

NGO'S AS THE LINK BETWEEN STATE AND SOCIETY?
WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CENTERS IN
SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by

SEMA GENEL

Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Bilkent University
Ankara

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SEMA GENEL

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To my parents

for loving me enough to let me make my own choices

ABSTRACT

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Sema Genel

Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Ahmet İçduygu

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Civil society initiatives in Turkey are transforming from organizations based on traditional commitments, religious ties, and other primordial forms of relations to organizations based on universal values, which are shaped mainly by the claims of a larger civil society on a global scale. These universal values are in close interconnection with changes taking place at the local level, exerting an influence on particularistic values. This results in flows of interaction between global civil society and grassroots initiatives. In this sense, civil society organizations at the national level play a crucial role in the provision of the link between the global and the local within a given nation-state. However, values promoted at the national level, shaped mainly by politics of the nation-state, can be in sharp contradiction to those of a universalist and equally particularistic character.

This situation is currently prevalent in Turkey with respect to the discussions on the crisis of democracy in the country. Civil society organizations, represented mainly by *vakıfs* and *derneks* as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), are trying to bring closer together the national practice of democracy with the changes of the notion of democracy at the global level, with reference to local particularities. It is the role of the national NGOs in Turkey, then, to ease the tension with respect to the clash of values between the state and the local community level as shaped by a global civil society. On a global scale, NGOs have started filling the gap between the top-down policies of the state and the bottom-up demands of local grassroots activity. The three-tier relationship between the state, NGO, and the local community is becoming increasingly complex due to the internal as well as external forces at play.

It is this role of Turkish NGOs that is the focus of the current study. It is interesting to observe the degree to which NGOs in Turkey are creating alternatives to development and a move towards participatory democracy through women's empowerment centers within a larger state-sponsored development project in Southeastern Turkey. Given the peculiarities of gender and minorities as essential components of the case study, the thesis analyzes the role of Turkish NGOs in creating the links between local and central authorities on the one hand, and the local community on the other.

Keywords: Civil society, NGOs, Development, Women's Community Centers, Southeastern Turkey

ÖZET

DEVLET İLE TOPLUM ARASINDAKİ BAĞ OLARAK SİVİL TOPLUM ÖRGÜTLERİ? GÜNEYDOĞU ANADOLU'DAKİ ÇOK AMAÇLI TOPLUM MERKEZLERİ

Sema Genel

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Türkiye'deki sivil toplum girişimleri, geleneksel bağlılık, dini cemaat ve hemşehrilik ilişkilerine dayanan örgütler olmaktan çıkıp küresel sivil toplumun şekillendirdiği, evrensel değerlere dayanan örgütlere dönüşmektedir. Yerel düzeyde gerçekleşen değişikliklerle yakinen bağlantılı olan evrensel değerlerin partiküler (özgün) değerler üzerinde doğrudan bir etkisi bulunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, küresel sivil toplum ile tabandan gelen girişimler arasında bir etkileşim ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu anlamda, ulusal düzeydeki sivil toplum örgütleri, herhangi bir ulus-devlet içerisindeki küresel-yerel bağlantıyı sağlama hususunda önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Ne var ki, büyük ölçüde ulus-devlet siyasetiyle şekillendirilmiş ve ulusal düzeyde yüceltilen değerlerle, evrenselci ve aynı zamanda partikülerist karakterdeki değerler arasında keskin çelişkiler görülebilmektedir.

Ülkedeki demokrasi krizi üzerine yapılan tartışmalar bağlamında sözkonusu durum Türkiye'de şu an için geçerlidir. Daha çok vakıflar ve dernekler tarafından temsil edilen, hükümet-dışı örgütler olarak sivil toplum kuruluşları (STK), ulusal düzeyde uygulanan demokrasi ile küresel düzeyde değişen demokrasi anlayışını yerel uygulamalara gönderme yaparak birbirine yaklaştırmaya çalışmaktadır. O zaman, devlet ile küresel sivil toplumun şekillendirdiği yerel toplumun değer çatışmalarından kaynaklanan gerginliği asgari düzeye indirmek Türkiye'deki ulusal STK'lara düşmektedir. Küresel ölçekte, STK'lar, devletin yukarıdan aşağıya uygulanan devlet politikaları ile tabandan yukarı doğru ilerleyen yerel toplumsal hareketlilik sonucu doğan talepler arasındaki boşluğu doldurmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Devlet, STK ve yerel toplum arasındaki üçlü ilişkiler yumağı, iç ve dış etkenlerin oynadığı rol sonucu git gide daha karmaşık bir hal almaktadır.

Hali hazırda, Türkiye’deki STK’ların oynadıđı rol, alıřmanın ana temasını oluřturmaktadır. Türkiye’deki STK’ların kalkınmaya ne de alternatif yarattıklarını ve lkenin gneydođusundaki Gneydođu Anadolu Projesi (GAP) kapsamında, ok Amalı Toplum Merkezleri (ATOM) aracılıđıyla, katılımcı demokrasiye ne de katkıda bulunduklarını gzlemlemek ilgin olacaktır. Azınlıklara ve toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı zgnlkler alıřmanın temel bileřenlerini oluřturmakta ve bu bađlamda Türkiye’deki STK’ların, yerel ve merkezi otoriteler ile yerel toplum arasındaki iliřkileri oluřturmakta nasıl bir rol oynadıđı konusunun analizi yapılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sivil toplum, Sivil Toplum Kuruluřları (STK), Kalkınma, ok Amalı Toplum Merkezleri, Gneydođu Anadolu

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ABBREVIATIONS

AÇEV: *Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı*, Mother-Child Education Foundation

ÇATOM: *Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri*, Multi-purpose Community Centers

ÇYDD: *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*, Association for Support to Contemporary Life

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

GAP: *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*, Southeastern Anatolia Project

GNP: Gross National Product

GÜNSİAD: *Güneydoğu Sanayiciler ve İş Adamları Derneği*, Association of Southeastern Industrialists and Businessmen

ILO: International Labor Organization

IMF: International Monetary Fund

ISDPC: Intergovernmental Social Development Policy Committee

KAMER: *Kadın Merkezi*, Women's Center

KEDV: *Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı*, Foundation for Support to Women's Labor

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Nongovernmental Organization

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OHAL: *Olağanüstü Hal*, Emergency Rule

PKK: Kurdistan Workers Party

PTC: Public Training Center, *Halk Eğitim Merkezi*

TEGV: *Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı*, Foundation of Education Volunteers

TEV: *Türk Eğitim Vakfı*, Turkish Foundation for Education

TKV: *Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı*, Development Foundation of Turkey

TOÇEV: *Tuvana İstekli Çocuklar Eğitim Vakfı*, Tuvana Foundation for the Education of Motivated Children

TOKAP: *Toplumsal Kalkınma Projesi*, Community Development Project

UNDP: United Nations Development Fund

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNIDO: United Nations International Development Organization

WHO: World Health Organization

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the global scene are characterized by different social, cultural, economic, and political forces that are operational in seemingly converse trends. These trends seem to lead to the homogenization of a world culture on a global scale as well as simultaneous heterogenization of diverse cultures. The globalization process poses threats and uncertainties as much as opportunities. Alternative lifestyles and cultural diversity emerge together with the creation of a mass industrial culture and the destruction of the natural environment. While political theorists emphasize the emergence of a new politics, a politics of identity, global governance, and radical forms of democracy, developmentalists have traditionally seen the negative effects of economic globalization and the creation of a mass consumption culture that does nothing else than destroy the natural environment and create social injustice. Within developmentalist thinking, however, there can be different ways of looking at the globalization process, as the changes taking place in the development paradigm today are precisely the instigators of cultural pluralism and difference that is flourishing on a global scale.

Processes of globalization create a milieu of opportunities as well as tensions. With the increase in social movements on a global scale, we see the emergence of a global civil society. Recent discussions on the crisis of democracy have partially been the engine for the creation of civil society organizations with global objectives, leading to social policies that gain an increasingly global character. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), increasingly becoming more political, have been the main instigators of this move towards a globalized civil society. Processes of globalization have repercussions that simultaneously affect the globe and the village. NGOs at the national level are in a position to enable the smooth flow of interaction between these two levels.

As witnessed on a global scale, changes are similarly discernible in Turkey where multiple forces are at play. Leaving behind the more community-oriented, parochial forms of civic organization, trends of a global civil society are being observed in Turkey with discussions on the further ‘democratization’ of the country. Turkey has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of civil society organizations, especially since the early 1990s. This increase is proof that civil society in Turkey is equally affected by the formation of a world culture. However, there lies another actor at the national level, that of the Turkish state, which is a potential level of tension among other actors at various levels of activity. It is this interaction between civil society, the grassroots level and the Turkish state, which is the core problematique of the current research.

There is no doubt about the Turkish state’s mixed relations with civil society organizations in the country. While global trends have encouraged the flourishing of

civil society initiatives based on universalist values, particularistic claims are being nurtured by communities at the local or regional level. The Turkish state, while attempting to complete its nation-building process, is heavily influenced by international and transnational changes in the world, as is the Turkish society. The socio-cultural setting at the local level is defined by traditional commitments and networks as well as global identities where developments at the global level have resulted in recent political changes in Turkish societal arrangements. Despite the inheritance of a strong Ottoman-Turkish state and a weak civil society, and the adoption of the notion of a unified, homogeneous ‘Turkishness’, there is a concurrent awareness of diverse cultural identities at the local level.¹ Despite contrary assertions at the official policy level, it is argued that Turkish people no longer experience a homogeneous, shared ‘Turkishness’, but an ‘alternative brand of Turkishness’, implying the ‘many different ways of being Turkish.’² New civil society organizations that create the link between the state and society, both in the world and in Turkey, are situated between the two seemingly opposing forces of global culture. This becomes more evident upon the consideration of demands of religious and ethnic particularities by various groups in the country. Thus, changes at the global level have the potential of creating tensions at the nation-state level as cultural and minority rights become more assertive at the local level in Turkey. Given the recent trends of globalization, it is the aim of this thesis to observe to what extent civil initiatives in Turkey are influenced by and contribute to this global culture.

¹ Cultural pluralism and diversity are a result of factors including reactions to political oppression, strategies of dealing with economic hardships, and the aspiration for better opportunities and personal fulfillment. For details look at Bruce G. Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), 238.

² Kevin Robins and David Morley, “Almanca, Yabancı [Germaner, Foreigner],” *Cultural Studies*. 10:2 (1996), 250-251, and Asu Aksoy and Kevin Robbins, “Thinking Across Spaces: Transnational Television from Turkey,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 3:3 (2000), 352.

Discussions on the crisis of democracy have reflections on development policies and practice. States, as the traditional providers of development theory and practice, have mainly regulated the presence and operation of nongovernmental activity within their territories. NGOs with a humanitarian welfare objective have initially started as organizations outside the political system. Since the 1960s, however, it is no longer possible to think of civil societal organizations as apolitical actors. As opposed to the continual tensions created by anti-state movements, NGOs have realized the multiple benefits of cooperation with the state. The notions of ‘good governance’ as well as ‘global governance’ have contributed to the increasingly political role of NGOs within policy making and implementation. Issues of ‘governance’ have included the fruitful and positive collaboration of NGOs with their respective governments.

NGOs dealing with issues of development have tended to include into their agenda a variety of issues, from human rights to minority welfare to environmental concerns, as well as alternative approaches to development such as ‘empowerment’, ‘local participation’, ‘grassroots activism’ and ‘people-centered development’. As opposed to the notion of linear progress through economic growth and the top-down approaches of development assistance carried out by the state and multilateral aid agencies, NGOs became increasingly aware of the need to incorporate into the development process the cultural resources at the local level, achieved through the direct participation of the community. Development NGOs, interested in promoting participatory democracy, strive for culturally diverse, socially just, economically sustainable, gender balanced societies living in environmental harmony. Thus, NGOs have been acting as the link

between the top down approaches of state authorities and the bottom up practices of the grassroots level.

With respect to development policy and practice in Turkey, the Turkish state has adopted a progressive policy of regional development in Southeastern Anatolia. The adoption of ‘sustainable human development’ as the official development policy of the Regional Development Administration of the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) places this institution in a peculiar position with respect to other public institutions, national NGOs working on issues of development, and the local community in the region. The Turkish state, influenced by the notion of sustainable development as initially promoted by the intergovernmental Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, has adopted this approach in its master development plan for the Southeastern Anatolia Project. A number of UN-related agencies in Turkey have helped in promoting the sustainability dimension of the various projects comprised within the larger GAP framework. While providing direct technical assistance, these agencies have also promoted the activity of national NGOs in social development projects. Within the larger GAP project are women’s empowerment centers for a gender balanced development in the same region. These women’s centers, called *Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri (ÇATOMs)*, translated as Multi-purpose Community Centers, aim to develop local women’s resources and build capacity in order to make them aware of their potentials in the creation of better qualities of life, for themselves, their families and the communities in which they live. Through these ÇATOMs, it is the aim of this thesis to evaluate the interactions among state authorities,

national NGOs involved in the respective project, and the local community as beneficiaries of the ÇATOMs.

