

## A Descriptive Evaluation on Civil Society Theses Written Between 1993 and 2018 in Turkey

### 1993-2018 Yılları Arasında Türkiye’de Yazılan Sivil Toplum Tezlerinin Betimsel Analizi

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#### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to track the thematic dynamics of civil society development from 1993 to 2018 in comprehensive researches. Owing to their comprehensive theoretical and research designs, only the civil society oriented M.A and PHD theses are included to the main sampling within this study. One of the main question is based on how the issues have changed over the years and what determinants can be listed for the main themes of studies. Another research interest of this study is to find out which research fields/departments mostly focused on civil society themes. In the scope of the current research study, firstly, the conceptualization of civil society is being dealt with as in different theoretical perspectives. Then, the brief history of civil society in Turkey is mentioned relevant to the consecutive periods. For the research, descriptive survey model is used as the analysis method. Therefore, the findings are described and articulated within the given research design. By using this method, three periodic categories are identified to comprehend the whole development process. In doing so, various tables were used to depict the quantitative information. The results revealed that the main themes of the theses were changed with the periodical social and political processes. However, the refugee crisis has not been examined sufficiently.

#### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Sivil Toplum, Sivil Toplum Tarihi, Betimleyici Tarama Modeli, Tezler

#### Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı 1993’den 2018 yılına kadar olan süre zarfında Türkiye’de sivil toplum alanı ile ilgili yapılan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin tematik dinamiklerini tarihsel olarak incelemektir. Özellikle tezlerin bu anlamda araştırmanın örneklemini oluşturmasının nedeni teorik ve araştırma açısından daha kapsamlı olmasıdır. Araştırma sorularına dayalı olarak çalışmada tarihsel olarak sivil toplum temalarının nasıl değiştiği ve hangi faktörlerin bu anlamda etkili olduğu incelenmektedir. Ayrıca üniversitelerdeki hangi bölümlerin/ araştırma alanlarının sivil toplum alanına ilişkin sorunları ve konuları daha fazla incelediğine de odaklanılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda öncelikle sivil toplumun kavramsallaştırılmasına ilişkin farklı yaklaşımlar tartışılmakta, daha sonra Türkiye’de sivil toplum alanının kısa tarihine değinilmektedir. Araştırma bölümünde ise betimleyici tarama yöntemi kullanılarak 1993 ve 2018 yılları arasında yazılan tezler incelenmektedir. Bu doğrultuda üç ardışık periyodik kategori belirlenmiştir. Bulgular sonucunda dönemsel olarak sivil toplum tezlerindeki konuların toplumsal sorunlarla değişiklik göstermesine karşın, 2011 yılı itibarıyla ortaya çıkan mülteci krizinin yeterince yansıtılmadığı görülmüştür.

## Introduction

The origin of the term “civil society” traced back to Ancient Greek philosophy. As Kucuradi (1998: 28) pointed out, generally, the scholars have underscored that this term is mainly identified within the framework of “politike koinonia”, the Aristotelian concept. This ancient term refers to political order formed by citizens. In such a system, there is no difference between “political” and “civil”. Here, the context of the order is interrelated with the emphasis of “society”.

In this vein, Onuf (2005: 45) mentioned about the various and sophisticated definitions of “civil society”. For instance, Liberal view depicts the civil society as the “association’s network” providing useful services to the citizenships within a social sphere. In opposite, critical thoughts ignore this articulation due to its having pragmatist purpose and subsidiary content to state policies. Therefore, “civil society” is being dealt with as pervasive independent sphere in the state which needs to be analyzed more profoundly.

However, both the dominant and critical views have been commonly stressing the importance of civil society within democratization process. In this respect, the term “public” is an essential component of socio-politic system. While the public is a sphere consisting of people who are expressing their ideas freely and living in coexistence, the civil society is “manifesto” of those organized thoughts (Khan et al, 2012: 43). So civil society is based on the convergence of public and state within the democratization process where social movements and deliberative democracy are intertwined with each other (Sitembolukbasi, 2005; Simsir, 2008)

Known as “the corner” of democracy, civil society has various definitions which have been shaped by both dominant- liberal views by Locke and critical- mostly Marxist perspectives started with Hegel. Locke (1998a; 1998b) described civil society as the political society in order to stress on the importance of legislation and legitimacy. The notions, freedom, health, money and property have become important as civil needs within this order. For Bignami (2007: 14-18), Liberal view touches on the significance of freedom of expression and right of association within the framework of democracy. Hegel (2001) interpreted civil society as the district association consisting of individuals under the legal essentialness. The legal order contributes to formation of universality of civil society. For Chakraborty (2016: 20), Hegelian perspective depicts civil society as the “transition” phase between family and state. Civil society is the “antithesis” of the state. Unlike Hegel, Marx (1979) put civil society in “base” and state in “superstructure”. Thus, the completion of idealism requires the existence of civil society. For Gramsci (1992), civil society is an ideological arena within “hegemony” conceptualization. Therefore, civil society fulfills the duty of “council” in the state. Unlike Marx, civil society is a “superstructure” and state is a “base” from the Gramscian perspective.

