

PERCEPTIONS OF FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS REGARDING THE EU'S ROLE
IN THE TURKISH WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

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Supervisor: Meltem Müftüler-Baç

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The status of women's rights in Turkey presents a dilemma with 2014 marking 100 years of women in tertiary institutions and gains made in all aspects of life in the Turkish women's movement while, on the other hand, Turkey has consistently low rankings on international indexes on gender equality alongside statements made by top-level officials in the Turkish government questioning the very notion of gender equality. In this environment, the question of how feminist organizations, the major players in the Turkish women's movement working on women's issues, perceive the European Union (EU) in the movement becomes increasingly important. In approaching this problem by utilizing concepts related to sociological institutionalism and by conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews with activists from three feminist organizations (KA.DER, KAGIDER, and Mor Çatı), this thesis shows that they perceive the EU as a normative power and they themselves as dependent on the EU for the promulgation of women's rights in the Turkish women's movement. This thesis further takes into consideration external factors such as major developments in relations between Turkey and the EU throughout the years as well as an emerging narrative in public discourse that has shaped the environment in which feminist organizations operate in.

ÖZET

FEMİNİST ÖRGÜTLERİN AB'NİN TÜRK KADIN HAREKETLERİ ROLÜNE İLİŞKİN BAKIŞ AÇILARI

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Anahtar sözcükler: Türkiye’de kadın hareketi, feminist örgütleri, cinsiyet eşitliği,
Türkiye ve AB

Türkiye uluslararası endeksler üzerinde sürekli düşük sıralamalar da yer almakta ve Türkiye'deki üst düzey yöneticiler de cinsiyet eşitliği kavramını sorgulayan demeçler vermekte iken, Türkiye'de kadın hakları 100. yılını doldurduğu 2014 itibari ile kadınların üçüncül örgütler ve hayatın tüm yönlerin de elde ettikleri kazançlar bakımından bir ikilem oluşturmaktadır. Böyle bir ortamda, feminist örgütlerin ve Türk kadın hakları üzerinde çalışan ana aktörlerin Avrupa Birliği'nin (AB) hareket içerisindeki yerine dair nasıl bir bakış açısına sahip olduğu sorusu önem teşkil etmektedir. Bu soruna yaklaşırken, yapılandırma tekniği ile ve sosyolojik kurumsallaşma kavramlarını kullanarak, derinlemesine üç farklı feminist örgüt aktivisti (KA.DER, KAGIDER ve Mor Çatı) ile bağlantılı mülakatlar ile, bu tez AB'nin bir normatif güç olarak ele alındığını ve Türk kadın hakları hareketinin yayılımı bakımından AB'ye bağımlı olduklarının kanaatine varmıştır. Bu tez, ayrıca, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin yıllara göre ilerleyişi ve feminist örgütlerin faaliyet gösterdiği ortamı şekillerinden toplumsal söylemin gelişmekte olan tahkiyesi gibi dış faktörleri de dikkate almaktadır.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of any Discrimination Against Women
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EEC	European Economic Community
EP	European Parliament
EWL	European Women's Lobby
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
MUSİAD	Independent Industrialists and Businessman's Association
KA.DER	Kadın Adayları Destekleme ve Eğitim Derneği (Association for Supporting and Training Women Candidates)
KAGIDER	Kadın Girişimciler Derneği (Association of Women Entrepreneurs)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
TKB	Türk Kadınlar Birliği (Turkish Women's Association)
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
WB	World Bank

INTRODUCTION

At the First International Summit on Women and Justice in Istanbul in November 2014, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that he does not consider men and women to be equal due to the Islamic perception of creation (*fitrat*). Erdoğan then reinforced his earlier statement a couple days later at a meeting with the pro-Muslim Independent Industrialists and Businessman's Association (MUSİAD) when he stated, "You cannot put men and women on equal footing. What women need is to be treated at equal value with men rather than seeking equality" (Daloğlu 2014). Along the same lines, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu implied that the more gender equality in Scandinavian countries is associated with a higher rate of suicide ("Gender Equality Triggers Suicide" *Hürriyet Daily News*). The aforementioned statements made by top-level officials have undoubtedly reignited a series of controversies and debates in the self-proclaimed secular Republic of Turkey. While this is not the first time in which officials have made statements regarding gender equality,¹ this recent set of statements does call into question and requires a reconceptualization of how women are perceived in society.

The year 2014 also marks the centennial of women in tertiary institutions in Turkey, however the status of women is still far from favorable. Reports released at the time this thesis was written such as the Gender Gap Index 2014 ranked Turkey 125 out of 140 countries (World Economic Forum 2014) and human rights watch groups announced a record number of murders among women for the year 2014 (Kızılkoyun 2014). Gender equality in Turkey is far from being realized with a low rating in both the

¹ In July 2010, at the Women and Justice Summit (Kadın ve Adalet Zirvesi) Erdoğan made a similar statement claiming that men and women cannot be equal simply because their natures are not equal.

spheres of economic and political participation. Furthermore, the numbers of murders due to “honor killings” committed against young women in rural areas of Turkey along with the numbers of women exposed to domestic violence are said to have increased exponentially in the last couple of years and are a cause for concern (Tremblay 2014). Taking all this into consideration, the future of women’s rights in Turkey will most certainly remain on the political agenda for years to come, especially considering the fact that views regarding the role of women in society is extremely polarized in Turkey. That said, it would be disingenuous to suggest that the women’s movement in Turkey has not greatly contributed to elevating the status of women in society. Even though the women’s movement in Turkey has made strident gains in several aspects of life, recent statements made by officials run counterintuitive to several fundamental concepts employed by feminist organizations, acting as major impediments for the movement. This thesis attempts to address this complexity in shedding light on the way in which feminist organizations currently perceive the EU to fit within the women’s movement in Turkey.

In common discourse and among certain ideologies in Turkey, the aim of reaching gender equality has often been conceptualized within the larger process of democratization. Prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) founded and ran by women in Turkey who are the main advocates of achieving gender equality in society have also been viewed as part of this ongoing process. Going through this process of democratization has often meant Turkey’s political, economic, and social integration into the global community via becoming a full member of the European Union (EU) in adhering to a set of international liberal norms and values. While state actors can carry their own weight in the aim of reaching full democratization, as has been evidenced by adhering to the political conditionality imposed by the EU, civil society has also been a vital player in meeting the demands of this democratization process in the 21st century (Göymen 2008). Thus, logic follows that in pursuit of the goal of democratizing a country, women’s organizations in civil society are extremely significant in promoting the agenda to solve problems currently faced by women in the 21st century. The integral role of women’s organizations in the women’s movement is well-documented in Turkey, particularly since the 1980s in their ability to situate themselves in a blossoming civil society.

Given the complexity of overcoming gendered problems in today’s increasingly complicated and globalized world, women’s issues need to be addressed on many fronts

– at the national, international, and local levels – meaning there are several actors who work to confront the women’s issues in society. While women’s organizations denote several different ideologies, this thesis will particularly focus on women’s rights-oriented feminist organizations that operate on the principles of feminism. Women’s organizations in Turkey emerged in the struggle against existing gender equalities and have served many roles and functions in fighting against mentalities, antiquated laws and behaviors, and rhetoric from the top level of the government in order to further promote gender equality. These organizations are firstly important for service provision whose aim is to help women in order to meet basic needs. They also play a role in deconstructing widely-held beliefs such as the role of patriarchy deeply embedded in the fabric of society, thus challenging the status quo. They also strive to make structural changes to better represent women as truly being reflected as half the population. These organizations also carry the heavy load of identifying the problems women face by raising awareness, mobilizing people at all levels of society, swaying public opinion through education and influence in media, maintaining legal prowess in drafting new laws and advocating, among other activities. Inherent in all these roles is acting as spokesperson for those who might not have a strong voice in society or unable to envisage a society that views both genders as equals. Women’s organizations in general, and feminist organizations in particular, work to confront deficits in certain spheres of society, namely political participation, economic participation, education and social needs. These organizations require capacities such as the know-how, the staff, the expertise, and the funding in order to carry out these functions (Esim 1999: 890).

Of course, it would also be disingenuous to suggest that Turkey is exceptional in having serious deficits in the realm of gender issues – even in countries that rate higher in international development or gender equality indexes than Turkey, women elsewhere face numerous problems including a wage gap, lack of political participation, domestic violence, among other inequalities (Hubbard 2014). Thus, international institutions are major actors in tackling gender inequality due to their scope, outreach, organizational capabilities, and funding opportunities. International actors also play a vital role in holding international conferences, setting standards for the definitions of concepts, and proposed legal reforms leading to gender equality. In fact, achieving gender equality through gender mainstreaming has been a priority identified by EU institutions. Furthermore, the EU has clearly stated its intentions regarding gender issues for potential EU member states during the accession process, including Turkey.

Additionally, international institutions such as the EU have become increasingly important over the years not only in addressing gender issues on the international level but also in interacting with the players at the state level as well as those in civil society. Due to this, it is increasingly important to be able to examine the supranational institutions, state level, and civil society in order to more clearly form a picture of the efficacy of programs that are intended to solve the aforementioned problems. In addressing problems of inequality, supranational institutions, in our case, the EU, diffuse norms and values through the accession process during which candidate countries adhere to criteria in order to become a member of the institution (Tocci et al. 2008, Slobodchikoff 2010). Thus, these norms have been increasingly spread to NGOs, especially to feminist organizations in Turkey, thereby enacting change.

Taking into account the role of international institutions and increased interaction between institutions such as the EU and civil society organizations in candidate countries such as Turkey, the main idea of this thesis is to explore how and why perceptions of feminist organizations regarding the EU have shifted regarding the EU's role in the Turkish women's movement. In answering these questions, I intend to go beyond simple approval or disapproval ratings of the EU but instead delve into whether the EU is perceived as an anchor, an ally or equal partner, a reference point, an equal partner or as an impediment to the women's movement. To further this argument, I wish to understand if the process of ostensible Europeanization through EU membership reforms has affected the perception of women's organizations in light of poor public opinion and rising anti-western sentiment among the public and top-level officials. Given the current political climate in Turkey and from my reading of the literature on the women's movement in Turkey, I hypothesize that feminist organizations perceive the EU as a normative power and as being dependent on the EU and its institutions in the struggle to address women's issues in promulgating the Turkish women's movement. Furthermore, I hypothesize that this perception is caused by external factors namely politics surrounding the EU and Turkey as well as an alternate narrative surrounding the women's movement.

In an attempt to explain this perception, I hope to expand on the changes that have occurred within and among feminist organizations actively engaged in the women's movement since the late 80s and early 90s as having developed alongside the EU. I propose that there has been dependency on the EU ideologically, functionally, and fiscally among the higher profile feminist organizations interviewed for the purposes of

this thesis. Furthermore, the emergence of conservative political Islam and the patterns of behavior exhibited by high-level politicians in Turkey have contributed to this shift in perception. It would be outside the scope of this thesis to look at all women's organizations across the entire ideological spectrum (liberal feminist, Kurdish feminist, conservative, state-sponsored feminist, among others) actively involved in the third phase of the women's movement in Turkey considering varying aims, capacities, and functions perceive an international institution such as the EU.

In order to be able to answer my research question(s), I plan to use terms and concepts offered by sociological institutionalism that will allow me to understand norms and values through discourse and rhetoric that in turn have shaped perceptions of women's organizations (Finnemore 1996, Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, March and Olsen 2009). In this process of self-identification and thus perception, an organization or institutional is shaped by its external factors. It is the aim of this thesis to be able to identify actors within the sociological institutionalism theoretical framework in order to better classify the way in which we can better understand the environment women's organizations find themselves in and thus how perceptions are shaped regarding the way women's organizations are then motivated to conduct themselves and their activities. Because this research relies heavily on discourse and rhetoric, I will integrate interviews, press releases and declarations made by women's organizations into this paper in order to be able to decipher their perceptions of the EU's role in the women's movement in Turkey. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with three activists associated with the following three high-profile women's rights-oriented, feminist organizations: KA.DER (Support and Training of Women Candidates) works to promote the political participation among women in Turkey; KAGIDER (Women Entrepreneur's Association) works to promote women entrepreneurs mainly in the economic sphere; and Mor Çatı (Purple Roof) provides shelter and other services for those women who need help from domestic violence. These organizations were chosen not only because of the extent with which they had interaction with cooperation with the EU but also because they addressed different areas of interest in the women's movement. I will further use material from debates in the media and statements made by top-level officials in order to form an accurate picture of the landscape in Turkey regarding the current stance on women's issues by delineating how the movers and shakers of the society are responding to these struggles.

The rationale undergirding this thesis is double-fold in being able to contribute to the literature in a meaningful way and to have practical implications for the EU in being involved in the women's movement in Turkey in the future. Much emphasis in the literature on Turkey-EU relations is placed only on the public perception of the EU in Turkey. There is a deficit in the literature on the organizations' perceptions of the EU, in particular how feminist organizations perceive the EU's role in the Turkish women's movement. This is an area that warrants further analysis and research considering the recent boom in not only civil society groups but also the advancement of women in Turkish society especially since the late 90's. Furthermore, the increasing impact that civil society organizations (CSOs) can have on a democratizing movement such as the women's movement, especially while acting as a conduit for the people who want to see change in society. However, the opposite can be observed in Turkey and among other neighboring countries with the rise of conservative values in both the political and social spheres – in Turkey's case conservative Islamic values that have tended to relegate women as secondary citizens. These values contradict many international institutions' commitments to gender equality. A recent Pew poll has revealed anti-western sentiment in Turkey with 73% of the Turkish public disliking the US and 66% disliking the EU ("Turks do not favor...", *Hürriyet Daily News*). This signals the continued shift in public opinion against the EU in recent years. Bearing this in mind, exploring this as an area of study has practical implications as to whether or not the EU should change its approach when devising projects or giving out funding in order to better fit the Turkish context. I hope that this thesis will be able to shed light on the level of cooperation expected from women's organizations of EU involvement in the women's movement in Turkey especially with regard to practicality – funding, institutionalization, capacity building including training of employees or providing extra manpower to deal with certain details of projects.