Factors that make the Southeastern Anatolia region and the ÇATOMs interesting in terms of the current research are the diverse cultural composition of the region and its characteristic of extreme gender imbalance. The region is significant in its tribal arrangements of social, political and economic relations. The harsh characteristics of this local culture are especially prevalent in its gender relations. Being the region in Turkey with the least resources and opportunities, smaller scale social development activities are being carried out by development NGOs and a small number of women's associations. Moreover, this is a highly delicate part of the country as it has been scene to armed conflict between the Turkish security forces and the militants of the Kurdistan Workers Party, referred to as PKK, defined by the Turkish state as an illegal, terrorist organization. The armed confrontations in the region during two decades have enforced Emergency Rule in the Southeast that has resulted in the inhibition of civil society activism and organization. All these factors provide the best testing grounds for state-civil society relations in the region and in Turkey.

The dynamic factors, both global and local, affecting regional development in Southeastern Turkey and the ÇATOM project are evident. Factors of a national character are equally relevant and determinant. In an attempt to view the role of national NGOs in bringing closer the related state authorities with the beneficiaries of Southeastern women within the ÇATOM project, the main part of the empirical study was based on qualitative data collected from the field. In addition to reviewing the

existing literature on developments at the global and national scale for the conceptual framework of the current research, primary data included the results of the fieldwork undertaken in selected ÇATOM centers. Given the three different parts of the fieldwork, namely the target group of the ÇATOMs, the NGOs directly or indirectly involved in the ÇATOMs, and the local and central state authorities in relation with the particular ÇATOMs, field data was collected at different time periods between September 2000 and December 2001. The monthly and annual reports of each ÇATOM gave an overview of the type of activities that were carried out in the centers, but it was the field study that provided the essential raw data for assessing the impacts of the ÇATOMs and the genuine role of Turkish NGOs within the given context. The provinces visited in the Southeast included Batman, Siirt and Şırnak, with the counties of Şirvan, Cizre and Beytüşşebap along with the village of Uluköy.

Given the focus of the thesis on the role of NGOs in Turkey within social development, the conceptual framework is divided into two chapters, namely chapters II and III. The initial chapter situates NGOs, as civil society organizations, within development theory and practice. While NGOs are regarded as instigators of the recent shift in global development theory and practice, they are also viewed in terms of their changing relations with state authorities. Chapter III includes a portrayal of the country-specific case of development efforts in Turkey, along with the emergence of civil society and its institutions in the country. Since development and NGOs in Turkey are issues specific to the country, an extensive part of chapter III is dedicated to the historical background of the Ottoman-Turkish political culture, developments within republican Turkey, the nature of civil society organizations, the recent effects of the processes of globalization

on these organizations, followed by their changing relations with the Turkish state. Chapter III gives the reader an insight on factors leading to the current situation of regional developmental inequalities and civil society organizations in Turkey today.

Chapter IV presents an introduction to the empirical study of the thesis. An overview of the Southeastern Anatolia region is provided, as the location of the fieldwork. The socio-political situation of the region is portrayed with respect to the Turkish state and nongovernmental activity in Southeastern Turkey. The unique approach of the GAP project to issues of social development is revealed in the Administration's new development policies and plans for the region. ÇATOMs, as women's empowerment projects within the broad topic of social development, are selected for the specific fieldwork of the current thesis. ÇATOMs constitute an important case study, as they are centers in which NGO-state cooperation is encouraged.

Chapter V, VI and VII present the results of the analysis of data collected from the field. The realities of women in Southeastern Anatolia region are detailed and their views of the ÇATOM centers are portrayed in chapter V. Chapter VI includes the perspective of state officials on the ÇATOM project, including military officials in the region, public administrators such as governors and directors, and the officials of the GAP Administration. Having adopted 'sustainable human development' as the official approach to development and 'gender balanced development' as the specific policy of ÇATOM activities, the peculiar position of the GAP Administration is given special attention. Finally in chapter VII, views of the NGOs active in the ÇATOMs are presented. Their approaches to development in general and their direct and indirect

involvement in the ÇATOM project in particular are analyzed. NGO relations with the local community and the target group in the ÇATOMs, as well as their relations with the state authorities are presented.

NGOs, within the framework of the ÇATOM project, are evaluated as a possible link between the state and society in Turkey. As the main problematique of the research, an analysis of state-NGO-target group interactions within the ÇATOM project is the main focus of chapter VIII. The degree to which NGOs in Turkey are creating alternatives to development and a move towards participatory democracy through the ÇATOMs of the GAP project is also assessed in the same chapter. The concluding remarks of the thesis in chapter IX reveal the answer to the potential role of NGOs in Turkey as representatives of a world culture shaped through policies and practices of global development.

CHAPTER II:

THE GLOBALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

2.1. The Shift in the Development Paradigm

2.1.1. Emergence of Global Civil Society

New social movements are synonymous with the growth of a global civil society. The claim is that the process of modernization increasingly poses threats of survival to the whole of mankind. The fact that the processes have become universal renders their effects universal and hence the necessity of universal action through a global civil society. This, by definition, argues for movements against the currently prevailing norms and values. Given their reactionary character, Dalton et al. define global civil society as “the co-existence of radical critique of the existing order, on the one hand, and *de facto* integration into the existing society and into the political arena, on the other”.³

³ Russell J. Dalton, Manfred Küchler, and Wilhelm Bürklin, “The Challenge of New Movements,” in *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies*, eds. Russell J. Dalton and Manfred Küchler (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 281.

Similarly, Zaidi claims that the relationship between these movements and the host government is one that is “based equally on antagonism and cooperation”.⁴

It can be suggested that global civil society and social movements are ‘post-ideological’ given the fact that there is no one doctrine that they all subscribe to.⁵ Nevertheless, Inglehart refers to ‘post-material’ values as the common drive behind a global civil society.⁶ On the issue of value changes, however, Inglehart makes the key argument that these post-material values “complement rather than replace” traditional material values.⁷

A number of concepts characterize the global civil society, including universal values, particular interests, difference, identity and culture. While there is an emphasis on universal ideals as a prerequisite for human survival, there is a simultaneous emphasis on particular values that are more local in scope. Seemingly contradictory trends, as advocated by Mouffe,⁸ there is also the claim that they are in fact two sides of the same phenomenon. As Trigger phrases it, “the expansion of loyalties to embrace humanity as a whole would not extinguish narrower loyalties”.⁹

In the light of these global developments, Wapner claims that new social movements have led to the surge of a global civil society, a ‘world collective life’, that functions

⁴ S. Akbar Zaidi, *The New Development Paradigm: Papers on Institutions, NGOs, Gender, and Local Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 209.

⁵ Ibid., 281.

⁶ Ronald Inglehart, “Values, Ideology, and Cognitive Mobilization in New Social Movements,” in *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies*, eds. Russell J. Dalton and Manfred Küchler (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993).

⁹ Bruce G. Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), 247.

across national boundaries.¹⁰ Similarly, Boli and Thomas stress the influence of civil society organizations operating at the global level and with global alternative approaches in propagating a 'world culture' which represents 'humanity'.¹¹ They detect a number of principles that underlie the effects of these civil society associations on world culture. Their universalism and individualism is prevalent in their worldviews and organizational structures as well as their democratic decision-making approaches. For the common good of humanity, global civil society organizations choose to pursue a model of rational progress. Through scientific means, their aim is a safer and better world for all. Trigger calls this a 'pan-human identity' in which people from all over the globe, irrespective of nationality, religion, language, and race are able to mobilize themselves for a common cause.¹²

In parallel with the homogenization of global culture due to universalism, heterogenization is also in process due to the particularities of ethnicity, religion, culture, and so on. Axtmann envisages the emergence of both socially and politically active grassroots groups in which heterogeneity, difference, and diversity are accommodated and promoted.¹³ Trigger suggests the emergence of local and regional cultural diversity that aims to offset the exploitative consequences of mass industrial culture.¹⁴ Hence, at the same time, parallel to the universal character of certain values, it is possible to observe the resurgence of culture and cultural diversity related to issues of the quality of

¹⁰ Paul Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics," *World Politics*. 47 (1995), 323.

¹¹ John Boli and George M. Thomas, "World Culture in the World Polity: A Century of International Non-governmental Organization," *American Sociological Review*. 62 (April 1997), 172-173.

¹² Trigger, *Sociocultural*, 246.

¹³ Roland Axtmann, *Liberal Democracy into the 21st Century: Globalization, Integration, and the Nation-state* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996).

life. As opposed to the linear progress of modernization, we witness the pluralization of culture and the politicization of identity conflicts. Through the maintenance of traditional knowledge of survival, a group of people can be better fit to face the challenges and threats of the future.¹⁵

In fact, instead of the use of ‘culture’ in the noun form, Appadurai¹⁶ notices the increasingly new use of the word in the adjective form, as in ‘cultural’ diversity.

Appadurai does not emphasize the traditional meaning of culture, that is the collection of traditions and local knowledge of the past, but aspects of culture that help mobilize group identity and activity. In this sense, Appadurai places an emphasis on collectivities and prepares the foundation for discussions on ethnicity. He stresses the instrumental aspect of culture rather than the primordial one. Culture becomes crucial in that it brings out difference as a value in itself in a ‘purely identity-oriented instrumentality’, thus forming the basis for the mobilization of group identities.¹⁷ Movements involving these conscious group identities are what Appadurai defines as culturalism. Trivializing the immediate effect of primordial tribal relations and histories on the concept, culturalism and hence multiculturalism is “identity politics mobilized at the level of the nation-state”.¹⁸ Projecting this into the future, it can be argued that given their greater knowledge of the different traditions and cultures, multicultural societies compared to

¹⁴ Trigger, *Sociocultural*, 211.

¹⁵ Ibid., 211.

¹⁶ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

¹⁷ Ibid., 12-14.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

monoculture nation-states are better prepared to face the criticisms and challenges of a globalizing world.¹⁹

Despite the continuation of local cultural identifications, there is also the phenomenon of local cultures being increasingly influenced by global cultural forms, leading, in many cases, to the creation of hybrid cultures. This intermingling of the different forces, the homogenizing effect of the global culture and the reassertion of local cultures and identities, leads to the fusion of these two forces, giving rise to ‘third cultures’.²⁰ The ‘creolization of cultures’ is a result of groups who adopt certain features of global culture while at the same time holding on to their own particularities. This, however, does not clash with the arguments on multiculturalism, as advocated, for instance, by Appadurai.

Considering the phenomenon of the increase in such social movements and civil society organizations worldwide, it is possible to put forth the notion of ‘global governance’ which includes the proliferation of actors and the establishment of international norms and networks in an attempt to deal with the challenging issue of governance on an increasingly global scale.²¹ Given the emergence of a global civil society, state policies and institutions are being challenged. Within this framework, Held²² suggests a redefinition of the structure of political power as the different forces of globalization and

¹⁹ Trigger, *Sociocultural*, 212.

²⁰ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post-Development, Reflexive Development,” *Development and Change*. 29 (1998).

²¹ Raimo Vayrynen, “Norms, Compliance, and Enforcement in Global Governance,” in *Globalization and Global Governance*, ed. Raimo Vayrynen (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 25.

internationalization on the one hand, and regionalization and localization on the other are being intertwined. The current move towards a new global politics thus points to changing relations between the state and society. States no longer have the monopoly on the governing of society and the setting of policies, leading to the challenge of the traditional definition and role of the state as provider of public services. While criticizing government, yet at the same time working in cooperation with it, civil society organizations have become a crucial factor in global governance. This, Wapner claims, is a new form of governance,²³ resulting in the new notion of ‘good governance’.²⁴

2.1.2. Relevance for Global Social Policy

The arguments given above do have a relevance for development as issues of peace, human rights, environmental protection, and gender equity as the motivators of social movements are also the concerns of development, especially in the context of sustainable human development. However, it is important that we examine these phenomena a bit more closely for the following discussions on development.

One major point to consider is that these arguments are developed mainly within the discipline of political science leading to theories of democracy. Other disciplines such as sociology, environmental studies, women’s studies, cultural studies and so on have made use of these theories, however, it is interesting to note that these arguments mainly

²² David Held, *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

²³ Wapner, “Politics Beyond the State”, 336.

take shape and evolve around contexts of industrialized societies. Having secured stability in the long-run, societies in the developed world are looking for alternative values of freedom, experience and quality of life.²⁵ Despite the preparedness of governments and societies to accept the existence of a multicultural social composition within their territory, even industrialized countries live through problems of adaptation and stability. This problem is put forth by Halil Magnus Karaveli, as a Turkish journalist in Sweden, on the delicacy of the concept of nationality and the nation-state. He points out that although the Swedish government has responded to claims from the grassroots level of Sweden as a multicultural society and currently makes efforts to maintain the image of a tolerant government, there are nationalist surges from the Swedish people who are not always welcoming to claims of multiculturalism.²⁶ Consequently, even in contexts of relative welfare and high standards of living, the tensions of different identity claims and the evolution towards multicultural settings can create the grounds for potential tensions.

