



THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

KOULOGLOU PINELOPI

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University of Macedonia of Economic and Social Sciences

Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies

Under the supervision of Associate Professor Konstantinos Tsitselikis

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of women's movement throughout the history, from the late times of Ottoman Empire until today. It emphasizes on the various categories of feminist movements that have been formulated, such as Kemalists, Islamists, and radical feminists, liberal and Kurdish feminists. It aims to present the change that feminist movements brought in favour of women rights by bringing "private" topics like violence against women to the political agenda, and finding solutions for women's problems. The impact of Europeanization process cannot be denied especially in the empowerment of civil society and the formation of NGOs concerning women issues pointing out deficiencies and asking for the improvement of women's status in Turkey.

Key words: feminism, women's movements, Kemalist, Islamist, Radical feminists, EU, NGOs

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Pay attention to every corner of the world, *we are at the eve of a revolution.* Be assured, this revolution is not going to be bloody and savage like a man's revolution."

Fatma Nesibe, feminist lecturer, in Istanbul 1911

INTRODUCTION

When do you think women and girls were finally deemed to have "human rights" by the world's nations? The obvious answer might be 1948, when the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#); or perhaps the 1970s, when the global feminist movement started changing the world in the West? Even though the majority of the population conceives feminism as an archaic ideology it was only in the early 1990s that the United Nations finally recognized that women and girls also have human rights. Someone can notice that it happened rather lately in the history of protection of human rights. Furthermore, the decision was taken rather reluctantly under the immense pressure and lobbying of thousands of women and women's groups both from the south and the north, initiated by a global women's network coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL).

Women have suffered a lot throughout the history, they were always considered as the most vulnerable part of the society but at the same time instead of being respected as an equal human they were subordinated by the society which was and still is under patriarchy. An interesting point is that the males of the male-dominated societies do not understand that they themselves become satellites of the patriarchal order. A very famous Chinese saying notes that, "half of the sky belongs to women," however this is not true for the Earth (Benmayor, 2011).

Therefore feminists have started to formulate women's organizations and groups from early years, especially in the West in order to demand equality, respect, non violence and their right to express their femininity. Women in West, which were the first to have access to knowledge, had created movements influenced by the feminist theory. The first to talk about women rights were the philosophers emerged by the Age of

Enlightenment in the 18th century, this type of feminism can be called as “protofeminism”. Further in 19th century the “feminine ideal” emerged by women. From that point onwards the feminist movement evolved and took various shapes through the 3 waves of feminism, as presented in the paper. Feminist movement had developed as a reaction to certain state policies and thus can be considered a rebellion on regards of women movements, starting to formulate civil society, against the state (Gündüz, 2004). What is more, a woman suffering domestic violence due to male-dominated societies was another reason that pushed them to respond and react. Throughout the world, violence against women is excused on grounds of love, jealousy, passion, honour or tradition (Amnesty International, 2004). The feminist movement was spread all around the world and women’s organization started to rise and lobby for their common interests.

The success of the feminist movements should be regarded in that respect. There are different types of feminist movements and their emergences depends a lot from the political system of each country, the level of democratization, and respect on human rights the level of literate people and culture. To over generalize the feminist movement can be two folded there are the more radical and the ones that are lobby-seeking feminist groups, such as women group’s parts of political parties, NGOs, civil society in general etc. However the lobby-seeking feminist groups are influential and becoming dominant in Western societies compared to the more radical feminist movements (Çaha, The Death of Feminism as an Antisystemic Movement or the Success of Feminism to Change the System from Within?, 2003). It can be explained by the fact that they contribute to the humanization process of the system itself. However, still the feminist groups (particularly those who emphasize autonomy and difference) continue to be one of the leading movements with a strong contribution of feminism to civil society, in particular, in the historically male-oriented public spheres (ibid).

This paper will provide special attention in the case of Turkey and the evolution of women’s movement influenced by the feminist theory. The starting point of the women’s movement can be observed in the late times of the Ottoman Empire. From that point onwards the Ottoman women and later the Turkish women were influenced by the West countries and introduced feminism in the realms of Turkey. The women’s

movement in Turkey took various shapes and was influenced by many prevalent factors of Turkish Republic. Nowadays there are many types of organizations, from radical feminism, religious feminism to women's rights organization and NGO's dealing with women issues however their initiatives stem from feminist theory and their will to confront patriarchy in any suppressing form. It is crucial to notice that feminists managed through their persistence and pressure over the politics to change the existing reality of women in Turkey. Even though there are still many to be done it is noteworthy to be emphasized as an indication of feminism's ability to change the system from within (Çaha, *The Death of Feminism as an Antisystemic Movement or the Success of Feminism to Change the System from Within?*, 2003).

This picture in the politics of the Turkish state has actually been reversed by feminist groups in the aftermath of the 1980s. The paper aims to present the past and current situation of feminist movements in Turkey by providing an analytic historical overview of the evolution of women's movements. It is important the reader to create a complete picture of women's effort in Turkey under the Turkish concept and shaped perceptions about women and their role in society in order to understand the reasons that led them to rebel and how it was managed. Furthermore, in the first part of the paper the 3 waves of feminism that shaped the feminist movement all around the world will be presented in the Turkish concept and their delay to be integrated, of about 20 years in each case, along with the types of feminist that were formulate throughout the feminist history in Turkey, such as Kemalists, Islamists, Liberal, Radical feminists and Kurdish feminists, being active in favor of women rights. The first part also includes the law amendments that were made throughout the history concerning the status of women by amending parts of the Constitution altering the Civil and Penal Code.

How and why the social movements in Turkey emerged? Who got involved? How they were shaped throughout time? How much were influenced by the political scene? The second part of the paper aims to introduce the formation of the civil society sector and more precisely the emerging of women's organization which are considered to be the initiators. Someone could definitely say that women's movements assisted a lot in establishing women's rights, educating parts of society and thus promoting equality and respect towards women. Europeanization and the beginning of accession process

in 1999 played a crucial role towards the democratization of Turkish Republic, the protection of human rights and minorities. Therefore, the second part mentions the effects of Europeanization process. Through project funding gave a boost to women's organization and thus to the emancipation of women. Furthermore, as stated in the text the chance to come closer and exchange views with other international civil society's organization was a plus regarding women's rights and the evolution of feminist theory. A question that might be raised is to what extent did EU help and if their initiatives were superficial? The answer is yes and no, in all cases what really matters is the issue to be enough politicized by the interested group in order to make a difference from the grassroots of the society. The feminist movement has always been a humanist movement. All in all, some of its representatives were reformers, others revolutionaries, but virtually all of them worked for a better, more equitable and more humane world. Therefore there are many outcomes over the evolution of women's movement but with certainty feminism in Turkey did have a positive outcome regarding the women status. Furthermore, this paper presents some of the most well known organizations and movements existing in Turkey separated in the appropriate categories such as Kemalist, Islamist and radical feminist movements. The last part of the paper offers details about the current status of women and the progress of women movements as well as some drawbacks that drug behind the movements and their ability to further achieve goals.

I PART

A. HISTORY OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY

From early times, the whole process of modernization and westernization evolved very slowly however the effort of Ottoman women and latter on Turkish women to fight for their rights was evident. During the Ottoman period the Western countries had already initiated their modernization process. The Western civilization improved technologically very rapidly and the high level of education and access to information and knowledge influenced the Western societies from an economical and societal aspect (Yiğit, 2008). An analysis of the history of the Turkish women's movement has to be viewed in the framework of Ottoman and Kemalist legacy, and, to what extent these historical eras influenced the process and evolution of women's movement. Looking back the historical background of Turkish women's movements is easily divided in three major and totally contradicting eras. The first era takes place during Tanzimat period (1839-1876), the second one, began with the Republican era, with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and, the third period begun after 1980s at the end of the military coup/regime and as stated was initiated by the Turkish women themselves (Gündüz, 2004; Coşar & Onbaşı, Women's Movement in Turkey at a Crossroads: From Women's Rights Advocacy to Feminism, 2008).

OTTOMAN EMPIRE & THE CREATION OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The first period began in the milestone year of 1839 with the wide-spectrum of laws in the Tanzimat¹ period (Gündüz, 2004). The reforms that Tanzimat introduced influenced the target group of that paper. Subsequent to the principles that French Revolution had set in the fields of human rights *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* created a space and a political ground from which Young Turks² demanded a series of reforms,

¹ The first modernization attempt, as accepted by most of the historians on Ottoman Empire, is called Tanzimat Reforms and were made by Sultan Mahmud II. (Tomac, 2011)

² The modernization progress which took part in the 17th century was led by the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) and during the early 18th century Young Turks were considered to be the official political continuum. They were mostly educated in Europe and brought back the principles of modernization from the West. (Tomac, 2011)

thus altering the governance of the Ottoman Empire, the 17th century was the preparatory era for setting principles towards women's rights in the West (Gündüz, 2004). However, women rights in the Middle East, their rule and principles came to be applied only much later, with a delay of a half century (Gündüz, 2004). At that time, Ottoman Empire was influenced from the societal developments in the West and strived to improve the contacts with them. As a consequence, the need for reforms, in the field of human rights in order to be modernized and westernized, was urgent. Dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century, which is considered to be the later period of Ottoman period, the first women activist can be found.

The Turkish feminists' scholars have pointed out that the rise of women's movements and activists took place to the pre-Republican era and begun to struggle for their legal and human rights. They were educated women who challenged the existing gender relations (Al-Ali, 2008). At the beginning, they were struggling within the context of Islam and Shari'a law, but, later on with the emergence of "modernization process" a progress could be noticed. During the Tanzimat period (1829-1876) arguments in favor of secularism made their appearance and talked about the evolution of human rights (Al-Ali, 2008). The period 1908 until 1920 the foundation of a number of organizations resulted in creating a prosperous environment for the feminist movement to emerge. At that time the well organized Ottoman women's movement questioned the patriarchal system and demanded women's rights, by publishing woman's journals, discussing "women's questions" and by building women's groups (Gündüz, 2004). They managed to set the road for the formation of a more modern and democratized state and from that point onwards the movement quickly grew and widened.

On the other hand, at that time some patriotic organizations were formulated, and, at the end of World War I, sixteen (16) women's organization were struggling for "the national cause" (Al-Ali, 2008). As Kandiyoti highlights in the Al-Ali's paper, the women entered the political discourse and set questions regarding their rights and many discourses among the women's had to deal with the topic of modernization vs. cultural conservatism and integrity.

KEMALIST REPUBLIC & THE RISE OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

After the fall of Ottoman Empire, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in 1923 was the founder of the current secular Turkish Republic. The Turkish Republic followed a “modernist-nationalist-secularist” agenda aiming to contradict with the previous norms of Islam and monarchy (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). It was the first country that had adopted the modernization processes in the Middle East; the Kemalist reforms sought the “emancipation of women” along with the revision of its Constitution regarding the political rights of women, their status in society, education and labor force participation (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). The 19th century is considered to be a milestone century for Turkey given that the progress of women’s rights is reflected. Along with the democratization process, the modernization of the state took place. The majority of the old followed norms should be revised from the state, in order to approach the Western model of civilization. Therefore, the founding fathers had to respond to the challenge of creating new political identities, in a new political culture.

A huge obstacle, towards the harmonization of the cultural dimensions with the West, was the religious laws and norms which were keeping the state in opposition to modernization. Additionally, the religious institutions played a significant role in favoring the opposition towards the liberalism and individualism that western prototypes were indicating (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998). For this reason, the leaders of the Republic resorted to authoritarian measures, and, abolished the Shari’a law, with a more secular one. The new pattern the state promoted, supported the rights of women by revising their status and offering them “more” freedom of choice. However, the revision of Civic Law in 1923 did not equal with the liberation and emancipation of the women, but, on the contrary it led to a patriarchal doctrine. This patriarchal doctrine, from the very first time, the feminist movements of the West were struggling to reverse, because this was, is and will be considered a huge drawback in the expression of human rights.

In the Turkish Republic, the women are not chained by discriminatory practices as it happens in other Islamic countries (Müftüler-Bac, 1999). Comparing with the women in Middle East there is a great progress regarding the securitization of women’s rights. In fact, since Turkey wants to be accepted from the West and enter the European Union it has to follow that path, but, the truth is that the women live inside an illusion.