In the sections that follow, the first chapter will expound upon the theoretical framework undergirding this piece of work in the tradition of sociological institutionalism. With the basic ideas in sociological institutionalism, I hope to not only explain the shift in perception among women's organizations but also to be able to explain the external factors that have affected normative values which then in turn have had an impact on the identity and thus activists' perceptions of the EU within women's organizations. In order to be able to elucidate this, I will expand upon my methodology

of using rhetoric and discourse from interviews and debates to elucidate norms in public discourse to bring some answers to the forefront.

The women's movement in Turkey did not occur in a vacuum, therefore in gaining a more nuanced view outside the realm of common discourse, one must critically analyze the historical developments in a multifaceted way. In an increasingly globalized and complex world, a movement such as the women's movement needs to be understood in the context of the social and political forces that have and continue to shape it. In this specific situation, the increased interaction between the women's organizations and the channels made available to these organizations via EU institutions. The second chapter of this thesis traces the history of the women's movement in Turkey by dividing Turkey's women's movements into three distinct phases: the Ottoman period, the early Republican period, and the post 1980s to present day. Turkey has had quite a long history on struggling against inadequacies in women's rights. Women who were among the upper echelons of society during the Ottoman Empire began the fight for women's rights by establishing space for women to be able to debate the issues of the day but also by publishing women's magazines. Turkey began its experiment with democracy in the early 20th century with potential and hope for change. The work of these early movers and shakers acted as impetus legal changes including a change to polygamy laws and also allowing women the right to vote. While this furthered the cause of women's rights in Turkey, it also was within the view that women were exalted only to the point that their freedom would act as a marker of how modernized/westernized Turkey was becoming. Although these early reforms allowed women to gain an elevated status in society, the Republican People's Party (CHP), the first political party in modern Turkey established by founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, did not allow for civil society to bloom during their single-party era. Therefore, much public debate about the furthering of women's rights in Turkey outside the realm of Marxism remained fossilized until the 1980s military intervention, which saw the rise of various factions of women who mobilized protests in reaction to decisions made by judges on court cases.

After gaining a clear picture of the historiography of the women's movement in Turkey, the second chapter of this thesis positions women's rights-oriented organizations, in particular feminist organizations, within the women's movement. The strength of women's organizations in Turkey was seen and felt of course in the earlier days in the late 80s with mass public mobilization to fight violence against women as

well as during the reform frenzy of the early 2000s in which both the Civil Code and the Penal Code were revised. The culmination of women's organizations could be seen this time in their ability to mobilize, reframe the narrative of the debate as well as shift public opinion. This reform frenzy can be seen as a vital part of Turkey wanting to start accession negotiation talks with the EU – and in order to do that, it needed to pass a series of reforms.

The third chapter turns to the EU in explaining its history of conventions, declarations, and treaties in adopting gender equality as one of its fundamental tenets in its rhetoric regarding human rights. Throughout this history, we can understand that gender equality was mainly seen through the lens and justified as a developmental goal stressing the importance of eliminating discrimination through implementing quotas and banning practices in the workplace that tend to lead to discrimination. While the ideas inherent and implied by human rights are something the EU wants to maintain internally, it has also placed a huge effort in exporting its ideas to candidate member states through its political and legal conditionality, pre-accession funding that is available to CSOs. Outside the membership accession, possibilities exist for women's organizations in civil society in Turkey to take advantage of EU institutions for their own development and in carrying out their activities. Thus by looking at both the limitations of feminist organizations in Turkey during the early 90s and the vacuum that was filled by its mechanisms, we can begin to more clearly understand the way in which the EU has influenced and contributed to the women's movement.

In order to be able to better change the external environment in which feminist organizations operate in to achieve their goals of elevating the status of women in society, the fourth chapters looks at two women's issues and their public discourse. Domestic violence against women is the first topic as it is an issue, which has been contentiously debated in Turkey and is one of the issues that galvanized the women's movement in the 1980s. Within the realm of domestic violence, I will examine the clashing of mentalities between the Turkish government and a feminist organization by looking at a government-sponsored program entitled ŞÖNİM. This chapter also explores abortion, which has more recently made it onto the political agenda, therefore onto the agenda of feminist organizations. This example will further prove that while abortion is controversial, the government has restricted access to abortions with little to no public consultation.

The fifth chapter examines the way in which activists in feminist organizations currently perceive the EU. The perceptions of feminist organizations in the type of role that the EU should play in the women's movement in Turkey will be analyzed after conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews by looking at how the EU is perceived as a reference point, the perceived contributions of the EU to both the women's movements and further to feminist organizations, and their perception of the future of the EU.

Finally, the conclusion provides answers to the original hypotheses proposed at the beginning of this thesis considering both the analyses from interviews conducted as well as the external environment that feminist organizations operate in. Furthermore, the conclusion will contain remarks about prospects for future study.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis aims to both understand and explain the perception of feminist organizations toward the EU. I intend to accomplish this by utilizing concepts and terms from sociological institutionalism to explain the external political and social factors that have had an impact on the perceptions of activists in feminist organizations. This will serve as a useful tool in order to understand common perceptions among feminist organizations who are engaged with EU projects.

The social sciences have revealed that traditional dichotomies such as “East” and “West” or “modern” and “traditional” have no longer proven useful in an increasingly transnational world. Traditional state actors are no longer the only actors engaged in dialogue and diplomacy in solving global or domestic issues. Multilevel governance such as that of the EU exemplifies the vital role played by civil society plays in decision- and policy-making as well as creating a sense of belonging, necessitating the need to take social aspects into account. Newer theoretical models and concepts, such as those found in sociological institutionalism (March and Olsen, Finnemore and Sikkink), need to be employed to examine convoluted and layered developments. I hope to employ this framework in order to reveal the nuances in the way that the EU operates when it comes to its accession process for to potential member states and the process of norm diffusion. I will use certain concepts from the perspective of sociological institutionalism to be able to explain how the external environment have shaped organizations’ interests and activities by analyzing the perspectives of individual actors

that speak on behalf of the organizations. The mechanisms that the EU uses to spread its norms such as conditionality do not automatically ensure that these laws will be interpreted and implemented in the exact way stipulated by the EU. This interpretation of norms and values by state actors shape the environment and shape the way in which feminist organizations perceive the EU.

In our case, we look to the interaction between CSOs that have taken root in a perceived larger democratization process in Turkey and specifically within the Turkish women's movement. The women's movement has always been at the whim of domestic political contestations that have not always offered an inviting environment for the promotion of feminist ideas due to the strong nation state and its brand of "state feminism" as well as conservatism – both of which have their own forms of patriarchy. The initial vacuum offered by the 1982 military coup in Turkey allowed for the burgeoning of feminist organizations leading them to rely on international institutions – namely the EU. This is illustrative of the idea that many feminist organizations have fallen into a conceptual trap in which they can't conceive of the future of the women's movement without aid from the EU.

In arguing this throughout my thesis, In the following chapter, I plan to elucidate the role of norms in sociological institutionalism and the role that perceptions play among actors in determining appropriate behavior, thus leading actors and organizations to make decisions according to rules. These perceptions are then shaped by external contexts that these actors find themselves in. By being able to delve into the extent that these norms have or have not been internalized by external actors, we can begin to understand more analytically the way in which perceptions are formed.

1.1 Institutionalism

Within the past 50 years, the concept of institutionalism has gradually evolved to more holistically explain the forces that shape complex political processes and behaviors by gradually incorporating arguments that emphasize different aspects of institutionalism. In the realm of new institutionalism, Hall and Taylor identified three types of institutionalism: historical, sociological, and rational choice. Not only do their assumptions differ on what causes actors to behave in the way that they do but they also differ in the levels that are analyzed. Sociological institutionalists tend to look at how people are influenced at the supra-societal and supra-state level or at the level or

organizations, making it the most fitting theoretical framework for the purposes of this thesis.

If we are to take March and Olsen's definition of institutions that say an institution is a

relatively stable collection of rules and practices embedded in structures of resources that make action possible – organizational, financial and staff capabilities, and the structures of meaning that explain and justify behavior – roles, identities, and belongings, common purposes, and causal and normative beliefs (2009: 5)

In other words, institutions have their own resources, meaning they are in the position to oversee the way in which these resources such as know-how, organizational capacity, and funding are allocated. Thus, inherently institutions who already have the power to set the agenda but also in allocating resources that they have significant sway over how the actors perceive the environment around them and further how these actors act. It is within this institutional context that social norms such as gender equality are shaped and shared. The increased social interactions between actors enable the diffusion of these norms, promoting a sense of common identity.

1.1.2 Sociological Institutionalism

While three different types of institutionalism have been identified, this thesis focuses solely on sociological institutionalism in an attempt to understand the shift in perception of feminist organizations regarding the EU's role. Sociological institutionalism began to take shape as a deficit existed in the literature regarding how "social realities influence behavior" in political life (Finnemore 1996: 325). In this way when sociological institutionalists refer to institutions, they are "emphasizing the social and cognitive features of institutions rather than structural and constraining features" (Finnemore 1996: 326). During the 70s, the common line of thought followed that culture had little to no impact on bureaucracies and organizations. This was contested by the sociological institutionalism, and their contribution to this institutionalist theory is tied to the role of institutions in promoting norms and their diffusion across societies.

While an influential paper written by John W. Meyer at Stanford University during the same decade challenged this assumption, leading the way that the external environment was in fact important in shaping bureaucracies (Meyer and Rowan 1977). This provided the foundation for the role of social norms and values to account for

behavior and action taken in the political sphere. Unsurprisingly, sociological institutionalism has its roots in organizational theory in providing an alternative “for the rational basis of ‘modern’ institutional forms and procedures” (Mackey 2009: 255). Indeed as Mackey so clearly stated, “institutional forms must therefore be analyzed not in terms of their rationality and efficiency but in terms of the culturally specific ways that they take on particular forms” (2009: 255). In other words, the when an actor makes a decision, it might not have been made in order to increase efficiency or to increase output as a rational choice model would suggest. Furthermore, the focus shifts to causes that are more cultural or ideational (Amenta 2010: 2) which leads us to the idea of norms. Norms are important as they are “a standard of appropriate behavior for actors within a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 891).

While employing sociological institutionalism, it is vital to understand the connection between the political and the social, which in our case will be vital in explaining the attitudes and perceptions among activists in feminist organizations. In this way, the interaction between actors and institutions needs to be examined. Sociological institutionalism assumes that values and norms are embedded in institutional practices that we would otherwise take for granted. It is important to remember that these norms are also embedded in wider cultural contexts which could work both on the domestic and international level but for the purposes of this thesis we will look at how namely norm receptiveness at the domestic level helps to shape this context for feminist organizations.

1.2 Logic of Appropriateness

Sociological institutionalism signals a cognitive shift from actors behaving and making decisions using a calculus-based approach to following the rules. March and Olsen first coined the term “logic of appropriateness,” denoting that actions are dictated by rules and these rules are defined by what is appropriate or exemplary behavior (2009: 2). This is an important in order “to fulfill an identity is to follow appropriate rules, however actors rely on their own accounts and interpretations of political history and their role within in” (Balasco 2010: 18). Thus, perception also plays a large part in construction of identity and thus how they view others resulting in certain actions and behaviors. This further stipulates that actors’ behaviors are motivated by what is culturally appropriate not by what would necessarily bring the most efficiency as a

result of their decision. According to March and Olsen, “actors seek to fulfill obligations encapsulated in a role, an identity, a membership in a political community or group, and its ethos, practices and expectations” (2009: 3). In more practical terms, this means that certain practices from the wider context are adopted in order to enhance its legitimacy. This wider context is often referred to as “context-bound rationality,” which means looking at the social contexts “within which individual and group interest and norms are formed” (Mackey 2009: 256).

1.3 Norms and International Norms

Finnermore and Sikkink further state that in line with the idea of the “logic of appropriateness,” in order to keep a certain status at the international level or even at the domestic level, states will be motivated to follow norms. When adopting a norm due to international pressure and when international or transnational pressure outweighs domestic pressure, it is called “international socialization.” This can be done either by “diplomatic praise or censure and supported by material incentives or sanctions...this socialization can go beyond states and involved networks of organizations that pressure states to adopt the norms, as well as monitor compliance” (Balasco 2010: 19).

Norms have a few characteristics in which they can function as being regulative, constitutive or evaluative. Regulative norms can lead to an ordering of concepts and then constraining behaviors, while constitutive means creating new actors, interests, and categories of action. Evaluative norms, as the name suggests, allows for action to be evaluated either by a community or by a society. If a norm is evaluated negatively, this is commonly called “norm breaking behavior.” Of course, the opposite can happen where one receives praise if the a norm is adhere to; if a norm has been highly internalized, adhering to a norm might not elicit any type of behavior at all (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 892). Since the EU has mechanisms such as the European Commission who publishes annual Progress Reports for Turkey as a candidate country, norms within the scope of this thesis will be looked at as evaluative norms.