Both those opposite aspects have not only enriched the content of civil society, but also rendered it complex. In order to comprehend civil society in simple way, Scholte (2007: 16) suggested 4 (four) general definitions: (a) Civil society can be interpreted within human community. In this definition, civil society is a place where people interact with each other tolerantly, safely and non-violently; (b) Civil society can be understood

within public sphere conceptualization. In this definition, civil society as a politic platform of citizens where they discuss about the current and future lives; (c) Civil society is an associational evaluation of human community. In this framework, civil society refers to an area including the non-profit associations independent from state. This area should be independent from the political and private spheres; (d) Civil society is included in the “third sector”. This sector is where legally registered and professionally staffed non-profit organizations are working in different fields. In general, this articulation is the most referenced and commonly used definition amongst all.

Bayhan (2002: 6) underlined four main components of modern civil society: “pluralism”, “publicity”, “autonomy” and “legality”. All those consist of holistic civil society sphere where “pluralist” and “autonomous” structure exists and “public” interests are being protected under “legal” conditions. Therefore, within the framework of common definition, the concept of civil society can be positioned as opposite to dominant discourses through its ideological, economic and organizational characteristics. This perspective renders civil society crucial in terms of implementing and protecting the individual rights and freedoms within the triad relationship among individuals, society and state (Bedük, 2006: 54).

Based on the multifaceted importance of civil society, this study aims to find out how the main themes of comprehensive researches have been changed between 1993 and 2018 released in Turkey. Due to their more comprehensive theoretical background and research findings, M.A and PHD theses were included in the sampling. To reach the reliable data, it was searched on the Thesis Center of Web site of Council of Higher Education, and it was shown that the first entry of thesis concerning civil society issues was made in 1993. Therefore, the scope of civil society researches covers the period between 1993 and 2018. In total, 407 studies were reached.

The main purpose of this study is to track the thematic dynamics of the comprehensive researches within the given historical periods. In other word, this study aims to map out general view of civil society themes in 25 years by focusing on the theses. Having acknowledged that, civil society has been developing in Turkey since the late 1980’s, the research findings will allow to understand what were/are the main themes/issues in civil society studied by scholars and how the focal points of the researches have been changed by the time. In this context, the historical background of civil society in Turkey will be discussed as well. The research questions are as follow:

- What are the main civil society themes/issues focused by scholars in 25 years in Turkey?
- What are the comparative differences among the periods of 1990-2000, 2000-2010 and 2010-2018?
- Which departments of the universities mostly examined the issues of civil society?
- What reasonable determinants can be shown for the grounds of thematic dynamics?

As a research method, the descriptive survey model was used to analyze the

findings by resorting to the categorization. Prior to the findings, the history of civil society in Turkey will be traced back to Ottoman Empire and the present conditions will be mentioned. Research findings will be discussed in the conclusion.

### **The Brief History of Civil Society in Turkey**

Unlike the West countries, the current formation of civil society has been developed since 1980's in Turkey. In this vein, one of the crucial factors in progress of civil society has been the acceleration process of membership negotiations to EU in 2000's. This occasion has led to the emergence and development of civil society as a "sector" in Turkey. EU granted opportunities have contributed to increasing of local NGOs and implementation of various projects in countrywide.

There are various studies tracing the roots of civil society back Ottoman Empire (Çaha, 1995; Acun, 2005; Aslan, 2010; Uluç, 2013). To understand the civil society in Ottoman empire, Buluş (2009: 28) exemplified the guilds, foundations, sects and Islamic monasteries. Foundations were more effective amongst them owing to the fact that there were many of them in different parts of the Empire and they were working actively. The foundations were both religious and social structures fulfilling various communal and public services in the society. The foundations were under the control of Ottoman Empire's management. They were the effective apparatuses of Ottoman government in order to carry out relief works in the society. In this context, they were not neutral organizations. They were not independent from the state. In fact, they were mainly implementing municipal services in different areas of the Empire under the control of the related government. Çaha (1995: 100) and Aslan (2010: 263-265) linked the non-formation of civil society in Ottoman Empire with the lack of autonomy and strict control. The main indicator was the financing of those organizations by the government. Therefore, the foundations were not independent from the state. Guilds were under the same conditions. The control of Ottoman government on the guilds was intended to inspect the production qualities and price determination. Due to aforementioned reasons, it is a debatable issue that foundations, guilds or others as well whether can be exemplified as initials for the current NGOs or not. Moreover, the claim of tracing back the civil society origins in Ottoman Empire needs to be researched and discussed inclusively (Acun, 2005: 51; Uluç, 2013: 405).

