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Engendering "Civil Society"?

Discourses of Women's Organisations in Turkey

by

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Abstract

This thesis asks how women's organisations are affected by and responding to the promotion and institutionalisation of civil society in Turkey, as led by the European Union (EU). More specifically, I enquire into the civil society discourses articulated by members of women's organisations in the country in order to evaluate the extent to which they reflect or contest hegemonic views of civil society currently in circulation. I employ feminist critical discourse analysis to make sense of forty-one semi-structured interviews conducted with women activists from Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish, feminist and anti-capitalist organisations, and of their group documents. I make four main sets of empirical arguments about this data, namely that members of women's organisations in Turkey articulate diverse discourses of civil society; that these discourses cut across different organisations in ways that belie what are often seen as fundamental ideological differences in the Turkish context; that these discourses show women activists in Turkey do not passively reproduce dominant views of civil society, even if many cling to it as a normative ideal; and that there is evidence of important critiques of and/or resistance to civil society, and of its outright rejection, meriting wider attention amongst activists and analysts. With these arguments, the thesis contributes to the literature on NGO construction of civil society in Turkey and the Middle East, and on the women's movement in Turkey, and to the feminist theorisation of civil society.

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

AGD Anatolian Youth Association
AKP Justice and Development Party
AKDER Women's Rights Organisation against Discrimination
AMARGİ AMARGİ Association
ANAP Motherland Party
AP Justice Party
BDP Peace and Democracy Party
BKP Capital City Women's Platform Association
CA Conversation analysis
CEDAW Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE Central and Eastern Europe
CSO Civil society organisation
CDA Critical Discourse Analysis
CHP Republican People's Party
ÇKD Republican Women Association
DYP True Path Party
FCDA Feminist critical discourse analysis
DEP Democracy Party
DEHAP Democratic People's Party
DİKASUM Research Centre for Women's Affairs Diyarbakır
DİSK The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey
DP Democrat Party
DÖKH Democratic Free Women's Movement
DMO Democratic mass organisation
DTP Democratic Society Party
EU European Union
EWL European Women's Lobby
FP Virtue Party
HADEP People's Democracy Party
HEP People's Labour Party
IGO Intergovernmental Organisation
PDA Post-structuralist discourse analysis
PKK Kurdistan Worker's Party
RP Welfare Party
KCK Kurdistan Communities Union
KA-DER Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates
KAMER Women's Centre
KESK Confederation of Public Workers' Union
Mazlumder The Organisation of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
MEDA Mediterranean Economic Development Area
MENA Middle East and Northern Africa
MGK National Security Council

MHP National Movement Party
MNP National Order Party
NGO Non-governmental organisations
Özgür-Der The Association for Free Thought and Educational Rights
SELİS SELİS Women's Association
SFK Socialist Feminist Collective
SIDA Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TEMA The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion
TESK Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen
TİSK Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
TOBB The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TSK Turkish Armed Forces
TÜKD Turkish Association of University Women
TÜRK-İŞ Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions
TKB Turkish Women's Union
UN United Nations
US Flying Broom
WB World Bank
WTO World Trade Organisation
VAKAD Van Women's Association

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Introduction

This thesis asks an empirical research question, which is how women's organisations in Turkey are affected by and responding to the promotion and institutionalisation of civil society in Turkey, as led by the European Union (EU). More particularly, this thesis seeks to identify how and in what ways voices of women activists contribute to the meaning of civil society and/or produce alternative understandings to the dominant view of civil society.

1. Rationale

The thesis responds to two current political struggles over the theory and practice of civil society. The first has to do with the contemporary dominance of a neoliberal version, and its contestation. Civil society has long been an ambiguous and contested term, as evident in the existence of diverse traditions in the civil society literature - such as liberal, Marxist, Gramscian, and Habermasian. However, since the global revival of the concept in the 1980s the meaning of the concept has become more fixed. After the collapse of Soviet Union, civil society was perceived by both scholars and policy-makers as a way of overcoming a range of problems associated with authoritarianism and the crisis of the welfare state. Policy makers, scholars and NGO activists alike have interpreted the revival of civil society as "a return to associational life, enabling engagement with the state and fostering solidarity in the public sphere" (Chandhoke, 2005), thereby facilitating the cultivation of "trust, choice and virtues of democracy" (Young, 2000: 155). In this context, international institutions such as the EU, the United Nations (UN), and the World Bank (WB) have employed the notion of civil society as a policy tool for promoting democracy and development, including in the Middle East. The dominant approach of international organisations rests on a Western, liberal dichotomy between state and civil society, in which civil society is identified with associational life and control over the state. In this sense, civil society is construed as crucial to the functioning of liberal democracy and democratic governance, an empowering force against the authoritarian state. However, civil society is also associated by international

organisations with neoliberal policies intended to shrink the developmental and welfare state, bringing with it an emphasis on the delegation of key responsibilities to non-governmental organisations (NGO), including women's NGOs, in the areas of poverty, education, health and the like, a fact that has garnered significant critique.[1]

The second political struggle over civil society hinges on the gendered character of the theory and practice of civil society. Feminist thinkers and commentators locate the gendered bias of the term, particularly the liberal/neoliberal versions of civil society, in the reification of a public/private divide.[2] Put simply, liberals waver between two views of the public/private divide; in one view, civil society is squarely envisioned as part of a public, masculine sphere distinct from a private, feminine sphere, and in the other, it is private yet still distinguished from domestic life (Squires, 2003: 132; Okin, 1998: 117). In both views, civil society is associated with masculine traits and roles. Not only does this reveal the gendering of civil society as a concept, it also calls attention to the historical exclusion of women from civil society and political life based on the desire to confine them to a private world. By exposing the reification of the liberal public/private dichotomy, feminist theorists highlight the interaction between civil society and both public and private spheres, and bring the family, considered as a part of the private or domestic sphere, back into political consideration (Benhabib and Cornell, 1987: 7).

The dominant neoliberal and gendered version of civil society is contested across the Middle East, including in Turkey. In addition to the many studies in the region which criticise neoliberal civil society, there are scholars who seek to rethink civil society in the Middle East by looking at women's position and activism. Such scholars indicate the gendered dimensions of civil society and the state, and the increasing significance of gender politics in challenging the state in the region.[3] To be sure, a number of studies have explored the history, trajectories and contemporary

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[1] For critical voices to contemporary dominance of a neoliberal version of civil society, see the following: Beckman (1996); Charlton and May (1995); Carothers and Ottoway (2000); Clarke (1998); Dvoráková (2008); Encarnación (2002); Fisher (1997); Mercer (2002); Lewis (2001); van Rooy (1998) and Altan-Olcay and İçduygu (2012).

[2] For further critical discussion of the gendered bias of civil society, see the following: Pateman (1988, 1989); Fraser (1992); Benhabib (1992); Howell (2006, 2007); Howell and Mulligan (2003, 2005); Hagemann, Michel and Budde (2008); Phillips (1999, 2002); Stevenson (2005); Young (1990, 2000); Weldon (2005); and Eto (2012). This literature will be discussed at more length in Chapter 1.

[3] For instance, see Krause (2008, 2012); Al-Mughni (1997); Al-Ali (2003); and Al-Ali and Pratt (2011) and Rabo (1996). This literature will be discussed at more length in Chapter 1.

contexts of the women's movement, women's activism around state ideology and policies, NGOisation, and the gendered dimensions of funding processes in the Middle East, including Turkey.[4] Particularly in Turkey, feminist scholars and activists have examined the understandings of women's groups and civil society organisations (CSOs) of the effects of the EU accession process on civil society organisations, especially women's organisations. They have critically researched the impacts of the EU and other international funding on the Turkish women's/feminist movement and women's organisations.[5]

This thesis builds upon and seeks to contribute to these critical interrogations of civil society in Turkey but takes as its starting point the question of how NGOs in general, and women's NGOs in particular, can contribute to the field of meaning around civil society, as this has not been widely discussed in the academic literature. The limited research into NGO activists' articulation of civil society in the Middle East, includes work by Abdelrahman (2004) and Pratt (2005) on the engagement of NGO activists with civil society and power in Egypt, and Kuzmanovic (2012)'s study on activists in Turkey. There has been even less attention given to women activists' articulations of civil society, with the honourable exceptions of Çaha (2013) and Leyla Kuzu (2010). Çaha and Leyla Kuzu's studies pay attention to the construction of civil society as a masculine space and provide a feminist critique of this mainstream idea of civil society by turning to the articulations of feminist, Islamist and Kurdish women's movements, either by surveying their magazines (Çaha, 2013) or by conducting in-depth interviews with members of two women's organisations (Leyla Kuzu, 2010). The main focus of both pieces of research is on the role of women's movements and/or women's organisations in expanding the public sphere, but neither analyses the encounter of women activists' understandings of civil society with hegemonic official discourses circulating currently in Turkey.and also they do not cover all the different types of women's groups in the country.

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[4] Some of the feminist scholars working on these topics are: Arenfeldt and Golley (2012); Chatty and Rabo (1997); Jad (2004, 2007); Kandiyoti (1991, 2011), Moghadam (1997, 2002, 2003); Göçek and Balaghi, (1994).

[5] Some of the studies which focus on this issue are: Landig (2011); Göksel and Güneş (2005); Baç (2005); Tocci (2005); Keyman and İçduygu (2003); Ergun (2010); Sirman (2006); Üstündağ (2006); Kabasakal Arat (2006); Alemdar and Çorbacıoğlu (2010); Kuzmanovic (2012); and Bora (2011).

In the light of this gap in the literature, in this thesis I focus on women's voices in and contributions to civil society in Turkey. I treat civil society as a discursive construction with the meanings it takes varying over time and space; that is, civil society is given meaning through discourses in historical and socio-political contexts. As will be indicated in Chapter 2, I examine the women activists' various articulations of civil society in terms of "the taken-for-granted factors (historical, social, political and cultural) that shape the language [they] use" (Treleaven, 2004: 159). In this regard I adopt a feminist perspective, one which is critical of the sidelining of women's voices on the problems of civil society in Turkey and which seeks to ensure that the full diversity of women's voices is given a platform.

The Turkish context offers a unique window of opportunity for analyzing women's voices in the promotion and institutionalisation of civil society. Although Turkey cannot be regarded independently from the global revival of civil society, and particulary not from efforts to promote and institutionalise it across the Middle East, there are three reasons why the Turkish case is distinctive.

First, Turkey has long been a crucible for modernisation processes, which have fuelled tensions between secularism and Islam that affect both civil society and women's organising in distinctive ways. Turkey is unique among the other Middle Eastern countries with regards to its modernisation process, led by the Kemalist elites who promoted secularism and Westernisation. "Turkey is often singled out as the only Muslim majority country with a secular Constitution and a Civil Code (adopted in 1926) that breaks with the *shar'ia*" (Kandiyoti, 2011a). The aspiration to be modern through Westernisation and Europeanisation dates back to the Tanzimat reforms of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, intensifying with the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Republican Kemalist elites sought to disengage with the Ottoman past, which they associated with Islamic traditions, through the top-down imposition of a secular state and secularist political culture, backed up by military force (see Toprak, 2005; Tank, 2005: 6; Arat, 2009; Göle, 1997). Their effort was only partially successful and a dichotomy emerged between the secular modernity of elites and urban centres, and Islamist values in rural areas and among the poor. Westernisation by state-imposed reforms has predominantly been perceived as a reason for the subjugation of civil society by the Kemalist

secular state in Turkey (see Toprak, 1996). Tensions remain today as Islamic forces seek entry into civil society and Kemalists resist that move (see Seçkinelgin, 2004; Ketola, 2009; Şimşek, 2004).

The dichotomy between Western and Islamist values and the Turkish Republic's modernising project have had crucial implications for women's organising in Turkey (Kardam, 2005: 3). To begin with, Kemalism instrumentalised the women's movement. The struggle for women's rights in Turkey began in the Tanzimat period of the Ottoman modernisation and after the 1908 revolution "women emerged as activists, forming their own associations and expanding the volume of their publications" (Kandiyoti, 1991: 43). However, in the early years of the Turkish Republic, as Al-Ali emphasises (2003: 217), the women's movement in Turkey was induced by "developmental and modernist aims" in contrast to colonised countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Palestine; it was supported as pulling away from the Islamist roots of the Ottoman Empire and bolstering the secular ideology[6] that could justify "the new state" (Arat, 1994: 71; see also Kardam, 2005: 39-40).[7] Since the 1980s the women's movement has been characterised by diversification, with the rise of feminist and Kurdish oppositional voices to Kemalism, as well as a

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[6] The formal enhancement of women's status was integral to the secularisation process (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 175). The establishment of "state feminism" and "state controlled gender discourse" was the outcomes of this process (Kardam, 2005: 39). State feminism aimed to promote the rights of women in public life and women's problems and demands were met by state policies (Tekeli, 1986; Seçkinelgin, 2004). Zehra Arat (1994: 74) argues that Kemalist reforms cannot be characterised as "state feminism" since to able to identify any movement as feminist it has to perceive "gender inequalities and male domination" and to act towards defeating domination. On the contrary, according to Tekeli (1981 in Tekeli, 1986: 184-5), "the new rights' given to women by the secular republicans carried a symbolic meaning in their fights against the religious authority that formed the legal basis of the previous Ottoman state". From the state's perspective, model Republican women would "get an education and pursue a career and were expected simultaneously to be attentive and well-trained mothers" (White, 2003: 146; see also Sirman, 1988). In other words, the Kemalist understanding of gender equality did not lead to equality for all, but rather created a group of elite women, known as Kemalist women, who got a chance to have an education and to work professionally (Kardam, 2005: 40). Thus women who were uneducated, rural and who understood Islam as a way of life were excluded from many citizenship rights. This mind-set remained dominant throughout the 1950s and 60s, although there were some initiatives to close the rift between urban and rural places for the sake of women (Çaha, 2013: 54-55).
[7] It was against this backdrop that the first women's party, the Women's People Party (Kadınlar Halk Fırkası) was established in 1923 by Nezihe Muhiddin. With the closure of this party, the Turkish Women's Union was formed in 1924. In 1926, gender equality was formally guaranteed by the promulgation of the Swiss Civil Code. Practically, this meant that polygamy was abolished, women were granted equal rights of divorce, and women were given the right to vote and run in municipal elections in 1930 and in the general election in 1934 (Kandiyoti, 1989: 126; see also Arat, 1994). For Kandiyoti (1989: 126), these reforms indicated "a new positioning of the state vis-à-vis the woman question" although they did not significantly affect the position of women in the rural areas.

conflict between Islamic organising and Kemalism. In Kandiyoti's words (2011a): "a new generation of post-1980s feminists were no longer content to be the grateful daughters of the republic". Such women questioned "the modernist gender discourse promoted by secular state elites", reconsidering women's position within society and challenging the public/private divide (Kardam, 2005: 43, 45). [8] But new divisions within the women's movement also emerged at this time (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 42; Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 325), most obviously around sexuality, the headscarf issue, the Kurdish issue and class. Kurdish and Islamist women criticised Kemalists for "being ethno-centric and exclusionary of other identities" (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 47). In such ways, then, the dynamics of modernisation and the tensions between secularism and Islam, have played out in unique ways in Turkey and within its women's movement.

The second reason for focusing on Turkey is that, in contrast to other Middle Eastern countries, the development of civil society there has been led by the EU – in ways that have had profound implications for women's organising. While other international institutions have had a role in the country, particularly as donors,[9] it is the candidacy of Turkey to the EU that has been fundamental to the way civil society has developed. EU influence has been widely debated among scholars and commentators, as has the extent to which this Muslim-dominated country can embrace concepts of civil society and democracy that originate in the West (Kubicek, 2005: 362). Nonetheless, Turkey has participated in Community Programmes for some time, having been granted candidate country status at the Helsinki Summit (1999). Since then, considerable political attention has been given to the reforms necessary to meet the political dimensions of the Copenhagen criteria, which "serve as a basis for the further democratization of the state–society relations" (Keyman and

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[8] In these years, women's and feminist groups were striving to eliminate violence against women, the oppression that women experienced in the family, "the use of sexuality as a medium for male dominance, the misinterpretation of women in the media and the challenge against virginity tests" (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 41). In 1987, feminists organised "the Women's Solidarity March Against Gender-based Violence, the first major feminist rally of the second wave women's movement and the first mass political demonstration of post coup d'état Turkey" (Altınay and Arat, 2009: viii).

[9] "The WB [World Bank] today directly supports civil society capacity building in Turkey" and the UN has had a significant influence on civil society in Turkey since *the NGO and Foundations Forum* organised in 1996 as the UN Habitat II conference. This was crucial for establishing and mobilising social actors in Turkey (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 14).

İçduygu, 2003: 224). "The EU has explicitly directed its attention towards Turkish civil society as a partner/local agent with regard to bringing about social and political change and buttressing the development of a democratic policy" (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 14). More concretely, there has been since 2006 a programme of EU support allocated for the furtherance of the EU-Civil Society Dialogue in Turkey, with the specific aim of encouraging civil society engagement in the proposed accession of Turkey to EU membership. Thus Turkey has undergone, and is continuing to undergo, an EU-led civil society development process.

The EU strongly encourages the participation of the women's movement in this process, as it makes clear in the Communication (EC, 2005: 9):

> through close links between women's rights and equal opportunities organisations in the EU and in Turkey, the civil society dialogue will contribute to the objectives of strengthening the position and participation of women in all aspects of Turkish society.

Since 2006, EU funding has been offered to women's organisations in Turkey which has, consequently, contributed to a shift in the focus of most of these organisations to projects enhancing "civil society". Certainly, "gender equality, women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming and women's human rights" (Kardam, 2005: 1; see Landig, 2011) have become part of the agenda of civil society organising and women's organisations have become central to development programmes, taking on the provision of "services to increase women's literacy, medical information as part of public health and population control programmes, development of women's skills and talents in order to increase their participation in the labour force, and shelters and legal consultancy to battered women" (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 52). Such projects can be interpreted as part of the democratisation process in Turkey (Gazioğlu, 2010) or criticised as precipitating the NGOisation of the women's movement (Bora and Günal, 2002: 8-9; Hacıvelioğlu, 2009: 16-17). Whichever interpretation is adopted, it is clear that EU-funded civil society programmes are a powerful force in reshaping women's organising in Turkey. In parallel, women's organisations have contributed to key domestic legislative reforms which are aimed at ensuring Turkey fulfils the requirements of the EU accession process.[10]

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[10] Examples of legislative reforms include the Civil Code (2001), the Penal Code (2004), the New Labour Law (2003), the new Social Security and General health Insurance Law (2006), and the Law

The third reason to focus on women's organising in Turkey has to do with the fact that the country has recently become a laboratory for a unique government-led, religious-conservative vision of civil society, with fraught implications for women. The victory of the Islamic Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP) in the three general elections of 2002, 2007, and 2011 with increasing proportions of the vote, meant the party was able to determine the contours of political debate for over a decade. The rise of the AKP during this period revived the "secularism versus Islam" debate (Uslu, 2008: 82), because of its conflictual relationship with the Kemalist state and military elites. Nonetheless, it did to some extent succeed in inserting conservative and neoliberal values into civil society. The AKP supported the diversification of CSOs, a civil rather than military approach, a democratic opening for the Kurdish issue and EU-initiated reforms such as revisions of the Penal, the Civil Code, press laws and anti-terror laws and funding. As an example, the laws regarding associations and foundations implemented in 2004 and 2008 under the AKP regime, "made it easier to establish organisations and harder for the state to monitor organisational activities" though "there are still a number of legislative concerns in relation to securing full freedom of associations" (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 10). What is more, the first AKP Government was in support of holding negotiations with civil society organisations, particularly women's CSOs (Cosar and Onbaşı, 2008: 326) and its gender-sensitive policies included penal reform, "the amendment to the Law on Municipalities (2005), which obliges municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to open women's shelters, and the formation of the Parliamentary Commission for the Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men (2009)" (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 562), along with the "nullification of the statement 'man is the family chief' from its civic code" (Yılmaz, 2015: 157).

However, EU influence and, correspondingly, the AKP's commitment to democracy in Turkey began to lessen with the AKP's third term in office (beginning

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on Family Protection And Preventing Violence Against Women (6284 sayılı Ailenin Korunması ve Kadına Karşı Şiddetin Önlenmesine Dair Kanun, 2012). Implementation of CEDAW, ratified in 1985, was another important outcome of the EU adaptation process for women's rights in Turkey (Çaha, 2013: 67).

in 2011). Since then, the authoritarianism of the AKP has increased,[11] sparking protests from the women's movement in Turkey. Pursuing authoritarian gender policies, the AKP Government has launched an ideological battle to control the female body and sexuality, promulgating several controversial laws and decrees.[12] Simultaneously, since the 2007 elections, the AKP Government has negotiated more selectively with women's organisations (Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 326). In such ways, the AKP's support of civil society, and particularly of the role of women's organisations within it, has been limited and ideological; it has instrumentalised CSOs to legitimise its policies and "acted selectively, excluding class-based and gender-based organisations deemed radical and/or marginal" (Coşar and Yücesan-Özdemir, 2012: 298). Relatedly, while apparently embracing some of the core assumptions of the Western liberal understanding of civil society in AKP's first and partially second term in the office, it leans increasingly towards supporting Islamist/conservative and/or pro-government organisations. This shows how the civil society terrain in Turkey is contested and continues to evolve, meriting close and continued research.

2. Research Questions and Arguments

I ask two main research questions of my case study. First, what are the main features of the civil society discourses articulated by women activists in Turkey and what are the key factors shaping their articulation? Second, in what ways and to what extent do these discourses reproduce and/or contest the hegemonic civil society discourses currently circulating in Turkey?

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[11] The Ergenekon and Balyoz trials, the KCK (Kurdish Democratic Confederation) operations, the silencing of the media, the imprisonment of dissenting journalists, academics, students and intellectuals, and govenment interventions in the editorial policies of newspapers and television channels are examples of AKP authoritarianism (Tolunay, 2014).

[12] In October 2008, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that "each women should have at least three children" (Hürriyet, 2008). In May, 2012, the Erdoğan government stated that they are working on a bill to ban abortion after four weeks rather than the current ten weeks of pregnancy, apart from in emergency cases. Abortion, which became legal in 1983, was one of the most important outcomes of the women's movement in Turkey. Therefore, immediately after the AKP's declaration, the women's organisations in Turkey formed a platform called "Abortion is a Right and the Decision belongs to the Woman" and organised a pro-choice rally in the city centres of İstanbul, Adana, Mersin, İzmir, Diyarbakır, Çanakkale, Sinop, Antalya, Eskişehir, Van, Ankara and Sakarya to protest the ban. After the protests, even though the AKP Government took a step back, they continued working on the Bill of Reproductive Health (Radikal, 2012).

I will make four main arguments in response to these questions. I will show to begin with that members of women's groups in Turkey produce multiple discourses of civil society, which I describe under the headings of voluntarism, autonomy, mediation, democratisation, opposition, anti-hierarchy and co-optation. In this way, the women's movement in Turkey does not speak with one voice on civil society. Next, I claim that ideology is not the only factor shaping which civil society discourse is articulated. The discourses circulate in complex and overlapping ways in that they do not map neatly onto ideological group identities; instead several discourses may coexist within the same group, and some cut across different ideological strands. It appears that factors such as location, funding, organisational structure and the framing of women's rights also play a role in shaping which discourse comes to the fore.

In addition, I will argue that the women's organisations do not passively reproduce dominant discourses of civil society, but actively engage with and contest them. Most of the activist groups, to varying degrees, mirror hegemonic liberal pluralist, Western ideals of democracy and the role of civil society, and retain a normative attachment to them. But all, also to varying degrees and in different ways, contest some components of the liberal-democratic civil society ideal and its institutionalisation in Turkey. Finally, I will show that some of the activists, namely the anti-capitalist feminists, reject civil society as a normative ideal, seeking to resist it by foregrounding feminist agency and politics as the key vehicle for emancipation of women in civil society. When read in conjunction with more widespread critiques of and challenges to civil society among my interviewees, it would appear that there are important oppositional voices to dominant civil society norms in Turkey, which require more attention than they have thus far received.

3. Methodological Framework

In order to analyse the civil society discourses of women activists from various groups in Turkey and to uncover their gendered dimensions, I adopt a methodological framework drawn from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), informed by Fairclough (1992, 1995) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), and developed in its feminist form by Lazar (2005, 2007). CDA is generally about exploring links between language and social practices. A feminist take on CDA - feminist critical

discourse analysis (FCDA) - underscores the importance of gender as structuring power relations and adopts "a critical feminist view of gender relations, motivated by the need to change the existing conditions of these relations" (Lazar, 2005: 3). What FCDA attaches to CDA is the necessity of theorising and analysing "the particularly insidious and oppressive nature of gender as an omni-relevant category in most social practices" (Lazar, 2005: 3). Feminist CDA analysts show that social practices "reflected as well as constituted by discourse" are not neutral, but gendered, and they seek to criticise discourses which sustain the patriarchal social order with a view to contribute to struggles of contestation and social transformation (Lazar, 2007: 145). Feminist CDA also recognises difference and diversity among women which requires the researcher to undertake historically and culturally contingent analyses of gender. Lazar emphasizes that gender intersects with other systems of power based on race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, culture, and geography, meaning that "gender oppression is neither materially experienced nor discursively enacted in the same way for women everywhere" (Lazar, 2007: 149). In this way, FCDA shows up the difference and diversity among women by conceptualising "gender[13] as a variable ... identity category" (Lehtonen, 2007: 11).

I am going to apply FCDA to a particular case study. The case study approach involves "a detailed examination of a single example" and "produces a type of context dependent knowledge" (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 220-221). One of the merits of this approach is that it includes "more detail, richness, completeness, and variance – that is, depth – for the unit of study than does cross-unit analyses" (Flyvbjerg, 2011: 301). While the main criticism directed at the case study approach is the non-generalisability of research findings to other cases and to other populations (Bryman, 2008: 55),[14] the point here is "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2009: 13). In this regard, undertaking a case study gives me a chance to make a detailed analysis in which complexity and variety within the Turkish women's movement can be fully

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[13] "Gender" in FCDA refers to both a set of power relations ("gender" as oppression, as related to patriarchy) and as an identity category, and in this thesis, I shall use gender in both senses where relevant.

[14] Flyvbjerg refutes five misunderstandings on the case study research. To look at this discussion, see Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011).

revealed, with regard to the different ideological and activist backgrounds of participants, and their ethnicities, classes, ages and religions.

My case study data consists of forty-one in-depth interviews with Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish, feminist and anti-capitalist women activists from ten organisations located in four different cities in Turkey. The interviews took place over a period of three and a half months, between May and mid-August, 2012. The interviews were based on questions which probed a range of issues, including demographic details; the women's history of activism; civil society and its relation to power; hierarchy and domination; the women's views on the relationship between civil society and gender; their evaluations of EU-Turkey relations; the EU's approach to civil society and its role in funding Turkish women's organisations; feminism; and the organisational structure of the CSOs. In addition, I gathered documentation in the form of written sources and web site materials produced by the women's groups. These documents included activity reports, by-law of the organisation (*dernek tüzüğü*), leaflets introducing the group's aims, activities, campaigns and projects, project outputs such as reports and publications, journals and books published by the group, and press statements.

In terms of the selection of women's organisations and interviewees for this research, I engaged in purposive sampling. In order to do so, I rethought the dominant political standpoint-based categorisation and re-categorised the women's organisations in Turkey according to five criteria: the ideological/political standpoint, geographical location, the relationship to the EU funding, organisational structure and framing of women's rights and feminism. This enabled me to capture a reasonable spread of views between and within each group. Thus, I spoke to women activists from a range of social backgrounds who were of varying ages, possessed varying degrees of political experience, had taken varying trajectories into women's rights activism and civil society, held varying positions in the group (e.g. the leaders of organisations and ordinary members), and had been employed in different industries and professions. [15]

In order to analyse this data according to the principles of FCDA, I first

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[15] I will discuss the methodology, sampling strategy, data, and the dilemmas of fieldwork and data analysis in more depth in Chapter 2.

established the socio-political context in Turkey with regard to civil society and gender. The next step was the two-stage textual analysis. Initially, I conducted an "in-depth textual analysis". This is a close reading of the women's interviews and group documentation by using coding questions in order to identify the key civil society discourses and whether and how they refer to gendered dimensions of civil society. I then ran an "interdiscursive analysis" to explore the interdiscursive encounters of women's discourses with the hegemonic civil society discourses in Turkey. This allowed me to analyze how the women activists treat those official hegemonic discourses circulated in Turkey and in what ways they reproduce and/or contest them.

4. Thesis structure

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 reviews three broad topics in the academic literature on civil society, namely, the concept of civil society and its dissemination, the role of NGOs in civil society, and the impact of gender on civil society and NGOs. This chapter discusses approaches to the concept of civil society and NGOs, highlighting the global dominance of the neoliberal understanding, as well as the existence of alternative critical and feminist approaches, focusing particularly on the literature on civil society and NGOs in the Middle East, and especially Turkey.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodology guiding my empirical research. I begin by highlighting the feminist innovations of CDA, elaborating on the textual strategies of FCDA, explaining why I employ these processes for my research and touching upon issues of reliability, validity and reflexivity. I then focus on the Turkish case by elaborating my sampling strategy for both women's groups and individual participants. I conclude this chapter with a focus on my fieldwork experience by discussing access to research sites and participants, interview process, barriers, research ethics and my positionality in the research, as well as my reflections on the coding process and its dilemmas.

Chapter 3 turns to the Turkish case in order to make sense of the main features of dominant official civil society discourses in relation to state policies, gender relations and international funding, particularly EU funding. This is the pre-textual stage of discourse analysis. I organise this chapter by conducting a historical

analysis of the circulation of the notion of civil society in Turkey. The chapter is divided into four sub-sections: i. the Republican period starting with the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923) until the beginning of the 1980s; ii. the 1980s and a route towards neoliberal policies and depolitisation of the political; iii. the 1990s and the politics of difference and intolerance; and iv. the years of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). I highlight the hegemonic discourses pertaining to each period, namely "repression", "autonomy", "democratisation", "project-based civil society", "dialogue" and "authoritarianism". Overall, the main goal of this chapter is to establish the social and discursive context in which women's CSOs operate and to which they are responding.

Chapters 4 and 5 present my analysis of civil society discourses of the women activists and their relationship to hegemonic civil society discourses circulating in Turkey. In these two chapters I present the findings of my empirical research in two steps, firstly, with an in-depth textual analysis, and secondly, with an interdiscursive analysis. Chapter 4 presents a very detailed discourse analysis of the Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish, feminist and anti-capitalist feminist women activists' interviews and group documentation. With the first research question in mind – what are women's civil society discourses and what are the key factors shaping their articulation? – I show that there are seven discourses used by women's organisations: "voluntarism", "autonomy", "mediation", "opposition", "democratisation", "co-optation" and "anti-hierarchy". I argue that despite some influence of the pre-existing ideological positions of the women's organisations on their civil society discourses, my findings, to some extent, challenge those ideological distinctions.

Chapter 5 finds answers to the second research question – in what ways and to what extent are these discourses reproducing and/or contesting the dominant official civil society discourses currently circulating in Turkey? – by analysing the interdiscursivities between the women activists' discourses and hegemonic civil society discourses. I group the encounters between hegemonic and women activists' discourses around three categories reflecting, to some extent, the prevalent civil society approaches in the Middle East as discussed in Chapter 2: i. reflection and negotiation of liberal democratic discourse; ii. critical engagements; and iii. a rejectionist approach. On the basis of my findings in Chapter 5, I argue that the

women activists' discourses reflect but also contest dominant civil society discourse currently circulating in Turkey, sometimes striving to produce alternative approaches to civil society.

I conclude the thesis by pulling together the main arguments and discussing the wider implications of my findings for debates about NGO constructions of civil society in Turkey and the Middle East, the study of women's organising in Turkey and for feminist theorisation of civil society. I also point to the limitations of my work and identify some possibilities for further research.

Chapter 1

Civil Society in the Middle East: Theories, Applications and Feminist Critiques

Introduction

This chapter reviews three relevant fields of academic literature on women's activism and civil society. I begin by examining the trajectory of the concept of civil society: its emergence in the West, the variety of views that have developed on it over time, and its contested characteristics. This discussion highlights liberal and critical perspectives on the concept and also emphasises the global dominance of the neoliberal understanding, paying particular attention to the Middle East and Turkey. The second section of the chapter deals with literature on the role of NGOs in civil society. It focuses on the mission of civil society building and development that has been attached to NGOs largely by the neoliberal view, and examines the contested role of NGOs in the Middle East, including in Turkey. The third and final section of this chapter centres on feminist debates about gender, civil society and women's NGOs, again paying particular attention to arguments about Turkey and the Middle East.

1. The concept of civil society and its dissemination

1.1. The emergence of civil society in the West

The concept of civil society can be traced back to political and philosophical developments in Europe and the United States during the Enlightenment (White, 1996: 142). It came to the fore in the context of the transition from absolutist monarchy to the modern state via industrialisation and development, as a way of opposing the autocratic state (Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001: 4). In other words, the emergence of civil society in the West coincided with processes of "capitalization, industrialization, urbanization, [and] citizenship" tied to the nation-state (Eddin Ibrahim, 1995: 28).

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, civil society was understood as equivalent to political society. This idea of civil society as political society was rooted in a social contract "agreed upon by previously dispersed individuals" and

was distinct from a "state of nature" (Schippers, 2005: 344). Contract theorists viewed civil society as a driving force for the growth of civilisation as the concept promoted a view of "the civilized or political state of human beings" as opposed to "the uncivilized or pre-political" (Kumar, 1993: 376-377).

However, by the early 19th century, civil society began to be conceptualised as distinct from the state (Keane, 1988: 35-6) and became an important term for the "development of the public sphere" (Hagemann, 2008: 17). This was because the independence of civil society had become an important foundation for a democratic state (Ketola, 2010: 31), and civil society was conceptualised as an autonomous, self-generating and active force against despotism. In addition to such links to democracy, civil society came to be regarded as an important arena for the acquisition and protection of private property; indeed, "the emergence of a distinct sphere of private property" as a result of "the growth of capitalism and the development of the science of political economy" occurred in tandem with the independence of civil society from the state (Kumar, 1993: 377). In sum, civil society was initially formulated in, and performed a useful function for, emerging Western liberal societies.

1.2. Civil society as a contested concept

After its initial emergence, a range of approaches to civil society appeared in the academic literature. Among these, liberal conceptions of civil society have dominated. In the liberal tradition, civil society is construed as a space of plurality beyond both family and state, firstly and most famously articulated in the works of Alexis de Tocqueville. According to de Tocqueville, because of the dangers of despotism and of "a tyranny of the majority that might result from an electoral sweep in an era of populist politics" (Cox, 1999: 6), liberal societies should foster an active, plural and autonomous associational life as a mechanism to limit the interference of the state (Onbaşı, 2008). He thus defines civil society as a space for a network of voluntary associations (de Tocqueville, 1971: 126-133). De Tocqueville's idea continues to influence contemporary political thought, particularly in the work of Diamond (Onbaşı, 2008: 55). Diamond (1994: 5) approaches civil society as an area "of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules and it is

an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the state". In this view, the distinction between state and civil society is emphasised and characterised in positive terms. Putnam (1995) is another contemporary proponent of Tocquevillian thought. He laments the decline of a spirit of association or what he terms "social capital": "networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Cox, 1999: 27). As a solution to this decline, Putnam recommends a notion of civil society which pays attention to "community spirit, volunteerism and association" (Van Rooy, 1998: 13). In such ways, the Tocquevillian liberal approach, with its emphasis on civil society as the expression of society and a form of "associational life" (Edwards, 2004: 10), is still very influential today.

This liberal idea of civil society has, however, been given new meaning in the neoliberal era. International organisations (such as the WB, the EU and the WTO) have adopted an understanding of civil society that is based on providing funding to CSOs or NGOs for building and promoting democracy. This neoliberal view reinforces the idea that the power of civil society should be increased vis-à-vis the state through the input of international donor agencies, in order to both create an independent space for citizens and generate a retreat of the state from some areas. It is neoliberal in character, as Kaldor (2003: 9) points out, because "civil society consists of associational life – a non-profit, voluntary 'third sector' – that not only restrains state power but also actually provides a substitute for many of the functions performed by the state". The neoliberal policies prevalent around the world encourage the establishment of more NGOs with pressure from the international donor institutions, and this effectively conceals the goals of creating a minimal state while producing a profit-seeking donor sector for NGOs.

Critics of liberal and neoliberal views of civil society often draw on Hegelian and Marxist traditions. In contrast to the emphasis on pluralism and associationalism in the liberal tradition, Hegelian and Marxist traditions equate civil society with bourgeois society. The Hegelian approach conceptualises civil society as an entity, which requires the supervision and control of the state (Keane, 1988: 50). Hegel defines civil society as a "specialized and highly complex network of rules, institutions, agencies, groups, practices and attitudes [which] evolved within the legal

and political framework of the nation-state to satisfy individual needs and safeguard individual rights" (Pelczynski, 1984b: 263). In this approach, the state is conceptualised as a guardian of individual freedoms. Further, Hegel (1998: 373) argues that civil society recognises individuals as self-sufficient persons, separating them from family ties. Crucially, for Hegel, civil society is an important component of "the totality of rationally structured modern political community" (Pelczynski, 1984a: 1).

In the Marxist tradition, civil society has been conceptualised more negatively, as a site of class struggle, with the state seen as the instrument of the bourgeoisie, unlike Hegel's "universal state" (see Cohen and Arato, 1992). Marx (1994: 153) traces the emergence of the term 'civil society' to 18th century property relations, which had already evolved from antiquity and medieval times. He associates civil society with bourgeois society as the growth of civil society was dependent on the development of capitalism and so clearly encompasses market relations (White, 2004: 8). Although both Hegelian and Marxist traditions accept civil society as a bourgeois society, they diverge in terms of their approach to the role of the state in relation to civil society. Whereas for the former the state is a body for "harmonizing competing interests in self-interested and egoistical society" (Van Rooy, 1998: 10), the latter sees the state as subordinate to the dominant class (Kaldor, 2003: 20).

The classic Marxist understanding of civil society, which puts economic institutions at the centre of society, has been transformed since the middle of the twentieth century with the influence of Gramsci, who shifted the focus from the economic dimensions of civil society to "civic, cultural, educational, religious and other organizations not directly related to the system of production" (Kumar, 1993: 383-384). For Gramsci, "it is not 'economic structure' as such that governs political action but the 'interpretation of it'" (Kaldor, 2003: 20). Gramsci (1971: 263) argues that capitalist hegemony is constituted by a mix of political society and civil society; the capitalist state exercising its power consensually through civil society but also, ultimately, through coercive force. In this way, the meaning of the notion of civil society changed considerably. In the Gramscian approach, civil society is delineated "not as a part of society, but as a sphere in which battles for and against capitalism

are fought and that sphere is occupied by a struggle for material, ideological and cultural control over all of society, including the state" (Van Rooy, 1998: 10). This approach also, however, captures the transformative potential of civil society and the possibility of an emancipatory counter-hegemony (Cox, 1999: 3).

An alternative view is articulated in the works of Habermas, in which civil society is treated as a means to realise the "values of active citizenship and political participation" (Onbaşı, 2008: 80). Habermas claims that the development of a robust civil society is only possible through active participation in a liberal political culture (Habermas cited in Schippers, 2005: 347). Habermas asserts the existence of public-political society, explains its links with civil society (Habermas, 1989) and argues for recognition of the public sphere and the state as mutually constituted, rather than distinct, areas (Habermas, 1996). According to Habermas and other critical theorists, a "healthy civil society is one 'that is steered by its members through shared meanings' that are constructed democratically through the communications structures of the public sphere" (Edwards, 2004: 9). Much like Habermas, Cohen and Arato advocate a three-part model, which distinguishes between civil society, political-administrative processes and economic processes. In this model, they define civil society as "a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication" (Cohen and Arato, 1992: ix).

To sum up, civil society has become a contested concept, with differing versions put forward by liberals and their critics. As we shall see in the next section, although the neoliberal view has become dominant in recent times, in the West and beyond, many conflicting notions of civil society nonetheless remain in circulation.

1.3. The triumph of neoliberal civil society?

The concept of civil society was revived in the late 20th century in both Eastern Europe and Latin America. In those contexts, civil society has been placed outside the state as part of anti-totalitarian struggles, and viewed as a space in which citizens can exercise some control over the conditions in which they live, through both self-organisation and political pressure (Kaldor, 2003: 8). Because of its capacity to

empower at the level of the individual (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 23), it is lauded as a democratising force.

When the term 'civil society' emerged in Eastern European contexts in the 1980s, it was seen to have three core components: self-organisation, civic autonomy and the creation of independent spaces (Kaldor, 2003: 21). It gained importance during the late 1970s and early 1980s during the rise of social movements against communist states in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (White, 2004: 7). The United States supported CSOs and groups in such countries, both financially and diplomatically, and when the Revolutions of 1989 happened, "civil society... suddenly gained cachet in Eastern Europe as the key to democratization" (Carothers and Ottoway, 2000: 7; see also Ishkanian, 2009). Civil society was thus positioned in opposition to state despotism, as a sphere in which social groups where able to exist and flourish (Hall, 1995: 1). Civil society effectively became a main concern in "the project of 'anti-politics', an oppositional stance that opposed the socialist state by addressing the individual" (Hemment, 2007: 49).

Whereas in CEE countries the debate about civil society revolved around the excesses of Communist statism and the revival of associative initiatives of non-state organisations, in other contexts the debate was couched in terms of the development and promotion of democracy. In Latin America, the main axis of the debate turned on the task of increasing development and enabling international agencies and lenders to bypass the central state and deliver direct assistance to what they identified as the constituents of civil society (Khilnani, 2001: 12). In this sense, the idea that the development of civil society is linked to democracy has been widespread in Latin American countries (cf. Brysk, 2000: 151).

However, it can be argued that these activist-based approaches to civil society that emerged in Eastern Europe and Latin America were incorporated into the neoliberal approach, mainly through the influence of international institutions (such as the WB, the UN, the EU and the WTO). These institutions perceive civil society as a way of developing democratic governance by increasing the role and participation of CSOs (Ketola, 2013). They employ the concept of civil society as a policy tool for promoting democracy and development through their own policies and funding. In diverse non-Western contexts, civil society has been associated with

the transition to democracy, and the opportunity to obtain assistance or funding for this transition has been linked to each country's eagerness and efforts to develop civil society. In this way, the concept of civil society has been used in non-Western settings to refer almost exclusively to donor-NGO relationships, and civil society development has been limited by the policies of international organisations.[16] It could be said that the current attraction of the concept of civil society relates to the global dominance of neoliberalism (Konings, 2009: 2), by which NGOs have been co-opted (Klees, 2002: 49). In short, what clearly emerges from the practices of international institutions worldwide is that civil society is seen as inevitable and necessary for democratisation.

However, Marxists and Gramscians have criticised the neoliberal notion of civil society on the grounds that it separates civil society from the state. This neoliberal project "conceals its own massive use of state power, transnational and local, for the purpose of constructing a civil society according to its own image" (Beckman, 1993: 30). The neoliberal agenda represents NGOs as apolitical by virtue of being part of a voluntary and non-profit sector (Kaldor, 2003: 9). This enables the concealment of oppressive bourgeois characteristics of capitalist society and the fact that NGOs come to perform many of the functions formally assigned to the state (Kaldor, 2003: 9). The idea that neoliberal civil society is an empowering and democratising force has also been challenged bypostcolonial scholars. For them, civil society is an ethnocentric term, which cannot mediate "between self and society outside a Western contexts" (Chatterjee, Hann cited in Kuzmanovic, 2012: 23) and should therefore not be applied globally as a general model. Such scholars also accuse global donor institutions of neglecting the peculiarities of local context, and of importing culturally specific (Western) normative ideals of civil society into non-Western contexts (Van Rooy, 1998: 15) such as the Middle East.[17]

1.4. Contesting neoliberal civil society in the Middle East

The concept of civil society spread to countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) in the 1990s as a result of processes of economic and political

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[16] See, for example, Carothers and Ottoway (2000); Edwards (2004); Beckman (1997); Lewis (2001); and Chandoke (2005).

[17] Also see Carothers (1999); Carothers and Ottoway (2000); Comaroff and Comaroff (1999); Killingsworth (2012); and Hagemann (2008).

liberalisation (Moghadam, 2002: 14). It has been employed in the region with the aim of transforming authoritarian regimes into democratic ones. This, to a certain extent, reflects the idea applied in Eastern Europe, of strengthening civil society against the state (Ibrahim and Wedel, 1997: 12-13). However, although the main goal of democratisation is similar, the cases of Eastern Europe and Latin America on the one hand, and the Middle East on the other, differ in an important sense. In the former, civil society developed from below to defeat authoritarian dictatorships and military regimes, while in the latter, political change has – until recently[18] – been primarily driven by moderate liberalisation measures, and external forces, rather than pressure from civil society (Wictorowicz, 2000: 46-7). The "development of civil society" in the Middle East has been facilitated specifically by the global tendency of donor governments and multi-lateral funding agencies to treat NGOs as allies in development, the corresponding shift in the development agenda away from economic development and towards political and social development (Moghadam, 1997: 25), all oriented to the main goal of undermining the state's repressive control over society. In this light, international organisations have focused their attention "on building democracy from below, through building-up of civil society, understood as a sphere of liberal and democratic leaning" (Cavatorta and Durac, 2011: 9). Concurrently, Arab states in the early and mid-1990s conducted several projects that triggered expectations for the growth of democracy within civil society (Carapico, 2002: 380).