1.4 Norm Entrepreneurs and Norm Leaders

Following from these ideas, there are also “norm entrepreneurs” who are “actors who seek to propagate specific ideas about what they see as appropriate or desired

behavior for the community.” The reason why they are given this title is because they are in a way the agenda setter – they are able to frame the ideas that they want to propagate and they have the power to be able to define and interpret these ideas. By doing this, they are setting the standards and limits as to how a problem, concept or idea is viewed. According to Barasco, “norm entrepreneurs often construct these new cognitive frames in environments of already existing norms, and thus are forced to compete with and contest these new norms” (2010: 14). In order to be able to aid these norm entrepreneurs, there are “norm leaders” that “can be considered to be those organizations or individuals responsible for enacting and/or monitoring compliance to a norm” (Barasco 2010: 6). Within the realm of this framework, the EU can be considered the norm entrepreneur, while feminist organizations can be considered the norm leaders in carrying out these norms and values.

1.5 Norm Diffusion and the EU

The EU has been described as a normative power (Manners 2006, Tocci 2008). The EU can diffuse its norms to either already-existing Member States by pushing specific norms or in candidate countries by promulgating shared European norms such as “freedom of movement, uncorrupt governments, a single market, and strong human rights” (Slobodchikoff 2010: 1-2). By adopting these norms, the assumption is that states would become more democratic and in turn would inevitably achieve the peace and stability that the EU strives for. Several scholars argue that the EU uses integration as way to diffuse norms among candidate countries during the accession process as articulated by the Copenhagen Criteria, which encompasses political and economic stability as well as acquiescence to the EU *acquis* (Tocci 2008, Slobodchikoff 2010). As Slobodchikoff states, “...by pursuing integration, the European Union can influence other states by the power of its ideas and norms and ensure democratic member states that share European normative values” (2010:6). Therefore, in appealing to potential member states, the EU is able to offer membership while the candidate musts adopt EU norms and values.

This process of adapting norms can also be referred to as Europeanization in which internal structures are altered in order to be compatible with EU standards. Thus, one common topic is how much a country adapts to norms depending on how large the gap is between domestic standards and EU standards. Within the Europeanization

literature, some scholars point to the idea that “the larger the gap between the two standards, the larger the EU pressure on the country” (Marshall 2013: 117). If looking at Turkey in adopting gender equality directives, we can say that the gap between the country standards and EU standards was high, therefore the EU placed a great deal of pressure on the Turkish government. Political conditionality acted as further leverage as

...the EU expanded its policies on gender equality over the years, it required candidates to fulfill those conditions before accession to the EU. The result has been the requirement from the EU that Turkey transpose all the existing EU directives on gender equality, sign all the necessary international agreements (eg. CEDAW, the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention, and the European Social Charter (Marshall 2012: 118)

With the expectations to sign these aforementioned international agreements the EU places pressure on Turkey via the annual European Commission Progress Reports. While the Progress Reports simultaneously acted as way monitor and pressure candidate countries into conforming to norms, it also frame subjects such as gender equality that would have long-lasting implications on the women’s movement in Turkey. The Reports in the late 90s and early 2000s not only highlighted the need for Turkey to change its Civil Code to meet the standards of CEDAW but also framed women’s issues as human rights issues. Furthermore, the membership process that followed the decision made at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, which pushed Turkey into the status of official candidate member of the EU also provided organizations that worked on women’s issues with the platform to continue pushing for rights through advocacy and lobbying efforts in appealing to the government and to parliament on further changes. This not only empowered women and feminist organizations but also allowed for the EU to diffuse its norms (Marshall 2012: 200).

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

Are we not human, too? Is it only because of our sex that we have lagged behind?

Rabia Hanım (1868)

Humankind is made up of two sexes, women and men. Is it possible for humankind to grow by the improvement of only one part while the other part is ignored? Is it possible that if half of a mass is tied to earth with chains that the other half can soar into skies?

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Even though Turkey was one of the first countries in 1934 among its European counterparts to extend the right to vote to women, Turkey has consistently fared poorly on international indexes designed to monitor gender equality in all aspects of society. That is not to say that the women's movement has failed to make great strides in influencing policy – in fact the Turkish women's movement has become increasingly influential in Turkey's political scene and within its larger process of democratization (Knaus 2007: 48). This struggle has been fought largely by actors within the women's movement in regard to legal changes that have pushed for further equality. Of course, legal changes are not a panacea in achieving gender equality within a society but have formed the foundation with women's organizations pressuring the government, running awareness raising campaigns, and being involved in service provision – the women's movement is faced with many challenges that need to be fought on several fronts in order to realize change in society.

In order to really be able to fully grasp the goals, aims, intentions, and discourse of contemporary feminist organizations in Turkey, it is vital to have a firm grip on the historical influences and major milestones that have shaped mentalities and motivations undergirding the women's movement today. This historical backdrop will serve as a good foundation in comprehending the forces that have shaped and continue to shape the perceptions of feminist organizations in Turkey. Due to the recent prominence of the women's movement in Turkey regarding politics, it is worth examining the roots of this movement in order to gain a fuller understanding of how its attitudes have evolved toward the EU in recent years.

Throughout much of Turkey's history, the women's movement has largely been viewed as a political issue. This is a common theme throughout the literature on the women's movement in which state-endorsed feminism was rarely questioned as it had elevated the status of women to such an extent in order to be able to reach the goal of modernization. Much emphasis has been placed in passing laws through Parliament that grant greater equality and freedoms to women – in other words, in the name of democratization. In the same vein, it is worthwhile to trace the history of legal reforms while still remaining aware of the downfalls of only viewing the promulgation of women's rights in a legal framework. However, once it became clear that legal reforms did not suffice in making widespread social changes, the narrative of the women's movement shifted focus to changing the mentality in order to enact long-lasting progress regarding gender equality. Many feminist organizations in Turkey have reflected the change of narrative by focusing not only on the increased participation of women in both the political and economic spheres but also on social issues including honor crimes, domestic violence, child brides, educational opportunities, among others.

2.1 The Three Phases of the Women's Movement in Turkey

While there are generally two different ways to confront the history of the women's movement in Turkey – the first tracing the women's movement alongside the major political developments in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey. The second approach analyzes the historical development of the women's movement based on women's demands and dictates that the women's movement in Turkey is in its second stage. I choose to analyze the history of the women's movement by the three different phases it has been through stemming from the *Tanzimat* Reforms in the Ottoman Empire, the Republican Empire,

and the feminist movement since the 1980 military coup. This is because the women's movement in Turkey has from the beginning been framed as a political issue and has thus been at the whim of the major political movements in Turkey (Coşar 2008: 327).

2.1.2 The Ottoman Empire

Commonly overlooked in common discourse is that the extent of the women's movement in Turkey can be traced back to the Ottoman Empire. Even though the women's movement started as early as the Ottoman Empire does not necessarily indicate that the movement was either widespread or lead to an earlier societal transformation in an increasingly progressive fashion. As the Ottoman Empire had slowly and painfully realized the superiority of Europe first through military defeats then politically, economically, and socially, there were early attempts at changing certain aspects of society in order to reach the standard of Europe. As Sirman points out that "it was reformist men whose main concern was to find ways to revive a floundering empire, who voiced concern about the position of women in society (1989: 3) or as Gündüz days "the oppression of women was seen as an obstacle for the modernization of the Empire" (2004: 115).

The beginning of solving this issue was first done legally. In fact, there was no legal code to speak of in the Ottoman Empire until Sultan Abdülmecit promulgated the Tanzimat Reforms in 1839 meaning that previously "the law was applied differently to different members of society depending on their social status, gender, profession, religion or religious sect" (Ilkcaracan 1997:3). No legal measures governing marriage had existed previously since Islamic law dictated the rules of marriage. It was during this time that we start to see a growing divide between the two schools of thought regarding women's status in society. It was also during this time that the question of women came into debate with a divide between the reformists and the conservatives.

...the modernists particularly criticized arranged marriages, polygamy and gender segregation and advocated the free access of women to education and 'free love.' The conservatives, on the other hand, saw these reforms as being influenced by western thought and a threat to the prevailing cultural identity; and they stressed the need to preserve the current status of women (Ilkcaracan 1997:3).

Much of the struggle for women's freedoms during the women's movements during both the Ottoman Empire and in modern Turkey can be viewed as a dichotomy with one side challenging the status quo and the other striving to protect the status quo. Or at least during the women's movement, the sides has been defined as to how they position themselves around the status quo – in other words, the actors in the women's movement either challenge or try to preserve that status quo of women in society.

Because Turkey experienced so much political and economic turmoil from fighting continuous wars on all fronts from the beginning of the 20th century, the question of women's place in society started to become an even more fundamental question as stated by Tekeli,

It was during the war years that women obtained some of the right they had fought for: they were admitted to universities in 1914; they were allowed to work in factories and the public service in 1915; and in 1917, the “family act” recognized the right to limit polygamy to Muslim women... (2010: 120).

Although the polygamy ban was to be implemented at a later date, it speaks volumes as to the issues that were raised and signaled progress in Turkish society toward the emancipation of women.

The early 20th century in Turkey not only saw the proliferation of war but also that of women's magazines and associations which addressed a variety of women's issues. It must be noted that the feminist movement that has taken shape in Turkey is far from monolithic. However, when women's movement started in the Ottoman Empire, “Ottoman feminists were generally educated women from the major cities of the Empire” (Knaus: 2007: 50). After the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) disposed of Abdulhamit in 1908 in favor of bringing back the Constitution, nearly a dozen women's associations popped up with functions running the gamut from service provision to fighting for women's rights (Kandiyoti 1991: 29). Furthermore, there were nearly 40 women's magazines published alongside several women's associations that varied in their aim, size, and scope. Even though the women's groups and publications revealed the diverse character of the emerging women's movement, there were issues that were common across the board including gaining the right for women to get a divorce, abolishing of polygamy and arranged marriages, creating jobs for women, the right for women to participate in the workforce, and the right to have an education (Ilkkaracan 1997:4). While these groups were championing universal rights, they were quite exclusionary. For example, the Society for the Elevation of Women (Teali-iNisvan

Cemiyeti) was founded regarding women's suffrage – but everyone who joined that club had to know English, indicating the eliteness of this club. In addition to politically-oriented associations, there was also the Society for the Defense of Women's Rights (Müdafaa-iHukuk-iNisvan Cemiyeti), who was mainly concerned with the right of women to have access to paid professions.

2.1.3 Beginnings of the Republic

After the end of WWI and its agreement that culminated in the Sevres Treaty, which carved Turkey among the Allied Powers, Atatürk was among one of the generals to fight the War of Independence to regain Turkey. In this context, Atatürk founded Turkey as a republic in 1923. He had the two main objectives of building Turkey as a nation-state and in further modernizing this state. In the name of these two objectives, Atatürk abolished both the Sultanate and the Caliphate in an attempt to end sharia law, which also worked in accomplishing a complete break with Turkey's Ottoman past. Furthermore, this allowed for Atatürk to place religion under state control by establishing the Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), Atatürk made sweeping legal and social reforms touched nearly every aspect of life ranging from the religious symbol of the caliphate, the educational system, transportation, the Romanizing of the alphabet, and the change in dress code, among others. The change in dress code essentially meant wearing what was deemed to be Western wear, included western-style headgear. This, of course, had implications on the wearing of both the *fez* (traditional religious headgear for men) and the veil, which is a contentious issue still in debate too (Zürcher 1993: 172-175).

In addition to all these aforementioned reforms, the Civil Code was changed as well in 1926; in 1926, a new civil code that strongly resembled the Swiss Civil Code. As Kandiyoti differentiates these sweeping reforms from the *Tanzimat* Reforms,

Unlike previous attempts at legislative reform which remained mindful of the provisions of the Shariah, this Code severed all links with it. Polygyny was outlawed and marriage partners were given equal rights to divorce and child custody. Although veiling was not legally banned, a vigorous propaganda campaign led by Ataturk himself exhorted women to adopt modern styles of dress, and dissenters were dealt with severely (1991: 23).

The Swiss civil code also gave women the right to inherit the same as men as well as the right to vote. This had the effect of “women became more visible in the urban space with their husbands” (Bayraktar 2009: 28). Women then were able to gain the right to vote at both the local level (1930) and the national level (1934). However, “the right to vote did not lead to further politization of women” (Gündüz 2004: 116). In other words, due to a top-down approach, women did not automatically begin participating in politics as the numbers of women in Parliament today prove that there was lag time between the law getting passed and women actually partaking in the political process.

Even though these reforms seem revolutionary for the time considering the state of Europe during that time in the early 20th century, these rights such as outlawing polygamy, women’s suffrage, or granting women the right to get a divorce, were actually quite limited. They were only a means to an end – with secularism and the integrity of the state during the time of state building as the end (Landig 2011: 207). Furthermore, many of the reforms were not realized. There were only 3.8% of paid women workers in 1955 and even as late as 1975, 51.8% of women were illiterate. The problem lay in the fact that the common discourse at that time was that Atatürk’s reforms were bestowed upon women especially before women in Europe, meaning that efforts to help women in groups or associations were mainly geared toward providing services “instead of questioning the role that the Republic had determined for them” (Ilkcaracan 1997: 6).

Prominent feminist activist and scholar Şirin Tekeli claims that because Atatürk was open enough to pass such reforms in the name of modernization, hence secularization, women were among the staunchest of supporters for the fight for secularism (2010: 119). Even though these sweeping changes advanced the cause of women’s rights during the early Republic, there were still signs that women could not go too far in this newly established mentality of state feminism. For example, women’s freedom to association or participate in organizational life was limited. Early attempts at getting more women in political decision-making bodies can be seen as early as 1925. A women’s political party was established under the leadership of Nezihe Muhittin called Kadınlar Halk Fırkası (TKB, Women’s People Party). However, this all women’s political party was never officially recognized by the Turkish state (Müftüler-Baç 2012). Women were able to become a part of the political system (albeit in a limited sense) in

1935 when women were elected to Parliament, which was another distinguishing characteristic for Turkey from its European counterparts.