During the Ottoman Empire the civil initiatives, which can be considered as the significant progress for civil society were emerged in the II Constitutional Period. The first civil society entities such as labor organizations, trade unions and social movements were formalized in this period (Aslan, 2010: 266). II Constitutional Period refers to the period begun with 1908 and ended with the establishment of Republic. This period is also known as the pre-modernization process. The importance of the II Constitutional Period is concerned with the reconstructing of constitutional order and parliamentary system. The number of political parties was increased, public opinion was formed and the press was developed in the meantime. To add more, censorship and exile were forbidden in terms of individual rights and freedoms. The authority to apprehend and penalize was abolished except the reasons constituting crimes in accordance with the legislation. The

right of assembly and association was legitimized (Bilecikli, 2008: 218-222). All those were remarkable steps for the progress of civil society.

In the first years of the Republic period, the political and social conditions were not satisfying or suitable for the civil society. Under the single-party system (1923-1946), there were two main factors which are bureaucrat-highbrow elitism and the ideological pressure of one-party rule restraining the development of civil society (Uluç, 2013: 407). The transition to a multi-party system did not bring out crucial changes in civil society. The only progress was the amendment of Law of Associations accepted in 1946. This Law enabled the legal conditions for forming the non-governmental organizations in the country. However, it lasted too short time. By the direct intervention of government in 1947, all the labor unions were closed. Soon after this unfortunate occurrence, military intervention was made in 1960. This influenced all the democratic initiatives for civil society formation adversely (Özgiraz & Arslanel, 2015: 107).

According to Gündüz and Kaya (2014: 144), the formation of modern civil society started with 1980s in Turkey. They accounted this late development for the both internal and external factors. Internal factors were listed as downsizing of the state, liberalization policies, privatization, empowerment of local administration and some social movements. And, the external factors were exemplified as the end of Cold War, globalization, and development of information society and the start of membership negotiations with EU (Talas, 2011: 395).

By the 2000s, the acceleration process for EU membership negotiations led to rapid improvement of civil society in Turkey (Bedük et al, 2006; Karadağ & Usta, 2011; Tutar, 2012; Çepel, 2017). The funding opportunities, various projects on different issues, and such factors paved the way for enlargement of civil society field within the shortest time.

Following the Syrian crisis in 2011, the forced migration to Turkey have led to increase of the numbers of local NGOs in the country. In parallel with this, the focus of civil society has directed to refugees and migration issues. Many local NGOs started to implement various humanitarian projects for Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers by the support of the State and international NGOs (Erdoğan, 2014; Türk, 2016; Akpınar, 2017; Altay et al, 2017). In this context, the refugee crisis can be also aligned within the significant indicators that contributed to development of civil society in Turkey.

The current study aims to examine how the above mentioned processes affected the thematic focuses of the comprehensive researches from 1993 to 2018. In doing so, descriptive survey model was employed in the study due to its eligibility in using both quantitative and qualitative attributes.

### **Research Method**

Descriptive survey method allows to examine and analyze a wide range of research materials and to arrive at general opinion over the findings (Cohen et al, 2007). Having both qualitative and quantitative aspects, descriptive survey model is very useful in analyzing numerical information and interpreting the data to aim for the generalization and prediction (Salaria, 2012). Based on the purpose of study, it can be employed for

either all population or the selected sample (Taşdemir & Taşdemir, 2011: 346). Most importantly, this research technique allows researcher to understand the ongoing process having been proceed since the certain time till the current date under the objectives of research (Yıldız, 2004: 79).

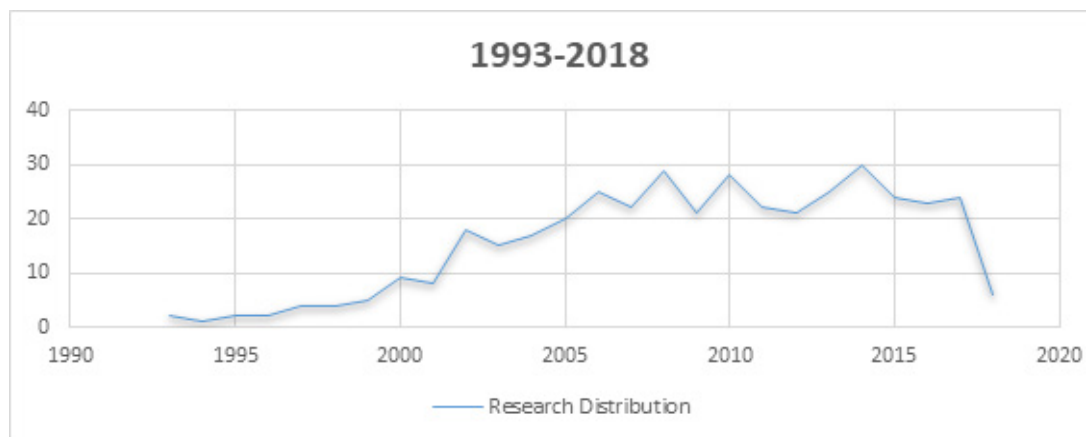
By using this method, first, M.A and PHD theses were searched on the Web site of Council of Higher Education by using the key words in Turkish, “*sivil toplum*”, “*sivil toplum alanı*”, “*sivil toplum kuruluşları*” and *sivil alan*” to reach the materials. Total number was 407 studies by the date of 20.03.2018. To analyze the quantitative data, the theses were categorized within the specific periodic categories and tables. Within qualitative examination, the tables of periodic categories were interpreted and discussed at the conclusion.