One other perspective to look at with respect to the recent discussions on identity politics is the clash between individual rights and freedoms and their collective counterparts. Although there seems to be a tendency for the preference of individual or universal rights over collective or particular rights, in any case, multicultural societies are struggling through the equal accommodation of both rights, without having to protect

²⁴ Potter mentions the World Bank's extensive emphasis on the concept in the 1992 World Bank report on Governance and Development.

²⁵ Inglehart, "Values."

²⁶ Halil Magnus Karaveli, interview by Gülden Aydın, *Hürriyet Gazetesi*, December 30, 2000.

one over the other.²⁷ Robertson, for instance, reveals the contradiction of universal ideals promoting particularistic values.²⁸ As such, global culture is in fact multi-faceted.

One last point I would like to make about the considerations made so far is that within the discipline of environmental studies, in particular, and development studies, in general, globalization has been mainly perceived as a negative phenomenon. With the stress on the environmental destruction of the processes of globalization and its widening of the gap between the rich and poor, globalization has mainly been seen as a trend to stand in reaction to. Despite the highly critical and oppositional stance of some social movements in the West, and their perception by neo-conservatives as revolutionary and anti-systemic, it is now realized in industrialized states and societies that this reaction is in fact a ‘crisis of democracy’,²⁹ as theorized by political scientists.

What makes the case of development, especially social development, harder to deal with, then, is the fact that it is an intervention. Given the difficulty of the industrialized nation-states in tackling the challenges of diverse global and local demands, creating a context of social, economic, and environmental harmony in a developing nation-state makes the situation even harder and definitely more delicate. Hence, it is not surprising that social policy, which is the basis of social development, has not, up to date, attracted much attention within the discussions of globalization. In addition, it is a field of study

²⁷ Trigger, *Sociocultural*, 240.

²⁸ Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities*, eds. M. Featherstone, S. Lash, and R. Robertson (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

²⁹ Dalton, “The Challenge,” 5.

that is not adequately researched and is therefore under-theorized.³⁰ After all, social development is a field with complex policy dilemmas.

A global social policy, despite its growing significance as a concept, faces the danger of tensions within and among different nation-states as well as between nation-states and global civil society. This becomes especially evident in the discussion of minority rights in countries with a strong nationalist tradition, such as in the field of humanitarian aid. Pieterse, for instance, points out the tensions that arise between political unrest in a region and the assistance that is offered to that region.³¹ Given the strong political implications of the area of conflict, offering assistance becomes a highly delicate issue. Indeed, Lewis³² argues that nongovernmental organizations active in humanitarian assistance in regions of conflict are becoming objects of manipulation. They are increasingly being used as interventions for policy imposition.

In any case, with the increasing participation of civil society organizations and voluntary groups in issues of social policy and particularly global social policy, it is being realized by the international community that social policy is of a more 'supranational and transnational character'.³³ For instance, with the adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, more and more countries give priority to satisfying human

³⁰ Bob Deacon, *Global Social Policy: International Organizations and the Future of Welfare* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 1.

³¹ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Humanitarian Intervention and Beyond: Introduction," in *World Orders in the Making: Humanitarian Intervention and Beyond*, ed. J. N. Pieterse (London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1998).

³² David Lewis, "Development NGOs and the Challenge of Partnership: Changing Relations between North and South," in *Transnational Social Policy*, ed. Catherine Jones Finer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

³³ Deacon, *Global Social Policy*, 1 and 153.

rights and undertaking social reforms on the basis of international declarations and other conventions.³⁴

2.1.3. From Social Development to Sustainable Human Development

A short history of the notion of social development will help situate the concept within current discussions of the role of civil society in issues of development. Even though the concept of social development is relatively new, its roots are found in colonial history. In addition to economic relations that were sustained through colonial ties, social welfare and the notion of social development shaped itself through British colonial history. After the initial focus on the education and welfare of communities through British ‘mass education’ programs in the East African colonies, the term ‘community development’ was used to emphasize the education and ‘development’ of the community rather than the individual. In Britain, the focus of social provision and welfare was the community and remained rather small-scale until the United Nations in the 1950s started using the term ‘social development’ to connote the development of non-industrialized countries, and shifted the focus from the community level to government provision of social welfare and central planning.³⁵

During the 1970s, the international community had agreed on the importance of social welfare in addition to the mainstream development approach of economic growth. In the 1980s, it was merely economic growth that received attention. By the 1990s, we

³⁴ Ibid., 30.

³⁵ James Midgley, *Social Welfare in Global Context* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1997), 184-185.

witness the revival of issues of social development as it becomes increasingly clear that the benefits of economic growth do not ‘trickle down’ to sustain social progress and quality of life at the local level.³⁶ Hence, a balance between the two aspects of development, along with environmental and cultural harmony, has gained relevance.

Social development, preceded by economic development, has traditionally been the domain of state activity and economic indicators such as the Gross National Product, or the GNP, have measured developmental progress, including social progress. The realization of the inadequacy of purely economic indicators for the measurement of social welfare, in 1990, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) made available a new indicator of social progress, the ‘Human Development Index’. Hence, the development terminology shifted the attention to what is now called ‘human development’.³⁷ Furthermore, with the understanding of continuous social impoverishment despite long-established efforts at development, it became clear that natural resources were being rapidly depleted and exploited for their economic value as raw materials for industrial goods. This was a consequence of civil society organizations acting as pressure groups dealing intensely with awareness raising concerning the negative impacts of global trends on the natural environment and the threat to human survival on the planet. This realization led to the urgency of what is widely known today as ‘sustainable human development’.

³⁶ *Change: Social Conflict or Harmony? Results of a Stockholm Roundtable* (New York: United Nations Development Program, Division of Public Affairs, March 1995).

³⁷ *Human Development Report 1990* (New York: United Nations Development Program, 1990).

The realization of the pressing urgency of social reforms for human development and the quality of life, the first World Summit on Social Development took place in Copenhagen in 1995. Among the commitments made by the 117 world leaders in the summit, organized by the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, were the eradication of absolute poverty, the promotion of social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights, the achievement of equality and equity between men and women, and the need to place people's participation at the center of development.³⁸ The agreements and consensus reached in the world summit drew upon the recommendations of the previous major UN conferences. Most importantly, it was a continuation of the conclusions drawn for sustainable development at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. The World Summit for Social Development also prepared the grounds for the following conferences on Women in Beijing in September 1995 and on Human Settlements in Istanbul in June 1996.

This transition of development to include the concepts of sustainability, participation, and empowerment, along with the creation of a 'new social contract at the global level'³⁹ has not been a smooth one however. The new social movements and their corresponding civil society organizations were the main instigators of these developments. Although there is no unified, global term or definition to describe these nonprofit, nongovernmental associations in the context of development, the term

³⁸ *World Summit for Social Development: The Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action*, (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, August 1995), Preface.

‘private voluntary organizations’ is used widely by development agencies of the USA and the term ‘nongovernmental organizations’ (NGOs) is used by the United Nations to encompass all such associations.⁴⁰ The latter term is used throughout the present thesis.

Starting off as charities in different countries of the world, NGOs started developing their own alternative views and approaches of development, thus becoming more influential as pressure groups and lobbyists of change. NGOs have been carrying out a number of different local development projects in the poorer regions and countries of the world. The projects are implemented through either the branch offices of international NGOs based in the countries of the North, or national and local NGOs working in their own regions in countries of the South.⁴¹ With the additional involvement of a large number of intergovernmental development agencies and multilateral assistance agencies, in addition to the state, actors in the field of development have multiplied as well as the sectors within human development. Issues such as the environment, gender, microfinance, empowerment, participation, and sustainability have become essential components of the development process or policies in their own right. A look at the history of the development of nonprofit, nongovernmental activity reveals the evolving political role of NGOs on a global scale.

³⁹ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁰ Helmut K. Anheier, “Indigenous Voluntary Associations, Nonprofits, and Development in Africa,” *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, ed. Walter W. Powell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 417.

2.1.4. Origins of Nongovernmental Activity and the Effects of Globalization

Despite a long history of NGOs, their proliferation has taken place only since the second world war. The origin of NGOs in the non-industrialized world has been linked to independence struggles in those countries. In developed countries, NGOs were initially involved in emergency relief aid to the victims of the two world wars. They slowly extended their work to the third world as the needs in these areas of poverty became acute.⁴² Many North-based NGOs started off as humanitarian charities helping out in situations of natural disaster. Although they were important for immediate emergency relief, NGOs later came to realize that development is not an end in itself but a delicate perpetual process.⁴³

Simultaneously, in the 1970s, many developing countries had started feeling the negative effects of the post-war rapid economic growth strategy aimed at intense industrialization. The resulting neglect of agriculture revealed itself in the food crisis and reached disastrous levels in the early 1980s. Food production in the South had not been able to keep up with rapidly expanding populations. As a consequence, the South became dependent on the North for food imports, which damaged its balance of payments. Nutritional deficiencies and famine started becoming a characteristic of third world underdevelopment. The oil crisis further increased dependency on the developed

⁴¹ In political economy and development discourse, North is used to denote industrialized, developed countries, while South is used for the poorer, non-industrial countries.

⁴² John Clark, *Democratizing Development: The Role of Voluntary Organizations* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1991), 34.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 36.

economies. These two shocks halted and even reversed economic and social development of many countries in the South.⁴⁴

It was in such an economic, social, and environmental chaos that NGOs, as institutions of civil society, proliferated. Civic dissatisfaction with the emerging situation revealed itself in the expansion of North-based NGOs in countries of the South, as well as the formation of national, regional, or local voluntary associations in the South, called ‘grassroots organizations’ or ‘people’s organizations’.⁴⁵ In opposition to mainstream governmental development practices, these organizations emphasized the different ways of reaching better standards of living. They introduced the significance of cultural factors and self-reliance on the effective increase in the quality of life. From the late 1970s onwards, international NGOs brought along their expertise in fields such as preventive health, education, shelter, and improved farming practices, while heavily stressing self-reliance for the beneficiaries of development assistance. They set up projects that would continue to benefit the local people even after NGO assistance came to an end. These included approaches which emphasize the participation of communities involved and their empowerment through cultural forms of expression.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Joan Edelman Spero, *The Politics of International Economic Relations* (London: St. Martin’s Press Inc., 1990), 165-167.

⁴⁵ Julie Fisher, *Nongovernments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1998), 70.

⁴⁶ Charles David Kleymeyer, “The Uses and Functions of Cultural Expression in Grassroots Development,” in *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development: Cases from Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Charles David Kleymeyer (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1994).

New approaches were thus put forth by NGOs starting from the early 1980s.

‘Conscientization’⁴⁷ was one such approach adopted by the Latin American grassroots organizations, in which the aim was not only improving the quality of life, but also helping the poor realize the reasons for their oppression and to encourage mass organization. The approach included political education, social organization and the eventual bottom-up improvement of living conditions. The approach of ‘empowerment’ was also developed later and is now widely used in South Asia, an approach that is rapidly adopted in many other parts of the world, especially for women’s empowerment. The purpose of the approach is to empower individuals and communities, and particularly women, through greater self-reliance and self-confidence in order to counteract the cultural, social, economic, political, and psychological disadvantages that they might face as a result of prevailing socio-cultural norms and harmful economic growth. The empowerment approach encourages policies and practice that guarantee the active participation of community members and women in the development process, thus increasing the beneficiaries’ control over the choices in their lives.⁴⁸

The (re)introduction of concepts such as culture, participation, and empowerment brought with it a whole new paradigm of development.⁴⁹ Considering the fact that all these concepts are linked together, the NGO alternative is one that has a holistic and integrated outlook on the development process. In the earlier models of development, ‘culture’ had a negative connotation, regarded as an impediment to technical progress, as

⁴⁷ The concept was developed by Paolo Freire, cited in Fisher, *Nongovernments*.

⁴⁸ Jo Rowlands, “A Word of the Times, but What Does it Mean? Empowerment in the Discourse and Practice of Development,” in *Women and Empowerment: Illustrations from the Third World*, ed. Halef Afshar (New York: St. Martin’s Press Inc., 1998).

modernization required ‘backward’ societies to rid themselves of their traditional ways of life.⁵⁰ The trend in development studies and practice now is the abandonment of “the monolithic thinking of the past in favor of a pluralist outlook”, which becomes particularly essential when the beneficiaries of a development project or policy are a group that is culturally or ethnically different from the mainstream.⁵¹ Hence, it can be concluded that, in lines with the argument of cultural diversity in the context of industrialized societies, development policy and planning also includes the move towards the celebration of cultural pluralism and the creation of multicultural environments.

The necessity and advantages of such bottom-up approaches become clear, for instance, in the promotion of a sustainable human development. Given the universality of an ecologically and socially balanced human development, it is increasingly recognized that it is only within the particularities of the target group that this universal aim can be realized. It is only the members of the group involved that is able to define the specifics of their situation, their problems, their aspirations, and it is only they who are able to shape the path of their own transformation, development, and thus liberation.⁵²

⁴⁹ Zaidi, *The New Development Paradigm*, 203.

