The new actors of women's movement: women NGOs and their potentials

Şenay Leyla[*]

Department of Sociology, Gaziantep University, Gaziantep, Turkey

Abstract

It is known that neo-liberal policies are effective in the reawakening of concepts such as civil society and civil society organizations. In addition, it is mostly ignored that women's civil society organizations' potential of reflecting discriminations make feminist movements visible. Civil society organizations of women have gotten into the process of differentiation and multiplication in the sense of both issues they are dealing with and places they operate in. The centre of the women movement spreads from big cities to peripheral centers. The feminist movement is no longer the movement of a specific class or ethnicity but rather includes groups and compositions that have different features. In the context of the Turkish nation and supranational women, sensitive actors and gender-blindness of mere political struggle contribute to this process. As Iris Marion Young has asserted, although civil society helps groups that have material and organizational power to sustain their social advantages, civil society and civil society organizations, in private, support democratic virtues. In this sense, civil society organizations of women which have different economical and social capital can contribute to the aim of widening public space and can turn the discourse of civil society woman-sensitive. Within this framing, experiences of two different examples from civil society organizations of women which are the carrier actors of women movement in Turkey after 1990 will be formulated. First one of these is KAGİDER (Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey) which operates in Istanbul and the second one is KAMER (Women's Centre) which operates in South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia. With these examples, moving from two different cultures and two different civil society organizations, it seems possible to develop an idea about early period of women movement in Turkey.

Keywords: Women movement, civil society, women NGOs, KAGİDER (Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey), KAMER (Women's Center)

Introduction

Civil society discussions have come to the fore recently due to women's movements and the productive policies of women's civil society organizations about women. As the demands and needs of women's movements or civil society organizations of wom-

en come to the fore and as their visibility increases, it seems inevitable to talk over the potential of civil society organizations. As such, the examples of KAGİDER (Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey) and KAMER (Women's Centre) which are foundations established after 1990 include an analysis of the early period of the women's movement in Turkey.

Although NGOs are considered to be apolitical and assumed as tools undertaking the functions of the state, we must need to recognize the existence of NGOs working to overcome the current situation and reminding the duties of state. Especially after the 1990s, many women NGOs target sexist structure in many areas such as particularly economics and politics. In addition, NGOs provided opportunities to discuss the subjects started in the 1980s and continued in the 1990s, incorporated in a private space (such as violence against women), and develop solutions for them. In this article, our aim is to shed light on policies of NGOs (having different traditions) towards women question and track down the women movement differentiation (in the context of class and ethnicity) in Turkey after the 1990s.

Discourses of the both KAGİDER and KAMER members are given in the article. The purpose of giving place to this discourse is to clarify many points such as explaining NGOs themselves and their activities to local governments, disclosing their position for women problem and gender order. While KAGİDER initially sees the status of women in field of economics as a problem, afterwards it also aims to strengthen women's social life. In this context, KAGİDER politicize women's needs with the demands such as Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership Funds, and gender-sensitive budget. KAMER can be seen as an indicator of feminist movement spreading on different classes and ethnicities in Turkey. This situation is absolutely reflected in KAMER's activities and discourse. KAMER carries the reminder function of especially violence against women and alternative models that reduce women's poverty (gender-sensitive micro-credit applications) and state duties towards women question. To sum up, both of the NGOs, though fostered by different traditions, (while KAGİDER sees the women question as a social problem, KAMER sees it as a political problem) produce policies towards women and question the gender order of the institutions.

Civil society and civil society organizations of women in Turkey

The concept of civil society and civil society organizations express different meanings in different times. During the historical process, civil society organizations which have developed in relation with civil society history appeared in their roles of alternative to state, sometimes being opposing and sometimes favoring. As a matter of fact, concepts such as means of modernization, third sector due to its economical function, a depoliticized space or non-governmental organizations that are organized by government (GONGO-Governmentally Organized NGO) were used for civil society organizations (Bora and Çağlar, 2002:339-344). Despite these alternative views, civil society organizations stress the potential of "talking about social problems". Therefore, their main functions can be listed as criticizing and directing the savings of public authority, informing wide sections of society about constructive savings in advance and influencing these processes or creating ways of opposing including civil relief means (Belge, 1998:69).

What lies behind civil society organizations' being recognized as the potential of 'talking about society' is the entrance of political representations of 1980s into crisis. Civil society organizations were considered to be a solution for clumsiness within parliamentary system (state and party structuring). Extensions carried by the women's movement must be considered in addition. Movements that do not comply with the descriptions of private and public space within liberal tradition serve the transforma-

tion of private and public discriminations. Therefore, in the scope of Turkey, feminism contributed to the civil society as social movement (Çaha, 2006:13; Göle (1998:117). It must be said that new social movements ambiguities the modernist oppositions (rational-irrational, public-private) of civil society organizations. By using the conceptualization of Offe (1999:61) we are face to face with institutions that operate increasingly in 'a non-institutional space.' Therefore 'NGO policy' seems to be a way of creating policies which have new forms in a new period.