This can be explained from the fact that, they are not truly emancipated, but they want to project this image of liberated and emancipated woman to the rest of the world (ibid). Someone can observe two types of women in Turkey, the open, “Western” type, emancipated woman, and, the closed, traditional, unliberated woman (ibid). It is only the first, the wealthy and educated women from the big cities that can reap the benefits that secular state provides them.

Under the auspices of “modernization process” initiated by the “modern state” “the Turkish women, despite their de jure equal rights in everyday, working and economic life and in politics, were unable to enjoy these rights, de facto” (Gündüz, 2004). The struggle between Islam and modernization is still taking place through the women, which are considered as mechanism for the protection of the cultural borders. For this reason the state and social institutions³ have authority over them to secure their sexual behavior (ibid). As Zuhale Gündüz continues to notice that it is not a matter of women choice how they will express their sexuality but matter of state control in order to preserve the standards and values of the society. For this reason, various ways of controlling their sexuality appeared, such as virginity tests which are considered a violation of basic human right. Sadly enough, this is a modern form of institutional violence against women, brought in by the Kemalist elite and continued in the Turkish Republic (ibid).

In a nutshell, the second phase of the formation of women’s movement it ended up by having positive and negative outcomes. The construction of Swiss Civil Code was something in favor of women however the legitimization from the state and institutions of insulting measures towards women was a serious drawback and hard to be overcome, especially in remote areas.

³ Social institutions in the Kemalist framework can be families, courts and cultural traditions (Gündüz, 2004).

The vast majority of scholars support the well known fact that the women's movement in Turkey underwent a significant swift on the post-1980 coup era which led the movement towards a more feminist "new social movement" (Ozcurumez & Cengiz, 2009; Arat Y. , 1994; Tekeli, 1992; Esim & Cindoglu, 1999; Ilkkaracan, 1997; Şimşek, 2004). A remarkable diversity of organizations emerged during that era such as secularist-Kemalist⁴ women's organization, as well as Islamist women's organizations and organizations targeting the left⁵ side of the political spectrum. The actors of those organizations aimed to overcome the challenges prior the coup situation. For example, the structure of the organizations was based on hierarchy, but organizations in post-1980 coup introduced equality (Ozcurumez & Cengiz, 2009) Secondly, the organizations promoted women mostly as political actors in first place and secondly as feminists (ibid).

That kind of political activity that women started to practice received criticism from two major scholars Kandiyoti and Tekeli, it was the base of "state feminism"⁶ that the republican period introduced. The Kemalist government emphasized on the reform regarding women issues, but its inner goal was to show to the rest of the world that was different from the modern German and Italian dictatorship (Tekeli, 1992). Turkey was considered to be a pioneer to the national modernization processes that it took among the rest countries of Middle East (Tomas, 2011). This can be explained from the developments in the legal framework that took place during the 80s. Turkey signed "The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women-CEDAW" in 1985. Furthermore, from almost a zero point in institutionalization the

⁴Kemalist women started to organize into the Association in Support of Contemporary Life (ÇYDD) and the Atatürkist Ideology Association (ADY) (Özdemir, Kemalist Tradition and Kemalist Women's Movement in Turkey After 1980, 2010)

⁵ Well known organizations influenced by leftist are considered to be the Progressive Women's Association (PWA), which was established in 1975 within the framework of the Turkish Communist Party (TCP) but was closed down in 1980, and, the second one is Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation (PRWSF), which was established in 1990.

⁶ Later on the paper the term "state feminism" will be analyzed in details.

process accelerated at academic (women studies departments and research centers in the academies), non-governmental (NGO's) and governmental (Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women and commissions) levels (Tan, Sağlamer, & Tüzel, 2009). However, instead of the women's movement to be inspired and further develop and demand real equality, it reached a standstill thanks to the consequences that "state feminism" established (Tekeli, 1992):

"For a long time, the new elite women of the republic repeated the mistaken belief that equality between the sexes has been achieved thanks to Atatürk"⁷. This environment created a fertile ground for the emergence of more radical feminists who contradicted the idea that the state's reforms are adequate for their human rights.

At the same time there is an uprising of politicization of Islam and consequently of Islamic feminism which was led by veiled women and promoted them to be more political active (Tomac, 2011). At that point, this action signified the return of pre-modernist Islamic traditions which aimed in a way to challenge the current secular public opinion (ibid).

An interesting point observing the 1990s decade is that women who in the 1980s used to say "never with an Islamic woman, even though she is a feminist," noticed that albeit they were dispersed to different political positions, different ethnic groups, different beliefs, different occupations, different classes and different statuses at the end, they recognized that all women are above all "women" and this identity actually underlies numerous problems (Çaha, 2010). As Çaha mentions in his research that was a turning point for the women who claimed themselves as feminists to "diverge from the modernist Kemalist understanding; in other words, to step down from their ivory towers by intermingling with society more" and this is considered the point of denying the elitist character of feminism in the 1980s (Çaha, *The Transition of Feminism from Kemalist Modernism to Postmodernism in Turkey*, 2011). The most significant outcome of this historical overview was the fact that the feminist women at the end noticed that "We are all women" despite belonging in other politicized

⁷ As Sirin Tekeli's explains and is cited from Tomac's analysis.

groups, therefore, the feminist movement became more sensitive to the problems experienced by women from different parts of society.

During the decade of 1980s there was a fervent evolution of new women's movement from contradicting sides, but, all of them were struggling for the rights they thought to be important. In any case there was demand for rights and this led to productive discourses. The real activist feminist movement, which was on seek to gain legitimacy in the 1980s it declared its different way of perceiving activism from Kemalism and socialism. In the 2000s the institutionalization of the movement was very fast however many women's organization were criticized as "project-seeking organizations" because of the EU accession process and the vast amount of money offered to the civil society in order to work on the respect on human rights (Çaha, *The Transition of Feminism from Kemalist Modernism to Postmodernism in Turkey*, 2011). On the other hand, as the present period will be further analyzed in the text, they carried out important projects and have twisted into a movement using teamwork with the aim to cure social problems (ibid).

B. WOMEN'S MOVEMENT & FEMINISM IN TURKEY

Whatsoever, the steps towards modernity, did, help in the women's emancipation but the formation took a different shape, comparing with the West. Turkey was in the past and still is, in the struggle to reach the level of Western values and the European system of states regarding the democratization level, economy, political plurality and system of education. In its agony of accomplishing the reforms, it overreacted by idealizing secularism, equality and nationalism (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010). From state's aspect, the status and the role of women attracted the attention of modernization process, so as to assist and accomplish the Westernization process (Ilkcaracan, 1997). The frontrunners of the westernization movement, supported that Western universality could only be completed through the liberalization of women and their liberation from Islamic tradition. This could only happen by including women in the social, political and economical life through education and cultural exposure to everyday life and not behaving them as "mere sexual objects" (ibid). As expected, there was an opposition from the side of Islamic conservatives and the

whole procedure of modernization was shaped through this opposition throughout the history until the 21st century.

The western women's movement were expanding and growing in a very fast way, from suffragette movement in the late 19th century to the identity politics. Although different types of feminism existed, all of them were influenced from different political stances regarding their level of radicalism. Through this procedure, three major waves of feminism consisted in order to formulate the feminist ideology and further support its existence. In contrast to the Western patterns, the reforms and the three waves of feminism were copied from western feminist movements. However, they were initiated and completed with a delay of almost 20 years, but, at least they were accomplished and succeeded in a quite moderate level to emancipate women in Turkey.

OPPRESSION TOWARDS GENDER GAVE BIRTH TO FEMINISM

Simon de Beauvoir, 1953, pinpointed that Turkish women share, with their contemporaries in other societies, the notion that a woman is considered to be the “second sex” and highlighted their struggle to survive in a male constructed system. Turkish woman face two forms of oppression as Müftüler-Bac indicates. The *tangible* ones consist of sexual harassment, assault, insult, battering, rape, virginity tests, torture, and murder. The *intangible* ones include legal discrimination, economic and social inequality. Scholars and a part of the society in general, mostly “condemn” Islamism as the fundamental oppressor. But, in fact there are some other factors which reinforce the patriarchal order and are often met in a variety of countries. These factors are very representative of the Turkish society and consist of the Mediterranean culture, Kemalism and Islam. The Mediterranean culture emphasizes on the “mucho” culture and as it is widely known the Mediterranean family structure is based on male superiority and female inferiority (Müftüler-Bac, 1999).

It is true that the women on their own consider themselves, as transmitters and protectors of the dominant social values and norms; therefore, the same traditions and social norms constrain the female behavior (ibid) and leave no space for a real emancipation. As far as Islam is concerned, the religious norms and Shari'a law considers women as second class people, who will provoke sexual attraction and for

this reason belong to the private sphere of house, as wives and mothers (ibid). However as the time goes by, the Islamic movement evolved its viewpoint about women, thus slowly the amount of veiled women working in the public sphere increased. Furthermore Kemalism is considered to be the third factor of oppression. Kemalist ideology aimed at integrating women into Turkish public life and used them as means for the modernization process (Diner & Toktaş, 2010; Charrad, 2010; Coşar & Onbaşı, Women's Movement in Turkey at a Crossroads: From Women's Rights Advocacy to Feminism, 2008; Gündüz, 2004; Ilkcaracan, 1997). Women were considered as “mirrors”, reflecting the progress of the society and since they were conceived from the western societies as the depressed part of the Turkish society with no equal rights, the improved women status was a sign for the twister of the male dominated Turkish society. However, as many scholars have pointed out, the women were dressed with the Western style but they could not express their femininity since they were considered pure and unreachable creatures who serve the higher cause of Turkish modernization. The oppression that women are facing is the price they have to pay for the “women emancipation”, which consequently leads to the suppression of their femininity (Müftüler-Bac, 1999). It is a vicious cycle leading a big part of the society, the women, to a dead-end, and, thus, to a stagnation in the field of human rights.

C. FEMINISM

PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM

All the women around the world fight collectively either consciously or unconsciously the system that conceives them, as second class human beings. At the beginning the majority of them did not have a clear idea of what they were fighting for, it was just their need to feel free and gain value as people being able to make their own decisions and choices. “Patriarchy” has been a concept used in anthropological and sociological studies to refer to the rule of the father in the household (Toktas-Celik, 1998). Patriarchy, is a system of powerful relations that is not only determined by gender, but, also by class, ethnic origin, nationality, race, age and religion (ibid). An interesting point to pinpoint is not the subordination of women from men but the

women themselves can oppress other woman of lower class. From that can be extracted that the theory of patriarchy finds a fertile ground not only towards males to females, but, broad-spectrum, superiors towards inferiors (mostly attaining the power from their monetary value) (ibid). However this paper will not only analyze how women are conceived from the society, a male-dominant one in Turkey, but also about the way the women are oppressed by the society, and how they deal with it. A term used to define the way the women are perceived in male dominated societies with a tendency of superiority is the “subjectification of women” (Müftüler-Bac, 1999; Toktas-Celik, 1998; White, 2004). It means the treatment of women as subjects who were used accordingly depending the occasion, as wives who bear children or as means towards the way of modernization, in the case of Turkey.

Feminist movements were formulated around the world in order to fight against the patriarchal system which tended to oppress them. Feminist theory deals with the political, economical and social inequalities due to the gender and more extensively with the subordination of women’s status (Müftüler-Bac, 1999; Toktas-Celik, 1998). Toktas-Celik research mentions that feminists after the 1980s, begun to observe women as active agents in negotiation with male dominance, in order to achieve a more tolerable way of treatment. The same path was followed by the more active women’s movement in Turkey. Nevertheless, the patriarchal system survived through the decades by continuously feeding the male dominance, which is achieved by oppressing the female population (Müftüler-Bac, 1999). In Turkey, the feminist movement, flourished in the 1980s after the end of the third military “coup”/regime, nevertheless the women who took part were consisted from a small percentage of educated women. By now, though, the women who actively participate have increased in number and are from various backgrounds, from rural and urban places taking action in various fields of the society, from organizational, political, education, activist, professional aspect.