⁵⁰ David Maybury-Lewis, “Foreword: Culture and Development,” in *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development: Cases from Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Charles David Kley Meyer (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1994), ix-xv.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁵² Tim Jordan, “Too Many Universals: Beyond Traditional Definitions of Exploitation,” in *Storming the Millennium: The New Politics of Change*, eds. Tim Jordan and Adam Lent (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1999), 149-150.

All these bottom-up strategies of ‘people-centered development’, ‘participatory development’, and ‘grassroots development’ are regarded as ‘alternative development’,⁵³ attempting to bring alternatives in terms of the actors, methodologies, and the values of development. This trend, which comes in different names, has been the mobilizer of a shift in the development paradigm at the intergovernmental level, resulting in the wide acceptance and application of the notion of ‘sustainable human development’. The most fundamental aspect of this kind of a development approach has been determined by Korten as issues of power.⁵⁴ The current approach is to make people aware of their rights with respect to the state and the international community, thus enabling individuals and communities to take advantage of what the state and the wider political context has to offer.⁵⁵

Alternative development recognizes the role of the insiders over those of the outsiders: “the relevant reality must be the people’s own, constructed by them only”.⁵⁶ Hence, the universal values of human rights, democracy, environmental harmony, social justice, and gender equity, all embedded in the concept of alternative development, have now become the concern of most NGOs. Pieterse regards alternative development to be a part of a larger phenomenon that he calls ‘reflexive development’,⁵⁷ in which changes are occurring in the world political order. Although NGOs have traditionally been seen as influential in lobbying the decisions taken at the state level, they are increasingly

⁵³ Pieterse, “My Paradigm or Yours,” 345-346.

⁵⁴ David C. Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1990).

⁵⁵ Dan Connell, “The Importance of Self-Reliance: NGOs and Democracy-Building in Eritrea,” *Middle East Report* (Spring 2000), 29.

⁵⁶ Rahman cited in Pieterse, “My Paradigm or Yours,” 357.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 367-369.

viewed as a separate group of political actors. Strange argues that various forces have rendered non-state actors as politically important as state actors.⁵⁸ Acknowledging the importance of these two roles, perhaps the most critical character of NGOs is the direct promotion of local civil society, or better, grassroots political activity, thus constituting political action within larger, collective bodies of civil society. In other words, global civil society takes shape through the encouragement of local level activism.

Pieterse observes a process of ‘repoliticization’ with the blurring of boundaries between the political and nonpolitical, and the resurgence of sub-politics. He claims that “development is now anchored in people’s subjectivity, rather than in overarching structures and institutions”.⁵⁹ However, an increasingly challenging position is created for NGOs that support local development initiatives. Shaped by the ideals of alternative development, encompassing cultural forms of expression, local participation, and empowerment, they are confronted with the traditional political setting of the nation-state and its institutions. It is these complex set of interactions among the different levels that I wish to analyze in the current study.

2.1.5. From Sustainable Human Development to Global Development Policy?

As social policy becomes globalized, the effects are being felt in the field of development, both in its approach and its organizational structure. As noted by development experts in preparation to the 1995 World Summit on Social Development,

⁵⁸ Susan Strange, “The Limits of Politics,” *Government and Opposition*, 30:3 (1995), 309.

⁵⁹ Pieterse, “My Paradigm or Yours,” 369.

“instead of approaching international relations in terms of conflicts between states, we should see them in terms of resolving global problems as people, not as citizens of states”.⁶⁰ With the influence of NGOs, international and multilateral aid agencies, including the World Bank and especially the UN agencies, increasingly promote this new approach to development.⁶¹ The UNDP approach to development has transformed to the extent that the Human Development Reports are assessed by many as “unusual and brave document[s] to come from the UN stable”.⁶² As can be observed from the reports of the UNDP, there is the wide acceptance that the new approach of sustainable human development shifts its focus on NGOs as one of the primary implementers of these new development strategies.

This signals to a global development policy, very similar to that of a global social policy, in which the focus of globalizing policies on social development and sustainable human development urge the shift of decision making structures down to the local level as well as the international, global level. The national level is no longer the only viable sphere for decision making and planning in terms of development. Stable NGO activity thus becomes the key point in the transition to global development policy, planning, and implementation through the adoption of grassroots development.

⁶⁰ *Change: Social Conflict or Harmony?*, 20.

⁶¹ Marjorie Mayo and Gary Craig, “Introduction,” in *Community Empowerment: A Reader in Participation and Development*, eds. Gary Craig and Marjorie Mayo (London: Zed Books, 1995), 2.

⁶² Guy Arnold, *The End of the Third World* (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1993), 3.

2.2. Changing NGO-State Relations in Development

In an attempt to look at nongovernmental activity in the light of developmental thinking, this section views the role of the NGO within the state apparatus. Nongovernmental activity has been encouraged as well as discouraged for different reasons, with NGOs increasingly taking the opportunity of influencing government policies and democratizing state structures and approaches to development.

2.2.1. State and the Provision of Development

Mackintosh⁶³ has observed the link between the emergence of NGOs and the role of the state with respect to the notion of development. The concept of development was originally associated with state provision. The state was viewed as a benevolent institution. The so-called 'public interest' state was defined using three basic characterizations. First, a given society has a set of common interests that need to be served. Second, the government is capable of correctly identifying this public interest. Third, the government will make use of its powers and take the necessary actions in order to serve this public interest.

The public interest view of the state came under severe attack from two perspectives. The left wing critics found fault in the first assumption of the public interest theory. They argued that it is not possible to speak of a homogenous public interest. They

regarded the state as serving merely the powerful interests of the dominant classes. In developing countries, these critics claimed, the government would also tend to serve the interests of foreign investors in hope of benefiting its own employees and supporters.

The view of the state as concerned with its own private interest was also advocated by right wing critics. Instead of attacking the first assumption of the public interest theory, however, these critics tackled the other two elements of the theory. They suggested that the state was not competent enough to identify this public interest, and even if it was able to do so, did not have the motivation to serve this public interest. They claimed that in the absence of competition, the government would exploit its monopolies of information and services in order to expand its own budget and power.

In search of a common solution to the 'private interest' view of the state, both critics have agreed on the devolvement of the state. Devolving the control of state resources to the 'third sector'⁶⁴ seemed to fit the ideology of both the left and right wing critics. This alliance of the two ends of the political spectrum has encouraged the expansion of the role of NGOs on a worldwide scale.

It must be noted, moreover, that with the new perspectives of post-modern left wing criticisms, the state is no longer regarded as serving only the dominant classes, since the axis of production is no longer the only cleavage in a globalizing world. Other lines of division, including race, gender, and ecology, have shifted the focus from concerns of

⁶³ Maureen Mackintosh, "Questioning the State," in *Development Policy and Public Action* (London: Oxford University Press, 1992).

class only to those of culture and identity.⁶⁵ It is now impossible to speak of a homogeneous public interest given the fact that a multiplicity of identities have emerged and the existence of each of them is a statement of difference which requires the satisfaction of each and every difference claim within the same territorial setting.⁶⁶

2.2.2. Traditional NGO-State Relations

NGOs, in the contemporary sense, have traditionally stood in opposition to government and its policies.⁶⁷ Explicit in its definition, NGOs have emerged as a result of their criticisms of governmental standing with respect to numerous issues. Given their supposedly flexible, innovative, and anti-bureaucratic organizational structure and culture, they stand in sharp contradiction to the hierarchical, centralized bureaucracy of the state. This, in turn, poses a threat for governments. Considering the tremendous increase in their numbers in the last two decades as well as the extension of their scope and fields of activity to include a large area of human interest, governments, particularly in the third world, have been suspicious of the activities of NGOs.⁶⁸ Environmental and human rights activist groups, for instance, have been repressed under the claim that they attempt to diminish state power. In countries where nation-building is a strong policy, NGOs can be regarded as sources of weakening state authority and territoriality.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ The state is considered the first and private entrepreneurship is considered the second sector.

⁶⁵ Jordan, "Too Many Universals," 141.

⁶⁶ Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*.

⁶⁷ Michael Edwards and David Hulme, "Scaling up the Developmental Impact of NGOs: Concepts and Experiences," in *Making a Difference: NGOs and Development in a Changing World*, eds. Michael Edwards and David Hulme (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1992), 16.

⁶⁸ Jon Bennett, "Introduction," in *NGOs and Governments: A Review of Current Practice for Southern and Eastern NGOs*, ed. Jon Bennett (Oxford: INTRAC Publications, 1997), 1.

⁶⁹ Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State", 335.

Consequently, as a result of the recent explosion in the numbers of NGOs, governments have imposed tighter laws and regulations on nongovernmental activity.⁷⁰

Clark analyzes state-NGO relations in three different political regimes.⁷¹ Under military and authoritarian regimes, Clark observes almost no collaboration between the two sectors as he views the third sector as siding with or becoming the political opposition. Secondly, Clark observes the absence of civil society organizations in single party states and regimes where the state regards itself as the ‘vanguard of the people’.⁷² In such an environment, the third sector is allowed to flourish only to the extent that the projects advocated are in lines with the policies and outlook of the ruling party or government. Finally, it is in liberal democracies that NGOs find it easiest to exist and flourish. This is supported by the system of voting in which satisfying certain interests becomes a mode of survival for those in government. Instead of direct ousting of the third sector, strategies in liberal democracies include either the intimidating or the devaluation of social movements. Otherwise, NGOs are easily given full support in liberal democracies.

2.2.3. NGO-State Relations in a Changing World

Despite the increasing independence of the NGO sector and the decreasing importance of the state, NGOs have come to realize that it is still the state that defines the

⁷⁰ Bennett, “Introduction”, 2.

⁷¹ Clark, *Democratizing Development*, 77-79.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 78.

framework within which NGOs operate in a particular setting.⁷³ Moreover, it is the attitude of the state with respect to the third sector as well as the laws regulating this sector that NGO presence and survival is determined in that particular country. In El Salvador, for instance, while a number of NGOs have started creating fruitful initiatives together with state institutions in terms of reformist educational programs, other NGOs in the same country regard the government as authoritarian and hostile, while the state perceives most NGOs as inconsistent, unreliable and unaccountable.⁷⁴ This example illustrates the ambiguous nature of the relationship and interaction between states and their civil society organizations.

What is most important perhaps is that given the declining importance of the nation-state in the determination of policy in all fields, issues must be reinforced on a larger scale in order to ensure policies that are more egalitarian on a global scale.⁷⁵ This brings forth the significance of global social movements and their positive relations with their respective governments. In both cases it has become important to influence government policy and practice at various levels in a way that establishes the foundations for the desired transformation.

⁷³ Edwards and Hulme, "Scaling Up," 16.

⁷⁴ Deepa Narayan, *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 141.

⁷⁵ Ramesh Mishra, "Beyond the Nation State: Social Policy in an Age of Globalization," in *Transnational Social Policy*, ed. Catherine Jones Finer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

While there is a shift in cooperating with governmental bodies and public institutions in the planning and implementation of projects, Bebbington and Farrington⁷⁶ assert that state-NGO relations are particular to each country and depend on the political context of that country, affecting the degrees of this collaboration. Dealing specifically with NGOs in the South and their role in agricultural development, the authors note three types of relations of NGOs with the state level. On the one hand, NGOs can be regarded by governments as assistant providers of public service. The gap of weak and inefficient government programs can be filled in and supplemented by NGO projects. In this way, NGOs are merely tools for the implementation of state oriented and designed programs. A second means of cooperation is through a more collaborative interaction between the state institutions and the NGO. Given the innovative nature and capacity of most NGOs, state organizations can receive assistance in the improvement of certain projects. This kind of an interaction involves the training of state officials by NGO staff on specific topics. The third, most ideal relationship between the two is the representation of NGOs on all aspects of government policies and programs. In a situation of this kind, NGO representatives are asked for advice on a wide variety of topics. Whatever relation exists between the state authorities and the NGO, the conclusion is that a complete isolation between the two reduces the impact of NGOs in the given area of implementation.

In terms of social welfare provision in general, NGOs represent an opportunity for states in that they divert public resources from the mere establishment of social infrastructure and provision to other fields of public responsibility including more innovative

⁷⁶ Anthony Bebbington and John Farrington, "Governments, NGOs and Agricultural Development: Perspectives on Changing Inter-Organizational Relationships," *The Journal of Development Studies* 29:2

approaches to social development. It is also important to note that NGOs are a tool for the channeling of foreign funding into the country since a large number of funds are available through NGOs only.⁷⁷

Concluding from a number of case studies on NGO-state cooperation, Edwards and Hulme point out the obstacles and restraints of this relationship.⁷⁸ In highly centralized structures, civil servants at the lower levels of the state bureaucracy are hard to work with given their lack of responsibility and consequent lack of motivation. Their lack of enthusiasm also results from the usually low salaries of civil servants. The frequent rotation of civil servants within the state structure adds another constraint as it makes NGO influence through directly working with state personnel almost impossible. The lack of public resources is another factor that hinders productive NGO-state partnerships. The presence of a lack of consensus and agreement among government authorities and ministries will render NGO inputs even more ineffective.