The literature on civil society in the Middle East can be grouped into three categories – supportive, rejectionist and critical – reflecting, to some extent, the rival

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[18] The social uprising of the so-called "Arab Spring", which took place over 2011 in the Arab countries, has been perceived as an "outcome of civil activism" and an "awakening of civil society" (Cavatorta, 2012: 75-76; Boose, 2012; Valliatanos, 2013). It is widely accepted that the Arab Spring represents a considerable growth in grassroots activism and the formation of social movements in the region. In Tunisia, for example, informal networks of activists initiated the demonstrations but were soon joined by formal trade unions and professional associations, who played a key role in organising the revolt. The success of these groups in overthrowing Ben Ali had an immediate knock-on effect in Egypt, inspiring civil society opposition groups to organise popular political action and demonstrations involving an unexpectedly high number of participants (Dalacoura, 2012: 64). Although the uprisings have been widely seen as a way of showing opposition to the neoliberal projects of dictatorships in Arab countries, it is still too early to judge their success or surmise their long-term consequences, particularly in the light of reaction and war in the region. Furthermore, the diversity of protests and demonstrations in different contexts across the region at the time should not be overlooked, as "the 'Arab' world is not a unified entity" (Dalacoura, 2012: 63); nor should the "contentious" and "collaborative" relations between state and civil society actors be disregarded (Hardig, 2014: 1136).

liberal and critical views outlined above. Supporters of the civil society project across the Middle East subscribe to the liberal view that civil society should be a separate entity from both the state and "primordial organizations" of kinship, village, tribe and religious group (Zubaida, 1992: 4). Such organisations are regarded as sources of coercion and authority "which can oppress the individual and trample over human rights; by contrast, voluntary associations are areas which foster individual autonomy and provide experience in the exercise of social and political rights and responsibilities" (Zubaida, 1992: 4). According to this view, NGOs, as the key actors in civil society, serve as agents of change and liberalisation, thus contributing to democratisation in the Middle East.[19] In this vein, Eddin Ibrahim (1995: 27, 30) identifies "the articulation of civil society" as one of four variables that impact upon the democratisation of the Arab world, despite evidence of problems and time lags in this process.

In the rejectionist camp, there are two lines of thought. According to the first, the Western, liberal view of civil society should be rejected in favor of more communalistic notions of civil society and the state (al-Masri cited in Pratt, 2005: 124), and NGOs are seen as Western creations. This approach holds that "civil society, NGOs, the state and good governance [are] the latest means by which the West undermines the strength of sovereign nation states in the Third world; therefore, NGOs are a threat to the organic relationship between the state and civil society" (Pratt, 2005: 124). The second line of thought in the rejectionist approach suggests that civil society cannot be practiced in the Middle East as "Islam" and "traditionalism" are incompatible with civil society. Gellner (1994: 29) adopts this view, arguing that "Islam exemplifies a social order which seems to lack much capacity to provide countervailing institutions and associations" that are key to civil society. In the same vein, for Sariolghalam (1997: 56, 60), the cultural preconditions necessary for the development of civil society are missing in Middle Eastern societies because of their particular social and state practices. Specifically, he asserts that "the recent return to traditionalism in the Middle East has made the possible emergence of civil society principles even less likely" (Sariolghalam, 1997: 56).

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[19] For example, see the studies of Norton (1995); Eddin Ibrahim (1995) and Al-Sayyid (1993).

There is a third category, which lies between the supportive and rejectionist approaches, which is critical of the situation and role of CSOs in relation to the state and informal relations in the Middle East. Scholars in this category argue that the liberal view does not work in the Middle Eastern context, as civil society is not a distinct entity from the state but rather repressed and co-opted by it. This can be seen in the fact that most of the NGOs in the region instrumentally act as a "substitute for state involvement in social provisioning for citizens", even though this should not be the case (Moghadam, 2002: 14). Moreover, critical scholars claim that civil society is restricted, repressed and co-opted by the state rather than being and acting as a distinct entity. In this regard, Personal Status Law is given as an example for the considerable power of state institutions vis-à-vis CSOs in Middle Eastern countries (Zubaida, 1992: 5). [20] The Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA), established in 1991 in Egypt by the feminist Nawal Al-Sadawi, was banned under the Personal Status Code, there, which gives the state a repressive power over voluntary groups, associations and organisations (Al-Ali, 2004: 78). Moreover, the state's control over NGOs can take the form of controlling the access to and management of international funding that is allocated to NGOs (Abdelrahman, 2004: 178, 183). Critics also argue that civil society is not distinct from informal relations in Middle Eastern societies. This is based on the idea that kin-based and communal relations are significant "organizers of the social life" in the region (Joseph and Slyomovics, 2001: 12; also see White, 1996).

In actual fact there are two groups within the category of critical scholars: one which supports the liberal approach to civil society but is critical of the ways in which it is practiced and applied, highlighting the need for further effort to achieve an autonomous civil society in the Middle East (e.g. Moghadam, 2002; Zaki, 1995); and one which is normatively closer to the Marxist, Gramscian and postcolonial views recounted previously, and which is critical of the main presumptions of the liberal view of civil society, such as the taken-for-granted attribution of positive features to civil society.[21]

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[20] For a critical evaluation of Personal Status Law, see Al-Ali (1997); Zaki (1995); Abdelrahman (2004); and Wiktorowicz (2000).

[21] Scholars in this camp include Abdelrahman (2004); Joseph and Slyomovics (2001); Nefissa (2005); Pratt (2005); Wiktorowicz (2000); and Zubaida (1992).

Despite the diversity in approaches to civil society in the region, there is a common problem in the conceptions of liberals, rejectionists and some critics, which has to do with their tendency to overgeneralise the concept. Whether they endorse civil society or assume it is a Western construct, commentators often fail to recognise the particularities of context and tend to homogenise the notion of civil society, overlooking its heterogeneity and diversity, and the contradictions within and between NGOs. In response to this problem, a group of critical scholars[22] have called for context-specific studies to analyse the position and role of civil society in relation to the state, and domestic and international institutions in the Middle East. It is this kind of approach which I adopt in this thesis, with my country-specific focus on Turkey.

1.5. Civil society in Turkey

What can we learn from the existing literature on civil society in Turkey? State and social relations in Turkey have been characterised in various ways, reflective of the liberal, rejectionist and critical perspectives in the Middle East literature outlined above. Turkish scholars who take a liberal perspective on the characteristics of state-civil society relations until the 1980s emphasise that civil society struggled to develop freely in the Turkish case due to a strong and centralised state bureaucracy which was inherited from the Ottoman period (Heper, 1985: 16). The Ottoman Empire had a patrimonial structure in which the Sultan acted as the supreme arbiter, and those working for him carried out the administration of the empire (Mardin, 1971: 200). Contrary to the feudal states in the West, the Ottoman state was autonomous and strong, and was able to determine the structure of the whole social system without negotiating with society. People were asked to pay taxes and to partake in military service but they were not seen as eligible to play key roles in state affairs (Sarıbay, 1998: 97). This top-down approach of the Turkish state has remained prevalent in the modernisation process (see Keyman, 2005: 40). To illustrate, in the period of 1923-1945, the bureaucracy and intelligentsia initiated a campaign for political socialisation so as to integrate urban and some rural sections of the society into the "political culture of modern national statehood" (Karpat, 1973:

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[22] For example, see Navaro-Yashin (1998a, 1998b); Abdelrahman (2004); Al-Ali (2004); Pratt (2005); Jad (2004); Cavatorta and Durac (2011); and Krause (2008, 2012).

48). In other words, the state has been conceptualised as a coercive force, perennially suspicious of civil society and reluctant to allow the development of social consensus (Toprak, 1996: 89). For scholars who take this approach, the dominance of the state centre over society engendered a "conflict" rather than a "compromise", and an autonomous civil society sphere free from the state could not be created (Çaylak cited in Çaylak, 2008: 117).

From the liberal perspective, the control of the state over civil society began to decrease in the 1980s as the top-down effort to build a Kemalist hegemony through civil society lessened. When political Islam and the Islamist movement emerged in the same period, it sought legitimacy using "global [liberal] discourses on minority and human rights" in response to the Kemalist agenda of the nationalist secular Republic (Rumford, 2002: 272). The logic of the Islamist movement was in fact representative of a broader critique of the three pillars of the Kemalist regime: modernisation[23], secularism and nationalism. As Akboğa puts it, "while many civil society organizations were founded with the goal of protecting the Kemalist principles, the 1980s witnessed the foundation of many civil society organizations that criticized the negative implications of these principles for some groups" (Akboğa, 2013: 7). What is notable, however, is that liberal advocates of "autonomous civil society" viewed the process of Islamicisation in Turkey as the emergence of civil society in opposition to the state after around seven decades of latency (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 131). Kurdish CSOs were also formed to confront the nationalist and unitary discourse of the Turkish secular state. These organisations were defined as "anti-establishment organizations, demanding the recognition of a separate Kurdish identity and collective cultural rights and denouncing the state's violations of human rights" (Kaliber and Tocci[24], 2010: 192). Overall, in this liberal

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[23] There are two ways of reading the history of modernisation in Turkey. On the one hand, the establishment of the Turkish Republic represents a discontinuity from the Ottoman legacy due to the aim to reform the political and cultural norms and codes prevalent under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, despite the foundation of the Republic, there is continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic in terms of political, economic and ideological aims in the period from 1908 to 1950 (Zürchrer, 1997: 3; see also Mardin, 2006). More in line with the discontinuity argument, Turkish modernisers tend to identify modernisation with Westernisation (Rumford, 2002: 259; see also Mardin, 1991; Lewis, 2002). Westernisation via state-imposed reforms has been regarded by commentators as one of the main characteristics of Turkish history (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 10).

[24] The work of Kaliber and Tocci (2010) is interesting in drawing attention to an unresearched area, the role and impact of Turkish and Kurdish civil society actors on the Kurdish question.

approach, whereas the state is considered as an area of power, and increasingly a negotiating partner (Çaha 2005), civil society is thought to represent the people (*halk*) (Navaro-Yashin, 1998b: 57). This is the discourse many scholars used to interpret the development of civil society in Turkey during the 1980s.[25] These scholars also stress the value of civil society as a space for meaningful associational life, attaching civil society to democratic progress, demilitarisation, pluralism and multiculturalism (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 130). They see civil society as becoming more pluralistic and diversified with the growth of Islamist, environmentalist, Kurdish, feminist, Alevi and Kemalist movements since the 1990s (Şimşek, 2004: 48).

The critical debates on civil society in Turkey reflect their critical counterparts elsewhere in the Middle East with their focus on the impossibility of maintaining distinctions between civil society and the state, and between civil society and informal relations. Focusing on the former distinction, Gramscians and Marxists downplay the 'autonomy' of civil society. According to this view, the Republican period in Turkey saw civil society constituted as a domain of political society to establish hegemony (Dikici-Bilgin, 2009: 111). Underpinned by coercion, the establishment and reinforcement of the Turkish state consisted of "forming a basis of consent in civil society and becoming hegemonic with a new world view acknowledged by the citizens" (Dikici-Bilgin, 2009: 112). Thus the state not only acquired the consent of society for Republican values and norms, but also transformed society. For instance, the establishment of organisations such as Türk Kadınlar Birliği (Turkish Women's Union) in the 1940s was construed as a sign of the will of the state to win consent from civil society (Dikici-Bilgin, 2009: 112). In this way, the critical view echoes the liberal account. However, the proliferation of civil organisations in the 1980s is explained not as civil society becoming more autonomous, but in terms of state delegation of responsibility, which occurred due to the implementation of a neoliberal agenda and a reduction in welfare provision. With the neoliberal turn in mind, critical approaches – particularly the Gramscians – critique the liberal view on the grounds that it emphasises autonomy and overlooks

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[25] Supporters of this approach include, among others, Keyman (2005); Keyman and İçduygu (2003); Gündüz (2004); Aydın and Keyman (2003); Heper (1985); Göle (1994); Robins (1996); and Çaha (2013).

the way in which the Turkish state used civil society to generate 'consent' in order to manufacture hegemony. As Navaro-Yashin (2002: 119) neatly puts it "the state of the 1990s, a secular democracy, demanded a realm of civil society in favour of itself."

In terms of the second distinction, critical scholars suggest that civil society in the Turkish context includes informal relations and networks. Thus White's study shows us that there are hybrid groups in Turkey, which are neither kinship-based nor formed of "contractually bound individuals" and which are "concerned with addressing local conditions: lack of water and electricity, the need for health care, or the need for job training for girls" (White, 1996: 142). In this way, she indicates that civil society in the Turkish case challenges the classical Western approach to civil society by including "personal, kin, and ethnic relations" (White, 2002: 179; also see Kuzmanovic, 2012). This resonates with the work of a small group of Islamist thinkers who reject the Western liberal view of civil society. Arguing that civil society cannot be independent from religion, they include foundations (*vakiflar*), religious associations (*dini cemaatler*), sects (*tarikatlar*), and religious Sufi lodges and orders (*tekke ve zaviyeler*) in the category of CSOs (Bulaç, 2005). Among such groupings, foundations played a particularly key role in conducting charity work in the Ottoman era; they "have made a comeback over the last two decades as a major conduit for charity work" and are "particularly important in the Islamist organizational network" (White, 2002: 200-202).

In terms of the circulation of neo-liberal discourses of civil society, the Turkish case is not an exception to the regional experience. However, it differs from the rest of the Middle East in terms of the influence of the EU. Turkey's eagerness to become a member of the EU has important implications for how civil society is understood in the country, as scholars widely acknowledge.[26] The EU accession process has paved the way for constitutional reforms to meet the Copenhagen criteria, and increased the flow of funding from the EU to Turkey. In this context, many reforms, namely the "adaptation package", were made in the areas of minority rights, human rights and the civil-military relationship, with help from CSOs (Çaha,

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[26] Some of the scholars working on this topic are: Ketola (2010, 2011, 2013); Tocci (2005); Bayraktar (2009); Çaylak (2008); Keyman and İçduygu (2003); Alemdar and Çorbacıoğlu (2010).

2013: 65). In contrast to other Middle Eastern countries, Turkey's civil society has been promoted and developed via EU funding and policy reforms. Since 2006, there has been a programme of EU funding allocated for the furtherance of the EU-Civil Society Dialogue in Turkey, with the specific aim of encouraging civil society engagement. Being an EU member candidate country has brought about "new legal and institutional frameworks supporting a role for civil society for socio-political development and democratization in Turkey" (Kuzmanovic, 2010: 431). Civil society actors, particularly business actors, were very active and effective in terms of putting pressure on the government to pursue Turkey's membership (Öniş, 2007: 247). When the AKP came to power in 2002, it saw EU accession as an important dimension of developing civil society in Turkey. The EU-induced democratic reform process has evidently influenced the AKP's emphasis on democratisation via civil society promotion.

However, it has been widely acknowledged that EU influence and, correspondingly, the AKP's commitment to democracy in Turkey, have lessened since 2011 when the AKP entered its third term in office. Since then, the authoritarianism of the AKP has begun to increase and the party's religious-conservative vision of civil society has deepened (Tolunay, 2014). More specifically, the party, particularly Prime Minister Erdoğan, has taken an increasingly oppressive approach to visual and print media, increased control over the use of the internet, restricted abortion and caesarean rights, introduced limitations on the sale and use of alcohol, and antagonised mixed-sex student dorms (Yılmaz, 2015: 152). The contemporary situation of democracy in Turkey has been criticised by a group of scholars as "post-modern authoritarianism" (Dağı, 2012), an "electoral authoritarianism of a more markedly Islamic character" (Özbudun, 2014: 155) and "a narrow vision of democracy based on an extreme understanding of majoritarianism" (Öniş, 2014: 5). Indeed, liberal and critical views converge in terms of their approach to the implications of the AKP authoritarianism on civil society as they emphasise the marginalisation of some groups compared to others. As Özçetin and Özer (2015: 18) highlight, "the ruling party's selective attitude towards CSOs is clear in the distinction it makes [between] "marginal", "problematic", "unacceptable" and "acceptable CSOs". In this way, secular CSOs are now navigating a more hostile

environment. Indeed, it can even be argued that CSOs have organised themselves more collectively in recent years due to their dissatisfication with government rule, as can be seen in the Gezi Park Protests of 2013.[27]

Having discussed academic work on the theory and practice of civil society from its emergence in the West to its institutionalisation in Turkey, I will turn squarely in the next part of the chapter to the literature on non-governmental organisations.

2. The role of NGOs in civil society

2.1. Defining NGOs

The term 'non-governmental organisation' (NGO) was first used in 1945 due to the "need for the UN to differentiate in its Charter between participation rights for intergovernmental specialized agencies and those for international private organizations" (Willetts, 2002). NGOs are usually defined as organisations established voluntarily by individuals to reach a shared goal, addressing the "public good" rather than individual interests (Karns and Mingst, 2010: 221). They are regarded as "neither having a mandate from government nor wanting to share government power" (Heins cited in Karns and Mingst, 2010: 221). There is a tendency to equate NGOs with civil society, however, civil society is a broader concept (Karns and Mingst, 2010: 230). Clarke identifies NGOs as "private, non-profit, professional organizations with a distinctive legal character, concerned with public welfare goals" (Clarke, 1996: 1). Thus, in the mainstream literature, NGOs share the following characteristics: they are voluntary, non-market (non-profit), non-governmental, and have distinct legal structures.

However, it has been debated in the NGO literature whether there is one single way of defining "what an NGO is, what it wants and what it does" (Hilhorst, 2003: 3). The NGO sector is not uniform or monolithic. NGOs vary in terms of their

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[27] The Gezi Park Protests began on 27 May 2013 with a demonstration in Gezi Park near Taksim Square in İstanbul. The demonstration started as an environmentalist protest, organised under the Taksim Dayanışması (Taksim Solidarity) with 128 constituents of civil society organisations, against the felling of trees, the demolition of the park and the construction of a shopping mall in its place. However, it transformed into massive protests against the AKP over the course of a couple of days, and spread to other cities in Turkey. The rising authoritarianism of Prime Minister Erdoğan was seen as the key reason for the emergence of the protests, as well as the disproportionate force used by the police, the infringement of democratic rights, and the restriction of civic freedoms (Bilgiç and Kafkaslı, 2013: 8).

structure, roles and functions, as well as their relationship to the state and funding opportunities. In terms of structure, NGOs range "from unstructured associations to elaborate institutions with broad membership bases, large budgets, and professional staff" (Silliman, 1999a: 135). NGOs may be based in a single country or established in multiple countries, and may operate domestically or transnationally. There are also international umbrella NGOs, maintaining an institutional framework "for different NGOs that do not share a common identity and looser issue-based networks and ad hoc caucuses" (Willetts, 2002). Besides, the focus and aims of NGOs can vary, from human rights, gender, health, environment and social welfare to agricultural development (Clarke, 1998: 36-37). They can also function as service providers, umbrella or advocacy groups.

NGO relationships with the state also vary between contexts and over time. As an example from the Northern European countries, Trägårdh's (2007: 3) study of state and civil society relations in Sweden is striking in tackling the assumption of a negative correlation between a strong state and "popular self-organization and democratic governance". She argues on the basis of empirical research that even though "measures of trust, social capital and membership in voluntary associations" are very high, the state plays a key role in affairs (Trägårdh, 2007: 3-4). Furthermore, with regard to funding, NGO relations with donors, government and other agencies may differ between settings. NGOs can obtain funding from a range of sources, including "membership dues, donations, governments, national and international organizations, foundations and the sale of products or services" (Silliman, 1999: 24).

As Hilhorst (2003: 5) argues, the NGO literature is based on two different approaches to the origins of NGOs, namely: seeing NGOs as being shaped by people; and viewing NGOs "as outcomes of and steered by situated historical and political processes". Whereas the former is more actor-oriented, the latter is structure-oriented. A more inclusive approach, asserted by Tvedt (1998), combines the two approaches by taking into consideration national and international development while accepting the importance of NGO leaders in establishing NGOs (Hilhorst, 2003: 5). By paying attention to the role of discourses in the construction of social relations and practices, Hilhorst (2003: 4) points to the importance of "organizational discourse" in analysing the roots of NGOs and the diversity among

NGOs. She argues that "the working of discourse within the organizations and …. the question of how actors in and around NGOs deal with the local, international and global complexities" have a crucial impact on the form, values and practices of NGOs (Hilhorst, 2003: 6). In the same vein, Murdock (2003: 507-508) is critical of a preoccupation in the literature with assessing whether or not NGOs are "doing good", which, she claims, runs the risk of stereotyping NGOs. She instead recommends putting the experience of NGOs at the centre of the research, and paying particular attention to how social actors negotiate meaning and practice (Murdock, 2003: 508). This chimes with the argument I elaborated in the previous section about the need to avoid over-generalisation about civil society. Likewise, it is problematic to develop universal, fixed definitions of NGOs and to attribute to them essential, unvarying characteristics, since variations in the national context may shape NGOs' politics, structure, funding sources, staff, activities, and relationship to social movements and the state (Silliman, 1999: 28). Hillhorst (2003) and Murdock (2003) add to this argument the point that the roles, motivations and self-understandings of NGO actors should be factored into analyses.

2.2. NGOs and donor policies in non-Western contexts

Although the rising number of NGOs[28] around the world has been seen by many academics as a significant phenomenon, it is NGOs in non-Western contexts that have received particular scholarly attention.[29] Since the end of the Cold War, 'the New Policy Agenda' was adopted by bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies to give a new, vital role to NGOs in the fields of poverty alleviation, social welfare, and the development of civil society (Robinson cited in Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 961). According to Edwards and Hulme (1996: 961-962), the two basic changes instigated by the New Policy Agenda are that NGOs are viewed as "a preferred channel for social welfare", and presented as an intrinsic part of a vibrant civil society and counterbalance to the state.

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[28] According to the Union of International Association's Yearbook of International Organisations, the number of international NGOs rose from 985 in 1956 to 14,000 in 1985, and there were approximately 21,000 in 2003 (Reimann, 2006: 45).
[29] See Clarke (1996; 1998); Edwards and Hulme (1996); Ewig (1999); Reimann (2006); and Robinson and Friedman (2007).

The literature suggests that NGOs have increased in number and assumed an enhanced role for three main reasons. Firstly, financial aid is now provided to NGOs based in developing countries through non-governmental development agencies based in the industrialised world, and through the funding provided by multilateral and bilateral development agencies. Secondly, NGOs have been acknowledged as key players by governments struggling to meet commitments to their citizenry as a result of the forces of economic recession in the 1980s (Clarke, 1996: 2). Thirdly, "in many developing countries, large-scale social movements that once were ideologically and organizationally cohesive, fragmented amid a shift in the themes of social mobilization" (Clarke, 1998: 37). For instance, in Latin America, NGOs have proliferated as a result of both the 1980s economic crisis, and efforts by individuals and international organisations to provide a democratic alternative to the military regimes (Ewig, 1999: 75).

The topic of NGOs is closely linked in the literature to the issue of local and international donor agencies. NGOs have become prominent due to the efforts of several international actors and donors, who have presented them as "the voice of the people and vehicles of private initiative" particularly in non-Western contexts (Reimann, 2006: 59). Western donors have put much effort into strengthening and promoting civil society by trying to persuade the public that there is an inevitable and natural relationship between democracy and civil society. Indeed, donors carry two indirect assumptions: that "democracy contributes positively toward development and that civil society is an important democratic check on the state" (Howell and Pearce, 2001: 40). Relatedly, Altan-Olcay and İçduygu (2012: 159) outline how international donors and Western governments (specifically the USA) perceive NGOs and civil society as realising three main goals: firstly, to include formal and voluntary associations outside "primordial, family-related or market-based profitable organizations"; secondly, to enable a dialogue between the state and individuals outside the arena of the state; and thirdly, to build up and improve tolerance and civility by increasing participation in the public sphere. In order to realise these goals, financial assistance is distributed to NGOs to carry out short and long-term projects.

International funding of NGOs reportedly influences their actions in two main ways. Firstly, the project templates provided by donor agencies restrict the NGOs' aims, activities and manoeuvres, and construct them as "neutral" and "value free" places, without taking the contextual characteristics into account (Ketola, 2009: 2; also Ketola, 2010, 2011). As Sloat (2005: 440) notes, the dependence of NGOs on donor funding has made them "beholden to the view point of the funder and less effective in promoting their own agenda of change". To illustrate, Hemment (2004: 217) criticises the motivation of international donors to build third-sector rather than grassroots networks in Russia, which runs contrary to the desires of Russian actors and their understandings of civil society. In the same vein, across the countries of Central Europe, working towards the identification of real problems is reportedly less important for NGO activists than speaking the "proper" project language of donor organisations in order to obtain funding (Dvoráková, 2008: 581).

The second main influence of international funding on NGOs emphasised in the literature is that such funding disentangles donors from "the work of state agencies and political organizations such as political parties" (Encarnación, 2002: 124). Thus, some of the roles of governments and state agencies have been delegated to NGOs via funding; that is, donor agencies now prefer to fund NGOs rather than governments to provide some basic services. For instance, when governments in non-Western contexts retreated from health care and other kinds of provisions in order to comply with structural adjustment policies, some women's NGOs became involved to fill the void (Silliman, 1999a: 139). What is more, international funding may help some NGOs to achieve a better position than governments in terms of their financial resources and expertise (Silliman, 1999: 24).

The UN, WB and IMF are the primary international institutions that engage with NGOs. They do so mostly through the provision of funding and grants, although Scholte (2004: 215) points out that these global governance institutions have developed other tools and strategies to increase their engagement with NGOs. The IMF, for example, publishes a Civil Society Newsletter while the WB has opened information centres, and the UN organises civil society forums at its Global Summits. However, it is precisely such actions by international organisations, which are part of their "official policies of promoting NGOs as a means of replacing state

services and thus deepening democracy" that have led to criticism of their role in encouraging the devolution of state services to NGOs, as mentioned above (Ewig, 1999: 76; see also Kamat, 2004).

Another pioneering international donor is the EU, known for aiming to enhance civil society and democracy, and for advocating the development of civil society through strengthening the role of NGOs. Research has been conducted into the impacts of EU funding on NGOs within different contexts, such as previous enlargement countries (Central and Eastern European countries, Romania and Bulgaria) and accession countries (Turkey).[30] The main focus of such analyses is the EU's positive impact on the promotion of civil society and democracy through mechanisms designed to increase the level of participation in decision- and policy-making processes, and by emphasising the democratic potential of NGOs in accession countries. Certainly, EU funding played a significant role in enhancing civil society and democracy in the CEE countries.[31]

While there is now a widespread understanding that NGOs should play an active role in establishing civil society, the definitions and functions of NGOs remain contested (Silliman, 1999a: 134). Karns and Mingst (2010: 249) point out that the view of NGOs "as promising agents of progressive social change", is beginning to change. Increasingly, they are seen as having "lost their political edge" and membership rates have correspondingly diminished (Börzel, 2010: 4). As a result, NGOs have morphed into "self-interested entities engaged in advancing their own agendas and often non-democratic, hierarchical groups concerned with financial and publicly perceived longevity" (Karns and Mingst, 2010: 249). This process, which started in the 1990s, has been described as "NGOisation" (Lang, 1997) by feminist scholars and others.[32] Indeed, Petras (1997: 12) has claimed that NGOs, particularly women's NGOs, are the "community face" of neoliberalism, "intimately related to those at the top and complementing their destructive work with local projects". As

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[30] See for example Kutter and Trappman (2010); Börzel (2010); Sloat (2005); Ketola (2009, 2010, 2011); Kuzmanovic (2010); Eslen-Ziya (2007); and Roth (2007).

[31] Roth (2007: 460) argues that whereas getting membership from the EU increased the access of the CEE countries to EU institutions and funding, it also led to new constraints and "a loss of financial support from international donors". These donors directed their attention to the former Soviet states and Turkey after the CEE accession due to the assumption that these funds would no longer be necessary in CEE states (Roth, 2007: 473).

[32] The feminist literature on NGOisation will be discussed at more length in the next part of the chapter.

the potential for NGOs to affect policy has increased and their access to funds has expanded (Silliman, 1999a: 136), they have become more dependent upon money which brings about necessities of fixed organisational structures, professional staff, and fiscal accountability (Hawkesworth, 2001: 230).

This section has indicated how NGOs are increasingly seen to be compromised by neoliberalism. Next, I will turn to the debates about NGOs specifically in the Middle East.

2.3. The contested role of NGOs in the Middle East

Donor dependence and NGOisation have been seen as a problem in the Middle Eastern context. Echoing the concerns of critics of civil society in the region, some scholars have questioned the taken-for-granted attachment of positive and democratising attributes to NGOs. They have analysed the impacts of the increasing number of NGOs and the broader process of NGOisation in the Middle East. By looking at the case of Palestine, for example, Jad (2007: 623) suggests that the NGOisation process turns "collective concerns" into "projects in isolation from general context". On the basis of her research on Palestinian civil society, she argues that "the rights-based agenda of women's NGOs has a negative impact on the mobilization of mass-based women's organizations; that this impact, in turn, created a space that has helped Islamist groups to establish themselves as a powerful and hegemonic force in Palestinian civil society" (Jad, 2007: 623). NGOs in the region are also critiqued by rejectionists for acting as agents of modernity and Westernisation. However, this approach often fails to recognise the particularities of context and tend to overgeneralise NGOs, overlooking their heterogeneity and diversity, and the contradictions within and between them. To illustrate, Al-Ali argues against the homogenising tendency to use the terms 'the Middle East' and 'Islam' interchangeably, and thus to identify the Middle East with "lack of democratization and respect for human rights", since contextual factors matter (Al-Ali, 2005: 102).

As indicated in the first section of this chapter, context-specific studies that are critical of overgeneralised claims about NGOs and civil society in the Middle East have been conducted, among them, Abdelrahman's (2004) and Pratt's (2005) studies of NGOs in Egypt. These studies are also notable for following the path

suggested in my discussion above of Hillhorst and Murdock, that is, they treat NGOs as agents navigating and contesting power relations, and pay close attention to NGO members' own understandings of their role. In this vein, Abdelrahman (2004: 185) briefly discusses the discourses of the members of four types of NGOs on civil society and democracy, and analyses "the degree to which Egyptian NGOs act as a collective force in society". She finds that Egyptian NGOs are polarised between two camps, Islamic and advocacy, reflecting the polarisation of Egyptian society and politics between Islamists and secular intellectuals. Whereas for the majority of Islamic NGOs, civil society and democracy are the products of a Western point of view which are used to maintain the West's "political and economic supremacy over the people of Muslim countries" and to replace "traditional culture with Western values and ideas", the majority of advocacy NGOs aim to promote a democratic society and political system by increasing people's participation in the public space (Abdelrahman, 2004: 186, 189). However, what Abdelrahman empirically demonstrates is that the civil society discourses of NGOs can be diverse and concurrent, as is evident in the differing approaches to civil society within Islamic and advocacy/secular NGOs (Abdelrahman, 2004: 185-190). For instance, some Islamic NGOs show less hostility to civil society and democracy concepts by arguing that "there is no harm in using these terms as long as they are employed in a way that does not violate Islamic teachings" (Abdelrahman, 2004: 187). Overall, Abdelrahman argues that civil society is not a homogenous or neutral term, as NGOs are often active agents in reproducing existing unequal power relations rather than offering just more alternatives (2004: 1, 3).

Pratt's work, in contrast, argues that advocacy NGOs in Egypt have a capacity to produce counter-hegemonic discourses and create alternatives to the dominant structures (Pratt, 2005: 128). Writing several years before the so-called Arab Spring, she argues that activists challenge the hegemony of the regime in several ways. Firstly, they use an autonomy discourse that asserts their independence from political society (state or political parties); secondly, they articulate a postnationalism discourse which opposes the "essentialized and 'racialized' nationalist discourse" of West-Arab or North-South dichotomies; thirdly, they critique the patriarchal private-public dichotomy; and, finally, they challenge the

neoliberal advocacy of globalisation, supporting instead an alternative globalisation from below, based on civil society connections (Pratt, 2005: 133, 137, 145-6). Pratt (2005: 148) interprets this as a forerunner of a counter-hegemonic project. While they come to different conclusions, Abdelrahman's and Pratt's studies both agree on the need to focus on NGO activists' own understandings of civil society and democracy, and to highlight the capacity of activists' discourses to contribute to counter-hegemonic discourses and/or to reproduce unequal power relations, which is precisely the approach I want to take to Turkey.

2.4. NGOs in Turkey

In this section, following common usage in the Turkish context, I employ the term civil society organisation (CSO) rather than NGO. In Turkey, we see varied categorisations of CSOs. As Kuzmanovic (2010: 434) explains, CSOs in Turkey are

> traditionally heavily stratified both with regard to the character of activities (political, charity, social clubs, mosque-building, etc.), as well as along ideological (leftist, right-wing nationalist, Kemalist, liberal, pro-Islamic etc.), culturalist (Alevi, Sunni, Kurdish, Turkish, women etc.), and social (class, location) lines.

Akşit (2006 in Çaylak, 2008: 122) offers an alternative way of categorising CSOs in Turkey, using three groups; namely, "CSOs that are part of the state", "organizations with a liberal and pluralist structure" and "organizations that are prominent for responding to state pressure".

The increase in international funding, specifically EU funding, being channelled to CSOs raises the issue of projectism (*projecilik*) and NGOisation (*STKlaşma*). EU funding has been closely tied in with the accession process, as funding is regarded as an instrument to integrate EU principles into Turkish society. In this way, CSOs are viewed as carriers of these principles (Erdoğan-Tosun, 2008: 137-8). However, projectism and NGOisation in Turkey have been widely criticised. Critics argue that civil society is employed as an instrument for freeing the state from its responsibilities and making NGOs the main agents responsible for providing welfare through the funding. This approach is called into question because it threatens to undermine the critical position of civil society vis-à-vis the state. In addition, critics point to the fact that funding tends to be channelled towards more professionalised NGOs with a secular outlook, which not only creates divisions

within the NGO sector but also marginalises other organisations in the funding process (Ketola, 2011: 90).[33]

While acknowledging the purchase of this critical view on the role of NGOs in Turkey, I want also to draw attention to Kuzmanovic's research which echoes that of Abdelrahman and Pratt in paying attention to NGO discourses. Kuzmanovic examines "what the notion of sivil toplum [civil society] means to those who evoke it and bring it into life" by discussing ethnographic data from fieldwork she conducted among those who perceive themselves as civic activists in Turkey (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 3). The ways in which civic activists produce perceptions of civil society emerges "in the context of a larger amalgam of social and cultural imaginings that are shaped by domestic as well as international social and policy contexts" (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 5). In this research, Kuzmanovic argues that civic activists are on "a dual quest for authenticity" in which they pursue both social legitimacy as agents for genuine civil society, and existential recognition as genuine subjects (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 178). Whether they also reproduce dominant understandings of civil society, as in Abdelrahman's case study of Egyptian NGOs, or contribute to a counter-hegemonic contestation of civil society norms, as on Pratt's reading, remains an open question. In the final section of this chapter, I will examine feminist approaches to both civil society and NGOs. As will become immediately clear, considerations of domination and resistance are crucial for feminists.

3. Engendering civil society and NGOs

3.1. Feminist critiques of civil society in the West

Feminists are concerned with how unequal gender relations structure civil society (Einhorn and Sever, 2003: 167), and with how this varies over time and in different contexts. In what follows, I will discuss the feminist literature on civil society, following Eto (2012), in terms of its critique of the public and private distinction, on the one hand, and the separation of civil society from the state, on the other. These two sets of criticisms are actually interrelated, although I distinguish them below.

Firstly, the distinction between public and private has become an important "organizing category" for feminist theorists in the West (Howell, 2005: 5). They

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[33] See for example Landig (2011); Göksel and Güneş (2005); Baç (2005); Tocci (2005); Keyman and İçduygu (2003); and Ergun (2010).

argue that civil society[34] should be regarded as a gendered term; in Einhorn and Sever's (2003: 167) words, "the public/political sphere of civil society is neither politically, ideologically nor gender neutral". The critique of the distinction between public sphere/civil society/state on the one hand and private sphere/family on the other, forms the basis of the feminist challenge to gender-based theories of civil society, since this dichotomy traditionally works to confine women to the private sphere while locating men in the public sphere.

For feminists, the interaction between the public and private spheres is a key factor in shaping women's lives in contemporary Western societies (Benhabib and Cornell, 1987: 7). The family and household "remained a private sphere inhabited by women who were not expected to play a role in public debates" (Fraser in Howell and Pearce, 2001: 21). Feminist thinkers contend that this modern dichotomy should be rejected and the family be considered political insofar as it is structured by relations of power. As Kaldor puts it, feminists reject a "public (state, market and civil society)/private (family) division since the family can be an oppressive and violent sphere" (Kaldor, 2003: 30). This critique dovetails with the broader feminist project of rejecting the confinement of politics to state affairs and calling for a reconsideration of "the landscape of politics" (Hassim and Gouws, 1998: 57; see Gal, 1997; Seungsook, 2002).

Pateman (1988: 10-11; 1989) provides a critique of Western civil society through an analysis of the works of modern contract theorists. Pateman's main argument is that the idea of a social contract as the basis of the modern liberal state relies on a public/private distinction and assumes that only certain types of individual – property-owning men – are equal parties to the contract, and that the state should regulate only the public sphere. Men remain heads of households, at the top of a hierarchy within the private sphere, able to rule in the home in which the state has no reach. Therefore, the "individual", "civil society" and the "public" are from the outset patriarchal categories which gain their meaning in contrast to womanly nature and the "private" sphere (Pateman, 1989: 34). The social contract is sexual as well as

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[34] As Squires (2003: 132) highlights, although the "state" and the "personal" are respectively located in "public" and "private" spheres, there is some confusion about where civil society ought to be placed. The classification that I employ here to discuss feminist critiques of civil society reflects this confusion. In this regard, civil society is "cast as private when opposed to the state … and public when opposed to the personal" (Squires, 2003: 132).

social, and by asserting sexual difference between men and women, and building the liberal state on that basis, it creates a political "difference between freedom and subjection" (Pateman, 1988: 6). Thus, the notion of civil society is designed to exclude women (Delue, 1997: 314; see also Phillips 2002: 72).

Many feminist theorists refer to the work of Jurgen Habermas in "analyzing institutional splits and dichotomies between the public and private spheres" in modern liberal societies (Benhabib and Cornell, 1987: 5). They begin by questioning the "normative ideal of (bourgeois) public sphere as open and accessible to all" (Howell, 2005: 2). Fraser defines the public sphere as conceptually distinct from the state and the economy; it is a site for the production and circulation of discursive interaction and it is distinct from the economy (Fraser, 1992: 110). Although Fraser appreciates Habermas's idea of the public sphere, she recognises the necessity of criticising and reconstructing it in order to show the limits of democracy (Fraser, 1992: 111). She argues that Habermas did not mention gender in his book, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, except by way of "a brief discussion on feminism as a 'new social movement'" (Fraser, 1987: 32). Therefore, Fraser's aim is to "reconstruct the unthematized gender subtext" by revisiting the links between public and private spheres in capitalist societies (Fraser, 1987: 32). Another problem for Fraser with Habermas's model is that he did not recommend "a new, post-bourgeois model of the public sphere"; thus, he failed to offer a concept of the public sphere different from the bourgeois conception (Fraser, 1992: 111-112). Therefore, for Fraser, interrelationships between the realms of state, market, civil society and family should be emphasised so as to demystify the gender-power relations which form the subtext of the modern state and economy (Benhabib and Cornell, 1987: 9), and to create multiple and counter-public spheres.

For feminist thinkers and activists, the family is viewed as political, and this is expressed in the maxim "the personal is political" (Howell, 2006: 20). However, there is an internal debate among feminists about whether or not the family should be included in the analysis of civil society (Howell, 2006). For some feminists such as Phillips (2002), the debates on definitional boundaries between civil society, the state and the market have little importance since the family helps to form "the norms, practices and behaviours in the public realm", including within the state, civil society

and the market (Howell, 2007: 418). However, for others, such as Dahlerup (1994: 117), the family should not be left out of analyses of civil society (see Pateman, 1989).

The second focus of the feminist challenge to civil society in the West is in terms of its assumption of a universally applicable dichotomy between the state and civil society. To begin with, feminists question whether such a dichotomy is universally normatively desirable, particularly from the point of view of women. Liberals aspire to a civil society, which is an independent, autonomous, plural space, and claim that by separating the state from civil society – which means less interference from the state – citizens' rights and liberties are protected. However, one of the problems with this distinction from a feminist perspective is that it underestimates the importance of the state and overestimates the potential of civil society (Eto, 2012: 107). This may justify the state cutting back on its responsibilities, which can mean cutbacks to services disproportionately used by women, along with the transformation of women's organisations into apolitical service providers, as discussed in the previous section. As Phillips makes clear, advocacy of civil society as a substitute for the welfare state strikes feminist scholars as an ideological move which merely adds weight to the unequal burden already faced by primary carers, most of whom are women (Phillips, 1999: 4). Likewise, Young (2000: 156) rejects the approach to civil society "as an alternative site for the public-spirited, caring and equalizing functions that have long been associated with governments" (Young, 2000: 180) and argues that strengthened relations between state institutions and civil society both improve democracy and diminish injustice (Young, 2000: 156-7).

Moreover, feminist scholars see universalising tendencies in the way the liberal approach to the relationship between state and civil society has been superimposed onto, and integrated into, non-Western contexts. Watson's (1997: 27) analysis of the relationship between women and civil society in Eastern Europe criticises the way the integration of the liberal approach here implies civil society is "an absolute political space". In the same vein, Seungsook (2002: 473) looks to the Korean context and finds that because civil society is viewed as a tool for democratisation, it is routinely situated in opposition to "the repressive state or

totalizing market" and becomes a "uniform and homogeneous space without social inequalities and divisions". In response to this dominant approach, Seungsook points to the feminist critique, highlighting the ways in which women are excluded from civil society in different historical and social locations, and writes in support of the "heterogeneous and multiple public spheres" suggested by Fraser and others (Seungsook, 2002: 473).

In the light of the discussion above, it could be argued that there is a general agreement among feminist scholars that civil society in the West, and as diffused more widely, should be viewed through a gendered lens, and that the reliance on public-private, civil society-informal relations/networks, and state-civil society dichotomies is highly problematic. The strong consensus on this view is hard to rebut. However, there are important differences between feminist scholars in terms of their view of the possibilities that civil society may thereby offer to women. On the one hand, some feminists argue that civil society is so problematic that it is of no political use to women; on the other hand, some believe that it remains, to a certain extent, a useful concept.

The former view can be found in the work of Pateman (1988, 1989), Phillips (1987, 1999, 2002) and Jaggar (2005), among others. These scholars see civil society as an intrinsically patriarchal concept, which cannot be used as an instrument to achieve an egalitarian society. Their approaches to civil society vary in their detail, but share this overall thrust. For instance, for Pateman (1988, 1989), the "individual", "civil society" and "the public" are from the outset patriarchal categories, which gain meaning in contrast to womanly nature and the "private" sphere (Pateman, 1989: 34). She asserts that civil society does not sufficiently include women or facilitate feminist struggles (Schippers, 2005: 349). Phillips "attacks civil society itself for the danger it presents to women" (Eto, 2012: 104), and wonders whether feminism even needs the concept of civil society (Phillips, 1999: 58). Phillips sees two main reasons for the incompatibility of feminism and the idea of civil society (1999, 2002). The first is that civil society marginalises women as well as other subordinate groups; since there is no way to "check that each citizen joins an equal number of groups or that each is equally active … civil society is likely to reflect and confirm whatever is the distribution of sexual power" (Phillips, 1999: 3). The second is that as civil

society is relatively unregulated, voluntary organisations may be coerced into adopting the agenda of dominant actors and those that discriminate against women (Phillips, 1999: 3). This argument dovetails with Jaggar's (2005: 10, 20) critique of civil society in the neoliberal state, where foreign funding to women's organisations limits "women's empowerment as citizens" rather than enhancing it; for her, "civil society as a terrain of democratic empowerment" should not be favoured over "traditional state-centred politics".