Civil society organizations have also enabled the transformation of traditional discrimination within the women movement. It is seen that the individual exists in public space possibly only through existing with their private space and through this recognition (Kentel, 2003:11). Relating the existence in public space with existence in private space is undoubtedly an extension of the women's movement. Inclusion of transformation between public and private space, politicization of woman and sexuality was an unexpected development (Göle, 1998:118). This development can be regarded as both the statement of the phenomenon called "political indifference" after the 80s is in fact towards traditional political institutions and also as the example of the expansion of political space (Sancar, 2000:26).

Civil society or civil society organizations expanding their political space aims to reconstruct this space. Questioning the gender regime as well as the relationship between transparency and accountability demanded from state by civil society organizations are of great importance. It is not possible to assert that public space in Turkey (education, politics, employment, etc.) is based on the gender equality. In this frame Keane (1994:36) asserts that social struggle and initiatives that will expand social equality and freedom are required. The dominance of capital, state and male citizens on civil society must be reduced in order to make this process efficient. As Kabasakal Arat has stated (2006:31) civil society-state relationship stands as an issue that must deal with feminist groups. A balance must be set between the demands of women to resolve their problems independent from the state and the possession of their own destiny with the demands of state to use its source and authority for the equality of women and gender.

Early period of women movement in Turkey

It is possible to generalize and divide the women's movement in Turkey into two periods. As Tekeli (1998:37) has stated, we can separate the women's movement into two periods in the sense of density of events, activities and demands. The women's movement composed of two periods, being the first period between 1910 and 1920 and the second period from 1980s up to now with preparation phase of 40-45 years. When we observe the early period of the women's movement in Turkey closer, we see that social transformation develops quickly. In an environment in which movements such as nationalism and pan-Islamism reshaped the political space by transforming from imperialism to nation, the questioning of the state of femininity reflected both to in discourse and in the organization activities of women.

We must consider two important issues about the early period women's movement, the Ottoman women's movement and feminists. These two issues are important since they reflect the characteristics of early period feminists. First is the analogy between the salvation of women and the salvation of the nation. This analogy mostly urged women to adopt a nationalist and a Muslim identity. The second is "early period feminists' being close to political power as wives or daughters of "aristocratic" and ruling class" (Zihnioğlu, 2003:52). For example in Nezihe Muhittin explains these issues as the rationale for writing her novel *Turkish Woman* (Baykan, 1999:65) in 1930's: "In this little piece of work, while observing the effects of various political periods on

our women and the life styles they formed; I would like to examine agitation and struggle ability of our women towards these factors." The emphasis of Muhittin is important for problematizing the relationship between political periods and the existence of women. In this context, looking at organizational characteristics of the early women's associations, we can see that both the war economy (during this period women associations organized as a charitable organization are common) and political reform movement are effective. For example, Ottoman Red Crescent Association, Center of Women Committee, National Assistance for Needy Soldier Families (1915), Country-wide Resistance Woman Committee (1913), etc (Durakbaşa, 2007:98).

It is possible to say that political demands of women became prominent in the period towards the Republic. In this period *Women's Association* (1924) which is a statement of political demands of women was founded by Nezihe Muhittin. While *Women Association* in which Nezihe Muhittin is active transforms itself into the Women Public Party which is a political organization we observe that the boundaries of women movement of the era became clear. The association always had to state that it is not related with committees such as Countrywide Resistance Organization of Women and therefore asserted that they will compose the women's representation of Countrywide Resistance Organization (Zihnioğlu, 2003:125). The period that moves toward the Republic while describes the activity of women, it also enabled them to be associated with identities about social wealth. Classification of early period feminists changes in this period. Women movement in Republic Period becomes widespread among educated, middle class women who have professions. Therefore the women and women roles which were ennobled by the Republic period undergo a transformation. With the Republic, 'Anatolian women' rather than 'coquette detached Ottoman women' are brought forward. In this sense Anatolian women is both the 'saviour' and the 'saved' (Göle, 2004:91).

The emphasis of 'Noble Turkish women' is a direct criticism of the role assigned for women by the previous political period. According to Durakbaşa, the image of 'new woman' was established as 'social woman' in the old period. Kemalists supported women to become working women with their traditional roles (Durakbaşa, 2000:143). "…In the cultural model of Kemalists social (public) roles of women was clearly evaluated superior to their domestic traditional roles for the first time and educated women who have a profession were rewarded with a respective status compared with traditional housewife" (Durakbaşa, 1998: 43). The image of new woman would both carry out her traditional roles and have a place for the wealth of nation. In short, "Turkish women must be the most serious, intellectual and dignified woman in the world" (Atatürk, 1997:242). The image of women of the Republic period legalize having profession with "national mission, the love of duty" but at the same time suppresses her gender with features such as "belonging, gravity, modesty, severity" as Göle (2004:110) has stated.