As a result of successful collaboration in the planning and implementation of development projects and programs, models of good practices have been detected, thus legitimating the cooperation between NGOs and their states.⁷⁹ The concept of good governance has acted as a further legitimation of this partnership, looking into ways of encouraging a more participatory and democratic decision making process in terms of policy setting, planning, and implementation, while at the same time assigning an

(1993).

appropriate role and position for the state. The notion of governance becomes particularly important with the increasingly political role of NGOs.

Given the ever-changing nature of the relationship between states and the nongovernmental sector, NGOs have found it essential to declare their independence from governments as well as internally regulate their own activities within the sector. As the NGO movement becomes more institutionalized and the numerous humanitarian and developmental efforts are concerted at the national and international levels, NGOs increasingly attempt to professionalize and regulate their own activities.⁸⁰ Hence, this is an effort on the part of NGOs themselves to self-regulate in addition to existing state regulations on nongovernmental activity.

Concerning the self-regulation of NGOs, it was in the field of disaster relief activities that such an international Code of Conduct was first prepared. Together with the 8 initial nongovernmental humanitarian agencies that adopted the Code in 1994, by 1996, an additional 72 organizations pledged their commitment to the Code, along with 142 states.⁸¹ Additionally, a number of codes of conduct are now being put together at the national and regional levels. Through such self-regulation, NGOs have officially declared their separation from the state and their full independence as a sector: “we shall formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement

⁷⁷ Mark Sinclair and Jonathan Goodhand, “NGOs and Governments in Central Asia,” in *NGOs and Governments: A Review of Current Practice for Southern and Eastern NGOs*, ed. Jon Bennett (Oxford: INTRAC Publications, 1997), 71.

⁷⁸ Edwards and Hulme, “Scaling Up,” 17.

⁷⁹ Bennett, “Introduction,” 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

the policy of any government, except in so far as it coincides with our own independent policy”.⁸² Through such developments, NGOs strive to become strategically influential.⁸³ Clark claims that such strategic NGOs both criticize the state and its approaches, yet provide constructive alternatives for the move towards a participatory, democratic, and a people-centered human development.⁸⁴

2.2.4. The ‘Globalizing’ State and the Provision of Development

It is clear that in the last fifty years of world development, states have provided both the motives and obstacles for just development. According to the experts of the World Bank, these mixed outcomes have been direct results of the ‘effectiveness’ of the state in the provision of development. Depending on development experience in the last fifty years, the 1997 World Development Report asserts that sustainable development is unattainable without an effective state. Since there is the concern that states might increasingly be incapable of responding to the ever-more increasing demands of a globalized nature, experts stress that the role of the state should rapidly be changing from that of direct provider of development to the role of ‘partner, catalyst and facilitator’.⁸⁵

Unlike the single-solution recipes thus far suggested for the development of all countries, the World Bank now accepts that formulations of an effective state and

⁸² Ibid., 5-6.

⁸³ Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century*.

⁸⁴ Clark, *Democratizing Development*, 77.

subsequent development are relative, urging individual states to opt to find their own specific measures for reform. As the 1997 report suggests, “the range of differences among states is too enormous, as are their starting points”.⁸⁶ The two aspects involved in this reform of the state include the transfer of the provision of certain collective goods to the hands of civil society on the one hand, and the change in the better and effective functioning of the state’s existing central and decentralized institutions, on the other. Hence, the new formulation for development is based on the specification and definition of the precise role of the state and then the building of capabilities of the state to match this role. The fact that most states try to do too much with too little resources and capability makes this formulation ever more important for a sustainable human development. An analysis of the potential for NGO-state cooperation in relation to changes in state effectiveness is an offshoot of the current study.

As clearly seen in this chapter, developments at the global scale result in repercussions at the local scale and visa versa. Global civil society, advocating alternatives to mainstream development policies and practice, has established a link with local civil society, in terms of the introduction of new definitions and concepts of development. These changes have brought with them the importance of NGO-state collaborations for a move towards good governance. Despite the move towards a new politics, state authorities still exercise power in the determination of development policy and approaches. Although state authorities in some countries are increasingly more inclined to hand partial power over to civil society organizations, this is less so the case in other

⁸⁵ *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

countries, including Turkey. While NGOs at the national level have increasingly become reflections of the link between the global and the local, they are still confronted with a strong state structure in Turkey. The details of nongovernmental activity in social development, and the particular approach and attitudes of the Turkish state towards civil society organizations are the focus of the following chapter.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

CHAPTER III:

DEVELOPMENT IN TURKEY

Despite global challenges, the internal dynamics of nation-states in terms of their relations with their civil society and their institutions are highly different from one another. The case of Turkey is no exception. Development policies in Turkey have shaped and regulated the emergence of private initiatives, both for economic and social motives. Starting from the history of development and the nature of nongovernmental activity in the country, the current attitudes of state elites towards civil society organizations in Turkey and NGO relations with the Turkish state are considered in the current chapter. Although more specific data on current issues of development in the Southeastern region of the country are highlighted in chapter IV, the current chapter gives the historical background of the reasons behind regional developmental gaps in Turkey. This overview is provided in preparation for the empirical study of the research.

The attitude of the Turkish state towards the nongovernmental sector can be best understood within its historical dynamics and the context that gave rise to social movements and organizations of civil society in Turkey in the 1990s. The development of the third sector in Turkey is different from that in the North as well as some countries in the South, mainly in Latin America and South Asia. The history of development policies, the changing nature and role of civil society associations as well as the Turkish political culture reveal the characteristics of today's development approaches and state-civil society relations in Turkey.

3.1. History of Development in Turkey

3.1.1. Westernization and Modernization as Development

Mardin points out certain characteristics of Ottoman-Turkish political culture which determine the state's attitude towards its civil society. These include intolerance towards opposition due to the state's tendency to see power as absolute, as well as the exclusionary orientation of the Turkish state.⁸⁷ Using Berki's distinction of the 'transcendental' and the 'instrumental', Heper draws a picture of Turkish political culture. On the one extreme lies transcendentalism which refers to the state as the prime actor in the setting of goals for society, while on the other extreme lies instrumentalism which refers to civil society and its interests as the prime mover of politics. State orientation, or transcendentalism, assigns priority to the ideals of duties and services of

moral, responsible citizens, while societal orientation, or instrumentalism, allocates priority to the various interests of the public, highlighting freedom, diversity, and pluralism. Using this distinction, Heper characterizes Ottoman-Turkish political culture as a tradition of strong transcendentalism and weak instrumentalism, pointing to a strong state and a weak civil society.⁸⁸

In terms of the decisions on social engineering and development, Mardin points out the top-down approaches in the Ottoman state administration, a quality he argues was inherited by the creators of the Republic.⁸⁹ Kazancıgil comments on the reality of the Ottoman-Turkish political tradition: “The Young Turks and the Kemalists, although very different from the traditional Ottoman bureaucrats, since they were trained in secular schools to become adepts of Western ideas and European-style patriotism, were the heirs to the old patrimonial tradition, which assumed the dominance of the state over civil society and reserved the monopoly of legitimacy and authority to state elites, at the expense of social and economic elites.”⁹⁰

Efforts at modernization in the Ottoman Empire, intensifying with the Tanzimat reforms starting in 1839, included the establishment of secular institutions of education, justice, and law, while some traditional institutions remained intact.⁹¹ But even prior to the Tanzimat reforms, at the end of the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire had started its

⁸⁷ Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi [Turkish Modernization]* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), 65-66.

⁸⁸ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (North Humberstone: The Eothen Press, 1985), 7-8, 16.

⁸⁹ Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi [Turkish Modernization]*.

⁹⁰ Kazancıgil, 1981, 48.

reformation, that is westernization, efforts with the changes in the military. The bureaucrats at the time, inspired by Western social and political thought, had faith in emerging constitutionalism and trade arrangements among states.⁹² The modernizing elite of the Empire had full trust in the “value of objective scientific truth, a great (and somewhat naïve) faith in the power of education to spread this truth and elevate the people [from their ignorance], an implicit belief in the role of the central state as the prime mover in society, and a certain activism, a belief in change, in progress.”⁹³

As a continuation of projects of modernization within the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish republic was quick to implement reforms in which the level of development of Western nations was taken as a direct reference point. Modernization policies included the ‘secularization’ of institutions, among which were the *vakıfs*. *Vakıfs*⁹⁴ (*evkaf* in Ottoman Turkish), active since the early years of the Ottoman Empire, were philanthropic foundations in which a certain endowment such as property was given up to be used for a charitable purpose. *Vakıfs* were the tools immensely used for the mobilization of a just social order as proclaimed in the Koran. They were essential

⁹¹ Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 157, and Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 52-53.

⁹² Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye’de Toplum ve Siyaset: Makaleler I [Society and Politics in Turkey: Articles I]* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), 252-264.

⁹³ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1993), 137.

⁹⁴ *Vakıf* is the Turkish word for foundation. The Turkish word *vakıf* is used throughout the thesis to denote these specific organizations of a Muslim character. Although *vakıfs* are not the only form of civil society organization in Turkey, they are the earliest form of nongovernmental, nonprofit organization. Traditionally, *vakıfs* have been established for purposes of ‘assistance and social solidarity’ and act mainly as ‘institutions of charity’. They continue this tradition today in Turkey. For further details look at Aydın Aybay and Rona Aybay, *Dernek ve Vakıf Kurma Özgürlüğü [The Freedom of the Establishment of Associations and Vakıfs]* (İstanbul: Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 1991).

elements of the Ottoman Empire, both in terms of social welfare and the provision of economic services.⁹⁵

During the Ottoman period, vakıfs and their leading ulema undertook agricultural activity on vast amounts of state-owned land, which they used in the funding of social and economic services.⁹⁶ Traditionally, the aims of vakıfs have been to provide assistance to the poor and needy, financial aid for religious, social, cultural, economic, and educational purposes, and the provision of public sector services such as mosques, *mescits*, *medreses*, libraries, meal distribution units, drinking water fountains, roads, bridges, hospitals, *hans*, *hamams*, and caravanserais.⁹⁷

With the declaration of the Turkish republic in 1923 it was decided that progress had to be hastily taken in fulfilling the task of firmly establishing a Turkish national identity and creating a Turkish nation-state. This, in turn, determined the path to be taken on the route to modernization. All religious and ethnic diversities were homogenized for the supremacy of rationality and progress, and the notion of cultural evolution gained importance. Hence, Turkish state and society's modernity came to be identified by how much it resembles western technological, social, and cultural characteristics.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Murat Çizakça, *A History of Philanthropic Foundations: The Islamic World from the Seventh Century to the Present* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2000), 1-2.

⁹⁶ Zürcher, *Turkey*.

⁹⁷ Aydın Zevkliler and Aydın Aybaş, "Türkiye'de Vakıflar [Vakıfs in Turkey]," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, Cilt 15* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1995), 1440, and Zekai Baloğlu, *Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Raporu: Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri [Report of Third Sector in Turkey: Problems and Solutions]* (Istanbul: Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), 23.

⁹⁸ Ahmed Gurnah and Alan Scott, *The Uncertain Science: Criticism of Sociological Formalism* (London: Routledge Publications, 1992), 131-135.

Although Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had announced that the sovereignty of the new Turkish nation-state belonged to the people, and no longer to the Sultan, it was still the duty of the state to ‘elevate the people to the level of contemporary civilization’. Since the uneducated could easily be manipulated by undesirable forces, Mustafa Kemal believed in ‘shaping’ public opinion rather than ‘consulting’ it. In his search for the ultimate ‘truth’ in terms of public policy, Mustafa Kemal determined that there was only ‘one best way’. The ‘collective conscience’ of the people would eventually realize the true path towards rational progress. Mustafa Kemal, however, made a distinction between ‘real’ and ‘artificial’ orientations, claiming that those ideas not in lines with the collective conscience could not be taken as real. Moreover, these artificial tendencies, which sometimes revealed themselves through public opinion, could only be interpreted as ‘personal tendencies’. Since the collective conscience of the Turkish people had not yet reached the desired level, sovereignty would not belong to the people until it did so.⁹⁹ This general approach which Kadioğlu calls the ‘republican will’¹⁰⁰ continues to shape state-society relations in Turkey, with the visible dedication of the Turkish armed forces to the heritage of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Becoming *medeni*, civilized, required an adoption of the material aspects of modernity exerted in the importance given to outward appearances.¹⁰¹ This revealed itself clearly in the changes in dress codes, including the reforms within the military and the adaptations of western clothing within the Palace. Images of modernity culminated with

⁹⁹ Heper, *The State Tradition*, 50-51.