It was an association that was found after a contradiction between women's movement which wished to establish a women's party and the state who did not allow such an experience, which instead accepted the formation of a women's association (Bayraktar 2009: 29)

The first Law on Associations in 1928, which effectively blocked the forming of associations that were based on gender (the word "gender" was later removed from the law in 1946). TKB reopened its associational doors in 1949 with the following motto:

to support, proliferate, and raise Turkish mothers who are cultured to the nation, comprehensive of their rights, who know how and when to use their rights, who serve their husbands and children with conscious knowledge, who respond to every trouble with loyalty and no self-demands.

This motto shows the almost institutionalization of this type of thought in the way in which the young Republic in the creation a new type of citizen with the added intent of bringing women into the public sphere as "women were perceived as the carriers and symbols of secularism and modernity; hence 'women's rights,' 'women's liberation,' and 'women's visibility' became essential to the Kemalist discourse" (Özcetin 2009: 108). While these women were seen as the main glue that kept the family together, which was seen as an essential unit of society, they were also expected to be more visible in public but as a chaste figure. Many women were trained in several professions such as lawyers and doctors during this time period, which differed from those who participated in the women's movement in Europe, making the women's movement in Turkey based on merit. This new network of women professionals provided the main foundation for the next wave of feminism was set by the new network of women professionals at this time.

2.1.3 1980's to Present Day

The second wave feminism that became popular in the West during the 60s and 70s sparked the larger global women's movement in the 70s, which also saw the beginning of a series of international UN conventions that addressed women issues. However, the broader implications of such a women's movement that stressed equality

in development and more specifically the workplace did not manifest itself in Turkey until nearly a decade later.

The 1980s in Turkey is often viewed in the literature on the women's movement as the beginning of the last (and most current) phase of the women's movement and coincides with the military coup. The 1980 military coup came on the heels of a decade of extreme political and social instability in which the military "suppressed all kinds of social opposition by force, applied a systematic depolitization of the masses and formed the basis of neo-liberalist policies proposed by the IMF and capitalist forces. In this atmosphere of repression and fear, the first new social movement which demonstrated the courage to be in opposition and articulate its demands was the women's movement" (Ilkcaracan 1997: 7-8).

The 1980 military coup in Turkey initiated a political vacuum by banning almost all former political activities of the political parties, associations and unions. During the early 1980s, women who were part of the social movement prior to the ban of the military established feminist women's groups. The feminist women's groups were created when women started to view critically their own roles and participation in the socialist movement. From the early 1980s, feminists began to question Kemalist ideology in terms of its effects on women. While the socialist movement and the feminist women's organizations had initiated their own critique of Kemalist reforms from the early 1980s, it was the rise of radical Islam that decisively determined the positions of women's organizations across the political spectrum (Esim 1999: 181).

As Şirin Tekeli (2010: 120) points out, because Kemalism and leftist ideology did not really permit the women's movement in blossoming, the fact that the military did not allow for political movement after the intervention paved the way for a "democratic and pluralistic women's movement" (Gündüz 2004: 117). It was only in this context that the women's movement for the first time since the founding of the Republic was able to question the state ideology and its conception of women in society, thereby questioning the status quo.

Thus, it would naturally follow logically that the first series of mobilizing women in the form of meetings and demonstrations on a large scale in modern Turkey was done as a reaction to state policies. The late 1980s witnessed the power of the mobilization of this new women's movement. A mass protest of around 3,000 women was held on May 17, 1987 in response to a court decision denying a woman a divorce on the grounds that her husband was abusing her physically. This protest also marked the first national protest since 1980 (Şirman 1989: 17). Furthermore, a year later a group

of women sent a petition with 7,000 signatures to Parliament protesting Turkey's reservations and demanding the implementation of the UN Convention for the Elimination of any Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Gündüz 2004: 119). In 1989, the movement mobilized 800 women to participate in the First Women's Congress to air complaints and grievances and went on to further publish the "Manifesto for the Rescue of Women."

One of the most pressing issues in the early part of the third women's movement in Turkey was the domestic violence endured by women in society. Not only was domestic violence not viewed as a crime but the mentality of the state was that they should not interfere in family affairs. Large-scale protests and a campaign launched by Mor Çatı were successful in awareness raising and bringing the topic onto the agenda as it had not previously been discussed. These aforementioned types of activities that had a wide outreach that raised awareness as to the plight of the women in Turkish society. With the visibility of the women's movement also came the visibility of the different divides in Turkish society. Because the women's movement transcends party, class, and ethnic lines, different ideologies were accepted into the movement and participation was encouraged making the women's movement more pluralistic.

One of the most important ways that women's movement has tried to not only bring gender equality to the rest of Turkey but also to question the patriarchal structure of society has been through changing the existing legal frameworks of the Civil and Penal Code. Thanks to the efforts of this women's movement in conjunction with the first couple years of Turkey being a candidate country to the EU, there were several laws that were passed in the name of expanding gender equality. These reforms to both Codes were seen as a necessary move in order to begin changing a mindset of the state in its role in both public and private spheres as well as changing the mindset of society in how women are to be viewed.

Several problems existed in the Civil Code that needed to be addressed with regard to gender equality. The Civil Code had in fact been amended several times in the 90s and again in the early 2000s by the coalition government. Article 159 was abolished in the early 90s as it stipulated that a woman had to get permission from her husband in order to work. In 1997, Article 153 was abolished as it allowed the woman to keep her last name should she choose after marriage. In the following year, the government implemented the Law for Protection of the Family, which allowed for protection against domestic violence (Gündüz 2004: 123).

The Civil Code was more extensively revised in 2002 with more than 1,000 additions to the Code. One of the most important deletions in an attempt to change the aforementioned mindset of both the state and the broader society was that of the article that stated the man was the head of the household. Furthermore, the legal age to be able to get married was raised for both men and women, bastard children were given the same rights, and single potential parents were allowed to adopt children (Gündüz 2004: 123). The new Code “granted women an equal share in goods and property accumulated during marriage” (Müftüler-Baç 2005:23) as well as equal rights over the home.

The women’s movement was also successful in reforming the Penal Code in order to be able to fit a liberal framework, which was finalized in 2005. A platform called the “Women’s Platform on the Penal Code” redrafted the sections that were relevant to women in the reformed Penal Code in redefining sexual crimes as “crimes against individuals” instead of “crimes against public morality” (Arat 2010), stronger sentences for sexual and “honor” crimes, criminalizing harassment and marital rape, increasing the penalties for domestic violence and sexual transgressions towards minors. While the women’s movement was obviously involved in the redrafting of this law, they were also active when the then Prime Minister tried to criminalize adultery, signaling one of the biggest political crises to date between Turkey and the EU. This would have implied that women would be the ones who were punished had adultery been criminalized because

it was more common for men to commit adultery rather than women and women would not be able to sue their husbands for adultery both because they would have less access to law and also because there would be social pressure against exposing their husbands” (Arat 2010).

Women’s groups responded by organizing a march in Ankara with the slogan “Our bodies and sexuality belong to ourselves” (qtd in Ilkcaracan 247). Feminists were able to get the European Women’s Lobby (EWL) involved to apply pressure on the government by the EU and raised awareness through the media, which sparked a debate in the government. Even the ministers were at odds with each other – the Justice Minister did not think that adultery needed to be criminalized while the Women’s Minister stated, “We cannot give up our own values just because we want to join the EU. Adultery is not considered a crime in many countries of the world. But just because this is the case...we cannot just accept it...we have to respect the values of Turkish society” (qtd in Ilkcaracan 248). Erdoğan backed down from his proposal to criminalize

adultery after meeting with the then-EU Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen (Ilkkaracan 247) who had initially made the following statement regarding the proposed ban on adultery: “I cannot understand how a measure like this could be considered at such a time – it can only be a joke” (qtd. In “Turkey signals U-turn...” *BBC News*). This further serves as an example as to how lobbying from local organizations to international NGOs, in this case EWL, worked to sway policy.

Following the reforms to the Penal Code, the AKP also took steps towards addressing the problem of violence against women. Honor crimes rate among one of the biggest challenges that face Turkey especially in the international arena where the issue is commonly discussed. In July 2006, the Prime Ministry issued a decree called the Prevention of Violence Against Women. This decree signaled a further shift in the mentality at the governmental level in terms of how the state views itself and its role in issues such as domestic violence. Whereas women protested in 1987 because the judiciary ruled based on the mentality that it was not the state’s place to intervene in the private sphere, this decree says that the state takes responsibility in preventing violence against women. Furthermore, the decree also contained a detailed plan of how to solve violence against women by listing state and civil society actors that it plans to work with – meaning that this opened channels for civil society actors and the state to be able to work together on one of the most prevalent issues in today’s Turkish society (Arat 2010).

2.1 Women’s Organizations in Turkey

After having traced some of the major developments of the women’s movement towards broader emancipation by looking at social, legal, and political milestones in Turkey, it is now worth turning specifically to feminist organizations and the role they play within the wider context of the women’s movement in Turkey. I will provide a definition of what is meant by a women’s organization and further feminist organizations in order to avoid possible conceptual confusion.

Considering that feminist organizations are still relatively in their nascent stage of development after having only really begun during the 1980s, discussing the general characteristics that have been shared by women’s organizations in the context of being in Turkey invariably reveals a number of deficiencies and limitations in order perform their desired functions within the movement. While the 90s marked the years of “street

feminism” in which many protested in the streets, the 2000s has been labeled by Bora and Günel as “project feminism” (qtd in Asuman 2012: 4) which has “transformed political aims to technical project goals and militancy into ‘activism’ and weakened the political content of the feminist movement” (Asuman 2012: 5).

Furthermore, this section will also peer into general problems in Turkish society addressed by women’s organizations in order to gain a more accurate picture of their activities and functions. By looking at the problems faced by women in society and taken on by women’s organization in civil society, I also hope to illustrate the civil society, nation state, and EU nexus in how some of these problems are addressed and resolved. Women’s organizations in Turkey have undoubtedly been affected by the EU in a number of ways – increasingly so since the 1999 Helsinki Summit in which Turkey was listed as a candidate country that was “destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to other candidate States” and to “benefit from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support its reforms, which will include enhanced political dialogue, with emphasis on progressing towards fulfilling the political criteria with particular reference to human rights (Helinski European Council 1999).

2.1.1 Definition of Women’s Organizations

A women’s organization could be defined as an organization that was founded by women and intends to benefit women through collective action. The main aim of women’s organizations is to change gender politics and this can be done in a number of different ways. According to Esim,

Women’s organizations are established as associations or foundations in Turkey. While associations emphasize human resources and membership, foundations focus on assets and the distribution of resources. Foundations are traditional social institutions of goodwill inherited from the early days of the Ottoman Empire. Foundations and associations are subject to the provisions of the Civil Code. Both have to secure state approval and financial reviews in order to operate (1999: 181).

While women’s organizations span a wide ideological spectrum such as state feminism, Kurdish feminism, Islamic conservative, liberal feminism, among others, this thesis will specifically focus on feminist organizations that operate on liberal feminist principles (Arat 2010).

2.1.2 Limitations Previously Faced by Women's Organizations

The way in which women's organizations tend to approach gender issues in Turkey is and has been influenced by political and social approaches. In other words, women's organizations in Turkey are at the whim of the political and social context it finds itself in. This has been true since the beginning of the women's movement and remains true even today with the added element of globalization, in the scope of this thesis we will talk specifically about the EU.

Women's organizations "have developed across the political spectrum in response to influences such as changes in the focus and priorities of donor agencies, the history of political movements in Turkey, and contemporary power struggles among political and social groups in Turkey" (Esim 1999:180). These women's organizations are still at the whim of all these forces and the different directions that has taken the women's organizations with the added element of international institutions such as the EU. This is partially due to the fact that feminist organizations that have been interviewed in this thesis are not able to sustain themselves financially meaning they have to actively fundraise and appeal to inter- and supranational institutions. When applying to funding at EU institutions, they must meet certain criteria that nevertheless shape their goals and missions of the organization.

In the mid 90s, there were 211 women's associations in Turkey with the aim of getting women into all (social, economic, and political) life however there were obviously deficiencies as public opinion was low for these associations (Keskin 1997). In a survey conducted in the mid 90's, 25% of people said that initiatives started by the women's movement were not successful – while 33% of women said that they were not interested in politics or issues regarding women's rights (Koray 1995: 60).

Funding continues to be a problem but was widespread throughout Turkey and among most of the women's organizations, but especially feminist organizations. When women's organizations started becoming more prevalent throughout Turkey in the 90s, Esim pointed out,

Women's organizations that have extensive national funding through private funds are those with religious agendas. Those with family planning agendas receive support from international donor agencies such as the International Planned Parenthood (IPPF). Those with religious agendas receive backing from other private religious funds and organizations such as the Islamic Municipalities and foundations (1999: 186).

Esim further states that there was sufficient funding for Kemalist camps of thinking in Turkey during the 90s as well. However, because feminism was not widespread in the way of thinking with a relatively polarized society between conservatives and Kemalist camps, burgeoning feminist organizations had it the worst regarding prospects for funding. While feminist organizations would not be able to get much support at the national level, this has forced them to look abroad to other alternatives in order to garner political and funding support.