That the central aim of women's associations being public welfare cannot be regarded separate from the process of nationalization. In this process education and organization of women were regarded as a need for the national task and ultimately public welfare. According to Durakbaşa, the problem of women in Turkey is still being considered on a 'modernizing' line both in the *Tanzimat* reforms period and this day. This point of view attributes to women the backwardness of society (Durakbaşa, 1998; Yaraman, 2001). When the problem of women started to be solved with backwardness, the first step to be recovered from the current situation was change of traditional bonds and 'transforming them with the new ones.' While the Republic period codes women as the mother of nation and the carriers of culture, according to Sirman, women at the same time turn into cultural carriers as 'the representatives of national spirit.' The

woman is used for differentiating a nation/identity from the other. In this process women are punished or ennobled if they behave according to their identity (Sirman, 2002:229-230). The woman is located with her belonging to a society or community rather than with her identity as a woman.

Lower and upper formations in the period of social transformation form a basis for revising the position of women. Sharing the opinion of Sirman, we can say that women are assigned the role of 'patriot citizen' rather than that of mother or wife. Education given to the women, activities and profession of women was evaluated relative to the contributions to the society by both men and women feminists of the period. Therefore Berktay (1998:8) asserts that since the period of the Republic could not create a change of mentality that would transform the patriarchy, it would be cruel to expect women movement to do this. As she has underlined, accepting the women as 'citizen' is an assurance for the democratization of country system but it should not be forgotten that the concept of abstract citizenship references men and is gender-blinded.

In the period that lasts till 1970s, women are regarded the carriers of culture, the representatives of national spirit as being 'patriot citizens' apart from being mother and wife. Within the leftist tradition from 1970s on, women are regarded as 'sisters' and 'fellows.' While the concepts of sister or fellow suppress the gender of women, it was taken in relation to class identities in the same process. Therefore the reason for the secondary place of women in their society seemed to arise from the class structure. Turkish leftists have the mentality that the feudal remnant will solve itself by being related to revolution can be said to bring the problem of women to the background or instrumentalized it in this fame despite of its equality and freedom discourses (Berktay, 1995:315-316).

Transformation of women movement in Turkey

Both the nationalization and freeing of women movement by leftist activities occurs around 1980s. As Bora have stated (1996:39) movements after the 80s began with small groups. Women in these groups saw that they are not 'saved' 'in future' by their mother, the women who always struggle for saving others settled account with their 'feminine experiences.' It is not arbitrary for this settlement to happen in 1980s. 1980s brought a pressure period caused by the military regime but at the same time enabled new discourses, new parameters to become visible in an environment in which rightist-leftist groups were suppressed (Arat, 1991:13). The women's movement is a political activity of depoliticized period began to sprout by the 1980s and diversified while sprouting.

The Second Wave Feminist Movement which coincides to 1980s in Turkey began to spread among middle-class women. Although feminist actors/activists in Turkey are composed of educated, mostly professional middle-class women, there are also women who get into connection with external feminist literature via their own means or friends (Arat, 1998:119). Thanks to this feature of the women's feminist literature could have been translated, read and discussed simultaneously.

Women sharing their experiences, refusing the hierarchical structure while sharing, loudly announcing and sharing the reasons of their being oppressed created a common arena. The slogan 'the personal is political' which became the political discourse of second generation women in 1960s in West becomes a slogan which is adopted by second generation feminism in 1980s in Turkey. Women included their domestic problems in the political arena a development not expected before. Second generation feminism of the 1980-1990 periods politicizes the meaning of femininity. In this frame the first public step of Feminists was taken with the symposium titled

"Woman and Her Problems" organized by YAZKO (Cooperation of Writers and Translators) in May, 1981. Since February 4th 1983, a page is separated for women in *Somut* which is a weekly journal published by YAZKO. At these page problems such as abortion, power of women, traditional place of women, women and advertising were discussed (Çaha, 2006:9; Timisi and Gevrek, 2007:15).

The journal, *Somut,* began to be followed in the feminist periphery for a short time both in Istanbul and in Ankara. House meetings were fed by the discussion points of this journal. As Bora has stated house meetings were 'political' because it brought private issues of women to the fore. While those who attend these meetings were academicians, post-graduate students, doctoral students at the beginning, the meetings began to gain strength by the attendance of those who are not from academic environment. House meetings enabled women to bring their experiences (motherness, relations with children, marriage, virginity, rape, violence, patriarchy, etc.) around feminine identity (Timisi and Gevrek, 2007:15-20). While these meetings transformed feminine experiences into an identity; on the other hand it also formed the basis of the crystallization of different women groups in feminist movement with the inclusion of women of different political status. Raising consciousness, creating awareness and sensibility, power strategies would be the indispensable methods of women's movement as the outputs of women's experiences of this period.

After the second half of 1980s, gathering of women spread towards public space. Subjects of nearly 10 meetings carried in Atatürk Cultural Centre brought differentiations within feminism to the fore. It can be said that the history of second generation feminism in Turkey is nourished by ideological movements in the background. Therefore second generation feminism occurs as a social project for the totalitarian (political, economical, cultural, and ideological) rather than being a marginal social project (Timisi and Gevrek, 2007:21).