¹⁰⁰ Ayşe Kadioğlu, *Cumhuriyet İradesi, Demokrasi Muhakemesi [Republican Will, Democratic Reason]* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1999).

the reforms of the Turkish republic during the 1920s, including the changes in the Arabic script, the Ottoman language, the Arabic calendar, the replacement of Islamic law with the Swiss civil code, the ban on religious brotherhoods, their vakıfs and other institutions of education and worship. The changes that were taking place at a rapid pace led to the emergence of a new class with its distinct clothing and lifestyle, which was very different from the mainly rural masses who had no economic, social, and cultural access to change. Lacking the institutions of industrialization and the political, social, and cultural foundations to support these institutions, the top-down policies of modernization did nothing more than enhance these cultural cleavages within society.¹⁰²

The other distinguishing feature of modernity in Turkey is well explained by Kadioğlu, in her distinction between the ‘republican will’ and ‘enlightened reasoning’.¹⁰³ As the Turkish republican will has always triumphed over enlightened reasoning, opposition to and criticisms of the republican ideology has systematically been repressed. The spread of republican ideology to the masses has, then, been assigned as the task of the reformers. This, in fact, was also seen among the Ottoman modernizing elite. The belief of the elite in their capacity to influence and transform ‘ordinary’ people is similar to the republican elite’s missionary attitude of ‘enlightening’ the masses.¹⁰⁴ Tanzimat

¹⁰¹ Reşat Kasaba, “Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 24-25.

¹⁰² Timur cited in Ahmet N. Yücekök, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum Örgütleri Gelişiminin Toplumsal Aşamaları ve Süreci [The Social Processes of the Development of Civil Society Organizations in Turkey],” in *Tanzimattan Günümüze İstanbul’da Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları [Civil Society Organizations in Istanbul from the Tanzimat to Today]* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998), 19.

¹⁰³ Kadioğlu, *Cumhuriyet İradesi [Republican Will]*, 12-14.

¹⁰⁴ David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 57.

elite, and later the republican elite, thus took over a socio-political mission and regarded themselves as ‘educators of society.’¹⁰⁵

Consequently, development activities in Turkey today revolve around the notion of *çağdaşlaşma*,¹⁰⁶ a synonym for Western civilization and modernization. In fact, since the establishment of the Turkish republic, ‘westernization’ [*batılhlaşma* in Turkish] is a term more frequently referred to than ‘modernization’ and ‘development’ itself.

However, to a large extent, the idea of progress has been brought to non-industrial countries without the collective consciousness of the local population. Similarly, top-down plans of westernization in Turkey were different from the changes taking place within the grassroots level of society. In other words, political change from above did not coincide with social change from below. As Zürcher describes so well: “There was an exceedingly wide chasm between this civilization [of the ruling elite] and the outlook of the almost totally illiterate rural population, whose horizon was limited by the surrounding villages and, at best, the market town.”¹⁰⁷

3.1.2. Development in the Turkish Republic

Development efforts in the Turkish republic have been heavily state-driven until the 1980s. Development initiatives until this period have been labeled as ‘etatism’ [*devletçilik* in Turkish], characterized by heavy state intervention in the economic and

¹⁰⁵ İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı [The Longest Century of the Empire]* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), 257.

¹⁰⁶ Literally meaning ‘becoming contemporary’ or ‘catching up with the times’.

¹⁰⁷ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 14.

social development of the country. This is a period marked by the development of state economic enterprises, perceived as the ‘engines of industrial and regional development’.¹⁰⁸ The international economic crisis of the 1930s, which resulted in the strategy of import substitution in Turkey, contributed to the state’s efforts at industrialization. This is typically regarded as the period from the establishment of the republic to the 1950s, since this date marks the beginning of the development of private enterprises, despite heavy governmental support in the form of credits and investments. A return to *devletçilik* in the 1960s continued to be influential in the country’s development until the 1980s.

The first 5-Year Industrialization Plan implemented from 1934 to 1939 resulted in the establishment of state industrial and agricultural enterprises, including factories and processing units for steel, chemicals, glass, paper, tobacco, alcohol and sugar.¹⁰⁹ During this period, the construction of railways gained priority, as the transportation of both raw materials and processed goods throughout the country became an essential component of development. Hence, railways were constructed from major seaports to significant spots of mining and centers of agricultural production.¹¹⁰ National levels of industrialization increased so much during the 5-Year Plan period that in 1939, Turkey shared with the

¹⁰⁸ Bilgiç cited in Paul White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers? The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey* (London: Zed Books, 2000), 102.

¹⁰⁹ Yücekök, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum Örgütleri Gelişiminin Toplumsal Aşamaları ve Süreci [The Social Processes of the Development of Civil Society Organizations in Turkey],” 29.

¹¹⁰ Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Hikayesi (Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarih) [The Story of Eastern Anatolia (Economic and Social History)]* (Ankara: Arkadaş Yayınevi, 1990), 99.

Soviet Union and Japan the first top three countries with the highest economic growth rates.¹¹¹

As opposed to such developments witnessed mainly in the coastal areas of the country, the East and Southeastern regions of Turkey remained isolated from such state investments in the economy. In the 1930s, 80% of agricultural production in the eastern provinces was for subsistence purposes. Even then, surplus produce was sold merely in the nearest local markets. Far from large scale agricultural production, industry in the region was also practiced at a small scale. The small number of state enterprises established in the eastern provinces was based on and enforced the traditional tribal relations in the region. Even though weaving was an important economic activity in the region, textile and carpets were woven in small ateliers in Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Mardin and Şanlıurfa. Work was sometimes undertaken in the home environment [*eve iş verme* in Turkish], hence again replicating the tribal and gender traditions in the region.¹¹²

The reasons for this underdevelopment were manifold. This was partly a result of limited access to the region, both in terms of access from the western part of the country and within the region due to harsh geographical and climatic conditions. Other factors included the socio-political structure of the region and its traditional relations with the state. Southeastern Anatolia, populated mainly by Kurdish tribes, had traditionally been relatively autonomous from the central state during the Ottoman Empire. As long as Kurdish tribal leaders paid their taxes to the state and agreed to not riot in an attempt to

¹¹¹ Yücekök, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum Örgütleri Gelişiminin Toplumsal Aşamaları ve Süreci [The Social Processes of the Development of Civil Society Organizations in Turkey],” 29.

expand their territorial boundaries, Ottoman administration left them to their own affairs in the region. Upon Ottoman and subsequent republican policies of state centralization, relations with the region that were ‘unproblematic’ until the 19th century, became tense. Consequently, a large number of riots broke out, starting with the first organized revolt by Kurdish *beys* in 1879. The riots that continued during the republic were reasons for the political and economic repression of the region.¹¹³

Although equal prioritization was attached by the Turkish state to the connection of the Southeastern region to the rest of the country through railways networks, the motives behind this were not social and economic in nature, but political and military. Because of limited access to and within the region, railways constituted high value for the presence of the military and the state in the Southeast. Indeed, the only reason that the military was able to settle the Şeyh Said rebellion in 1925, for instance, was because it had been able to make use of the French railway system in Syria to access Southeastern Anatolia. Interestingly, these, frequently armed, conflicts in the region led to the construction of police and gendarmerie stations, prisons, hospitals and various facilities for civil servants, as the first public investments of the republic in the region, thus paving the way for the entry of the state and the security forces into the provinces, counties and villages of the Southeast.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Hikayesi [The Story of Eastern Anatolia]*, 100-102.

¹¹³ White, *Primitive Rebels*, 56-57. White notes the fact that while most scholars date 1879 as the first Kurdish rebellion of a nationalist nature, others use the date of 1806 as the emergence of Kurdish nationalism.

¹¹⁴ Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Hikayesi [The Story of Eastern Anatolia]*, 95.

There were also internal impediments to the development of the eastern part of the country. The ‘provincialization’ of Kurdish *beyliks* and their attachment to the central state did not, in fact, lessen the economic and political power of Kurdish tribal leaders in the region. Upon transition from nomadic livelihoods to settled agricultural practices, tribal leaders, who were already dominant figures within tribal communities, became large landowners, as they legally confiscated and bought traditionally communal lands, paving the way to semi-feudal production relations in the region.¹¹⁵ This development did nothing more than further strengthen traditional patron-client relations and vertical power structures within and among communities.

The turn of the half-century was important in terms of the globalization of the economy and polity in Turkey. Together with 43 other countries, Turkey pledged in the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 to become a part of the global economy. In addition to IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank, other memberships included the Marshall Plan, OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). These developments opened up an era in which international credits were obtained for the infrastructural, agricultural and industrial development of the country. The upgraded infrastructure of transportation, energy, irrigation and communications was to enable produced goods to be more readily available in both domestic and international markets.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ The Property Law in 1858 legalized the private ownership of land as noted in Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Hikayesi [The Story of Eastern Anatolia]*, 86.

¹¹⁶ Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Hikayesi [The Story of Eastern Anatolia]*, 126-127.

During the 1950-1960 period, large scale irrigation projects constituted a major proportion of public investments. While 50,000 hectares of land was being irrigated in the entire country in 1950, this figure reached nearly a million hectares in 1960. However, in the Economy Congress in Istanbul in 1948, the decision was taken that the state would no longer be the sole provider of economic development. The only areas of responsibility earmarked for the state were education, communications, and national defense. It was emphasized in the Congress that economic initiatives be taken up by private individuals and groups. Indeed, there were increasingly liberalist oriented intellectuals and businessmen eager to open themselves up to the changes taking place at the international arena. According to Yücekök, this emerging class of new elite presented the ‘antithesis of the military-civil bureaucratic elite,’¹¹⁷ who had been the sole decision makers until that date.

Despite these changes, during the 1950s, there was an increase in the number of landless farmers. The situation of land ownership was such that in some Southeastern provinces, the territory of entire villages was in the possession of individuals and their families. According to a report of the State Planning Organization, this number was 360 villages in the Southeast in the year 1977.¹¹⁸ The increase in the number of landless farmers resulted in migrations from rural areas to cities, increasing the supply of seasonal labor. This migration, observed all over the country was above average for provinces in the east. The fact that there were insufficient economic activities in eastern cities to absorb this supply of seasonal labor led to migrations to the western parts of the country.

¹¹⁷ Yücekök, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum Örgütleri Gelişiminin Toplumsal Aşamaları ve Süreci [The Social Processes of the Development of Civil Society Organizations in Turkey],” 31-32.

Parallel to the migration of labor was the migration of private investments to regions outside the east. Even the capital accumulated by large tribal landowners in the Southeast was invested in the western parts of the country, rather than in the economic development of the Southeast.¹¹⁹

From 1960 to mid-1970s, Turkey witnessed a period of economic growth, with industry occupying a larger share of national income. Together with the growth in the economy, increase in the number of workers backed by the migration of surplus labor from the rural areas to the cities, intensification of capitalist relations in agriculture, and the subsequent change in power relations,¹²⁰ this period also marked the growth of class tensions in Turkey, thus preparing the foundations for conflicting interests and socio-political organization for the attainment of these interests.

But even during years of growth, the Southeast did not receive its share of investments. Especially during the 1970s, the ‘political’ decisions concerning public investments reduced growth impacts on the Southeast. The share of the Southeastern region in Turkey’s GNP values, which were already scarce, dropped to levels lower than ever before. This situation, which remained until the 1980s, brought with it a drop in living conditions, unemployment and increased migration to the west of the country, thus adding to the discrepancies among regions. Even though in 1968, the Southeastern Anatolia region was selected as the priority region in the development plan of the State

¹¹⁸ Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Hikayesi [The Story of Eastern Anatolia]*, 169.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 145-147.

¹²⁰ Yücekök, “Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum Örgütleri Gelişiminin Toplumsal Aşamaları ve Süreci [The Social Processes of the Development of Civil Society Organizations in Turkey],” 39-40.

Planning Organization, public investments in the region continued to be in the nature of ‘political investments.’¹²¹

A trend of inconsistent economic development and industrialization started to reveal itself in the middle of the 1970s. In contrast to the growth levels of the 1960s, the Turkish economy was about to go bankrupt by the end of the 1970s. As a solution of economic recovery, the government in 1979 decided to put into action a structural adjustment program, which was continued by the succeeding military government, which took over after the coup d’etat in September 1980. The important outcome of these structural reforms has been the reduced role of the state in the country’s economy and development. With the increase in private initiatives in industry and the service sector, the state was reminded once again that it was no longer the sole actor in economic and social investment.¹²²

These changes starting from the 1980s, according to Turan, had significant outcomes for the activation of civil society in Turkey. Increased awareness and resources of private enterprises resulted in support for social improvement through vakıfs formed by these newly emerging private businesses. This development resulted in the formation of a class of professionals with relatively higher levels of skills and know-how, thus contributing to the development of a pool of human resources capable of establishing and managing organizations of civil society. The increase in GNP per capita allowed the

¹²¹ Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Hikayesi [The Story of Eastern Anatolia]*, 150-151, 183.

¹²² İtler Turan, “1972-1996 Döneminde İstanbul’da Derneksel Hayat [Associational Life in Istanbul during the Period 1972-1996],” in *Tanzimattan Günümüze İstanbul’da Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları [Civil Society Organizations in Istanbul from the Tanzimat to Today]* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998), 202-203.

newly emerging middle and upper-middle class citizens to contribute a proportion of their income, despite minute in most cases, to associational activities. Moreover, rural areas unable to absorb increases in population exacerbated the migration of people from villages to cities in search for job opportunities and better living conditions. This migration, which started in the mid-1950s, resulted in the formation of *gecekondu* squatter neighborhoods in the outskirts of large cities. *Gecekondu* inhabitants, stripped from the support systems they had in their villages, found the solution in organizing for social solidarity and cooperation.¹²³

3.1.3. Emergence of Nongovernmental Activity

Throughout political history in Turkey, the military and bureaucracy have been the main instigators of a strong state, regulating economic and social development efforts in the country. The Turkish state's strategies of nation-building have traditionally determined the acceptable levels of social and political participation from below. This, naturally, affected the organization of civil society in Turkey. Mobility at the grassroots level has been under strict state regulation up until 1995. State and military elites have started loosening their grip on civil society since that date, in parallel to trends of democratization in the country.¹²⁴

¹²³ Ibid., 203-205.