D. WAVES OF FEMINISM

1ST WAVE OF FEMINISM

In the Anglo-Saxon world, during the first wave of feminism, the feminists were striving for the basic human rights which males reaped the benefits of a “proper” treatment many centuries ago. Such rights were education, the right to work, to vote and to be elected. Whereas in Turkey, the first wave of feminism appeared in the public sphere at the beginning of 20th century and a small number of women’s organization of that time were struggling for equality in civil and political rights (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). The claims of this movement overlapped with the reforms that the Kemalists were putting forward. The Kemalists’ idea, in 1920s and 1930s, was aiming to form a society ruled by legal equality among the citizens retrospective of their gender for the purpose to become a Westernized society (Diner & Toktaş, 2010).

The aftermath of the fall of Ottoman Empire and the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 was followed by the introduction of progressive for the time changes for women. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk announced two pivotal goals for the newly established republic, first, the creation of an independent Turkish state and the modernization of this state (Gündüz, 2004). A breakthrough of that time was considered to be the abolition of the Sultanate and Caliphate, the change of the old Civil Code, which was based on the *Shari’a* law, with the new Swiss⁸ Civil Code in 1926 (Diner & Toktaş, 2010; Ilkcaracan, 1997; Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010; Ozcurumez & Cengiz, 2009; Gündüz, 2004). The Civil Code was considered a victory over the Islamists and the proponents of the *Shari’a* (Ilkcaracan, 1997). The Turkish women gained the right to vote on 5 December 1934, to be elected and enhanced rights of inheritance (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010). What is more, with the new law the polygamy was forbidden and allowed the initiation of divorce processes from either partner (Gündüz, 2004).

⁸According to Korkut and Eslen-Ziya there are certain reasons for the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code. First, the Civil Code of 1907 was one of the most modern codes at the time. Also, Switzerland was a neutral country so by adopting its Civil Code it was believed that Turkey would not fall into the sphere of influence of any particular Western powers (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010).

From one hand, these reforms aimed to contribute to further modernization and democratization of Turkey and aspired to bring structural changes and outlaw Islamic practices and at the same time gave the potential to women to educate themselves and find a work place (Gündüz, 2004 Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010). On the other hand, the generation of a secular system for the modern republic aimed to destroy the links with the Ottoman Empire and subdue the religious hegemony, but, many scholars claim that it did not actual aim for the liberalization of women in real life (Ilkcaracan, 1997).

The whole Kemalist idea, which is led by secularism, received harsh criticism since it confronted the women issues not as topics that have to be dealt but by subordinating their demands and offering them rights and freedoms in a superficial base. For example, Kemal did offer to them the right to vote but it did not lead to a further politicization of women. The protectors of Kemalism and the new Republic treated women as means to promote Westernization towards Islam. The instrumentalisation of women can be observed once more, and, this time not from the conservatives, who conceived women as the protectors of family values and social statues quo, and, consequently, they suppressed them. (Gündüz, 2004; Ilkcaracan, 1997) This is how the so-called “state-supported feminism” emerged in the frameworks of the existing Kemalist ideology.

The women who had the potential to reap the benefits from the granted rights, constituted a very small amount of upper social classes and most of them belonged to the upper status, like wives or daughters of the people consisting Kemalist bureaucracy (Ilkcaracan, 1997). In reality, the life of the biggest percentage of women had not changed, because there was no actual implementation of the reform policies. The failure of the emergence of real women’s movement, which fights for their rights failed to emerge, because the ones who had the means and were educated did not question the reform policies (Gündüz, 2004). These policies reflected the reality of the society which is ruled by the patriarchal gender roles.

The end of the first wave of feminism was marked with the final ratification of the legislation. It allowed women to practice their political rights even though that women movements were considered until that moment, in 1930s, that had an independent and individualistic voice which was considered as a national threat (Diner & Toktaş,

2010). The first Turkish Women's movement, wanted to form a political party and they did manage to found it but after few years, in 1935, the leaders of the Republic forbade it, so until the 1980s a woman's political silence prevailed. This manifested the end of the 1st wave of feminism and left no other path but to affiliate with the Kemalist ideology (Tekeli, 1992).

2ND WAVE OF FEMINISM-1980S

In the west the second wave of feminism made its appearance from the early 1960s while in Turkey there was a delay of twenty years. The reason of this delay were the three coup d'états that occurred from the 1950s until the "last" one in 1980s. The first coup d'état was in 1960 the second 1971 and in the 80s the most significant of all as a turning point to the old status quo. Therefore, the involvement of civilians into political affairs and especially the formation of women's movement was not fertile during these decades. At that time all the political parties were closed down, the youth and women's branches of banned political parties were accused to be illegal (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). A new Constitution was formed in 1982 which ammended the 1961 Contitution. This Constitution considered to have a limited framework for individual rights and freedoms, but surprisingly enough the women's movement flourished (ibid).

A certain justification was provided to explain their emergence. According to Diner and Toktas, there are feminists scholars who argue that their rise was an outcome of the imprisonment of many male activists and leaders of leftist organizations. From Tekeli and Marshall perspective, the suppression of male-dominated political movements during the 1960s opened the way to the second wave of feminism to emerge in the 80s (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010). This feminists aimed at a more radical restructuring of the patriarchal society and had as a wish to include and involve, apart from elite and well educated women, other parts of society in the movement (ibid). The second wave of feminism brought up issues which concerned the violence against women inside family, the use of sexuality as a medium for male dominance, the wrong interpretation of women from media and the virginity tests which were broadly used. At that time the moto "Personal is Political" that existed in circles of feminists in the West, was absorbed from the Turkish women's movements (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). This moto was widely used in the beginning in order to

notice that the domestic violence is not an individual matter but a political topic (ibid).

At that time the liberal women's movement, in 1980s, appeared and approached with a different perspective the political situation of the time. They stand opposite of the republican women's movement with a more critical stance towards the Republic and the whole patriarchal domination. What is more, the liberal women's movement was successful in establishing solidarity networks especially against domestic violence. During the 1980s and the 1990s this movement expanded rapidly because the international attention focused on gender equality and on women's human rights ideology (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010).

3RD WAVE OF FEMINISM-1990S

The end of the era of post-1980s brought the more active decade of 1990s, when feminist activism turned into institution building. The foundation of characteristic women's organization during the 1980s signified the beginning of a new era where the social movements had more political opportunities to flourish, and, secondly, the cultural opportunities that emerged over the 1980s encouraged the creation of new social movements (Ozcurumez & Cengiz, 2009). During the 1980s and 1990s, movements such as Women Circle⁹, Women's Library and Information Centre, Directorate Generals on the status and Problems of Women, women studies programme and research centres emerged (ibid). Additionally, the institutionalization process proceeded and in 1996 the foundation of the Flying Boom opened and the Association for Supporting Women's Candidacy, in 1997 (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010).

The influence from the international feminist movement was at a great degree, for this reason, the women's movement not only continued to exist but formulated an even more feminist oriented organization such as nongovernmental organizations at national and municipal level which aimed to influence policy-making. These

⁹ It undertook activities such as supporting women's labor, provision of consulting services to women's legal problems and health problems, organization of consciousness raising activities and translating classical feminist books into Turkish.

nongovernmental organizations focused at domestic violence and opened shelter for battered women and organized protests against domestic violence and sexual harassment (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010). At that time the gap between the Republican or Kemalist feminists with the Liberal ones became bigger since the critique towards the Kemalist model and the roles it assigned to the Turkish women was insensitive. Another confrontational relationship was created among the mainstream Turkish Feminists and the Islamists Feminists which was intensified with the rise of identity politics. West had to face at that time, in the name of the identity politics, the challenge of the rise of black and lesbian feminism towards the white with heterosexual background. On the contrary, in Turkey this issue was far to be developed but their challenge was among the Kurdish and Islamist feminists (Diner & Toktaş, 2010).

E. GROUPS OF FEMINISTS

The feminist movements flourished in the beginning of the 20th century and had adopted many concepts in order to analyze contemporary topics which were concerning their gender status. Such concepts can be considered, patriarchy, sexism, positive discrimination, sexual abuse and harassment, domestic violence, which even though borrowed from West they blended in the Turkish society at that time. Moreover, the feminists received important knowledge about feminist strategies such as establishing autonomous and independent organizations and organizing issue-orientated campaigns (Tekeli, 1992). Also, they imitated institutions like shelters, crisis centers, women's studies centers and women's libraries (ibid). Whichever standpoint they represent, they have the same aim and fight for almost the same purposes. These issues are the schooling of female students, equal legal norms, elimination of violence against women and the honour crimes seen in the rural areas of Turkey and the low representation of women in the parliament¹⁰.

As Ilkaracan notices in her report (Ilkaracan, 1997), at the beginning of 1990s the primary power of women's movement and their influence to restructure Turkish civil society was not so powerful nor intense. An important factor for this twist was the

¹⁰ The majority of the scholars used in this paper claim the same reasons, therefore not cited.

weakness of the women's movement to rally and create a common discourse towards the patriarchal system. Meanwhile, the women's movements were separated into four contradictory wings which were the Kemalist or Secular Feminists, the Liberal Feminists, the Islamic Feminists, the Radical Feminists and Kurdish feminists. At the same time an unrecognized minority in Turkey played a very important role in the construction of feminist movement during the mid-1990s, are the Kurdish women. The Kurdish have voiced a discourse of double identity, referring to the mixture of their gender and ethnic identities. They detached themselves from both Turkish feminist groups and the Kurdish ethnic movement and fought for their own goals.

From the aspect of Kemalist feminists the rise of the Islamic movement was identified as a threat for the secular state of the Turkish Republic and for this reason they were in favor of the intervention of the state and the army in order to preserve the safety of the state. What is more, they thought that Islamic feminists were satellites of the male activists from the Islamic movements and therefore were considered as enemies. This animosity between the two wings created a big gap in their relations and makes even harder a future collaboration in the name of feminism. While, on the contrary, the Islamist feminisms sought ways to complement the practices of feminists with the values that Islam defines and criticized the modernization process and the great influence of the West on Muslim societies (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). A major pulling factor for the upsurge of Islamist women as political actors were the new socioeconomic¹¹ and political forces that urged people towards Islam and the women to cover their heads (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998).Kemalists and Islamist feminists have a transcendental conception of society conceiving themselves responsible for transforming the polity in an ideal society (ibid).

¹¹ The terms socioeconomic and political factors refer to Kemalism and its lack to provide organic linkages, the consequences of migration, the crises of national identity and the role of the state in controlling Islam (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998).

ISLAMISTS

¹²In order to offer a brief historical overview, the Islamist movements emerged from the oppression the women felt to express their religiosity by wearing a headscarf (başörtülü). From Tanzimat period the process of westernization that was undertaken imposed a certain style code, in particular towards women. After Mustafa Kemal established the Turkish Republic used women as a mean to modernize the state. They had to get dressed in a certain way those who were working as teachers or public space. The forbidding of expressing themselves and not being able to enter the universities with their headscarf, therefore to acquire knowledge, was considered an abuse of their right to express their right to religiosity. In the 1950s the rise of “Moderate Islam” arises in opposition to the Kemalists way of thinking and their affinity to the West. What is more, in 1956 the first law is established which forbid women to enter the Parliament with headscarf. The students who are veiled were confronting huge discrimination and rejection from universities, therefore, the elite Islamists were studying abroad and the majority were sent to the University of Vienna were did not face such a problem.

Political Islam in Turkish politics dates back in the 1960s even though the majority of their political parties were closed down by the Constitutional Court for violating the Republican principle of secularism (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). During 60s the oppression continued more fervently, while in the 70s some social movements consisted by well educated women protesting and acting in favour of their rights, an example of that organizations are “Association of Women for Knowledge and Culture” (“Hanımlar İlim ve Kültür Derneği”) in 1973, also a bit later the Fountain Association (“Şadırvan Derneği”), Association of Ideal Women and Association of Women related with Holly Things (“İdealist Hanımlar Derneği ve Mukaddesatçı Hanımlar Derneği”)¹³. All the above associations even though they had a character

¹² The whole historical overview was based on the information that was extracted from a text in the website that Islamists feminists acquire. In order the repetition of the citation to be avoided, it is provided as a footnote. (Sakin, Kara, & Kavuncu, 2008). Same as footnote 13.

¹³ Free translation of the names of Turkish Associations.

that served Shari'a laws and educated women to become good mothers and wives, it entailed a spirit of objection towards the subjectification of women from the state.