However, many feminists argue that it is still important to look at civil society from a feminist perspective. In other words, they seek to integrate the aspiration for gender equality into civil society debates, thereby helping to facilitate the creation of a more egalitarian and women-friendly civil society.[35] In my view, this approach is both more practical and more convincing. As an example, Young (2000: 156) underlines the crucial role of civil society in advancing inclusion, freedom of expression, and critique for the achievement of "deep democracy", even though she problematises the idea that civil society is a desirable alternative to the state for the promotion of democracy and social justice. For Young, state institutions inevitably decrease oppression and domination, and promote justice and development, since "many of the structural injustices that produce oppression have their source in economic processes" (2000: 155). Nonetheless, she ultimately argues that both civil society and state institutions should be strengthened because they have an essential role to play in promoting democracy and justice (see also Eto 2012). Similarly, Howell (2005: 6) underscores the "emancipatory potential" of civil society, which "may provide a site for organizing around feminist issues, for articulating counter-hegemonic discourses... for envisioning other less sexist and more just worlds". This is despite the fact that she is wary, like Phillips (2002), of the potential of civil society to become diffused with conservative ideologies which constrict women to the domain of the family and enhance their dependency (Howell, 2005: 6). As Hagemann (2008: 37) sums up, however compromised by neoliberalism and gendered inequality it may be, civil society "is the most important space and

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[35] See for example Arat (1994); Waylen (1994); Young (2000); Howell and Mulligan (2003, 2005); Howell (2006, 2007); Hagemann, Michel and Budde (2008); Eto (2012); Çaha (2006, 2010, 2013); Rabo (1996); Chatty and Rabo (1997); Moghadam (2002); and Leyla (2011).

form of action for articulating and enforcing feminist demands on the market and the state and for protecting women within the family".

The next section considers what the feminist literature has to say about the role of NGOs, given these have been such key vehicles for exporting civil society worldwide.

3.2. Feminist critiques of NGOs

It should not come as a surprise to learn that many feminist scholars and women activists argue that the global trend of NGOisation is problematic. In addition to the kinds of arguments articulated above in the section on NGOs, feminists are particularly concerned that the priorities of women's NGOs may be determined according to "the priorities of international organizations or government instead of supporting alternative changes" (Silliman, 1999a: 138). To illustrate, international directives and imperatives make more funding available to groups with efforts to improve the situations of women by providing them with resources, access to health care, skills training, etc., rather to than to efforts to transform their position (Silliman, 1999a: 138). Calderia (cited in Hawkesworth, 2001: 230) has criticised the foundation of NGOs as "the premier women's organizations" on the grounds that local women's NGOs have not achieved a state of empowerment and have been unable to determine their own agendas, due to their dependence on donor funding. In the same vein, Nagar's (2011) analysis of Indian women's activism highlights the negative impact that donor funding has had on women's empowerment, and Hemment (2007: 75) challenges the donor assumption that when state socialism in Russia collapsed, social groups and interests would rise up, and women's groups would follow the same trajectory as civil society discourse advocates.

These critiques are indicative of a more general feminist scepticism toward NGOs and their ties to international organisations. Some believe that NGOs have become "veritable traitors to feminist ethical principles who depoliticized feminist agendas" (Alvarez, 2009: 175). That is to say, the dominance of the international organisations' priorities in women's NGOs is so powerful that it weakens the consciousness-raising role of grass-roots women's groups aiming to challenge patriarchal relations. Alvarez (1999: 183) points out three main reasons for the erosion of the ability of women's NGOs to support feminist public policies and

social change. Firstly, "states and IGOs increasingly have turned to feminist NGOs as gender experts rather than as citizens' groups advocating on behalf of women's rights" (Alvarez, 1999: 183). Secondly, there is a "growing tendency of neoliberal states and IGOs to view NGOs as surrogates for civil society". Finally, the autonomy of NGOs is put at risk as a result of the sub-contraction of feminist NGOs by states for "advising on or carrying out government women's programs" (Alvarez, 1999: 183).

An illustration of this argument can be seen in Latin America, where structural adjustment policies were introduced in the 1990s. In that context, the role of the state was limited and NGOs were turned into "technically capable and politically trustworthy organizations to assist in the task of 'social adjustment'" (Alvarez, 2009: 176). Thus the focus of feminist NGOs shifted from radical social transformation to a more narrowly focused policy intervention agenda (Murdock cited in Alvarez, 2009: 177). Similar processes occurred in Central and Eastern Europe in the same period. Here, the "civic sector" proliferated and there were opportunities for women to establish NGOs to voice their common concerns (Sloat, 2005: 439). However, the confinement of the women's NGOs to "self-help, education and the public service" undercut feminist activism (Sloat, 2005: 440). Furthermore, whereas some NGOs limited themselves to self-help activities, the inadequacy of local resources and the "weakness of civil society" prompted several NGOs to apply for projects funded by government and/or international organisations (Parrott cited in Sloat, 2005: 440).

However, I would suggest, alongside others, that caution should be taken when feminist NGOs are painted as "handmaidens of neoliberal planetary patriarchy", since this idea "fails to capture the ambiguities and variations" within NGOs (Alvarez, 1999: 200). Moreover, as Alvarez (2009) points out, a major problem with the assumption that women's activism is determined and shaped by processes of NGOisation is that it overlooks the discourses and practices of women's agency within organisations. For instance, in the Latin American context, many NGOs remained powerful in terms of "grounding and articulating the expansive, heterogeneous feminist fields of the 1990s and the 2000s" (Alvarez, 2009: 177). All this reinforces the argument I highlighted in the previous sections, about the need for

context-specific studies to identify "which actors, discourses, practices and organizational forms prevail or are most politically visible at any given time in a given socio-political context" (Alvarez, 2009: 182), as well as for close attention to the articulations of NGO personnel. It is only through such research that it is possible to examine in what circumstances and to what extent women's NGOs in general retain a capacity to challenge the power and scope of state institutions, to affect international agencies (Tinker, 1999: 88), and to contest the mainstream notions of civil society, even though they are influenced by donor policies through funding arrangements.

3.3. Feminist critiques of civil society and NGOs in the Middle East

With regard to the Middle Eastern region, there have been diverse studies rethinking civil society by analysing women's position and the contribution of women's activism. Such studies shed light on the gendered dimensions of civil society and state, and the increasing significance of gender politics in challenging the state in the Middle East.[36] One critique of mainstream discussions that emerges from this literature is that it excludes women from civil society. In such a vein, Al-Ali (1997: 189) criticises the work of Zaki (1995) on the grounds that it presents civil society in a "male-centered" way and "disregards women's roles in and contributions to civil society". Additionally, Rabo (1996: 156) pays attention to how androcentric and ethnocentric assumptions dominate the debates about civil society, by drawing on examples from Syria and Jordan. Furthermore, feminist scholars of the Middle East highlight the disregard for secular women's associations in the mainstream literature. On this issue, Al-Ali criticises studies on the emergence and performance of civil society (e.g. Zaki, 1995; Zubaida, 1992) for ignoring secular feminist associations and limiting consideration of women's status to discussion of religious and minority rights (Al-Ali, 1997: 189).

This last point is worth dwelling on at more length. Feminist scholars are critical of the dichotomy of East/West or traditional/modern, and of the way in which it influences the conceptualisation of civil society and women's organising in the Middle East. In this vein, Al-Ali argues against the dominant trend of positing strict divisions between a "modern, secular and westernizing voice" and a "conservative,

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[36] See for example Krause (2008, 2012); Al-Mughni (1997); Al-Ali (2003); Al-Ali and Pratt (2011).

anti-western, Islamic voice" because she considers that this conceals "the overlapping, contradictions and complexities of discourses and activism" (Al-Ali, 1997: 175). In this dominant approach, whereas modernity is related with political development, authenticity is associated with the implementation of Shari'a (Al-Ali, 1997: 188). [37] Al-Ali emphasises rather that secularism does not automatically designate "an anti-religious or anti-Islamic positions". (Al-Ali, 2004: 4). Connectedly, Badran (2009) underlines the cooperation between Islamic women's organisations and secular feminists by arguing that they are not in conflict or opposition to each other; on the contrary, they intersect and in some cases support each other.

Scholars of this persuasion also highlight the fact that women in the Middle East are active agents who, despite constraints, establish groups or act collectively to advance their interests (Chatty and Rabo, 1997: 8). More nuanced analyses which take into account heterogeneity and particularity indicate that women's movements in the Middle East are not imported from foreign countries; rather, they "have emerged from within" and their agendas have been formed in relation to "the specific characteristics of the societies in which they have been active" (Arenfeldt and Golley, 2012). Likewise, in her study of women's rights activism, Stephan (2012) asserts that women's activists in Lebanon have actively contributed to the advancement of women's rights by developing strategies rather than "passively submitting to the religious and patriarchal political apparatus". In the same vein, Lewis's (2012) work on Egyptian women's activism refutes the general hypothesis in the West that Muslim women "are the passive observers on their own lives, oppressed in turn by fathers, husbands, social norms and legal institutions". On the contrary, she argues, many outstanding Egyptian activists, who are agents of change in their own lives and society, have been religious; mostly Muslim or Coptic Christian. She touches upon an additional misunderstanding regarding the Egyptian women's movement: that Egyptian feminism is anti-religious and "a negative and corrupting import from the west" (Lewis, 2012).

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[37] Similarly, Kandiyoti (1991: 1) engages with the category of 'Muslim women' and criticises both Western orientalists and Muslim feminists and scholars for their "ahistorical and ethnocentric depictions of Muslim societies", which prevent them from explaining crucial divergences in conditions for women, both within and across Muslim societies.

Feminist scholars underscore the democratising role of women's NGOs in the Middle East, whether secular or Islamic. According to Al-Ali, whereas women's NGOs must be linked with the state and the constituencies of civil society in their struggle for women's civil rights, they may also challenge these spheres, which could contribute to democratisation in Egypt (Al-Ali, 1997: 174). Her position gains support from Moghadam, who asserts that "women's rights or feminist organizations are the most significant contributors to civil society and citizenship" (2002: 16), as in many Arab countries, "the struggle for civil, political and social rights is led by women's organizations, which are composed of highly educated women with employment experience and international connections" (Moghadam, 2002: 15 see also 1997; 2003). In this way, these scholars support the view, articulated earlier, that it is possible to foster the creation of a more woman-friendly civil society rather than attempting to do away with the concept altogether.

That is not to say that feminist scholars are uncritical of women's NGOs in the Middle East, especially given the NGOisation process already described. Women's organisations have proliferated in the region since the 1990s (Moghadam, 2002: 16).[38] Jad (2004: 34) notes that whereas the growing number of women's NGOs in the Arab world is considered to be a means of promoting "bottom-up" democracy, this could also be regarded as a form of increased dependency on the West. She argues that rather than automatically identifying NGOs with "healthy socio-political development", the rise of Arab NGOs, particularly women's NGOs, should be examined using a historical and empirical approach, which would enable recognition of the limitations of NGOs in achieving the goals of "social change and democratization" (Jad, 2004: 34). Al-Ali (2004: 80-81) claims that one of the major

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[38] Moghadam (2003: 73) mentions seven types of women's organisations across the MENA region: service organisations, professional associations, development research centers and women's studies institutes, women's rights or feminist organisations, development and women-in-development (WID) NGOs, women's auxiliaries of political parties, and worker-based organisations. She explains the huge growth in women's organisations by four factors: demographic changes (including the increase in the numbers of women in education and paid labour), economic factors (women addressing the relationship between development and women's issues in response to the structural adjustment policies of the WB and a decrease in public spending in the areas of health, education and social welfare), political factors (challenges to the historical exclusion of women from domains of power, and responses to the rise in Islamic fundamentalism), and international factors (the UN Decade for Women in 1975-85 and the Nairobi Conference in 1985, the spread of global feminism and the international conferences of the 1990s) (Moghadam, 1997: 26-31).

impacts of both donor institutions and the international women's movement on the Egyptian women's movement has been the "professionalization of the previously voluntary welfare sector". She highlights the benefits and drawbacks of this issue when she states that:

> Being a woman activist can be a 'career' in contemporary Egypt, where a new field for jobs has been created within the wider NGO movement. Unfortunately, professionalism and careerism often involve competition for job opportunities, funding possibilities and travel grants, which, in turn, may breed envy and rivalry. (Al-Ali, 2004: 81)

Moreover, the feminist literature on women's NGOs in the Middle East also highlights the difficulty for women's groups to transcend the internal hierarchies and leadership structures which emerge in civil society organisations. In this sense, the work of Joseph (1997: 57) on Lebanese women's groups is interesting in revealing the "paradoxes and contradictions" of the ways in which women's groups can "reproduce hierarchical patron/client patterns of leadership such as those found in men's organizations … even though their work may contribute to the improvement of women's situations in some ways".

Clearly, any adequate analysis of women's NGOs in the region has to take on board both their achievements in contesting and expanding civil society norms, and the ways in which they reproduce such norms in the face of major structural constraints.

3.4. Feminist critiques of civil society and NGOs in Turkey

Turning finally to the Turkish context, some feminist studies have considered the gendered structure and role of civil society in the country, and the impacts of women's activism (Çaha, 2013; Leyla Kuzu, 2010; Arat, 1994). In line with the argument I make above about the feminist literature on the Middle East, such studies mainly argue that women's and/or feminist activism contributes to the democratisation process (Arat, 1994: 106), and that a new plural public sphere has been constructed in Turkey within which feminist approaches and practices have played a significant role since the 1980s (Çaha, 2013). Indeed, Çaha (2013; 2010: 92; 2007) claims that the political discourses developed by feminism – such as equality, difference and autonomy – contribute to the improvement of the position of diverse social groups in civil society, and to the pluralisation of public spaces, helping to

create a more woman-friendly civil society. Like some women activists from Egypt, women activists from Turkey "have rejected hierarchical leadership and tried to implement democratic decision-making processes" (Al-Ali cited in Al-Ali, 2003: 226), which could be considered to have made a contribution to democratisation in Turkey.

The role of women's organisations in civil society is not simply celebrated, however. The NGOisation of such organisations is a key focus of feminists' concern, as in the rest of the Middle East and in other parts of the world, particularly since the institutionalisation of the women's movement. As studies on the influence of funding on Turkish women's organising indicate, [39] negative interpretations of this process in Turkey tend to override positive ones. Some feminists consider that "as women work in the projects that are funded by organizations in which men are in the decision-making positions (such as the World Bank, UN or the EU), they move away from the world that feminists originally envisioned" (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 55). Bora and Günal (2002: 8-9) identify this process in Turkey as "project feminism", and argue that it has transformed political aims into technical project goals and militancy into "activism", weakening the political content of the feminist movement. Hacıvelioğlu (2009: 16-17) criticises the rise of project feminism in Turkey because of the way in which it pushes women's emancipation into the background, ruling out independent work and highlighting the incompatibility of funding with feminism. She pays attention to the unequal nature of projects and the way in which hierarchies often manifest in project development. [40] Thus, just as in the feminist literature on NGOs and civil society in the Middle East more generally, the implication is that analysts must pay attention to achievements but also be aware of these powerful structural constraints.

Amongst the studies on the women's NGOs in Turkey, those of Çaha (2013) and Leyla Kuzu (2010) are crucial in examining the role of women's movements and/or groups in civil society. Çaha's (2013) book conducts a discourse analysis of

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[39] See for example Sirman (2006); Üstündağ (2006); Kabasakal Arat (2006); Alemdar and Çorbacıoğlu (2010); Kuzmanovic (2012); and Bora (2011).
[40] For instance, there are clear power relations between "a group who execute the project" and "a group to whom the project is applied", with the former more likely to be comprised of middle-class, educated women and the latter comprised of women who are perceived as "ignorant" and in need of help (Hacıvelioğlu, 2009: 17).

fifty magazines published by women's groups between the 1980s and 2010. On this basis, Çaha argues that a new plural public sphere has been constructed in Turkey since the 1980s within which feminist approaches and practices have played a significant part. He problematises the compatibility of Kemalism with independent civil society (Çaha, 2013: 60) and indicates how feminists have challenged official state ideology, thereby underlining the constructive impact of the feminist movement on the promotion of civil society in Turkey (Çaha, 2013: 75-86). He also points to the distinctiveness of Kurdish women's discourses, which articulate opposition to male-dominance in the Kurdish movement and to the essentialist approach of Turkish feminists (Çaha, 2013: 178). Leyla Kuzu's work focuses more specifically on women activists' articulation of civil society itself. Her study analyses the role of women's movements in expanding the public sphere on the basis of in-depth interviews with two women's CSOs.[41] She looks mainly at the relationship between CSOs and the state, emphasising not only the authoritarian rule of the state but also that it can act as a partner of civil society organisations. In this regard, she shows how the women activists emphasise the need for autonomous organizing and reveals their mixed attitudes to professionalization. For her, women's CSOs challenge uniform perceptions of civil society by "making the public sphere women-sensitive" (Leyla Kuzu, 2010: 218). Taken together, these studies by Çaha and Leyla Kuzu challenge uniform approaches to both civil society and women's organisations in Turkey, and highlight the complexities and multiplicity of women's voices.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the literature on three topics: the concept of civil society and its dissemination; the role of NGOs in civil society; and the connection of gender to civil society and the role of women's NGOs. In the first section, after presenting a short history of the emergence of civil society in the West, I outlined liberal and critical voices in the discussions of civil society and focused particularly on the dissemination of liberal/neoliberal civil society, and rival arguments about it, in the Middle East, especially in Turkey. The role of NGOs in civil society was the focus of the second part of this chapter. I examined the dominant neoliberal conceptualisation

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[41] Namely KA-DER (Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates) and KAGİDER (Women Enterpreneurs Association of Turkey)

of civil society, which is applied to NGOs operating in non-Western contexts by international funding organisations, and focused on the contested role of NGOs in the Middle East, including Turkey. In the last section, after introducing the key debates and critiques of feminist scholars on civil society and NGOs, I addressed the different perspectives among such scholars regarding the usefulness of the concept of civil society, and the implications it has for women. I ended by discussing feminist literature on civil society and women's NGOs across the Middle East and in Turkey in particular.

I made four arguments in the course of the chapter to which I wish to draw attention here. Firstly, and most obviously, I have tried to show that civil society is a historically variable and politically contested concept. While its neoliberal formulation may be dominant today, as disseminated through international organisations, this should not be treated as fixing the meaning of civil society once and for all, particularly in the light of the many critical voices raised against the neoliberal view. Secondly, I argued in support of the view that overgeneralisation and stereotyping of civil society and NGOs in the Middle East and beyond should be avoided, in favour of close contextual study. Thirdly, I underlined the need to reject both structural determinism, which emphasises the overwhelming power relations within which civil society and NGOs are formed and which they reproduce, and uncritical celebrations of the agency of civil society and NGOs. Instead, I argued in support of attention to the ways in which NGOs are both produced by civil society and help to produce conceptualisations of it. Pratt, Abdelrahman and Kuzmanovic in different ways illuminate a path through which this can be achieved, through study of NGO and activist discourses in and about civil society, and the extent to which they reproduce or challenge power relations. Finally, I gave credence to the feminist critique of the gendered exclusions of civil society and of the neoliberal limitations of women's organising in the context of NGOisation, but maintained, along with Howell, Hagemann, Al-Ali and others, that feminists ought to continue to engage with civil society as a site in which gender inequality may potentially be challenged. I also supported Alvarez's injunction to explore ways in which women's NGOs can contest as well as reproduce neoliberal and patriarchal relations of power.

These arguments inform my case study of the role and position of women's voices in the construction of civil society in the Turkish context. In this case study I will build upon the work of Çaha, and Leyla Kuzu, who, as noted above, have studied the ways in which women NGO participants participate in and articulate notions of civil society. But neither of these authors aims to analyse the connections between women activists' understandings of civil society and hegemonic official discourses circulating currently in Turkey, which may indicate women's articulation of feminist alternatives to hegemonic instututionalisation. What is more, they do not focus on the responses of women activists to the instituuonalisation of civil society in Turkey by conducting a comprehensive study covering all types of women's groups from main political standpoints. Such an approach would offer the opportunity to compare groups by identifying commonalities and differences between them. In the next chapter I will set out the methodology and methods used to guide this undertaking.

Research Methodology: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

This chapter sets out to introduce and discuss my research methodology, which is a feminist version of Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). After explaining the strengths and weaknesses of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and showing how CDA differentiates itself from other types of discourse analysis, I will highlight the feminist innovations of FCDA, outline its textual strategies, justify these processes for my research, and touch upon issues of reliability, validity and reflexivity. I will then turn to the Turkish case by elaborating on my sampling strategy for the selection of women's groups and individual respondents and I will also provide some background information on the women's groups. I will next focus in detail on my fieldwork experience by discussing access to research sites and participants, the interview process, barriers, research ethics, and my positionality in the research. Lastly, I will reflect on the coding process.

1. From CDA to FCDA: Outlining a feminist critical discourse analytical approach

"Discourse" and "discourse analysis" are contested terms (Richardson, 2007: 21). Whereas some scholars approach discourse as "a single utterance, or at most a conversation between two people", others identify discourse with "the entire social system in which discourses literally constitute the social and political world" (Howarth, 2000: 2). In light of this, it is important to assert how I understand discourse in the context of methodology and research methods, and to distinguish my methodology from similar approaches. There are three main types of discourse analysis, namely, conversation analysis (CA), post-structuralist discourse analysis (PDA) and Critical Discourse analysis (CDA), and these can be categorised in terms of how they see the nature and role of discourse, their ontological and epistemological premises, and the relationship between text, discourse and context.[42]

In my research I employ a feminist version of CDA. [43] CDA emerged in the

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[42] See Wood and Kroger (2000); Phillips and Hardy (2002); Wetherell et al (2001); Jaworski and Coupland (1999); and Jorgensen and Phillips (2002).

[43] The other two widely used types of discourse analysis are conversation analysis (CA) and

late 1980s as a programmatic development in European discourse studies due to the contribution of the works of Fairclough (1992, 1995), Wodak and Meyer (2009), van Dijk (1996), and others (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), and since then, it has become one of the most influential and visible branches of discourse analysis (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 447). It is seen as part of the critical turn in language, because it has emerged as a critique of structuralist approaches which analyse language as an abstract system and which are deficient in contextual considerations. This part of the chapter will briefly concentrate on the characteristics of CDA and its strengths and weaknesses, before turning to justification for the feminist variant and the ways it both collaborates with and differentiates itself from mainstream CDA.

In general, the key aim of CDA is to explore links between language and social practices and "the role of discourse in social and cultural critique" (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 205). This approach is, therefore, interested in how language plays a part in social practices and the nature of the relationship between language and other elements of social processes (Fairclough, 2001: 229). CDA rejects the poststructuralist discourse analysis (PDA) assumption that everything can be understood through discourse. According to the advocates of CDA, discourse is constitutive as well as socially constituted by social practices (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 273-274; Wodak, n.d.: 8). It does not just "contribute to the shaping and reshaping of social structures but also reflects them" (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 61).

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postructuralist discourse analysis (PDA). CA entails conducting a micro analysis of repeated structural characteristics, with a focus on patterns of "talk-in-interaction" (Kitzinger, 2008: 119). The context in which the discourses are produced is limited to contexts where participants are actively interacting through conversations (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 456). CA is not a suitable methodology for my research for three reasons. Firstly, it bears positivistic tendencies towards discourse. It carries the assumption that "talk-in-interaction" constitute discourses and our observations of this interaction should direct the study, as if observations are free from values. Relatedly, CA is not suitable for my research because it seems to disregard the influence of broader social, cultural and political contexts on discourse construction. Thirdly, CA does not enable a critical approach to language, which is significant for my research. PDA argues that "social 'realities' are always discursively produced so that the identities and subject positions as speakers are being continuously reconstructed and open to redefinition through discourse, not outside of it" (Baxter, 2002: 830). While this approach to discourse analysis does seek to scrutinise the production and operation of power, it does not distinguish between discourse and practice, with the ontological commitment to a radical discursive constructionism implying that even practices are discursively created. In contrast, I am particularly interested in how social structures and socio-economic and cultural factors influence discursive formations, and vice versa. Since my aim is to unravel the interrelationship between language and power, I find it crucial to analyse dominant and resistant discourses to investigate the ways in which critique and emancipatory alternatives may emerge out of them.

While CDA does focus on language, Fairclough (2001: 229) uses the term "semiosis" to indicate concern with "meaning-making through language, body language, visual images or any other way of signifying". As Wodak and Meyer (2009: 27) indicate, in CDA, "every social practice has semiotic elements and these semiotic aspects of social practice are responsible for the constitution of discourse, genre and style". In CDA, text is described as any product whether written or spoken (transcript of an interview or conversation) and/or other symbolic forms (visual images and texts which combine text and images, such as advertisements) (Fairclough, 1992: 4). Text is "one dimension of discourse: the written or spoken 'product' of the process of text production" (Fairclough, 1992: 3). In light of this, Fairclough defines discourse in CDA in such a way that: "discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or 'constitite' them"; different discourses constitute key entities in different ways (Fairclough, 1992: 3-4). Another term in CDA that requires explanation is "genre", which is defined as "diverse ways of acting, of producing social life, in the semiotic mode e.g. everyday conversation, meeting in various types of organizations, political and other forms of interviews" (Fairclough, 2001a: 235).

What makes CDA different from other discourse perspectives is its problem-oriented, interdisciplinary and critical approach (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 271-271; Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 2). CDA begins with social issues and problems, rather than texts and interactions (Fairclough, 2001: 229). It differs from purely linguistic models of textual analysis in its understanding that reading texts is not alone sufficient for discourse analysis, as it does not delineate the links between texts and societal and cultural processes and structures. This points to the second feature of CDA, namely, that it is an interdisciplinary perspective, which combines textual and social analysis (Jørgensen and Phillips 2004: 66). Lastly, advocates of CDA question the positivistic assumption that there is an independent, knowable world unrelated to human perception and social practice that should be approached objectively (Marsh and Stoker, 2002: 22). Put simply, CDA is a politically engaged and critical approach to researching social problems, and advocates of CDA assume that "any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged not taken for granted" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 2). In this regard, the concept of "critique" has

crucial importance for CDA since it is claimed that critical knowledge enables human beings to "emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 7). In this approach, subjects are not seen as passive; on the contrary, human agency can actively create and change social reality.

CDA takes contextual considerations into account by viewing language as a form of social practice, and placing importance on the contexts in which language is used since "all discourses are historical and can therefore only be understood with reference to their context" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 276-277; Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 5, 20). Making sense of context, i.e. socio-political, economic and institutional factors, within which discourses are constructed, is crucial for the CDA methodology, as discourses constitute and are constituted by social structures.

In order to produce interpretation and explanation of discourses in the research process, CDA suggests two methods of analysis: intertextual and interdiscursive. Drawing on Bakthin's (1986) work, intertextuality and interdiscursivity address any text that is explicitly or implicitly in dialogue with other texts. In other words, "any text is a link in a chain of texts, reacting to, drawing in, and transforming other texts" (Fairclough, 2001: 233). Whereas manifest intertextuality "draws in the actual words of another text, e.g. direct reported speech", interdiscursivity can be seen as a "complex interdependent configuration of discursive formations" (Fairclough, 1992: 68). Interdiscursivity refers to both "identifying which genres and discourses are drawn upon in a text and analysing how they worked together through the text" (Fairclough, 2001: 241). Interdiscursivity which "ensures discourses' continuing fluidity, may be a key to both discoursal change and social progress, and can also be seen as dialectically "transforming" text through encouraging a rethinking of their meanings" (Sunderland, 2004: 30). In this sense, discourses are "open and hybrid; new sub-topics can be created at any point in time" (Richardson and Wodak, 2009: 46).

Understanding the workings of power and ideology in discourse is another crucial aim of CDA (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 3; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 272-273). For Fairclough (2001: 230), CDA is concerned with how language appears in social relations of power and domination, "how it works ideologically, the negotiation of personal and social identities in its linguistic and semiotic aspect". It is

argued that discursive practices make a contribution "to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups and these effects are understood as ideological effects of discourse" (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 63). Here, a reference point for ideology in CDA is Pecheux's (1982) approach to "language in the ideological construction of subjects" by drawing on an Althuserrian notion of ideology (Fairclough, 2001: 233). Ideology manifests in "rather hidden and latent types of everyday belief, which is often disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 8). CDA theorists also use Gramsci's (1971) notions of hegemony, a combination of coercion and consent, to explain complex power relations. This underlines "the idea of contested power" and enables us to "look at audiences having oppositional readings to socially created forms of meaning or texts" (Prinsloo, 2007: 81). So, CDA is interested in mapping and analysing the production and interpretation (reception) of power relations, and its role in shaping dominant and marginal discourses.

Since the key focus of CDA is to show the relationship between language and power, I need to examine closely the CDA approach to the concept of power. Power is a key concept in CDA for analysing how and why the dominant discourse is reproduced and/or resisted. It often sees texts as "sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance" as well as challenging and subverting power (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 10; see also Fairclough, 2003). Although in CDA power is understood as structural and hierarchical, chiming with Marxist views, some CDA approaches, such as Fairclough's (1992; 2001: 233), argue that Foucault's post-structuralist approach to discourse is another useful theoretical reference point. There are, therefore, overlaps between CDA and post-structuralist discourse analysis, as discussed above. In the Foucauldian view, power is conceived as "a force which creates subjects and agents – that is, as a productive force – rather than as a property possessed by individuals, which they exert over others" (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 63). In Foucault's words, "power needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (Foucault, 1984: 61). This approach to power claims it is dangerous to see power as essentially uni-directional since, among other things, it can mean

overlooking how domination is contested and negotiated, and it therefore seeks to illuminate sites of struggle over meaning between the powerful and the subordinated (Prinsloo, 2007). Indeed, the Foucauldian approach to power is very useful for identifying "resistant discourses" because, in this view, power and resistance[44] are forever entwined. In the light of this discussion, in my study I understand "power" as manifesting in relations of domination, which can produce resistance as well as subordination.

Let me turn to some weaknesses and limitations of CDA and discuss how I will tackle them in my research. First of all, CDA encompasses a range of theories and different approaches (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 23). Because of this, there are no coherent guidelines or theoretical frameworks employed in CDA, and no procedures on how to "proceed consistently from the area of theory to the field of discourse and text, and back to theory" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 23). However, since I see the methodologies as "recipe books" (Stanley, 1990), I do not consider the lack of guidelines in CDA as a disadvantage for my research. On the contrary, firming up the theoretical framework with coherent textual strategies in accordance with the research question(s) can turn this weakness into a crucial contribution to CDA studies. Secondly, it has been acknowledged by both advocates of CDA and its critics that there can be either too much or too little emphasis on linguistic features of texts in textual analyses (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 32). However, this can also be viewed in a constructive light as it leaves space for researchers to negotiate the extent to which they wish to or need to adopt a more linguistic analysis.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) brings together CDA studies and feminist scholarship (Lazar, 2005: 1). According to Lazar (2005: 5), the close relationship between feminism and CDA offers a "powerful critique for action". FCDA has the advantage of operating in a politically engaged discourse analysis programme, and CDA provides complex theorisation of the relationships between social practices and discourse structures, and offers "a wide range of tools and strategies for close analysis of actual, contextualised use of language" (Lazar, 2005: 5).

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[44] Further, explaining why power is relational, Foucault writes, "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power...its existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance" (Foucault, 1978: 95).

In a feminist take on CDA, discourse[45] refers to "a set of statements... that produce and organise a particular order of reality and specific subject positions therein" (Lazar, 2005: 143). FCDA insists on the importance of gender as structuring power relations and "adopts a critical feminist view of gender relations, motivated by the need to change the existing conditions of these relations" (Lazar, 2005: 3). In this sense, what FCDA adds to CDA is the necessity of analysing the "oppressive nature of gender as an omni-relevant category in most social practices" (Lazar, 2005: 3). The central aim of the approach is to understand the "complex, subtle ways in which taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated and challenged in different contexts and communities" (Lazar, 2007: 142). In other words, FCDA seeks to "demystify the interrelationship between gender, power and ideology" (Lazar, 2005: 5). FCDA analysts show that social practices, "as reflected as well as constituted by discourse" are not neutral, but gendered, and criticise discourses which sustain the patriarchal social order, thus making a contribution to struggles of contestation and change (Lazar, 2007: 145).

By drawing on post-structuralist perspectives, feminist CDA also recognises difference and diversity among women, which requires the researcher to undertake historically and culturally contingent analyses of gender in place of essentialist and universalist approaches (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2008: 4; Lazar, 2005, 2007). Lazar emphasises that gender intersects with other systems of power based on race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, culture, and geography, which means that "gender oppression is neither materially experienced nor discursively enacted in the same way for women everywhere" (Lazar, 2007: 149). In this way, for FCDA, there is "no universal category of woman/man" (Lazar, 2007: 141). That is to say, "gender" in FCDA refers to both a set of power relations ("gender" as oppression, as related to patriarchy) and an identity category. In this thesis, I use gender in both senses where relevant. Additionally, approaching gender as variable in my research means that it does not only add a "gender" aspect to the analysis of interrelations between power, ideology and discourse but also seeks to challenge

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[45] Reflecting the influence of Fairclough (2001: 229), some FCDA studies have used the term "semiosis" to define meaning-making through not only written and spoken language but also body language and visual images.

gendered hegemonic understandings and relationships.

I follow Lazar in turning to CDA because it provides "a means of foregrounding for examination the taken-for-granted factors (historical, social, political and cultural) that shape the language people use" (Treleaven, 2004: 159). Rather than taking a structuralist or formalist approach to language and to the text, CDA and FCDA scholars underscore the importance of context in the construction of meanings. Thus, for my empirical research, I will focus on discourse as socially constitutive and constituted by social situations, institutions and structures, including gender. This will enable me to look at not only the content of the empirical material as texts, but also the history and context that surround the production, dissemination and reception of the texts, "thereby constructing different 'realities'" (Philips and Hardy in Treleaven, 2004: 159).

Finally, since the aim of FCDA is to underscore in what ways power and dominance are discursively produced and/or (counter-) resisted (Lazar, 2005: 2, 149), this points me toward a focus on "counter discourses". Feminist discourse analysts underscore the importance of counter-hegemonic discourses from below which challenge the naturalising strategies and effects of dominant discourses (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002: 18). In this way, FCDA gives an active role to subjects who produce discourse, which means that it enables the researcher to see how women can actively create and change social situations, institutions and structures. This aspect is crucial for me to show the position of women activists from varying groups in Turkey as active interpreters and producers of civil society discourse.

FCDA implies two broad steps to the research process: i. the analysis of socio-political context and, ii. textual analysis. Attending to the socio-political, economic and institutional factors within which the discourses are constructed is crucial for the FCDA methodology, as discourses constitute and are constituted by social structures (Lazar, 2005). In this regard, FCDA methodologically points me towards context analysis as prior to textual analysis, since the complex processes of discursive production cannot be interpreted independently from wider dynamics (Lazar, 2005: 1-2; Sunderland and Litoseliti, 2008: 5). The application of this approach to my own research question means that I must first establish the socio-political context in Turkey with regard to state-civil society relations, funding and

gender as the precursor to the textual analysis. When I do this in Chapter 3 of the thesis, my goal will be to identify the official dominant views of civil society in Turkey and to analyse how it has been and is currently (re) produced. Only by doing this can I then determine the extent to which women's civil society discourses are resistant to the hegemonic view and/or offer an alternative to it.

In terms of textual strategies, it is important, to begin with, to come up with a way of systematically selecting the texts that will be analysed. It is the researcher who should find such a systematic procedure, taking into account the pros and cons of her/his text selection procedure. [46] In FCDA, most of the data, such as organisational documents, exist prior to the research project and are not produced specifically for it (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 32). That is to say, CDA and FCDA typically focus on a very limited number of texts and usually official documents, which mostly reflect agreed the position of the group, organisation and/or institution. However, texts produced in fieldwork from interviews and focus groups and very rarely participant observations have been also used by CDA and FCDA scholars and practitioners. Interview data is called "researcher-instigated discourse" in discourse-analytic research (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 72). Although using interviews in discourse analysis is similar to using interviews in any qualitative research in terms of structure of the interview (e.g. unstructured, open-ended, probing, etc.), it differs from the latter because of its strategy (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 72). In this regard, interviews should be an active process "within which interviewer and interviewee are viewed as equal partners in co-constructing meaning" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995 cited in Wood and Kroger, 2000: 72) and "answers that are produced in the interaction are not simply 'there', waiting to be elicited" (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 72). Moreover, using interviewing data differentiates discourse analysis from ethnographic studies, which involve "long periods of research participation in the life of the interviewee" (Reinharz, 1992: 18). FCDA researchers do not prioritise the production and analysis of ethnographic field notes; rather they look at words produced by the subjects, organisations and institutions which are the object of study.

Given the fact that CDA and FCDA studies usually analyse a very limited number of texts from official sources, this thesis is ambitious in terms of its text

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[46] Dr. Bernhard Forchtner, Personal correspondence, August 10, 2011.

selection. I cover a whole range of texts within two categories; namely, i. official documents such as relevant written sources and website material produced by ten women's organisations; and ii. transcripts of open-ended and semi-structured interviews with women from these ten organisations. My rationale was that interviews would offer diverse, complex and sometimes conflicting voices in a women's group, as opposed to the organisational documents which reflect a group's formal shared view and position with respect to specific issues and debates. I consider that official group documents are also significant not only in adding nuance and texture to my study but also in giving me the opportunity for triangulation of evidence from interviews.

In terms of textual analysis, the CDA approach developed by Fairclough (1992, 2003) generally proceeds from the "description and analysis of what happens in a text to an interpretation and explanation of these findings in relation to the immediate situational and the wider social and institutional context" (Zotzmann, 2006: 53). Fairclough uses a three-dimensional model of discourse analysis: i. text; ii. discursive practice; and iii. social contexts. He defines this model as follows:

> Any discursive 'event' (i.e. any instance of discourse) is seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice. The 'text' dimension attends to language analysis of texts. The 'discursive practice' dimension, like interaction in the 'text-and-interaction' view of discourse, specifies the nature of processes of text production and interpretation, for example which types of discourse are drawn upon and how they are combined. The 'social practice' dimension attends to issues of concern in social analysis such as instititional and organizational circumstances of discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discursive practice, ant the constitutive/constructive effects of discourse. (Fairclough, 1992: 4)

In 1999, Chouliaraki and Fairclough developed a more detailed model of discourse analysis, according to which, after selecting the texts, the researcher should take the following steps: i. a structural analysis of the context; ii. an interactional analysis, which focuses on linguistic features such as agents, time, tense, modality, and syntax; and iii. an analysis of interdiscursivity, which tries to compare the dominant and resistant strands of discourse (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 31).

FCDA proponents have different views on how to undertake close textual

analysis, but on my reading one can follow a two-level analysis involving, firstly, in-depth textual analysis and, secondly, interdiscursive analysis. For internal textual analysis, the researcher should code for the following: *referential/nomination* which asks how the persons and things are named and referred, *predication* which means traits, characteristics, qualities and features attributed to persons or things, *representation of social actors*, *role of agency, values* and *metaphors* (Lazar 2005; Reisigl and Wodak 2009; Fairclough 1992; 1995; Krzyanowski 2010a; McCarthy 2011). FCDA adds a *gender* dimension to the analytical principles of CDA as it attaches importance to the "oppresive nature of gender" (Lazar, 2005: 3) as a part of textual analysis. For the gender dimension, the researcher should code for how gender/gendered/patriarchy/male/male dominance are defined, how they are related and with what value they are accorded. What is crucial here is that while coding, the researcher should not forget that the gender category crosscuts all of the analytical principles indicated by CDA. For the second step of the discourse analysis, which is interdiscursive, one should indicate "when different discourses and genres are articulated together and through new articulations of discourses" (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 73). I will discuss how I applied these analytical principles in my study later in this chapter.

The approach that CDA and FCDA scholars take to issues of reliability and validity in qualitative research is worth noting. CDA scholars assume that "the classical concepts of validity, reliability and objectivity used in quantitative research cannot be applied unmodified" to qualitative research (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 31). According to Tracy (cited in Wood and Kroger, 2000: 163-4) "reliability and validity presume there is an objective world to be known … the differences are a result of measurement error (lack of reliability) and …. when differences exist, there is one accurate representation of what is (validity)". However, in discourse analysis methodology, there is a general suspicion of reaching for "objectivity" and a recognised need to find alternative criteria for establishing reliability and validity (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 164). Guba and Lincoln (1989: 251) suggest "trustworthiness"[47] and "authenticity"[48] are better for assessing the quality of my

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[47] It includes credibility (parallel to internal validity), transferability (parallel to external validity), dependability (parallel to reliability), confirmability (parallel to objectivity) (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 236-243).

research than quantitative notions of "reliability" and "validity", as "it is not appropriate to judge constructivist evaluations by positivistic criteria or standards, or vice versa". I foregrounded these criteria while conducting my research.

Furthermore, I operationalised the feminist principle of reflexivity in my research, which means reflecting critically on oneself as a researcher. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000: 7) put in, reflexive research consists of four main components: "systematics and techniques in research procedures", "clarification of primacy of interpretation", "awareness of political ideological character of research" and "reflection in relation to the problem of representation and authority". Since the researcher and participant are in a constructive relationship, the identity of the researcher becomes relevant to discourse analytic research (Taylor, 2001: 17). The analysis should include a reflection on the position from which it is carried out (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 66). FCDA practice should have a critical focus on reflexivity that "there is a need for on-going critical self-reflexivity for feminists keen on achieving radical transformation of the gendered social structures" (Lazar, 2005: 14).

The implications of this for my feminist research methodology is that my identity and position as a feminist researcher from Turkey is relevant to my selection of the topic, research question, methodology, data collection, interview situation and interpretation and analysis of data. Further, as a critical feminist researcher, I am required to be as open and transparent as possible about my position and values relative to the research, and to reflect on how the research may have been shaped as a consequence. The section on fieldwork explores these issues and reflects on the empirical research carried out. But first I delineate my case study, in terms of how I developed a sampling strategy to identify appropriate groups, and then sought to interview individuals and gather group documentation as the basis of my texts for analysis.

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[48] It consists of fairness (even presentation of different constructions of all stakeholders), ontological authenticity (maturation, expansion and elaboration of individual respondent's constructions), educative authenticity (boost of "individual respondent's understandings's of and appreciation for the construction of *others* outside their stakeholding group", catalytic authenticity criteria ("action is stimulated and facilitated by the evaluation process" and tactical authenticity ("the degree to which stakeholders and participants empowered to act") (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 245-250).

2. The Turkish case

With regard to the choice of women's organisations and interviewees for this research, I engaged in purposive sampling. In sampling women's organisations, I initially planned to select women's groups to interview on the basis of three factors: geographical location, political position and relationship to EU funding. After conducting a set of thirteen pilot interviews in December 2011, I revised and modified my sampling criteria on the basis of the positions I recorded from women's organisations in the field, re-categorising the women's organisations in Turkey according to five criteria: political orientation[49], geographical location, relationship to the EU funding, organisational structure, and framing of women's rights and feminism. In addition, I limited my sampling to advocacy and long-term women's organisations (ignoring non-advocacy groups such as service-oriented ones and those existing only to pursue particular short-term projects). The women's organisations in my study also vary in terms of the type of organising, such as association, foundation and collective; the extent and type of their political ties with other women's groups; the degree of their involvement in platforms at the national and international level; and whether or not they carry out lobbying activities. Table 1 shows the list of women's organisations which I interviewed during my fieldwork.

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[49] At the beginning of my research, I planned to look at the relationship of women's organisations with three axes of the Turkish Republican establishment: secularism, nationalism and capitalism. When this made the women's data presentation more complicated than I expected, I decided to employ the political standpoint of the women's groups, namely Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish, feminist and anti-capitalist, as one of the sampling criteria. Many thanks to Prof. Simten Coşar for her valuable recommendation on this point (Personal Correspondence, 2011).

Table 1: List of Women's Organisations in the sample

Women's Organisation	Political disposition	Geographical Location	Organisational Structure	EU Funding	Framing of Women's Rights/Feminism
TKB	Kemalist	Ankara	Voluntarism-based	Not funded	Equality
TÜKD	Kemalist	Ankara[50]	Voluntarism-based	Funded	Equality
AKDER	Islamic	İstanbul	Semi-professional	Not Funded	Justice-based Equality
BKP	Islamic	Ankara	Voluntarism-based	Funded	Justice-based Equality
KAMER	Kurdish	Diyarbakır/ Batman[51]	Semi-professional	Funded	Empowerment
SELİS	Kurdish	Diyarbakır	Voluntarism-based	Funded[52]	Emancipation
KA-DER	Feminist	İstanbul	Semi-professional	Funded	Empowerment
US	Feminist	Ankara	Semi-professional	Funded	Empowerment

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[50] Although it would have been preferable to interview participants in Kemalist women's organisations in two different cities, such as İstanbul and Ankara, practical difficulties during my fieldwork meant that it was not feasible.

[51] I selected two women's organisations from Diyarbakır because it was much more important for me to make comparisons between the experiences of the women's organisations located geographically in the eastern and the western part of the Anatolia, than to show the diversity and conflict within the eastern region.

[52] I am aware of the weakness that both women's groups in Diyarbakır are funded. However, although they are/were funded, their approach to the funding differs. For instance, in the SELİS an anti-project stance is dominant even though they received funding in the past. In contrast, the KAMER takes a pro-EU funding stance.

| SFK | Anti-capitalist Feminist | Ankara | Voluntarism-based | Anti-Funding | Emancipation |
| AMARGİ[53] | Anti-capitalist Feminist | İstanbul | Voluntarism-based | Funded | Liberation for all groups |

I will expand a little on the five sampling criteria. The dominant categorisations of women's groups in the literature[54] are political orientation-based i.e. Kemalist, Islamic, feminists and Kurdish[55] women's groups. For the first sampling criteria in my study, I followed this widely used ideology-based political categorisation.[56] The relationship of women's organisations to EU funding is the second sampling criteria, because of the prevalence and divisiveness of funding among women's organisations. I distinguished between groups that had received/were currently receiving funding, had not received/were not currently receiving funding, and that were against funding from the EU.

