty the Muslim parents felt about explaining mixed marriage to their social environment; the second is the concern about the difficulty their child might experience in terms of being accepted by the Jewish community; and the third one seems to be focusing on the potential problems they may experience such as cultural differences and/or children's identity. It seems to be that Muslim families were not usually closed regarding mixed marriage in terms of the fact that their potential bride or groom is not Muslim, but rather they seem to be concerned about the reactions they may receive from the society about their child's mixed marriage. Lastly, regarding the various reactions that the Jewish and Muslim spouses' received from their

symbolic environments (such as friends) in terms of their decision of mixed marriage seem to be revolving around the questions of how their families of origin reacted, and if they had a child, what their child's religious identity would be.

In the literature on intermarriage, it is argued that in order to not to experience the potential negative process of mixed marriage, the strategy of cohabitation may be considered as a substitute of marriage by mixed couples. Regarding the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey, even though some couples cohabitated before marriage, it seems like the Jewish-Muslim couples do not consider cohabitation as a substitute for marriage in the long run. There seem to be several reasons behind this perception such as, as mentioned earlier, it seems like the couples think that the society perceives a conjugal relationship more positively than they perceive cohabitation.

In terms of the wedding ceremony, it can be noticed that almost all of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples organized only a simple civil marriage because of several reasons such as the reaction they received from their families. It seems like they preferred the easiest way out of this dilemma. One of the remarkable points was that the Jewish spouses, who are married to someone from another religion, appear as single in the records of the synagogue. On the subject of the relations with each others' families, most of the spouses shared that they have good relations especially after getting to know each other; and also some of the spouses shared that their families have important cultural similarities or their approaches to religion are parallel whereas some of the Muslim spouses shared the differences between their families by pointing out the high educational and/or intellectual level of their Jewish parents-in-law.

In terms of the relationship between the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples, it seems to be that although the religious backgrounds of the spouses differ, they have common perspectives in terms of lifestyles, and this point seems to form one of the strongest bonds in their relationship. Moreover, one of the most important patterns noticed was the parallelism between the Jewish-Muslim partners' educational levels: almost every Jewish-Muslim mixed couple in the

study has the same educational levels. On the subjects of spouse selection and the sustained harmony of the relationship between them, the parallelism in their educational level may be considered as one of the decisive factors. It can be inferred that their parallel educational levels may be helping them to create a kind of similarity regarding the desired life. In this sense, although the partners' religious backgrounds differ, these Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages cannot be considered as mixed in terms of educational levels and in terms of perceiving life meaning such as having universal values or approaching the concepts of marriage and family from similar standpoints. Thus, it can be generally stated that -despite the difficulties they face in terms of mixed marriage- not conflict, but harmony is more dominant in the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in contemporary Turkey. Furthermore, regarding the socio-demographic appearance of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples in the current study, by depending on the income of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' households, it can be stated that the other prominent pattern was the relatively high socioeconomic level of the couples which seems to be displaying the class position of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples.

In terms of the religious atmosphere in their homes, the prominent common point mentioned by all of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples was respect to each other's differing religious practices and festivals. However, the respect they embrace as a strategy is not only limited to accepting the difference. The Jewish-Muslim mixed couples accompany each other in religious practices such as fasting, and they also attend each other's festivals together which usually means visiting each others' families to celebrate them. The Jewish-Muslim mixed couples also shared that, especially after marriage, they noticed many parallelisms between Judaism and Islam.

Conversion constitutes one of the most important dimensions of religion. While exploring the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages, two remarkable points were noticed regarding conversion. First of all, it should be mentioned that the Jewish spouses have a negative perception of conversion. It seems as though the Jewish spouses also perceive it almost as an impossible act. This perception

seems not only be connected to the difficult process of converting to Judaism, but also to the relative exclusivity of Judaism in terms of accepting other people as Jews via conversion. Accordingly, for the Jews who are born as Jews, it seems almost impossible to deny their Jewish identities. Secondly, neither Jewish nor Muslim partners considered converting to their spouses' religion with the exception that in the cases of two families, the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples considered the option of the Muslim woman spouse to convert to Judaism for their children. In this sense, it seems like conversion to Judaism may become an issue for the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples when they have a child. In the end, the intended conversion was not realized because of several reasons. Firstly, conversion cannot be carried out in Turkey; thus, they noted that they had to travel to Israel or to the United States. They also mentioned that conversion to Judaism is both an expensive and difficult process. Secondly, the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples had also heard of some negative experiences converted individuals went through such as inner feelings of guilt. These kinds of interactions with other individuals seem important for forming perceptions and decisions. This point is also evident from the fact that during the interviews, it was noticed that the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples were curious about the other couples' statements of experiences.