In 1979 "Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women" was accepted in European Union in 1979. Turkey gave its approval in 1985. In the frame of this agreement, women carried out a protest for the legal, political and economical regulations preventing gender discrimination. The "Women Petition" performed among women is important for being the first massive protest (Uçan, 2004:116; Çaha, 2006:10; Timisi and Gevrek, 2007:23). This protest is important for presenting the potential of women in gathering for their common interest despite the existence of different women groups. Similar protests reflected on campaigns such as "Solidarity Campaign against Violence," "Our Body Belongs to Us," and "No to Sexual Abuse." Despite their different association, women got around upper identity of femininity and struggle together. One of the formations that must be highlighted within the feminist movement of the period is the Feminist Weekend. This meeting reflects the feminist characteristics of the period. First, one is that it is important for being a formation that enables the gathering of different feminist groups (radical, liberal, socialist) in Turkey. "Protecting our identity, our body" can be thought as the slogan which summarizes this association (Kardam and Ecevit, 2007:90). The transformation of the Feminist Weekend to the Women's Council later on appears as the political statement of the mentality of collecting different feminist groups. Inclusion of different groups in the Weekend is especially important for discussing the concepts of 'feminist sister' or 'feminist authority' (Timisi and Gevrek, 2007:29). Feminist organization forms an important source of argument to find ways and means not hierarchical in the sense of both early and today's women's organizations. It must be noted that this tradition is dominant in the search of NGOs for non-hierarchical structures and relations in 1990s.

When we reach the 1990s we see that the tradition of actions and protests in the 1980s gained specific visibility and acceptance in society. Moving from this legacy, it

can be said that secondary position of women again turns into a social problem in the 1990s. The women movement that has developed from the 1990s has improved together with some distinctive processes. First, women movements enter a different process in the sense of working fields, organizational styles and ideological posturing when compared with previous years. Women's organizations increased quickly as the extensions of identity search of women with the ease of sustaining and announcing their own activities emerge. With the increase in organization, Kurdish feminist groups and feminist groups that are based on Islam headed for organization. Therefore organization spread not only in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir but also in different places such as Gaziantep, Antalya, and Diyarbakır.

Another point that characterizes the period after the 1990s is the international actors being determinant about women movements and women's organizations. During 4th World Conference organized in Beijing in 1995 and the Second UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1996, a lot of women NGO across the world had the opportunity of gathering and sharing their experiences (Kardam and Ecevit, 2007:91). Again when Amsterdam Agreement became valid in 1997, the EU aimed to provide equality of women and men in every political arena, law, program and activity. Gender mainstreaming not only aims for institutional, legal equality but at the same time becomes permanent and tries to provide a transformation which aims at changing behaviors and roles. In order to make contributions to this process, the European Women's Lobby has been organizing to be effective between women's organizations and decision makers (Uçan, 2004:117-118).

While these are the developments on an international level, we see the institutionalization stages of KSSGM (General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women) in Turkey at the same time. The first step of institutionalization of equality of women and men under the roof of state was taken with the announcement that a mechanism was formed in the EU in the frame of decisions taken in the context of Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. Later on this, construction became KSSGM. Of course, in the process of formation of this structure, it emerged that women's organizations, women groups are required for the state to develop the status of women and raise their sensibility (Acuner, 2007:127-136). Therefore the state has become a party to women's problem.

Formations after 1990: KAMER and KAGİDER

KAMER is important for both being nourished by the tradition of argument, discussion, awareness raising, gaining sensibility and applying this in two regions and being a civil society organization that operates in association living through the institutionalization and secondly organization process of 1990s. In this sense KAMER can be regarded as the civil society organization that exemplifies the process evolving from the 1980s to 1990s (experience of project feminism and inclusion of women from different classes into women's movement).

KAMER which completes its foundation practices in 1997 began operating with 12 women. KAMER is a civil society organization whose centre is in Diyarbakır and has 23 organizations in South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia. When we observe the mission of KAMER we see that it is the first independent women's organization in the region that 'aims to produce alternatives of harmful practices that is based on women's culture and traditions.' Later it is possible to mention many other civil society organizations that struggle with violence towards women and women's participation in economic life.

When the general activities of KAMER are considered, there are human rights

awareness group studies of women, domestic violence immediate support services and women entrepreneurs' studies which has been highly discussed and required recently. Group Studies of Human Rights Awareness of Women has been carried out since the foundation of KAMER. This study is composed of groups of 10-15 people and two group facilitators and lasts 3-4 hours a week and 14 meetings. Studies have been carried out about human rights of women, violence in and out of family, sexuality, communication, and economical rights of women, gender roles, and education of daughters, discrimination, feminism and women's organization (KAMER, 2003:12). The study which is called as awareness raising group study for human rights of women was changed with an egalitarian concept as awareness group studies due to the hierarchy it includes. In this sense, the women of KAMER make the relation of hierarchy with the system visible by problematizing the space between women and their own conscious in their works published in Amargi. "Who's conscious is higher than the other! All of us are brought up with the rules of this system… there was no place, no practice, no system in which women live freely as equal individuals of society neither here nor anywhere else. Therefore there was no conscious in hand we can use so we can't talk about "raising" it (Anon, 2009:53). Awareness group studies are important for presenting the complex relationship of daily life of women with institutions. Women of KAMER state the unequal relationship that moves from daily life to institutions as such: "As we discover ourselves we recognized the violence, hierarchy, and closure in our life. We saw that hierarchy which starts at home sustains out of home as well and broadens as the living space extents. Later on we learnt that hierarchy is one of the most important elements of system and is applied in details" (Anon, 2009:54). In this frame, awareness group studies not only mention the surprising similarity between the daily lives of women. Presenting these experiences with the gender base of society is valuable for the feminist point of view. Studies of KAMER which are carried out at intervals are undoubtedly the product of the struggle for making the bond between women's experiences and the sexist system visible.