I consider geographical location to be one of the most important sampling criteria. I chose three major cities – İstanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakır – where the

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[53] The AMARGİ Group İstanbul decided in December 2012 to close AMARGİ after 6 women decided to leave. This occurred after four months of fieldwork. The letter written by those 6 women highlights their reasons for leaving, one of which regards the motto, "We are together with our differences (Farklılıklarımızla bir aradayız)", because it is viewed as serving the ideology of liberalism. They also remark that AMARGİ disregarded opposing and/or advocacy (*savunma*) groups while declaring to be against all forms of violence (see the full letter in Turkish at http://goo.gl/hPdhb3).

[54] See for example Esim and Cindoğlu (1999); Sancar and Bulut (2006); Coşar and Onbaşı (2008); Marshall (2009); Diner and Toktaş (2010).

[55] It is important to note that Kurdish women may have different political orientations. Yet, the main reason why these women formed KAMER and SELİS is related to the struggle for Kurdish self-determination and the place of women within that. Within that basic framework, Kurdish women's groups may vary in their ideological positions. Thus, as will become evident later in this chapter and in Chapter 4, whereas SELİS highlights that it is a member of the Democratic Free Women's Movement (DÖKH), KAMER emphasizes that it is an independent women's group. More concretely, in the context of partnering with DÖKH, SELİS ran four campaigns; one of them was titled "Freedom to Öcalan – who is the leader of the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK), stop political massacre (Öcalan'a özgürlük, siyasi soykırıma son)". However, KAMER rejects to be close to any kind of political organisation.

[56] I used ideology as interchangeable with political orientation which is more in line with the approach of "a system of collectively held normative and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of conduct, which its proponents seek to promote, realize, pursue or maintain." (Hamilton, 1987: 38). But as depicted in FCDA in Chapter 2, ideology and discourse are not interchangeable concepts and reducable to each other; however, they are relational that discourse may be shaped by and articulated by not only political viewpoints, but also other factors, and vice versa.

women's movement is politically effective and visibly active. Ankara, with a population of five million (TÜİK, 2013), is the capital of Turkey in the region of Central Anatolia. Notably, this is where the Turkish Grand National Assembly and government institutions are located. İstanbul is the largest city of Turkey with a population of fourteen million (TÜİK, 2013) and is situated in the Marmara region. Diyarbakir has a population of 1.6 million (TÜİK, 2013) and can be set apart from İstanbul and Ankara because of its eastern location, having one of the largest Kurdish populations in the region, and the on-going conflict between the Turkish Government and the Kurdish people. Moreover, these cities are different from each other in terms of social, cultural and economic conditions, and this may reflect on women's organising. In terms of the number of women's organisations, İstanbul has seventy-six; Ankara has seventy-three; and Diyarbakır has eleven (Flying Broom, 2009). It is also fair to assume that the location of the women's groups in different cities may change their relationship with funding bodies, Turkish Government institutions, and ally organisations.

The organisational structure of the women's groups is another factor that could be influential on the civil society discourses of women coming from various women's organisations. Women's groups in Turkey vary when it comes to organisational structure, but I grouped them into two categories: primarily voluntary-based and semi-professional (with at least one professional employee who tends to lead and deliver projects with the help of volunteers (see Table 5 in Appendix IV).

The framing of women's rights and feminism is the fifth criteria, closely linked to the first. In the 1980s, the feminist movement in Turkey was divided into three groups: liberal, socialist, and radical (Çaha, 2006: 9). Nowadays, feminism and the women's movement has become more diverse. In this context, women's organisations in Turkey have had multiple, sometimes conflicting, agendas such as violence against women, ethnic discrimination or the headscarf ban (Marshall, 2009: 373). In relation to this issue, the approaches of women's organisations to women's rights and feminism can be grouped under the following five headings: "equality", "justice-based equality", "empowerment", "emancipation" and "liberation for all groups".

After developing these criteria, I identified the groups listed in the table

above for my study. I will now give some background information on each of these groups in turn, showing how they also meet the five sampling criteria.

TKB and TÜKD follow the Kemalist ideology as these organisations were both established in order to guard the secular pillar of the Republican establishment. Both follow secularist and nationalist programmes and regard women as citizens of the Turkish society and protectors of the Kemalist secular features of the state (Esim and Cindoğlu, 1999: 182). In line with this kind of political standpoint, the goals of the TKB are developing policies to promote equality, and educating people on women's human rights and associative legal rights. In the same vein, TÜKD aims to "protect the hard-won women's rights and other Atatürk's reforms such as secularism, and improve the educational, economic and social status of women throughout Turkey" (TÜKD, 1998; TÜKD, 2012).

Since the 1990s, the Islamic movement, contesting the Republican interpretations of secularism, "has served as a venue for the politicization of women in that women have actively taken part in the political parties of the religious conservative wing" and "the fight against the ban on wearing headscarves at universities has also increased women's political participation" (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 50-51). In this context, BKP and AKDER were established by religious women in 1995 and 1999 respectively. AKDER was set up to protest the headscarf ban, which was implemented in 1997, by students expelled from school and professionals denied employment because they chose to wear the headscarf (AKDER, No date.). BKP was established to "produce alternative views as well as theoretical and practical solutions so as to develop the ideological, political, legal, social and economic existence of women in Turkey", as well as to address the problems faced by religious women, which stem from established religious institutions which endorse patriarchy and from secularism. It pursues such aims by challenging the traditional image of 'woman' in the interpretations of religious doctrines and discrimination against religious women in modern society (BKP, No date). As Hatice Güler, women activist from BKP, underlines in the periodical titled "From Yesterday to Today: Başkent Kadin Platformu", the headscarf issue has been important in the organisastion's agenda since it has provided safety for women in Ankara who were punished, exiled and/or removed from their offices for wearing the headscarf (Güler,

2007: 8). Thus, the headscarf ban has been their springboard for challenging the secularist Turkish state and its discriminatory policies against Muslim women at universities and in public institutions. What is more, both women's organisations aim to increase awareness about all forms of social discrimination, and focus on the legal, economic, social and political empowerment of women, and issues such as domestic violence, honour crimes and the sexual abuse of children (AKDER, No date 1; BKP, No date).

The Kurdish movement has grown since the 1990s when it aimed to challenge Kemalist unitary and nationalistic understanding of the state. KAMER and SELİS grew out of the Kurdish women's movement; "The majority of KAMER's founders are Kurdish women who suffered from the prevalence of violence in the regions populated mostly by Kurds" (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 48). While KAMER highlights its independence from all bodies in its publicity materials and its website, SELİS emphasises that it is one of the components of the Kurdish women's movement[57] as a member of the Democratic Free Women's Movement (Demokratik Özgür Kadın Hareketi, DÖKH).[58] Nebahat Akkoç (2002: 12), one of the founders as well as the current president of KAMER, highlights, "independence has been one of the most salient principles of KAMER since its establishment. As being an independent women's group we have started to work with women for women". Despite this main difference, the aims of the two groups converge. They both seek to "develop methods to combat crimes committed against women under the disguise of honor" (KAMER, No date1), and campaign against violence against women, support women socially, economically and psychologically, and enhance women's cooperation and consciousness (Duman, 2010).

US, KA-DER, AMARGİ and SFK are the feminist organisations in my study.[59] Whereas KA-DER and US are closer to the liberal feminist approaches,

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[57] A member of SELİS explains that some feminist organisations in Turkey, such as VAKAD, openly declare that they are not representative of Kurdish women and so they seek to differentiate themselves on that basis (interview with Ece, SELİS, May 15, 2012).

[58] DÖKH was founded by twenty women's organisations in 2003 as an umbrella organisation with the aim of building a gender-focused, democratic, ecological and non-sexist society (Alınteri, 2009.). The member organisations of DÖKH include SELİS, DİKASUM, KARDELEN Kadın Evi, KARDELEN Kadın Kooperatifi, EPİDEM, KADEM, Bağlar Kadın Kooperatifi, CEREN Kadın Derneği, CEREN Danışma Merkezi (Reşide, SELİS). KAMER is not a member of DÖKH.

[59] I am aware that some women activists in the Kemalist, Islamic and Kurdish groups may also identify themselves as feminist.

AMARGİ and SFK take a leftist, explicitly anti-capitalist position. In this regard, KA-DER was established to "defend equal representation of women and men in all fields of life" and targets equal representation in "all elected and appointed decision making positions" (KA-DER, 2010). US ultimately aims to empower women's organisations in Turkey by enhancing dialogue and establishing communication networks between them by using "the media and all means of communication for increasing women's visibility and creating sensitivity and awareness pertaining to gender equality within the society" (Flying Broom, 2011). Both KA-DER and US share the goal of challenging male dominance in and across a range of contexts such as party politics, policy-making, employment and family life, by employing tools such as lobbying, campaigns, training and projects.

Both SFK and AMARGİ are feminist grassroots organisations and all of the activist women in those organisations define themselves as feminist. Whereas most of the group members of SFK call themselves socialist feminist, the women from AMARGİ adopt different feminisms (SFK, 2008; AMARGİ, n.d.). For the women from AMARGİ, the women's struggle cannot be delimited to the oppression of women by men since women may exert power as well. In contrast, SFK maintains a socialist feminist approach that women as a group are oppressed by men, and emphasises mostly class-based diversity and differences between women. Regarding the approach of both organisations to gender equality, SFK argues that the concept of gender equality conceals the subject; rather, it should be called "women-men equality" in order to highlight the exploitation of women by men (SFK, 2008). For the women from AMARGİ, the notion of gender equality is seen to inhibit feminism and to reproduce categories central to heterosexism (AMARGİ, n.d.1).

The women's groups in my study also vary in terms of their legal status, as variously associations, foundations and collectives. Apart from SFK (collective) and KAMER (foundation), all of the women's groups are associations. In contrast to the other associations, TÜKD and TKB – the Kemalist women's organisations – had the status of social welfare association (*kamu yararına calışan dernek*)[60] (Yalçın and Öz,

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[60] Social welfare organisations are tax-exempt organisations and the state support is given under the aim of public welfare. There are other rights and prerogatives applied to them (see Yalçın and Öz, 2011; Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2013).

2011: 73), which was terminated for TKB after 2002 (TKB, 2015; TÜKD, 2012). SFK prefers to be a collective rather than an association or a foundation due to its rejection of the hierarchical presidential system that is dominant among the associations. It is not alone with regard to the challenge of selecting a chairperson. AMARGİ and the Kurdish women's groups –KAMER and SELİS – do not practice the chair system even though they are legally required to have one. In fact, the women's groups tend to prefer to be associations for financial and regulatory reasons. For instance, US was founded as a non-profit women's organisation. The founding members chose the non-profit status to protect themselves from the audit and intervention of the Association Law. When the Association Law changed in 2004, it gave some flexibility to associations, and the Flying Broom decided to change the organization's legal status to an association. In a similar way, AMARGİ changed its legal status from cooperative to association in order to ease the income tax burden and financial processes, and to minimise state intervention. SELİS, established as an advisory centre in 2002, also changed to an association.

In terms of the year of establishment, TKB and TÜKD were established much earlier than the others, in 1924 and 1949 respectively. The rest of the groups were formed in the last twenty years, between the 1990s and 2000s (see the Table 5 in Appendix IV). The membership size of the organisations and their means of accessing women differ as well. TKB, TÜKD and KA-DER have a broadly based membership and operate throughout Turkey. Although KAMER cannot legally have members due to having a foundation status, it has around 50,000 volunteers across its 23 branches. Lobbying, campaigning, demonstrating, consciousness-raising, training, media, law, projects, consultancy and welfare services are the instruments used by the women activists in Turkey for their struggle (Paker, Özoğuz and Baykan, 2008: 5). Except for SFK, all of the women's organisations in my study use lobbying. Additionally, none of them except SFK have an anti-funding stance. However, they differ in terms of their approach to funding: whereas a group of women in TKB and AMARGİ has a conditional approach to funding, the women activists from the other groups are open to international funding sources and they are funded[61] by several

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[61] AKDER has not been awarded EU funding despite repeated attempts to secure EU grants (interview with Perihan, AKDER, July 5, 2012).

international funding agencies. The most common international funding institutions are the EU, UN and SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

2.1. Identifying interviewees

Turning to the recruitment of individuals within the identified women's groups, I contacted key members from each and then used snowballing methods to expand the pool of participants. Most participants were very keen to be part of this research. I reached from six to ten women activists from each category of women's group and was therefore able to capture a diversity of views within each grouping. My respondents are mostly educated professionals from middle-class backgrounds. As depicted in Table 4 in Appendix III, almost all of the women had completed a university education. Out of 41, five of them had a high school education only. Six participants had received a Master's degree and three of them had a PhD degree. Of those in education at the time of the research, I interviewed one undergraduate student, two MSc candidates and one PhD candidate. Most of the participants had high employment status, working in professional occupational positions such as lawyer, doctor, teacher, engineer, civil servant, performer, project officer, and psychological advisor. Some participants were employees of the women's organisation. Six participants were retired from positions such as instructor, engineer, and civil servant. In terms of age, most participants were under 60 years. The smallest age group was women between the ages of 61-70 (four women in total). The two largest groups were those aged between 20-30 (young) and 41-50 (middle age), with eleven participants in each. Eight participants were aged 31-40, and seven were aged 51-60. Particularly, the age differences between the group members within and across groups catch my attention. On the one hand the members of TKB and TÜKD that I interviewed were in their 50s and 60s, so they have the oldest membership of the organistions in my study. On the other hand, almost all of the women activists from AKDER, SELIS, AMARGİ and SFK have younger members than the other groups, with a high proportion of women in their 20s and 30s.

Table 2: Age Range and Number of Participants

Age Range	20 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51 – 60	61 – 70	Total
Number of Participants	11	8	11	7	4	41

It is also important to explain my respondents' political experience and their trajectory into women's rights activism and civil society, and to show the variance within and between the organisations. The participants from the Islamic women's group AKDER decided to found the organisation in response to the suffering and unjust treatment they experienced when they were university students due to headscarf ban. In other words, AKDER was established by women who had to quit their university education or go abroad to be able to continue their education. Furthermore, two women from BKP were active in the area of civil society by being members of a civil society organisation and a trade union before joining BKP. However, they decided to be part of BKP because of its non-hierarchical structure. As with the women from AKDER, those from BKP did not get a chance to obtain an academic position in a university due to their headscarf; for this reason they decided to organise into a women's group.

Three women from the Kemalist organisations TKB and TÜKD chose to be a volunteer of these associations after they retired; that is, they did not have any previous experience in civil society and women's rights activism. There are also four women who were active in civil society and worked in the area of women's rights, including on national and international projects on women's issues. What is more, two of the TKB women indicated their membership in a political party. Among my respondents from the Kurdish organisation KAMER, two women were politically organised and had a membership of a trade union and human rights organisation before KAMER. The rest started to be part of a women's civil society organisation when they came into contact with KAMER. Only one woman from SELİS had a women's movement background before becoming a volunteer with SELİS.

Three women from the feminist organisations, US and KA-DER, were experienced in women's rights activism and civil society before they met their associations. In particular, one woman participant from the organisation US had

close ties with the feminist movement in Turkey. Other respondents were not active in any women's groups and/or CSOs before joining US and KA-DER, although they stated that they were concerned with the issue of women's rights. Within my participants who identified as anti-capitalist feminist women, two from AMARGİ did not take part in any political activism; that is, they joined AMARGİ after an internship in the association. The rest of the women were either part of a political organisation or the women's movement. Similarly, three women from SFK were members of a leftist political organisation, however they decided to quit from this organisation and to struggle in a feminist group when they experienced gender discrimination and abasement because of their feminist identity.

There is also a variance within and between the individuals I interviewed in terms of their organisational positions. My interviewees include chair persons, general secretaries, members of executive committees, ordinary members and employees of the women's organisations. There was only one case – US – where I could not speak to the chair of the women's organisation because of her unavailability.

2.2. From groups and individuals to texts

Now, I will turn to what the textual strategies stated in the first part of this chapter mean for my research. My texts consisted of the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews with leading and ordinary members of the women's organisations identified on the basis described above, and also group documentation in the form of written sources and web site materials produced by the women's groups. Written organisational documents comprise activity reports, by-laws of the organisation (*dernek tüzüğü*), leaflets introducing the organisation's aims, activities, campaigns and projects, project outputs such as reports and publications, journals and books published by the organisation, and press statements released by the organisations. In effect, semi-structured interviews and group documents such as those described here constitute two 'genres' of text for scrutiny by FCDA procedures. As I aimed to identify the discourses of the women activists through this process of text analysis, I did not also engage in participant observation. This is partly for pragmatic reasons: the texts that I collected are voluminous and the analysis process was enjoyable yet also time-consuming and tiring. In addition, my research did not include participant

observation data because I am not concerned in this research with the relationship or disjuncture between the discourses of the activists and their practices.

3. In the field

3.1. Access to the field

Before beginning my field research, I spent almost one and a half months in Turkey to conduct my pilot fieldwork, which included pilot interviews with thirteen women from 9 women's groups[62], one representative from KSGM (Turkish Republic Prime Ministry Directorate General on the Status of Women), two employees from Sivil Toplum Geliştirme Merkezi (Civil Society Development Centre), one representative from the European Delegation, and a group of academics and women activists. Conducting pilot fieldwork in December 2011 in Ankara and İstanbul [63] was very illuminating for me. It helped me to understand the field, to predict the obstacles that I would come across, to revise my sampling and, most importantly, to meet and contact the key members of the women's organisations, policy-makers, and academics who helped me to connect to my respondents.

After gaining ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee of my university, I travelled again to my home country – Turkey – in May, 2012 in order to conduct my field research. The fieldwork took almost four months, and involved women from ten women's organisations in İstanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakır (see the map below). Prior to my arrival in Ankara, I managed to contact the gate keepers from almost all of the women's organisations via phone or e-mail and informed them that I attached importance to capturing the diversity amongst the participants within the organisation. When I started fieldwork, I continued to arrange my interviews by phone and e-mail.

As my first interviews were set in Ankara with TKB and BKP, I flew directly

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[62] Women's organisations in my pilot study are ANGİKAD (Business Women Entrepreneurs and Enhancement Association), Ucan Supurge (Flying Broom), AKDER (Women's Rights Organisation Against Discrimination), Baskent Kadin Platformu Dernegi (Capital City Women's Platform Association), Cumhuriyet Kadinlari Derneği (Republican Women Association), Türk Kadınlar Birliği (Turkish Women's Union), Gökkuşağı Kadın Platformu (Rainbow İstanbul Women Organizations' Platform), Kadın Dayanisma Vakfi (Foundation for Women's Solidarity), and Sosyalist Feminist Kollektif (The Socialist Feminist Collective).

[63] Due to the time constraints and the conflict in Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia, Kurdish women's organisations, including KAMER (Women's Centre) and SELİS Women's Association, could not be contacted during my pilot fieldwork in 2011.

to Ankara at the end of April. In the second half of May, I travelled to Diyarbakır and Batman and stayed there for two weeks to complete the interviews with the women activists from the Kurdish women's groups, KAMER and SELİS. In Diyarbakır, I also interviewed a woman employee from the DİKASUM (Research Centre for Women's Affairs)[64], although it was not included in my sampling. This interview enabled me to observe the problems that Kurdish women face in the south-eastern region, along with the high degree of awareness of the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality on women's issues. Afterwards, I went to İstanbul to interview women involved in women's organisations there. Since it was not possible to complete them during the first visit, I made three more trips to İstanbul from Ankara.

Illustration 1: Map of Turkey
Source: Mytripolog (2009)

It was apparent that I could not foresee the conditions and obstacles of the field until I was in Turkey, despite the pilot fieldwork. The unpredictability of the field brought about three main amendments to my research. Firstly, I modified my sample to replace one of the women's organisations, – ÇKD (the Republican Women Association) – with TÜKD (the Turkish Association of University Women), due to the busy schedule of the former. TÜKD is located in Ankara and its position is very similar to ÇKD in terms of its ideology and framing of women's rights. Therefore, in this case, substituting one organisation with another did not present a major problem

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[64] DİKASUM was established in 2001, and its main fields of work are male/domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, trafficking in women, violence against migrant and refugee women, violence against women in conflict situations, and women's human rights (WAVE, No date).

for my research.

A second amendment to my sample came about after having to conduct research in another city in the east Anatolian region, called Batman, as well as in Diyarbakır. KAMER, established as a Kurdish women's organisation in the east part of Turkey, has twenty-three branches. Before the fieldwork experience, I aimed to conduct my interviews in KAMER's central branch, which is in Diyarbakır. When I went to the interview setting, KAMER-Diyarbakır had already arranged two more interviews at the branch in Batman, which I followed up. This gave me some insight into how women's organisations operate across and between branches, particularly between local and central branches.

The third amendment is the numerical change to my sample. In terms of the quantity, I aimed to reach five participants from each of the ten women's organisations; that is, fifty participants in total. However, although I put all of my efforts into arranging more interviews, I could not achieve my target of five women from each organisation for two reasons. Firstly, as a result of the political situation in Turkey, the conditions of the women's groups in the east part of the Anatolian Region were difficult. Most of the members of SELİS, the Kurdish women's group in the region, have been jailed for three years because of the KCK (the Kurdistan Communities Union) trial. Secondly, as mentioned above, during June and July of 2012, the women's organisations were very busy with organising demonstrations and protesting against the attempt to introduce a ban on abortion in big cities such as İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir, the first two of which I chose as a geographical location to conduct my research. Despite these two problems, I do not consider the reduced number of respondents to be a problem for my research since I managed to reach between seven and ten women from each political category of women's groups. I also met the authenticity criteria through fairly representing different approaches within and between the women's groups.

3.2. The process of interviewing

Interviewing is "a powerful research tool for feminist researchers interested in exploring women's experiences and the contexts that organize their experiences" (De Vault and Gross, 2012: 229). In this sense, it is a crucial method for feminist research as it "gives voice" to those participating in the research (Sprague, 2005: 120); in my

study, this means giving a platform to women's perspectives and allowing their voices to be heard. However, "interviewing of women is not 'one-sized-for-all' activity; and thus, researchers need to attend not only to the intersections of race, class and gender in women's lives but also to the ideas that different groups of women may have about 'the way we talked to strangers' or 'the way we think about the research'" (Reinharz and Chase, 2003: 74). As Reinharz and Chase (2003: 81) assert, we need to "to reject romanticization [of women to women] interview" and to investigate "complexities of research relationship" (also see Riessman, 1987). Now I will reflect on my experience of the research process.

Between May and August 2012 I conducted interviews with forty-one women activists from ten different women's groups. I conducted open-ended and semi-structured interviews, which generally took approximately one and a half hours, but in some cases lasted an hour or two hours. While some respondents said that they were running short of time, others wished to speak at length as they were interested in my research. I had off-the-record chats with some women activists as I developed a close rapport with them. In the main, I met the participants at their organisation's headquarters and sometimes we met at cafes or restaurants, which were decided by both sides, i.e. participant and researcher. All of the interviews were based on questions concerning demography, civil society and its relation to power, domination, their views on the relationship between civil society, state and gender, their evaluations of EU-Turkey relations and the EU's approach to civil society, feminism, information on their projects, their activism with their group, the organisational structure of their group, and general questions on Turkey. In general, I did not deliver the interview questions in a fixed order; rather, I asked questions according to the context of the ongoing conversation. Similarly, some of the interview questions were slightly modified and reformulated during the interviews due to the level of communication and the flow of the conversation. In some interviews, I added new questions relating to the ongoing political agenda in Turkey – such as the abortion ban – because of the interviewees' preferences and interests (see interview questions in Appendix I). Conversely, largely because of the lack of time and the number of interview questions, a few of the participants did not allow me to finish asking all of the questions. This does not impact on the research findings however, because all

participants responded to the key questions about civil society, power, and hierarchy. Notably, when asking about demography, I was sensitive to the fact that it would be potentially controversial to ask participants about ethnic origin or religious affiliation.

In the research process, I was keen to form non-hierarchical and reciprocal relationships with my respondents, to be open and transparent with them, and to avoid taking a traditional approach to research which emphasises "objectivity, efficiency, separateness and distance" (Reinharz, 1992: 24; Ackerly and True, 2010; Reinharz and Chase, 2003; Reinharz, 1992; Oakley, 1981). Despite such intentions, I also recognised that it would not be possible to form a totally equal relationship between researcher and respondents. As Eschle and Maiguashca (2011: 9) caution, "interview transcripts… inescapably reflect certain power hierarchies involved in their production". One of my respondent's sentences validates this statement: "we cannot be totally equal in this setting because I am being asked questions by you". In the same vein, Rose (1997: 319) warns us that "we cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it".

Despite the limitations indicated above, I was attentive to feminist research ethics in the interview process. At the beginning of each interview I clearly introduced myself and my motivation to conduct this research by giving an information and consent form – which had been translated into Turkish – to each respondent. I personally explained the ethics form to them, allowed them time to read the form and ask questions about myself and the research, and obtained their signed consent. All of the interviewees agreed to sign the form at the beginning of the interview. I informed each interviewee that their participation was voluntary, that they were entitled to refuse to answer questions, and to terminate or withdraw from the interview. I also guaranteed that the data would be fully confidential and anonymised before it was analysed. In particular, I assured participants that in my written analysis I would only refer to organisational names and personal pseudonyms when referencing from data. I informed each respondent that the results of the research would be written up as a part of doctoral thesis at the University of Strathclyde and I would subsequently draw on the interview data in related publications in academic journals on feminist activism, civil society and the

women's movement in Turkey. I also assured them that I would organise a seminar for the women's groups to disseminate the findings of my research, in response to the expectations of some of the women activists to go beyond the theory-activism dichotomy. All interviewees agreed to participate in the overall research process and all were happy to be heard, though one participant from TÜKD refused to answer a couple of questions on power and domination, as she found those questions 'political' and did not want to be seen as a supporter of one particular ideology. Additionally, I recorded each interview by using an MP3 player and took additional notes when the interviews were underway. A few interviewees indicated that they were willing to talk about some issues only off-the-record and requested that I omit such points from my data analysis. Furthermore, after some inteviews, I engaged in informal conversations with the participants, and though this often complemented the data, these were not recorded. When I visited the headquarters of the women's groups I collected each group's documentation, such as leaflets, brochures, and project outputs, which enabled me to see the official view of each organisation on specific issues, which might differ from individuals' views. I also had the opportunity to do some participant observation in the working environments of the women's groups when I visited their offices.

3.3. Reflecting on my position as the researcher

I had assumed beforehand that the main barrier to gaining access to and the trust of the research participants would be my lack of involvement in the women's movement and my relatively privileged position as a doctoral researcher. Indeed, some participants did refer to "the threat of academic feminism" and this prompted reflection on my potential alienation from feminist praxis. However, more research participants chose to stress the necessity of developing a productive relationship between academia and activism, theory and practice. They were keen to offer insights and strategies on how to do this, for instance, through giving them feedback and information on my research findings and also delivering public talks and presentations outside of academic settings. I interpreted these suggestions as pointing to the importance of the role of the "activist-scholar", a role which not only moves thinking beyond dichotomies such as academic-activism and theory-practice, but also prompts serious critical reflection on my own position and purpose in the research

process (Johnson-Odim, 2001: 111).

According to Reinharz and Chase (2003), there is conventional wisdom that when the interviewer and interviewee share similar social locations, such as ethnic and class backgrounds, or sexual orientation, it will be easy to secure access and to develop rapport. However, researchers have increasingly paid attention to "the instability of 'insider' and 'outsider' statuses" (Reinharz and Chase, 2003: 82). In starting my fieldwork, I expected to have barriers based on the intersection of gender, religion, ethnicity, age and marital status. With respect to interpersonal barriers between myself and my respondents, in a few interviews, I did feel the influence of experience dovetail with age difference. Specifically, I felt it was more difficult to probe some issues and ask further questions with participants who were older, around the age of sixty and over, because of feeling anxious about my own relative lack of experience in the women's movement. Additionally, I was concerned that my status as a married woman at 30 who does not wear a headscarf, or as a non-Kurdish woman coming from the western part of Turkey, might make the interview process less productive due to lingering or even explicit prejudice. On reflection, I realised that this way of thinking actually reinforces tired ways of categorising women (including myself) as "other", and this is something I sought to avoid in my own attitudes during the research process. In any case, once the interviews were under way, what seemed a clear common interest in gender inequality and women's liberation in Turkey soon quashed my anxieties about barriers between women in Turkey. Thus the "conventional wisdom" criticised by Reinharz and Chase (2003) is also challenged by my fieldwork experience.

I approached the fieldwork with the attitude that the research would be a product of co-constructed knowledge with the women in my study. Though this attitude helped me negotiate some of the perceived and potential barriers discussed above, I learned much from my fieldwork about the research process, and about how to situate myself as a feminist woman and researcher born in Turkey and studying at a UK university.

The politics of time and space became evident as I – a woman from western Turkey – embarked on the fieldwork, especially after emerging from the initially isolating period of doctoral research in a UK higher education institution. This struck

me during my experience in Diyarbakır, where I became aware of just how much of a Western mind-set I carried with me into the fieldwork. After engaging with people living in Diyarbakır, and learning of their experiences, I began to see a clearer picture of the south-eastern Anatolia region where there has been an on-going war. What I learnt in the social context of fieldwork is crucially important; the interview process in general led me to challenge the unintentional stereotypical perceptions that I held to some extent towards Kemalist and Islamic women.

Disclosing oneself in the interview is another crucial demand of feminist scholars (Ramazanoğlu and Holland, 2002; Oakley, 1981; Reinharz, 1992). I avoided the traditional criteria for interviewing as "a one-way process in which the interviewer elicits and receives, but does not give information" (Oakley, 1981: 48) as I do not embrace the idea of approaching participants "as sources of data". Instead, I approached interviewing as "a strategy for documenting women's own accounts of their lives" (Oakley, 1981: 48). Reinharz and Chase write that "Interviewer self-disclosure takes place when the interviewer shares ideas, attitudes, and/or experiences concerning matters that might relate to the interview topic in order to encourage respondents to be more forthcoming" (Reinharz and Chase, 2003: 79). In my case, some of my interviewees asked me questions about my activist status and political standpoint (e.g. Was I politically active when I was an undergraduate student? What did I think about women's situation in Turkey? and so on); generally questions regarding opinions and judgements. I always answered them. However, on some occasions, in order not to lead and to affect the attitudes of the interviewees, unless asked I did not embrace total self-disclosure about my political views during the interviews, but instead waited until the end of the interview to have a chat about these issues. Reinharz and Chase (2003: 80) identify this situation when they state that "when researchers interviewing women whose perspectives are clearly different from their own, they may find a tight-lipped approach to be essential to gaining trust". Moreover, given the fact that I was dealing with women's organisations with different political inclinations, I attempted to take a neutral position on controversial issues during the interviews, treating differing views with equal respect.

4. In the computer lab: Transcription and coding processes and dilemmas
After finishing my fieldwork in Turkey at the end of August 2012, I returned to

Scotland to initiate the next phase of my PhD research, which involved transcribing, coding and analysing the data produced by the women activists in both the interviews and the organisational documentation. My aim was to identify the main civil society discourses from the interview data and group documentation and use my coding questions to reveal the specific discursive strategies used by women's organisations. As indicated earlier in this chapter, in FCDA the researcher should code for referential/nomination, predication, representation of social actors, role of agency, values, and metaphors. To apply these analytical principles, I looked for the traits, qualities and roles attributed to civil society; which specific people, institutions and organisations are associated with civil society; the perceived relationship between civil society, the state, economy/market, and funding; the gendered dynamics of civil society and its role in (re) producing inequalities; and the value accorded to civil society, that is, if it is viewed as a positive, negative or neutral organising space in the Turkish context. The aims here was to identify the main civil society discourses constructed by women from the women's organisations, and to explain how they are produced, what key factors shape their articulation, and the extent to which these discourses emphasise the gendered character of civil society. For my subsequent interdiscursive analysis, I analysed how women's organisations treat the official civil society discourses circulating in Turkey, and in what ways they reflected or contested them and sought to develop categories to "compare the dominant and resistant strands" of the women's civil society discourses in relation to the broader hegemonic discourses (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 31). This period of analysis was lonelier than my fieldwork, as I spent most of my time in my university's computer lab.

The first task was transcription of the data with the help of transcription software. In line with FCDA practice, I transcribed all of the women's interviews verbatim, excluding only the sections that my participants asked me to omit. The transcription process took four months; yet it was very illuminating. As well as being useful for recalling interview settings and discussions, more importantly, it enabled initial reflection on the key themes and discourses emerging from the data. The transcription process also revealed those instances where further probing during some interviews would have been beneficial to gain further and deeper insight on some themes. When I finished the transcription in January 2013, I had around 800

pages of text from the women's interviews. The documents I collected from the women's groups were also included in the coding process. I transformed the documentation from hard copy to soft copy in order to make them ready for coding. The limited field notes I took during my fieldwork were not included as it is not common to analyse field notes in FCDA and CDA, given the focus is not on the thoughts of the researcher.

In order to code the women's spoken and written data, I used coding questions, which were revisited and expanded after the pilot interviews conducted in 2011, with the addition of questions on power-domination-hierarchy and civil society, and its relationship with the Turkish state and the EU. What is more, although I formulated my coding questions before commencing the fieldwork, I should stress that formulating them was not a smooth and unproblematic process. As I mentioned in the first section, I drew on the studies of CDA and FCDA scholars and adopted my own coding structure. In this regard, I grouped the coding questions under two sections.

The first set of codes was on *civil society and its relationship with state/government, gender, democratisation, the EU and EU funding*. For this, I asked the following questions of the texts:

- which verbs, adverbs and adjectives are attached to civil society/CSO/society and gender (predicates, relations, etc.)?
- what traits, qualities and roles are attributed to civil society and gender?
- what things/people/institutions/organisations are related to civil society?
- is civil society/gender/gender equality accorded a positive, negative or neutral value in general and in the Turkish context in particular?
- is civil society is an actor/agent?
- which metaphors are employed with regard to civil society and what factors determine the choice of metaphor?
- what actors in civil society are represented and which themes are attributed to them?
- how is the relationship between the Turkish state/government and civil society described?
- what is the approach to the EU in Turkey (pro, anti, moderate, neutral)?

- what kind of relationship does civil society have with EU funding in Turkey and which traits and values are attached to this relationship.?

The second group of coding questions is on *civil society, power and hierarchy*. For this I coded the sources of power in Turkey; whether there is any relationship between power and civil society; the metaphors used in the women's texts; whether there are any binary oppositions in women's texts (see Appendix II). I applied both sets of coding questions to the interview and documentation data in Turkish using the NVivo 9 software programme, which took around 5 months. In order not to overlook any points and to support the data coded on the basis of the coding questions, I read the text of each interview and all of the women's group documents several times and determined the themes emerging from them. On the basis of both answers to coding questions and highlighted emerging themes, I prepared a detailed table denoting commonalities and disparities between and within the women's groups.

Now I was ready to write-up the research, at which point the issue of translation arose. I translated the interview extracts into English verbatim while writing up my empirical chapters. The translation process was not an easy task for me as I needed to take into account the contextual factors in which the language is spoken. To be sure that meaning was not lost in translation and that I did not misinterpret what the participants had said, I have included the Turkish original or explanation of some words in brackets or footnotes in what follows. I also explain in brackets when women laugh, are silent, or if the concept they invoke needs further elaboration. In order to be sure that I succeed in giving the same meaning in English, a Turkish-English speaker double-checked the selected translations without breaking the rules of confidentiality.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced and discussed my research methodology, which is a feminist version of CDA. My main aims in this chapter were to justify my application of the FCDA methodology to my research and to reflect on the research process.

After setting out a general discussion on the strengths and limitations of CDA in the first part of the chapter, I outlined my chosen methodology, FCDA, and explained the associated textual strategies as well as examining appropriate criteria

for assessing research qualitywhen using FCDA. The second part of the chapter turned to the Turkish case by elaborating on sampling the women's groups, identifying my respondents and providing contextual background to the women's groups. The third part described the fieldwork I conducted in May-August 2012 in Turkey by addressing questions of access, and reflecting on the interview process and my positionality in the research. The last part detailed my transcription and coding processes.

In the next chapter, I examine the socio-political context of Turkey, as the first, pre-texual stage of my feminist critical discourse analysis.

Chapter 3

The Socio-Political Context in Turkey: Official Civil Society Discourses

Introduction

This chapter draws on secondary academic analysis and official documents to evaluate the political, cultural and economic circumstances of Turkey over time, and particularly in the light of the EU accession process and the impacts of EU funding. In so doing, I am able to identify the main hegemonic civil society discourses in circulation. As feminist CDA methodology implies, this part of the thesis is a necessary precursor to the textual analysis of the civil society discourses of women's organisations in the next chapter, intended as it is to illuminate the context in which such organisations operate and its discursive constraints and possibilities. As such I will also pay attention to the gendered dynamics producing and produced by hegemonic discourses, and the implications for women's organising.

This chapter is divided into four parts. Firstly, I look to discourses circulating during the period from the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 to the beginning of the 1980s. I will show here the main features of the secular and nationalist Turkish state established after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, its relation to civil society and gender issues, and the hegemony of the "repression" discourse. Secondly, I turn to the period after the 1980 military intervention which brought about profound and sweeping changes in Turkish society, as well as sparking the rise of the women's and feminist movement. This is when an "autonomy" discourse began to dominate understandings of civil society. The third part of the chapter turns to the period during the 1990s when a "politics of difference and intolerance" saturated Turkish society (Öktem, 2011). I highlight the implications of this politics for the emergence of new groups in civil society and within the women's movement. It was during this period that the "autonomy" discourse was supplemented by an emerging "democratisation" discourse. Lastly, I will elaborate on the 2000s until the present day. The period between 2002 and 2011 saw the victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Turkey's EU candidacy status, at which time the discourses of "democratisation", "dialogue-building" and "project-based civil society" became dominant. Since the AKP's third term in office

(2011), however, a more "authoritarian" discourse of civil society has prevailed.

1. The "repression" discourse: Civil society and women from the Republican Period until the 1980s

The Turkish Republic was established in 1923 with the goal of breaking away from the Ottoman heritage. Modernisation, secularism and nationalism were the founding pillars of the new republic (Dikici-Bilgin, 2009: 115). In the early years of the Republican period, the Republican People' Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP[65]) was in power under the single-party regime and the official political ideology was Kemalism, named after Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. The philosophy of Kemalism consisted of "Republicanism, nationalism, populism, secularism, etatism and devrimcilik (inkilâpçilik)", and these key ideas were to provide guidance for Turkish civilisation (Kili, 1980: 387). The civilisation project of the Kemalist elites was not solely about economic and political modernisation; rather, the identification of "modernity" with "progress" was prevalent in the making of the modern Turkish nation through the insertion of Western rationality into the 'backward' and 'traditional' (Keyman, 1995). As well as "the political commitments of the Kemalist project", the "construction of a particular cultural identity" was deemed essential (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 175). This was because the Kemalist central state was "more interested in the principles of secularism, in building a new nation-state based on rationalist, positivist values, rather than in democracy and individual freedoms" (Kardam, 2005: 38). Indeed, cementing a new "self-conception of Turks" meant that the Kemalist project reached far beyond state reform because it was about transforming "a multi-ethnic Ottoman empire into a secular republican nation state" (Göle, 1996: 21).

What these founding pillars of the Kemalist state indicate is that the Kemalist elites were not shy in confronting the tensions between secularism and Islamism. Indeed, in the founding years of the Turkish Republic, secularisation was a key element of the project of *laicism* (revolution from above), and was equated with civilisation and opposed to Islam (Kadıoğlu, 2005: 23). In spite of the goal of a modern democratic state, secularisation in Turkey was not intended to pave the path

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65 The Republican People's Party, whose founder and chief is Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, declared itself as a political party on the 29th of October 1923. It can be identified as a Kemalist and social democratic party.

toward a liberal democratic system and it was in fact often used to legitimate authoritarian politics (Göle, 2003).

In this regard, the disestablishment of Islam was important in the process of nation building and modernisation in Turkey (Arat, 2009: 4). In order to realise this, legal and institutional reforms were put into practice. The caliphate was abolished, and General Directorate of Religious Affairs and the General Directorate of Pious Foundations were instituted in the place of Şeyh-ül-İslam and the ministry of religious foundations respectively (Arat, 2009: 4). Moreover, the New Civil code, which "prohibited polygamy, subjected marriage to secular law, outlawed unilateral divorce, recognized male-female equality in inheritance and guardianship of children" was adapted from the Swiss Civil code in 1926 (Arat, 2009: 4). The founders of the Republic "established secular systems of law and education; destroyed the influence and power of the ulema (learned men of religion) within the state administration; banned the unorthodox Sufi orders and outlawed the use of religious speech, propaganda or organization for political purposes" (Toprak, 2005: 170). Thus, Islam was taken out of the public sphere and confined to the private sphere, and, more importantly, the preservation of Islam in the private sphere was thought to be achieved by the regulation of religious affairs by the state (Tank, 2005: 6; Göle, 1997: 49). In brief, secularism, from its inception, was closely associated with state authority and used as an instrument to modernise and develop the country (Arat, 2009: 4-5). One of the consequences of Republican secularism was to divide the Turkish population into "secularist" versus "Islamist" camps, with the latter "marginalized by the Republic and pushed out of the centres of political power, social status and intellectual prestige" (Toprak, 2005: 171). The exclusion of the Islamists from the political, social and intellectual arenas lasted until the Islamic revival in the 1980s.

Along with secularism, nationalism has been one of the most effective and powerful forces from 1923 onwards in the history of Turkish politics (Uslu, 2008: 73). Ziya Gökalp was the early ideologue of Turkish nationalism from the Ottoman era. He believed it was necessary for Turkey to implement a range of reforms in order to embed nationalistic features in Turkish culture and to decisively support secularism. In the early Republican years "the state was not only justified by the

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Nation, it was also responsible for the development of the Nation's consciousness which was bound to excel by its non-religious character" (Seufert, 2000: 29). This really meant separating governmental affairs from Islamic influence and its oriental traits (Karpat, 1959: 25-6). Yet, even though nationalism had "a secular tone, it internalized Islam as a psychological glue to ensure that ethnically different populations within the boundaries of the new Turkey remained united" (Uslu, 2008: 84). This being the case, Turkishness was to be based on the acceptance of Turkish culture – "Turkey's language, its customs, its historical traditions" – rather than on race or blood (Uslu, 2008: 74). While the official goal was to unite ethnic groups in the name of Turkish national identity, this resulted in a great degree of intolerance toward Kurdish and Armenian populations. Overall, the role of the state was to create a Turkish nation, and since nation and state were to share the same goals, there was little space to manoeuvre for different interests and for associations to resist the nation-state (Seufert, 2000: 29). In effect, the nationalisation project legitimised the co-optation of civil society by the secular state (Ketola, 2011: 93), and the particular form of imbrication between the civil society and the state in Turkey was a result of their attachment to the nationalist project (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 176).

Secularism and nationalism were very much part of the broader project of modernisation in Turkey. Among other things, modernisation is based on the dichotomies between the East and the West, "moderns and traditionals, secular and religious, civilized and barbarian, democratic and dogmatic" (Göle, 2003: 18). The modernisation approach assumes that whereas the West is characterised by secular democracy, rationality, individual freedom and technological advancement, the East is shaped by Islamic norms and values such as relatedness, honour and social harmony (Kardam, 2005: 3). The modernisation project in Muslim countries seeks to "Westernise" not only "the cultural code, modes of life and gender identities" (Göle, 1996: 21), but also political discourse and practices.

In light of the discussion above, I would argue that "repression" emerges as the official dominant discourse of this period within which the state represses civil society, even though the state created a platform for civil society by establishing "a secular legal system which recognized gender equality, secular education, and a conception of public service", which was not premised on ethnicity, class differences

or kinship ties (Toprak, 1996: 87). Foundations, which played a key role in conducting charity work in the Ottoman era, became of secondary importance with the establishment of the Turkish Republic and thereby associations began to work towards disseminating Republican values and ideas (White, 2002: 200). Under the rule of the CHP as a single-party, the Turkish Hearts (Türk Ocakları) and the Turkish Women's Union, formed respectively in 1932 and 1934, were abolished in spite of the fact that they endorsed a similar "civilizing and nationalizing project" (Seufert, 2000: 29). In sum, the hegemonic civil society discourse circulating in Turkey from the early years of the Republic until the multi-party system period (1950) was strongly shaped by the Kemalist and etatist mindset, informed by two key goals: guaranteeing the state's responsibility for democracy and ensuring the development of society within the boundaries of the Kemalist project (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 175).