In the literature on intermarriage, it can be seen that intermarried individuals are usually approached as if the weakening in their religious identities caused their mixed marriage decision; this tendency can be noticed particularly in the early studies of the aeitology of intermarriage. In this sense, intermarried individuals' voices have not been frequently heard regarding their identities that are in question. In this study, I consider listening to the self-perceptions of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples as vital; thus, one of the most important aims was to catch the meanings the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples attribute to their religious identities.

Before pointing out the mixed married Jewish spouses' self-perceptions in terms of their Jewish identity, I would like to mention the general difficulty of exploring Jewish identity. This difficulty mostly arises out of the fact that being

Jewish may reveal a multi-layered identity that consists of the concepts such as religion, tradition, faith, culture and ethnicity. The discussion of this complex issue was not within the limits of the current study; however, at this point I would like to mention that while delving into the self-perceptions of the mixed married Jewish spouses, not an essentialist conception of Jewishness was adopted; on the contrary, the mixed married Jewish spouses' own perceptions about their Jewish identities were tried to be understood. In so doing, the general aims were to explore the dynamic characters of the concepts of identity, religion, tradition, faith and culture, and also to bring a different perspective to the research area of mixed marriage which is to pay more attention to mixed married individuals' own perceptions about their identities and/or experiences rather than to create typologies and/or to consider their identities, situations from a negative approach as if mixed marriage is a pathological event.

Also, before delving into the issue of the Jewish spouses' self-perceptions about their Jewish identity, it is important to note that it seems like the Muslim spouses consider Jews living in Turkey as a group that has a different religion. As mentioned earlier, since Jewishness consists of the concepts such as religion, tradition, faith, culture and ethnicity, it seems useful to mention the general perception of the mixed married Muslim spouses regarding Turkish Jewry.

In terms of the Jewish spouses, it can be said that their minority status in Turkey is compounded since they become a minority in the Jewish community by marrying a Muslim. Regarding their self-perceptions about their Jewish identity, it can be noted that for them, the meaning of being Jewish seems to go beyond just a religious belonging. Most of the Jewish spouses seem to be distinguishing the concept of faith from religion and the concept of religion from culture/tradition while sharing their connection to their Jewish identity. While the Jewish spouses do not consider themselves as religious in terms of Judaism, they mostly perceive themselves as faithful, and they emphasized the cultural importance of their Jewish identity for them. In addition, although in general Jewishness points to the concepts of religion and ethnicity, in the current study, the Jewish spouses did not frame their connection to their Jewish identity within

the concept of ethnicity. The Jewish spouses perceive themselves as Jews without having any reservations, and they mostly mentioned the importance of Jewish culture and traditions for them. In this sense, the concept of ethnicity may seem to be the connection between the Jewish spouses and their Jewish identity. However, when the Jewish spouses were posed the questions of "What does being Jewish mean to you?" and "How do you consider yourself ethnically and religiously?" their answers mostly were: "I am both a Turk and a Jew. But I am more Turk because I live in Turkey"; "I am a Turk, but my religion is Judaism. I do not feel like belong to anywhere else"; "[I am a] Jewish Turk"; "I am culturally a Jew, but I do not have any religious faith". These points seem important in terms of noticing the dynamic characters of the concepts of identity, religion, tradition, faith, culture and ethnicity. Also, it seems like characterizing the Jews who are married to Muslims as individuals' with weak Jewish identity is not a fruitful way to follow. In this sense, it seems like there is no denial in terms of their Jewish identity; on the contrary, they seem to be embracing their Jewish identity.