An interesting point to be observed regarding the “informal” ban of headscarf is the forbidding of female students to enter the universities. Before the 1982 Constitution in Turkey, female students did not enter the universities wearing a headscarf but that was not imposed by law, it was a norm followed by everyone. However after 1982 Constitution the first incident of universities following a law became known with the case of Yildiz Ramazanoglu studying at the Hacettepe University.

During the 1990's they adopted the identity politics and empowered their appearance in the Turkish political scene. New Islamists intellectuals and pro-Islamic bourgeoisie had appeared by that time and formed a critical approach towards the Kemalist Ideology and the path that Turkey had chosen towards modernization. The fundamentalist Islamic women were opposite to the feminism due to the ideas that were representing and the influence from the materialist values the Western world was providing. The contradicting fact is that they were religious and wanted to have the ability to lead an Islamic way of living, but, at the same time were acting with a feminist spirit when they were struggling to enter the universities and gain a place in the professional society, while being veiled (Tekeli, 1992).

An interesting historical point is the election of AKP and its ruling. As a political party attacked followers from the Islamists movements because it promised to deal with the issue of ban but until 2008 nothing was done. The women's movement during that period abated and reduced their political actions because believed that the issue would be settled. An important role on supporting the right of a woman to express herself as she wish was played by the universities, which even though they were fined they continued to allow the entrance in veiled women. However this was occasional and it was an individual decision of its university. This incident shows that the universities as institutions try to approach the social movements and resist together towards the violation of its person to express freely itself.¹⁴

¹⁴ The whole historical overview was based on the information that was extracted from a text in the website that Islamists feminists acquire. In order the repetition of the citation to be avoided, it is provided as a footnote. (Sakin, Kara, & Kavuncu, 2008)

At that point is important to indicate the difference between the terms Islamic (Islamic) and Islamist (Islamci). According to the proponents of secularism the term Islamic “denotes piousness and devotion and has a limited compatibility with secularism and the latter term implies a politicized and fundamentalist form of Islam that entails the ‘distortion’ of religious sources and an ardent opposition to the secular foundations of the Republic” (Keskin-Kozat, 2003).

The impressive fact is that the whole Islamist movement benefited the women to activate in the field of politics representing the religious conservative wing: Justice and Development party (JDP) (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). The Islamist movement in the majority is dominated by men but the last years a great percentage of feminists have emerged and are struggling to improve the role of women, based on the Islamic values, but a bit differentiated of that of a mother and a wife. Their main goal is to change the concept of democracy and how is structured through secularism. The Republican understanding of secularism, involves state control over religion (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998). Therefore, the altering of the perception of democracy would be crucial for them, because if democracy means self-rule and offers them the opportunity through politics to define their future, then Islamists have a chance to define their civic rights by exercising their democratic rights to participate in politics (ibid). An important case for them is to fight the ban of wearing headscarves at universities and in public places as well (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010; Diner & Toktaş, 2010; Coşar & Onbaşı, *Women's Movement in Turkey at a Crossroads: From Women's Rights Advocacy to Feminism*, 2008; Ilkcaracan, 1997; Moghadam, 2010). A key point is the fact that Islamist women/feminist struggle not only against “the secular interpretations of their rights, but also against patriarchy that is legitimized by sacred authority within the confines of Islam” (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998).

Furthermore, an intense discourse on the status of women in Islam have been developed from Islamist women through women’s magazines, which write about modernism, feminism, marriage and Islamic way of life (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). A large question was raised “Is religious feminism possible?” (ibid) and the development of Islamic feminism has created an interesting discourse on whether the headscarf can truly help the emancipation of women since it helps women to attend

universities and work. This movement contains a wide category of women; all of them are self-conscious Muslims. They can be separated in those who expect respect of their religiosity from the state, those who actively demand it and those who do not want any confrontation with the state and the rest feminists (Arat Y. , 2005). Some of these women are influenced by the feminist theory and movements while others do not recognize it as influential power. Consequently, instead of trying to bridge the gap the Islamist feminists consider Kemalist ideology as a burden to their own way of emancipation since it defines freedom on its own terms excluding part of a society who sticks on religious believes more.

KEMALISTS

The Kemalist understanding of modernization is based upon a single fake truth that was well structured in order the public to think and act in a specific Kemalist oriented way (Çaha, *The Transition of Feminism from Kemalist Modernism to Postmodernism in Turkey*, 2011). The influence of 19th century worldwide positivism played an important role in the construction of the understanding of modernization (ibid). It does not offer you alternatives only a single way of existence. According to this belief system, reality, accuracy and validity belong to what is modern, and, at the same time, the traditional is wrong and unacceptable (ibid).

Kemal Ataturk initiated the liberation and modernization process of women but under certain rules which leads to the big dispute of posing the “modernization process” of women under question. “The Republican state determined the characteristics of the ideal woman. It established a monopolistic system to propagate this ideal in a population that often held quite different values and perceptions of women’s behavior.” (Atakav, 2007). In a way Kemal Ataturk offered to the women the possibility to participate in the construction of their gender and to become the means in order to represent the modern and secular Westernized state. However as many scholars state (Arat Y. , 2005; Ilkkaracan, 1997; Diner & Toktaş, 2010; Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010) the woman was used as an instrument, in order the Republic to succeed its goal of Westernization by using the ones who wanted to modernize and excluding the others. The people who did not wish to follow Kemal’s processes were called as “ignorant and backward” usually originating from poor and rural areas, who wanted to maintain their religious status even though facing harsh oppression and

insults from Kemalist elites (Çaha, *The Transition of Feminism from Kemalist Modernism to Postmodernism in Turkey*, 2011). This elitist approach, unfortunately, has taken hold of generations of women in universities, professional life and the bureaucracy.

In the late 1980s the first Kemalist feminist, who were the old generation of that time, begun to organize themselves in collectivities and women's movements, basically, in response to what they conceived as the Islamist threat in the secular society. Their main concern was the quick rise of the Islamism because Shari'a law was connected with the "abuse" of women's rights. Kemalist reforms managed to restrict the Islamist values and customs of polygamy, unilateral divorce by men, unequal share of inheritance for women and Kemalist advocates were afraid of putting at risk the secular legal framework and women's newly acquired rights (Arat Y. , 2005). In contrast, the other strong wing the Islamist were opposing towards the reforms the Kemalist Feminists were asking because most of the times were oppressing their right to be veiled and practice with eagerness the religion.

According to Özdemir's article Kemalist women's right to stand against the rise of Islamist women in 1970s and 1980s was based on the secular state. They perceived themselves as defenders, wanted to protect the state from returning back to a "Medieval state" (Özdemir, 2010). These women identified themselves and their power with the state, regarding them as educated, intellectual and modern, conceived Islamists as reactive and deluded (ibid). In a nutshell, women undertaking to establish Kemalist principles in the Republican period undertook the protection of Kemalist values (ibid). However, an interesting point to be highlighted is that they indeed endeavor to accomplish their goal, but when they understood that the state's institutions were drained, Kemalist women did not abandon their identity as a guard of the Republic but came into action and protested.

LIBERAL

Until the 1980s the women's movement were separated into three categories, the Kemalist women, the Islamist women and the Socialist but none of them were "women" or "individual women", therefore, they did not realized the subordination of their identity that existed in the own organizations (Gurpinar, 2006). An explanation

for this is that Kemalist ideology never intervened with the private sphere, Islam, conceived the private sphere as sacred (*mahrem*) and Socialism was also anti-feminist since it denied that women were oppressed because of their gender (Ahiska, 1994; *ibid*). These perceptions led to a creation of a new ideology that was influenced from the above and from the West as well, since the women represent this new movement were educated with western type education (*ibid*). Therefore at the 1980s, a liberal women's movement was developed in Turkey to focus on women's problems.

The younger generations of secular, westernized urban women started to reject the ideology of state feminism because they questioned the sufficiency of the Kemalist reforms. State feminism was representing the stream of modernization by promoting education, women's right to represent various professions and unveiled women, but, as an ideology was superficial and turned a blind eye to reality, to woman's life at home and their subordination from the male domination since they had the right to beat them and forced them into arranged marriages (White, 2004). "As Deniz Kandiyoti puts it, Republican women were "emancipated, but not liberated" (*ibid*). The policy of the state offered equality between the sexes, but it left women alone in the private sphere (Gurpinar, 2006). Nevertheless, women managed to overcome state sponsorship with the appearance of a more Universalist Liberal feminism (White, 2004). Liberal feminists increased the expectations of women and aimed to change gender role dynamics and women's status in both the family and workplace (Gurpinar, 2006).

As mentioned at the beginning, this new women movement, of more liberal feminists and not so influenced by the state's modernization programme, managed to cater for women by opening shelters for battered women and was interested more about the woman as a personality and not as a "proper model" of an urban, well-mannered and educated citizen woman. What is more, the debate over the state feminism opened the doors to the real emancipation of woman and was the beginning of a new era which managed to become a success story for women's empowerment in the early 20th century (Atakav, 2007; White, 2004).

RADICAL FEMINISTS

While Kemalists had as a priority to fight illiteracy and expand the secular educational opportunities for women the radical were opposing to that Republican reforms (Arat Y. , 2005). Unlike Kemalist feminists the more radical were opposing to communitarian and were in favor of more individualistic values. (Arat Y. , 2005) The radical feminists as stated by Ilkkaracan are perceived by the rest of the feminists as the ones who “dare” to criticize the present status of women in Turkey; either they support Kemalist ideology or Islamism. Unfortunately, there are not many in this wing and a famous radical feminist who had established a number of women’s magazine in Turkey is Duygu Asena (Ilkkaracan, 1997). However the radical Islamist feminists are not focusing in the role of women in Islam but criticize the unfulfilled promises of Kemalism or capitalism (ibid).

In a nutshell, the era of 1990s was very significant because the women’s movement diversified a lot and separated from each other, thus, were firm on their believes. However all of them, Kemalists, Islamists, socialists, liberal and radical feminists, shared a common objective. It was crucial for them not only their right to work but more importantly to gain and sustain their right of acquiring an independent identity (Atakay, 2007) . What is more, despite some arguments among them within the feminist ranks shared the same aim of undermining patriarchy and involved solidarity with women who shared a common subordination despite the huge differences (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998).

KURDISH FEMINISTS

Kurdish women’s groups who had taken part in the feminist movement throughout the 1980s evolved into an ethnic-based feminist movement in the following decades. Starting from the beginning of the 1990s, Kurdish women’s groups began to make their voices heard through publications, foundations, associations or cultural houses (Çaha, *The Kurdish Women's Movement: A Third-Wave Feminism Within the Turkish Context*, 2011). Kurdish women became politically active in the leftist movements of the 1960s and 1970s while during the 1980s, the Kurdish ethnic movement increasingly prioritized the ethnic problem over socialism (ibid). The armed movement developed through the PKK at that time and the political Kurdish movement developed through 1990s. Kurdish women played an important role by

living aside the life behind the walls of their houses and struggle for their languages, cultures and identities, stand upon their rights into the public sphere and the streets (ibid). Since the Turkish government refuses to recognize the Kurds as a separate ethnic minority, the Kurds do not have minority rights such as speaking their mother tongue and having their own religious ceremonies. Furthermore, the Turkish government singles out Kurdish women as tools to try and remove the concept of Kurdishness from the population (Arat 2008). These activities gradually laid the foundations of the Kurdish women's movement. Some of these women eventually moved from an ethnic struggle to the struggle for women's right. Kurdish feminists do not only deal with the issues of being a woman in Turkey, but also with being a woman in Kurdish society and being a Kurd. Kurdish feminists question the current political system of Turkey altogether. Kurdish feminists also deal with living in a heavily patriarchal society and have to struggle to change the attitudes of their own people, which is a significantly more difficult struggle than the Turkish feminists face (Arat 2008).