As a candidate country, there are 50 million Euros that go to Turkey as part of preaccession funding and 2.5 of that 50 million goes toward organizations and projects that work toward greater democratization of human rights in general, in which women's issues would fall. The organizations interviewed in this thesis and many other women's organizations around Turkey lack funding -

nevertheless, women's organizations both in Turkey and in Greece shared a common 'dependency' on project-based funding from non-domestic sources. By providing funds and encouraging civil society development, the EU had a positive impact on women's groups' mobilization and networking (Elsen-Ziya)

CHAPTER 3

THE EU, TURKEY, AND GENDER EQUALITY

The human rights of women are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life at the national, regional, and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community.

-The 1993 Declaration of Vienna World Conference on Human Rights

While Gender Equality is a common objective and a common value of the entire EU, the Consensus recognizes Gender Equality as a goal in its own right.

COM 2007 2

After experiencing two destructive world wars in the first half of the 20th century, several European institutions were established to ensure that no war on a massive scale like the two world wars would be fought again on European soil (Wallenstein 2002). One of these institutions, first known as the European Community (EC) before becoming the European Union (EU) stressed the importance of human rights. Europe has been seen around the world as being the epitome of human rights including women's rights as the West has taken credit as pioneer of human rights around the world. However, this was not always the case. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section delineates the history of how the EU evolved into incorporating all the ingredients necessary in further promoting gender equality to one only its Member State but also the candidate countries. The second part of this chapter will look at the intersection between the EU and Turkish civil society, more specifically feminist organizations. The third section will then trace the history of the relationship between the EU and Turkey

Although this might be the case, the EU has at times lagged behind in putting women's rights onto the agenda. As one scholar points out,

...during the Central and Eastern European enlargement process, the EU was often criticized for its shortcomings to integrate gender mainstreaming as well as the private sphere gender equality issues into its enlargement policy (Özdemir 2014: 120).

The best way in which the EU can continue to hold status as heralding human rights is through political conditionality it holds over member states during the membership accession process. Before potential member states can be accepted into the fold of the EU, each state has to fulfill a set of political criteria (the Copenhagen Criteria) and must be able to harmonize their legal framework (*acquis communautaire*) with that of the EU's.

The main purpose of this chapter is to outline the major changes made within the EU with regards to its treaties, charters, institutions and other mechanisms that strive toward greater gender equality and how civil society in Turkey and the EU have constructed a symbiotic relationship through these aforementioned channels. This undoubtedly will show the relationship between feminist organizations that are so instrumental to the women's movement in Turkey. The relationships that have been formed through several platforms, initiatives and projects have been instrumental to the way in which feminist and women's organizations in Turkey perceive not only the women's issues and status in society but also in the way they perceive the EU in reference to its place in the women's movement in Turkey.

3.1 European Governance

The end of the 20th century marked a time in which the European Commission was able to further expand the idea of civil society in the decision- and policy-making process with a couple noteworthy publications. The first was the Discussion Document The 2001 White Paper on European governance addressed the concerns expressed by citizens of member states on the inaccessibility of the EU, skepticism of European institutions, the fact that citizens feel alienated from the work done by the EU, the widening gap between the EU (the growing distance between European institutions and its people) on several levels. Therefore, the White Paper proposes to make a commitment to governance in order to be able to make the EU inclusive of its citizens in

light of anti-EU sentiments or Euro-skeptics. The governance proposed in this paper is not only limited to governance in Europe but also stresses the idea of global governance in an effort to improve its dialogue with civil society actors in third countries (this being relevant to us as Turkey would be considered as third country in this case). The main principles undergirding the White Paper were openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence. This then further outlined the idea of creating a dialogue with special interest groups, and one of these interest groups was the of women's organizations and thus "the Commission has thus been active in promoting women's networks and networking on gender equality issues" (Elsen-Ziya 83).

3.2 Gender Equality as a fundamental right in the EU

Throughout the years, one can gradually see the way in which gender equality has evolved in charters and treaties adopted by European institutions. The EU has made gender equality a basic tenet of its existence and puts it at the center of all its activities. This can be seen in its treaties and charters as the general trend was first that they were once more focused on equality in the economic sphere in the name of development – this has changed over time to allow for gender equality in all spheres of life. Article 119 of the 1957 Treaty of Rome stated that the European Economic Community (EEC) would strive for equal pay for men and women. In fact, feminists in the early 1970s used the aforementioned Article 119 in the Rome Treaty to appeal to European policy makers (Mazey 1998). In amending Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam proposed the amendment specifying "In all activities referred to in this Article, the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality between men and women." The 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates in Articles 21 and Articles 23 that equality must be ensured and reaffirms a ban on discrimination (which applies to more than just sex), respectively. The 2009 Treaty of the European Union commits Member States to non-discrimination and equality between women and men in Articles 2 and 3. Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union commits to fighting inequalities and to promoting equality between men and women, and Article 10 of the same treaty specifies fighting discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

In March of 2010, the European Commission adopted the Women's Charter in order to strengthen gender equality in all policies and was then followed by the Gender Equality Strategy to ensure the concepts in the charter were manifested. The Strategy addresses gender gaps that continue to exist such as the gender gap in employment by looking at the balance between work and life, promoting entrepreneurship among women as well as seeking the best practice child care. The other gaps identified by the Strategy are the gender pay gap and the lack of women working in management boards. However, this does not really bind the member states to fully conform to the charter.

3.2.1 EU Legislation toward gender equality

Through legislation, the EU has committed to 15 European Directives between 1975 and 2010, which are legally binding documents for all EU Member States, meaning these must be incorporated into their national legislation. The European Directives mainly has made points on the promulgation of gender equality in the workplace with the following stipulations in common: ensures the equal treatment of men and women at work, prohibits discrimination in social security plans, sets the minimum requirements on parental leave, provides protection to pregnant workers and recent mothers, sets out rules on access to employment, working conditions, remuneration and legal rights for the self-employed.

3.2.2 Gender Mainstreaming in the EU

Gender mainstreaming was officially introduced in the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty with the term itself having been introduced into the lexicon at the Fourth UN World Conference, which was then made into a policy strategy at the Beijing Platform for Action. In fact, in highlighting the role that women's networks played in bringing gender mainstreaming about, Marshall further elucidates, "the pressure from transnational women's networks toward the conceptualization of women's rights as human rights...aided the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the Platform."

In order to address gender mainstreaming which aims to introduce the idea of gender equality at all stages of the policy process, the EU has several mechanisms to put this into action. More specifically, the EU has several channels to address the progress at several levels to ensure gender mainstreaming is achieved – ranging from the

institutional level to Parliament to working with civil society. The High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (high-level representatives that look at gender mainstreaming at the national level), the Advisory Committee (composed of representatives from the ministries of member states, representatives from gender equality bodies, European social partner organization, and the European Women's Lobby); and there are also formal committees such the European Pact for Gender Equality and the Beijing Platform for Action.

3.2.3 EU Institutions and Gender Equality

The Trio Presidency Declarations as part of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union are adopted in order to act as a catalyst to speed up progress made in Member States regarding gender equality. Furthermore, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality exists in the European Parliament which is responsible for the definition, promotion and protection of women's rights (including in third countries), policies promoting equal opportunity, the removal of all forms of discrimination, implementing and developing gender mainstreaming policies, ensuring that international agreements and conventions are upheld and implemented, and information policy on women.

There is also the research aspect in order to be able to keep decision-makers informed known as the European Institute for Gender Equality which is responsible for collecting and publishing information related to gender equality for policy purposes. The Council of Europe monitors the implementation of Article 14 and Protocol 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

At the civil society level, the European social partners are dedicated to ensuring gender equality especially in the work place by following the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality in the fields of addressing gender roles, promoting women in decision-making bodies, support a healthy work-life balance, and addressed the gender pay gap. The European Women's Lobby acts as a gateway to civil society and is an umbrella organization that comprises of more than 2,500 civil society organizations – mainly works with EU Member States but also with two countries that are not members that being Macedonia and Turkey.

3.2 The EU and Turkish Civil Society

Civil society actors are seen as being vital to the democratic process as they allow for people in all sectors of society to formulate and voice their opinion by providing the necessary channels with which to do so. Turkish civil society and the EU have a relationship of reciprocity, while throughout the accession process, the EU acknowledges that civil society is a vital part of having and maintaining a working democracy which works for the favor of the EU – in spreading their norms and values more quickly, largely through the accession process by using conditionality. The mechanism in which civil society organizations see that the EU works as a catalyst in achieving their aims, they have much impetus to working with each other as they view each other as vital in order to be able to achieve their goals (Seyrek 2004: 2). Civil society in general can be seen as the transmitters of “major economic, political and social dynamics of the EU to their countries and create the necessary environment for the transformation of the state and society in line with the values of European integration.” In fact, in COM 2004 in which civil society dialogue is stressed the importance to “diminish the lack of common knowledge of the EU in Turkey” (COM 2004: 656). These civil society organizations also have the power to lobby the EU in order to speed up CSOs in member states have the potential to be quite active in the accession negotiation process.

The way in which CSOs can influence the decision-making process in the EU in explained in the following procedures:

There is the institutionalized procedures through direct involvement in the consultation committees of the European Commission, Economic and Social Council etc., and also a “semi-institutionalized” or “less institutionalized” procedure, through lobbying these institutions. Although indirect involvement is possible and is sometimes realized through the partner organization, the first, by nature, cannot be effectively used by Turkish civil society. However, the second process is used by Turkish civil society as effectively as the civil society organizations of the Member States.

The EU is seen as being more open to lobbying activities and is a target of Turkish CSOs in order for them to be able to push their agenda. Even though this is the case and the EP provides an ideal environment for lobbying activities, “...nevertheless the EP is considered the most unenthusiastic EU institution when it comes to Turkey’s full-membership and thus changing the perspective of the EP has been politically very important” (Seyrek 2004: 4).

Table 1 – The Interaction between Turkey, the EU, and the UN

	1980-1985	1986-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
Important Events	Turkey became a signatory to CEDAW	Turkey officially applied for EU membership in 1987	EU accepted Copenhagen political criteria, 1993 Turkey accelerated its EU membership efforts Turkey became a signatory to the Beijing Declaration	EU officially accepted Turkey's membership application, 1999 Turkey enacted the Law on the Protection of the Family to protect women against domestic violence, 1998	Turkey amended the Civil Code, the Penal Code, Labor Law, and the Constitution to provide gender equality Turkey signed the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, 2002 Accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU begin	Turkey amended its social security system Turkey introduced its Gender Equality Programme Parliamentary Commission of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was established, 2009

Source: Marshall, Gül Aldıkaçtı. 2013. *Shaping Gender Policy in Turkey: Grassroots Women Activists, the European Union, and the Turkish State*. SUNY Albany

3.3 Turkey – EU Relations

Turkey had to become more democratic in order to be able to join the rank of the European Union, thus a series of political reforms was necessary in order to follow through a process of harmonizing both political and legal systems to match the Copenhagen criteria. While there have been many other countries that have gone through the process of Europeanization to become a member of the EU, it was more challenging in Turkey's case due to the legacies left behind by the Ottoman Empire such as the promulgation of the political culture, the religious culture, Turkey's geographical position, demographic situation

After a difficult process spanning over forty years, Turkey was finally granted candidacy in 1999 at the Helsinki Summit which inspired serious political and legal reforms necessary before reaching negotiation accession talks. This democratization process manifested itself through the implementation of criteria stipulated in the political conditionality of the Copenhagen criteria. The period between 1994-2004 was the most intense period for the adaptation of this criteria in “increased legal protection of social, cultural, and political rights of all Turkish citizens irrespective of religious and ethnic origin, the role of the military in Turkish politics, and freedom of expression in Turkey” (Müftüler-Baç 2005: 21). The end of 2001 marked the beginning of major reforms; even though there were attempts to enact reforms previously, they were not effective as the coalition party in charge was not able to do this effectively as well as an economic crisis that took priority. The October 2001 Constitutional package amended the 1982 Constitution in terms of abolishing the death penalty and allowing for more freedom of expression. In November of 2001, a new Civil Code was put into practice in order to address the lack of gender equality in marriage allowing for women to claim their right to accumulated property in the case of a divorce. The August 2002 reform package included reforms to laws regarding anti-terror and allowed for languages other than Turkish to be broadcasted. This last reform was significant as it allowed for Kurdish to be broadcasted, a language that was banned from being broadcasted or taught in schools in the 1982 Constitution (Müftüler-Baç 2005: 21).

The incumbent political party, AK Parti (Justice and Development Party) is a conservative Islamic-leaning political regime that has been in power since 2002 and ran on the platform of getting into the European Union. This momentum that was started in implementing reforms attempted to harmonize Turkey with the Copenhagen criteria began to slow down in 2005 and in 2006; the AKP seemed to show less enthusiasm in following these reforms. Furthermore, the reforms that were being carried out in the country indicated to EU political actors that these reforms did not adequately reflect some of the spirit found in the Copenhagen criteria. Even when reform fatigue was felt by EU officials, president of Turkey Abdullah Gül reiterated, “our reform efforts aimed at raising standards and practices in all areas of life to the highest contemporary standards will resolutely continue” (Schliefer 2006). For example, in relation to human rights, there were some questions raised about the lack of rights according to women in respect to virginity examinations and honor killings. There was also expressed concern about the lack of human rights among the minority of Kurds that populate the southern

and eastern regions in Turkey. As there had been several clashes between the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and the Turkish government in the 90's as well as an increase in terrorism among those factions, the question of whether or not the situation was being dealt with in a humane way remained to be answered until the passing of these reforms would have ensured a more democratic approach to this crisis. However, in June 2006, an anti-terror law was passed that allowed for security forces to deal with terrorism in an arbitrary manner, and this raised eyebrows among officials in the European Union about the real intentions of these reforms, as they were not aligned with the message of the stipulated criteria (Patton 2007: 340).