The meanings, which the Jewish spouses who are married to Muslims attribute to their Jewish identity, can be discussed in several points. In the narratives of the Jewish spouses there may be noticed an emphasis on being born Jewish; thus, they seem to perceive their Jewish identities as immutable. In this sense, none of the Jewish spouses have reservations about identifying themselves as Jewish, but the meanings they attribute to their Jewish identities are diverse. Some Jewish spouses considered their Jewish identity only as one of the parts of their identity, and they also shared the importance of the attitudes in the society towards them in terms of approaching them by emphasizing their Jewish identity. Also, there can be noticed an almost clear opinion about Jewish identity in terms of its being more than a religious identity, and in some cases something different than a religious identity. There were two clear examples of this perception. One of the Jewish spouses shared that it does not matter whether she adopts the religion or not. She said that she was born a Jew, she is a Jew, and she will always be a Jew, whereas another Jewish spouse considered himself as an atheist by adding that this does not mean that he is not a Jew. As noted earlier, he

said that in terms of cultural background, he is certainly a Jew. The emphasis on tradition and culture can be noted as a common point in the Jewish spouses' own perceptions about their Jewish identity. The feelings of happiness and pride seem to be the common descriptions in their self-perceptions about their Jewish identities. There were two other important points about their self-perceptions which were being proud of the success Jewish people have around the world and the emphasis on the solidarity and privileges Jewish people own. Lastly, some of the narratives discussed the possible effects of being a minority in a country, and in that sense they noted the desire of Turkish Jews to preserve their Jewish identities.

By taking the Jewish spouses' general opposition to conversion into account, it can be argued that Jewish identity seems to be relatively closed both for individuals who are born as Jews and for the ones who consider becoming a Jew by converting. In this sense, since conversion to Judaism is considered as a very difficult process, it seems like for the ones who want to convert the religious practices of Judaism become dominant whereas for the Jewish-born the symbolic meanings of being a Jew seem to be connecting them to their Jewish identities.

In many cases, the interviews with the Jewish spouses also covered their experiences of being Jew in a predominantly Muslim country. In this sense, they shared their experiences in the public sphere. One of the common points that occurred in terms of their experiences was the importance of names in the public sphere. Almost all of the Jewish spouses' shared anecdotes were related to the experiences they have gone through regarding their uncommon names. This seems to be pointing to the symbolic importance of names in daily life. Another common point was the patriotic character of the Jewish spouses that was mentioned by their Muslim spouses. Furthermore, the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples think that their mixed marriage most probably is not perceived positively by the Jewish community and the society. Lastly, the lack of knowledge about Jews in Turkey was often described both by the Jewish and Muslim spouses as being one of the causes of the negative experiences they go through in the public sphere.

On the subject of the Muslim spouses' self-identifications, it can be stated that none of them were raised under pressure in terms of religion. While the Muslim spouses were sharing their perceptions about their Muslim identities, they mostly distinguished the concepts of faith and religion. In this sense, they mostly perceive the concept of faith positively by describing it as something that is between the God and individual whereas they approached to the concept of religion differently. The Muslim partners mostly considered themselves as faithful, but they emphasized that they are not religious. They embrace the cultural dimension of being Muslim, but they seem to have reservations about identifying themselves as Muslims perhaps since they do not see the Muslim identity as one which goes beyond the religious identity. Recall that the Jewish spouses also distinguish between the concepts of religion and faith, but since the Muslim spouses mostly do not consider themselves as religious, it seems like they are puzzled about identifying themselves as Muslim. This seems to be arising out of the perception that while the Jewish spouses may consider their Jewish identity as an identity beyond religion and/or something different than a religious identity, the Muslim spouses have difficulty since they cannot seem to consider the Muslim identity as something separate from religion. One point that should be declared is that none of the Muslim spouses totally denied her or his Muslim identity -in fact in some cases they consider themselves as Muslims-; however, they emphasized that they are not religious, and they mostly mentioned the importance of the cultural dimension of being Muslim such as celebrating the festivals. Also, in terms of the meanings they attribute to their Muslim identity, it can be mentioned that several values such as being a good person, being fair to people, being respectful to other religions and believing the God were common in the narratives.