The Kurdish feminist will often find herself agreeing with the Turkish feminist on major issues, but it is difficult for her to break past the ethnic boundaries imposed between them. She is, however, far more successful at doing so than the Islamist feminist. The fact that she questions one of the basic tenants of Kemalism (nationalism) means that she is at odds with a Turkish feminist that is a strict adherent to Kemalism (Arat 2008). As already mentioned the Kurdish women struggle for women emancipation and equality however they persist on separating them with the rest feminist movement in Turkey. This can be explained by their effort to define their feminism with an ethnic identity, "Kurdish". As they declare:

"We want to primarily differentiate ourselves from Turkish feminism. The feminism "performed" in Turkey without ethnic identity is automatically understood as Turkish feminism. Women of other ethnicities are ignored, thus, the common feminist discourse serves for those women in the dominant ethnicity, and our differences are covered up. Besides, it implies a political stance against the rejection of our Kurdish identity. Therefore, we need to name our feminism as such. We experience gender segregation in this society intertwined with racism." (Çaha, *The Kurdish Women's Movement: A Third-Wave Feminism Within the Turkish Context*, 2011)

All in all, the aim of Kurdish feminist is twofold. From the one side the struggle against male-dominated society and their subordination and on the other hand the Turkish feminists. As Çaha mentions there is not only one way of emancipation but there are alternative way of emancipation and self-realization depending on different social, economic and cultural context.

F. LEGAL AMENDMENTS

CIVIL AND PENAL CODE

By the time the Turkish Feminists and women organizations managed to step into the Turkish political realm and were recognized from the wide political audience, indeed, they succeeded in improving the past and the current living life of women according to the Turkish Constitution. Once the Constitution was altered and new fundamental human rights were established for woman the appropriate time for reforming the Civil Code had arrived. Despite the gender equality principal in the Constitution and the numerous international documents to which the country has been party, civil, penal and labour laws in Turkey continued to contain various discriminatory provisions and an overarching patriarchal perspective until the 1990s (Acar, Göksel, Dedeoğlu-Atılğan, Altunok, & Gözdasoğlu-Küçükalioglu, 2007).

During the 1980s the younger generation of Kemalist feminists followed a more radical and concrete path by seeking real equality and bringing the topic of domestic violence to the forefront. Domestic violence could not only be controlled with a legal framework as supported by the older Kemalist feminists, but by treating it as fundamental issue and not simply as a topic of “equality”. Many campaigns were initiated in order the government to ratify the petition of United Nation for the Convention of Nondiscrimination Against Women, also, were organizing campaigns to raise public awareness of domestic violence against women, the pick of the organized campaigns was the Purple Needle against sexual harassment which took place at streets and in workplaces (Tekeli, 1992). That was the starting point for the more radical period on behalf of demanding rights, to come.

In April 1990, 14 feminists established a foundation in order to open a shelter for the women who were suffering from domestic violence. The power of collectivity against

the state was shown through the founding of the Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998). It remained autonomous and was run by women as feminists, and, not as social workers. However they sought for support from the municipality, but in the thought of the municipality owing the power they abandon the concept and run the shelter from their own savings and money (Arat Y. , 1998). Finally, in 1993, the feminists collaborated with the state and were offered the required money by holding their autonomy from the state. Their relationship reached that point the time the state changed their patriarchal and subordinating stance towards women. After that shelter many others followed.

According to CEDAW's report the Directorate General for Child Protection and Social Services founded guests houses which opened in Izmir (1990), Ankara (1991), Bursa (1991), Antalya (1991), Eskisehir (1993), Istanbul (1995) and Tekirdag (1996). All in all, apart from the political ideology that characterizes each feminist there is also a part that rings the bell to each woman and this is considered to be the domestic violence. The feminist women, who fight to eliminate domestic violence, make a noteworthy attempt to create self-respecting individuals of women who have been socialized to be sacrificing, selfless mothers and wives. Furthermore, as ironical as it seems the feminists had first to wage an individual fight against social norms and communitarian practices and then join together in feminist solidarity to underline injustice of women as group. (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998)

In the 1990s, plentiful articles from the Civil Code were revised since they were violating the equality principle. Indicative examples are considered to be the abolition of Article 159 in the 1992, which bound the working of a woman to the permission of her husband (Gündüz, 2004; Tekeli, 1992). Additionally, in 1997 the Article 153 was revised and woman acquired the right to keep their own surnames if they wished so. After all the campaigns and protests run by women belonging to all sides, in 1998, the Law for the Protection of the Family entered into force, was legally protecting women from domestic violence.

By April 2000, a coalition government had prepared a draft civil code, integrating women's demands for full gender equality, but it was blocked by an alliance of conservative parliamentarians (UN Women, 2011). The most controversial aspect of the women's demands was related to matrimonial property. Opponents claimed that the proposal that property acquired during marriage should be divided equally was against Turkish traditions, would destroy the family, increase divorce rates and ultimately destroy Turkish society (ibid). The new code equalized the legal minimum age of marriage and gave the same inheritance rights to all children, whether born within or outside of marriage. Under its provisions, property acquired during marriage must be shared equally.

The women's movement responded by bringing together a broad coalition of more than 120 NGOs from all over the country (ibid). Women's rights organizations, representing different sectors of society and from different ideological viewpoints, came together to campaign on a common platform. One of the coalition's most successful tactics was to gain the support of the media, sparking public debate about the role of women in society and raising awareness of women's rights.

Furthermore, a crucial point was the expansion of gender equality which became reality with the revision of the Civil Code by 2002. By amending the Civil Code the Turkish Parliament deleted the article which considered the man as the head of the family, also, raised the minimum age for marriage at the age of 18 (earlier was 17 to man and 15 for women) (Arat Y. , *Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey*, 1998). What is more, it progressed by offering the potential to single parents to adopt children and the children who were born outside a marriage was given the same amount of inheritance rights as the others (ibid).

More amendments of the Civil Code concerning the legal framework are considered to be radical enough and Turkey managed to fulfill the "typical" requirements of a post-patriarchal society (ESI, 2 June 2007). Such amendments refer to the Turkish Constitution (2004) asserting that "women and men have equal rights", the state is responsible for taking all necessary measures to realize equality between women and men" (Article 10). Also reforms to the employment law (2003), the establishment of

family courts (2003) and a completely reformed penal code (2004) have brought about comprehensive changes to the legal status of women (ESI, 2 June 2007).

After the passage of the civil code in 2001 and buoyed by their success, the coalition of NGOs turned their attention to the penal code. Under the old code, crimes such as rape, abduction or sexual abuse against women were categorized as ‘crimes against society’. The women’s movement launched a bold campaign, which culminated in a new penal code in 2004, which was put in practice in 2005, included the criminalization of marital rape and sexual harassment in the workplace, the revision of all articles discriminating between single and married women and the strengthening of provisions on sexual abuse of children. Finally, it reinforces the Government’s determination to prevent “honour “crimes, or murders of women or girls who have engaged in conduct considered morally reprehensible, such as speaking with a man who is not a blood relative, or marrying a man that her family does not approve of. Furthermore, the code banned courts from handing down lenient and merciful sentences for the perpetrators of so-called ‘honour’ killings or to rapists who marry their victims (UN Women, 2011; Amnesty International, 2004). Specifically, such honour crimes are committed by the woman or girl’s family members in an effort to salvage the family’s name or honour. This new legislation, which inadequately refers to such crimes as “custom killings, makes such crimes punishable with life sentences (Boeton, 2005).

Law is a powerful tool for social change, but it is not a magic wand!

II PART

A. EUROPEANIZATION & THE FORMATION OF NGOS

With the fall of Communism in 1989 in the authoritarian regimes of Eastern Europe, the need of integrating their societies from authoritarian rule to democracy required an ultimate change from the grassroots. The societies which are in the process of democratization need to promote active citizenship to their citizens and this can only be successful through the assistance of civil society. For this reason, at that time, a global revival of civil society was observed. The restructuring of the right civil society is promoted from the international environment and the western societies support their efforts towards their attempts for democratization (Kuzmanovic, 2010). Turkey's case is not far from what is mentioned above. It came to the epicenter of attention due to the strengthening of relations with the world of international donors and policy agendas, such as World Bank, IMF, UN and EU (ibid). Turkey in order to reapproach EU should insist on the growth of civil society, as a mean to bolster the democratization process and the socio-political reforms and that will be achieved the time Turkey will apply to the Copenhagen Criteria.

The revival of civil society in Turkey brought new forms of organizations, the Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). However, civil society has two dimensions, the one which are subjected to strict state control and are influenced by political parties and foundations, and, the others who are resisting towards authoritarianism after the 1980s and the end of military coup. All in all, the formation of civil society represents the political expression of the society (Kuzmanovic, 2010).

The EU's pressure also inspired feminist groups. Women's rights organizations studied different European codes and identified those articles in the Turkish penal code that necessitated rewriting. "In a sense the civil society sector is inspired by the EU because it creates an atmosphere of reform and offers the opportunity between organizations to develop relations and exchange knowledge and know how, as well as experiences and trainees. Pinar Ilkcaracan, founder of Women for Women's Human Rights-New Ways, a Feminist organization that played a key role in mobilizing the Turkish population to support these feminist reforms, noted that Turkey would have gotten these reforms without the EU but it would have required much more time

(Boeton, 2005). Furthermore, she emphasizes the need for the continuous monitoring from the International Society.

The EU insists that the talks scheduled with Turkey can be stopped anytime in the years ahead. According to feminist groups, Turkey is reluctant to change and skeptics claim that the Turkish government has pushed for the adoption of these legal reforms in the hopes that it will get Turkey a seat in the EU. Members of Parliament from the ruling party were especially resistant and very much behind Erdogan's attempts to criminalize adultery. Ilkcaracan underlines the fact that they're making these changes not because their heart's in them, but because of the demands of Europe. Paradoxically, some human rights militants recognized that by "sweetening" their criticisms, Turkey would have a better chance of being admitted to the EU. In short, the hope of one day belonging to Europe has clearly played a positive role in favour of women's rights.

EU RAPPROCHEMENT

Turkey strived a lot in order to become a full member of the European Union, for this reason, they have to confirm to the *acqui communautaire*. They consist a part of the Copenhagen criteria, which require that any candidate country should take measures so as to achieve stable institutions that guarantee democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect towards minorities (Ketola, 04 Jul 2011). One part of *acqui communautaire* mentions the establishment of civil society and NGOs are excessively funded to further contribute towards liberty, democracy and human rights. A civil society should involve certain characteristics, such as pluralism, toleration, civility, altruism, emphasis on consensus and mutual dependence of the state with the civil society (Heper & Yildirim, 2011). For this reason, the rapprochement of Turkey's with EU brought new legal institutional frameworks in order to support the role of civil society, promote socio-political development and reinforce the process of democratization. The attention has been focused on the NGOs, since are considered to be the prime local agents who will bring the change and implement the strategies imposed by EU and international donors (Kuzmanovic, 2010). A popular belief insists on the great importance of civil society for further development in the political and economic field, either in national or international level.

There are specific NGOs which are considered compatible with EU missions and work as partners in order to influence the civil society of Turkey, and, as consequence their projects are excessively funded. On the other hand, there are critical voices that resist with the policies that are imposed by the agenda of international agents. Indicatively examples are considered to be the feminist organization, which are financed neither from EU nor from local actors, therefore, they have their own agendas.

In a nutshell although NGOs are considered to be apolitical and assumed as tools undertaking the functions of the state, it is important to recognize the existence of NGOs working to overcome the current situation and remind the duties a state has to undertake. Especially after the 1990s, many women NGOs target sexist structure in many areas such as particularly economics and politics. In addition, NGOs provided opportunities to discuss the subjects started in the 1980s and continued in the 1990s, incorporated in a private space (such as violence against women), and develop solutions for them.

B. NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY

Turkey has suffered from political polarization and violence in the 1960s and 1970s which ended up in the military coup in 1980. Due to the controversial character of the time, Turkey tried to maintain strict control over voluntary organizations, associations and foundations. However, social movements and organizations such as feminism, Islamism, environmentalism, Kurdish nationalists and human rights activism started to emerge in the mid-1980s (Şimşek, 2004). The great transformation of Turkey underwent in the 1980s, from an authoritarian nation-state tried to evolve in a traditionalistic neo-conservatism and pro-market libertarianism and towards this attitude the new social movement offered a lot, especially, in the transformation of the political scene (Şimşek, 2004). Turkey's nation-building is more influenced by European experience than the American, regarding the social movements (Şimşek, 2004). In Europe and Turkey, nationalism and modernization, suppressed many cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious elements. But, only when globalization, technological advancement and global communication made their appearance

managed to weaken the authorization of nation-states and the moment for the social movements to emerge had come (Şimşek, 2004).