### Findings

As indicated in research method, the research findings were categorized within periodic phases in order to be analyzed and interpreted in more comprehensive way. In this context, three different but consecutive periodic categories were identified. Each category includes the certain date ranges, which are the period between 1990-2000, 2000-2010 and 2010-2018. The main reason of such specifying is related with understanding and interpreting the main themes on historical base. In the same manner, general review/analysis of the studies is scrutinized relevant to categorization, as well.

Initially, it will be focused on the general review of the findings involving from 1993-2018. In this respect, Table 1 exhibits the distribution of M.A and PHD theses released in the given years, in Turkey. As can be shown in the Table, there was an upward trend in civil society oriented studies since 1993 until 2018. On the other hand, the number of the theses increased since 2000s, and it culminated in 2014:

**Table 1. The Distribution of Researchs**



Another finding is related with the main themes of the theses. This information is essential for making inquiries about the focal points of studies. 16 main themes were determined among the 407 different subjects. In accordance with the Table 2, the most focused issues were the analyzing of relation between politics and civil society, and

governance/institutionalization problems of NGOs. On the contrary, the least was the examining Syrian Crisis in terms of NGOs. To add more, the impact of civil society on development and the gender perspective on civil society were also less studied issues amongst all. The other themes and percentages are as below:

**Table 2. General Overview on Civil Society Theses**

<b>The Main Themes</b>	<b>Number Of Studies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Theoretical Discussions on Civil Society</i>	48	11,79%
<i>Democracy and Civil Society</i>	34	8,35%
<i>Environmental Protection and Civil Society</i>	17	4,18%
<i>Education Policies and NGOs</i>	16	3,93%
<i>The History of Civil Society in Turkey</i>	24	5,90%
<i>EU Harmonization Process and Local NGOs</i>	34	8,35%
<i>Civil Society in Different Countries</i>	19	4,67%
<i>Politics and Civil Society</i>	61	14,99%
<i>Governance and Institutionalization Problems of NGOs</i>	56	13,76%
<i>Social Policies and NGOs</i>	22	5,41%
<i>Local NGOs in Turkey</i>	12	2,95%
<i>The Importance of Civil Society in Syrian Crisis</i>	3	0,74%
<i>Other Contributions of Civil Society</i>	17	4,18%
<i>Communication Activities of NGOs</i>	22	5,41%
<i>The Impact of Civil Society on Development</i>	11	2,70%
<i>Gender and NGOs</i>	11	2,70%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 shows which departments of the universities have studied the civil society issues. This general overview on the studies gives us the important information of questioning which department mostly tackled or interested in the civil society as a research object in Turkey. To the table, Public Administration was the top department studied the subject. The other highest percentages were in Sociology and Political Science. The term, Other Departments was used to apply to the sum of some departments which studied only once during the 25 years. The less studied departments were Communication Sciences and Journalism, as shown in the table:

**Table 3. General Overview of Departments Studied Civil Society Issues**

<b>Departments</b>	<b>Number of Studies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Education</i>	26	6,39%
<i>Public Administration</i>	89	21,87%
<i>International Relations</i>	26	6,39%
<i>Public Relations</i>	28	6,88%
<i>Sociology</i>	62	15,23%
<i>Social Services</i>	13	3,19%
<i>Economics</i>	11	2,70%

<i>Business Administration</i>	25	6,14%
<i>Political Science</i>	56	13,76%
<i>Law</i>	9	2,21%
<i>Communication Sciences</i>	6	1,47%
<i>Journalism</i>	6	1,47%
<i>Other Departments</i>	50	12,29%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100%</b>

To expound the general overview of the studies in a detailed way, as mentioned before, three periodic categories were identified. These categories allow examining three important periods as 1990s, 2000s and 2010s in terms of civil society development. In such a way of analyzing, the change dynamics of the studies will be revealed more clearly.