Overall, it seems that even though the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples' religious backgrounds differ, their approach to the concept of faith is parallel, and this commonness seems to be generating the vital strength in their relationship in terms of overcoming the possible conflicts that may arise since their religious backgrounds differ. In this sense, it is difficult to argue that since they married someone from another religion, the concepts of faith and religion are irrelevant

in their lives. Rather the important point seems to be the parallelism in their approach to their own religious identities. Lastly, another important common point in terms of religion is that both the Jewish and Muslim spouses shared their opposition to the religious section in Turkish IDs.

In the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey, one of the most important effects of mixed marriage on the spouses' perception seems to be the Muslim partners' awareness about the problems of the minorities in Turkey. It seems like either the Muslim spouses became aware of these as a result of sharing life with a Jew or their existing sensitiveness has increased. This can be interpreted as a result of the majority-minority dimensions of Jews and Muslims in Turkey. The Jewish spouses noted that they always have been aware of Islam and Muslims; however, they stated that their marriage has an effect on their Muslim spouses' awareness of Jews and their problems. Most of the narratives illustrated the reaction and/or consternation of the Muslim spouses at times when –for instance- the Muslim woman spouses are posed questions about their uncommon surnames or when they witness other individuals' talking about Jews in a negative way or when they observe a negative process that their Jewish spouse goes through. In these incidents, the Muslim spouses seem to be displaying reactions in terms of protecting Jews. In the public sphere, it can be said that the negative processes that the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples experience mostly occur not in the context of their mixed marriages, but rather their partners' Jewish identity. In this sense, it is significant that not all, but most of the negative incidences the Jewish-Muslim partners shared occurred in official settings. Moreover, it seems like the Muslim partners usually approach the issue from the point of view of both Israel and Palestine. Furthermore, not only the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples, but also their children mentioned that they feel discomfort in terms of some individuals' perception in Turkey that considers Israel and the Turkish Jews as the same; they seem to be finding this approach as unfair to the Turkish Jews.

The self-identifications of the children of the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages constitute a very important dimension of the study. In contemporary

Turkey, it seems like Jewish males marry to Muslim females more than the reverse. Thus most of the children of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages are born to a Jewish father and a Muslim mother. In Turkey, it is known that the statement of religion in a child's ID is determined by taking father's religion into account; thus, the children of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples may be registered as Jews. However, in general the Jewish community does not perceive them as Jews since their mothers are not Jewish. Thus while for the civil law in Turkey, theoretically, these children are Jews, for the Jewish community they are not. The statement of religion in the ID seems to be the first problematical issue the mixed couples experience after having a child in Turkey. In the cases of 7 children in the current study, all of the children's fathers are Jewish. Two of the children were registered as Jews, two others were registered as Muslims and for the remaining three, the religious section of their ID was left blank. In addition, in the two cases of the study, the mothers are Jewish (one Jewish spouse was pregnant at the time of the interview, and one Jewish spouse and her husband does not have a child yet); thus, the child's situation seems to be relatively less problematic regarding being Jewish due to the fact their mothers are Jewish, they would be considered as Jews by the community more easily if they chose to be Jewish.

In many countries, Jews constitute a religious minority group. In the literature there can be seen discussions about the effect of the majority religion on their identities; thus, the children who are born to these mixed marriages constitute an important dynamic. The cases in contemporary Turkey seem to indicate that almost all of the children's self-identifications are closer to perceiving themselves as Jews or they consider themselves as Jews despite the facts that these children were born and live in a predominantly Muslim country, and there may be difficulties that they may experience with the Jewish community since their mothers are not Jews. There is also the reluctance of the Jewish community in accepting these children as Jews. One of the children considered herself as a Jew by noting that she perceives her Jewish identity not as a religious belonging, but mostly as a cultural epithet and as an identity providing privilege. Another child stated that he considers changing the statement of religion in his ID from Islam to Judaism. One of the children had not decided

about it yet, but he shared that he never considers himself as being Muslim. Another child, as his parents stated, both due to their joint decision and also by his own choice, had the bar-mitzvah, and he considers himself mostly as a Jew. One of the interpretations the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples had in terms of their children's closeness to Jewish identity was that these children's names and surnames are uncommon names in Turkey; thus, the couples thought that their names would have been considered as odd for Muslim identity, if they have chosen to be Muslim.