Another study of KAMER which draws attention on its founding year is the project about honor killing. KAMER initiated studies for raising the sensibility for women on the issue of violence towards women and for spreading this study to city centers in two regions and from there to counties and villages. In this aim, a large scaled project of three years was carried out after the preparation study in 2003. "Project for the Development of Permanent Methods in the Struggle against Killings Committed under the Guise of Honor" aimed both to create a sensibility in the region and a search for permanent, concrete methods of resolution. This project was applied by taking KAMER organizations in Diyarbakır, Mardin, Kızıltepe, Urfa, Bingöl, Batman, Hakkari, Muş, Van, Siirt, Bitlis, Adıyaman, Malatya and Şırnak into consideration (KAMER, 2005:26). In the scope of this project, issues of what the concept of honor killing implies, reasons for honor killing, women in which socio-economical statues are exposed to this and the ways of protection were examines. Generally, an institutional sensibility was formed in the region and specific institutions were included in the project as parties. Emergency teams, governorship, municipalities, authorities of provincial directorates of SHÇEK (Institution of Social Services and Child Welfare), bar association and healthcare organizations, mufti organizations, representative authorities from police and gendarme were enabled to act together with all the shareholders. While the parties are gathered in the region, KAMER made efforts to include international actors on the issue of violence towards women by participating in both national and international meetings for the presentation and operation of the project. It has participated in the discussion of 'Courses for Human Rights of Women' organized in Sweden and had negotiations with various funding boards in Holland. Parallel to this,

studies of KAMER about honor killing were explained in the meeting in Ankara, İzmir, Şırnak and Muğla so the subject was retained on the agenda. Over 500 women applied to KAMER as a result of studies that lasted nearly three years. It is known that nearly 100 applicants live in fear for their life. Although this project does not continue, actively tracing the practices about honor killing still goes on (KAMER, 2006:34-47).

In the process, project KAMER stated that honor killing is not restricted to women of a specific ethnicity. When the violence towards women is considered as a universal problem, it is not seen as a situation particular to for South-eastern and Eastern Regions. It is clear that when crimes committed under the guise of honor are considered, people recall these two regions. In addition to this imbalance within regions, unemployment, poverty, false communication based on language increase the events experienced in these regions (KAMER, 2005:19). Publicity of the violence, institutions remained in the background, and political movements in the region pushing the subject to the second place cause violent activities towards women to be imprisoned in a private space. In this sense KAMER focuses the subject to be discussed by relating the violence with universality.

Akkoç who wrote the establishment story of KAMER relates the violence with women being both traditional and institutional practitioner. "We are imprisoned within the limits of traditional rules called verbal laws all through our life. We were the executers of the decisions taken in every step of life. Although we struggle more than men it was not possible for us to take place in decision mechanism" (Akkoç, 2007:206). As Ertürk have stated, KAMER targeted dominant Turkish society as members of excluded people in one hand and patriarchal order which suppress women on the other (Ertürk, 2006:99). Within these two situations, while KAMER manifests its independency besides political, ideological belongings, it also exemplifies a struggle on the platform of women's movement in Turkey as a woman NGO. This struggle first operates in KAMER's acknowledgment in the region by public/governmental agencies. The Women of KAMER recount the process as such:

> Sometimes we used to go to governorate, they did not make appointment with us, we move to police department but we are refused, there are days when we wait at the door of governorate from morning till evening. But considering the situation now, we see that this is their job and they have to do this. We could impose this study to the people in Diyarbakır only after 11 years and advanced in changing some of the policies. (H.A.)

KAMER which talks about the daily experiences of women in South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia regard the state as the party of this study in other words as the party of women is problem. Activating the representatives of counties in state institutions and the potential they have is the issue with which KAMER struggled for since its establishment.

KAMER is secondly said to be politicizing the experiences of women. Of course this is carried out as a counter attack towards current Kurdish movement and violences being attributed to a specific ethnicity.

> We stand on our feet. We keep the same aloofness with everyone. People say where this Kurdish movement, Kurdish problem come forth. You know we keep the problem we live secret; we don't let it out of this room… We have the mentality to solve the problems by ourselves. But we lived the process for few years and nothing could be solved within us. It is because violence is still experienced. (H.A.)