#### ***The Theses Released between 1993-2000***

The main themes and departments will be taken into account within all categories. In the period between 1993 and 2000, it was seen that totally 29 studies were written and released. Out of 29 studies, 25 were M.A and 4 were PHD theses.

According to Table 4, the most studied topic was the discussing of theoretical perspectives on civil society (27,59%). In this framework, Gramscian approach and the fundamental concepts of civil society were discussed mainly. Another most examined research object was the historical evaluation of civil society in Turkey (17,24%). In this respect, it was centered upon the period of Ottoman Empire and various sects existed in the meantime. Within the scope of relationship between civil society and democratization, civil society organizations were dealt with as supportive intermediaries of human rights, and essential components for the holistic democratization process. As to the politics and civil society theme, the connection between state and civil society, the relation with local administration, the role of NGOs in foreign policy, and the impact of civil society on the power were discussed comprehensively. Under the theme of other contributions, musical and health care activities of local NGOs, and the supportive role of civil society in Marmara Earthquake were the other less studied subjects of theses. Another least finding was about the role of NGOs in EU harmonization process, as described below:

**Table 4. *The Main Themes of the Studies Released between 1993 and 2000***

<b>The Main Themes</b>	<b>Number Of Studies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Theoretical Discussions on Civil Society</i>	8	27,59%
<i>EU Harmonization Process and Local NGOs</i>	1	3,45%
<i>Democracy and Civil Society</i>	4	13,79%
<i>The History of Civil Society in Turkey</i>	5	17,24%
<i>Environmental Protection and Civil Society</i>	3	10,34%
<i>Politics and Civil Society</i>	4	13,79%
<i>Gender and Civil Society</i>	1	3,45%
<i>Other Contributions of NGOs</i>	3	10,34%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>



The distribution of departments on studying civil society themes is depicted in the Table 5. In compliance with those findings, Public Administration was the top of the list with the number of theses as 13 which means to the approximately half (44,83%). The latter most studied field was Sociology with the percentage of 20,69%. On the other hand, Music Studies, Law, Public Health, Philosophy, Environmental Engineering and Labor Economics were the departments settled at the bottom of the list due to the numeric data, as below:

**Table 5. The Distribution of Departments on Civil Society between 1993 and 2000**

Departments	Number of Studies	Percentage
<i>Music Studies</i>	1	3,45%
<i>Public Administration</i>	13	44,83%
<i>Religion</i>	2	6,90%
<i>Sociology</i>	6	20,69%
<i>Political Science</i>	2	6,90%
<i>Law</i>	1	3,45%
<i>Public Health</i>	1	3,45%
<i>Philosophy</i>	1	3,45%
<i>Environmental Engineering</i>	1	3,45%
<i>Labor Economics</i>	1	3,45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>

Two tables are providing important insights into the period of between 1993 and 2000 in terms of understanding general overview of civil society studies for that period of Turkey. Finally, concerning the languages of the studies, it was seen 7 of those theses were written in English and 22 were in Turkish.

#### ***The Studies Released between 2000 and 2010***

In total, 203 theses were written and released in the period between 2000 and 2010. 34 of them were PHD and the rest of were MA theses. Regarding this period, 4 (four) main themes were ensued that are; *theoretical discussions on civil society, the relation between politics and civil society, the role of NGOs in EU harmonization process and governance/institutionalization problems of NGOs*. Theoretical approaches on civil society (12,81%) were associated with the discussing of such concepts as autonomy, ideology and such which are mostly based on Hegelian view. The convergence between corporate social responsibility projects and some civil society activities, and globalization effects were the other analyzed issues in this framework. Political parties, public opinion, local administration, civil unrest, the role of NGOs on active citizenship and foreign policy were the focal issues in the politics and civil society theme. Most particularly, the relation between state and civil society (11,82%), and the impact of civil society on the power were the prominent studies amongst all. As regards to title of EU harmonization process and local NGOs (11,33%), the significant role of NGOs in integration with EU and the funding opportunities provided by EU were discussed and emphasized in the related researches. To underline, this topic has become popular among the other

issues for this period. In the vein of governance/institutionalization problems of NGOs; funding problems, performance tracking, corporate reputation, quality and voluntary management were analyzed, predominantly. Gender perspective on civil society (2,46%) and communication activities (1,97%) of NGOs were the less interested themes, as shown below:

**Table 6. The Main Themes of the Studies between 2000 and 2010**

<b>The Main Themes</b>	<b>Number Of Studies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Theoretical Discussions on Civil Society</i>	26	12,81%
<i>Democracy and Civil Society</i>	17	8,37%
<i>Environmental Protection and Civil Society</i>	13	6,40%
<i>Education Policies and NGOs</i>	8	3,94%
<i>The History of Civil Society in Turkey</i>	12	5,91%
<i>EU Harmonization Process and Local NGOs</i>	23	11,33%
<i>Civil Society in Different Countries</i>	11	5,42%
<i>Politics and Civil Society</i>	24	11,82%
<i>Governance/Institutionalization Problems of NGOs</i>	23	11,33%
<i>Social Policies and NGOs</i>	11	5,42%
<i>Local NGOs in Turkey</i>	11	5,42%
<i>Other Contributions of Civil Society</i>	8	3,94%
<i>Communication Activities of NGOs</i>	4	1,97%
<i>The Impact of Civil Society on Development</i>	7	3,45%
<i>Gender and NGOs</i>	5	2,46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100%</b>

To the Table 6, there was uptrend in analyzing of civil society role on environmental protection (6,40%), as well. In the same manner, the researches which analyzed the connection between education policies and civil society have being come into prominence since this period. Furthermore, the contributions of NGOs on rural and socio-economic development were examined within the theme of civil society impact on development (3,45%).

With respect to Table 7, Public Administration (22,66%) and Sociology (19,21%) were the premise departments studied civil society issues amongst all, likewise in previous periodic category. Education (7,88%) and Public Relations (7,88%) were the other prominent departments that increased interest in civil societies in this period. Art History, Finance, Industrial Engineering, Information and Records Management, Defense & Defense Technologies and Psychology were at the bottom of the list in terms of numbers of studies. The other findings are as follow:

**Table 7. The Distribution of Departments on Civil Society between 2000 and 2010**

Department	Number of Studies	Percentage
<i>Art History</i>	1	0,49%
<i>Fine Arts</i>	2	0,99%
<i>Finance</i>	1	0,49%
<i>Education</i>	16	7,88%
<i>Forestry Engineering</i>	2	0,99%
<i>Industrial Engineering</i>	1	0,49%
<i>Public Administration</i>	46	22,66%
<i>Information and Records Management</i>	1	0,49%
<i>International Relations</i>	10	4,93%
<i>Journalism</i>	4	1,97%
<i>Public Relations</i>	16	7,88%
<i>Religion</i>	2	0,99%
<i>Sociology</i>	39	19,21%
<i>Social Services</i>	5	2,46%
<i>Economics</i>	9	4,43%
<i>Business Administration</i>	6	2,96%
<i>Communication Sciences</i>	2	0,99%
<i>Political Science</i>	25	12,32%
<i>Defense and Defense Technologies</i>	1	0,49%
<i>Landscape Architecture</i>	2	0,99%
<i>Psychology</i>	1	0,49%
<i>Law</i>	4	1,97%
<i>Labor Economics</i>	2	0,99%
<i>Urban &amp; Regional Planning</i>	1	0,49%
<i>Philosophy</i>	4	1,97%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100%</b>

As described above, the dynamics of the civil society studies had discernibly changed from the period of 1993-2000 to 2000-2010. Above all, the highest number of civil society researches was in this period. Totally, 203 theses were written and released that equals to the half of all studies from 1993 to 2018. In this context, new research objects in civil society were ensued and new departments started to examine civil society issues. Concerning the written languages of the theses, 32 were in English, 3 were in French and the rest of all were written in Turkish.

#### ***The Theses Released between 2010 and 2018***

The last category depends on the current overview of studies released from 2010 to 2018. Although it has been 8 years, totally, 175 theses were disseminated, and 36 of them are PHD theses. The rest were MA studies written by different departments and based on different perspectives. In this period, two main themes have become prominent which are the examination of politics and civil society interrelation (18,86%), and governance/

institutionalization problems of NGOs (18,86). Unlike the other periods, the relationship between local administration and civil society organizations were the focal point of researches within the framework of politics and civil society theme. Another main topic in this theme was about the role of NGOs on foreign policy. Conflict resolution, the relation between state and civil society, the role of NGOs in struggling towards terror, active citizenship and the impact of civil society on the power can be listed as the other issues studied in the scope of this theme. Concerning the governance/institutionalization problems of civil society, job satisfaction of NGOs' staff, performance and HR structures, voluntary management and financial transparency were being studied, predominantly. Analyzing of local NGOs in Turkey (0,57%) and the role on environmental protection (0,57%) were the less focused issues in accordance with the Table 8, as below:

**Table 8. The Main Themes of the Studies between 2010 and 2018**

<b>The Main Themes</b>	<b>Number Of Studies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Theoretical Discussions on Civil Society</i>	14	8,00%
<i>Democracy and Civil Society</i>	13	7,43%
<i>Environmental Protection and Civil Society</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Education Policies and NGOs</i>	8	4,57%
<i>The History of Civil Society in Turkey</i>	7	4,00%
<i>EU Harmonization Process and Local NGOs</i>	10	5,71%
<i>Civil Society in Different Countries</i>	8	4,57%
<i>Politics and Civil Society</i>	33	18,86%
<i>Governance/Institutionalization Problems of NGOs</i>	33	18,86%
<i>Social Policies and NGOs</i>	11	6,29%
<i>Local NGOs in Turkey</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Syrian Crisis and Civil Society Activities</i>	3	1,71%
<i>Other Contributions of Civil Society</i>	6	3,43%
<i>Communication Activities of NGOs</i>	18	10,29%
<i>The Impact of Civil Society on Development</i>	4	2,29%
<i>Gender and NGOs</i>	5	2,86%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8 shows us theoretical discussions on civil society (8%), which were the most focused research object previously have decreased over the years comparing with the previous periods. Another downtrend theme has been the role of NGOs on environmental protection. New theme has been ensued that is related with the Syrian crisis and refugees. The sharp rise has been on the studies including communication activities of NGOs. On the other hand, the focus on the theme of EU harmonization process has decreased comparing with the 2000s.

The distribution of departments on civil society was not different form the other periods. Public Administration (17,05%) and Political Science (16,48%) took the leads amongst all. However, the field of International Relations (9,09%) has become more interested in civil society issues since 2010. Another uptrend has noticed in Business

Administration (10,80%). Moreover, some new departments, for instance, architecture, banking, computer engineering, medical history and ethics, and urban and regional planning analyzed the civil society themed theses in this period. Each of them studied only one study. The whole list is described as below:

**Table 9. The Distribution of Departments on Civil Society between 2010 and 2018**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Number of Studies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Anthropology</i>	2	1,14%
<i>Architecture</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Banking</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Fine Arts</i>	2	1,14%
<i>Finance</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Computer Engineering</i>	1	0,57%
<i>History</i>	3	1,70%
<i>Healthcare Management</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Education</i>	10	5,68%
<i>Public Administration</i>	30	17,05%
<i>Information and Records Management</i>	1	0,57%
<i>International Relations</i>	16	9,09%
<i>Journalism</i>	2	1,14%
<i>Public Relations</i>	12	6,82%
<i>Visual Arts</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Sociology</i>	17	9,66%
<i>Social Services</i>	8	4,55%
<i>Economics</i>	2	1,14%
<i>Business Administration</i>	19	10,80%
<i>Communication Sciences</i>	4	2,27%
<i>Political Science</i>	29	16,48%
<i>Medical History and Ethics</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Tourism</i>	3	1,70%
<i>Psychology</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Law</i>	4	2,27%
<i>Labor Economics</i>	2	1,14%
<i>Urban &amp; Regional Planning</i>	1	0,57%
<i>Philosophy</i>	1	0,57%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100%</b>

Within this period, 23 of the theses were in English, and one was written in French. The rest, 151 studies were released in Turkish. New research objects of civil society field and departments have been emerged during this period. For all periods, uptrend and downtrends give us crucial details that have to be taken into account in the findings. In this context, the next section will discuss the results by comparing the periods and arrive at the conclusion.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the main themes/issues focused by scholars in 25 years and which departments of universities mostly examined the civil society issues in Turkey. In doing so, the purpose was to elicit the comparative differences among the periods of 1990-2000, 2000-2010 and 2010-2018 in order to analyze more effectively. To comprehend the situation in a detailed way, three following periodic categories were identified within the analysis. Two kinds of tables were sketched for each category. In advance of the categories, the general overview of civil society oriented studies was described through the tables.

The Table 1 exhibited the study dynamics of the civil society over 25 years. As shown clearly in the related table, there has been upswing in civil society as research interest since 2000s. It can be associated with the funding opportunities provided by the state, EU, UN agencies and other sources. Moreover, this upswing is coincided with the striking upsurge of non-profit sector globally from the developed countries of North America, Europe and Asia to the developing countries of Latin America, Africa and the former Soviet Bloc. By referring to Salamon's (1994: 109) study, this development can be explained with the increasing numbers of associations, foundations and similar organizations formed by people in order to access human services, to prevent environmental degradation, to promote grass-roots economic development, to protect civil rights and so forth. On the other hand, another table (Table 2) centered upon the main themes within civil society mostly studied. The indicators revealed that the examination of politics and civil society interrelation, governance/institutionalization problems of NGOs and theoretical discussions on civil society were the popular research objects studied by researchers. The last one (Table 3) of the general overview statistics gives us the information about which departments of universities has been mostly interested in civil society. As regards to this table, Public Administration, Sociology and Political Science were at the top of the list.