The organising of Kemalist women was a crucial element in the top-down effort to build Kemalist hegemony through civil society. The dichotomy between Western and Islamist values, and the secular Kemalist state and its nationalistic features, have crucial implications for women's rights and feminism in Turkey (Kardam, 2005: 3). Kemalist women were an important part of secular civil society but their mobilisation was encouraged and channelled by elites as a key part of the instrumentalist approach to civil society at the time. In essence, Kemalist women were mobilised to build social support for three pillars of the Turkish Republic. In this context, the Turkish Women's Union, which was established in 1924, and the Association of Professional Women (Meslek Kadınları Derneği), (re) established in 1949, promoted Kemalist ideology and principles (Çaha, 2013: 58). In this sense, it could be said that the Kemalist activist women and their organisations were an important part of secular civil society (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 175). Still, secularism was key to state ideology and partly shaped the extent of reforms regarding gender relations and civil society.

The repression discourse held sway in the 1950s and 1960s although it somewhat changed after the transformation from a single-party regime into a multi-party regime in 1946. The victory of a centre-right party – the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) – in 1950 seemed to prepare the ground for supporting popular control of the state, religious freedom, democracy and a liberal economy. Indeed,

Democrat Party rule between 1950 and 1960 was characterised by "the downgrading of the secularist tendencies of previous governments, rapid economic development, the political and military integration of Turkey into the Western alliance and the growing financial dependence on US" (Zuchrer, 1997: 5). Religious groups, associations of businessmen, labour unions, peasant groups, media groups, and various political groups were developed (Çaha, 2013: 31). For instance, the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, TÜRK-İŞ) was established in 1952 as the first labour confederation in Turkey (Zurcher, 1995: 330). Although the DP was in conflict with the prevalence of "the bureaucratic intelligentsia" of the state, it did not challenge the sovereignty of the state itself (Heper, 1985: 100, 109). In 1957, the devaluation of the TL and rising inflation contributed to the decrease in electoral support for the Party, and Turkey very nearly experienced a repeat of a single-party regime of etatism and suppression of opposition (Kalaycıoğlu, 1998: 118-9). However, although the Democrat Party did bring about substantive change in many respects, the understanding of sovereignty of the state vis-à-vis the people and civil society did not really change under the Democrat Party Governments in the 1950s. The discourse of repression continued its hegemony, and civil society remained under the sway of the state.

On May 27th 1960, military junta launched a coup d'état against the Democrat Party.[66] The next civil government formed in 1961 and was led by a coalition of the Republican People's Party and the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP).[67] The military intervention "opened a political space for parliamentary opposition" after ten years' rule by the Democrat Party (Toprak, 1996: 91). The 1961 Constitution prepared after the coup was regarded as a "much more liberal constitution" (Zürcher, 1997: 5). For instance, modifications were made to the prevalent Westminster majoritarian electoral system, an independent judiciary was established along with a Constitutional Court, and autonomy was granted to university institutions and organisations operating radio and television. These reforms were intended to check

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[66] Many members of the Democrat Party were arrested during the coup, and the leader of the party, Adnan Menderes and two other party members, were executed.

[67] The Justice Party was established as a right-wing party after the 1960 coup d'etat by the supporters of the Democrat Party, which was disbanded by the military junta. It was also dissolved after the 1971 coup.

governing institutions, and, in particular, to oversee the executive body (Kalaycıoğlu, 1998: 119).

Importantly, these reforms also prepared the ground for associationalism (*dernekçilik*) (Kalaycıoğlu, 1998: 119). Statistically, in this period, there was an increase in the number of civil society organisations, including business chambers, trade unions and associations together with political parties (Bikmen and Meydanoğlu, 2006: 36). Despite the rise in civil society organisations, the shift toward associationalism in Turkey was minor; civil society was not independent from the state (Yerasimos, 2000). In practice, the state only listened to those organisations with an outlook that was in line with the principles of the secular state (Ketola, 2011: 93). The military memorandum in early 1971 is typically seen as proof of the suppression of civil society by Turkish state elites.

Instability and extremism were rampant in Turkey before the 1971 coup, in large part due to the 1970 world economic crisis (Zürcher, 1997: 5). Ahmad reminds us of the situation in that period:

> By January 1971, the universities has ceased to function, students emulating Latin American urban guerrillas robbed banks and kidnapped US servicemen, and attacked American targets. The homes of university professors critical of the government were bombed by neo-fascist militants. Factories were on strike and more workdays were lost between 1 January and 12 March 1971 than during any prior year. The Islamist movement had become more aggressive and its party, the National Order Party, openly rejected Atatürk and Kemalism, infuriating the armed forces (Ahmad, 1993: 147).

In this atmosphere, the 1971 coup d'etat occurred with an aim to "suppress opposition forces with alternative political projects" (Toprak, 1996: 91). In the name of reconstructing "law and order" the left was repressed (Ahmad, 1993: 148) and Islam was manipulated. The main political changes that the military regime brought about were the dissolution of all political parties, amendment of the 1961 constitution, establishment of the special courts in charge of dissent resolution, control of universities to restrain radicalism, and weakening of the trade unions by abolishing the Worker's Party on July 20th 1971 (Ahmad, 1993: 152, 156). National Outlook (Milli Görüş) emerged in Turkish politics with the establishment of the Islamist party, National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP) in 1970. The party

was closed down due to its threat to form an Islamic state in May 1971 (Atacan, 2006: 45), and succeeded by National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP). What is important here is that since the foundation of MNP, "Turkish Islamism has been incorporated into the political system and legitimated by the parliamentary system" (Göle, 1997: 47).

In the 1970s more women's associations promoting the Kemalist ideology were established, such as the Turkish Mother's Association (Türk Anneler Derneği) and the Federation of Women's Associations (Kadın Dernekleri Konfederasyonu). However, around this time, women began to mobilise as part of leftist groups via associations (Çaha, 2013: 59). This represented a shift in organising in the Turkish left, since prior to this time women's issues were not regarded as worthy of attention (Berktay, 1990: 274). In this context, the Progressive Women's Association (İlerici Kadınlar Derneği) was formed by the Turkish Labour Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi) in 1975 and the Ankara Women's Association (Ankaralı Kadınlar Derneği), named after the Federation of Revolutionary Women's Association (Devrimci Kadınlar Derneği Federasyonu) was also formed to organise campaigns and protests, particularly for working class women (Çaha, 2013: 59).

I could argue that there is no significant discursive change in the decades after the early Republican period, despite some Westernisation, and that it is with the military coup of 1960 that space was opened up for associationalism. Despite granting this space formally, in practice the state remained in control of civil society. The repression discourse was the official discourse and only a narrow range of groups emerged with demands in line with the Kemalist agenda. When a wider range of radical movements emerged in the late 1960s to early 1970s, and there was social upheaval, the state responded by suppressing alternative visions, hence the 1971 coup d'etat. In light of this, the state was very much reliant on military intervention to maintain support for the three pillars – modernization, secularism, nationalism – of the Kemalist project. In sum, the Kemalist secular nationalist state created its own civil society and Kemalist women became the "carrier" of this system, or in Kadıoğlu's (2005: 26) terms, the "images of modernity".

2. The "autonomy" discourse: Civil society and women in the 1980s

In September 1980, military elites decided to overturn the civil government again, this time using the rationale that Turkey was too politically, economically and socially unsteady to continue being governed under the present regime. After the 1980 military intervention, Turkey became a setting for deep and widespread social change. The military intervention brought about the dissolution of political parties and several civil society organisations, including those formed by students and academics. The 1982 Constitution, written after the intervention, limited civil rights and liberties, and prohibited ethnicity and class-based organisational activities (Mousseau, 2006: 306). Additionally, the military junta used Islam in their fight against the separatist and leftist movements which emerged during the 1970s, and prepared a policy called "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" in order to weaken the clashes between left and right (Ketola, 2011: 93). Simply put, there was another cycle of repression of the left and a repeat in the manipulation of Islam for political purposes after the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, Islam was construed as one of the founding components of Turkish society that had the power to unite the disparate groups within it (Akboğa, 2012: 7).

Three years after the military intervention, "free" elections were held, authorised by the army. These elections were, symbolically at least, geared toward re-consolidating "secular democracy" and sparking the emergence of a more autonomous civil society (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 123). In the 1983 elections, the Motherland Party[68] (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) formed the Özal Government. This change in government marked the beginning of a new period of reform and change in Turkey, based, on one hand, around Özal's liberalisation policy, and on the other, on the emergence of Islamism. Under this government, "the 24 January Decisions" integrated Turkey into the global capitalist economy through economic liberalization, and economic policy was transformed from being based on import-substituting to export-promoting industrialisation (Keyman, 2005: 43). With the Özal Government, Turkey strengthened neoliberal economic and social policies which had already been realised to some extent by the military regime (Akça, 2014: 19). Through Özal's economic liberalisation and anti-statist policies, Turkey aimed to integrate into the

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[68] The Motherland Party is a centre-right party established in 1983 by Turgut Özal.

global capitalist economy (Keyman, 2005: 43). Whereas the anti-statist discourse of the Özal Government signalled the emergence of a liberal civil society discourse and the rise of NGOs, the introduction of neoliberal policies meant that civil society was reduced to the realm of market relations and the economy more broadly (Sarıbay, 1998: 103-104).

Although these neoliberal restructuring policies bolstered economic growth and triggered the creation of a new capitalist class, especially in Anatolian cities, they unfortunately led to poverty, increased social inequalities in terms of income and lifestyle (Kardam, 2005: 48), rising unemployment, inflation and mass migration from rural areas to urban centres (Delibaş, 2009: 96). The pro-Islamist Refah Partisi (Welfare Party, RP), successor of the MSP, was established in such an environment in order to create an "alternative political voice appealing to the grievances of the urban poor" with an ever-increasing level of political support until the 1997 memorandum (Delibaş, 2009: 97). Although the integration of Islam into politics in Turkey has a history dating back to transition to a multi-party system (1950s), in the 1980s, Islamist movements began to grow through the rise of RP in both local and national arenas (Özdalga, 1997: 75). One of the crucial strategies of the Islamist movements was to "develop an educated counter-elite as a base of support" (Narlı, 1999: 40). To clarify, the migration of peripheral groups to the urban centres enabled new groups to attain secular education, which provided an "opportunity of upward social mobility" and allowed them to "come to terms with modernity in general and with secular elites in particular" (Göle, 1997: 52-53).

As noted above, the Turkish state strictly controlled rights and freedoms through the 1982 Constitution, "which, inter alias, prohibited education in languages other than Turkish (Article 42)" (Kaliber and Tocci, 2010: 195). Partly in response to such measures, in 1984, a guerilla war began against the Turkish Republic by the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in order to establish an independent Kurdistan, and "the state has responded with heavy military" (Öktem, 2011: xiii). In this context, Kurdish[69] nationalism developed as a mass movement in Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolia for the Kurds to claim their cultural rights (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 42).

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[69] Kurdish people make up almost 20% of the population in Turkey: 11 to 15 million out of a total population of around 74 million (Updegraff, 2012: 119).

In this period, and against the backdrop of the recurrence of multi-party politics, the concept of civil society began to gain popularity (Köker, 2007). CSOs have proliferated since the mid-1980s, with the goal of prospering civil society and contributing to democratisation by weakening the power of the state and military. In other words, the main role of civil society actors was to "push the military authority for this end" and their influence on political change in Turkey (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 173). To illustrate, the Motherland Party's victory in 1983, after the three-year military junta, was interpreted as a response of civil society to the authority of military (Mert in Şimşek, 2004: 47). In this sense, the ANAP Government replaced "the discourse of existence of individual for state" with the "discourse of existence of state for individual" by supporting the discourse of "national will (*milli irade*)" (Sarıbay, 1998: 103). In this way, the "democratization of the state" became a key manifesto pledge for right-wing parties (Bora, 1994: 14). At the same time, the rise of civil society helped to popularise policies which valued private enterprise (Sarıbay, 1998: 103). Importantly, the number of Islamic CSOs rose significantly, especially in the post-1983 period (Kadıoğlu, 2005: 28).

The increase in the number of NGOs created an idea of expansion of civil society vis-à-vis the state in Turkey. Thus, the "autonomy" discourse was the official hegemonic discourse of the 1980s. This discourse largely stems from a liberal approach to civil society where civil society is autonomous relative to the state, and the separation between state and civil society is valued. Whereas the state is considered as an area of power, civil society is conceptualised to represent the people (*halk*) (Navaro-Yashin, 1998b: 57). Democratisation and demilitarisation were particularly key as the latter helped to define civil society as a "non-military" space and an "area of freedom" (Bora, 2005: 264). Despite the limitations and critiques of civil society practice in Turkey, it was perceived normatively with positive connotations, viewed as "a realm of possibility for change" (Rumford, 2002: 273). What is notable is that advocates of "autonomous civil society" viewed "Islamicization in Turkey as the awakening of civil society against the state after seventy or more years slumber" (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 131).

During the years of widespread politicisation in Turkey − in the 1970s and 1980s − "women's organizations were predominantly the appendage of leftist parties

and groups and the Association of Progressive Women continued to be powerful in this era as the organization of working class women" (Flying Broom, 2009). Crucially, towards the end of the 1980s, women's groups started to be distinguished from each other with regard to their ideological persuasions (e.g. radical, liberal and socialist feminists), their choice of type of organisation (i.e. establishing formal organisations or remaining informal, non-hierarchical networks) and their location (e.g. the groups in İstanbul and Ankara) (Kardam, 2005: 45). However, some women's groups hesitated to be referred to as civil society activists because of the historical tendency of civil society to be co-opted by the Turkish state. This issue became more important for women's organisations in Turkey in the 1990s and 2000s when the donor-CSO relations began to impact on civil society, and this will be elaborated in the next part of this chapter.

To conclude, in the political climate of the 1980s, according to the official discourse, civil society was recognised as an associational sphere and, through demilitarisation, began to become autonomous relative to the state. Pluralism was allowed and practiced to a certain degree.

3. The "democratisation" and "autonomy" discourses: Civil society and women in the 1990s

The 1990s are crucial years in Turkish history because of the rise of the Islamist and Kurdish movements, the 1997 military intervention, the headscarf ban, and the EU candidacy status with the Helsinki Summit (1999).

The 54th government of Turkey was formed by rightist political parties, namely Refah Partisi, having an explicit Islamist origin, and Doğru Yol Partisi (True Path Party, DYP) on June 28th 1996. However, the life of this government was short due to the so-called reactionary (*irticacı*) politics of the Welfare Party government; trade unions and professional groups organised against the government, "with words of encouragement by the army to join the 'battle' between the MGK and the government" (Seufert, 2000: 34). The "Civil Initiative Five", composed of the employer and labour unions TOBB (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey), TESK (Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen), TİSK (*Turkish* Confederation of Employer Associations), DİSK (The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of *Turkey)* and TÜRK-İŞ, published a notice in

February 1997 criticising the reactionary politics of the Welfare Party Government, and advocating a struggle for secularism and democracy. This initiative could be viewed as an example where the mainstream actors of Turkish civil society agreed with and supported the Kemalist military generals and officers of the 1997 coup d'état, aiming to highlight the possible threats posed by an Islamic government to the secularist Turkish state. With the pressures from the secularist camp, a modern coup-d'état occurred on February 28th 1997 and the Refah Government was abolished by the military junta.

In the aftermath of the coup, the conflict between Islamism and secularism was reignited when the government decided to ban the donning of the headscarf/türban[70] in public spaces such as universities and public institutions. Wearing a headscarf had been subject to state regulations rather than law because of the rising number of headscarved university students since the 1980s (Akboğa, 2013: 2). In this context, the headscarf became symbolic of the Islamisation of Turkish society. Regarding its outright ban in public spaces, the dominant argument circulated by the Kemalist women was that wearing a headscarf is an obstacle for women to liberate themselves. Unsurprisingly, this engendered heated debate between Kemalist and Islamist groups. Importantly, the struggle of the Islamist groups against the headscarf ban was institutionalised (Akboğa, 2013: 1). CSOs such as AKDER, ÖZGÜR-DER (The Association for *Free Thought* and Educational Rights) and Mazlumder (The Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People) were established in order to challenge the authority of the state and military, and fought against the headscarf ban (Kadıoğlu, 2005; also see Pusch, 2000).

Another divisive issue that caused unrest during the 1990s centred on Kurdish nationalism, which was salient internationally as well as domestically. Because of the aim of the PKK to form "an independent Marxist state", the Turkish state and its allies such as the USA and the EU viewed the PKK as a "terrorist movement" and responded militarily (Gunter, 2013: 88). In other words, "at the beginning of the 1990s the military opted for a new strategy that totally militarized the Kurdish

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[70] A türban is rather different from the traditional headscarf, which is "the style of donning of the headscarves to cover the head, neck, ears, and the shoulders of women" (Kalaycıoğlu, 2009).

question and destroyed all hope of a political solution" (Akça, 2014: 24). Exceptionally, in 1993, Turkish President Turgut Özal seemed to accede to negotiate with the PKK but this plan was left unfinished after his unexpected death, and thereafter, the military response became more severe (Gunter, 2013: 88). In such an environment, alongside the Islamist movement, the Kurdish movement began to be institutionalised. Political parties that gave priority to resolving the Kurdish problem were founded in the 1990s, and they found a support base from Kurdish people who were politicised through the Kurdish mass movement (Çağlayan, 2007: 126). HEP (People's Labour Party) was the first pro-Kurdish party established in 1990. DEP (Democracy Party, 1993), HADEP (People's Democracy Party, 1994) and DEHAP (Democratic People's Party, 1997) followed HEP after it was shut down due to allegations of aiming and acting to dissolve the state's indivisible integrity (NTV, 2009). Kurdish CSOs were formed as part of the institutionalisation of the Kurdish movement, in order to confront the nationalist and unitary discourse of the Turkish secular state. Importantly, new Kemalist CSOs emerged in the early 1990s to challenge the rise of Islamist and Kurdish movements and re-consolidate "the official Kemalist ideology"; that is, Kemalist civil activism was seen as inevitable for hegemony-building in the area of civil society (Erdoğan, 2000: 250). In this regard, Kemalist organisations mirrored the role of the authoritarian Kemalist state in seeking to protect "national unity and laicism" (Erdoğan, 2000: 250).

In the 1990s, ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey began to lift up their voices "against policies that they felt were aimed at undermining their cultural and ethnic identities" (Özçetin and Özer, 2015: 18). With these events and developments in mind, the official-dominant civil society discourse was undoubtedly one of democratisation. This discourse overlaps with the autonomy discourse, outlined in the previous section; because of the way it constructs the independence of civil society as inevitable for the formation and promotion of democratic society. The democratisation discourse developed in two particular ways in Turkey, specifically, through the juxtaposition of civil society (*sivil*) against the military, and through the pluralisation of civil society which reflected the fissures in Turkish society.

Firstly, democratisation was assumed to be occurring because CSOs were heavily contesting military authority. Political elites and analysts shared the view that

the dominance of the military, displayed through its interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997, was the main barrier to creating a free and associative space for the civils. In this light, trade unions (*sendikalar*), associations (*dernekler*), foundations (*vakıflar*), sectoral associations and chambers (*odalar*), bar associations (*barolar*) and fellow countrymen associations (*hemşehri dernekleri*) were viewed as promoting democracy when fighting against the authority of the military in the ruling of the country (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 173). What is notable about the democratisation discourse is that the concept of civil society was employed together with the notions of democracy and democratisation without any further analysis (Köker, 2007; Şimşek, 2004: 46).

Nonetheless, the democratisation discourse also found some justification in the pluralisation of civil society in this period. There was a sharp increase in the number and diversity of CSOs and civil society was construed by the state as an actor able to play an essential role in the processes of democratisation and Turkey's EU accession (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003). During this period, the idea that the state had abandoned its policy of suppression and was seeking actively to encourage autonomous civil society intensified (Şimşek, 2004: 68).

However, dominant democratisation and deepened autonomy discourses of the 1990s offered only partial accounts of civil society at this time. In particular, the idea of pluralism was not respected and never really materialised. Conflicts among different groups, especially between secularists and Islamists, still dominated politics by drawing a line between state and civil society, and relations within civil society (Ketola, 2009: 92). From the 1980s onwards, confrontations between Turks and Kurds, Alevis and Sunnis, Islamists and Kemalists have been reoccuring, and when one side becomes powerful, it restrains and suppresses the other (Şimşek, 2004: 63). The exclusion from civil society of new groups which did not share the Kemalist line of thinking was particularly prominent, as this period was characterised by "the emergence of rather vocal Islamic groups and of groups questioning the ongoing military involvement, its grounds and implications in the south-east throughout the 1990s" (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 177). What this makes clear is that the discourse of democratisation was profoundly flawed; followers of this interpretation "have confused a changing discourse or technique of state power with an autonomous rise

of civil society and the idea of a separate realm of society was used by politicians seeking legitimacy, more in this particular historical period in Turkey than any before" (insert citation). They have, moreover, overlooked "the tension-ridden struggles between diverse organs of the state on the one hand, and members of social movements on the other" (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 132). Put differently, the deepening autonomy discourse hides the fact that civil society became an area to promote the legitimacy of the state.

The implications of these changes and tensions for women in the civil society arena were profound. The 1990s is characterised by the institutionalisation of the women's movement. Women's organisations increased in number, from around 10 between 1973 and 1982, to 64 between 1983 and 1992, and more than 350 in 2004 (Uçan Süpürge in Arat, 2008: 400), and they focused on various issues such as violence against women and women's human rights (Çubukçu, 2004: 99). Furthermore, these organisations started to develop strong political ties, lobbying activities and network structures (Uçar, 2009: 4). With the goal of struggling against the double burden of being exploited both by the Turkish state and the patriarchal culture in the region, the Kurdish women's civil society organisations such as KAMER, SELİS, VAKAD (Van Women's Association) and DİKASUM (Research Centre for Women's Affairs Diyarbakir Diyarbakır) were founded in Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolia where there has been an on-going conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdish people since the 1980s. What is more, Islamist women's organisations such as the Capital Women's Coalition Platform Association (BKP), established in Ankara in 1995, and the Women's Rights Association against Discrimination (AKDER), founded in İstanbul in 1999, were formed to protest the headscarf ban.

To sum up, democratisation and deepened autonomy discourses were the official civil society discourses of the 1990s in Turkey. The next part of this chapter will ask whether or not this has changed during the terms of the three AKP Governments.

4. From "dialogue-based" to "authoritarian" Civil Society Discourses: Civil Society and Women in the Years of the AKP

The victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the last three general elections (2002, 2007, and 2011), with increasing votes, has enabled the party to set the agenda for Turkish politics during the 2000s and beyond. Since 2002, the Party has established single-party governments and the CHP has been the main oppositional party. The AKP is regarded as a continuation of the Democrat Party (1950) (Mert, 2007) and most of the party cadres were supporters of the National Outlook (Milli Görüş) tradition, which is represented in Turkish politics with the establishment of the Islamist party, namely MNP in 1970, and succeeded by MSP, RP, Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP) and Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP) (Atacan, 2006: 45).[71] The AKP formed after the dissolution of the FP by the reformist faction of the party, and to distance themselves from hard-liners in that party. The main aim of the AKP has been to challenge the Kemalist establishment across administrative, judicial, military, economic and social levels.

What makes the AKP's power unique in the Turkish case is its endeavour to integrate not only conservative and Islamic values but also a neoliberal programme into political discourse and practice. The "AKP revitalized the neoliberal hegemony by 'the absorption of Islamism into secular neoliberalism more or less successfully at the levels of the hegemonic formation'" (Tugal cited in Akca, 2014: 30). The period of the AKP's rule can be separated into two parts. The first period, of victory in the 2002 to 2011 elections, is identified by the discourses of "democratisation", "dialogue-building", and "projectism" shaped by the EU accession process and the associated democratisation programme. The second period began after the 2011 elections, from which point we see the rise of an "authoritarian" civil society discourse.

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[71] Although they rejected this claim as "leaders of the party have emphasized that they have broken away from the Milli Görüş" tradition (Çıtak and Tür, 2008: 215) of the Refah Party, the AKP's organic links with this tradition have been obvious since the establishment of the party. This differentiates the AKP from former centre right parties (Özman and Coşar, 2007: 455).

4.1. Dialogue and project-based civil society: AKP power until 2011

Despite portraying itself as a "conservative democracy" (Yıldız, 2008: 43), the first AKP Government gave priority to "market rationality" and economic goals by implementing a far-reaching neoliberal programme rather than neo-conservative policies (Acar and Altınok, 2013: 2). Connectedly, the AKP aimed for EU accession and showed commitment to the principles of Western democracy and liberal economics, particularly between 2002 and 2007 (Acar and Altınok, 2013: 2). The EU-induced democratic reforms played an important role in forming a dialogue-based civil society discourse.

At this time, the AKP sought to present "itself as the representative of Turkish civil society" (Dikici-Bilgin, 2009: 117). It was seen as offering "renewed opportunities for civil society development and was met with high expectations" (Özçetin and Özer, 2015: 18). The "dialogue" discourse became dominant as successive AKP governments stressed how they prioritised civil society differently from the previous governments (AKP, 2012). They intentionally employed new rhetoric to emphasise that they welcomed the participation of CSOs in the decision- and policy-making processes. The dialogue-based conception of civil society is therefore about taking into account the voices of a diversified civil society sector. In this period, the number of civil society organisations increased and the interests pursued continued to be diversified: from various women's issues to the environment, from gay and lesbian rights to homelessness, from language rights to ethnic groups and prison reform associations. Thus, we see a "less formalized" and "more diffused" CSO sector at this time compared with the period when it was comprised of more traditional organisations (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 174).[72]

Although the changes in the structure of CSOs were remarkable, civil society was still at the level where the hegemonic struggle between secular and Islamic circles remained predominant (Ketola, 2011: 92). The sociocultural reflex was "contracting more frequently in the first years of the 21st century than it did in the last 30 years of the 20th and the emergence of politicized religious groups in particular motivated such a situation" (Seçkinelgin, 2004: 177). In the 2000s, the

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[72] In 2013, the number of CSOs in Turkey, comprising associations, foundations, trade unions, chambers and cooperatives, reached 248,875. Of these, 99,230 are active and 149,645 are annulled which indicates that many CSOs are short lived (Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2013).

headscarf ban continued to be one of the decisive issues in Turkish politics. On February 9th 2008, the Parliament's proposal for a constitutional amendment to lift the headscarf ban in higher education was accepted (BBC, 2008). However, on June 5th 2008, the Constitutional Court rejected the proposal on the basis that it was against the principle of laicism and the unchangeable provision of the Republic (NTV, 2008). In 2013, the AKP Government removed the ban, except for public prosecutors, police officers and judges, in the so-called "Democratization Package" (Radikal, 2013).

Dovetailing with the dialogue-based civil society discourse, the democratisation discourse became prominent in the 2000s with respect to the EU accession process. Before turning to the Turkish case, I would like to discuss the EU's view on civil society[73] in general. The emphasis on civil society in the EU has gradually increased with the aim of promoting the policies of democracy (Raik, 2006: 1). The Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (2003) emphasised the "principle of participative democracy" and that "institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society". Generally, civil society is thought of as a way of overcoming the limitations of parliamentary democracy and "building alternative mechanisms of legitimation into the system of governance" (Amstrong, 2002: 106). Moreover, the increase in the international visibility of civil society through international meetings is the other reason EU institutions engage with civil society (Salgado-Sanchez cited in Bayraktar, 2009). All of the EU institutions make the involvement of civil society in EU affairs a primary concern (Kohler-Koch, 2010: 101).

As also discussed in Chapter 1, the EU associates the consolidation of democracy with civil society development, as became obvious during the accession of CEE countries. One of the important motives of CEE countries to support accession to the EU was the "conviction that, once in the Union, their own states will become more robustly democratic" (Sadurski, 2004: 371). In this context, civil

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[73] It is important to emphasise that the use of civil society by EU institutions is not "uniform"; however, it basically links to "organised civil society" (Kohler-Koch, 2010a: 1120). A broad range of non-governmental actors such as "associations of business, trade unions, professionals, citizens' organizations or cause groups" are labelled as civil society organisations (Kohler-Koch, 2010a: 1120). Additionally, at the institutional level, while the European Parliament and the Council are not so concerned about the notion of civil society, the European Commission and the Economic and Social Committee has played a key role in shaping the civil society discourse in the European Union.

society is construed as serving as a channel between citizens and the state to provide leverage for democratic change. Turkey has not been free from this kind of approach after experiencing several military interventions and the growing motivation for the EU membership. In 1999, after obtaining EU candidacy status in the Helsinki Summit, Turkey begun to receive financial grants.[74] Being such a large country, the economic and political impacts of possible Turkish accession on Union politics have generated much anxiety among Western European commentators (Hughes, 2004), as has the extent to which this Muslim-dominated country can embrace concepts of civil society and democracy that originate in the West (Kubicek, 2005: 362). Nonetheless, Turkey has been participating in EU Programmes.

After gaining candidacy status, in March 2001, the Accession Partnership was adopted by the European Council for Turkey and determined the conditions to open accession negotiations at the end of 2004 (Bayraktar, 2009: 48). With 35 chapters, accession negotiations commenced in 2005. EU interest in civil society and its actors, particularly CSOs, has risen in the wake of this process. Obtaining candidate status to the EU has been considered significant for the "development of a pro-democratic civil society" in Turkey (Şimşek, 2004: 70). There were two main impacts of the EU accession process on civil society: i. "proper ground for changing the legal system", and ii. "EU financial support" (Çaha, 2013: 67). In this regard, considerable political attention has been given in Turkey to the necessary reforms to meet the political demands of the Copenhagen criteria, "which is served as a basis for the further democratization of the state–society relations" (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003: 224). Several reforms were made within the areas of the civil-military relationship, and minority and human rights under the title of the "adaptation package" (Çaha, 2013: 65). In the reform process, civil society actors, particularly business actors, were very active and effective in putting pressure on the government to fight for Turkey's membership (Öniş, 2007: 247). In 2002, one hundred and seventy-five CSOs published a joint declaration to show their eagerness for the

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[74] The EU grants provided to Turkey are divided into two groups: i. pre-candidacy grants (1964-1999), and ii. post-candidacy grants (1999-present). In the first period, grants called MEDA (Mediterranean Economic Development Area) (1996-99) and EUROMED (1997-1999) were awarded to Turkey. In the latter period, Turkey has started to benefit from EU funding under one framework with an aim to institute political, economic, legal and administrative measures as a condition to conform to the EU acquis (ABGS, No date).

integration of Turkey into the EU, since they believed that accession could result in "a more democratic, modern, open, and a secular system as well as a powerful and consistent economy and welfare society" (Çaha, 2013: 66). Among the EU reforms in Turkey, the new Association Law, executed in 2002 and 2008, brought about important changes for CSOs. It eased regulations concerning the establishment of new associations and allowed them to conduct shared projects with international organisations (Çaha, 2013: 66-67).

As remarked above, the AKP Government's close relationship with the EU, particularly in the first period, was remarkable and this led to a certain change in Turkey. EU membership is identified with Westernisation and modernisation, initiated by the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and by the Turkish political and military elites (Tocci, 2005: 75). The AKP is a political party that formed itself as a strong proponent of the EU-motivated reforms (Öniş, 2007: 247) and formulated its democratisation agenda within the context of the EU harmonisation process. The motivation of the AKP for EU membership is based on two points: "its interests" and "ideology-related explanations" (Tocci, 2005: 80). Whereas the former is about how the EU accession process helps the AKP become more legitimate through jettisoning "its Islamist past vis-à-vis the international community and the secular establishment in Turkey", the latter is about how the EU helps to ensure democratic reforms that the AKP needs (Tocci, 2005: 80). In this light, "Civil society has been both a subject and an object of the EU reform process" and the reform process has lent more credence to, and empowered, CSOs in Turkey (Tocci, 2005: 80-81).

The democratisation discourse was also promoted for some time as the AKP sought to address the Kurdish question by peaceful means. This was especially clear with the reforms planned in many areas – including the Kurdish question – in order to meet the EU Copenhagen political criteria after Turkey's acceptance of EU candidacy and the PKK leader Öcalan's arrest (Çelik, 2014: 5). The coalition government (DSP, ANAP and MHP) enforced crucial EU harmonisation reforms with respect to the Kurdish question such as "a gradual ending of the emergency rule in the Southeast, allowing television and radio broadcasts in Kurdish, making Kurdish language training possible" (Pusane, 2014: 84). Those EU harmonisation

reforms for the Kurdish question lasted in the first AKP Government with a goal of "eliminating the practice of torture and ill-treatment, [extending] the freedom of expression and association, [amending] the broadcasting law to allow for broadcasting in languages other than Turkish by public and private radio and television stations, and [permitting] the granting of Kurdish names to children" (Pusane, 2014: 85). After a period in which Erdoğan "adopted a nationalistic and hard-line rhetoric during the 2007 elections campaigns" (Pusane, 2014: 85), a Kurdish Opening or Kurdish Initiative (also called the Democratic Opening) was launched in 2009 by the AKP Government (Gunter, 2013: 88), although "government constituencies" and "pro-secular" groups reacted strongly to the Opening (Somer and Liaras, 2010: 152). Through the "Kurdish initiative", the AKP Government aimed to stop the war between PKK guerillas and the Turkish military, to come up with a solution to the Kurdish question and to enhance the human rights of the Kurdish population living in Turkey. It was said to tackle democratic deficiencies of the regime by highlighting problems such as obstacles to education in the mother tongue, prosecution for "demonstrating, writing, or speaking in support of Kurdish-nationalist ideas" and the 10% threshold. It also seemed to cement the party's aim of "reaching a peace agreement with the PKK" (Updegraff, 2012: 120-121).

However, such democratisation goals did not last long. The Kurdish Opening process failed "shortly thereafter following the increased number of deaths among the Turkish military and the PKK, which led to increasing social polarization between Turks and Kurds" (Çelik, 2014: 5). The pro-Kurdish DTP[75] (Democratic Society Party) was closed by the Constitutional Court on December 2009 due to its affinity with the PKK, and 1,500 people, such as including politicians, human rights advocates, writers, artisans and leaders of CSOs, have been arrested because of membership of the KCK (Kurdish Communities Union) since April 2009 (Gunter, 2013: 89).[76]

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[75] The DTP was a Kurdish political party established in 2005 after the banning of DEHAP by the Constitutional Court in 2003. BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) succeeded DTP in 2008 after its closure due to the claim of its close relationship with the PKK.
[76] The KCK is "the alleged urban extension of the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)" (TodaysZaman, 2010).

The democratisation discourse, while it lasted, also encouraged negotiations with women's CSOs (Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 326). Indeed, it can be argued that the AKP's support of Turkey's accession to the EU offered women's organisations a crucial role "in bargaining with government authorities" during this period (Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 331). Although there was no shared "frame of political reference" amongst such groups, they were able to apply significant pressure on the government (Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 326), contributing to the implementation of CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), the development of a new Turkish Penal Code (2004), the amendment to the Law on Municipalities (2005) which obliges municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to open women's shelters, and the formation of the Parliamentary Commission for the Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men (2009). These gender-sensitive reforms were all achieved under the AKP (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 562). During this period, the AKP "achieved remarkable legal regulations on protection against male violence and nullification of the statement 'man is the family chief' from its civic code", even though it could hardly be described as a "pro-women's rights political party" (Yılmaz, 2015: 157).

"Project-based civil society" was yet another official discourse in Turkey in the 2000s. The increase in international funding, specifically from the EU, being channelled to CSOs in Turkey was tied in with the accession process, with funding regarded as an instrument to integrate EU principles into Turkish society. In this way, CSOs have been viewed as carriers of these principles (Erdoğan-Tosun, 2008: 137-8). With the funding provided by the EU as well as other international organisations, CSOs, including most of the women's organisations in Turkey, have been receiving funding from the EU to sustain themselves, while there are others which reject such funding or are not able to apply due to bureaucratic obstacles. The funding is used to pursue projects regarded by the EU as a way of promoting the democratisation process in Turkey (Gazioğlu, 2010).

Although the EU also propounds a democratisation discourse, in non-member countries that are regarded as in need of development, its dominant approach to civil society fits more closely with neoliberalism; it emphasises the idea of encouraging the growth of civil society through strengthening the role of CSOs and thus

promoting democracy and a free market economy. A prominent feature of EU civil society discourse in terms of its funding framework is the presumption of a causal and linear relationship between civil society and democratisation. The EU has thus directed attention towards Turkish civil society as a partner "to bring about social and political change, and to buttress the development of participatory democracy and NGOs in particular, [which] are seen as prime local agents of social change to implement the strategies of the international donor" (Kuzmanovic, 2010: 431). Since the 2000s, dialogue-based and bottom-up relationships, alongside the promotion of multiculturalism, have been suggested as ways to enhance the civil society-democracy relationship in the Turkish context. The EU's policy on civil society in Turkey is also viewed as a way of transforming "the state-centred nature of Turkish politics and policy-making" (Ketola, 2010: 105). The EU civil society development projects, and EU strategies and policies, have therefore had some impact on determining and framing the domestic agenda, and ensuring the rise of the project-based version of civil society.

Turkey has received pre-accession funds from the EU since 2005 and state institutions or CSOs can obtain these funds according to the project title and scope (Delegation of the European Union to Turkey, No date). As well as MEDA and the Civil Society Development Programme of the EU, there has been a programme of EU support allocated for the furtherance of the EU-Civil Society Dialogue in Turkey with the specific aim of encouraging civil society engagement with the accession process. In 2005, the European Commission adopted a Communication (2005) on civil society dialogue between the EU and the candidate countries, in order to set out a policy framework. The Commission aimed "to overcome the problem that arose during the previous enlargement of citizens being neither sufficiently informed nor prepared, to strengthen contacts and exchange of experience, and to ensure better mutual awareness and understanding by developing a civil society dialogue with Turkey and Croatia" (Europa, 2007). With the inclusion of non-governmental actors in the implementation of EU programmes promoting democracy and human rights, there have emerged several activities "directed to particular civil society organizations in Turkey to promote democracy such as project-cycle and project-management seminars, technical training of staff and volunteers, and assistance with

horizontal and vertical network-formation" (Kuzmanovic, 2010: 432). In this context, the Civil Society Development Centre (Sivil Toplum Geliştirme Merkezi) was established in 2005 and many project writing and implementing companies were formed thereafter.

To conclude, dialogue and project-based civil society and deepened democratisation were the official dominant civil society discourses of the 2000s in Turkey. Although dialogue and democratisation were the official discourses of the AKP Government until 2011, the AKP nonetheless took a "majoritarian approach to politics", which "equated democracy with winning elections" and "representation rather than participation" (Özçetin and Özer, 2015: 8).

4.2. The authoritarian civil society discourse: The post-2011 AKP period

In the post 2011 period the AKP reinforced "patriarchal and moral notions and values, often framed by religion" in terms of organising in and across social, cultural and political realms (Acar and Altınok, 2013: 2). The party, and particularly Erdoğan, has taken an increasingly oppressive approach to everyday aspects of life such as control over the media and internet use, bans or limits on abortion and cesarean rights, and prohibition of the sale and use of alcohol (Yılmaz, 2015:152). This has had different implications for shifting civil society discourse in Turkey, mainly by bringing to the fore authoritarian conservative values and norms, and diminishing the impacts of the Kemalist/secular project. This has been done without undermining the neoliberal agenda. In this context, it is important to look at the ways in which AKP authoritarianism makes an impact on civil society in Turkey.

The Ergenekon (a clandestine organisation) and the Balyoz (Sledgehammer) trials, and KCK (Union of Communities in Kurdistan) operations, can be seen as examples of the AKP Government's attempts to "dominate the key arms of the state" (Tolunay, 2014), and thereby signs of escalating AKP authoritarianism. In this regard, the AKP has used civil society as a legitimate ground for standing against the ideology of Kemalist elites and military dominance in state institutions in Turkey. CSOs have been instrumentalised to legitimise its policies. For instance, with the aim of strengthening civil society against the military, the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials were on the AKP's agenda to challenge the "alleged clandestine network that, according to prosecutors, has been operating since AKP's first victory in 2002 in

order to facilitate and eventually stage a military coup" (Milan, 2013). Hundreds of military officers, journalists, writers as well as academics were imprisoned during these trials (NTV, n.d.). In the meantime, in 2012, under AKP rule, a Parliamentary Commission was formed to investigate military interventions and memorandums in Turkey, which was presented as an important step in practicing civil politics rather than military-backed politics. What is more, the KCK operations which started in 2009 – as indicated above – have continued during the third term of the AKP Government, with "a massive police operation against activists, advocates, academics, and publishers who are pro-Kurdish on the grounds of alleged links to the outlawed the KCK"; many individuals, including mayors, party affiliates, organisers and activists, were arrested and imprisoned (Abu-Rish, 2011).

The post-2011 period also witnessed the Gezi Park Protests which took place in late May and early June. What began on May 27th 2013 as an environmentalist protest, organised under the CSO umbrella Taksim Dayanışması (Taksim Solidarity) against the demolition of Gezi Park and construction of a shopping mall soon turned into a massive protests against the AKP in İstanbul and other cities in Turkey. The rising authoritarianism of Prime Minister Erdoğan, the disproportionate force used by the police, and infringement of democratic rights and restriction of freedoms were seen as the main reasons why the protests emerged (Bilgiç and Kafkaslı, 2013: 8). Erdoğan "sees the 'ballot box' as the only legitimate instrument of accountability in a democracy and describes the anti-government demonstrations as an attempt by the minority to impose its will on the majority by unlawful means" (Özbudun, 2014: 157).[77] The Gezi protests were followed by contestations with the Gülen Movement (with which the AKP were previously in collaboration) and the trials of four AKP MPs for corruption, and this has resulted in deepening tensions around AKP authoritarianism and the polarisation of society between supporters and non-supporters of the AKP.

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[77] In terms of social class, it should be noted that the Gezi Park uprising "appears to be an occasionally multi-class, but predominantly middle-class movement" (Tugal, 2013: 166). It is also important to highlight that these protests were seen as "part of a broader global movement of social solidarity and resistance", namely the so-called Arab Spring revolts and the Occupy movement originating in the USA as well as "other similar forms of resistance to neo-liberal globalization in the United States, Western Europe and elsewhere" (Öniş, 2014: 8).

In the post-2011 period, the AKP has also pursued authoritarianism in its gender policies by taking conservative and moral attitudes towards female body, promoting the idea of a "strong family" and holding anti-feminist sentiments, and this has increased the significance of gender politics in challenging the state. In terms of revealing the AKP's stance on the female body and sexuality, it is helpful to turn to the most recent large-scale campaign organised by the various women's organisations in May 2012, in response to the draft law that would ban abortion. Before the discussion of the abortion ban, in October 2008, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that "each woman should have at least three children" (Hürriyet, 2008). [78] The Erdoğan Government attempted to impose limitations on abortion and caesearian section in May 2012. It stated that it was working on a bill to change the period of lawful termination from up to the tenth week of pregnancy to up to the fourth week, apart from in emergency cases (Guardian, 2012). The legalisation of abortion, obtained in 1983, was one of the most important outcomes of the women's movement in Turkey. Therefore, immediately after the AKP's declaration, women's organisations formed a platform called "Abortion is a Right and the Decision belongs to the Woman" and organised a pro-choice rally in the city centres of İstanbul, Adana, Mersin, İzmir, Diyarbakır, Çanakkale, Sinop, Antalya, Eskişehir, Van, Ankara and Sakarya to protest the ban. After the protests, even though the AKP Government took a step back, it continued working on the Bill of Reproductive Health (Radikal, 2012). What is more, it sought control of women's bodies in other ways. To illustrate, in July 2014 Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç declared that "women should not laugh loudly in public" (Radikal, 2014), which was fiercely criticised by feminists.

In addition, it is obvious that the "family" has been a central topic of the AKP's conservative social policy agenda. Firstly, the Ministry of Women and Family was replaced by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy in 2011. In this way the emphasis on "woman" was replaced with an emphasis on "family", thus glorifying motherhood and equating it with womanhood (Çelik, 2014: 5). The AKP

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[78] Prime Minister Erdoğan reiterated his call for three children in 2013 by stating that "One or two children mean bankruptcy. Three children mean we are not improving but not receding either. So, I repeat, at least three children are necessary in each family, because our population risks aging …" (Hürriyet Daily News, 2013).

Government, particularly Erdoğan, has also reinforced its hostility towards feminism, and denied the equality of women and men. President Erdoğan declared in November 2014, at the KADEM (Women and Democracy Association) Women and Justice Summit, "woman and men are not equal. This is against difference of nature or disposition (*fitrat*)" (Diken, 2014). He also stated during the same event, "feminists do not accept motherhood" (Diken, 2014). Erdoğan had made a similar statement in 2011: "I do not believe in the equality of men and women. I believe in equal opportunities. Men and women are different and complementary" (quoted in Kandiyoti, 2011: 10). As Kandiyoti aptly puts it, these interventions "signalled that regardless of Turkey's signatory status to CEDAW, the PM had chosen to nod in the direction of *fitrat*, a tenet of Islam that attributes distinct and divinely ordained natures to men and women" (Kandiyoti, 2011a).