The children of these mixed marriages may choose –whether they are accepted or not by the Jewish community- between being Jew or Muslim. It can be argued that despite the difficulties they may experience, in terms of their parents' different religious backgrounds they seem to have the two options: Judaism and Islam. It seems like in the eyes of these children, Muslims are either very religious or individuals who do not believe in religion; thus, it seems like they find the general standpoints of Muslims extreme. The children also noted that the relative closeness of Jewish people in social environments (such as Jewish students in school) discomforts them. Overall, the existing cases seem to reveal the relative attractiveness of being a Jew or a Muslim when individuals have options. In terms of being Muslim, the children mentioned that they have never considered identifying themselves as Muslims.

Regarding the bar-mitzvah, since the situation of these children is different than that of children whose mothers and fathers are both Jewish, it seems to be that the bar-mitzvah constitutes a central point for these children in terms of their connection to Jewish identity. The children of the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages seem to be interested in the bar-mitzvah, and they are mostly interested in its ceremonial dimension. On the subject of the bar-mitzvah, one of the remarkable considerations of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples was that they noted that their son can always claim that he is Muslim, but they think that if the bar-mitzvah has not made for him, he would not have been able to claim his Jewish identity. In this sense, it seems like the bar-mitzvah is a significant ceremony symbolically for the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children.

The meanings the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children attribute to the bar-mitzvah seems to be going beyond its traditional interpretation of becoming an adult Jew and a part of the community. It can be argued that the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples perceive the bar-mitzvah as one of the central steps for their children to claim that they are Jews. Also, although it seems that the children usually are not raised under any religious pressure, the parental effect in terms of the children's identities seems important. Evidently, these children are not interested in religion in terms of giving themselves a religious identity, but rather they seem to be mostly interested in the attractive dimensions of Judaism such as the festivals and traditions.

In terms of the religious identity of the children, the other important point is the Muslim mothers' relatively positive approach to their children's interest in Jewish ceremonies such as the bar and bat-mitzvah. In the current study, most frequently the fathers are Jews, and it is generally known that in Islam the father's religion is important whereas in Judaism mother's religion is vital. In the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in contemporary Turkey, it seems like regardless of religion, the fathers have dominance over the children's self-identifications. Also, the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples without children mentioned that they want their children to be acquainted with both of the cultures, and they want to let her or him to decide her or his religious identity if she or he wants to have one. In addition to these, it was remarkable that mostly the mothers were curious about what their children would say in the interviews about being a child of a mixed marriage, with regard to the issue of religious belonging and so forth. As children of Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey, it seems like they get to know both of the Jewish and Muslim festivals, and they seem to be enjoying this opportunity. Curiously the future plans of all of the children that were interviewed, included going to the United Stated and staying there.

The life-cycle ceremonies should be noted as one of the important problems that can occur in the Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages. One of the narratives was about the negative process of circumcision: the Muslim mother

shared that she wanted their twin sons to be circumcised by a rabbi; however, they were rejected. Depending on the interviews, it seems difficult to draw any conclusions or patterns about these ceremonies. For instance, in terms of the bar-mitzvah there can be noticed a spectrum ranging from organizing the bar-mitzvah in the synagogue for the child whose mother is Muslim to not even considering it since the mixed couple perceives it as impossible to arrange. Also, there can be seen some other strategies such as organizing the bar-mitzvah just as a birthday party. As mentioned earlier, particularly the bar-mitzvah seems to be a ceremony in Judaism that the children of these mixed marriages are interested in; however, it seems like there is not a single rule or way in terms of organizing it for the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples. Another problematic life-cycle ceremony seems to be the funeral and burial of the children who consider themselves as Jews. Since the Jewish cemeteries are separate and strictly exclusive, the children's situations remain problematic. Lastly, on the subject of the burial, the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples seem to be concerned about the situation of their children in the future since the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples cannot be buried in the same cemetery, the couples noted that their children will be divided if they want to visit their graves.