Thus, when AKP came to power in 2002, while espousing a pro-European stance, they were able to also appeal to a new bourgeoisie rising in Anatolia composed of a class of devout Muslim businessmen and women who also wanted to propagate modernizing reforms for economic purposes. Before the AKP came to power there was a lot of fragmentation among the coalition party that ruled the country combined with a severe economic crisis, which created a group of voters disenchanted with previous regimes, therefore the AKP received their vote in addition to the up and coming Anatolian devout bourgeoisie; however, the government did not receive that vote through pure loyalty to the party, instead as a technique of ensuring that previous parties in the coalitions would not be able to pass the 10% threshold required to enter Parliament. On top of this, the AKP was able to garner much support by steering clear of Islamic ideology and terminology and was successful in distancing itself through a rhetoric based on differentiation from previously religious Islamic parties. Furthermore, by adopting a stance based on a neoliberal free market economy, emphasis on human rights and democracy as well as the intention to become a part of the European Union, the AKP was able to attain a wide base of supporters. Hence, the dramatic shift in public weighed heavily on the steps that the AKP took in slowing down the promulgation of EU-inspired democratizing reforms.

One of the main ways in which this has been done is through the EU – while there are arguments suggesting alternative methods in Turkey joining the global community, the EU provides the most comprehensive set of mechanisms to ensure its goals are reached to act as a counter system of checks to democratic deficiencies in Turkey, the most amount of funding, and up until recently has provided much impetus in introducing reforms (Arat 2010: 870). In this way, it's important in order to

understand the way in which the EU is perceived as it has such sway in the process of democratization in present and future member countries.

CHAPTER 4

THE EMERGENCE OF AN ALTERNATE NARRATIVE: DEBATES SURROUNDING WOMEN'S ISSUES

All the problems faced by women in society in today's Turkey can be undergirded by certain mindsets perpetuated within culture. Within this culture is a patriarchal mindset that has reduced the view of women and relegated women to a certain and narrow role in society. In Turkey, it is almost impossible within the past couple years to discuss the major issues faced by women without talking about politics. As conservative Islam has made its way into politics, the incumbent political party AKP has been perpetuating a view of women in Turkish society that relegates women to a secondary status, running counterintuitive to the norms and values promulgated by the EU.

Because the historiography of the women's movement tells us that feminist organizations tend to galvanize around social and political issues – and further that social issues regarding women's place in society is usually placed on the agenda intentionally or unintentionally by politicians, it thus follows that we look at each issue and how it has been portrayed recently in the media and referred to by politicians by analyzing their discourse in understanding the type of environment that has been shaped in which women's organizations operate in. This environment then has direct bearings on the way in which activists in feminist organizations view not only themselves but also those outside themselves such as a supranational institution like the EU. Therefore, this chapter will further serve as an understanding of the debates surrounding the issues by looking at the legal reforms at both international and domestic levels and programs initiated to see the different approaches regarding an attempt at gender equality. I will hopefully further be able to shed light on the way in which EU mechanisms have worked with these issues as a diplomatic way to censure norm breakers through EU Progress Reports and statements released by the European Parliament; however this has proven to be moot in recent history as the Turkish government no longer seeks legitimation from the EU. This has happened on several occasions especially recently in the area of human rights. While this will not be an exhaustive list of all the issues plaguing women in today's society, this chapter looks at both domestic violence and abortion. While domestic violence has long been an issue in public debate with much

legal progress being made to this end and much more interaction between Turkey, civil society, and the EU has occurred. On the other hand, the issue of abortion is an issue that had not been publicly debated before after the 1982 Constitution. A closer look at both of these issues reveals the way in which the Turkish government has shifted the narrative in both cases that allow for more conservative values to come through, shaping the environment of civil society and thus feminist organizations.

4.1 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has been one of the largest and widely ignored problems until relatively recently facing women in Turkey. Some studies claim that 47% of the population experiencing domestic violence, with only 8% seeking help in response to this violence (Hacettepe University 2011). Other studies have claimed that this number is as low as 3%. Domestic violence can take on different forms as can be described as anything that includes rape, stabbings, kicking, fractured skulls, being starved, being locked up with animals, severe psychological violence.

One of the most important achievements made by the women's human rights movement in Turkey has been to grant more legal protection for women who might find themselves in situations of domestic abuse. Even though the government has been more vocal on this issue arguably more so than any other gender issue, the way in which laws and programs are implemented concerning the protection of women against domestic violence perfectly illustrates the tensions encountered between the government and feminist organizations (Meline 2011). This is further illustrative of a disconnect in norms and values between the EU and the Turkish government.

4.1.1. Measures combating domestic violence at the national level

The Law for the Protection of the Family (Law 4320) passed in 1998 only applied for the victim after domestic violence has already occurred, meaning no preventative measures existed. A problem that complicated matters even more was that there existed a mentality of not reporting violence, more so than today. There have been further reports in the inadequacies in the implementation of the law, such as the misunderstandings of law enforcement who for example would ask for papers documenting an infraction during a domestic abuse case even though the law does not

stipulate that documentation is required. This of course then acted as a further hindrance for women receiving protection from the state. Furthermore, there are several women in rural parts of the country who had never been registered therefore they cannot make an official complaint and were also not able to receive help from the state. Even though women were underreporting their experiences with domestic violence earlier, all these factors contributed to the even lower reporting of experienced domestic violence, signaling a disconnect between the way in which the law was interpreted and passed and the way it was implemented.

The Law on Protection of the Family and the Prevention of Violence against Women passed in March 2012 is considered a significant victory for the women's movement in which over 200 women's organizations participated in getting passed in Turkey. As Park describes,

...[Family and Social Policies] Minister Fatma Şahin wanted to have contributions from NGOs. It is, however, difficult to bypass the male-dominated bureaucracy. Although several changes were made despite our objections, I believe that we as women's NGOs have played an important role in the adoption of the law. I can say that this is a success [that stems from] the strong lobbying activities of female lawyers and women's associations (2011).

The new law was passed by the Turkish Parliament on International Women's Day and addressed many of the shortcomings of Law 4320, as the name suggests. The biggest accomplishment of the new law is that it is capable of protecting all women, regardless of their marital status and further prevented victims from suffering economically by giving abused women an allowance, paying for childcare, allowing the family court to intervene in the instance of shared property to make sure that the victim isn't victimized again

After the passing of this law along with the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, the government started a pilot project entitled ŞÖNİM in 14 locations to operate as a part of implementing this law. Each center is supposed to operate in providing support from law enforcement, legal aid, social work, finding a job, and anything from women's NGOs. However, these this pilot programmed has been heavily criticized by women's organizations who follow a feminist approach and who were active in promulgating the passing of the Law on Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence against Women. First of all, the targeted audience for this program is not only for women and children, often the ones who are victims of domestic

violence, but also the ones who are perpetuating the violence. Furthermore, these centers have the ability to choose if a woman is able to stay at one of the shelters and for the duration of how long she can stay. However, this runs counterintuitive to the way in which feminist organizations such as Mor Çatı operates their shelter, as they claim that this program does not allow autonomy and self-empowerment to women who have already been victimized. These centers are meant to also work all day every day, however it has been noted that due to limited staff capacity, this has not yet been realized. Furthermore, these centers are typically located outside the city, meaning they have very little outreach and are located far from attaining the expertise they need for fulfill expertise on their staff. Not only that but on a practical level, this makes it very difficult for women who are in need and who do not have many resources to reach these centers. According to Park, a fear expressed by other women's organizations can be summarized in the following,

Independent women's organizations have also expressed concern that these centers may eventually replace the feminist women consultation and solidarity centers, causing a loss of experience and expertise gained from years of work in the field of violence against women (2011)

As stated earlier, tension exists between Mor Çatı and the state when it comes to both funding and the way in which the state manages the shelters. Most of the aforementioned shelters are headed by the state but according to Mor Çatı do not mesh well with feminist principles in the way in which the shelters are being run. The state shelters seem to have stricter rules and do not allow women to have their cellphones with them. Furthermore, the women who seek refuge at these state-run shelters are not allowed to leave without permission. Both these options leave women without a sense of autonomy after they had already been abused and being dependent on their husbands, meaning they are not able to learn how to (re)gain a sense of independence in the event that they leave the shelters. While Mor Çatı allows the women to stay up to 12 months as well as allows boys up to the age of 18, the state has stricter regulations and only allows for a 4-5 month stay.

The above is extremely important as it lends insight as to how the state and feminist organizations are at odds with one another as 19 women's organizations refused to work with ŞÖNİM – not only ideologically but also practically in the implementation of the law. The way in which the law is being implemented under this program does not allow for women to have access to everything offered by the law and

lacks a women's-oriented approach. From the way in which this program has been carried out by the government suggests that the government values the family over the individual women by acting as an authority in controlling who can benefit from their services. This example is also elucidating in understanding how the government perceives its role as attempting to prevent divorce and to keep the family in tact by the sheer fact that it also allows for perpetrators to seek help.

4.1.2 At the international level

Turkey has signed and ratified the European Convention on Human Rights, which is an international treaty that established the European Court of Human Rights. Turkey is also a member of the Council of Europe, which is an organization that holds its member states accountable for issues related to human rights. Furthermore, Turkey has ratified both the CEDAW and the CEDAW Optional Protocol in 1985 and 2002 respectively and has signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women in 2011 and 2012. As Gündüz states,

...This convention (CEDAW) demands the realization of the same rights for men and women in all fields of life with changes and revisions of law in areas that discriminate against women and the taking of necessary measures for the modification of daily activities and practices that perpetuate discrimination. With the ratification of CEDAW, Turkey responded to the intensified international and national debates about women's rights, which were energized by the UN Decade of Women. The signing was mainly due to international pressure and concern about the international reputation of the country. With the ratification of CEDAW and the demonstrations of efforts to improve women's status, Turkey tried to present a positive picture, in order to justify the request for membership in the European community from 14 April 1987 (2004: 128).

In other words, in signing these conventions and protocols that are embedded with norms and values that Europe holds, Turkey is expected to abide by these norms and values if not face repercussions from being connected with European institutions.

Turkish citizens are able to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (as many have) when they feel that the judicial decision has violated values in the aforementioned international treaties, the following statement highlights the deficits in such a system:

Despite the authority granted to the European Court of Human Rights, the court

is a distant actor at best for the actual implementation of its judgments and in its influence in preventing domestic violence. The effectuation of the long-term goals expressed by human rights activists would ultimately require the state government of Turkey, specifically the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice to enact the strong enforcements against domestic violence. It would also require the involvement of domestic institutions to actively educate and mobilize its population to ensure protection for women in Turkey on an individual level

This statement carries some weight as it is indicative that the judicial arm of a European institution embedded in the EU is not enough to enact change at the societal level, indicating that further avenues need to be pursued in order to be able to solve problems within the larger women's movement. While another view holds that the decisions made regarding domestic violence and released by the European Court of Human Rights in facts holds weight and is important

because this ruling publically condemned Turkey in its failures to fulfill its declared obligations to protect its women from domestic violence. It specifically condemned the shortcomings and indifference of authorities who were supposed to ensure protection for the victims of domestic violence.

The European Court of Human Rights then acts as a mechanism to be able to publicly condemn Turkey. In this way, within the lens of sociological institutionalism, we can view this as acting as a legitimation force for the Turkey as a norm breaker to act in line with international norms. However, with statements made by top-level officials, the need for the Turkish government to seek legitimation and to fulfill international socialization is dubious at best.

4.1.3 The European Commission's 2014 Progress Report

Even though some European Commission Progress Reports in previous years have been overall positive, the way in which women's issues have been handled in Turkey have been criticized. In the EU's 2014 Progress Report, Turkey was criticized for not effectively implementing the Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women. The Report noted that there was obvious discrepancy between the plan for the struggle against violence made by the Turkish Ministry for Family and Social Policies, citing that CSOs "regretted la lack of indicators, objectives, a monitoring system or funds allocated for activities. Violence Prevention Centres were established in 2 additional pilot cities, 14 in total. A regulation on their operation had to be issued, staff appointments were not completed and appointed staff not trained" (2014 EU Progress Report 56).

The Report further criticized the deficiency of the government in providing the adequate number of shelters, lack of financial support, as well as the lack of follow-up once shelters were established (2014 Progress Report 56). The Council of Europe Taskforce recommends that there be around 72,000 shelters for women in Turkey, however at the time the article was written there were only around 123, meaning that Turkey did not fulfill 71% of the shelters that were recommended for them. On top of this, the Report overall called Turkey to account in not providing enough protection for both women and children citing honor crimes and child marriages as significant problems in the country..

4.1.4 Public Debate Regarding Domestic Violence

Public debate regarding domestic violence has been recently enflamed by the example of Sefer Calinak who had been in prison for previously killing two women (one of which he was married to another his girlfriend) appeared on a dating show. A month later he appeared on another talk show hosted by Seda Sayan as she introduced him by saying “Have you ever seen a murdered with such a smiling face?” Experts and activists from different sectors chimed in to voice their opinions regarding the ostensibly nonchalant appearance of a murderer on a normal and popular day-time television program and the message that this was supposed to send the rest of the public. Head of the Human Rights Foundation (TIHV) Korur Fincancı argued that that by having this man on this show and allowing him to defend himself by putting most of the blame on the women who were victimized really normalizes violence in Turkey. She argued that this might then lead people to take justice in their own hands without going through the correct legal proceedings with such light sentencing in the judicial system, as was evidenced by this man on TV. It has been argued that this simultaneously reinforcing the idea that domestic violence is a personal matter, therefore the public should not get involved. This is easily illustrated by the dozens of cases cited in which women beaten in public during the day were not hindered by other people on the street – this is also supported by anecdotal evidence of neighbors not intervening when a husband is beating his wife when in most cases the neighbors don’t interfere or call the police as they consider this a matter that should be sorted out in the family. Furthermore, the point raised by activist Tehide Tagan in *Al-Monitor* was that while there are no serious deficiencies with the laws, the problem lies within the way in which the laws are implemented.