The authoritarian stance of the AKP Governments, especially the last one, reflects the marginalising attitude they have held towards some CSOs and particularly women's organisations. "Though the AKP governments have repetitively declared their willingness to dialogue with civil societal actors", write Coşar and Yücesan-Özdemir (2012: 298), "in practice they have acted selectively, excluding class-based and gender-based organizations deemed radical and/or marginal". Thus since the 2007 elections, the AKP Government has negotiated more selectively with women's organisations (Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 326). Women activists are aware that the AKP Government tries to find favour with some women's organisations by, for instance, inviting them to policy-making meetings, while marginalising other groups, especially those with more radical views on the body and sexuality. To illustrate, Prime Minister Erdoğan met with the representatives from some women's CSOs on July 18th 2010 as part of the process of the above-mentioned "Kurdish Opening" (Bianet, 2010). In this meeting, "Erdoğan interpellated the women present as mothers saying that 'their voices would drown out the sounds of bullets' since no pain equals that of a woman whose son has fallen victim to war" (Kandiyoti, 2011: 10). This is despite the fact that "among the 80-odd attendees were members of NGOs with established feminist credentials such as KA-DER and the Foundation for Women's Solidarity, among others" (Kandiyoti, 2011a). Even if the invitation to attend meetings is accepted and participation occurs, women activists are aware that

their demands are not fully taken into account in the law and policy-making process (KESK, 2012). For instance, in the preparation of the Law on *Family Protection and Preventing Violence Against Women* (6284 sayılı Ailenin Korunması ve Kadına Karşı Şiddetin Önlenmesine Dair Kanun), women's groups were invited to the consultation process by state officials and bureaucrats. However, their recommendations were only partially taken into account and the law still does not fully meet their demands, as stated by the 237 women's organisations that gathered under the Şiddete Son Platformu (Platform to End Violence). Conversely, the AKP favours the Islamist and/or pro-government civil society women's organisations, which have grown in number and influence during this period (Dikici-Bilgin, 2009: 117).

In sum, the way the AKP Governments and international actors have influenced civil society in Turkey in the 2000s and 2010s can be characterised in terms of four official discourses, with "dialogue-based" and "democratisation" discourses eclipsed by "project-based" and latterly by "authoritarian" civil society discourses, with negative outcomes for some sections of society and for women's organisations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I gave an overview of the idea of civil society in Turkey by addressing the dominant official civil society discourses circulating in distinct periods of Turkish political history. I identified these discourses by looking to the constructions of civil society by the Turkish state and political elites, CSOs, and the EU. I also aimed to address the gendered dimensions of civil society and the development of women's organisations over time.

I found six official dominant civil society discourses, namely, "repression", "autonomy", "democratisation", "dialogue-based", "project-based" and "authoritarian". While the discourse of repression was hegemonic until the 1980s, between 1980 and the 1990s civil society was perceived to have become autonomous and very much a key player in the process of democratisation. When we turn to the 2000s until the third term of the AKP, civil society continued to be seen as autonomous from the state even though it is clear that this is an ideological manoeuvre; the AKP Government has gestured towards listening to the ideas and

criticisms of CSOs by producing a dialogue discourse and deepening the democratisation discourse. Moreover, in those years, the project-based civil society discourse emerged due to EU funding in Turkey. The EU's dominant discourse of civil society echoes the neoliberal approach to civil society by drawing attention to the idea of developing civil society through strengthening the role of CSOs in promoting democracy and a free market economy. Importantly, this discourse is not in conflict with the AKP Government's approach to civil society and CSOs. Overall, the dominant civil society discourses of the 2000s rests on the idea that CSOs are/should be autonomous, be able to form dialogue with the state institutions, and have a capacity to obtain international funding and thereby promote democracy. Since the third term of the AKP, however, authoritarianism has escalated with important implications for the civil society arena in Turkey, generating a disjuncture from the democratisation and dialogue discourses of the previous era.

Here, what is important to emphasise is that all of these discourses are presented by proponents as if civil society in Turkey is free from gender hierarchies and class and identity-based conflicts. This chapter has sought to demonstrate that this is empirically not the case. The following two chapters provide a detailed analysis of the discourses produced by ten women's organisations in the country, which, as I will show, further expose and challenge the gendered dimensions of civil society, amongst other things. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I thus turn to the interview and documentary data collected during my fieldwork in 2012 to identify the main discourses of civil society produced by the women's organisations.

Chapter 4

Mapping the Civil Society Discourses of Women's Organisations

Introduction

This chapter identifies and analyses the civil society discourses of women activists in Turkey. Whereas Chapter 3 used secondary literature about the political history and context of Turkey to identify broad discursive trends about civil society over time, in this chapter I identify and analyse women's civil society discourses by offering a detailed analysis of data based on primary empirical research, including interviews with members of ten women's organisations in Turkey, and the campaigning literature available to me at their offices or online. The organisations, selected using the sampling criteria discussed in Chapter 2, are TKB and TÜKD (Kemalist groups from Ankara), AKDER and BKP (Islamic organisations from İstanbul and Ankara respectively), KAMER and SELİS (Kurdish groups from Diyarbakır), İstanbul feminists KA-DER and their Ankara counterparts US, and finally the anti-capitalist SFK (Ankara) and AMARGİ (İstanbul).

My method of analysing the discourses of these groups was also discussed in Chapter 2. To reiterate, in order to identify discourses as comparable entities, I have focused on the key components of "function", "relationship", "gender", "value" and "agency" in interviews and organisational texts. Specifically, in my coding of the data I focused upon the following: the traits, qualities and roles attributed to civil society; what people, institutions and organisations are associated with civil society; the perceived relationship between civil society, the state and the market; the gendered dynamics of civil society and its role in (re) producing inequalities; and the value accorded to civil society, that is, if it is viewed as a positive, negative or neutral organising space in the Turkish context.

What I find from my analysis is that the women activists from Turkey produce seven civil society discourses. Civil society is represented as: "a space of voluntary activity", "a sphere of autonomous organising", "an agent of mediation

between state and society", "an anti-systemic agent", "an anti-hierarchical area", "a space for democratisation" and "a co-opted and non-feminist force". Moreover, women's discourses circulate in complex, overlapping ways and do not map neatly onto different group identities. In this regard, while political orientation plays a role in shaping civil society discourse, it is not determining of such discourse.

In what follows, I run through the seven discourses in turn.

1. The voluntarism discourse

According to the voluntarism discourse, civil society is a space of voluntary activity, especially for women. Voluntarism is interpreted as an indispensable principle of civil society and identified with no personal gain. As the oldest interviewee from the Kemalist TKB states, "everything you have done – all your labour and effort – is for an aim and there is no benefit from it. … No one forces us to do that; we do it on our own" (interview with Sevda[79], May 8, 2012). This discourse is reproduced by almost all of the women from the feminist organisation KA-DER, who posit "voluntarism" and "self-determination" as the main tenets of civil society and the guiding principles of the association itself. Rezan, the president of KA-DER, in her mid-50s, described civil society in her interview (July 18, 2012) as "organised structures established by volunteers to intervene in politics for the sake of citizen's own rights". In contrast, Islamic women made very few references in interview to the voluntaristic dimensions of civil society. However, we still see an emphasis on voluntarism in their literature, such as in the book *From Yesterday to Today*. In this publication, BKP members highlight the principle of voluntarism with Özlem Gültekin stressing that "every woman struggles for a work that yields no financial advantage and even has disadvantages, although they have so many responsibilities" (Gültekin, 2007: 9). Women from the second Islamic organisation, AKDER, also circulate this discourse. Birsen, the youngest member of AKDER, puts it this way: "Civil society comprises a group of people who act voluntarily, believe in the same cause and wish to be helpful for society. I mean, civil society organisations are non-profit organisations which aim to benefit society" (interview, July 6, 2012). An AKDER leaflet confirms this approach, stating "AKDER is a civil society organisation based on voluntariness

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[79]All names used are pseudonyms.

continuing its fight for seeking right in all national and international platforms" (AKDER, n.d.).

Within this voluntarism discourse from Kemalist, Islamic and feminist groups, the identity of women activists is constructed in a particular way, as 'responsible volunteer women'. To illustrate: the Kemalists and some women from KA-DER linked "being a volunteer woman" to the concepts of "responsibility", "duty" and "commitment". A gendered dimension to civil society discourse is introduced here in that the intersection of voluntarism discourse with responsibility centres on an image of women who do not anticipate or gain any benefit for carrying out their civil duties, and who are charged with the mission of civil society development as well the promotion of women's rights. Moreover, voluntarism is explicitly not identified as a type of leisure pursuit or social activity, as made clear by the youngest woman from TKB, in her forties: "I think any civil society work which is seen as a social activity will not go anywhere" (interview with Lale, May 7, 2012). Similarly, the president of KA-DER rejects voluntarism if it is informed by the following attitude: "I can either work or not, depending on my mood" (interview with Rezan, July 18, 2012). To some interviewees from KA-DER, this kind of attitude demonstrates a lack of discipline in CSOs, acts as a hindrance to their institutionalisation, and certainly does not represent what they mean by "voluntarism". In this way, only the women's organisations have achieved the status of "genuine" CSO, as Tansu, an older woman activist from the TKB states:

> Only the women's organisations have civil society consciousness.... In other organisations, it is not as developed as in the women's organisations. They are called civil society organisations but there is no civil society in Turkey as conforming to our understanding in terms of context, aim, working format and the relationships with the state. (interview, May 4, 2012)

The responsibility aspect of the voluntarism discourse can also be seen in the emphasis on the educating and consciousness-raising roles of women's groups in civil society, with CSOs expected to reach out to people (*halka inmek*), inform them and raise them up, especially on the Kemalist view. This has functioned to reinforce a paternalistic, top-down positioning of Kemalist women as enlightened leaders in contrast to ordinary ignorant people, which is characteristic of the modernisation

discourse and which, as Kadıoğlu (1998: 94) points out, has been an element of the Kemalist education mission since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. As one woman from TÜKD puts it, "the problem is how to reach to the people (*halk*)... prepare more leaflets suitable for their level, you know, simplified motto, writings, spokesperson" (interview with Pınar, June 30, 2012). Or, as the Vice-President of the same association, who is in her late 50s, elaborates, "CSOs should inform people about … topics – firstly recognise the problems; and secondly enlighten and educate the people" (interview with Sevim, June 28, 2012). The websites of both TKB and TÜKD place emphasis on this role. TKB's website states:

> We Turkish Women should get to the place we deserve in the social and political life. First of all, we need to raise awareness and educate the Turkish Women. We should explain to them that they should reach for more and explain to them how they would reach their goals. Our objective is to achieve the social, economic and politic equality of the women and men in Turkey. We should put forth effective work for advancing the education, togetherness and awareness levels to the level Atatürk envisaged for the modern Turkish women (TKB, 2015).

Similarly, in TÜKD's by-law, it states that one of the aims of the association is the "enlightening of society, helping girls and women get education under modern conditions; contributing to spreading adult education and realising projects regarding these issues" (TÜKD, 2010).

Connectedly, the voluntarism discourse is promoted through a critique of professional civil society organisations**.** Indeed, voluntarism and professionalisation seem to be regarded as mutually exclusive processes, and it is through this distinction that the women activists from TKB maintain their self-understanding as a "genuine" CSO. Whereas "genuine" civil society is defined as voluntary based and distant from political authority, the "alleged" one is identified as male-dominant, professional, interest-oriented and close to political power/the state (political power and the state are used interchangeably). In this sense, some Kemalist women explain the lack of civil society consciousness in professional organisations by the non-existence of voluntarism and thus, as Buket in her late 40s from TKB emphasises, "to a great extent voluntary organisations should be identified as civil society" (interview, May 10, 2012). To illustrate, Sevda from TKB criticises the professional feature of some of the CSOs in order to bring the voluntary aspect of civil society to the fore: "the

TOBB [The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey] is a standard civil society organiSation. But, is it ever similar to us? All of the structures within the TOBB are professional" (interview, May 8, 2012).

There are other approaches to the relationship between voluntarism and professionalism, however. In stark contrast to the Kemalist women, some activists from the Islamic group AKDER partly view voluntarism in a negative light by identifying it with lack of professionalisation. Perihan, who is the General Secretary as well as an employee of AKDER, argues that voluntarism merely reveals the extent to which there is a "lack of professionalisation in civil society in Turkey" compared with European countries (interview, July 5, 2012). In addition, there is a group of women from TKB, TÜKD and KA-DER who do not support voluntarism exclusively; rather, for them, it should be accompanied by "institutionalisation" and "professionalisation". For instance, the youngest interviewee from TKB argued that professionalisation and voluntarism are complementary rather than in tension. As she puts it, "civil society should be something professional... I mean I have to work in order to survive but concurrently it is not very easy to be active in an association. Therefore, as well as the volunteers, there should be a professional team here" (interview with Lale, May 7, 2012). Similarly, an activist in her 60s from KA-DER underscores: "....The combination [of voluntarism and professionalism] must be made better. ... In the West, it [civil society] is more institutional and professional and ours is more amateur; this must be more of a priority" (interview with Selda, July 22, 2012). Yet, this should not be equated with endorsement of a private sector form of professionalism. Indeed, the same interviewee also argues that projects managed by civil society are differentiated from the social responsibility projects of private companies which are seen as marketing ploys to promote the image of a company. More generally, Selda points out what distinguishes civil society from professionalism of private sector:

> … Supposing that we are making a petition campaign and I view this from a professional standpoint. They say, for example, "let's hire a person to conduct the petition campaign". You can do that, you can hire a person for money but it is not the issue; if I, at my age, can set my table, collect signatures, explain my association to people, then the case is completely different. After all, if I hire a person, this person does not absorb what really matters for you [but]... in the meantime, I may convey

some messages, and they reach out to the right places. (interview, July 22, 2012)

Clearly, Selda wants to contest the meaning of professionalism to clarify that she does not endorse a kind of private sector professionalism in her effort to add to and improve voluntary practices.

2. The autonomy discourse

Moving on to the next discourse, women from all the groups, apart from anti-capitalist groups, in my sample, underscore the autonomy of civil society, in two main respects. First, they articulate the view that civil society organiSations are independent from and "above" political parties, political organisations and ideologies. Women interviewees from Kemalist and Kurdish women's groups circulate this aspect of the autonomy discourse. Although the overwhelming majority of the women from both Kemalist organisations show sympathy with the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party, and take part in its activities[80], they attach a pejorative meaning to "politics" when practised by the CSOs. They are of the view that CSOs should be at a distance from any political party or ideological stance, as Nurdan, who is the President of TÜKD, indicates: "We are independent. We are not following any political opinion; we are not a part of any political party/organisation. We are autonomous and free" (interview, June 29, 2012). Similarly, it is stated in TKB's by-law that:

> all activities of the organisation are carried out with an awareness of being a civil society organisation and with a sense of policy above political parties. People who are members of political parties may be accepted as members of the organisation on condition that they act in accordance with the policy of the organisation that is above all political parties and remain loyal. (TKB, 2015)

In the same vein, the Kurdish activists from KAMER argued for remaining "above-state and political parties" (interview with Seda, June 2, 2012), "not defending any type of politics or ideology carried by a political party/organisation" (interview with

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[80] Even though I did not ask which party the women voted for, they showed their sympathy with the main opposition party in Turkey, called CHP. The CHP is a centre-left Kemalist secular party. Some of the women in my sample highlighted their membership and also the administrative position they hold in the party. However, one of the women participants from TÜKD reported that "we have some members who are members of the National Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, the MHP)" (interview with Sevim, TÜKD, June 28, 2012), which is an ultra-nationalist party in Turkey.

Sevda, May 20, 2012) and "surviving without anyone's support" (interview with Derya, May 17, 2012). However, the Kemalist women also clarify that to be distanced from political doctrine and party politics does not mean that their CSO is "non-political". A positive interpretation of "politics" is attached to the activities of CSOs with regard to their involvement in policy and decision-making. Among the women activists I interviewed, Pınar from TÜKD was clear about the value of CSO involvement in policy: "associations should engage in politics. … just as the business world oversees and directs the policy decisions, civil society needs to develop supportive and/or preventive policies especially for social issues" (interview, June 30, 2012).

The insistence that civil society organisations should be ideology-free also emerges on the subject of solidarity amongst politically active women. The women activists from the Kemalist groups that I interviewed frame "womanhood (*kadınlık*)" as an identity that creates common ground for women's CSOs irrespective of ideological identification. Lale from TKB implies that as long as a CSO maintains autonomy from any ideological stance, creating a common ground among women's organisations is possible:

> Organisations share a common ground in that they are sensitive to women's issues and they detach themselves from any political thinking such as being headscarved or not [*açık/ kapalı*], believing in Islam or not... In civil society it is necessary to prioritise women and women-sensitive policies, and to aim towards doing something both in law and practice in support of women. We can work together with an association for headscarved women. I don't care what she [headscarved woman] thinks but we have a common topic: woman. (interview, May 7, 2012)

Similarly, Tülin, in her 40s and President of KAMER Batman Branch, highlights the value of autonomy in terms of the freedom it gives KAMER to reach as many women as possible through autonomous organising: "I can reach all women, even if they are supporters of the CHP, or the BDP, headscarved or not,... …. You can be useful for them if you are independent. You cannot reach all women when you have a political party behind you" (interview, May 18, 2012).

However, after further probing on this issue, it became clear that the perceived solidarity of women has limits. Some interviewees from the Kemalist groups, in particular, find markers of Islamic identity and faith problematic. Buket's interview

is striking because while the need for cooperation with headscarved women is acknowledged, it shows intolerance about the visibility of headscarved women in the public sphere: "I get annoyed when I see headscarved women at the table in the Ministry of Environment … It seems primitive in this decade" (interview, May 10, 2012). What the reproduction of the secularism-Islamism distinction here helps to reveal is the way in which the autonomy discourse is bound up for Kemalists with the ideal of Republican woman as "educated, urban, non-headscarf wearing", discussed in Chapter 3 (Özçetin, 2009: 106). Kemalist women are quite explicit that women ought to simultaneously fulfil the roles of mother, wife and educated professional, roles which make up the Republican ideal. When the Republic model of womanhood is situated in the context of the autonomy discourse, it becomes clear that Kemalist women's organisations do in fact invoke ideology in their vision of civil society. This is because, in their view, civil society is an autonomous space that ought to be led by women who embody and represent the Republican ideal. Kemalist women simultaneously gloss over differences among women in an effort to be ideology-free and mask their ideological orientation in this very move by assuming that women's organisations in civil society ought to be occupied with the same mission.

Moving on to the second dimension of the autonomy discourse, activists from all organisations apart from anti-capitalist feminist groups put forward the idea of civil society as "above government" and of "non-partisanship (*tarafsızlık*)". In this way, they assume that a free civil society is set apart from government and not controlled by it.

The importance of a free civil society dovetails with, and can only be understood in light of, the distinction among activists between pro-government and anti-government organisations. For the Kemalist women, civil society contributes to the struggle for gender equality only if it keeps its independent and critical characteristics. This explains why they re-categorise CSOs in light of their depending on their pro-government alignment, as Lale from TKB states:

> Our association is contemporary (*çağdaş*) and in line with democratic principles. Other associations consist of headscarved women, are pro-government. All their demands are met, for example, assembly hall and buses arranged to travel to the hall are free of charge.... But we organise by spending from our own personal pockets... I mean the government

always safeguards the civil society that is on its side and organises activities to undermine the ones on the other side. (interview, May 7, 2012)

According to the Kemalists, pro-government organisations – in particular Islamic women's organisations – muddy the important distinction between civil society and government because they are not critical of the government. But, perhaps surprisingly, women from both Islamic groups in my sample agree that state control of civil society should be eliminated because it is contrary to the freedom of civil society, as Perihan, president of AKDER, indicates: "if civil society activities are checked by the government, this is very problematic" (interview, July 5, 2012). Or as Hale from the same organisation put it, "CSOs are independent from the state and become an alternative to it by seeing what the state cannot see … I mean do you think the cumbersome and giant form of the state enables it to keep up with societal changes?" (interview, July 9, 2012). Islamic women lament the lack of autonomy in civil society and criticise the power of the state to destroy its independent and critical dimensions. They argue that the state's distinction between the CSOs which are "close to the state (*devlete yakın*)" and those which are "opposed to the state (*devlete karşı*)" in effect subjugates the former to itself and imposes restrictions on the activities of the latter. Size matters here, as Birsen from the AKDER points out, "the state may influence the big CSOs by being more committed to them, for example, by supporting their project, compared to the small ones" (interview, July 6, 2012). What is more, CSOs that do not share state ideology are at risk of being closed down, as one of the participants from AKDER recalls:

> Political power ultimately makes an impact on civil society... For instance, during the 28 February [1997] process Anadolu Gençlik Derneği (the Anatolian Youth Association, AGD) was shut down. As you can see, the political power very easily closed down an organisation which does not go along with it. (interview with Göknur, July 11, 2012)

Additionally, Islamic women argue that it is problematic when CSOs fail to interrogate state policy and act as a check on state power. Birsen from AKDER comments that "civil society should be strong against the AKP partisanship... it can cope with state power as long as it is strong" (interview, July 6, 2012). However, this is not the case in Turkey, as Ayşe who is Vice-President of BKP and in her late 40s articulates: "unfortunately, a civil society which would foster politics is very weak in

Turkey. A strong civil society is where people are aware of their rights autonomously from the state." (interview, August 7, 2012). In parallel, Perihan from AKDER states that "there are some Islamic associations which turned into organisations anxious not to disrupt or pressure the government" (interview, July 5, 2012) and Nurten from BKP emphasises that "we are blamed by some people as being close to government, [but] this is not the case. We don't say yes to everything that the AKP does" (interview, August 9, 2012). It is clear that for these women activists, their organisations transgress government and political party norms and practices; they want to stress how they are not absolutely aligned with these groups and maintain their own autonomy.

Kurdish women also seek to maintain independence from the state. As stated in KAMER's book titled *We Can Stop It*, "the principle of 'independence' was the most important policy …We created an independent space where we could be independent and think and debate to form ideas. Ever since, each and every one of us has had an idea to voice" (KAMER, 2011: 265). According to all KAMER members, state control of CSOs is unacceptable. In response, they argue for a "non-partisanship" approach, which distinguishes their organisation from CSOs which are effectively interest-based and in a close relationship with the government (a view shared also by women from the feminist organisations US and KA-DER). Nuray, the President of KAMER and the oldest interviewee from this organisation, expresses this point clearly: "the most powerful CSO in a city is Ticaret Odası [Chamber of Commerce]. How can an organisation that needs the approval of the government for a bid be independent?" (interview, May 16, 2012). This point can be better understood by recalling the fact that in Turkey, civil society consists of "not only associations and foundations but also trade unions, political parties, chambers, universities and labour unions" (Göksel and Güneş, 2005: 57). Therefore, the prevailing CSO classification is questioned by the women from KAMER to such an extent that they reject the classification of interest-based organisations as part of civil society. As Seda from KAMER puts it, "CSO is civic (*sivil*). These are the organisations that are above the political parties and the state. The others which behave for their own interests are chambers and trade unions which seek their own interests. None of them are a

CSO...they strive only for the rights of their own members" (interview, June 2, 2012).

Kurdish women from KAMER, differently from the other groups, relate ethnic identity with the autonomy of civil society. Just as interest-based organisations are regarded as only working for their members' rights and establishing close ties with the state, those CSOs which base their membership on ethnicity are viewed in a similar light. To reinforce that the women activists I interviewed from KAMER do not use ethnicity in this way, Nuray, the President of KAMER, states that women "moderate (*hafifletme*)" their ethnic identity with respect to their organising work so as to "make room for other women to stand beside them and to become more independent" (interview, May 16, 2012). This point references other Kurdish women's organisations in the region, and the organising work mentioned includes a proposal that in order to be more independent, the organisations need to have less identity-based relationships with other CSOs. In this sense, it could be argued that the autonomy discourse works to transcend ethnic differences in this case.

Though KAMER members recognise the benefits of independence, they are also attuned to the obstacles of maintaining independence, particularly in light of the on-going conflict between the Turkish state and Kurdish people in South-Eastern and Eastern Anatolia. In this regard, two categories of CSO appear in the women's spoken texts, namely, independent (*bağımsız*) and partisan (*yandaş*). Nuray states that, since its establishment, the KAMER foundation has been accused of "being partisan toward the Kurdish political movement by the state officials or being dependent on the Kurdish movement due to striving for women's rights" (interview, May 16, 2012), but all the women that I interviewed from KAMER stress their difference from any partisan groups. This issue was also raised in their book *We Can Stop This*:

> During the time of our establishment, we experienced our greatest difficulties as a consequence of our principle of independence. This difficulty still continues—albeit somewhat lessened. Neither government agencies nor other organisations wanted to believe that we were independent. …. They did not want to understand the fact that KAMER was on the side of women's human rights. (KAMER, 2011: 281-82).

Proving their independence to others and gaining trust are ongoing tasks. One strategy in this regard is to organise handcraft workshops to bring more women into

the foundation in areas where partisan groups are especially dominant, as Nuray points out: "some people from the KCK came to us and said we can't do … things without asking their permission. … women avoid talking to us because they are afraid,…We don't want to ask their [the KCK] permission, as such a thing will make us dependent on them. Thus, the only way for us is to … open up a ceramics workshop" (interview, May 16, 2012).

The women from the second Kurdish group in my sample, SELİS, favour a confrontational (*çatışmacı*) rather than collaborative approach to the state. They are, therefore, sceptical of the view that civil society should be a negotiating partner and should function as an intermediary between the state and society. As Gökten, who is in her late 30s, puts it, "civil society appears to me as being independent from the power (*erk*), from the governing body *(yöneten)* and where you stand comfortably for what you want" (interview, May 24, 2012). In this light, another woman, Ece, who is the youngest interviewee from SELİS and the President of the association, states that "disclosing some issues, molding public opinion, etc." are key to the purpose of civil society (interview, May 15, 2012). She voices the importance of having "a civil pillar (*sivil ayak*)" in society functioning as a control mechanism on the state, trying to make the state act in new and better ways (Ece, SELİS). Overall, SELİS members "expect the state to adopt an attitude that accepts the independence of CSOs... otherwise, oppression from the power may come into existence in that area" (interview with Reşide, May 22, 2012).

Interestingly, activists across the Kemalist, Islamic and feminist groups in my sample stress the need to maintain financial independence from government. Indeed, they attach negative meanings to CSOs being supported by the state because of the way this potentially undermines CSO autonomy. Nurdan, the President of TÜKD, says that "if the CSOs have an expectation from the state, they cannot keep their idiosyncratic features... expecting any financial source from the state is inconsistent with my understanding of civil society" (interview, June 29, 2012). It seems, however, that rejection of financial support from the state is not a principle set in stone. Because of the financial difficulties experienced by many CSOs, some interviewees from the Kemalist groups are of the view that state support is welcome if it is used to support projects and consultation processes, and to buy essential

resources. Lale, the youngest member of TKB, makes this quite clear: "if the associations are for the public benefit, not for any personal gains, women, environment, health organisations etc. should be supported by the state" (interview, May 7, 2012). Similarly, among the Islamic women, public funding is endorsed if it is allocated to CSOs independently from the government; indeed, this is also viewed as one way of curbing the rise and dominance of government-supported CSOs in Turkey. Nurten from BKP addresses this more nuanced position: "you can't always criticise someone or an institution you always take money from. There is such a risk...[But] civil society should get project-based financial support from the state. This would enable a transformation to some extent" (interview, August 9, 2012). However, in the following excerpt from my interview with Rezan, member of the feminist group KA-DER, it is clear that full funding from the state remains compromising:

> I personally do not approve state's support for civil society... it has been discussed a lot between women's organisations and there are so many women telling me that CSOs are engaged in very important activities and the state should support this but I do not agree. For example, I am saying that it [the state] should not help with anything except for rent allowance [for organisations] and insuring an employee … in order not to establish dependency. (interview, July 18, 2012)[81]

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[81] Views on independence from international funding vary more widely. For example, women from the feminist group TKB are mostly highly critical of international funding, with Sevda from that organisation emphasising the need to "tackle the bureaucracy and negative attitude of the international donors to the CSOs" (interview, May 8, 2012). In contrast, the other feminist organisation in my sample, TÜKD, shows its strong identification with international funding through the way it uses NGO ideas and language. TÜKD thinks that international funding should be accepted, stating in the Ankara branch 2010-2011 activity report that they have organised training seminars on Project Development and Ways to Reach Sources of Funding, and also that they aim to create funded projects in the field of women's studies (TÜKD, 2011). According to the women from Islamic organisations BKP and AKDER, funding does not necessarily and always endanger the independence of an association. As one of the women acrivists from AKDER argued, "the EU funding lets us organise training for women and conduct field work research" (interview with Perihan, July 5, 2012). Yet even here, some women believe CSOs funded by "invisible sources" do not always maintain a critical or oppositional stance and "civil society has not been always non-governmental like that and met the opposition", as Serpil from BKP articulates (interview, August 12, 2012). The Kurdish women have a more wholeheartedly pro-international funding position. All of the women in the Kurdish organisation, KAMER, take a pro-EU stance and believe that projects play a key role in enhancing civil society. As stated in the book titled *Women's Problems in the Southeast* (Güneydoğu'da Kadın Sorunları), KAMER believes that women's organisations should find their own independent resources, and it supports EU funding in this regard. Their support is not entirely uncritical, however. Like the Islamic women, they do believe that if the funding institution itself lacks independence or acts as if it were a governing agency this can weaken the relationship between a CSO and donor agency.

3. The mediation discourse

The third discourse implies that civil society is an agent of mediation between society and the state, regardless of specific governments. Thus Sevda, the President of Kemalist group TKB, states that "it does not matter which political party is in power, in general we request from them to have a close relationship with civil society... because we are the eyes and ears of the public, we are the organised voice of the public" (interview, May 8, 2012). Further, TKB lists among its key objectives on its website the fostering of strong cooperation and solidarity with national and international CSOs, public institutions and local administrations, and creating joint projects with them (TKB, 2015). Similarly, for Begüm from the Islamic organisation BKP, civil society is imagined as "a channel between the people and political power". Civil society is "at the people's side" (interview, August 1, 2012). And the press statement issued by BKP regarding the December 17th 2013 corruption crisis insists "Via civil society organisations the reflection of the national will on the decision-making processes is possible and necessary" (BKP, 2014). A final example comes from the Kurdish group KAMER, which stresses that it aims to increase collaborations with the public bodies:

> KAMER strives to take part in City Councils. It strove to collaborate with the KSGM (Directorate General on the Status of Women). It took part in meetings regarding preparations for the National Action Plan … It is important for KAMER to be part of the Violence Monitoring Committee headed by the State Minister on Women, where there is a representative from each department and where it is possible to communicate about the difficulties encountered on the ground. (KAMER, 2011: 284).

There is a strong emphasis in this discourse on the active role of civil society in shaping and pressurising government. As one interviewee from TKB put it, "the opinions of the civil society should be taken in every respect" (interview with Buket, May 10, 2012). On the TÜKD web site, "working and leading the way for a modern, secular Turkey with women pioneering for change who can take active part in all decision making mechanisms as equal, active and free citizens" is listed among principles (TÜKD, 2010), and TKB similarly encourages women to take part in decision-making mechanisms (TKB, 2007). Or, as a statement by Nurşen Orakçı on the website of BKP puts it: "As CSOs, we became well-aware that we have a very important mission in the issuing and implementation of laws and we realised that we

need to work very hard" (Orakçı, 2007). The function of civil society as a pressure group should be initially fulfilled before considering other strategies of civil activism, as Lale from TKB explains: "civil society organisations function as a pressure factor...They should form relations with the government by establishing communicative channels. If this is not managed, they should go for demonstrations and protests, but not any violent activities" (interview, May 7, 2012). There is an accompanying emphasis in this discourse on dialogue and negotiation: the state has a responsibility to "listen" to what civil society has to say, as Yasemin from AKDER explains: "the state should listen and invite the CSOs into the law-making process and should pay attention to their suggestions and projects" (interview, July 13, 2012).[82] Seda from the Kurdish group KAMER uses the example of when activist women created a platform to push for change in the Civil Code to illustrate how dialogue between civil society and the state can work productively: "When we detect some problems about women.... We say, you are the state, this is your responsibility and you have to do it. As a CSO, we remind them of their duties" (interview, June 2, 2012).

The women from feminist organisations US and KA-DER articulate a rather different approach to the mediating role of civil society, one which is more instrumental in character. They support this role only because they know that siding with the state brings access to resources, including valuable information, which they also acknowledge comes at a cost. Çiçek, who is one of the employees of KA-DER and has no political party membership, makes this point clear: "If you say something contrary to the government today, you can't participate in a meeting organised by the government and you can't be informed of developments. Or, for example...if you have good relationships, you can learn the agenda of the Parliament in advance" (interview, July 21, 2012). The by-law of KA-DER accordingly states that it strives to be "in cooperation with all ministries, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in particular, with the Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and with all other related commissions…"

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[82] It is likely that the mediation discourse is so prominent among the Islamic women because of their continual organising and struggles against the headscarf ban. In this context, lobbying and other advocacy activities are brought to the fore in several accounts, and the function of CSOs is seen to be participation in the process of decision-making and policy-making, and influencing the implementation process.

(KA-DER, 2012). As well as fear about state repression, pragmatism and necessity inform this expression of the mediation discourse. As Emel, the youngest member of US, clarifies, "it is obvious that it is not possible to do something [for CSOs] by positioning yourself totally independent from the state. So, civil society has to be a negotiating partner of the state" (interview, June 26, 2012). To illustrate, the US "Route of Women in Democracy" Project (Demokraside Kadın İzleri Projesi) aimed to encourage participation in decision-making processes and to build a bridge between women's organisations and members of parliament, and a more continuous exchange of information (US, 2011: 1).

It should be noted that the women activists from Kemalist, Islamic and Kurdish KAMER also bring attention to a disjuncture between the ideal and the reality conveyed by the mediation discourse. Ideally, in their view civil society should act as an intermediary between the state and the people but this is very difficult to achieve in Turkey. Thus Kemalist women point to the ways in which the AKP Governments have marginalised associations which advocate Kemal Atatürk's ideas and the idea of a Republican secular state, labelling them "anti-government". For women from TKB, this strategy has had quite concrete effects, because financial aid to the organisation was cut under the AKP, and they have experienced a funding shortage. More broadly, Kemalist participation in policy-making has been restricted and this means, for the Kemalist women in my study, that their role in checking government power is undermined. For women activists from the Kurdish group KAMER, the disjuncture between the ideal and the reality in terms of the mediation discourse is due rather to the gender ideology of the AKP Governments:

> We [KAMER] are trying to create a relationship [with the state] based on dialogue and empathy. Is it happening? Of course not. There are some political disparities (*politik farklılıklar*). For example, the government currently builds its politics around protecting the family. …we object due to various reasons, for example, the family is not strengthened unless you empower women, or emphasising the family constantly can objectify women. We do try to criticise these policies. We have endless struggles and contradictions (interview with Nuray, May 16, 2012).

Finally, despite their relative visibility under the AKP regimes, both Islamic women's organisations are also sceptical about their capacity to influence government. As Göknur, a woman activist from AKDER in her 30s, explains, CSOs

"put forward something… you create public opinion and this will be viewed as a step backward by the government" (interview, July 11, 2012). In general, and as discussed in the autonomy discourse above, Islamic women explain their relative marginalisation from the AKP government by referring to their distance and deviation from what they regard as "pro-government" organisations. However, some women activists from BKP echo the Kurdish women when they account for their organisation's marginalisation by making reference to gendered exclusions. Thus Nurten, for one, highlights "a sardonic and trivialising viewpoint of the government or state officials towards the organisations working on women's issues... this has a negative impact on the women's associations" (interview, August 9, 2012). She adds that what lies behind this attitude is "the dominance of the male point of view and the man's fear of losing authority" in civil society (interview, August 9, 2012).

4. The oppositional discourse

We have seen the tensions and ambiguities involved in the first three discourses described above. The fourth discourse, produced by women activists from the Kemalist TKB, Islamic BKP and Kurdish SELİS, stakes out a more clearly oppositional position, insisting that civil society should be conceived as an anti-systemic agent. The women differ, however, in their perception of what the system is.

For a few Kemalist women from TKB, the "established system" in Turkey is the AKP government regime. In this regard, repressive and anti-secularist elements of AKP rule, touched upon in Chapter 3, such as the restrictions on the right to protest, the Ergenekon (a clandestine organisation) and Balyoz (Sledgehammer) are highlighted as particularly disconcerting for the Kemalist women. On the basis of those concerns, Kemalist activists construct a binary opposition between pro-systemic, "non-adversarial (*muhalif olmayan*)" and anti-systemic "unorganised (*örgütlü olmayan*)" civil society, as Tansu from TKB elaborates:

> When you say civil society in Turkey, there are two groups: one taking a stand for the system and the other being out of the way or removed. For the one supporting the system, there are lots of opportunities...Many people or organisations integrate to the system in order to stay on its good side. Well...they are assimilated. (interview, May 4, 2012)

Using this categorisation, these women position Islamic organisations as assimilated and their own associations under the category of "anti-systemic" organisations, thus reproducing existing polarisations with the Turkish women's movement along secular/Islamic lines. The fate of anti-systemic women's CSOs is set to be one of marginalisation and exclusion from opportunities. Tansu concludes that "civil societies should not have a relationship with the power [political power] at all. Civil society means organisations; organisations exist to become oppositional ...They are not expected to be accepted by the government or political power" (interview, May 4, 2012).

For a small group of the Islamic women activists that I interviewed, "the system" is identified with state tradition and ideology in general, and the authority of the Republican state in particular. In a reverse of the anti-systemic discourse of the Kemalist women activists, Islamic women's oppositional discourse centres on criticism of the laicist and Republican authoritarian ideology of the state. In addition, the legitimacy of the state is called into question, as BKP member Nurten explained: "In Turkey, the state is very powerful. It tells me what kind of Muslim I should be...The main dilemma of Turkey is being a laicist Republic, at the same time 99% of the population of Turkey is Muslim" (interview, August 9, 2012). In this regard, civil society is produced as an alternative space to the established system; it is discursively referred to as a platform where people voice their criticism of the state. One woman from BKP spoke passionately of the value of an oppositional civil society:

> Civil society should be different from normal public institutions, I mean, different from the present or current "system"... It means to be able to produce an alternative to the system... the present situation without accepting it as it is…. For instance, civil society organisations say that social norms such as "man is the head of the family", should be altered and they run campaigns in order to fulfil this intent. This may necessitate long-term work and struggle. Those people who go against the system pay a price; in some cases, they may be killed. (interview with Nurten, August 9, 2012)

With this last point Nurten illustrates just what can be at stake for those pursuing an oppositional vision of civil society.

Kurdish interviewees from SELİS uniformly articulated an oppositional anti-systemic discourse, but in this context, "anti-systemic" refers to "anti-state and anti-power". They describe the state as a "masculine state" and as a set of institutions that

categorise some people as "the other (*ötekileştiren*)". This critique of the state is clearly more abstract and absolute compared with the views expressed by the Islamic and Kemalist women activists discussed so far. The target of critique here is not a specific state structure controlled by governments but the idea of the state itself. As one member of SELİS puts it, "we are against the state approach. When there is a state, we see power and oppression" (interview with Reşide, May 22, 2012). In addition, activists from SELİS are very critical of the intertwining of state and capitalism, which results in the marketisation of civil society. This is reflected in their critique of the now established links between CSOs and funding, discussed above. Funded projects are considered to lead to the formation of power areas in civil society and obliterate its adversarial drive. It is in this light that we should understand the distinction between conformist and oppositional versions of civil society drawn here. In contrast to the ways in which Kemalist and Islamic groups map this division onto the secular/religious divide, Kurdish groups distinguish between the "subservient (*itaat eden*)", "non-oppositional (*muhalif olamama*)" groups that are male-dominated and take funding, and non-funded women's groups. Gökten from SELİS illustrates this in the excerpt below:

> Actually I don't think that the CSOs in Turkey have their own agenda any more. They operate within the framework of the power, but now they don't have an oppositional dimension. … [But] I definitely believe that women's organisations have a special place in Turkey. Hierarchy is less, maybe due to woman's nature (*kadının yapısı*); they do not like hierarchical structure very much[83]… [and because] they are an oppressed class (*ezilen bir kesim*). I think that women's organiaations are more dynamic although I said that governments have pressured civil societies but women's groups can go beyond the system much more [than the other CSOs]. (interview, May 24, 2012)

Overall, then, there are significant differences in how the system and opposition to it is theorised among these different women's groups. Yet there is also a shared, overwhelmingly normative vision of civil society, one which acknowledges that civil society may be drawn into the sphere of influence of the system, but which also

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[83] Whether this latter point, which suggests a tie between women's nature and anti-hierarchical organising, rests on essentialist understandings of gender or a position more akin to a feminist standpoint, is not clear.

clings to the possibility of a positive and supportive organising space with the responsibility of scrutinising and resisting the state.

5. The anti-hierarchical discourse

The fifth discourse frames civil society as a potentially anti-hierarchical space. Echoing the structure of the anti-systemic discourse, this is a view critical of many civil society organisations, including women's organisations, which are dominated by hierarchical and unequal structures and problematic leadership practices. It simultaneously invokes an aspiration to create a civil society which pursues equality and an end to hierarchical social relations, whether such relations arise from within civil society or between CSOs and the state.

Challenging hierarchical and centralised forms of organisation in civil society is a predominant concern of activists from groups across my sample, and is usually discussed in conjunction with the autonomy discourse, as shown when "dependence" and "hierarchy" are articulated together and framed as decisive problems in civil society. For example, the feminist organisation KA-DER takes a stand against hierarchical formations, stating in its by-law that it has done so by removing the word "educate" from its name and instead adopting a relationship based on sharing, not hierarchy (KA-DER, 2012). Importantly, the anti-hierarchy discourse is mainly discussed with regard to relationships *within* CSOs, and specifically the issue of representation and leadership, as a woman from KA-DER explains:

> I think that hierarchy is not viewed as a very big problem in women's organisations, but in fact, the thing is that CSOs... are also hierarchical in themselves, and women's organisations are not excluded from this. …Women's organisations are represented by presidents as well as by an EC [executive committee], the members themselves are not part of these decision-making procedures and these discussions. (Interview with Çiçek, July 21, 2012)

Or, as Sevda form the Kurdish KAMER declares, "we had meetings with the other CSOs. In some of them, the President has a separate room. Other people are working next to the President's office in such a small room with adjacent desks. I was shocked. This is nothing but hierarchy" (interview, May 20, 2012). In the same vein, for the Kurdish women activists in my study, the prevalence of hierarchical structures within and between CSOs is one of the most significant problems plaguing

civil society, and their critique of it underscores how they try to create a non-hierarchical organisational structure in their own groups.

We see a subtle difference between activists in my sample in terms of their approach to hierarchy. On the one hand the interviewees from the Kurdish group KAMER, and also from the feminist groups, argue that it is impossible to completely dismantle hierarchy, even within their own organisations. As Nuray puts it, "it is a lie to say that there is no hierarchy in KAMER" (interview with Nuray, May 16, 2012). The feminist groups suggest that, in order to work with the state or government, a hierarchical organisational structure may be necessary; furthermore, some KAMER members suggest that hierarchies based on differential knowledge and experience might be desirable. To illustrate, some interviewees from that group argue that anti-hierarchical structures can result in the "devaluation of knowledge and experience" (interview with Nuray, May 16, 2012) and "disharmony in an organisation" (interview with Tülin, May 18, 2012). In line with this approach, KAMER documentation makes clear that its commitment to "taking a position against hierarchy" is tempered by the need to have "equality without devaluing knowledge and experience" (KAMER, 2011: 283). On the other hand, the women from the Kurdish group SELİS and the anti-capitalist AMARGİ strive to establish and maintain non-hierarchical structures in and between organisations. As Gökten from SELİS articulates, "I believe there is less hierarchy in women's organisations. In SELİS, it is even less … we are doing our best not to develop such a hierarchy" (interview, May 24, 2012). AMARGİ emphasises in its introductory leaflet: "we do not want to resemble the system that we are so critical of, so we have no leader, but hold everyone responsible. That means no one decides for anyone. We implement our mission through work groups. We make decisions through consensus" (AMARGİ, n.d.1). Nonetheless, irrespective of whether they think hierarchy can be entirely abolished, all groups in my sample agree that an overemphasis on leadership positions in a CSO, specifically in a women's organisation, is unacceptable.

For the women in the anti-capitalist organisation, AMARGİ, capitalism is one of the key sources of inequality within and between CSOs. This can be seen in the interview with Eda from AMARGİ, who declares "there are not enough alternative CSOs. We should have more CSOs that have problems with the system

that have issues with capitalism, concern about the working class, and at the same time, sexism. We lack this type of CSO, we have to increase" (interview, July 3, 2012). For her, far too many CSOs are "ends" in themselves rather than "instruments" which bring about benefits for society as a whole. Other members of the same group lament the way CSOs function like a company, with the workers within it relatively detached and alienated from the group's goals. As Duygu from AMARGİ puts it, "the CSOs are turning into places where you do your own task without attaching yourself to that space" (interview, June 2, 2012), and where one's marketable abilities, such as proficiency in English, override attachment and commitment to an organisation.