In the first category (1993-2000), the Table 4 demonstrated that the theme of theoretical approaches on civil society was mostly discussed. In particular, Gramscian interpretation of civil society was mostly preferred in the discussions. Gramsci (1992) conceptualized the civil society as an ideological struggle practice within the framework of "hegemony". Therefore, as distinct from Hegel and Marx, the perception of Gramsci was based on the connection between civil society and the state. According to his examination, civil society is not utterly independent from the state (Tosun, 2001). This perspective was being approached in the majority of studies intended to understanding the background of civil society in Turkey. Taking into account of the development of civil society has been starting since the late 1980s, the questioning of the relationship between civil society and the state can be considered on valid grounds that why approached mostly by the theses. Therefore, the problematic of civil society conceptualization and the role of civil society organizations on democratization process became the focal points of the researches, predominantly, in 90s. On the other hand, the Table 5 shows us that, Public Administration and Sociology are at the top of the list by having maximum numbers of theses.

2000s and afterwards can be stated as very significant period in terms of civil society development in Turkey. Many changes have been occurred during this period. First and most one has been the initiating of membership negotiations with EU. The reason of the importance this process for civil society in Turkey must be associated with the funding opportunities provided by EU. Owing to these opportunities, the number of local NGOs has been increased, rapidly. On the other hand, the negative impact of EU funding as the conversion civil society field into “market” should be discussed more comprehensively as well. In the same manner, other funding opportunities have been ensued by means of UN agencies and other local or international sources in this period.

In the period between 2000 and 2010, theoretical discussions on civil society and the issue of interrelation with politics were the main themes focused by the researchers. For this period, Hegelian perspective was more preferred instead of Gramscian view. Hegel was on the premise theorists who distinguished civil society from the state. By addressing the universality, Hegel (2001: 138-155) defined civil society as the antithesis of the state. In this context, the notions of autonomy and ideology, the importance of NGOs in local administration, and the impact of civil society on foreign policy of the state were the other focal points analyzed mainly by the theses. In parallel, governance/institutionalization problems of NGOs were also examined, comprehensively. Concurrently, some researchers examined the large local NGOs such as TUSIAD, TESEV and etc. which are working efficiently in Turkey, from different perspectives. The civil society conditions in various countries were also research interest by the studies. On the other hand, the remarkable finding of this period was the sharp increase in studying the important role of NGOs in EU harmonization process. This can be caused by the starting of EU membership negotiations in this period, as mentioned above. Public Administration and Sociology were the premise departments in studying the civil society issues. The notable departments for this period can be shown as Public Relations and Education which steadily increased the number of theses since 2000 to 2010.

In the beginning of 2010s, some political and social movements happened inside and outside of the country that has affected the scope of civil society. One of them was Syrian crisis which has resulted with the forced migration of over 10 million people to various countries. Turkey is the top country hosting the highest number of refugee population. According to the statistics of UNHCR, there are approximately 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees living in Turkey. This unfortunate happening has led to the formation and development of refugee oriented civil society in Turkey and in other related countries, as well. Numerous support activities and aid programs have been implementing by means of local and international NGOs in collaboration with the governmental organizations. This is all to say; the importance of NGOs and the efficient domain of civil society have been emerged and emphasized during this period (Erdoğan, 2014; Türk, 2016; Akpınar, 2017; Altay et al, 2017). However, this development was not sufficiently examined in the researches as can be seen in the Table 8. Although it has been almost 7 years, it was reached only three theses analyzed the serious consequences of Syrian crisis and the contributions of NGOs in this process. On the other hand, the governance/institutionalization problems of NGOs and the relation between politics were the main themes of this period. In special,

the role of NGOs on local administration, on foreign policy, voluntary and performance management of NGOs were the most focused subjects comparing with the others. Another finding was the upswing in analyzing the communication activities of NGOs. Social media use and PR activities were the main topics in these theses. The importance of NGO on EU harmonization process was one of the important subjects, as well. As regards to the distribution of departments, the Table 9 exhibits the maximum numbered theses were released by Public Administration and Sociology. The uptrend in civil society topic has been shown in two departments which were Business Administration and Internal Relations during this period.

To conclude, it could be stated all the periodic developments are reflected in the theses excepting the one topic, Syrian crisis and refugees. The last category revealed that, it was one of the less studied issues amongst all. In general, the whole research shows us how the research objects of civil society studies have been changed over the years. For instance, although the conceptual background of civil society was being analyzed in 90s mainly, by the 2000s the organizational structures of NGOs become prominent issue of the studies. To sum up, there has been a strong relationship between the periodic occurrences and the themes of theses.

The importance of this study is related with the general overview on civil society theses written and released between 1993 and 2018. Therefore, this limited research can be helpful and useful in understanding the gaps in civil study issues that should be studied in the future. Also it is also suggested that, the contents of the theses can be scrutinized by extending the sampling to all related research articles in order to reach more detailed information.

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