¹²⁴ Yasushi Hazama, "Civil Society in Turkey" in *Aspects of Democratization in Turkey* (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1999), 70.

State control over civil society has been the fiercest during the single-party rule (1932-1950) of the Turkish republic.¹²⁵ Turkish nation-building, containing a strong element of secularism, led to strong state control over religion. The sharp polarity between religion and science was one of the factors that resulted in hostility towards vakıfs, as the initial form of nongovernmental organization in Turkey. Religious brotherhoods had respective power through vakıfs, in addition to their influence within the state cadres as well as the masses. Not surprisingly, from the mid-1920s to the 1950s, the abolition of vakıfs occupied the minds of many state and political elites. In addition to the weakening of religious power, there was also the project of the creation of a Turkish nation-state formed on the basis of a unitary Turkish state and society, for which no obstacles were tolerated.¹²⁶ Given the negative attitudes towards vakıfs and the new restrictions brought on the establishment of such organizations, the number of vakıfs during the first 40 years of the Turkish republic was merely around 50.¹²⁷

When *derneks*, translated as associations, became legalized as another form of civil society organization with the Law of Associations in 1938, a part of the activities and services in the nonprofit sector was then provided by these organizations. Legally, both vakıfs and associations are nongovernmental entities for the provision of public benefit. Associations, referred to as a ‘union of individuals’, are made up of the voluntary gathering of individuals for purposes of a common good, mainly through the generation

¹²⁵ Ibid., 70.

¹²⁶ Çizakça, *A History of Philanthropic Foundations*, 86-87.

¹²⁷ Hatemi, *İslam Açısından Sosyalizm [Socialism in Islam]*.

of ideas and personal efforts.¹²⁸ Given the laws regulating the activities of associations, these organizations became agents of lobbying and acted as pressure groups in Turkey, aiming at political change. In that sense, the objectives and motives of associations in the country are similar to syndicates and political parties.

Vakıfs, referred to as a ‘union of properties’, are formed mainly for the purposes of the transfer of assets and funds for a public objective.¹²⁹ The main factor distinguishing a vakıf from an association is that vakıfs are able to generate profit and funds to be allocated for the purpose of ‘culture, charity and solidarity’.¹³⁰ Another difference between the two forms of civil organization is that vakıfs in Turkey can operate within more than one field of activity, while the association is legally allowed only one field of specialization.¹³¹

From the end of single-party rule in Turkey to 1961, the freedom of formation of political parties was considered under the Law of Associations. The influence of political parties on social movements and trade unions resulted in reactions of the state towards the freedom of social and political organization. Only in 1963, during a period of state deregulation, was a separate Law for Political Parties designed and state control on social and political activities relaxed.¹³²

¹²⁸ Zekai Baloğlu, “Introduction” in *The Foundations of Turkey*, ed. Zekai Baloğlu (Istanbul: Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı, 1996).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Aybay and Aybay, *Dernek ve Vakıf Kurma Özgürlüğü [The Freedom to Establish Associations and Foundations]*, 1.

¹³¹ Zevkliler and Aybaş, “Türkiye’de Vakıflar [Vakıfs in Turkey],” 1441.

¹³² *Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Gelişme Sürecinde Demokratik Örgütlenme ve Hukuki Düzenlemeler [Democratic Organization and Legal Arrangements in the Process of Economic and Social Progress]* (Istanbul: Friedrich Ebert Vakfı, 1993).

In terms of vakıfs during this period, from 1967 to 1973, 250 new vakıfs were established¹³³ and the number reached 1,877 by 1985.¹³⁴ Corresponding to a phase of state deregulation nearly a decade later,¹³⁵ the increase in vakıfs has been exponential.¹³⁶ This was especially the case after another change in regulations allowing for the establishment of vakıfs depending on the funding to be raised in the aftermath of establishment,¹³⁷ hence paving the way for civil society organizations dependent on external sources of funding and donor agencies other than the treasury.

Given the expansion of civil rights with the new legal arrangements of the 1961 constitution, the number of associations proliferated during the 1960s. This was a period that witnessed tremendous cultural, social, and political change in the country. However, political unrest in Turkey during the same period led to the revision of laws pertaining to civil society formation. It was believed by the military and bureaucracy that these organizations formed the basis of ‘terrorism and anarchy’ in the country.¹³⁸ Following the period after the coup d’etat in 1980, all activities of associations were ceased, leading to further revisions and curtailment of civil rights. The military intervention as well as the following increase in the number of vakıfs and associations also resulted in the drafting of a law by the National Security Council, which strengthened the position of the Ministry of Interior with respect to civil society organizations. Upon reporting of organizational activities of a fundamentalist and

¹³³ Hatemi, *İslam Açısından Sosyalizm [Socialism in Islam]*.

¹³⁴ Çizakça, *A History of Philanthropic Foundations*, 102.

¹³⁵ Hazama, “Civil Society in Turkey”, 71.

¹³⁶ Çizakça, *A History of Philanthropic Foundations*, 102.

radical nature, the Ministry of Interior was assigned the power to shut down any suspicious formation of civic nature.¹³⁹

Although according to the 1961 constitution, associations could be established without prior notice to state authorities, with the 1982 constitution, associations could no longer be politically active or receive support from and provide support to political parties. These organizations could easily be dissolved in the case that they are viewed as threatening the indivisible unity of the Turkish state and nation, threatening its sovereignty, security, and the public order. Their lobbying and awareness raising activities were also restricted in that associations were prohibited from organizing meetings and demonstrations, and making press releases without undertaking an array of procedural bureaucratic requirements and obtaining the necessary permissions for such actions.¹⁴⁰

This phenomenon, then, clearly brings us to the situation in Turkey today, where there is still relative state control over and hostility towards interests groups within society and local manifestations of global civil society. Efforts at the centralization of state power, through the binding force of nationalism based on cultural homogeneity and secularism, have been fierce in republican Turkey. How this is beginning to change with the most recent developments is the crux of discussions of civil society in Turkey today.

¹³⁷ Baloğlu, *The Foundations of Turkey*.

¹³⁸ Baloğlu, *Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Raporu [Report of Third Sector in Turkey]*, 34.

¹³⁹ Çizakça, *A History of Philanthropic Foundations*, 107.

¹⁴⁰ Baloğlu, *Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Raporu [Report of Third Sector in Turkey]*, 35-38, 43.

In conclusion, economic disparities among regions, traditional civic dissatisfaction revealing itself in rebellions, and the continued unwillingness of the Turkish state to share its power with civil society are all factors that have led to the shaky development of nongovernmental activity in Turkey. Suppression of anti-republican forces, defined as reactionary and divisive, has restricted the potentials for civic mobilization and social organization. The changing nature of civil society in Turkey since the 1980s, and state-society relations are detailed in the remaining sections of the current chapter.

3.2. Changing State-Society Relations and Civil Society in Turkey

3.2.1. The Changing Nature of Civil Society

For an analysis of the organization of civil society in Turkey today, it is imperative to reveal its sharp contradictions to the situation in the Ottoman Empire. Vakıf activities, as the first form of nongovernmental activity, were historically centered around a mosque, serving the “spiritual and material welfare of the believers.”¹⁴¹ This religious base of vakıfs was slowly dissolved starting from the reforms within the Ottoman Empire, their secularization reaching a climax with the formation of the Turkish republic. However, values of religion and kinship, still constituting an important source of bondage within society in Turkey, play a key role in the formation of informal

¹⁴¹ Richard Van Leeuwen, *Waqfs and Urban Structures: The Case of Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 67.

networks as well as formal associations. A large number of civil society organizations in Turkey today are still constructed around communal ties and networks.¹⁴²

In a study carried out during the 1970s, Dubetsky analyzes a special characteristic of Turkish culture and social structure called *hemşehrilik* (home-of-origin relations).

Looking specifically at the organization of production, he detects the importance of kinship and primordial ties of home-of-origin, rather than relations based on rational criteria.¹⁴³ As unique features of society in Turkey, he stresses the validity of “cultural prescriptions for appropriate ways of relating to others.”¹⁴⁴ These highly personalized social relationships result in cultural obligations to the *hemşehri*. These relations have continued to exist in urban settings where there are plenty of associations formed to maintain social solidarity among *hemşehris* and strengthen *hemşehri* relations.

Similarly, Meeker¹⁴⁵ points out the peculiar social organization of kinship ties in communities in Turkey. Through ethnographic studies in the region, Meeker emphasizes the different possibilities and terms of meaning and significance based on Islam. Hence, Meeker identifies Islam as one of the common bases for the closeness of ties of kinship.

With time, the industrialization of the economy and the intensification of capitalist relations led to economic, social and political change in Turkey. The interests of

¹⁴² Jenny B. White, “Civic Culture and Islam in Urban Turkey,” in *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, eds. Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn (London: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁴³ Alan Dubetsky, “Kinship, Primordial Ties, and Factory Organization in Turkey: An Anthropological View,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 7 (1976), 437-438.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 440.

¹⁴⁵ Michael E. Meeker, “Meaning and Society in the Near East: Examples from the Black Sea Turks and the Levantine Arabs (II),” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 7 (1976), 383-422.

individuals, groups and classes moved from the limited scope of the religious and or *hemşehri* community to other broader groups of interest. Such dynamics of globalization brought tremendous changes to civil societal movements and their institutions in Turkey as well as other Muslim countries. It is recognized that socio-political trends on a global level include the universalization of issues such as human rights, conservation of the environment, feminist concerns, participatory democracy, and so on. This is strengthened by the urbanization of societies and the involvement of Turkish intellectuals in the international arena that promote these values. Turkish elites have in turn been inspired by these values for the formation of nongovernmental organizations in the country.¹⁴⁶ This is prevalent in the current activities of a large number of civil society organizations in Turkey.

After the end of the Cold War, the West started concentrating on a large number of new projects for the democratization of the socio-political system of the successor states of the Soviet Union, including a strong emphasis on human rights.¹⁴⁷ This implied the encouragement of civil society in these newly formed countries. Hence, these countries have become a testing ground for Western neo-liberal views on democratization and privatization.¹⁴⁸ As evident in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, the democratization process in certain parts of the world is vigorously encouraged by donor agencies. Together with the Central and Eastern European, Central Asian, and Middle Eastern countries, Turkey has also been receiving its share of international funds for

¹⁴⁶ Sheila Carapico, "NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs: Making Sense of Non-Governmental Organizations," *Middle East Report* (Spring 2000), 13.

¹⁴⁷ Guy Arnold, *The End of the Third World* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1993), 121.

democratization and peace-related projects, and the encouragement of a globalized civil society in the country. These have been taking place particularly within the context of the country's potential accession into the European Union.¹⁴⁹

Perhaps the most relevant factor for the purpose of the current study relates to the political and economic policies of market liberalization on a global scale.¹⁵⁰ One is the approach of the structural adjustment of the developing country, requiring cuts in government expenditure on social services, hence creating a gap in social infrastructure and services. The solution of the international providers of credit for development is rapid economic growth and a minimal involvement of the state in matters of social welfare and provision. Realizing the negative effects of structural adjustment on vulnerable groups in society, the consequence of this approach is the increasing importance given to NGOs by donor organizations such as the UN agencies and other international development assistance agencies. As has been the case in Afghanistan, for instance, a number of NGOs have been established in Turkey in response to initiatives by the UN agencies, the UNHCR in particular, to serve as implementers of UN development programs and projects.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Mark Sinclair and Jonathan Goodhand, "NGOs and Governments in Central Asia," in *NGOs and Governments: A Review of Current Practice for Southern and Eastern NGOs*, ed. Jon Bennett (Oxford: INTRAC Publications, 1997), 67.

¹⁴⁹ Observations from the 8th Symposium on 'Civil Society Organizations', Istanbul, Turkey, December 15-16, 2000.

¹⁵⁰ A number of examples are provided by Binnaz Toprak, "Civil Society in Turkey," in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. Augustus Richard Norton (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 97-100.