Moving from the speeches of women of KAMER, the violence they experienced we can say that the identity of women is being formed. In this sense political identity comes following the feminine identity. In addition it is clearly stated that political ac-

tions are gender blind. It must be underlined that there is a serious awareness that women and feminine point of view is rescued from subordination. As Fraser (2006:14) has stated "…talking about necessities is detected as a struggle which the groups that have unequal discursive (or non-discursive) sources try to make their social needs hegemonic." KAMER's women politicizing the violence experience that they live; succeeding discussion beyond identity policy can be regarded as the indicator of their success in their efforts.

KAMER makes the same effort on the issue that violence towards women does not belong to a specific ethnic group. The policy of KAMER 'reaching from all strata' can be regarded as the indicator. Note the statement of a woman of KAMER;

> We have said that we will work together and side by side with women. And we have said that we will work here without doing any discrimination of language, religion and ethnicity. While examining violence we do not only talk about Kurdish women, but also Arabic, Zaza and Armenian, Assyrian though few. We will work together with all these women… Because Kurdish men and Arabic, Turkish and Assyrian men commit violence, it does not matter. (N.K.)

These examples we have mentioned exemplify the transformation potential of KAMER, a civil society organization of women, as an actor on the issues in which requirements and concepts are related with. Women discuss, politicize and transform their problems with their feminine identity. Therefore they include a detailed analysis about society. Undoubtedly, these analyses invite people to reread family policy, domestic roles, education and economy in which men are regarded dominant by the tradition.

Another issue which is problematized by KAMER is empowerment of women economically. The relationship between empowerment of women and the alteration of her position come to the fore with the frequent studies of entrepreneurship recently. When the recent studies of KAMER are considered, it is seen that women entrepreneurship studies are indispensable. The project of women entrepreneurship is based on the desire of economical presence of women who have participated in the studies of KAMER, stopped the violence, succeeded in getting out of home and who trust in herself (KAMER, 2003:16). The aim of KAMER's entrepreneurship studies must be regarded as the empowerment of women's position in the family rather than empowering the family. We know that many micro credit applications are designed as an income-generating activity to the family. However the woman of KAMER designs micro credit as a tool that she would use for empowering her own position. Therefore she pioneers the mentality that income-generating studies must be carried out together with awareness group studies. Akkoç who is the charter member and also the member of consultative board of micro credit points to the importance of entrepreneurship studies' being woman-oriented.

> We have been carrying out women entrepreneurship project for nearly one year in fact. I am searching for what all these people are doing and whose activities attain its aims. We have given money to many women within micro credit program but when we observe the life of that woman there is nothing that creates awareness that would enable her empowerment as a woman. It brings women out of the house. It creates a period of empowerment. Women get this money because it is given to them. Women are trusted more. There is a recycling at the rate of 98%. However it is not the money given in order to empower women actually. Women are chosen because they are addicted to their debts. Therefore although this money provides a temporary empowerment it brings burden to women in long term. It is because they have spent nearly 20% of this money for themselves. The rest of this money was operated by men. Women begin to get worried when day of debt payment comes closer and there are

even women who experience violence at home for overdue debts. (N.A.)

Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey (KAGİDER)

We continue the discussion of empowerment of women economically and raising her status that have been discussed in many organizations, groups since 1990s with KAGİDER which has high visibility. Although women's participation in public space or economical life is not a new discourse the existence of women as entrepreneurs appears as a new discourse in the sense of Turkey.

When we examine KAGİDER closer, we can say that they began operating in Istanbul in 2002 and their main purposes are to increase the number of women entrepreneurs who create an economical value, empowerment of current women entrepreneurs, enabling their integration with the world and finally contributing to the economy of Turkey (KAGİDER, 2007:5). In the frame of this mission, we see that KAGİDER centralized the women entrepreneur but their demands or activities are not restricted with entrepreneurship. We must talk about an expansion in the mission of KAGİDER especially after 2007. It can be said this development is influenced both participation demand of KAGİDER in the agenda of Turkey and by the studies of KAGİDER with different women groups (KADER (Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates), KAMER, Amargi Women Academy, Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation, etc.) in recent years.

We can exemplify the mission expansion of KAGİDER with the composition of women fund and bringing this fund as women entrepreneurship and leadership fund later. Women funding aims to create resource and transmit this resource to civil society organizations which make efforts for the economical, social and political empowerment of women, that being means that would enable gender equality. In this sense KAGİDER is the first foundation which provides fund with women project basis in Turkey (KAGİDER, 2007:23). In the scope of this fund, various activities of Amargi Women Academy, Flimmor Women's Cooperative, and Foundation of Solidarity with Women, KAMER and Community Volunteers Foundation towards social economical life of women are supported. But in the final declaration of I. International Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership Summit organized on 4-5 June, 2009; it was decided to form the Entrepreneurship and Leadership Fund (KGL Fund) that would serve for the education program for the working life of women and support of women in political arena. It is possible to regard KGL Fund as a political and institutional means that would enable the empowerment of women.