Even before the 1980s the women in Turkey started to mobilize and get activated by forming radical ideological groups. During 1960s and 1970s they were dealing mostly with socialism, anti-imperialism and exploitation in contrast with the current women's issues. It is widely accepted that the military coup with the repression of male movements/organizations and its ideas opened the way to the rise of feminism. So, even though the military intervention harmed the existed democratic institutions, the society managed to reborn from its ashes bringing up an important for the social order, movement. The feminist movement that emerged at that time took the name "Septemberist movement"¹⁵ due to the military coup that coincided (Şimşek, 2004).

The women are distinguished according to their class, ethnicity, religion and community, but, what binds them together is their need for emancipation and liberation from the patriarchal society which subordinates their gender (Tekeli, 1992). In other words, they are separated by social class, by being rural or urban, by region and by culture, but, again they share gender inequality (Tekeli, 1992). According to the gender needs, two types of categories exist; the practical and the strategic one (Moser & Levy, 1986). The practical, consists of needs concerning living conditions, health care and employment and these needs are usually short-term and local in type. In contrast, strategic needs derive from the women subordination and for this reason are large scale needs and require long term in order to eliminate gender hierarchies. (Moser & Levy, 1986)

In the case of Turkey, which has a long history of women's organization, these two categories are applicable to gender needs. Over the history from Ottoman Empire until the establishment of the Turkish Republic, women's organizations have faced lots of obstacles, especially from political and societal sphere, but, they managed to survive and further develop in order to reach a satisfactory level. Turkish women's organizations should be analyzed within the framework of their struggle towards the opposition of the country's political and social groups (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999).

¹⁵ It was called Septemberist movement in order to imply that was a creation of the military coup, which took place on September 12, 1980 (Şimşek, 2004).

These women organizations arose only a decade later than women in West and the women who took part at that time were few, but well educated, originating from middle or upper class and in their analysis they use theories common from the West paradigm such as patriarchal domination, sexism, gender inequality and sexual discrimination (Tekeli, 1992).

Turkey was the first country among the rest of Middle East to integrate its newly established state, by introducing new reforms, towards democratization and modernization process, initiated at the time of Ottoman Empire. The Kemalist ideology assisted to this path because it launched reforms regarding political rights, education and labor force participation. However it followed the platform of “state-sponsored feminism” and received some criticism by the opposite side of Islamists.

As it was aforementioned, a variety of feminists existed and gained visibility by focusing in different aspects of the society and by using diverse means and activities to succeed their goals. Either opening shelters for battered women, founding journals, organizing symposia and campaigns to inform the society about women issues, enter the politics, but, in any way all of them aimed at influencing the society. Therefore during the 1980s and 1990s the feminist movements mushroomed and formulate various forms of organizations, either informal types of organizations or more formal such as NGOs or even participation in political parties while adhering to the feminist way of thinking and aiming to influence the political elites.

PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REALM

Women’s organizations are defined as organizations whose founders and beneficiaries are women. Usually the founders originate from urban, wealthy family, are well-educated and the beneficiaries are women originating from rural, poor families who have limited access to education and information (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999; Diner & Toktaş, 2010; Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2010; Müftüler-Bac, 1999; Ilkcaracan, 1997). The collective action of women’s agencies was the power that altered the politics of gender and the negative formulated perception about women in Turkey. However the political culture of Turkey poses a great variety of hindrances to women’s participation in politics. Thus excluding them from political realm and deter them to have the opportunity to influence direct the society about gender issues. “Women’s

organizations face the challenges of the mainstream political culture which stems from the predominantly male-dominated politics in which the communication with civil society institutions are limited.” (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999).

Women’s organization are either founded as associations or as foundations, the first, focus on human resources and membership, the latter, emphasize on assets and on distribution of resources (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). From the era of Ottoman Empire the foundations have remained as leftovers of traditional social institutions of goodwill. Both of them require the approval of the state and its financial support in order to function. As it happened, also, in the West the emergence of the majority of these organizations which fight for the liberation, emancipation and equality of women, was initiated by wealthy, well-educated women, with access to information about feminism and the campaigns of the women from the West for gender rights. What is more, they had the appropriate contacts and the funds to start an organization which had as a goal the inclusion of more vulnerable women from poor and rural areas (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). With a chronological order the information that follow are organizations which were formulated by women after the establishment of the Turkish Republic:

ORGANIZATION FORMULATED BY WOMEN FROM 1923

1923 Foundation of the People’s Party of the Women. Later banned by the government

1926 Introduction of the Swiss Civil Code

1934 Women get the full citizenship, including the active and passive right to vote

1935 Female Deputies allowed in the Grand National Assembly

1975 Foundation of the communist Women’s Union for Progress

1980 First foundations of the “Awareness-raising Groups“

1984 Beginning of the “Headscarf Debate” in Turkey

1987 First legal feminist street protest against domestic violence

1987 Duygu Asena publishes her bestseller Kadının Adı Yok (Engl. The Women without a Name)

1988 First feminist congress in Ankara

1990 Foundation of first women’s shelter “MOR ÇATI” in Istanbul

1990 First women’s studies program at a university of Istanbul

1991 Foundation of the ministry for women's issues by the social democratic government

1995 First publishing of the feminist magazine PAZARTESI

1996 First publishing of the first Kurdish women's magazine ROZA

1996 Foundation of Feminist Women Society (FKÇ)

1997 Foundation of KA-MER to support women rights in particular 23 provinces of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia

1997 Foundation of the association KA.DER to support women in the political system

2000 Foundation of the feminist theater project TIYATRO BOYALI KUŞ

2001 Foundation of the feminist collective AMARGI

2002 Reform of the Turkish criminal and civil rights code: Treatment of women and men in marriage, divorce and property rights equalized

2003 Foundation of the Filmmor Women's Cooperative

2003 Foundation of Istanbul Women Platform for Peace

2006 First publishing of the feminist magazine Amargi

2007 Foundation of the Women's Platform of Constitution

2007 Public Sphere Meeting organized by AKDER (AYRIMCILIĞA KARŞI HAKLARI DERNEĞİ; Women Rights Association against Discrimination)

2007 Foundation of KADAV (KADINLARLA DAYANIŞMA VAKFI; Women's Solidarity Foundation)

2007 Foundation of the Women's Labour and Employment Initiative / KEIG

2008 Foundation of Women's Platform against Sexual Violence

2008 Foundation of Socialist Feminist Collective (SFK)

2009 Foundation of the Women for Peace Initiative

(Amargi Istanbul)

DIFFICULTIES & CHALLENGES OF POLITICAL¹⁶ MOVEMENTS

The interesting point is how the whole procedure of the formation of feminist's movements evolved throughout time, by separating the feminists into new politicized and activist groups influenced by the current political parties. Does this mean that the women's movements lost their incentives or managed to fulfill their goals? Feminist's priorities developed through time and different goals were and are set according to the political climate of the period. However they always adhere to the demise of patriarchy. In the case of Turkey, the feminist movements adhered to the suppression and domestic violence that women suffer inside their homes as well as the feminists put a great pressure in order to introduce laws that promote equality. The last decades a great need emerge, such as to learn to women to talk about their problem and ask for help, to acknowledge that they do actually face suppression and violence. This required to be trained. In small villages where they usually live, the access to education or information is very limited.

Therefore new challenges arose and had to respond to that call, because women from rural areas in Turkey had a great need to be heard and make familiar to the public what they were suffering under the male-dominated societies. For this reason apparently, the answer is negative, and a brief explanation can be their need to provide assistance, through trainings and projects, in remote areas where women are located and do not have access to human rights education. In order to make it public they need to take a different formation, therefore many feminist movements change to more formal movements which could had legitimacy from the state and usually that was the formation of civil society's organizations. Therefore in order to financially support their projects, they needed sponsors. As Esim and Cindoglu notice most of the women's organizations are not fully self-sufficient financially.

¹⁶ By that I mean, not inside a political framework i.e. a political party, but having an ideology regarding their existence. What kind of stance they follow towards state and life in general. Every person that has the ability to take decisions follows a certain political stance in his/her life. Therefore, a movement it cannot represent anything else but a "political ideology" since it is formulated with the need to succeed a goal, i.e. a feminist movement asks for the demise of patriarchy.

The alternatives women organizations actually have are three. The first alternative was to adhere to a political party or private organization so as to be able to fund planned projects and trainings run by the organizations. However at the same time they have to follow specific directives of their funders that are financially supporting them in order to cover their operating costs, complete the training courses, offer psychological support, and building of shelters e.t.c (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). This immediately makes them satellites of political parties or private companies which forces these groups not to be independent but follow certain agendas. The founders of these organizations are mainly urban middle-class, professional women while the beneficiaries of these programmes are mainly urban lower middle-class or squatter area women and the relationship between the founders of the groups and the beneficiaries are mostly vertical/hierarchic (ibid). The second alternative is to be funded from international donors; more precisely get funded by EU once the accession process had begun. The last opportunity, is the most radical one, and is followed by radical feminist movements, essentially political in nature, which do not accept funding provided that they want to be independent.

In Turkey is probable to find women initiating projects, running NGOs or informal groups expressing their support to women initiatives and needs. At the same time there might be movement's with deep altruistic motivations or not. The latter case is a habitual practice in order to sustain their viability, thus, they end up to be guided by implicit or blatant political agendas. A contradictory factor regardless their initial altruistic motives is the fact that many of these women's organizations are state sponsored for accomplishing special projects and programmes. This poses the question, to what extent, can the state influence the route of the projects since it is the only dominant sponsor? Apart from the state, other local NGO or international organizations can fund the relevant projects.

Another worrying factor, is the sponsorship of private foundations and how discreet would be in their demands. Furthermore, another rather negative outcome of these programmes, which aims to support the poorest parts of the society, derives from the fact that the founders and trainers do not actually want to share their knowledge and expertise in depth but only in superficial level. Also the redistribution of wealth and social justice are not on their agendas at all (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999).

C. FORMATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The term civil society was first conceptualized in the West¹⁷, applies to democratic societies and aims to create a democratic pluralism and include concepts such as civil and human rights (Karaman & Aras, 2000; Çaha, *The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey*, 2001). The most up to date definition that defines the term civil society suggests the idea of individual and/or group autonomy vis-à-vis the state (Karaman & Aras, 2000). The exercise of new freedoms that accompanied increasing urbanization represented a new way of life, and one which was becoming increasingly independent of the state. An important factor for the creation and the preservation of civil society is the direct relationship between civil society and democracy. In other words, without a dynamic, differentiated, and participatory civil society, there is no democracy, and vice versa (Çaha, *The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey*, 2001). The crucial reason a society would like to formulate a strong civil society is the fact that the initial aim of civil society groups is to influence the political elites in order to defend the “common interest” or the common good and if it sometimes does not overlaps then to demand for their rights.

An indicative example can be the Eastern Europe which was ruled by authoritarian regimes, but after their fall under the banner of democracy the concept of civil society appeared on the agenda, and was also forced by international powers such as EU, in the form of a reaction against dictatorial power. Civil society came to be associated with autonomous social units and organizations, as well as with freedom of public opinion in general (Karaman & Aras, 2000). A very crucial factor that civil society should play as Çaha mentions it in the texts, is to “be a true component of civil society, it must be involved in putting pressure on the state. The ways by which social groups can influence the state include voting, lobbying, visiting leaders, petitioning government bodies, and carrying out protests, meetings, and strikes.” Furthermore, the actual and preliminary goal is the protection of human rights and someone should bear in mind that only through democratic societies that perceive of the state as an instrument for peace, security, and order the goal can be achieved. On the contrary

¹⁷ By West, is referred to Western Europe and United States.

those that perceive the state as an abstract and metaphysical entity would not question or protest against the state in their demands for human rights (Çaha, *The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey*, 2001).