Most of the children consider the start of the religious course in school as the turning point in terms of noticing their situation's meaning with regard to being a child of a Jewish-Muslim mixed marriage. This seems to be the starting point of their awareness of their situations in the public sphere. In the study, most of the children did not attend the religious course in school. One of them attended once, but then she said that she could not find what she was looking for which was a cultural course about all religions whereas one of the other children's school system does not have that kind of religious course for its students. Moreover, the twin brothers did not attend to it by explaining their situation to the school, and in the case of another child, the religious statement section in his ID was left blank; thus, he did not attend it. Overall, it can be noted that out of 7 children in the study, five of them did not attend it, and two of them did. These two siblings were the only children in the study who were registered as Muslims in their IDs.

Regarding the children's situations, in the narratives of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples, there can be noticed three common points. First of all, the parents seemed to be concerned about the difficulties their children may experiences in Turkey regarding their situations of being a child of a mixed marriage. Secondly, couples perceive their children's situations as an opportunity for them since they have options regarding their religious identity. Thirdly, most of the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples shared their desire for their children to be acquainted with both cultures.

Although the study does not aim to make any generalizations in any sense, the self-identifications of these children who were born to Jewish-Muslim mixed marriages in Turkey seem to be creating a critical puzzle for the Jewish community. The Jewish world seems to be having concerns about their low population. Furthermore, it seems like the occurrences of mixed marriage are not decreasing; on the contrary, they are increasing around the world. Another challenge for the Jewish community is that Judaism does not carry the intention of proselytizing in terms of gaining new adherents via converting; thus, converting does not seem to be a way to increase their population. Thus, the puzzling question arises out of the mixture of these facts: Should they consider the children of these mixed marriages as Jews or not? It seems like the children of these mixed marriages in contemporary Turkey are not losses to Judaism; on the contrary, they seem to be feeling themselves as closer to Judaism.

The Jewish-Muslim mixed couples also mentioned how they perceive their own mixed marriage. According to these couples, the religious difference between two individuals must not be seen as a burden to mixed marriage. The mixed couples also mentioned that marrying someone from a different religious background paves the way to get to know another religion, and thus enriches their lives. Additionally, it can be argued that even though the couples' perspectives of marriage may differ, their perceptions of family as a unit is remarkably positive. Another point in the narratives about mixed marriages was that whenever a divorce occurs, the religious difference is seen as the scapegoat; they do not find this right. Moreover, the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples

mentioned that in order to deal with the potential problems and reactions, those who marry someone from another religious background need to be brave and strong. Furthermore, they shared that they do not think mixed marriage makes their marriage more difficult; according to them, the respect that must be displayed to each other gains more importance in a mixed marriage.

On a macro level, the Jewish-Muslim mixed couples noted that they consider their mixed marriages as an example of the possibility of living in harmony while keeping their different religious identities; they noted the importance of getting to know the other identities in terms of resolving conflicts. In this sense, they particularly perceive their children to be important since they noted that their children are raised by getting to know different religions and cultures. In terms of the importance of mixed marriage on a macro level, they think that these mixed marriages are important micro examples, and they might have positive effects in terms of showing the possibility of sharing a house despite having different religious identities. However, they think that these effects may be on a micro level, and there must be deeper transformations in the society to overcome prejudicial opinions and perceptions. Lastly, they mentioned that in this era mixed marriages is inevitable.

Exploring the self-identifications and experiences of Jewish-Muslim mixed couples and their children in contemporary Turkey provides a significant ground to comprehend one of the most important aspects of the interactions between different religious identities. Throughout the study, the central aim was to understand couples' and their children's self-perceptions about their religious identities, and their experiences both in the private and the public spheres since in the literature on intermarriage, in general, mixed married couples' and/or their children's voices are not frequently heard. Listening to mixed couples' self-identifications not only paves the way to understand the meanings they attribute to their identities that are in question, but also it reveals the dynamic characters of the concepts of identity, religion, faith, culture and tradition. Thus, it shows that their self-perceptions about their religious identities cannot be understood by primordial ascriptions. Moreover, the self-identifications of the children of

these mixed couples provide remarkable insights into the issue of the relative attractiveness of Jewish and Muslim identities in a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey. Furthermore, mixed marriage, as being the most intimate relationship between individuals from different religious backgrounds, and also children of mixed marriages seem to be creating a challenge for the boundaries of religions, particularly for Judaism, in terms of noticing the various meanings of the Jewish identity for mixed married Jews and also in terms of determining the answer to the question of whether or not the children of these mixed marriages are Jewish.

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