While the move to allow a two-time convicted murderer was condemned by a CHP parliamentarian however TV show host Sayan was defended by Ankara Mayor Melih Gökçek who is part of AKP – this has sparked a debate online and in the government and among the general public as can be seen with the more than 3,000 complaints received by the television station that aired the program. One of the major questions that was raised, which is also a valid question in places such as the United States, as to the blurring of certain images such as cigarettes or alcohol on television airings but not much censoring of violence against women– as the message of having a convicted killer on television is not quite clear – is it to make light of the situation in an attempt to put all the blame on the women who were victims of these crimes. Or perhaps some have debated that this man’s appearance might raise awareness to women that these things happen in Turkey and to be cautious when hearing men justify themselves in this way. These are the issues that people were debating as they were not sure of the underlying message.

The statements and the actions made by the government even though passing laws that were promulgated by Europe has been revealing as to an emerging narrative in the political sphere. While the mentality of the government towards intervening in the private sphere has ironically changed in the past two decades, the Islamic conception of “nature” pigeon holes women into one role in society, leading the government to emphasize the norm of “motherhood,” which overrides the norm that women are as equally valuable in any role they choose to have in society. In this sense, women are only viewed as being part of the family unit, with the government interpreting that it is their moral duty to act as a conduit to fix marriages in shelters for battered women as opposed to helping women gain their autonomy.

4.2 Public Debate Regarding Abortion

While the issue of abortion was never high on the political agenda in Turkey after it was legalized in the 1982 Constitution, it has become a contentious issue within after 2011. Abortion has been the talk of the town for the past couple years – The rate of abortion was found to be low in 2008 (unlike the world average of 28/1000 people Turkey is 14.8/1000 people) – in fact, abortions were legalized in 1983 precisely because there were too many deaths from illegal and unsafe abortions (Tremblay 2014,

1b). Even so, there are examples to where the rule of law regarding abortion rights has become more and more degraded in Turkey as women are being denied abortions.

In March 2014, a 22-year-old women tried to kill herself after she was denied an abortion as a state hospital. This incident came on the heels of several controversial statements made by government officials as well as rumors about abortions being banned. This case is more or less justified or legitimized when in the summer of 2012 high-level government officials such as the mayor of Ankara made such statements like “What is the baby’s crime that he deserves to get aborted? The pregnant women should commit suicide instead” (Tremblay 2014, 1a) or to where then-Prime Minister Erdoğan several times likened abortion to murder after first saying “I consider abortion to be murder. No one should have the right to allow this to happen” (Ahmadi 2012). The issue of abortion was further politicized in Turkey in 2012 when Erdoğan compared abortion to the massacre at Uludere in which Kurdish smugglers on the Iraq border were mistaken for members of the PKK.

After these statements, Erdoğan stated that there was an initiative to place more restrictions on abortions in Turkey such as changing the law that said that women can have abortions at 10 weeks to 4 weeks, unless the woman could prove that there was some type of emergency (Gharib 2012). After these controversial statements were made, women’s organizations mobilized women on the street in a series of campaigns, such as “Benim Kararım” (My Decision) as well as numerous petitions.

On March 11th 2014, there were rumors that abortion was secretly banned. In an interview with Al-Monitor, the head of the OB/GYN association explained it in the following way

The right to choose to terminate a pregnancy based on the women’s decision is legal, but we cannot provide the service. What is left to medical doctors is either classifying any abortion as a medical necessity or redirecting women to seek private care to terminate the pregnancy.

In other words, even though there has not been a ban on abortion, state hospitals are not allowed to give abortions and no governmental funding exists. There have then been claims that this will cause a rise in the price of abortions in private facilities, severely disadvantaging poorer women. Furthermore, this does not address the needs of abortion as a moral problem since there is a lot of research that shows that high restrictive regulations in curbing abortions does not correspond to the number of abortions performed or received (Tremblay 1a)

Human rights lawyer and renowned journalist Orhan Kemal Cengiz diverted attention away from the Uludere incident to an abortion issue that had not previously existed by stating "...the prime minister wants to get conservative and religious people on his side, people who have been criticizing him over Uludere and other issues for some time." Even if Erdoğan was simply making these shocking statements for political purposes, the Turkish government still has effectively been able to reframe the narrative regarding abortion in equating it with murder and by also making it more difficult for women to receive abortions under any circumstances in state hospitals. By the act of making it more difficult to receive one even without outright banning it has effectively meant that a topic as controversial as abortion is not open to the society for debate.

Although the EU does not have a cohesive policy regarding abortion, in an interview with BBC Turkish in the summer of 2012, EU Commissioner for Enlargement Stefan Füle criticized the way in which the discussion of abortion was handled by subsuming it under freedom of expression. Civil society was not able to debate the subject and restrictions were implemented in public hospitals with little to no public consultation by saying:

This is a sensitive issue. It is one of the issues that politicians should address extremely carefully. There is no EU regulation in this field. There is need for a broad debate on this matter. Not only politicians, but the civil society, doctors and of course most importantly women should also debate abortion. Because this is primarily their issue (Bal 2012)

However, due to the recent restrictions imposed by the government regarding abortion, they seemed to have taken little to no heed of Füle's criticisms.

CHAPTER 5

FEMINIST ACTIVISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EU IN TURKISH WOMEN'S NGOS

Even though women's organization in Turkey have not had an extensive history with most prominent women's right-oriented organizations having started in either the late 90s or the early 2000s. Since this time, they witnessed the growing influence of globalization, increasing involvement of international institutions, advances in technology, as well as domestic changes. This has no doubt had an impact on the way in which women's organizations in Turkey perceive their immediate environment as well as their transnational links with the EU.

I will argue in this chapter that feminist organizations perceive the EU as a normative power as well as playing a vital role in the Turkish women's movements. Furthermore, factors such as funding, networking, and professionalization has contributed to the way in which activists in feminist organizations perceive the EU to be a vital part of the women's movement. Thus, it could be said that these organizations fall in a sort of "conceptual trap" in which they can see no other alternative to an institution such as the EU.

5.1 Organizations interviewed

The organizations that I have interviewed for the purposes of this thesis are high-profile women's rights-oriented organizations that operate on feminist principles and have worked extensively with international institutions – in fact forming most of their motto, slogans, and identities from international meetings such as the Beijing Conferences or from international conventions such as CEDAW. I interviewed activists representing different aspects of areas being addressed in order to achieve greater gender equality. I conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews with an activist from each organization. The interviewees varied among age and chosen profession and had different levels of experience in the women's movement in Turkey. KA.DER

(Support and Training of Women Candidates) works to promote the political participation among women in Turkey, KAGIDER (Women Entrepreneur’s Association) works to promote women entrepreneurs mainly in the economic sphere, while Purple Roof (Mor Çatı) provides shelter and other services for those women who need help from domestic violence.

Table 2 Organizations Interviewed for this Thesis

Name	Organization	Position	Date of Interview
Gönül Karahanoğlu	KA.DER	Chairperson	13.11.2014
Nuray Özbay	KAGIDER and KA.DER	Deputy Secretary Board of Directors	14.11.2014
Ilke Gökdemir	Purple Roof Foundation	Volunteer	18.11.2014

5.1.2 KA.DER

KA.DER was founded in 1997 by nineteen working women, including Şirin Tekeli who has been a prominent name in the women’s movement especially since the 1980s. The women who founded this organization were chosen purposefully in order to include “journalists, businesswomen, politicians, and public relations consultants to be able to increase the capacity to have access to policy networks” (Bayraktar 2009: 37). This can be reflected in the extensive networks that KA.DER has been able to create and the quality of work it produces. KA.DER defines itself as an association in defending the equal representation of both men and women in all aspects of life, particularly in elected and decision-making bodies, which is vital for democracy. KA.DER’s priority lies in equal representation for all women in the world of politics. The main belief behind these aims is that problems that are faced by women in society would simply not be resolved without women in decision-making bodies.

There are currently 3,000 members in KA.DER. They are advocating for a critical mass of at least 30% to be reached in Parliament. Their public campaigns are aimed at

public awareness and they have a political school as one of their most important and wide-reaching activities. Among their major projects that they have been carrying out since 2008, KA.DER has focused on educating women who are potential candidates in both local and general politics as well as empowering women citizens. In the realm of empowerment projects, KA.DER first carried out the Empowerment of Women Citizens Project funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) in an attempt to further improve women's NGO's capacities in Turkey as well as general awareness raising of women's rights (www.KA.DER.org). A similar project has been carried out but funded by the European Union entitled "Empowerment of Women Citizens and Activists as Active Voters and Citizens Project" between 2013-2015 in collaboration with the DIHAA. The EU funded approximately 94% of this project (146,825 Euro out of the 155,829 Euro in expenditures). The first phase of this project comprised of 3-day long seminars in not only empowering women but also raising awareness among voters and potential candidates about women's rights issues. This project had wide-sweeping effects as it was able to reach 1,708 women spread across several cities in Turkey. KA.DER is transparent with all its activities as well as their funding through its reports that are released every two years along with the rotation of its internal staff.

In terms of addressing the problem of low female participation in Parliament between 1935-2007 there have only been 186 women in parliament as opposed to 8,294 men – in 2007 only 4.4% of Parliament was composed of women. KA.DER offers a women's training facility in order to promote more women in decision-making bodies in which they have reached more than 20,000 women in Turkey. While KA.DER's goal in 1997 was to raise the number of female parliamentarians to 10%, they almost reached their goal in 2007 with 9.1% female parliamentarians. During the time preceding the 2007 elections, KA.DER had nationwide campaigns that are seen as playing a role in this increase (Bayraktar 2009: 36)

5.1.3 KAGIDER

KAGIDER is a non-profit organization founded in Istanbul in 2002 by 38 women entrepreneurs. As their name would suggest, KAGIDER aims to elevate the status of women both economically and socially by enhancing entrepreneurial skills in order to be able to achieve their stated vision which is "creating a world in which women produce and establish their existence freely and plan an effective role in decision making processes" (KAGIDER.org). Among some of its main activities are projects,

mentorship support, training programs, consultancy services as well as advocacy and lobbying work. KAGIDER not only supports Turkey's getting into the EU but also argues for the role of women in the negotiation process. Because KAGIDER is also involved in the EU dialogue and in maintaining this dialogue, they have been the first women's organization to set up an office in Brussels, which allows them to communicate more easily with both the EC and EP.

KAGIDER presents an interesting case simply because it is not as reliant on EU funding as the other two organizations as it has even established its own fund to help smaller organizations benefit from funding, as these organization does not normally have the capacity to benefit from EU funding.

5.1.4 Mor Çatı (Purple Roof)

Purple Roof was founded in 1990 after it was realized that a solidarity network that was created out the need that so many women needed support from doctors and lawyers against domestic violence. Purple Roof assumes that violence comes from the inequality that exists in society between men and women, therefore it's important for Purple Roof to empower women's solidarity as well as building women's confidence and gaining their autonomy to make their own decisions.

Purple Roof has a Solidarity Center open for women who have experienced some form of domestic violence. The Center on average receives ten applications everyday either by phone or in person (www.morcati.org). Purple Roof also runs a shelter in collaboration with the Şişli Municipality and the European Commission Delegation of Turkey among others who support Purple Roof.

Table 3 EU Funding Received by Feminist Organizations Interviewed in this Thesis

Name of Organization	Name of Project and Year	Type of Funding	Amount
KA.DER	Empowerment of Women Activists and Women Citizens as Voters and Active Citizens 2013-2015	EIDHR	146, 825 (out of 155, 825)
Purple Roof	Building Bridges for Prevention of Violence Against Women; 2010-2011	EIDHR	139, 992 (out of 101, 981)
Purple Roof	Women's	EIDHR	120,000 (out of 148,

	Collaboration for Gender Justice 2012-2013		236)
KAGIDER	Avrupa Kadın Girişimcileri Mentor Ağı 2011-2013	EC	??
KAGIDER	Kars'taki Kızlar İleriyor 2010-2011	EU and Turkish government	??
KAGIDER	WE-Mentor Projesi, 2007-2008	?	??

Source: Data gathered from official websites of KA.DER, KAGIDER, and Mor Çatı.

5.2 Perception of the EU as a “reference” point for terminology

Since the concept of governance in allowing more stakeholders to become involved in the policy and decision making processes has become a global phenomenon, civil society has been booming as a result. Unfortunately due to the reasons stated above, in a developing country such as Turkey, the concepts of civil society and nongovernmental organizations were not part of the normal lexicon. In much this way, as the EU had made a decision in the 1999 White Paper on governance that every decision and endeavor made by the EU would be in the name of governance, therefore strongly supported the emergence of civil society. This support of civil society was not only limited to member states, as Gönül Karahanoğlu, the current Chairwoman of KA.DER pointed out the importance that the EU played in being the formation of the concept “NGO” and “civil society” for not only Turkey at large but specifically Turkish feminist organizations when asked about the contribution of the EU to the women’s movement, “They (NGOs) have been able to build their expertise on certain issues. There is now a mentality of NGO. These are the two main issues”²

5.3 Perception of EU as a reference point for best practice

A plethora of good and best practices exist within Europe, which makes the scene even more complicated for the most efficient way of carrying out project or a specific program. Any organization would need guidance in order to recognize the best practice

² KA.DER Interview with Gönül Karahanoğlu 13/11/2014.

and to be implement it as Ilke Gökdemir from Purple Roof described that Europe is often the site of best practice for the way in which shelters are run according to a feminist approach.³

So for example when you say that child care is a must, you are using the best examples from the EU. So it's also a reference at the legal level – at many levels. It's a resource of best practice. And at the same time, it's the solidarity among the women's organizations around Europe – it's also another thing that is very crucial.”