The case of Turkish civil society is somewhat problematic and can be differentiated: between the "appearance" of free organization, on the one hand, and the "reality" of free organization on the other (Karaman & Aras, 2000). In Turkey today, we have the former, but not the latter. Civil society in today's Turkey does appear to espouse the principle of free organization; the root of the problem is the limited freedom of expression that still exists under the name of a democratic state (ibid). Civil society in Turkey exists in name only; the people and the institutions, especially those of the less economically fortunate classes, do not have complete, unhampered freedom from the traditionally coercive, officially ideological, state bureaucracy because discrimination still exists in Turkey (Karaman & Aras, 2000)

CATEGORIES OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Nowadays the most obvious categorization of the Turkish women's movement is according to their political agendas. They suppose to form three different groups; the Kemalists, the Islamists and the Feminists and each of them follow a different political agenda regarding the projects and programmes its group is engaged. The following separation is due to their will to be politicized and attach to the specific political thought. These types of organizations are twofold from the one aspect follow the political party's way of thinking but at the same time the women act in favour of women's common interests. There is a differentiation between this type of organization and the civil society's organization because even though they stem from their need to emancipate and strengthen women they are influenced differently. As it has already mentioned before, women's organization can formulate either formal or informal¹⁸ organizations, adhering to political parties or following their own agenda,

¹⁸ With the term formal and informal, I differentiate the women organization in two groups. The ones that are institutionalized and legitimized by the state (adhering to political parties or NGOs) and the others like gatherings of friends but at the same time expressing political speech, most of the times more fervently than the others. The truth is that even if the latter wanted to be legitimized they would not be because of their radical thoughts bearing, let alone that they do not want since they are opposing

establishing NGOs acting in favour of women issues or just formulate a group of discussion, watching movies, exchanging ideas with other women with same interest and the will to resist on patriarchy, male-dominated societies and all type of violence against women. That part consists of a presentation of women NGOs and indicative examples of women's organization involved or receiving influence by political parties.

WOMEN NGOS

During the historical process, civil society organizations which have developed in relation with civil society history appeared in their roles of alternative to state, sometimes being opposing and sometimes favouring. As a matter of fact, concepts such as means of modernization, third sector due to its economical function, a depoliticized space or non-governmental organizations that are organized by government (GONGO-Governmentally Organized NGO) were used for civil society organizations (Bora and Çağlar, 2002:339-344; cited (Leyla, 2011). Despite these alternative views, civil society organizations stress the potential of “talking about social problems”. Therefore, their main functions can be listed as criticizing and directing the savings of public authority, informing wide sections of society about constructive savings in advance and influencing these processes or creating ways of opposing including civil relief means (ibid).

In the past two decades, a movement of some 30 Turkish non-governmental women's rights organizations has spearheaded legal, political and social change to promote equality and eliminate violence against women. Change, however, is not coming easily as these NGOs try to battle ingrained traditional views toward women amidst

to state's way of thinking. An indicative example is Amargi which is a group of feminist activists. Usually that type of organizations seek to create feminist knowledge together and examine society and politics from a feminist point of view and at the same time strive for peace, anti-militarism, respect to minorities and LGTBs. This is a well known organization, which at the time faces problem with state, but there are others not that well known in the publicity that are independent of government and political parties.

much turmoil. The liberal environment¹⁹ that already existed in Western countries arrived in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, hence a variety of civil society actors came upon the scene (Çaha, *The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey*, 2001). The most remarkable group that emerged at that time, were women comprising a local feminist movement that defended the local problems of Turkish women. The development of civil society in Turkey is essentially related to the self-empowerment of its actors, in that case, the women, as a result of the grassroots activism and is considered a product of the interaction between domestic and international actors, predominantly during the late 1990s and 2000s (Ergun, 2010).

Once these women entered the public sphere, they set up many different associations and were a central aspect of the last two decades of the Ottoman Empire from 1908 to 1923. They managed to influence the Turkish political scene and demand basic rights that some students of Turkish politics have considered them to be the paramount element of civil society during that time (Çaha, 1995: cited *ibid*)

The women's organizations were active a long time ago and had traversed a long way until the exposure of their influence to society. Their demands and needs of the women's civil society organizations came to public's attention, their visibility was increased, and, therefore, their influential power was increased. The women's movement can be separated into two periods taking as a consideration the chronological era, the activities and their demands. The first period, took place between the 1910 and 1920s, and, the second period, lasted from 1980s up until now. In the first period the women's movement presents a quick transformation in a period of time where big changes take place in Turkey. The political atmosphere that prevailed at that time was nationalism and pan-Islamism, when the imperialism of the Ottoman Empire was transformed into a nation state (Leyla, 2011). A major concern of women's organization was the issue of the depressed femininity of women which was questioned a lot from state. At that time, the women's movement divided into the

¹⁹ Liberal concepts that were formed in Western countries are those such as the minimal state, individualism, social differentiation, the rule of law, and human rights and liberties, and they are the ones that have constituted the sociological, philosophical and political environment that has enabled the formation of civil society (Çaha, *The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey*, 2001).

opponents of Ottoman women's movement and the real feminists. The latter period began with the first wave of feminism and still proceeds with prevalent one, the third wave of feminism.

According to Ömer Çaha's arguments about civil society, almost "every women's groups have been institutionalized in a different way by defining their own feminisms or maintaining their own feminist existences." (Çaha, 2011) In this respect, it can be argued that the movement, during the 1990s was separated at an organizational level rather than at a level of perspectives (ibid.). It is well known that each NGO shapes its own policies and formulates an attitude towards society and politics. There are many different types of women NGOs, according to what they represent, believes, religion, ethnicity and class. For example many NGOs were motivated in the 90s by the domestic violence and tried to develop and implement solutions to alleviate the victims of violence.

According to Nilufer Göle, in the case of Turkey, feminism as a social movement benefited the civil society. The battle among state and women civil society has to seek a balance. An indisputable fact is that during the 1980s, when Turkey had to confront a strict military control over the civil society, the uprising feminist movement helped to usher democratization through campaigns and demands for women's rights, participation, and autonomy (Moghadam, 2010). The overpopulation of males in the civil society destructs the gender equality and the dominance of capital, state and males should be minimized in order to achieve social equality and freedom of speech in the society (Leyla, 2011). The women's organizations should prioritize their demands, in order to resolve their problems without the state interference with sources and the exercise of authority over women's and gender equality (Leyla, 2011). In simply words, they have to seek for their independence from the state control over their needs.

A very important rule, that all states should follow in order the society to be truly democratic, equal representative and well-functioning, is to construct a civil society. A state in a society with a strong civil society is likely to be considered an intermediary and instrumental institution, and this notion helps to guarantee the liberty and basic rights of individuals. People should have in mind that their human rights can only be defended through societies that perceive of the state as an

instrument for peace, security, and order (Amnesty International, 2004). Those that have a different perception of the state such as an abstract and metaphysical entity would not question or protest against the state demanding their human rights (ibid). Indicatively example is the case study of this paper, Turkey in the early years of its formation where Kemal did not leave space for the emergence of an independent civil society. However as it is observed steps forward were made from all sides and this has to be mentioned, regardless the fact that Turkey still needs a lot of development in order to reach a level that all the civil society organizations would be independent and equal representative with all voices having the chance to be heard, internally towards the organization and externally towards the state by offering space in the decision-making process.

On the other hand, someone can observe that women's organization are not active enough in the decision-making process and is not yet applicable to influence the local level not to say at a national level. According to Çaha's research, this practice is taking place because the local governments are not ready yet to welcome these groups (Çaha, Women and Local Democracy in Turkey, 2010). The real reason can be explained on the immature political culture of the Republican state as it still convinces with suspicion the civil society organizations, especially the ones that have political implications (ibid).

In a nutshell, women's organizations consisted with activists and dealing with various relevant networks can be observed that strengthen and increase a country's competence for gender equality (Eslen-Ziya, Warsaw 2007). Their desire for equality and emancipation is reflected in women's increased interest in active engagement in civil society because the voice of grassroots women's concern and introduce them to policy.-makers and political elites (ibid).

KEMALIST WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

Women's movement is an important part of Kemalist tradition and played an important role on the liberalist movement's slotting into place in Turkey. Kemalist women started to be organized under the roof of the Association in Support of Contemporary Life (ÇYDD) and the Atatürk-ist Ideology Association (ADY), another non-governmental organization inholding Kemalist women and women of different

environments is the Association for Support and Education of Female Candidates (Ka-Der). Other indicative examples of Turkish Kemalist women organizations are the following ones; the Kemalists women's organization in Turkey are the Association of Republic's Women (CKD), ÇEV (Contemporary Education Foundation), Turkish Women's Union (Turk Kadınlar Birliği), the Association to Support the Modern Life (Cagdas Yasami Destekleme Dernegi), and the Association to Research Women's Social Lives (Kadinin Sosyal Hayatini Arastirma Dernegi). These organizations are trying to fulfill both the practical and strategic gender needs and include activities such as seminars on women's legal rights and skill training courses for income-generating activities (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). A common belief of Kemalists is that if they enlighten the women with the Kemalist Ideology the secular state will be preserved.

ISLAMIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

In the category of the Islamists women's organizations are Ladies' culture and Education Foundation (Hanımlar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı) which focuses mostly on seminars referring to the role of the Islamic women inside the family and Qur'an. Moreover they have a charitable character and provide poor families with food and clothing (HEKVA). There is a vast majority of Islamic organizations which are supported by various Municipalities and journals which keep up to date about future programmes and activities that Islamic women's organizations deal with. Their main goals are to fulfill the practical gender needs and focus mostly in the preservation of families and how to be proper wives and mothers. On the other hand, though, the women who founded these organizations do belong in the radical Islamic movement but act both as activists and as mothers. (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). Today, the most effective ones are the Gokkusagi Kadın Platformu (Rainbow Woman Platform) in Istanbul, especially its member organizations Hazar Grubu, AK-DER, and HEKVA. Baskent Kadın Platformu in Ankara (Ozcetin, 'Breaking the Silence': The Religious Muslim Women's Movement in Turkey., 2009).

FEMINIST MOVEMENT

The third category consists of the feminist movements who are neither Kemalists nor Islamists and are not influenced by any political actor or political sphere of the time. They are autonomous and this has as a consequence, a limited budget to realize the projects and programmes which have been planned ahead. Feminist organizations focus mostly as their fundamental principle for their activities on the gender, therefore, they try to promote the transformation of gender and the hierarchies which are shaped from the gender (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). Some of the feminists' organizations are the Purple Roof Women's shelter (Mor Cati Kadin Siginagi), the foundation to Support Women's Work (Kadin Emegini Degerlendirme Vakfi), the Altindag Women's Solidarity Foundation (Altindag Kadin Dayanisma Vakfi), the Amargi Women Academy (Amargi Kadin Akademisi), the Socialist Feminist Collective (*Sosyalist Feminist Kolektif/SFK*), The Women for Peace Initiative, Film mor Women's Cooperative, *Lambda Istanbul* is the biggest LGBT organization in Turkey, Kadının İnsan Hakları Projesi (Women for Women's Human Rights). An autonomous women's organization that aims to provide women and women's organizations with tools and strategies to confront structures of inequality and work against the effects of marginalization. Most of them wanted to organize independent of men, the state and the capital in their struggle against patriarchal oppression and exploitation of women which is intertwined with capitalism in many ways.

The feminist movements perceive the women as independent agents of society, they neither nurture a dependency, both on political or religion field, nor reinforce them to stick to the traditional gender roles of women as Kemalists and Islamists do in their projects (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999). They usually emphasize on the strategic gender needs and focus on the separation in labor force because of gender. For these reason the feminist movements make the women's needs a priority and this becomes a reality with the center for battered woman or the child care centers in order the mother not to feel guilty because they left their children and work with peace of mind.

In a nutshell as mentioned in a previous chapter, the institutions or political actors, who offer financial support, envisage their assistance as a mean to the realization of the national project of Turkey towards modernization and further economic and social development. However feminist women's organizations are the only ones comparing with the Kemalist and Islamic women's movements which target change for women for themselves and not as a mirror of the process or social change according to the political agendas they represent. Ironically, between the feminists and Kemalists there is a similarity in their commitment to the secularism that the Turkish Republic represents. However the feminist women's organizations search for a common path of understanding and cooperation with the Islamists while the Kemalists have a negative attitude which is reciprocal. (Esim & Cindoglu, 1999)

E. PRESENT AND FUTURE : WOMEN'S STATUS

Over the past decade, Turkey has witnessed major legislative reform on women's rights, in large part driven by advocacy and lobbying by the women's movement and the external pressure of EU. In short, from the 1990s onwards, gender equality issues have been more visible in the Turkish political arena and were formalised and institutionalised through various changes in legal frameworks. The efforts of women's civil society organisations and international monitoring activities (CEDAW, EU) have led to policy and action by governmental bodies. In recent years, the efforts of some private sector initiatives have been added to this cooperation between public authorities, women's NGOs and international agencies (Acar, Göksel, Dedeoğlu-Atılğan, Altunok, & Gözdasoğlu-Küçükalioglu, 2007). The last decade, from 2000s and onwards women NGOs started to act as lobby, building networks which are strongly connected to one another both internally and with foreign countries. Furthermore, as someone can observe over the last years there was a mushrooming of laws concerning equality and violence towards women however as can be observed from statistical numbers and reports they are not implemented appropriately because there are still countless victims from violence and inequality in several fields. Therefore there is a global question that rises. Is the establishing of additional laws

effective or it leads to legal pluralism where the one law controls the other and finally there is no solution?