More broadly, the critique of hierarchy dovetails for many of my interviewees with their critique of patriarchy. The women activists from the Kurdish groups SELİS and KAMER certainly identified male dominance as one of the roots of hierarchy. As Reşide, one of the youngest activists from SELİS, comments, "We grow up with this hierarchical structure in which mother is always in the kitchen, is responsible for the child care and the father works outside. It is all these little things we grow up with" (interview, May 22, 2012). KAMER's documentation puts it this way:

> We realised that hierarchy was one of the pillars of the system, which was practiced with diligent care. … This system gave women the opportunity to exist only in men's shadow. Many of us believed that there were no forms of existence other than that as someone's daughter, wife, or mother. We were suffocating each other even while expressing our love. We stopped doing this. (KAMER, 2011: 268)

The fact that dominance in the family translates into dominance of men in mixed group decision-making processes in civil society annoys these women, and is contrary to their equality-based understanding of civil society. In line with this approach, the CSOs dominated by men and attributing traditional gender roles to women are called into question, as Reşide from SELİS articulates in the following extract:

> ...There are also some civil society organisations which ascribe gender roles to women, well, from how it should be at home to their point of view of the state.... For example, in one of the meetings I participated in, there were some women who can said that "if a woman does cleaning at home, gets along well with her husband, she is not exposed to

violence"...there are also civil society organisations [that support this kind of idea]. (interview, May 22, 2012)

As can be seen in this quote, for Kurdish women, the patriarchal system is not limited in scope to to men's power over women, but is reproduced by women themselves. Tülin from KAMER underscores the point: "It's a male-dominated system, I suppose … women are affected by this. They may say 'If men show off their power, I'll do the same to them' … Women can also resort to violence in some cases, for example, when they become a manager" (interview, May 18, 2012).

It is in connection to this argument that the normative aspect of the anti-hierarchy discourse emerges, as it is suggested by some interviewees that the transformation of civil society can only be realised by feminism. While integrating a feminist approach into civil society is acknowledged as being "difficult due to the dominance of hierarchies within and between the civil society organisations" (interview with Çiçek, KA-DER, July 21, 2012), Duygu, one of the oldest members of AMARGİ that I interviewed, argues that feminism has already had a significant impact on civil society. She says that "it is feminism that will bring horizontal organisation into the society … and should develop relationships with civil society" (interview, June 2, 2012). Eda from the same organisation agrees:

> I am sure that leftist CSOs and human rights associations fight against the problems of the civil society, but they don't fight for destroying the power domain. In those organisations, men are in power, so they don't want to give up their power easily, so they don't address these topics. … this is a problem of sexism … they should learn from the feminist women's organisations …it is not easy, it is still on-going. (interview, July 3, 2012)

In line with this view, women's organisations are framed by some interviewees *as model organisations for civil society* as a whole, exemplifying best practice for CSOs to follow due to their efforts at building bridges between organisations, notwithstanding any internal struggles they may have with hierarchy. An activist from US puts it this way: "the primary duty of civil society [is] to come side by side. We can work on different subjects but we can get together for the issues. The women's organisations can do this and it sets an example for others in civil society" (interview with Didem, June 19, 2012).

6. The democratisation discourse

I turn now to the democratisation discourse, which posits that civil society is an arena for non-disciminatory and active citizenship. Two distinct approaches to the connection between democracy and civil society can be discerned. While Kurdish women underscore the non-discrimination aspect of the democratisation discourse, women from feminist US emphasise the development of democratic culture and active citizenship practices via CSOs. I will outline each of these approaches in turn.

The interviewees from both Kurdish organisations in my sample focus their attention on the need for civil society to combat discrimination. They frame discrimination between and within CSOs as a "democratic failure", and their emphasis upon it is linked to the regional and ethnic problems they encounter as Kurdish women and as individuals working within Kurdish women's organisations. In the first place, they argue that they face discrimination on the basis of ethnic difference coded in geographical terms. Thus Nuray from KAMER mentions that she is bothered by some people from other organisations referring to her as "coming from the *Eastern* part of Turkey" (interview, May 16, 2012), i.e. the Kurdish regions of Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolia. As noted by Derya from KAMER:

> One of the problematic areas in the civil society is discrimination … We can see it when we go to the West from the East [of Turkey] for project work. When I say I am from Diyarbakır [a city in Eastern Anatolia], you can see eyebrows are raised, because they have some type of profile in their minds, and they get surprised if the person they met doesn't fit into this profile.... when people or other organisations come to this side of the country [the eastern part of Turkey], they position themselves as the knowledgeable person; the person comes to give us knowledge or the person comes to save us. Ultimately, here we have also produced knowledge, experiences, data …, but when they come from the West there is a perception that they come here to teach or save us. (interview, May 17, 2012)

For Derya, this discrimination can even result in violence: she goes on to describe a Women's Shelter Congress held in 2012 in which "Our women friends coming from the East and South-East were almost lynched, they had to be guarded and sent away after they felt their lives were in danger … This is ridiculous … This is where we are in civil society" (interview, May 17, 2012). In addition, discriminatory attitudes are explained as responses to the articulation of a particular identity, that is, "*being a woman from Diyarbakır*" rather than the more general identity of "*being a woman*".

In this vein, Reşide from SELİS discusses the same Women's Shelter Congress: "We are accused of not dealing with women's issues, but dealing with regional issues". She cites an example of a colleague reading a letter from a woman in prison and continues "we got a serious reaction; banging the tables, shouting 'get out of here, you can't do it like that in Turkey, go to Northern Iraq, here is Turkey!' ... they never want to see SELİS in the decision-making process" (interview, May 22, 2012).

Unlike the women from KAMER, my interviewees from SELİS focus on the discrimination produced by the state and its policies in Turkey. They refer to "divisions (*ayrışma*)" in society, whether taking the form of gender divisions between men and women, ethnic divisions between Turkish and Kurdish people, or religions divisions between Christians and Muslims, as resulting in "othering (*ötekileştirme*)" by the state. As Gökten puts it:

> There is a serious separation in the society, the trouble or distress of one group is not felt by other groups. Men don't feel women's, Turks don't feel Kurds', and Muslims don't feel Christians'. There is such a separation. Thus, civil society cannot unite and build more power as a bloc and obviously this doesn't help the democratiaation of the country. However, this separation is generated by the state's politics. Eventually, [for the state] it is easier to control and rule when you are separated. (interview, May 24, 2012)

In this way, the state is portrayed as a source of illegitimate power and oppression. Furthermore, in this context, the state is viewed as a masculine entity, which goes some way to explaining its abuse of power. Ece, an activist from SELİS, underscores that the masculine mindset of the state in Turkey effectively means it ignores women's problems and, at the same time, it has an interest in propagating an acceptable image of womanhood; those deviating from the state's image of femininity are subject to the process of othering (interview, May 15, 2012). The women from SELİS accuse the Turkish state of making organisations such as theirs "the other (*öteki*)" through refusing them financial support and indirectly forcing them to become dependent on EU and other sources of funding. As Ece remarks, "if you don't mind the masculine state, you don't have those kinds of problems; your projects are approved by the state very easily" (interview, May 15, 2012).

Feminist groups also appeal to the democratisation discourse, but differently from the Kurdish women activists, emphasising how the development of democratic

culture depends, among other things, on the idea and practices of active citizenship. For feminists, active citizenship is promoted and accommodated within CSOs since these organisations are ideally suited to representing "the people". This is particularly evident in the interviews with women from US. Civil society encompasses all citizens, and a broad definition of "civil" is defended, as when Fulya from US refers to "the people's sense of morality, their ways of working and their language … which is defined in opposition to the 'military (*apoletli olmak/olamamak*)' or 'official (*resmi*) ' definitions" (interview, June 21, 2012). Civil society is conceptualised as a space for organising around, and providing representations of, citizens' voices, and in this way it contributes to the development of democratic culture. The projects conducted by US, such as Gölge Meclis Projesi (Watch Your Shadow) and Demokraside Kadın İzleri Projesi Brosürü (The Route of Women in Democracy), also confirm this standpoint. "Through the Gölge Meclis Project" notes one leaflet, "instead of having to go along with the services that are considered appropriate for themselves, women will be encouraged to set the agenda and to be active in achieving the result they want" (US, n.d.). Similarly KA-DER has projects such as Kadın Yurttaşların ve Aktivistlerin Seçmenler ve Aktif Yurttaşlar Olarak Güçlendirilmesi Projesi (Empowerment of the Women Citizens and Activists as Electorates and Active Citizens Project) which are "supporting active and participatory citizenship by empowering women … and in the long term encouraging the active participation of the women in politics" (KA-DER, n.d.). The aim is for women who are the targets of these projects themselves to become active in civil society. As Didem from US concludes, becoming part of a CSO both facilitates and enhances the impact of active citizenship:

> If there is a matter in the area you live in, to say that "I feel uncomfortable about this situation" is the first step to being organised about it. Because those who are organised get annoyed about the pavement issue today, the day after the people should say, "you don't build the right pavement for the suburbs", and this turns it into a class struggle.... An active citizen should be an activist. This kind of activism can happen on the streets, it happens by attending the council … this voice of disturbance works when it is organised. That's why I believe in CSOs. (interview with Didem, June 19, 2012)

Overall, then, the feminist groups suggest that the power of civil society as a realm of active citizenship lies in the way it can shape the political agenda to include previously marginalised yet vital issues people feel strongly about.

7. The co-optation discourse

The final discourse is much less positive, hinging on the idea that civil society is an agent of co-optation. This view is articulated by the anti-capitalist feminists – all the women I interviewed from SFK and some from AMARGİ – along with some women from US. For these women, civil society in Turkey has been subject to co-optation by the state. Specifically, they pose a challenge to CSOs by framing civil society as a depoliticising and non-feminist force. Their main line of criticism is based on unveiling the contradictions within the understanding and practices of civil society. In this context, civil society as it actually exists in Turkey is described as: i. depoliticisng in terms of the activity it promotes, ii. status- and interest-seeking, and iii. a buffer zone between the state and the market. I will deal with each of these points in turn.

The first dimension of the co-optation discourse constructs a dichotomy between civil society and feminist politics, and highlights the de-politicisation of civil society. That is to say, feminist organisations are positioned in contrast to other CSOs, and CSO politics more generally is viewed as reproducing capitalist structures and substantially concealing systemic inequalities by adopting a narrow, issue-based mindset where problems are viewed in isolation from each other. In this sense, these women activists use pejorative phrases like "professionalism" and "maintenance of the system" in order to describe civil society, and do not view it as an arena for transformative political struggle, as Burçak from AMARGİ makes clear:

> I don't respect civil society from my point of view, you can't respect it in a way. It is a nice thing, but not radical, it doesn't produce something different. It obscures the existing problem, does not say anything to transform it. It helps the continuance of it in a way and actually it makes the problems look nicer. (interview, July 2, 2012)

Whereas CSOs are described as "conciliatory (*uzlaşmacı*)", feminist organiaations are called "critical", as stated by Betül from the same group: "to me, feminism can't choose to conciliate, this is why I say a feminist organiaation is not a CSO, or it shouldn't be. Feminist politics should always be critical" (interview, June 15, 2012).

In the same vein, some women from US construct a dichotomous relationship between civil societism (*sivil toplumculuk*) and revolutionism (*devrimcilik*). In the context of broader political struggle, "civil society activism" is regarded as the lesser of the two practices, partly because of the way such activism shows signs of and enables co-optation by the state and the political power.

According to this view, the relationship of civil society to the state is one of conformity rather than an adversarial relationship. As Burçak from AMARGİ signifies, "I believe it is built on the principle of avoiding any conflict" (interview, July 2, 2012). In this context, developments in civil society, such as NGOisation and the rise of the funded project, are singled out as important instruments for creating a depoliticised space; as Betül from AMARGİ puts it, "they [civil society organisations] are not able to transform the society due to lack of political attributes" (interview, June 15, 2012). More than this, civil society is limited by direct repression. For Emel from US:

> [Political] power has started to rule civil society. It used to be like, "you have a field … play here" [but] … it is beyond that idea now…. [Take] the example of Canan Arın. Well, she is a lawyer from the Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation (Mor Çatı) and she was taken into custody because she was talking about early marriages. A lot of people from KESK (The Confederation of Public Labourers' Union) were taken into custody. Therefore, it is beyond "go on, you can play in the garden". It doesn't even allow you to play. You will play in the garden in the way it [political power] wants. (interview with Emel, June 26, 2012)

State repression thus severely limits the actions and impact of civil society activists. The same activist employs a wall metaphor to show that activists are trapped within the boundaries of civil society: "There is a wall but I am not very sure if hitting this wall wears it down (*aşınmak*). Does this wall erode? ... What is wearing down, you or the wall?" (interview with Emel, June 26, 2012)

In this context, many activists from feminist and anti-capitalist groups refuse to refer to their organisation as CSOs. This is not to suggest they seek the total abolition of CSOs and civil society. Zeynep from SFK, for one, acknowledges the importance of CSOs but insists that the role of the civil society should go beyond them:

> CSOs have many projects. Let's consider what is sought in single-purpose projects for women like advisory hotlines for domestic violence,

etc. All of these affect women's lives directly. But … an organisation like SFK … takes women and turns them into political subjects (*politik özneler)*. [CSOs and feminist organisations are] separate areas but mutually supporting areas. Political subjects themselves can take heart from the CSOs' research and projects, etc… but I think politics cannot be restricted to CSOs only. (Interview, June 26, 2012)

In this extract, there is a reference to a wider definition of politics than the world of CSOs allows for. In the light of all this, "civil society" and "CSO" are not seen as acceptable terms to use to identify the feminist political struggle and organisations associated with it. Within this context, the SFK manifesto starts with an approach that "being independent from the state, capital and men" is an essential feature of for feminist organisations. The organisation does not suggest that CSOs should be autonomous from authorities in order to work properly in the site of civil society; rather, it challenges the idea and practices of civil society (SFK, 2008). Indeed, feminism can gain its meaning precisely from the contrast with civil society, as when Betül, one of the younger members of AMARGİ, explains: "For me, civil society looks like a concept in which the meaning is emptied out, because it is very abstract … because of that, there is still a reason to call myself a feminist. Because it [feminism] is not neutralised (*hiç etmek*) by power, as is the case for civil society" (interview, June 15, 2012).

More concretely, the incompatibility of feminism with civil society/CSOs is emphasised by referring to the "non-CSO" characteristics of feminist organisations. Thus some interviewees from AMARGİ prefer to see themselves as part of a "women's organisation" than a CSO, seeing this term as challenging the dominant perceptions of civil society as being "above-politics" and specialised. As Esra articulates:

…One cannot call AMARGİ a civil society organisation. Because AMARGİ has a side, it produces political discourse (*söz*). Indeed, its side is very clear. Therefore it does not say that "I am talking above politics" or "I am creating a non-political discourse", rather, it states "I am doing politics". (interview, June 16, 2012)

In line with this approach, women from SFK prefer to employ the term "democratic mass organisation (DMO)" rather than "civil society organisation". For all of the anti-capitalist feminists from this group, the site of civil society in Turkey is divided into two groups: CSOs supported by international funding and DMOs. These two

distinct groups are also defined respectively as the "state-approved and non-state approved". As Bilge from SFK puts it, "there are government policies and opposing groups. The democratic mass organisations are the oppositional groups for me … we don't use the CSO term" (interview, June 15, 2012). Similarly, Zeynep from the same organisation describes SFK as a political movement rather than a CSO. In this way, SFK for her retains its political potential for transformative change:

> In a professional organisation, you do advocacy, but feminism is not only advocacy, it is beyond that. Of course, you can do that as well, but it shouldn't be limited to that because feminism is more threatening, fights against the system by definition, fights against the patriarchal system. This is a total struggle that should include many areas. For example, a study against men's violence can make a crack in the system, but if you define that only from that perspective, if you don't make an overall system analysis and build an entire struggle, you can crack but cannot overturn the system. (interview, June 26, 2012).

The second dimension of the co-optation discourse is that civil society is considered an instrument for status and interest-seeking. When presidency, delegation and representation start to play a key role in a civil society organisation, according to the anti-capitalist women that I interviewed, a CSO turns into an instrument for gaining capital and status and is easily manipulated by the state/governments. In other words, the internal organisational hierarchies of CSOs means that those leading the organisation become detached from the membership profile, as Esra argues: "Civil society has serious hierarchies within itself … CSOs are becoming power domains as being a president or something else there is a prestigious thing" (interview, June 16, 2012). The solution to combat these problems is located in "bottom-up politics" and direct political participation in decision-making procedures, rather than more representational procedures. For example, participation was emphasised and redefined in "Beyoğlu'na Feminist Sözümüz Var (We have a Feminist Word to Beyoğlu)" campaign brochures: "If you do not see the obstacles in front of the participation of the women and the other disadvantaged groups and try to eliminate them with conscious interventions, the word participatory has no meaning" (SFK, 2013). At this point, feminist organisations are suggested as an alternative to representation-based organisations since they put an emphasis on horizontal and non-professional structures, rotational systems and collective and non-hierarchical

decision-making processes. This perspective on feminist organising prompts women to participate in the politics of organising as well as in the politics of everyday life. It refers implicitly to the broader debate on "bureaucracy vs. collectivism" (see Martin, 1990) in the literature on feminist organisations, and aligns feminism with internal democracy, broad participation and minimal hierarchy.

The third dimension of the co-optation discourse is that civil society functions to serve as a buffer zone between the state and capitalism. Anti-capitalist women activists believe that when civil society plays this role, it permanently blocks the possibility of solving the problems of the capitalist system caused by both the state and market relations, as Elçin from SFK highlights:

> I think the civil society is an intermediate agent that would tolerate the inequalities faced by individuals, on their behalf, as a result of powerful attacks of capital and the state. I mean, it's like a welfare state. Like when capitalism became cruel and produced a deadlock, the welfare state project was developed. Nowadays, capitalism is more of a deadlock [than before] but the state does not want to take responsibility for the damage [directly]. They do this through civil society, sometimes through support provided by the state and by causing [people] to forget the reality that they are the state's main responsibility. (Interview, July 23, 2012)

In order to illustrate this point, Burçak from AMARGİ discusses how a CSO may form a relationship with capital, giving the example of the alliance between TEMA (the Turkish Foundation for Combatting Soil Erosion) and Koç, the second largest company group in Turkey. When the latter "occupied some forest area in İstanbul and built a university campus there [Koç University]. …not a single civil society organisation gave a reaction about how valuable that land is and how that is an occupation" (interview, July 2, 2012). In this regard, the state is understood to be in need of civil society in order to manufacture consent; it is seen to gain legitimacy through civil society. "The state needs civil society to be able to promote politics, to create this hegemony" (interview with Esra, AMARGİ, June 16, 2012). Because of this understanding of state-civil society relations, most of the anti-capitalist women activists characterise the dominant perception of civil society projects creating "a free and equal world" as a "delusion" (interview with Betül, AMARGİ, June 15, 2012)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented my findings from the interviews with 41 activists from ten women's organisations in Turkey. The aim of the chapter was to analyse the main features of the civil society discourses articulated by the women activists from Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish, feminist and anti-capitalist women's organisations. I found that women's groups did not produce a unified narrative but rather many different discourses of civil society. I identified seven main ones, under the headings of "voluntarism", "autonomy", "mediation", "opposition", "democratisation", "anti-hierarchy" and "co-optation", as set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Discourses of Women's Organisations

	Discourses	Women's Organisations									
		Kemalist		Islamic		Kurdish		Feminist		Anti-capitalist	
		TKB	TÜKD	BKP	AKDER	KAMER	SELİS	US	KA-DER	SFK	AMARGİ
1	Voluntarism	X	X	X	X				X		
2	Autonomy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
3	Mediation	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		
4	Opposition	X		X	X		X				
5	Democratisation					X	X	X	X		
6	Co-optation							X		X	X
7	Anti-hierarchy					X	X	X	X		X

The autonomy discourse is the most prevalent, in which the Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish and feminist women activists position civil society "above politics and ideology" and independent from the state or government despite some divergences within it. The mediation discourse is the second most common discourse produced by the women from Kemalist, Islamic and feminist organisations, and the Kurdish organisation, KAMER. This discourse implies that civil society plays a key intermediatory role between the state and society. Often closely aligned with the

mediation discourse is the voluntarism discourse, which creates the idea of civil society as a space that is and/or should be reliant on voluntary activity performed by responsible persons who do not expect any personal benefit. A rather different meaning of civil society emerges with the opposition discourse that is produced by the Kemalist, Islamic and Kurdish women activists. This discourse assumes that civil society should be an anti-systemic agent, and criticises "non-adversarial or unorganised" civil society and the suppression of civil society by the system; yet the emphasis of the Kurdish women is distinct from the other groups.

The emphasis on the democratic outcomes of the promotion of civil society activism lies at the heart of the democratisation discourse, which is circulated by the women from the Kurdish organisations and the feminist organisation, US. Overlapping somewhat with the democratisation discourse is the anti-hierarchy discourse, which is produced by the women from the Kurdish and feminist organisations as well as AMARGİ, the anti-capitalist organisation. This discourse envisages civil society as a site in which CSOs should have a non-hierarchical and horizontal organisational structure, and suggests that the integration of feminist organisational principles and practices into civil society is one way of rebuilding civil society along non-hierarchical lines. In stark contrast to the connotations of the democratisation discourse, the discourse of co-optation identifies civil society as a depoliticising and non-feminist force, and challenges particular features of civil society in Turkey. Starting with the assumption that civil society has already been co-opted in Turkey, it rejects the idea of civil society from the outset.

In terms of the key factors shaping the women's articulation of discourses, political orientation of course plays an important role. In line with their political standpoint, almost all of the interviewees in my sampling – apart from the anti-capitalist women – make a distinction between pro-government and anti-government/state CSOs. This is important for considering how ideology works to shape the contestations and fragmentations between the women's organisations in Turkey. For instance, confrontation is apparent in the Kemalist and Islamic women's interview texts, as they directly refer to each other as pro-government or pro-system. Kemalist women understand civil society as an area for performing and reinforcing the secular or Kemalist characteristics of the Turkish Republic, and the position and

mission of Kemalist women's organisations are thus differentiated from those of the Islamic women in my study, who are seen as too close to government. In the mirror image of this perspective, the Islamic women accuse the Kemalist women's organisations of being overly partisan and compromised by close ties to the Republican system. Furthermore, political standpoint explains why different meanings and roles are attached to civil society in the same discourse. Thus women activists from the Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish and feminist organisations all articulate opposition, democratisation, and voluntarism discourses but divergent understandings of civil society emerge in each of these accounts because of the different political leanings of those who articulate them.

However, political standpoint is not the only factor shaping the articulation of civil society discourse. Each organisation's approach to funding plays a crucial role – see for example, how it shapes the Kemalist women's civil society discourses in terms of the relationship between voluntarism and professionalism. Generally speaking, the women activists from TÜKD, who are pro-funding, are positive about the integration of voluntarism with professionalism, while almost all women activists from TKB that I interviewed, who are sceptical of funding, repudiate this approach in the name of promoting a perception of "responsible voluntarism". Another example can be given from the anti-capitalist organisations. While SFK is an anti-funding organisation and produces the co-optation discourse, anti-capitalist women from AMARGİ are open to funding and do not reject the idea of civil society, envisaging it as a non-hierarchical site for women and compatible with feminist goals.

Organizational structure is also influential in shaping the articulation of certain discourses. For instance, although I identified a good degree of convergence between the Islamic women's civil society discourses, the different organisational structures of AKDER and BKP partly influence their views on the relationship between voluntarism and professionalism. AKDER is semi-professional and supports the inclusion of professionalism in civil society while BKP depends on volunteers and tends to see civil society as a voluntaristic activity. This might be a decisive factor for their different approaches to the relationship between voluntarism and professionalism.

In addition, geographical location is a factor that explains why the Kurdish women's civil society discourses diverge from the women's organisations with different ideological leanings. As noted above, the Kurdish women's organisations are located in Diyarbakır, in Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolia, where the Kurdish population is concentrated and where there has been an ongoing war between the Turkish state and Kurdish fighters led by the Kurdish Workers' Party. Quite clearly, these organisations are affected by this regional politics, specifically the issue of ethnic identity and the on-going war. I would argue that this is why women activists from both Kurdish organisations find common ground in the articulation of the democratisation discourse, which envisages a non-discriminatory civil society.

Finally, the framing of women's rights and feminism is another factor that influences the articulation of women's civil society discourses. In particular, this impacts on their understanding of the gendered dimensions of civil society. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the issue of women's rights and feminism can be framed according to the following categories: "equality", "justice-based equality", "empowerment", "emancipation" and "liberation for all groups". I would argue that whereas the women's groups using the first three categories to conceptualise women's rights – "equality", "justice-based equality" and "empowerment" – mainly refer to the importance of women's activism in the site of civil society, those using the last two categories – "emancipation" and "liberation for all groups" – are more likely to address the hierarchical relationships and patriarchal features of civil society, and to emphasise feminist agency to tackle those problems.

The next chapter will analyse the ways in which the women activists' civil society discourses outlined here engage with hegemonic civil society discourses circulating in Turkey.

Chapter 5

Interdiscursive Analysis: Reflection, Negotiation, Critique or Resistance?

Introduction

This chapter presents the second stage of the textual analysis. It examines the interdiscursive dialogue between the civil society discourses of the women's groups, identified in Chapter 4, and the hegemonic civil society discourses mapped out in Chapter 3. I aim to analyse the discursive continuities and disjunctions between the two sets of discourses by identifying whether and how hegemonic discourses are reproduced by the women's organisations, how the interdependencies of the competing discourses are constructed, and the extent to which women are "'transforming' text through encouraging a rethinking of their meanings" (Sunderland, 2004: 30). If there is such a transformation, this analysis will enable me to show the power of women's discourses to move beyond hegemonic discourses and create new meanings and visions of civil society. In light of the focus of this chapter, it is helpful to recall the two sets of discourses under analysis. I will refer to the current hegemonic civil society discourses in Turkey, which are "autonomy", "democratisation", "project-based civil society", "dialogue" and "authoritarian-based", and the civil society discourses produced by the women's groups, namely, "voluntarism", "autonomy", "mediation", "opposition", "democratisation", "anti-hierarchy" and "co-optation".

In what follows, I group the encounters between hegemonic and women activists' discourses around three categories which are also prevalent in the literature on civil society in the Middle East, as discussed in Chapter 2: i. reflection and negotiation of liberal democratic discourse; ii. critical engagements; and iii. rejection. The first discusses the ways in which the women activists are endorsing the liberal view, at least to some extent, through both *reflecting* the hegemonic discourses and *negotiating* with these hegemonic discourses. The second examines the critical engagements of the women in my sample with the liberal approach to civil society by

discussing their *critique of civil society* as well as their *resistance through challenges*, in other words, how the women activists contest civil society but continue to speak within the language of civil society. Lastly, I will discuss the rejectionist approach, which refers to "resistance through alternatives". This means that the women activists strive to combine dissent with the production of an alternative framework for their activism and political visions. I will discuss in each case the gendered dimensions and implications for the emancipation of women. Overall, this chapter could be regarded as an analysis of the ways in which power and gender relations are (re-) constructed in the interaction between women's civil society discourses and dominant discourses in Turkey.

1. The liberal civil society discourse: Reflection and negotiation

1.1. Reflecting hegemonic civil society discourses

Women activists' civil society discourses show continuities with the dominant civil society discourses of autonomy, voluntarism, democratisation and dialogue. I begin by showing the continuities with the autonomy discourse and arguing that this discourse is reflected in the women's interviews in two ways. Firstly, they draw on similar linguistic terms to those found in the hegemonic discourse, such as "free", "autonomous", "independent", "voluntary" civil society and CSO. Secondly, the intersections between the women's discourses bring about complex relationships with the dominant discourses. This is noted in the reproduction of the autonomy and voluntarism discourses by the women activists from Kemalist, Islamic, Kurdish and feminist women's groups.

By way of a reminder, the hegemonic autonomy discourse posits that since the 1980s, the state has been retreating from the area of society, and civil society is constituted as a realm for people's voices and demands. In other words, the issues that were previously not voiced by the people have begun to find an expression in the realm of civil society (Navaro-Yashin, 1998: 57). It is also argued by scholars and activists that after the 1980 coup d'état "various social groups such as religious groups, ethnic movements, women's movements, human rights activists and environmentalists, started to attempt to narrow down the scope of the state's economic, political, social and even cultural hegemony in favour of a civil society"

(Çaha, 2013: xiv). In this sense, the autonomy of civil society from the state is promoted in academic circles as well as through international donor agencies, and sustained by the official discourse of the Turkish state elites. It is regarded as a means for forming a liberal and pluralistic civil society independent of the state's authority; in this view, the state is not a determinant or controller of civil society (Navaro-Yashin, 1998b: 57-8).

The women's CSOs reflect the autonomy discourse in two ways, by emphasising "autonomy from the state/government" and "autonomy from politics and ideology", as discussed in the previous chapter. Whereas the first dimension refers to the state or government, the second is a broader term which refers to ideas and social forces that subsume the state. In this sense, the autonomy of civil society from both is regarded by the women activists that I interviewed as a prerequisite for more freedom and the promotion of diversity in civil society.

Amongst the women's organisations, the interviewees from the Kemalist groups, the Kurdish group KAMER, and the Islamic and feminist groups emphasise autonomy, albeit in various ways. They invoke autonomy by envisioning a space of civil society functioning autonomously from the state/government, and positioned above politics and ideology. It is interesting that the Kemalist women draw on an autonomy discourse that originated in opposition to the orthodoxies of Kemalism and secularism. In this sense, members from both Kemalist organisations conceptualise the area of civil society as supra-political and supra-ideological. Similarly, control of CSOs by the state is not accepted by the Kurdish women, particularly those from KAMER, since CSOs should retain their autonomous and critical features by staying "above state and political parties" (interview with Seda, KAMER, June 2, 2012) and "not defending the view of a political party" (interview with Sevda, KAMER, May 20, 2012). The women activists from KAMER aim to transcend a politically-shaped civil society by distancing themselves from any ideology, as they also highlight in their documentation. According to the Islamic women, the area of civil society is constructed as an alternative to the state and market, and is viewed as a distinctive space free from any conflict. Civil society is also located with the people and their demands, as opposed to the state and its rules and institutions. Thus, civil society is imagined as a reserved independent and critical site in which state scrutiny should be

eliminated for the sake of the promotion of democracy in the country. Similarly, feminist women from KA-DER and US employ the term "autonomy" in relation to full financial state support for the CSOs, and frame such support as a threat to "being civil" or independent. They also argue that CSOs should respond to and solve problems and issues emerging "from below", and should be considered distinct from organisations constituted "from above", i.e. political parties.

However, we see divergence in the women's autonomy discourse. This divergence is much more obvious in the Kemalist and Kurdish women's interviews in the sense that they stress their independence from different institutions in line with their distinct experiences as women's CSOs in the Turkish context. Most of the Kemalist women, mainly from TKB, emphasise their autonomy specifically from the AKP Government rather than from the state per se. In contrast, the women activists from KAMER wish to be free from the supervision of not only the state but also any political organisation located in the eastern and south-eastern region. This view is also articulated in their idea of civil society as "above ethnicity". KAMER is the only organisation in my study to introduce a link between autonomy and ethnic identity. In this regard, moderating the Kurdish identity of an organisation is suggested as a way of reinforcing the autonomy of a CSO. This is because some women activists from KAMER consider it essential to create independent and free CSOs that are inclusive and do not discriminate based on ethnic identity. This approach has to be understood in light of the aim of KAMER to change its image in the eastern and south-eastern regions because it is perceived by others to be too close either to the state or to the Kurdish Workers' Party.

Overall, I have two criticisms of the reproduction of the autonomy discourse by women's CSOs. Firstly, the autonomy discourse tends to depoliticise civil society by reinforcing the state-civil society dichotomy established in the dominant discourse, and drawing a clear boundary between the two spheres. It attributes distinctive characteristics to civil society, as if state and civil society were easily and entirely separable entities. What is more, the attachment of supra-political traits to civil society is an effort to differentiate the civil society sphere from not only the state/government but also from any kind of political and ideological force. When members of the women's organisations attach a pejorative meaning to politics and/or

ideology, aligning with broader hegemonic discourses, they place civil society outside "the political". Secondly, the positive traits and functions ascribed to the concept of civil society through the normative definition of "autonomy" in civil society threaten to essentialise the notion of civil society and to disregard the different and diverging interpretations of civil society that have emerged in the Turkish context. Notably, the autonomy discourse is not always reproduced as a stand alone discourse, rather, it dovetails with the voluntarism discourse for several of the women's organisations (except for the Kurdish and anti-capitalist organisations, and the feminist US). By constructing a positive correlative relationship, voluntarism is presented as a necessity for ensuring the autonomy of an organisation, and is addressed as a guarantee for autonomous associational life and the freedom of CSOs. In this way, voluntarism is pitted against professionalism, which is articulated as a threat to the independence of an organisation.

The women's organisations also reproduce the dominant "democratisation" discourse, which is circulated currently in the Turkish context, mainly by the international funding agencies, and rests on the idea that a developed civil society will bring about democratic change and improvement, thereby creating a more liberal democratic society. This discourse regards the increase in the number and diversity of CSOs as a good indicator for realising that aim; therefore, there is strong support for the inclusion of different groups and organisations in the civil society arena. This normative democratic model of civil society is reproduced in the women's interviews. Some of the Kurdish, Islamic and feminist women underscore a positive correlation between a strong, developed civil society and promotion of democratic culture.

Lastly, the women's civil society discourses reproduce the emphasis on dialogue discourse used common in civil society discussions in Turkey. As stated in Chapter 3, this hegemonic dialogue discourse prescribes the high participation of civil society organisations in decision-making and policy-making processes as a way of paying attention to, and taking into account, the voices of civil society actors. In this sense, the idea of a consensus-based relationship with the state prevails over any conflicting relations. Through their dialogue discourse, women activists from the Kemalist and Islamic organisations, KAMER and KA-DER similarly portray civil

society as one of the channels between the state and society. Civil society is viewed as a space for policy-production and development, and is deemed responsible for ensuring the problems of society are part of the public political agenda. For instance, the Islamic women suggest that a dialogue-based relationship with the state can be established if the state consults with CSOs during the decision-making process, and if CSOs oversee state actions. Similarly, for members of KAMER, CSOs should be positive, problem-determinant and solution-oriented and thus they should be in a constructive dialogue with the state institutions. Importantly, most of the women define the main function of CSOs as participating in the process of decision-making and policy-making, and influencing the implementation process.

A potential pitfall with women's reproduction of the dialogue discourse is that it glosses over more insidious power relations which not only impact on policy-making but operate throughout society. Although CSOs can play an important role in influencing laws and government policies, I would argue that "getting access to power is not only a matter of participation in decision-making processes" (Townsend 1999: 27) since power is not always identifiable or visible. The dialogue discourse can, in other words, function to mask power relations operating out of sight and behind closed doors, especially at state and policy levels. However, as I will discuss later, the depiction of women's participation in the decision and policy-making process is not uncritical. Almost all of the women I interviewed are aware of the power dynamics operating in those processes and pay particular attention to the ways state authorities marginalise women's organisations.

1.2. Negotiating hegemonic civil society discourses

The continuities and disjunctions between the women's civil society discourses and hegemonic discourses are often nuanced. To capture these nuances I use the term "negotiation" to describe the ways in which the women activists that I interviewed reproduce hegemonic discourses but are somewhat critical of them at the same time. There is, therefore, a degree of compromise evident in the women's perspectives because the hegemonic discourses are both criticised and reclaimed. Negotiation occurs with voluntarism, dialogue and project-based civil society discourses.

The meaning of voluntarism is negotiated in two ways in women's civil society discourses, specifically in those articulated by the Kemalist organisations, the

Islamic organisation AKDER, and the feminist organisation KA-DER. Firstly, negotiation occurs by way of opening up the voluntarism discourse and bringing in the concept of responsibility, which effectively extends the boundaries of the discourse. In the women's interviews, voluntarism is presented as a responsibility rather than a free-time activity. Indeed, what is unique in these interviews is the image of women as committed and responsible volunteers acting in an autonomous site of civil society. For instance, for the women from KA-DER, the main responsibility of a CSO volunteer is to actively participate in the political arena. If an organisation is comprised of self-disciplined and committed activists, they believe it is more likely to become institutionalised. The Kemalist women reproduce the voluntarism discourse but instead stress their responsibility to promote civil society as well as women's rights for the overall benefit of the society. Although the priorities of the Kemalist women and feminists from KA-DER differ, almost all of the women from these organisations extend the boundaries of voluntarism by integrating the idea of responsibility. What is also clear in the Kemalist women's discourses is that negotiation with the voluntarism discourse occurs by invoking the ideological commitments of Republicanism. As Tekeli (1981) aptly argues, women's rights function as a way of denying the Ottoman past and forming a "democratised" Republic in light of Western ideas and practices. That is to say, women who were educated, enlightened, responsible, and protectors of the nation were conceived as the bearers of modernisation in the Republican period. By demanding commitment and duty-based voluntarism rather than being satisfied with civil society participation as a leisure time activity, the Kemalist women reproduce a specific Republican gender identity for women. This identity is premised on feeling responsible for the development of civil society, and thereby enlightening other people and benefiting society. In this sense, there is a hint of elitism in the way Kemalist organisations negotiate and extend the voluntarism discourse.

Secondly, there is also an effort to negotiate the voluntarism discourse by opening up civil society to the promises of professionalism. Even though the women from some organisations associate "genuine" civil society with voluntary-based organisations, the idea of civil society being a predominantly voluntary-only space is negotiated by some members of AKDER and KA-DER. They believe in the

compatibility of voluntarism and professionalism within a CSO, and suggest the two combined can increase the sustainability and efficiency of an organisation. Indeed, this combination aids in the process of CSOs becoming institutionalised. For these organisations, such a negotiation of the voluntarism discourse is justified since combining voluntarism and professionalisation is thought to be better for the future of the CSOs.

The groups in my sample also negotiate with the hegemonic project-based civil society discourse, which is constructed by the increase in international funding, particularly from the EU, to CSOs in Turkey. Members of Islamic and feminist organisations, the Kemalist organisation TÜKD, the Kurdish KAMER, and anti-capitalist AMARGİ do not oppose the idea of projects and funding. Indeed, they believe in the power and capacity of funded projects to enhance civil society and the women's movement more broadly. However, this discourse contracts when the women activists from these groups acknowledge the limitations of projects and funding, especially those provided by state authorities and international donor agencies. This is where the interdiscursivity between "project-based" civil society and the "autonomy" discourses emerges. Women activists using the project-based discourse indicate that receiving international funding does not threaten their autonomy as long as funding bodies do not try to regulate CSO spending in accordance with their own goals, priorities and activities. Those CSOs which exist to solely seek funding or to bend to the will of donor agencies and the state are described as "fake" CSOs in contrast to the "real" CSOs which are seen as standing strong against donor and state pressure. While accepting the reality of donor funding, the women's discourses recognise the possible threat of the power of capital to shape civil society and to encourage funded CSOs to abandon any critical stance. In this regard, women's project-based discourses extend beyond the hegemonic form of this discourse to include a reflexive critique of the marketisation of CSOs.

Lastly, the meaning of "dialogue" is negotiated in the women's interviews. A few women from the feminist organisation US do not accept the hegemonic discourse of dialogue because of its restricted content. A feminist woman from US whom I interviewed states that civil society should "deliberate and, if required, argue with and against the state rather than only establishing a dialogue with it" (interview

with Didem, US, June 19, 2012). On the basis of their experiences with the decision-makers in Turkey, Didem suggests that activists should deliberate with the state on the specific matters so as to establish accountability between the state and CSOs. In this way, the boundaries of the dialogue discourse are extended. In such ways, my interviewees extend the scope of voluntarism, project- and dialogue-based civil society discourses, and effectively carve out a wider, more critical space for the voices and actions of CSOs.

2. Critical approaches to liberal civil society

2.1. Critiquing hegemonic civil society discourses

This takes me to the critical engagement of the women's groups with dominant civil society discourses. Almost all participants in my study identify a range of problems with civil society in Turkey which threatens the understanding of an autonomous, voluntary, democratic and dialogue-based civil society, and they particularly criticise the authoritarian civil society discourse of the current AKP Government. When women adopt a more thoroughly critical approach to the current state of civil society, they move beyond the compromise with hegemonic civil society discourses, characteristic of practices of negotiation, to stress the hollow nature of hegemonic discourses and the inability of CSOs to conform to the standards of good practice implied in these discourses. Specifically, women's groups emphasise the unwelcome divergence from autonomy and voluntarism; the lack of democratisation in civil society; and the problems with dialogue, project-based relationships and the authoritarian civil society discourse of the post-2011 AKP period. I will deal with each of these points in turn.

First, the interviewees refer to the problems of civil society in the Turkish context as an undesired deviation from the autonomy and voluntarism discourses. They assert their immanent critique of the gap between the ideals of civil society contained within hegemonic discourses and the lack of commitment to these ideals in practice. Connectedly, they position women's organisations as more committed to these ideals than other CSOs and in this way they remove themselves from being implicated in their own critique. This manoeuvre is clear in their production of binary categorisations. Women's organisations are often situated within the realm of a genuine, voluntary civil society while interest-orientated organisations like trade

unions are situated outside this category. Similarly, the authenticity of CSOs which are "pro-government" or "partisan" is scrutinised while those which are "anti-government" or "non-partisan" are deemed to be better able to fulfil the demands of a CSO. What is more, the self-positioning of the women's CSOs becomes more obvious when gender enters the discursive equation. Members of some women's groups suggest that women and women's organisations are crucial agents in the development of an autonomous civil society. With the exception of the anti-capitalist organisations, the women activists from all organisations foreground this idea about women's role in civil society and their ability to resist the male-dominated and interest-seeking characteristics of other CSOs. For instance, the Kemalist women envision women's organisations as taking on a special mission in civil society in terms of their particular organisational consciousness and role of enlightening society, as shown in Chapter 4. This mindset is also used to uphold the voluntarism discourse by pointing out its gendered dimensions. Male dominated, non-voluntary CSOs are viewed as suspect and framed as less genuine than women's organisations.

Thus while the women activists' immanent critique of the autonomy and voluntarism discourses is laudable, it does contain some inconsistencies and tensions of its own. It establishes divisions between women's groups. Within the realm of women's organisations, some are viewed as more genuine than others; those women's organisations founded by a small group for social purposes are contrasted with organisations struggling to protect women's rights and to enhance women's social status. Thus only some politically-orientated women's organisations become "the most genuine and proper" civil society actors. The creation of the binary categorisations also undermines the promotion of democracy which the women's organisations intend to support. To illustrate, the confrontational relationship between the Kemalist and Islamic women does not conform to the normative demands of the hegemonic democratisation discourse. The Kemalist women portray the Islamic women's organisations as pro-government CSOs and are intolerant towards women wearing headscarves in the public sphere. Indeed, the Republican ideal of "womanhood" is used as a barometer to evaluate the aims and activities of other women's organisations in civil society. Likewise, the Islamic women's organisations emphasise the juxtaposition of Kemalist women's organisations with

the secularist political party, the CHP. What is problematic here is that through constructing binary categories which are then mapped onto other CSOs, the women activists in my study situate themselves and their CSOs as worthy of operating in a democratic civil society, while excluding others from this realm. This may bolster their own sense of power and impact on their relationships with other organisations, and signifies their ambition to create a "pure" civil society inclusive of "good" CSOs only.

The second manifestation of the critical engagement with hegemonic civil society discourse is in the women's insistence on the limits of "democratisation" on the dominant view. The democratisation discourse is found to be particularly hollow by the women activists from the Kurdish organisations because, in their experience, democratic principles are not adhered to *within* civil society. This critique is informed by their first-hand experience of ethnic discrimination from other CSOs. For instance, the Kurdish interviewees recalled how people from other organisations would refer to them as "coming from the Eastern part of Turkey" (interview with Nuray, KAMER, May 16, 2012) in meetings. More generally, the Kurdish women activists recalled how treatment of their ethnicity frequently made them feel like "the other" and exposed the hierarchies within civil society. The critique here is that CSOs themselves may not endorse democratic values such as equality and non-discrimination, and this is a key factor undermining the democratisation function of civil society. Indeed, this goes some way to explaining why the Kurdish women activists offer an inclusionary and non-discriminatory approach to civil society.

The third point of critique focuses on the dialogue-based relationship between civil society and the state in Turkey, and how this manifests in an authoritarian tone particularly in the post-2011 AKP period. The interviewees assert that rather than establishing a "dialogue-based" relationship with CSOs, the AKP Government shows authoritarian attitudes to the CSOs in line with its authoritarian policies in other areas. Although the Islamic women have less problematic relations with the government, activists from all of the women's groups criticise the AKP Government's exclusionary stance toward some CSOs and women's CSOs in the decision-making and policy-making processes. The extent of state acceptance of CSOs as proper negotiating partners is debated by most interviewees. For example,

the Kemalist women criticise the dominant authoritarian civil society discourse of the AKP by calling attention to the marginalisation strategies of successive AKP Governments from the policy and decision-making process, and the lack of state support for their facilities and projects. Marginalisation is construed as blocking the Kemalist women's CSOs more generally from checking and shaping government policies. Similarly, as a feminist from KA-DER underlined in Chapter 4, women's organisations which did not conform to government ideology were effectively excluded from the process. Likewise, despite more visibility in current times, the Islamic women show a common concern about the extent to which they are perceived as genuine negotiating partners by the government, and the extent of their impact on policy. Even though they are aware that the AKP has been partisan towards some civil society groups, they continue to expect the state to accommodate real dialogue to support women-friendly policies only if sufficient pressure is applied to the state by CSOs. In this sense, the Islamic women believe that CSOs have to become stronger to pressure the state into forming dialogue-based relationships.