5.4 EU as Agent of Institutionalization

One of the limitations for organizations during the 90s in Turkey was simply a lack of institutionalization and lack of professionalization. Before being associated with KA.DER, Karahanoğlu had been working on social projects with NGOs since 1994. When first speaking about the EU, she brought up the first social project that she took on in the mid-90s entitled Aile Danışma Merkezi, which was a joint project between the Kadıköy Municipality, Marmaray University and a women's platform. According to Karahanoğlu, “we didn't know how to start, because it was a social project. We envisioned some things and after five years, I realized that all the goals I had written on a piece of paper were accomplished.”⁴ She then explains that there was not much direction regarding how to plan, run, and implement social projects in Turkey at that time. Furthermore, this project mainly focused on to provide already-existing social provisions to women in poor neighborhoods in the district of Kadıköy. In her interview, Karahanoğlu indicated that these projects were focused on “helping” people that provided support educationally, socially, legally, physically, and mentally. This project did not only focus on women but also included children. Karahanoğlu further goes onto detail a project started in 2002 called the Sançayaşam project, which marked the first joint project between a Turkish municipality (Kadıköy Municipality) in which workshops and seminars were given to police officers and imams regarding gender issues. She said that before that experience, she did not know how to write a proposal for projects but learned during that period.⁵ She perceives that the project was successful and credits the EU in providing expertise or know-how in two ways. The members of the EU project were able to teach the staffers on how to write for projects as well as

³ Purple Roof. Interview with Ilke Gökdemir 18/11/2014

⁴ KA.DER Interview with Gönül Karahanoğlu 13/11/2014.

⁵ KA.DER Interview with Gönül Karahanoğlu 13/11/2014.

providing extra staff to take care of bureaucratic details that allowed the other staffers to work in achieving the immediate goals of the project.

But then when referring to the further institutionalization of feminist organizations, we find that all the interviews agree that through the process of applying for funding and for projects, this actually forces the organizations to become more and more organized and self-monitoring:

The EU has contributed mostly on the institutionalization of women's organizations – monitoring the issues – they also pushed the Turkish NGOs to monitor themselves even in projects, in policies, in activities, we got an understanding of those impact analysis on all our activities. This is mostly in line with EU project applications, financial support – that sphere gave the Turkish women's movement a chance to learn to institutionally strengthen ourselves and have a better staff capacity and have a better accountability – even keeping the basic accounts and stuff. It gave a certain kind of knowledge and know-how on that. Also the notion of solidarity with the other women's organizations in Turkey and around Europe with communicative channels for projects.⁶

5.5 Networking with other European Organizations

The EU-funded projects that NGOs often apply to and get accepted sometimes have a dimension of twinning the project with another organization. This works well on several fronts. This allows for the subject and goals of the project for the one applying further interaction with a program that is either trying to accomplish the same goal – therefore you have more brain power and double the manpower in carrying out the project or you can become paired with an organization that has already proved good or best practices. With this opportunity, Ilke Gökdemir states:

So with these EU projects, we get acquainted with women from other countries and we become aware of what they have in their countries – and we take these things as our goals. And then we work in that direction. There are a lot of exchanges of thoughts that I think is very positive.⁷

Furthermore, Nuray Özbay discussed the KAGIDER's office that they have in Brussels, which allows them not only to have representation in Europe but also allows them to be closer to civil society groups in Europe such as the EWL which acts as an important locus for lobbying and advocating. For women's organizations in Turkey that

⁶ Nuray Özbay. Former Assistant Secretary KAGIDER and on the Board of Directors at KA.DER

⁷ Ilke Gökdemir. Purple Roof. 18.11.2014

want to have an international outreach, the EU is seen as one of the most important way to accomplish that goal. International outreach could mean networking with other women's organizations in order to attempt collaborating with one another

...most of the women's organizations have their own linkages with European channels like the European Delegation in Turkey or the Parliament or the European Women's Lobby so you can bypass state politics and all those negativities there so you can directly get connected with the EU process via the NGO-EU channel⁸

5.6 Ambiguity regarding the future of the EU

After the 2014 EP Elections revealed the emergence of Euro-skeptic and conservative parties whose rhetoric is not similar to the European standard of norms. This Euro-skeptic rhetoric is less likely to hurt women's issues rather than help it. This leads certain activists who benefit from EU funding not sure about the future of the EU considering the rising anti-EU sentiment:

There is one more thing within the EU itself. The gender issues – they are not very prioritized – the financial crisis, the economic problems, austerity measures and problems provide cuts from the budgets of women's issues. So it's another battle on the EU level – keeping the gender issue on the agenda of the Parliament because the EU itself turning a more conservative tide – so its another big discussion. So if it's going to be like this, perhaps the gender priority of the EU will decline. And we will have a huge impact. Currently, I don't see a progress there. I think it's harder to get the Parliament, to push the Commissioners because there are discriminatory discussions in the Parliament like on the LGBT rights, so as the right wing policy and conservative politics is increasing in the EU.

5.7 Perception regarding the exclusivity and limitations of the EU

During these interviews, while discussing the extent to which the EU is inclusive for women's organizations in Turkey fighting for women's rights, there was unanimous agreement among all participants that processes in gaining funding from EU institutions was laborious and could be improved, because as they stand now, applying for funding is such a tedious process that only certain organizations with already-existing capacity are able to successfully receive funding as the competition is fierce. Furthermore, this

⁸ Nuray Özbay. Former Assistant Secretary KAGIDER and on the Board of Directors at KA.DER

then puts newer and smaller women's organizations that are not already well-equipped at a disadvantage in not being able to receive funding, since there is very limited funding they would be able to receive otherwise.

However, while all women interviewed were in agreement with the benefits of funding provided by the EU, each expressed a grievance related to the funding, Scholar Asuman Keysan reflects an argument found in the literature in regard to the increase of funding as "not an uncontroversial issue for women's groups in Turkey. The dominance of the projects has been on of their crucial discussion topic" (2012:1) The argument then generally follows that while there are more organizations that have become increasingly professionalized, this "project-based activism" has taken away from the "spirit of the women's movement" and have caused fragmentation within the movement.

Furthermore, all interviewees were in agreement that there is a serious problem with solidarity among women's organizations here in that women's organization can and do not work with one another on a long term basis – they will only work with one another when there is a certain cause that is brought to the agenda, normally by politicians. This poses problems when one considers long-term goals and long-term projects that are needed in implementing measures that are supposed to be sustainable.

CONCLUSION

This thesis began by delineating a series of hypotheses regarding the way in which women's rights-oriented feminist organizations perceive the EU within the larger women's movement in Turkey. I first hypothesized that feminist organizations perceive the EU as a normative power. Throughout the reading of both the history of the women's movement and major developments in Turkey-EU relations, it is quite clear that the EU pressurized the Turkish government by using diplomatic censure and praise to further promulgate certain norms and values found within the European community. By both being able to look at the actions and motivations of the government, such as the signing of CEDAW and the reversal in the decision to criminalize adultery, we can clearly see examples in which the Turkish government was pressured by the EU in the early 2000s to conform to certain norms. This can be understood as common discourse among major feminists activists as interviewed in this thesis in their understanding of the history of this aspect of the women's movement in Turkey.

The women's movement was started during the latter part of the Ottoman Empire and that was granted greater freedom in the pursuit of democratization in the early years of the Republic was largely stalled until the late 80s when domestic violence became an issue for debate in the public. Civil society blossomed in Turkey after the 1999 earthquake with the realization that the Turkish government could not provide basic services that the people needed. Economic and political liberalization in the 80s and 90s coincided with a rising civil society in Turkey. When Turkey was admitted as a candidate for member of the EU in the 1999 Helsinki Summit and a roadmap was created, the Turkish government began feeling pressure to conform to EU norms and standards. Therefore, the EU was able to apply pressure through both Progress Reports and Member Accession documents in order to change the Civil Code and the Constitution and signing international agreements on gender equality, making the Turkish government was more receptive to these changes. This in turned empowered

women's, and in particular feminist, organizations in Turkey by paving the way to begin advocating and lobbying on women's issues in society.

The negotiation process that was started in 2005 made it easier for these organizations to work with the government, who was at that time open to including civil society into the policy making process. However, perception among feminist organizations is that they cannot cooperate easily with the Turkish government as the incumbent party has started to promote ideals that correspond with more religious conservative values that run counterintuitive to the values promulgated by the EU not only in the area of women's rights but also human rights at large.

If we are to turn to our theoretical framework, we would find that the women's organizations were in a position to open themselves to the international stage due to both globalization and the transformations that Turkey was going through with political and economic liberalization in the 80s and 90s. However, grassroots organizations at that time had limited access to the government in changing policy. While after the 1999 Helsinki Summit which propelled Turkey to candidate status provided a roadmap for Turkey to follow. These changes represented a shift in gender policy as well as new rhetoric that opened the stage for lobbying and advocacy. On top of this, the increased importance placed on civil society dialogue and project by the EU provided several opportunities for feminist organization in Turkey to be able to carry out projects that would influence policy in Turkey.

By embarking on a discussion involving international socialization and the role that the EU has played in an attempt to diffuse its international norms through political conditionality for member states, we can begin to understand the environment in which Turkey found itself at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 2000s. Through the process of what has been termed "international socialization," the government of Turkey was in the early 2000s attempting to become a part of a larger political community. As the European Union had relatively more legitimacy in the eyes of the Turkish public during those years when Turkey was accepted as a candidate to become member of the EU, according to sociological institutionalism, the way in which both the coalition government and the AKP conducted and pushed legal reforms through Parliament with a seemingly more open approach to working with civil society and particularly women's organizations as "norm leaders," we can explain this as an attempt to be a part of the larger European Union and to attempt to seek legitimization in the eyes of the larger international community.

By examining public discourse surrounding highly controversial women's issues in contemporary Turkey, such as domestic violence and abortion, we can more clearly understand the way in which the government has been able to shape the narrative and environment in which feminist organizations operate in. When it comes to domestic violence, the example of one government program that offers help to both victim and offender in domestic violence, clashes between government and feminist organizations in their mentality become obvious in simply approaching the subject of domestic violence. Furthermore, by delving into the newly debated issue of abortion as top-level politicians made recent statements that have galvanized women's organizations spanning the ideological spectrum, the government still made regulations despite objections from civil society. In this environment of hostile rhetoric, conflicting mentalities little to no public consultation has contributed to a perception of being dependent on the EU as well as seeing the EU as an increasingly necessary part of the women's movement not as a legitimizing role but in strengthening ties not influenced by politics.

With Prime Minister Davutoğlu's announcement in January 2015 of the "Program on the Protection of Family and Dynamic Population Structure," he proposes to provide increasingly incremental financial incentive measures for mothers and each subsequent child they have ("Mothers welcome..." *Daily Sabah*). Further incentives for working women after their maternity leave include flexibility in the numbers of hours worked per week depending on the number of children the woman has or the age of the child. These new incentives suggests a discourse that deemphasize women in the public sphere, signaling a shift from the discourse in the early 2000s ("Turkish gov't unveils..." *Hürriyet Daily News*).

During the interviews, it was clear that this perception of the EU as having been and will be a necessary part of the women's movement but not as a pressurizing force. Instead, over the years with the completion of projects, opportunity to network and be represented in Brussels, among others have become more important than simply acting as a legitimizing tool. Furthermore, feminist organizations themselves have become much more effective at pushing pressure on the government once they become more professional and institutionalized. One of the ways they have become more institutionalized is through applying to projects funded by international institutions. Instead of seeing this in simply a rational choice way, these funds allowed them to carry out projects that promoted their values and ideas. Applying to these funds also required

quite a load of work, therefore these organizations were required to increase their capacity and know-how and expertise in order to write projects for funding. As has been stated by several activists in the women's movement in Turkey, these projects further pushed institutionalization of these organizations but also networking experiences and professionalization. Furthermore, with feminist organizations like KAGIDER able to have a presence in Brussels and to have a presence in the EWL, they have been able to utilize EU mechanisms in furthering the voice of women in Turkey and airing grievances that are commonly experienced by the women in Turkey. So in other words, organizations like this don't simply have symbolic representation in Europe simply by having an office there, but it also works for lobbying and advocacy work, which has increased their international legitimacy.

While the women interviewed did not seem to be fazed by the status of Turkey-EU relations, I would argue that this has an impact on their work when put into the sociological framework. While it is true that horizontal and vertical linkages have been established and maintained by women's organizations in Turkey, the EU no longer has leveraging or bargaining power when it comes to commenting on the status of human rights within Turkey if looking at discourse from top-level officials. The premier of the country has stated that he does not believe in the legitimacy of the European Parliament decision as well as EU Commission Progress Reports that both at times made statements criticizing Turkey on its human rights violations. This has received quite severe push back from officials in Turkey that really do not do more than heighten tensions between the two.

Considering the limits and scope of this thesis, there are several prospects for future research. While this thesis narrowed in on the perceptions of feminist organizations, there is certainly room to further research other ideologies found in women's organizations as they might not be as receptive to a supranational institution such as the EU. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to research smaller women's organizations with lesser visibility in Turkish society that might not have the capacity to apply for EU funding.

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