The new civil code, passed in 2001 is based on the principle of equal rights and responsibilities within the household. The campaign for these milestone legal achievements was long and hard fought initiated by the hardships the women had been through. Once the Government of Turkey had ratified CEDAW in 1985, the women's movement seized the opportunity to lobby for reform of the civil code.

However hopes were dashed when a series of petitions for change failed to obtain parliamentary approval. With a starting point the 80s and with milestone decade the 90s, feminist advocates built the movement, highlighting how the civil code violated Turkey's own constitutional guarantee of gender equality, pinpointing that what was offered were not enough and the need to further demand on the improvement of internal and international legal framework, as well as its commitments under CEDAW (UN Women, 2011).

Further steps towards legislation preventing violence have been decided but still not implemented. In May, Turkey signed on to a new Council of Europe Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (SUSSMAN, 2011). The government passed a Labor Law in 2008 promising state contributions towards Social Security costs for female employees for five years. In 2010, an AKP-appointed education minister overrode a Constitutional Court's ban on the headscarf in public institutions by directing, allowing millions of observant female students to access higher education for the first time (ibid). And despite the ban, covered women do work in some government offices, although they say they still face discrimination. But the implementation remains spotty at best (ibid). However the burden borne by headscarf-wearing women, recently gained entrance into universities and continue to be unable to enter teaching jobs, state employment, and professional occupations (Peres, 2011). For example, as mentioned in Sussman's article current legislation stipulates that any municipality with a population greater than 50,000 should have a domestic violence shelter, but the government is more than 100 shelters short. The total combined capacity for the 50 or so shelters that currently exist runs to just over 1350 people, hardly sufficient to ensure the safety of the 11 million women who have faced or are facing physical or sexual violence in Turkey, according to estimates by Human Rights Watch.

Therefore as can be observed from the everyday news in Turkey many women are treated with violence²⁰ and honor crimes are made from their own family in order to keep the honor of the family. What is important to notice as progress of the society is the acknowledgement that there is a problem and start looking at it as a problem and not as something normal. The honor crimes are presented in news and the predators are going to jail, many brothers of the women are calling for help in the various shelters in order to save their sisters. However there is the negative aspect of the issue. As mentioned in Uçan Süpürge/ Flying Broom report most rapists went unpunished due to contradictions between the justice and judiciary systems, whereas cases know as Siirt, Mardin, Fethiye, Çorum and Sinan cost the general public with shocking verdicts (Flying Broom report by Burç Köstem - Ceren Kocaman, 2011). It was claimed that 13-year-old N.Ç. gave her consent to rape by 26 men, which resulted in minimal punishment for the perpetrators (ibid). Municipal women's centers are working to raise public awareness about domestic violence, along with offering education courses and a network of support for women as well as many educational programmes are presented in television (Newshour, 2008) On the other hand, there is limited freedom of expression as can be observed from the latest arrests of many activist and human rights activists.

The good news is that the amount of women participating in the political scene is getting increased. As Ilkcaracan mentions in one of her interviews Turkey used to stand badly but the situation has been improved “The percentage of women in governmental executive positions in Turkey in 1994 was 15.1 percent, we look at the situation starting in 1994 because of the Beijing Declaration in 1995, when the international community declared its commitment to the advancement of women and guaranteed to adopt a gender perspective in policies. In 2009, this percentage was 11.8”. The number of women elected to the 550-seat parliament is expected to double

²⁰ According to the data of the Ministry of Justice, the number of women murders increased by factor 14 between 2002 and 2009. While 66 women were killed in 2002, this figure raised to 953 women murders in 2009. The development of the increase was documented as follows: 83 women murders in 2003; 128 in 2004; this figure more than doubled in 2005 with 317 women killings; again a sharp increase with 663 in 2006; a peak of 1011 women murders in 2007 and a small decrease in numbers in 2008 with 806 women murders. (Bianet, 2011)

from the current 50 (9%) (DOĞAN, 2012). But Turkey will still be behind other Muslim countries, such as Afghanistan (28%) and the United Arab Emirates (23%) (ibid). The big difference is made by the BDP the Kurdish political party which has as a quota 50% of women and 50% of men and once a man is in head of the party then a women should take over.

Additional good news is that women are getting organized. Those battling to end restrictions on the headscarf are among the most vocal and there is a swift in the approach of secular women by supporting the campaign to force parties to accept female candidates who cover their heads (Economist, 2011).

In a nutshell, the last 40 years, feminist organizations in Turkey have progressed showing their power and existence through various demonstrations, exhibitions and marches. They have become significant NGOs that bolster Turkey's civil society and take an active role in social development programs in support of women, including efforts to improve literacy, provide health information and job training, to build women's shelters and provide legal assistance (Peres, 2011). Their overall effort to be heard was achieved in some point and the government is paying attention to what feminist groups demand from. However as mention in Today's Zaman article, an important drawback of the feminist movement is the lack of unity and cooperation, the cultural values and the secular-Islamic way of living overcomes solidarity and empathy. "Unfortunately, the feminist movement in Turkey remains highly fragmented. Many conservative women do not support feminists and seem even revolted by the mere mention of the word, even though they have benefited from their increasing public presence, and from their pressuring government, the courts and other institutions to provide more freedom and better treatment for women. In addition, secular and Islamic women's groups are not empathetic toward each other and do not cooperate nor collaborate – a sad state of affairs" (Peres, 2011).

As mentioned above the secular-Islamic way of living is the predominant part of Turkish society and AKP is the representative. It has ruled in Turkey for almost a decade and has sparked wide debate among academic and political circles. The debates mainly focus on the established ideological dichotomies in Turkey-laicist versus religious, republican versus liberal, Kemalist versus Islamist,

modern versus traditional, military rule versus civilian rule (Waterman, 2011). Its relation to Islamist politics is a bit complicated because from their initial years in power they kept lower profile and still continue to deny that they pursue Islamist politics. However it follows a socio-cultural policy fed by religious conservatism. “With respect to feminists, the Prime Minister and a number of leading party members have referred to them as ‘a bunch of marginals’. They have even disavowed gender equality as a desired goal, and dismissed warnings against feminist concerns of violence against women in Turkey. Although confusingly, the AKP governments has been attentive to forge a public identity that recognizes women's rights and that is supportive of the measures against gendered violence”. (ibid)

An overview of the current situation in Turkey is offered by the reports of Uçan Süpürge/ Flying Broom. Turkey ranks 126th among the 134 countries that are listed in the Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum (Flying Broom report by Burç Köstem - Ceren Kocaman, 2011). Turkey is 109th in the “level of education” section, 131st in the “equal opportunities” section and 99th in the “political power” section. Beside Turkey’s lower rankings on gender equality reports, it made women’s agenda with the removal of “women” from the name of its ministry, with femicides, sexual abuse and suicides (ibid). The point of AKP has been to marginalize feminists who either oppose the party's neoliberal mindset or who claim a say in the gendered policy making process (Waterman, 2011). The party's gender policies are meant to be incorporated within a neoliberal order of things under the monopolizing political stance of the AKP that aims at reserving agenda setting, policy-making and implementation to itself.

The most striking example of the hostility toward feminism under AKP’s term in government was the declaration by the Presidency of Religious Affairs in 2008. As mentioned in his speech “Feminism leads to grave consequences in moral and social respects. Above all, the woman who falls into the feminist movement, [by acting] through the principle of unconditional freedom ignores many of the rules and values which are indispensable for the family (quoted in GURSOZLU-SUSLU 2008)” (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, *New Grounds for Patriarchy in Turkey? Gender Policy in the Age of AKP*, 2001). The periodic censures from different AKP representatives and/or from governmental bodies against feminism should be considered within this socio-

political frame that continues to exist and are expressed in various forms in every occasion (ibid). An interesting note made by scholars is the party's political identity in general and its approach to women's issues in particular. They follow a new version of patriarchy whose disciplining power is embedded in modernity, and fed by nationalism and an updated version of religious conservatism (ibid).

One thing the feminists should have in mind that the feminist struggle is about changing mindsets and cultural values and about forcing society to recognize the dignity of women as individual human being, is neither a competition among women nor a contradiction. The future generation of Turkish women and feminist should work together with unity and a common goal, of liberating themselves from oppressive powers and demanding equality.

F. CONCLUSION

Taking into account the research done for this paper the final point is that Turkey by becoming a member in EU might have more possibilities to integrate all the feminist movement and take into consideration the demands of the women for a more equal representation, undermining the patriarchal state and eliminating the violence and subordination of women, especially in the periphery of Turkey. Once being a member in EU Turkey would have to enhance the democratic values, maybe not in its will, but, through a spillover effect towards women. Republic of Turkey will be forced to integrate democratic norms, learn to act under certain values by respecting human rights, thus, women rights as an equal person in the Turkish society. However this can not only become reality through regulation and rules but also through attaining political culture that enhances freedom of expression and actual rights of political activism no matter their political background or identity. Furthermore, an important factor is the change of mindset and the will for a change. As far as women's movements are concerned, they can become a part of the society that will press for further change towards equality and equity.

Women should not face these challenges unsupported. The state has a duty to protect women from violence committed not only by agents of the state but also by private individuals and groups. Under international human rights law, states must exercise due diligence to secure women's rights to equality, life, liberty and security, and

freedom from discrimination, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment (Amnesty International, 2004). They must have policies and plans to fulfill these rights, to protect people from abuses of these rights, and to provide redress and reparation to those whose rights have been violated (ibid).

As Amnesty International underlies in the report made for human rights in Turkey many more shelters are needed for women fleeing violent partners or families. Such women should have prompt access to judicial mechanisms and appropriate health care. Furthermore, it notes that the authorities must cooperate with women's rights groups and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in ending the restrictions on women's rights to make decisions about their lives – their choice of partner, how they express their sexuality, their mobility and access to economic and social rights, their engagement in political life, their right even to leave the house.

As seen throughout the text there is a great variety of laws but why does the situation remains almost the same with so many women in danger of being hurt, raped or even killed? Because as Senal Saruhan explains, a feminist lawyer in Ankara who led the campaign to revise the penal code, “implementation is the real obstacle to the full recognition of women's rights because passing legislation is one thing, but changing mentalities has proved to be quite another” (Amnesty International, 2004).

Throughout my research I have read, heard and noticed attitudes and mistreatment not only towards women. Human rights abuse is a common practice all over the world that is sad and depressing to discuss still such issues with all that progress in the world taking place. Taking into consideration the countries that are in a better position regarding respect on human rights, someone can notice that there have human rights education and culture, but the most important is the role the movements, either more conservative or more radical, that play in order to influence and demand rights from the political elites. Therefore a country that can be called democratic is the one that has a strong civil society with activists, social and political movements, NGOs to cooperate in favour of people as a whole. If Turkey wants to be considered as a modern democratic country should start protecting more its parts of society and not suppressing them.

In a democratic society social groups suppose to undertake functions such as the politicization of the future generations, awakening social consciousness, diffusing the group culture, and putting pressure on the governing groups (Çaha, The Death of Feminism as an Antisystemic Movement or the Success of Feminism to Change the System from Within?, 2003), this is solely a bottom-up solution that can only be implemented by the grassroots. Women and women's NGOs in Turkey must not lose sight of their goals, and must continue to work alongside one another to achieve full equality between the sexes. The movement should build on the momentum and political influence it has generated over past years by continuing to push for non-violent and fair solutions to achieve their goals. Concluding I would like to cite Virginia's Woolf saying:

“...as a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country.
As a woman my country is the whole world.”

(Three Guineas, 1938, ch. 3)

Hoping one day all women and humanity in general will feel free and not be in any form suppressed in every part of the world!

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