Several activists that I interviewed explain that the AKP Government's strategies of exclusion and marginalisation are gender-based. Although some women's organisations support the dialogue discourse, what really stands in their way is the government's disrespect for women's CSOs in line with its authoritarian civil society discourse. In this regard, a group of women from the feminist organisations criticises the exclusionary attitudes of the state towards particular women's organisations that do not think or work in line with the government's ideology. In the same vein, the women activists from the Islamic organisations refer to the different experiences of women and men in civil society, and their participation in the policy and decision-making process. They highlight men's easier and wider access to funding networks than women's, as well as the unequal distribution of resources to organisations based on gender. As shown in Chapter 4, because of "the dominance of the male point of view and the man's fear of losing the authority" (interview with Nurten, BKP, August 9, 2012), women in the CSOs can have some problems with the state institutions when conducting their projects. What is striking here is that the Islamic women explain the reason for the government's

exclusionary attitude in terms of their identity as a woman or a women's organisation rather than their Islamic/religious identity.

What I would like to highlight here is that despite several differences between the Kemalist and Islamic women touched upon in Chapter 4, I see a significant commonality regarding their approach to the gendered dimensions of civil society. Although a few Kemalist and Islamic women put forth a gender critique, most do not, and overall, they tend to endorse gender norms. In other words, both pay little attention to the gendered features of civil society. These women are not sufficiently focused on the gender norms and hierarchies prevalent in civil society and produced in relation to the state to pose a discursive challenge to the hegemonic discourse; gender takes a secondary and relatively insignificant place in their civil society discourses. I would argue that established feminine and masculine roles in CSOs in Turkey, and more generally in the area of civil society, are not contested by the Kemalist and the Islamic women's organisations, and they ultimately fail to challenge patriarchy and women's subordination.

2.2. Resistance through challenging hegemonic civil society discourses

This section shows how women's civil society discourses oppose hegemonic autonomy, dialogue and project-based civil society discourses. I argue that the women activists from almost all of the different political standpoints produce forms of opposition to the hegemonic discourses, question dominant views of civil society in Turkey, and call for the rethinking of the borders and meaning of civil society from women's point of view.

Firstly, the very notion of "autonomy" embedded in the hegemonic autonomy discourse is challenged by activists from the feminist KA-DER, Kurdish SELİS, anti-capitalist feminist SFK and Islamic BKP. To illustrate, for the women from SELİS, CSOs should have *absolute* independence from the state, as expressed in the quote from Gökten, member of SELİS, "civil appears to me to be independent from power, from the governing forces" (interview with Gökten, SELİS, May 24, 2012). Bearing in mind the historical abuses of state power in Turkey, absolute independence implies being situated beyond the reach of state oppression and includes the demand that the state should respect CSO autonomy. Opposition to the hegemonic autonomy discourse takes a distinct form in the Islamic women's discourses, as they seek

independence from Republican state ideology. In turn, they want to see the creation of alternative spaces in which the people can voice their issues and problems entirely unregulated by state ideology. Perhaps most radically, the women activists from anti-capitalist SFK resist the hegemonic autonomy discourse by reframing and redefining the understanding of autonomy as independence from the state, capital and men. Besides, civil society itself is regarded as one of the actors in the power terrain rather than merely functioning as a controlling and restraining agent on the state. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter 4, a feminist woman from KA-DER questions the dominant meaning of autonomy in terms of being above politics, and criticises the voluntarism discourse as a key source of labour exploitation in CSOs (interview with Çiçek, KA-DER, July 21, 2012).

Secondly, the hegemonic dialogue-based civil society discourse is challenged by my interviewees, as shown in Chapter 4. Kemalist women from TKB challenge the dialogue discourse by suggesting that civil society should adopt an anti-systemic character. As indicated in Chapter 4, this was expressed by Tansu, a member of TKB, through her criticism of discourse which implies the "inevitability of a close relationship between state and civil society", and her support for the view that "civil societies should not have a relationship with the [political] power at all" (interview with Tansu, TKB, May 4, 2012). In the same vein, Kurdish women activists from SELİS advocate building confrontational rather than dialogue-based relationships with the state. Both confrontational and anti-systemic arguments align with a sceptical attitude towards the notion that civil society is always a channel between the state and society and should behave as a negotiating partner with the state. As cited in Chapter 4, SELİS members do articulate the importance of "a civil pillar (*sivil ayak*)" – by referring to CSOs – functioning as a control mechanism on the state (interview with Ece, SELİS, May 15, 2012). However, they highlight that this does not mean that relationships with the state are always dialogue-based and congruent; on the contrary, civil society should make no compromises to reflect its oppositional and critical character.

Moreover, some women from the feminist organisations, particularly US, oppose hegemonic dialogue-based discourse because of the way it masks the unequal power relationships between civil society and the state. In this sense, they argue that

fear of being deprived of knowledge and resources only accessible through the state turns CSOs into negotiable partners. As touched upon in Chapter 4, a woman participant from US, Didem, states that "you cannot transform the things you want unless you integrate into the system; otherwise, the system reckons you as 'the other'" (interview with Didem, US, June 19, 2012). This point is also referred to as one of the handicaps of civil society, which leads to a condition of "not being able to reject power" (interview with Didem, US, June 19, 2012); that is, not being able to show an oppositional character to the system. However, those feminist women still suggest the possibility of transformation of the existing system from "within", through being a part of civil society. A member of KA-DER similarly suggests that this transformation can be brought about by CSOs playing a radical rather than balancing role relative to the state. For the feminist women, dialogue-based discourse fails to admit the problematic outcomes of a desire to establish relations with the state; in particular, it masks the fact that partisan and non-partisan organisations are distinguished according to the unequal economic opportunities provided to each group by the state. This is presented as evidence for the fragmented and unequal civil society prevalent in Turkey.

Finally, the interviewees resist the hegemonic discourse of project-based civil society. They argue that civil society ought to be a non-marketised sphere, free of values which seek to instrumentalise relationships and promote a profit motive. In some ways, this resistance intersects with the women's autonomy discourse. For instance, some women activists from the Kemalist group TKB and feminist organisation KA-DER voice opposition to projectism and funding because recipient organisations risk being regulated by donors and becoming dependent on donor funding. Çiçek, a member of the feminist organisation KA-DER also highlights the necessity of not being funded by donors in order to maintain independence from the burdens of capital; in this sense, she thinks beyond the options of full or partial international funding articulated by other women's organisations (interview with Çiçek, KA-DER, July 21, 2012). Similarly, the activists from the anti-capitalist organisation AMARGİ resist projectism. They argue that accepting funding forces recipient organisations to adopt the same language and framework as the funding

organisation, and effectively eliminates any discretion CSOs have when delivering their projects.

Interestingly, the Kurdish interviewees from SELİS do not link the project-based civil society discourse to the autonomy discourse, but instead critique funding and projectism as a part of power dynamics. The prevalence of funded projects is considered by these women to lead to the concentration of power in civil society, which consequently undermines its adversarial position. Furthermore, they argue that establishing relations of exchange as a priority of CSOs leads to members becoming alienated from their own labour and falling into the trap of pursuing a profit motive. In this context, resistance to project-based discourse stems from an unwavering anti-capitalist perspective.

The resistance of the interviewees in my study to particular hegemonic civil society discourses is complemented and deepened by their opposition to patriarchal relations in civil society. The Kurdish and feminist groups, along with the anti-capitalist AMARGİ, reveal the gendered nature and structure of civil society. To illustrate, Nuray, a member of KAMER, points to the dominance of masculine approaches in Turkish state institutions and CSOs, and suggests "gender mainstreaming as a solution to this problems of civil society" (interview with Nuray, KAMER, May 16, 2012). Male dominance is recognised as part of a broader patriarchal social system. For the Kurdish women activists, the dominance of men's voices in decision-making processes in mixed groups is exasperating, and they stress that their aspirations for change stem from an equality-based approach. What is more, as evidenced in Chapter 4, those CSOs which attribute traditional gender roles to women are called into question.

This critique of patriarchal relations, in particular, dovetails with a broader critique of hierarchy. The Kurdish activists, for example, point out that hierarchies are a source of domination which can be reproduced by men and women. They recognise that just as men exercise personal and structural power, women may have a capacity to dominate when they come to managerial positions. This is why the Kurdish women in my sample are critical of the constructed hierarchies in womenss organisations which have significant leadership positions. In the same vein, the feminist organisations in my study frame hierarchical structures within women's

organisations and CSOs as a significant and decisive problem of civil society, originating in the issue of representation in the CSOs. They argue that representation becomes problematic when it is illegitimately delegated to someone or a group of people to oversee work and deliver projects. In this sense, CSOs are contrasted with feminist organisations based on their hierarchical structure.

Furthermore, the issue of hierarchy also comes up when the possibility of feminist civil society is debated. Çiçek from KA-DER describes the task of integrating a feminist approach into civil society as "difficult due to the dominance of hierarchies within and between the civil society organizations" (interview with Çiçek, KA-DER, July 21, 2012), as indicated in Chapter 4. However, there is, in my view, a positive and transformative role attached to the feminist movement itself, which is very active and independent in Turkey in terms of reinforcing women's organisations, and differentiating them from the other CSOs. What is more, feminists that I interviewed suggest that women's organisations are model organisations for civil society because of their attempts to organise in non-hierarchical ways. Indeed, the women activists from AMARGİ do envision a non-hierarchical civil society if feminist goals are integrated, and, at the same time, patriarchal power structures and domination are challenged in CSOs. This discourse challenges the typical normative language used to frame civil society as an autonomous space which operates through voluntarism, and which functions as a channel between society and the state.

3. The rejectionist approach: Resistance through alternatives to civil society

Women's civil society discourses not only oppose hegemonic discourses but often seek to change them through rejecting civil society, and in this process alternative and transformative discourse emerges. I call this discursive move "resistance through alternatives". This form of resistance effectively advocates "democratic mass organisation" or "women's organisation" to replace civil society. Most obviously, anti-capitalist feminist organisations make this move since their resistance to civil society is accompanied by suggestions about ways of rethinking the concept of civil society and its relationship with feminist activism and politics. More specifically, they articulate two ways of thinking differently about civil society: advocacy of "feminism" and advocacy of "revolutionism". According to this form of resistance, social transformation and emancipation cannot occur from within the realm of civil

society and so it is essential to transcend the boundaries of civil society to achieve these aims.

For the first way of thinking, advocacy of "feminism", the discourse of "moving beyond civil society" attaches a positive and transformative meaning to the concept of politics, and locates feminist politics beyond the space of civil society activism. Here, resistance is adopted against hegemonic liberal-democratic civil society discourses which, when taken together, are depoliticising and non-feminist. As stated in Chapter 4 by a woman activist from AMARGİ, the state, in the case of the AKP, "needs civil society to be able to promote politics, to create hegemony. … I think the AKP is the one which uses it the best" (interview with Esra, AMARGİ, June 16, 2012). Further, existing civil society is deemed to be non-political and cluttered with interest-based organisations which make demands on behalf of their own members to the neglect of broader social concerns. Likewise, project-based civil society discourse is resisted by anti-capitalist feminist women, particularly SFK, through emphasising the position of civil society as a buffer zone between the state and market. They strongly support the independence of organisations from capital; they reject funding which leads to projectism and highlight the advantages of raising funds independently of the state, any organisations and/or any person.

By suggesting "revolutionism" as a term to identify their struggle, some feminist women from US and some anti-capitalist feminist women make a general challenge to the normative idea of civil society. To illustrate, these women pay attention to the instrumentalisation of civil society due to it having become an agent of co-optation. In this context, they construct a dichotomous relationship between "civil society" and "revolution". While the latter aims for political struggle, civil society is framed as a space that is depoliticised yet determined by enduring power relationships and oppressive institutional structures. This implies that a struggle to change the existing system "from within" cannot be successful. Indeed, these women activists underscore the incapacity of civil society to form an oppositional bloc to dismantle existing power relationships and structures. By replacing the concept of civil society with revolutionism, some feminist women from US produce an alternative language to replace hegemonic civil society discourses.

These alternative approaches assume incompatibility of feminism with civil society. The women's organisations who advocate them do not go by the name of "CSO" and, in fact, their "non-CSO" features are emphasised. Instead, the women activists from SFK employ the term "democratic mass organisations" and the women from AMARGİ use the term "women's organisation". This subtle discursive strategy can be viewed as a way of resisting dominant images of CSOs as being above politics, and as offering expertise on a topic and representation of certain groups in society. These women do not see civil society as a space or an agent that should or could be reformed as it has already been co-opted by the state and political power. Currently, they support the language of "feminist politics and women's organisation" over "civil society and CSOs". For them, the concept of civil society is too closely associated with "civil activism" and fails to offer any meaningful transformative politics.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to analyse the interdiscursive encounters between women's civil society discourses and hegemonic civil society discourses circulating in the Turkish context. I showed that the women's discourses engage with the hegemonic discourses in three ways, namely through: i. reflection and negotiation; ii. critique; and iii. rejection.

Overall, I want to make two general arguments regarding interdiscursivity of the women's discourses and the hegemonic discourses. First, I argue that the women's groups are actively engaging with and contesting the hegemonic civil society discourses currently circulating in Turkey. That is to say, there are varying and sometimes contradictory continuities with and deviations from the hegemonic discourses, sometimes articulated within the same group. All (except women from the anti-capitalist feminist organisations), to varying degrees, mirror liberal pluralist, Western ideals of democracy and the role of civil society, specifically reproducing and/or negotiating with most of the current hegemonic discourses of autonomy, democratisation, project-based civil society and dialogue in Turkey. In reflecting these discourses they universalise the Western, liberal model of civil society. In so doing, the activists demonstrate that they value and seek to promote the idea of liberal democracy and a strong and vibrant civil society. However, at the same time,

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all, to varying degrees and in different ways, contest some components of the liberal-democratic, Western ideal and its institutionalisation in Turkey. It is thus evident that, although the women are influenced by the structural factors identified in Chapter 2, such as donor policies through funding arrangements, they exercise significant agency in challenging the power and scope of state institutions (Tinker, 1999: 88), and in contesting mainstream notions of civil society. In Alvarez's (2009) terms, we should not overlook the agency of women's NGOs.

What is more, I would argue the critiques voiced by women activists, in general, and the rejectionist view, in particular, are important and merit further attention. Women activists from almost all of the groups (excepting the anti-capitalist SFK) indicate the ways in which relations and practices within civil society continually undermine the realisation of normative ideals. They also challenge the gendered hierarchies and unequal power relationships that dominate the civil society by advocating women's and/or feminist politics. And the rejectionist approach, articulated by women from the anti-capitalist organisation in my study, goes further by arguing for the replacement of civil society activism with feminist politics, as part of an alternative vision of a democratic Turkey, one that is less about adding women into civil society and more about foregrounding feminist agency. Despite the fact that it is articulated by a minority voice, this approach is important due to its explicitly feminist character and transformatory potential. It deserves to be more widely discussed within the women's movement in Turkey and among feminist scholars of civil society, as it points to the potential emergence of counter-hegemonic voices within civil society. In sum, in line with Pratt (2005), Abdelrahman (2004) and Kuzmanovic (2012), I would argue that the critical and rejectionist approaches of women activists are important for challenging the power relations that dominate civil society, and for creating new terms for and language about civil society in the Turkish context.

I turn now to the Conclusion of the thesis.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore how women's organisations in Turkey are affected by and responding to the instutionalization of civil society in the country, partcularly in the context of EU accession process. More specifically, it asked two empirical questions: what are the main features of civil society discourses articulated by the women activists and what are the key factors shaping their articulation? Furthermore, in what ways and to what extent do these discourses reproduce and/or contest the hegemonic civil society discourses circulating in Turkey.

1. Summary and arguments of the thesis

In order to respond to my research questions, I organized my thesis around five main chapters. Chapter 1 reviewed the relevant literature on the concept of civil society and its dissemination, on the role of NGOs in civil society, and on the relationship between gender, civil society and NGOs. This chapter contrasted liberal with critical approaches to the concept of civil society and NGOs and emphasised the global dominance of the neoliberal understanding of civil society, paying particular attention to the Middle East and Turkey. It also introduced alternative feminist approaches to civil society and NGOs. Chapter 2 discussed the methodology of the thesis. I elaborated upon the textual strategies of feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), focusing on data collection and analysis processes. I then discussed the Turkish case by elaborating on my sampling strategy for women's groups before reflecting on my field-work experience and on the dilemmas I faced during transcription and coding processes. In Chapter 3, I turned to the historical and socio-political context of Turkey with an eye on the hegemonic civil society discourses produced not only by the Turkish state and political elites but also international organisations like the EU. In Chapter 4, I presented the findings of the empirical research conducted with women from the Kemalist (TKB, TÜKD), Islamic (BKP, AKDER), Kurdish (KAMER, SELİS), feminist (KA-DER, US) and anti-capitalist (SFK, AMARGİ) women's organisations in Turkey. Identifying and mapping the civil society discourses articulated by women in these organisations laid the groundwork for the interdiscursive analysis presented in Chapter 5, which explored the complex ways in which the women's civil society discourses reflect, critique and reject hegemonic narratives of civil society in Turkey.

Four main arguments emerge from Chapters 4 and 5. First, I have shown that women do not speak with one voice on civil society, rather, there is a multiplicity of women's discourses ranging from autonomy, voluntarism, mediation, democratization to (and, used to a lesser extent) opposition, anti-hierarchy and co-optation discourses.

Second, ideology or the political standpoint of groups is important in shaping which discourses of civil society are articulated, and in what ways, but not determining. Women's organisations which diverge ideologically and politically in fact converge in their use of the same civil society discourses, and women who support the same political standpoint sometimes produce conflicting discourses. This means that civil society discourses circulate in complex ways in that they do not map neatly onto ideological group identities; several discourses may be used simultaneously by one organisation, and some discourses cut across several organisations. In that light, I have suggested that factors such as funding, geographical location, organisational structure and the framing of women's rights and feminism also play a role in determining which discourse comes to the fore. Also, these factors are useful for explaining why discursive divergences occur within each political categorization. To illustrate, as detailed in Chapter 4, approach to funding shapes the women's civil society discourses in terms of the relationship between voluntarism and professionalism or how they approach to and define the site of civil society, while geographical location is a factor that explains why both Kurdish women's groups find common ground in the articulation of a democratization discourse which envisages a non-discriminatory civil society.

Third, I argue that the women's NGOs do not passively reproduce hegemonic discourses. True, they often mirror key tropes, with all except the women from the anti-capitalist feminist organisations, to varying degrees reflecting liberal pluralist, western ideals of democracy and civil society, specifically reproducing the current hegemonic discourses of "autonomy", "democratization", "project-based civil society" and "dialogue". In this, they still retain a normative commitment to the liberal ideal of civil society, with civil society represented as an active intermediary between society and state and envisioned as an independent space free from state regulation and ideological influence. These normative visions, however, are also used

to critically evaluate the reality of contemporary civil society in Turkey, based on women's experiences of working within it. To illustrate, activists are critical of the interferences of government and/or funding agencies that undermine their organisational autonomy, and claim that it is increasingly difficult for them to act as an intermediary between the state and people in Turkey in the context of AKP marginalisation of many women's groups. In this light, the activists I interviewed have had to negotiate with key elements of the dominant view, compromising on the meaning of "voluntarism", "dialogue" and "project-based civil society". And all, also to varying degrees and in different ways, contest some components of the liberal pluralist view of civil society and its institutionalisation in Turkey. They do so by developing systematic critiques of the problems with mainstream theory and practice and attempting to resist these, pointing to, for example, the lack of meaningful autonomy, the harmfulness of projectism and insidious patriarchal hierarchies in civil society.

Fourth and finally, I suggest that both the critical and rejectionist approaches of women activists are significant for challenging power relations dominating civil society and for creating new terms for and language about civil society in the Turkish context. I want here to highlight particularly the rejectionist view adopted by the activists from anti-capitalist women's groups, and their articulation of an alternative vision of a democratic Turkey, one that is more about foregrounding feminist agency. I have claimed that this approach, despite the fact that this it is very much a minority voice, is important due to its explicitly feminist character and transformatory potential. It is thus worthy of further debate within the wider women's movement and of more attention from feminist scholars of civil society and others.

2. Wider implications of the research

What do the arguments above contribute to wider debates about civil society and among feminists? In my view, my thesis augments and sharpens the claims made in recent work paying attention to NGO activists' articulation of civil society in the Middle East region and in Turkey, as well as speaking to the literature on the women's movement in Turkey and to feminist theorisations of civil society. I will take each of these contributions in turn.

To begin with, this study builds on Pratt (2005) and Abdelraman (2004)'s

work on NGOs and civil society in Egypt, showing that the kind of diversity that Abdelrahman identifies and the counterhegemonic possibilities uncovered by Pratt are not unique to the Egyptian context but also found in Turkey. As discussed in Chapter 2, Abdelrahman (2004: 185) problematises the dichotomy between Islam and secularism, by showing the differing approaches to civil society within both Islamic and secular NGOs (Abdelrahman, 2004: 185-190). My study shows this phenomenon, to some extent, manifests also in the Turkish context, in that similarly diverse discourses of civil society can be found in both Kemalist and Islamic women's groups. In addition, I argue that the discourses of civil society that I identify often cut across women's groups, irrespective of their political standpoints. Turning to Pratt's study, she argues that Egyptian advocacy NGOs produce counter-hegemonic discourses in the form of arguments for autonomy and post-nationalism and in their critiques of patriarchy and neoliberal globalisation (Pratt, 2005). What I see from my research is that some echoes of these arguments can be found in Turkey amongst women activists there, albeit the overall picture is more mixed. I find in some quarters a similar insistence on autonomy from the state and an hostility to Turkish nationalism, to patriarchy and to neo-liberalism, but the context for and the content of these claims are very different from the Egyptian case. For example, a critique of Turkish nationalism is put forward particularly by Kurdish women, but not in a post-nationalist way given their simultaneous advocacy of Kurdish self-determination. Also, these counter-hegemonic dimensions of the discourses of women's organisations in Turkey are tempered by some mirroring of hegemonic liberal views of civil society, as I showed in Chapter 5. So even if there are some counter hegemonic possibilities here meriting further attention, as argued above, I would not conclude about Turkey, as Pratt does about Egypt, that there is evidence of the emergence of a nascent, unified counter hegemonic project.

This thesis also adds new insights to the recent work by Çaha (2013) and Leyla Kuzu (2010) on the construction of civil society in Turkey by women's groups. On the one hand, my research adds breadth to this work because it casts a wider net empirically. While Çaha undertakes documentary analysis, I combine this with interviews and vice versa for Leyla Kuzu. Moreover, I have undertaken over double the number of interviews of Leyla Kuzu, with women from more groups and from a

much wider range of political orientations. This expands the empirical picture drawn by both authors. Most obviously, it enables me to show that women's groups in Turkey are more diverse in their discourses than previously acknowledged. Leyla Kuzu's focus on liberal and feminist consttributions to civil society, for example, misses the distinctive articulations of Kemalist, Kurdish and Islamic women's groups. While these political perspectives are acknowledged in Çaha's research, he gives only cursory attention to anti-capitalist perspectives absorbing them under the wider category of feminism and thus missing the ways in which, as I have shown, anti-capitalist and feminist groups differ in their approaches to civil society. In addition, my research reveals the ways in which women's discourses of civil society cut across these ideological categories and also that women within such categories may articulate multiple and sometimes contradictory views. This is a corrective to, for example, Çaha's conclusion that Kemalist views are entirely incompatible with a plural and open civil society and Kemalist women have "ceased to be a component of civil society" (2013, 60-61). Rather, my work shows that there is some variety of views amongst Kemalist women and that they are actively seeking to construct civil society. Moreover, I argued in Chapter 4 that there is a convergence between the approaches of Kemalist and Islamic women.

On the other hand, I cast a more critical light on the relationship between women and civil society than Çaha and Leyla Kuzu because of my focus on encounters between women's civil society discourses and hegemonic narratives circulating in Turkey. Çaha may be critical of Kemalists, but for him civil society is unproblematically good and beyond critique (which may also be part of the reason for his neglect of anti-capitalist rejectionist views). Leyla Kuzu seems to share the normative commitment to civil society and argues for the transformative power of the discourses, demands and needs of women's CSOs (2010: 2). However, some of the women's groups (the anti-capitalists) in my study do not endorse the normative value of civil society, while others (Kemalist, Islamic) adopt an approach to civil society that is not transformative, reproducing gender inequality rather than challenging it. As I have shown, these women's concepts of civil society neglect or reify gendered hierarchies or privilege certain kinds of women only. In other words, they neglect gendered distributions of power that have a direct impact on access to

civil society and decision-making power within it. This is in contrast to most of the women from the Kurdish, feminist and anti-capitalist feminist groups, who seek to challenge gender inequalities within civil society and identify them with male-dominance, hierarchy and as barriers to emancipation. In sum, my adoption of a critical discourse analysis approach to this material yields a more complex and less idealised picture of the relation of the women's movement in Turkey to civil society than that offered by Çaha and Leyla Kuzu.

Beyond the focus on civil society, my thesis also makes a contribution to the broader scholarship on the women's movement in the country. One cannot assume, as analysts have tended to do, that the women's movement is fragmented along predictable and rigid ideological lines. For instance, like many others, Marshall (2009) categorizes the women's movement in Turkey in terms of political orientation such as Kemalist, Kurdish, Islamic and feminist. I too use these categorisations as my starting point, but I go on to show that there are various forms of intersections between the women's discourses originating from these different political standpoints, with for example, women activists from all political positions apart from the anti-capitalist one producing "autonomy", "mediation" and "voluntarism" discourses in line with liberal and Western-based approaches. This points to the fact that discourses transcend political distinctions within the women's movement. Further, my research suggests that factors other than ideology contribute to women's civil society discourses, such as their relationship to funding, geographical location, organisational structure and framing of women's rights and feminism. This indicates the need to review the way women's organisations are typically categorized, and to question the assumption that divisions along ideological faultlines are determining of differences between groups.

Finally, my research has conceptual ramifications for feminist critique of civil society. In contrast to the strand of feminist scholarship which dismisses a focus on civil society as a strategy of little value for challenging hierarchical relations between gender and power (e.g. Pateman, (1988, 1989); Phillips, (1987, 1999, 2002); and Jaggar, (2005)), my findings lend weight to the alternative feminist view that engagement is unavoidable and can be positive (Howell, (2006, 2007); Hagemann, Michel and Budde, (2008); Eto, (2012); Arat, (1994); Rabo, (1996)). Instead of

criticizing outright the participation of women's NGOs in civil society and assuming incompatibility between civil society and feminism, we ought instead to remember civil society is contested terrain and pay respectful scholarly attention to ways in which women negotiate and contest the complex processes of its construction. What is more, even where some feminist and anti-capitalist feminist organisations assume an incompatibility between feminism and civil society, their critique or rejectionist approach to civil society should prompt the rethinking of the theory and practice of civil society from a feminist perspective, not its outright dismissal. Only by taking into account more substantive critiques coming from a range of specific contexts can hegemonic civil society discourses be challenged in scholarship and by civil society activists.

3. Limitations and further research

Nevertheless, there are limitations to my research. Firstly, I acknowledge that more detailed textual analysis work could be undertaken for the analysis of women's discourses and hegemonic discourse in Turkey. To help with this, more women could be interviewed from each group. In my study, I conducted one and a half hour semi-structured interviews with between 6 and 10 women from each ideological grouping, specifically 7 from the Kemalists, 10 from Islamic groups, 8 from Kurdish, 6 from feminist and 10 from anti-capitalist. Although the limited numbers of participants from each grouping, and the variation between them, could be interpreted as a problem of group representativity, I have argued above that the women's discourses were not determined by political standpoint, and so this did not significantly impact on my analysis. Still, I would acknowledge that, if more women were interviewed, the relationship between political standpoint and civil society discourses could be more securely established.

Second, the official political discourses on civil society could bear closer examination, in terms of the systematic application of FCDA techniques of textual analysis to primary documents produced by government, state and international donor agencies as well as media articles. For Chapter 3, I relied on secondary data already used in academic literature. Given the focus of this thesis is on women's civil society discourses and how they approach the current hegemonic discourses in Turkey, academic interpretations of hegemonic civil society discourses were

sufficient for me. However, examining primary sources in a more systematic way would likely reveal more multiplicity in these dominant views and show internal instabilities and contradictions.

In terms of further research, there is certainly potential for a large-scale, Turkish-specific study focusing on the civil society discourses of mixed-gender organisations with diverse agendas, ranging from environmental to youth organisations. The aim here would be to shed light on how men and women understand and practice being in civil society and to determine if they are aware of gender divisions and inequalities within civil society and within CSOs in Turkey. Exploring what activists understand by "gender" would be a basic but essential aspect of such a study. Given what I found in my research about the rather loose ties between political standpoint and civil society discourse, it would be fruitful to examine how a wider range of organisations envision civil society in relation to the state and market, and the extent to which they reproduce and challenge gender identities and relations in Turkish society. Most obviously, this would enable a comparative analysis of how men and women understand civil society in Turkey and would contribute to existing feminist literature on gendering of civil society.

More broadly, there is also scope for further comparative research between different countries. This thesis focused on Turkey, however, my research provides a platform for undertaking comparative research on Turkey and another countries from the Middle East or Eastern Europe, Latin America, where the concept of civil society has also gained prominence since the 1990s. Given that Turkey has been a laboratory for Europeanisation and modernisation, as well as Islamisation and conservatisation, it would be worthwhile to compare the experiences and views of women in Turkish civil society with those of women in other countries from different geographies experiencing similar processes. Indeed, comparative research of this sort may well enable women's organisations from different continents and regions to learn from one another; collecting and sharing such experiences and perspectives may help them better pursue their normative goals and projects. Such comparative work could also reveal the cross-border networks of solidarity and cooperation that women's organisations create in order to challenge the gendered and sexist ideas and practices of civil society.

In particular, there is great potential for up-to-date comparative work on Turkey and other countries from the Middle East, in the wake of both the so-called "Arab Spring" and the Gezi Park protests. The former took place throughout 2011 and has been widely perceived as an "outcome of civil activism" and an "awakening of civil society" (Cavatorta, 2012: 75-76; Boose, 2012; Valliatanos, 2013). The Gezi Park protests took place in late May and early June 2013 in Turkey (the year after my fieldwork) against the demolition of a park in Istanbul and construction in its place of a shopping mall, and soon turned into massive street demonstrations against the AKP, particularly the rising authoritarianism of Prime Minister Erdoğan (Bilgiç and Kafkaslı, 2013: 8) in cities across Turkey. Although commentators were initially optimistic about the Arab Spring, critiques have been mounting in the context of counterrevolution and civil war (see Hardig, 2014), and it is still perhaps too early to know the implications of the Gezi Park protests for civil society - although the 2015 election results indicate that AKP hegemony continues to be challenged. So political conditions in the country and across the region continue to change rapidly, pointing to the need for the continual updating of research into movements in the Middle East, including in Turkey. Overall, then, the research presented here needs to be seen as a small part of a much bigger and still ongoing conversation about the efforts of movements like the women's movement in Turkey to respond to hegemonic power relations and to articulate alternative possibilities.

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Appendix I: Interview Questions

Demographic questions

1. Age
2. Economic status
3. Marital status
4. Employment status

Civil society and its relation to power, domination and public/private realm

- Definitions

5. How do you define civil society?What does civil society mean to you?What kind of civil society are you talking about?
6. What is a civil society organization? What are/shoud be their aims, mission and activities?
7. How do you define civil society in Turkey? What is the dominant concept of civil society in Turkey? How is civil society-state relations working in Turkey?
8. How is civil society and market relations working in Turkey?
9. Do you see civil society in the public or private realm? Do you think this realm includes family?

- Power and Hierarchy

10. What are the main sources of power in Turkey (state, military, patriarchy, etc..)? Do you think this kind of power shape civil society? In what ways?
11. Do you think are hierarchies in civil society? If yes, what are these? Where do they come from? Are hierarchies problem in civil society? In what ways are they problem in civil society?

- Women's Groups

12. Are there any particular roles of women's groups in civil society? If yes, what are these?
13. In what ways/to what extent women's organization participate in civil society? Which groups are the most powerful in terms of civil society involvement in Turkey?

Women's views on relationship between civil society and gender

14. How do you define gender? What does gender mean to you?

15. How do you define gender equality? Do you believe gender equality has been targeted in Turkey? Yes/No. Why/why not?
16. Is civil society .....(ask in their own language e.g. gendered, patriarchal, ...etc)? Why/why not?
    1. Whether or not ......problem in civil society?
    2. Whether or not civil society challange / offer solution to this problem?
17. Do the women's groups in civil society challange this problem? (whatever the problem is)
18. Do you think your group and women's groups challange that?
    1. If yes, in what ways?
    2. To what extent?

Women's evaluations of the EU-Turkey relations and EU's approach to Civil Society

19. How do you evaluate EU accession process in Turkey?
20. How do you think the EU approach civil society?
21. Do you think there is a close relationship between civil society promotion and democracy? Why/why not?
22. Do you think women and men benefited or disadvantaged by the EU accession? If yes, what are these?

Feminism

23. How do you define feminism in general? Do you consider yourself as feminist? Do you think your organization is feminist? If not, howwould you describe it?
24. How does your organization define feminism?
25. Do you think feminism has/should have a particular approach to civil society and the EU?

Information on their projects and views on the roles/aims of EU funding in Turkish civil society development especially for women's organizations

26. Did you get any funding from the EU? Tell me about the project. What is the name of the project (s)? What are the aims of the project? Is it under IPA (Pre-accession Assistance) programme? What is the budget of the project? Who contacted with the EU?
27. Have you had any other national and/or international project? If yes, what kind of project are these? What is the aims of it?
28. Did you have any training about writing/implementing a project?If yes, where? Are you employed in an EU project (manager, project executor etc.)?
29. Do you have documentation around your funding?If yes, can I see them?

30. Do you see projects/funding as a way of civil society building or not in Turkey? How is it contributing to the civil society? In what ways and to what extent?
31. What do you think about the implications of these funding for women's movement? Helping or hindering the movement?

Activism with their group

32. What motivates you to be active in the political struggle? When did you get involved? Why did you get involved? What keeps you going?
33. When did your group start? Why did it start?
34. When did you join the group? Why and how did you join?
35. Which other groups do you work with? National/international?
36. What does your group want? Describe your main aims/priorities and agendas?
37. What are the main things you are fighting against?
38. What does your group do? What are its main programmes, activities?
39. How do you frame women's rights? In what ways does your group empower women?
40. Do you think what are the areas of women's problems in Turkey? What are your priorities as a women's organization?
41. Do you have any current campaigns

Organizational structure of the women's CSO

42. How decisions are made? Do you have a Board? How often do you meet? President of the association? How is the president elected?
43. How many members do you have? What are the criteria to join? Membership fee? What are the other sources of the organization?
44. Do you have paid staff? Who pays (EU, membership fee and donations)? Do you have volunteers? How many?

General questions on Turkey

45. What do you/your group think are the main issues facing Turkish women today?
46. What do you think about headscarf issue in Turkey?
47. What do you think about Kurdish issue?
48. What do you think about the power of military in politics?

Appendix II: Coding questions for internal textual analysis of the women's interview and group documentation data

I. Civil society and its relationship with state/government, gender, democratization, EU and EU funding

1. Which verbs, adverbs, adjectives are attached to civil society/CSO/sivil/toplum and gender (predicates, relations, etc...)?

2. What traits/characteristics, qualities and roles are attributed to civil society and gender?

3. What are the things/people/institutions/organizations that civil society related? How?

4. Is civil society accorded a positive, negative or neutral value?

   i. in general?:
   ii. in the Turkish context in particular?

5. Is 'gender'/'gender equality' accorded a positive, negative or neutral value in the Turkish context?

6. Is the relationship between civil society and gender/gendered/male/male-dominance constructed? If yes, how?

7. How is the relationship between civil society and democracy constructed? What kind of relationship is it (positive, negative, neutral)?

8. What are the metaphors are employed in the (women's) texts with regard to civil society? What factors (cultural, ideological, etc.) determine the choice of metaphor?

9. Is civil society an actor/agent? Does it cause things? Does it effect/outcome of something?

10. What are the actors in civil society represented in the women's interviews? Which themes are attributed to them?

11. What values, traits, roles are attributed to women's organizations in civil society?

12. How is the relationship between the Turkish state/government and civil society?

13. What is the women's organization's approach to the EU in Turkey (pro, anti, moderate, neutral)? Ways of establishing the relations?

14. What kind of relationship does civil society have with the EU funding in Turkey? Which traits/values are attached to this relationship?

15. What is the women's organizations relationship with the EU funding (funded, not funded/against funding)?

II.   Civil Society, power and hierarchy

16. What is their conception of power? Which verbs, adjectives, nouns are attached to power?

17. What are the sources of power in Turkey?

18. Is there any relationship between (these source of) power and civil society? What are these? What are the metaphors used in the women's texts?

19. Are there any binary oppositions in women's texts? If yes, what are people/actions/events defined in oppostion to?

III.   Geographical location

20. Do they attach any particular meaning to the geographical location? What are these?

Appendix III

Table 4: List of Interviewees

Name of the Group	Location	No of Participants	Name[84]	Education Level	Organizational Position	Employment Status	Age	Date of Interview
TKB	Ankara	4	Sevda	Bachelor	President	Lawyer	61	May 8, 2012
			Lale	Bachelor	Member of Executive Committee	Civil Servant	43	May 7, 2012
			Buket	Bachelor	Member of Disciplinary Board	Civil Servant (Retired)	48	May 10, 2012
			Tansu	High School	Member	Self-employment (Retired)	65	May 4, 2012
TÜKD	Ankara	3	Nurdan	Bachelor	President	Lawyer	46	June 29, 2012
			Sevim	Bachelor	Vice-President	Instructor (retired)	58	June 28, 2012
			Pınar	PhD	Member of Executive Committee	Working in a political party	64	June 30, 2012
AKDER	İstanbul	5	Perihan	MSc	General Secretary	Employee of the Association	29	July 5, 2012
			Birsen	Bachelor	Member	Psychological Advisor	28	July 6, 2012

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[84] All names are pseudonyms.

			Hale	Bachelor	Member of Executive Committee	Doctor	34	July 9, 2012
			Göknur	MSc	Member	Civil Servant	35	July 11, 2012
			Yasemin	Bachelor	Member of Executive Committee	Doctor	35	July 13, 2012
BKP	Ankara	5	Serpil	PhD	Member of Executive Committee	Columnist	49	August 1, 2012
			Ayşe	MSc	Vice-President	Not working	47	August 7, 2012
			Nurten	Bachelor	Member of Executive Committee	Not working	42	August 9, 2012
			Cemile	High School	Member	Civil Servant (retired)	49	August 2, 2012
			Begüm	PhD	President	Lecturer (retired)	51	August 1, 2012
KAMER[85]	Diyarbakır Batman	5	Tülin	University Student	President of the Batman Branch	Employee of the foundation	43	May 18, 2012
			Nuray	Bachelor	President	Employee of the foundation	57	May 16, 2012
			Sevda	Bachelor		Employee of the foundation	25	May 20, 2012

[85] Since the KAMER has a foundation status, it does not have any membership structure. It has totally fifty (50) employees at its 23 branches in the region.

			Derya	High School		Employee of the foundation	41	May 17, 2012
			Seda	High school		Employee of the foundation	52	June 2, 2012
SELİS	Diyarbakır	3	Ece	Bachelor	President	Lawyer	24	May 15, 2012
			Gökten	Bachelor	Member	Teacher	38	May 24, 2012
			Reşide	Bachelor	Member	Civil Servant	27	May 22, 2012
US	Ankara	3	Didem	Bachelor	General Secretary	Employee of the association	55	June 19, 2012
			Fulya	Bachelor	Member of the Executive Committee	Employee of the association	37	June 21, 2012
			Emel	MSc candidate	Member	Employee of the association	26	June 26, 2012
KA-DER	İstanbul	3	Rezan	MSc	President	Translator	55	July 18, 2012
			Selda	MSc	Member	Engineer (retired)	62	July 22, 2012
			Çiçek	Bachelor	No membership	Employee of the association	32	July 21, 2012
SFK[86]	İstanbul	5	Burcu	Bachelor	Member	Engineer	37	May 30, 2012
			Feyza	MSc candidate	Member	Student	28	May 31, 2012

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[86] The civil society organizations in Turkey are enrolled in two forms: association and foundation and they are affiliated to different public institutions, the Department of Association in the Ministry of Interior and the Directorate General of Foundations under the Prime Ministry (TÜSEV, 2013). In my sampling, the SFK is an exception since it is registered none of those; instead, organised as a collective which makes it legally and structurally much more independent.

			Bilge	Bachelor	Member	Ceramist	56	June 15, 2012
			Elçin	Bachelor	Member	Lawyer	29	July 23, 2012
			Zeynep	PhD candidate	Member	Project officer in a different organization	30	June 26, 2012
AMARGİ	İstanbul	5	Duygu	Bachelor	Member	Teacher	50	June 2, 2012
			Burçak	Bachelor	Member	Teacher	33	July 2, 2012
			Betül	Bachelor	Member	Project officer in a different organization	24	June 15, 2012
			Esra	MSc	Member	Project officer (part-time)	26	June 16, 2012
			Eda	High School	Member	Performer	43	July 3, 2012
		41 (total)						

Table 5: General Information on the Women's Organizations in my sampling

	TKB	TÜKD	AKDER	BKP	KAMER	SELİS	US	KA-DER	SFK	AMARGİ
Establishment Year	1924[87]	1949	1999	1995	1997	2008	1996	1997	2008	2001
Location	Ankara Headquarters	Ankara Branch	İstanbul	İstanbul	Diyarbakır headquarters & Batman branch	Diyarbakır	Ankara	İstanbul Headquarters	İstanbul	İstanbul
Number of members	4047	1000	450	192	50,000 volunteers[88]	72	70 volunteers and 500 local broadcasters	1000[89]	300	5
Branch	61	10	None	None	23	None	None	16 (branches and representatives)	5	4
Legal Status (vis-a-vis the state)	Association	Association (social welfare organization status)	Association	Association	Foundation	Association	Association	Association	No legal status (set-up as a collective)	Association

Funding	No national and international projects in the head-quarter but there are projects conducted by some branches	National and international projects (e.g. EU)	No international projects (but they applied to various EU grants couple of times.)	National and international projects (e.g. EU)	National and international projects (e.g. EU)	International projects	International and national projects	International projects	Membership fees	International projects
	Membership fees Donations Money raised by fair and other social events	National and international projects (e.g. EU) Donations	Membership fees Donations Money raised by courses and organised social events	Membership fees Donations Money raised by courses and organised social events	10% equity Institutional support Donations	Membership fees Donations		Donations Membership fees	Donations Occasional fund raising activities.	Institutional support Membership fees
Approach to Funding	Conditional/ Sceptical	Pro-funding	Pro-funding	Pro-funding	Pro-funding	Critical/ Sceptical	Pro-funding	Pro-funding	Anti-Funding	Conditional/ Sceptical

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[87]Apart from TKB and TÜKD, the establishment date of the women's organizations corresponds to the institutionalization period of the women's movement in Turkey. The situation of the Kemalist women's organizations could be explained by the state-sponsored women's organizing in Turkey dating back to the early Republican period.

[88]KAMER pays 15 YTL (around £3) for daily expenses of volunteers such as local transportation and lunch.

[89]TKB, TÜKD and KA-DER have broadly based membership.

Membership	Open to women and men	Open to women and men	Open to women	Open to women	No registered members due to legal status	Open to women	No membership system, works on volunteer basis[90]	Open to women and men	Open to women	Open to women and LGBT
Number of professionals	None (a secretary for administrative works)	None (a secretary for administrative works)	2 professionals and one secretary[91]	None (a semi-volunteer secretary for administrative works)	50 professionals (distributed among 23 branches)	None (a secretary for administrative works)	7 professionals[92]	5 professionals (in İstanbul headqaurter)	None	None (a woman who does administrative works in AMARGİ-İstanbul)
Political standpoint	Kemalist	Kemalist	Islamist	Islamist	Kurdish	Kurdish	Feminist (empowerment of women's/women's orgs	Feminist (equal representation for women)	Feminist (destroying patriarchal capitalism and emancipation of women)	Feminist (liberation of women and LGBT groups)

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[90]The US association meets the number of membership criteria regulated by the Association Law, i.e. 25 formal members.

[91]The salary of professionals is paid by membership fees.

[92]The salary of professionals is paid by projects.

Organizational structure	Voluntarism-based Hierarchical	Voluntarism-based Hierarchical	Semi-professional Non-hierarchical	Voluntarism-based Non-hierarchical	Semi-Professional Non-hierarchical	Voluntarism-based Non-hierarchical	Semi-Professional Semi-hierarchical	Semi-Professional Hierarchical - but a rotational system for the working of EC[93]	Voluntarism-based Non-hierarchical (Rotational system)	Voluntarism-based Non-hierarchical (presidency system is set for formal purposes.)

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[93]EC stands for Executive Committee.