KAGİDER started to carry out this mission which aims the economical and social empowerment of women in the BIZ centre. It is aimed to give incubation and consultancy services within BİZ apart from seminars of 'entrepreneurship and leadership education,' 'I am setting up my businesses,' 'I am developing my business.' It is targeted to give entrepreneurship and leadership education to 300 women within the centre (KAGİDER, 2009:33). Onanç, board chairman of KAGİDER summarizes the philosophy of BİZ as such: "we must improve an equal social life culture in which different individuals live together and respect each other. We must compose BİZ by being individuals who think, examine, produce and are parts of solution. We can achieve this with our women upper identity" (Milliyet BİZ, May 2009). Therefore although BİZ was founded as an entrepreneurship and leadership centre we can say that it tries to include all the women with its discourse.

One of the characteristics that separate KAGİDER from other civil society organization of women is their announcing the EU process of Turkey loudly. Thus, studies were initiated in Brussels in March, 2008. This step can generally be thought of as a statement of the belief that the NGO practices of KAGİDER play an active role in the

participation process of EU. A member from KAGİDER explains the lobby activities for EU process as such:

> Our greatest aim was to increase women entrepreneurship. But now we have deviated from our aim, which is our first establishment mission. Our mission is now restricted with showing ourselves in political arena and working for Turkey's efficiency in EU process on political platform. We have no more expectation. Now we are focused on this (N.G).

Apart from being a member of European Women's Lobby, KAGİDER makes efforts to apply the mentality of gender mainstreaming of the Amsterdam Agreement on economical and political life (TÜSİAD and KAGİDER, 2008:320-321). KAGİDER's demand of a 'gender-sensitive budget' can be regarded as the means of women point of view in economical field. It is possible to regard KAGİDER's demand as the effort of politicizing a specialized area, discursively (economical) limits of depoliticized area.

Another point that must be mentioned about KAGİDER is the close dialogue of recent women's movement with social institutions. Onanç, board chairman of KAGİDER, summarizes the mission of KAGİDER in two evaluations. One of them is the explanation that KAGİDER will use its influence for the equality of women and men and that "any people, any institution who wants women to improve is our fellow" (Hürriyet, 23 March 2007). The second explanation of Onanç is about the relationship of KAGİDER's feminist movement: "We recognized something in KAGİDER. We examined KA-MER (Women's Center) and Purple Roof. We saw that people have the same share in women's movements. I bestowed that common share for myself. This is now described as feminism by some of the intellectuals" (Milliyet, 6 May 2007). It is not possible to deduce from the quotation that KAGİDER is a feminist organization. In this frame KAGİDER is regarded as a civil society organization nourished by liberal tradition and makes efforts to make organization such as "Commission of Equality of Women and Men," "EU Women Secretariat" active. However it is important to say for a NGO which centralizes women entrepreneurship that means that would enable the empowerment of women both in social and in political area are searched.

Conclusion

We see that there are various civil society organizations in Turkey after 1990s whose working fields and issues are different. In this sense the KAGİDER and KAMER organizations seem to be united for the empowerment of women although their working fields and working methods are different. Recently KAGİDER has especially been contributing to women's movement by including women's economical, social, diplomatic and private area in the political area. Similarly, KAMER has made efforts to politicize the private area of women and the economical means that would empower the women independent from the home. In short, although the political-intellectual tradition by which both the civil society organizations are nourished on their political means and target group, their public discussion is creating gender sensibility. All these efforts of civil society organizations make it necessary to emphasize the potential of producing policy and politicizing the demands. In spite of these efforts, it must be added that the civil society organizations of women mostly see between bringing service and operating the mechanisms that remain restricted in reaching out to women.

Bibliography

Abadan-Unat N. (1998) Söylemden protestoya: Türkiye'de kadın hareketinin dönüşümü. In: Hacımirzaoğlu AB, editor. 75 yılda kadınlar ve erkekler. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, p

323−336.

Acuner S. (2007) 90'lı Yıllar ve resmi düzeyde kurumsallaşmanın doğuş aşamaları. In: Bora A, Günal A, editors. 90'larda Türkiye'de feminizm. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p 125−158.

Akkoç N. (2007) Diyarbakır Ka-Mer'in kuruluş hikayesi ve yürüttüğü çalışmalar. In: Bora A, Günal A, editors. 90'larda Türkiye'de feminizm. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları: p 205−216.

Anon. (2009) KAMER'in farkındalık grupları. Amargi (12):53−54.

Arat Y. (1991) 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde kadın hareketi: liberal Kemalizm'in radikal uzantısı. Toplum ve Bilim (53):7−19.

Arat Y. (1998) Feminists, islamists and political change in Turkey. Polit Psychol 19:117−131.

Atatürk MK (1997) Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri II (1906-1938). Ankara: Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları.

Baykan A. (1999) Nezihe Mühittin'de feminizmin düşünsel kökleri. In: Baykan A, Ötüş-Baskett B, editors. Nezihe Muhittin ve Türk kadını. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Belge T. (1998) İnsan hakları ve yurttaşlık çalışma grubu. In: Üç sempozyum: sivil toplum kuruluşları. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, p 69−70.

Berktay F. (1995) Türk Solu'nun kadına bakışı: değişen bir şey var mı? In: Tekeli Ş, editor. 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde kadın bakış açısından kadınlar. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p 313−326.

Berktay F. (1998) Cumhuriyet'in 75 yıllık serüvenine kadınlar açısından bakmak. In: Hacımirzaoğlu AB, editor. 75 yılda kadınlar ve erkekler. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, p 1−11.

Bora A. (1996) Kadın hareketi: nereden nereye. Birikim (83):39−41.

Bora T, Çağlar S. (2002) Modernleşme ve batılılaşmanın taşıyıcısı olarak STK'lar. In: Bora T, Gültekingil M, editors. Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce (Vol. 3): modernleşme ve batıcılık. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p 336−346.

Çaha Ö. (2006) Türk kadın hareketi: "kadınsı" bir sivil toplumun imkanı? Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi 1(3):6−15.

Durakbaşa A. (1998) Cumhuriyet döneminde Kemalist kadın kimliğinin oluşumu. Tarih ve Toplum 51:39−43.

Durakbaşa A. (2000) Kemalism as identity politics in Turkey. In: Kabasakal Arat ZF, editor. Deconstructing images of "the Turkish woman." New York: St. Martin's Press, p 139−155.

Durakbaşa A. (2007) Halide Edip, Türk modernleşmesi ve feminizm. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Ertürk Y. (2006) Turkey's modern paradox: identity politics, women's agency and universal right. In: Ferree MM, Mari Tripp A, editors. Global feminism: transnational women's activism, organizing, and human right. New York: New York University Press, p 79−109.

Fraser N. (2006) İhtiyaçlar mücadelesi. İstanbul: Feminist Kitaplık.

Göle N. (1998) Yurtdışı ilişkilere kurumsal bir bakış. In: Üç sempozyum: sivil toplum kuruluşları. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, p 114−120.

Göle N. (2004) Modern mahrem. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.

Kabasakal Arat ZF. (2006) Feminist proje girişimleri: genel sorunlar ve Türkiye için değerlendirmeler. Amargi (3):30−31.

KAGİDER (2007) KAGİDER çalışmaları, 2005−2007.

KAGİDER (2009) KAGİDER faaliyet raporu, 2007−2009.

KAMER (2003) Grup çalışması için el kitabı. KAMER.

KAMER (2005) Suçlu kim? KAMER Güneydoğu ve Doğu Anadolu bölgelerinde 'namus' kisvesi altında işlenen cinayetler ile mücadelede kalıcı yöntemler geliştirme projesi 2005 raporu. Diyarbakır: KAMER Vakfı Yayınları.

KAMER (2006) İstersek biter. KAMER "namus" adına işlenen cinayetler 2006 raporu. Diyarbakır: KAMER Vakfı Yayınları.

Kardam F, Ecevit Y. (2007) 1990'ların sonunda bir kadın iletişim kuruluşu: Uçan Süpürge. In: Bora A, Günal A, editors. 90'larda Türkiye'de feminizm. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p 87−108.

Keane J. (1994) Demokrasi ve sivil toplum. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.

Kentel F. (2003) Sivil toplum kuruluşları: "projecilik" versus kültürel yurttaşlık. In: Projeler, projecilik ve sivil toplum kuruluşları sempozyumu. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, p 3−12.

Offe C. (1999) Yeni sosyal hareketler: kuramsal politikanın sınırlarının zorlanması. In: Çayır K, editor. Yeni sosyal hareketler teorik açılımlar. İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, p 53−79.

Sancar M. (2000) Global sivil toplum mu? Birikim (130):19−32.

Sirman N. (2002) Kadınların milliyeti. In: Bora T, Gültekin M, editors. Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce (Vol. 1): milliyetçilik. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p 226−244.

Şeni N. (1995) 19. yüzyıl sonunda İstanbul basınında moda ve kadın kıyafetleri. In: Tekeli Ş, editor. 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde kadın bakış açısından kadınlar. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p 53−78.

Tekeli Ş. (1998) Birinci ve ikinci dalga feminist hareketlerin karşılaştırmalı incelemesi üzerine bir deneme. In: Hacımirzaoğlu AB, editor. 75 yılda kadınlar ve erkekler. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, p 337−346.

Timisi N, Gevrek MA. (2007) 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde feminist hareket: Ankara çevresi. In: Bora A, Günal A, editors. 90'larda Türkiye'de Feminizm. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p 13−39.

TÜSİAD, KAGİDER (2008) Türkiye'de toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği: sorunlar, öncelikler ve çözüm önerileri. TÜSİAD and KAGİDER.

Uçan S. (2004) İkinci dalga feminizmin açtığı alan: demokratikleşmeden AB'ye. Birikim (184-185):113−121.

Yaraman, A. (2001) Resmi tarihten kadın tarihine. İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları.

Zihnioğlu Y. (2003) Kadınsız inkılap. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.