¹⁵¹ Peter Marsden, "Afghanistan: State Disintegration and the Role of NGOs," in *NGOs and Governments: A Review of Current Practice for Southern and Eastern NGOs*, ed. Jon Bennett (Oxford: INTRAC Publications, 1997), 17. Despite these developments in Turkey and a large number of developing countries, there are arguments that the formation of civil societal elements in these countries is based mainly on foreign funding. Zaidi, for instance, argues that NGOs in a large number of developing countries are creations of international funding agencies. For further details look at S. Akbar Zaidi, *The New Development Paradigm: Papers on Institutions, NGOs, Gender, and Local Government* (Oxford:

Turan makes the sharp distinction concerning the nature of nongovernmental activity in Turkey prior to and after 1980. Prior to this date, the state was regarded as the sole provider of economic and social development in Turkey. Associations and vakıfs operational in the field of development that were established prior to 1980 were responsible for support to the realization of public services. In most cases, public authorities had initiated and encouraged the establishment of third sector organizations for the undertaking of social and economic activities. During the period up to 1980, associations and vakıfs feebly accepted their developmental roles as assigned to them by the Turkish state and tried their best at successfully fulfilling these roles without criticism.¹⁵²

On the other hand, the political parties of the pre-1980 period encouraged and helped establish associational organizations as a means of easily establishing contacts with their potential electorate. At the time, these associations, mostly tied to political parties through ideological attachments, acted as mere extensions of the respective parties during their rule in government. They were heavily involved in the undertaking of clientelistic activities, thus acting within the established system of vertical power relations. The 1982 constitution brought serious curtailments to connections between

Oxford University Press, 1999), 204. In Turkey, however, there are strict regulations on the usage of foreign funding and obstruction to the availability of such funding for project implementation in the country. For details look at Baloğlu, *Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Raporu* [Report of Third Sector in Turkey].

¹⁵² Turan, “1972-1996 Döneminde İstanbul’da Derneksel Hayat [Associational Life in Istanbul during the Period 1972-1996]”, 206-207.

political parties and associations, rendering parties ineffective mobilizers of associations in Turkey.¹⁵³

Economic changes in the post-1980 period brought with it new understandings of civil society organizations and their normative relations with the state. As stated earlier, the growing possibility of funds from private entrepreneurship helped increase the independence and autonomy of civil society organizations. In addition to the effect of internal transformations in Turkey, processes of a global nature also contributed to the change in civil society organizations. The proliferation of global NGOs, their connections with civil society at the national and local levels, along with the support offered to these developments by the international community all contributed to related changes in the organization of civil society in Turkey. Instead of acting merely as sub-contractors of public services, for the first time, civil society organizations had flourished as “organizations with the potential of instigating genuine change”, in the words of Turan.¹⁵⁴

As a result of these global influences, starting from the mid-1980s¹⁵⁵ and especially during the 1990s, the number of civil society organizations in Turkey has increased tremendously.¹⁵⁶ Some associations acting as pressure groups have cooperated in attempts to influence government policy on a number of issues, including strategies of nuclear energy and gold mining with cyanide in Turkey. Together with the interest in

¹⁵³ Ibid., 207-208.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 208.

¹⁵⁵ Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey,” 92-93.

¹⁵⁶ Zevkliler and Aybaş, “Türkiye’de Vakıflar [Vakıfs in Turkey],” 1440.

other humanitarian issues such as environmental harmony, gender equity, and particularly human rights and democracy, a large number of civil society organizations regard themselves as posing an alternative to the current arrangement of the political system in Turkey, thus being closely associated with the political agenda of democratization. They regard themselves as an alternative voice to the conventional statist outlook of ‘either coup d’etat or the shariat.’¹⁵⁷ Together with the presence of both religiously oriented and leftist civil organizations, the general feel among civil societal groups in Turkey is that they have now created a more moderate stream of possibilities to exist alongside with mainstream politics, together with the possibility of generating positive transformation at the state level. Hence, influenced by movements in the West, civil society in Turkey also tackles the question of the crisis of democracy. The growth of the NGO sector in the 1990s is regarded by many as a positive step towards participatory democratization in the country.¹⁵⁸

Since the 1980s, Turkey has been witnessing a rise of political Islam and a revival of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Although these are forces derived from civil society,¹⁵⁹ they are considered as challenges that need to be overcome and settled by the Turkish state.

This is evident in the state policy towards religiously oriented associations and civil

¹⁵⁷ Aydın Uğur, “Sunuş Niyetine Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum ve Demokrasi [Civil Society and Democracy in Turkey as Introduction],” in *Üç Sempozyum: Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998).

¹⁵⁸ This recent increase in the number of civil society organizations in Turkey is the result of an increase in the number of vakıfs, as opposed to *derneks*. However, it is interesting to note that instead of vakıfs in the traditional sense, these recent organizations portray the characteristic of the more contemporary associations. The main incentive behind this development is the legal and political difficulties posed onto the establishment of associations. Instead of confronting the obstacles faced by associations, individuals have preferred to establish organizations in the form of vakıfs, despite the relatively higher costs involved in the establishment of these organizations. For further details, look at Aybay and Aybay, *Dernek ve Vakıf Kurma Özgürlüğü [The Freedom of the Establishment of Associations and Vakıfs]*.

society organizations that promote religious and cultural rights. Religiously oriented organizations, for instance, are excluded from the legally defined list of civil society organizations in Turkey as they are constitutionally prohibited.¹⁶⁰ Instead, organizations of a public nature are included in the list.¹⁶¹ Carapico has made a similar analysis of the perceptions of certain voluntary organizations in the Middle East and the Arab world.¹⁶² These organizations have either been classified as terrorist organizations as in the case of the Kurdistan Workers Party and Hizbullah, or, for those organizations that promote minority rights and receive foreign funding, as organizations of western import threatening the unitary character of the state and society. The idealization of the nation-state and its perceived benefits have tended to result in the overstressing of religious, cultural and ethnic diversities as a threat. Some scholars believe that this ‘divisiveness’ and ‘separatism’ has been overemphasized, especially in third world countries, to the benefit of authoritarian and exploitative governments.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 141.

¹⁶⁰ Hazama gives the legal grouping of these organizations as *dernekler* (associations), *vakıflar* (foundations), *işçi ve işveren sendikaları* (trade unions and employers’ unions), *kamu kurumu niteliğindeki meslek kuruluşları* (public professional organizations), and *kooperatifler* (cooperatives), in Yasushi Hazama, “Civil Society in Turkey,” in *Aspects of Democratization in Turkey* (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1999), 67-70.

¹⁶¹ It is argued by Pitner that local sources of funding such as ‘public philanthropy’ are not a rooted and well-established tradition in the Muslim world. (in Julie Pitner, “NGOs’ Dilemmas,” *Middle East Report* (Spring 2000), 36.) Pitner defines Islamic charities as the only exception to this, in which *zekat*, or religious almsgiving, represents the only form of domestic philanthropy. In Turkey, however, despite the long tradition of *zekat* and other forms of religious social redistribution through *vakıfs* during the Ottoman period, the current secular arrangement of the legal system as well as the secular character of most charity organizations no longer renders effective this form of public philanthropy as a means of internal fund raising. In contrast, religious obligations in the form of *zekat* or otherwise are handled by *vakıfs* owned by the Turkish state.

¹⁶² Carapico, “NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs.”

¹⁶³ David Maybury-Lewis, “Foreword: Culture and Development,” in *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development: Cases from Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Charles David Kley Meyer, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1994), xiii-xiv.

Increased demands for the recognition of cultural, religious, and ethno-nationalist diversities result in different dynamics of political identification on a transnational and global scale. This, Hann believes, contributes to the expansion of the definition of civil society.¹⁶⁴ He argues that a mere emphasis on universalism legitimizes too ideal a conception of social organization and has consequently isolated itself from current social realities, practices, and power relations. As stated above, White and Dubetsky portray the particularities of civil society in Turkey through the portrayal of importance given to communal and kinship relations in such civic networks. Similarly, the recent reassertion of Islamic values together with ethno-nationalist claims in the last two decades also portrays the particularities of civil society movements in the country. These movements have become more visible with the urbanization of society in Turkey. Mango argues that the Turkish state's traditional efforts at the homogenization and secularization of society have "broken the texture and natural harmony of Turkish society."¹⁶⁵ It can, then, be concluded that there are civil societal initiatives in Turkey today that aim at the restoration on a new dimension of these community values, both religious and ethnic (of which kinship plays a major role), in addition to struggles for the triumph of universal values such as democracy. However, it is interesting to note that these efforts become universal only in the sense that a respect for all religions, ethnicities, and cultures has, in itself, become a universal value. Given the challenges of issues such as multiculturalism, ethnocentric nationalism, and religious communitarianism on a global

¹⁶⁴ Chris Hann, "Introduction: Political Society and Civil Anthropology," in *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, eds. Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn (London: Routledge, 1996), 17-19.

¹⁶⁵ Mango, *Discovering Turkey* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1971), 13.

scale, Madison asserts that the modern conceptualization of civil society must be rethought in a post-modern context.¹⁶⁶

3.2.2. State-Society Relations

Although most social movements in the West are now regarded and accepted as manifestations of the crisis of democracy, in Turkey, apart from some members of the civil society and some intellectuals, social movements and their organizations are regarded by most political and state elite along with members of the armed forces with extreme precaution. This view is the most prominent among extreme secularists today, particularly members of the armed forces, given their mission of safeguarding the Republic against divisive forces. Vakıfs with a traditional religious character and the more recent associations with a more contemporary agenda, such as human rights and democracy, are both organizations which are regarded with suspicion.

Similar to the case witnessed in Turkey, Pitner states that in the Muslim world on the whole, NGOs are regarded by their states as ‘the most dire national security concerns’ facing their countries.¹⁶⁷ Of all NGOs, those dealing with human rights issues are labeled as the most dangerous, as these organizations are all-inclusive and directly include claims to religious, cultural and ethnic rights. With the increase in foreign funding on issues of human rights and the promotion of democracy, these organizations have become particularly suspicious to respective state officials. The Tunisian

¹⁶⁶ G. B. Madison, *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 1998), 36.

government, Pitner states, has solved this problem through the creation of NGOs by the national intelligence service. The intelligence personnel, through these organizations which Pitner calls GNGOs, or governmental NGOs, are thus able to monitor conferences and other activities undertaken by Tunisian human rights organizations both in Tunisia and abroad.¹⁶⁸ As stated by Adiin-Yaansah and Harrell-Bond, few NGOs that work on the issue of human rights are perceived by their governments as ‘non-partisan, non-sectarian, and non-political’.¹⁶⁹ The regular reaction by governments to movements that point out their failure with respect to the maintenance of human rights and democracy is the suppression of these movements rather than the introduction of the demanded reforms.¹⁷⁰ Thus, given the globalizing position of the issue of human rights, Pieterse points out the tension between the current understanding of state sovereignty and the increasing importance given to human rights.¹⁷¹ As indicated above, this dilemma is strongly felt in the Turkish context in which any foreign assistance on issues of the protection of human rights is seen as a threat and in direct conflict with state sovereignty and integrity.

The current issue of NGOs in the Muslim world can be described as ‘both trendy and controversial’,¹⁷² a case which shows similarities to the situation in Turkey. On the one hand, in lines with the thinking in the West and international agencies, the growth of civil society in the Muslim world is regarded by many as the foundation for the

¹⁶⁷ Pitner, “NGOs’ Dilemmas,” 34.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹⁶⁹ Eddie Adiin-Yaansah and Barbara Harrell-Bond, “Regulating the Non-Governmental Sector: The Dilemmas,” in *NGOs and Governments: A Review of Current Practice for Southern and Eastern NGOs*, ed. Jon Bennett (Oxford: INTRAC Publications, 1997), 54.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 54.

¹⁷¹ Pieterse, “Humanitarian Intervention”.

flourishing of a more democratic environment, a cure to ineffective, inefficient state bureaucracies, and a compensation to the provision of social welfare in the respective countries. Discussions on civil society and democracy are similarly prevailing in Turkey. On the other hand, the same organizations are viewed with precaution by a large number of authorities of the state institutions and members of the military.¹⁷³ They are viewed as agents of western imperialism by others.¹⁷⁴

Historically, the Turkish state has been highly suspicious of civil societal elements, and hence has tended to control and suppress these forces.¹⁷⁵ Carapico, analyzing the social and political changes that civil societal movements have brought to the Muslim world in the 1990s, detects the factor of traditional state repression of oppositional parties, syndicates, cooperatives and other institutions formed by what the scholar calls ‘civic energies’. Similarly, in terms of the relationship between the state and civil society organizations, Hazama asserts that state regulation and deregulation of civil societal elements in Turkey has coincided with the country’s nation-building strategies.¹⁷⁶ Stressing the effect of nation-building on the functioning of NGOs in Turkey, Yerasimos,¹⁷⁷ having led a research project on civil society funded by the European Union, observes that civil society is underdeveloped in Turkey and its institutions are scarce. He states that it is difficult to find NGOs operating in the western sense of the term. This, he believes, is related to the recent history of nation-building in the country.

¹⁷² Carapico, “NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs,” 12.

¹⁷³ Krista Masonis El-Gawhary, “Egyptian Advocacy NGOs: Catalysts for Social and Political Change?” *Middle East Report* (Spring 2000), 38.

¹⁷⁴ Carapico, “NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs,” 12.

¹⁷⁵ Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey,” 89, and an example is provided by White in “Civic Culture”.

¹⁷⁶ Hazama, “Civil Society,” 70-81.

¹⁷⁷ Stefanos Yerasimos, interview by Defne Asal, *Aktüel*, 1999.

He observes that NGO working principles are close to etatist viewpoints and nationalist values and have taken on the role of replication of statist ideals.

The cultural policies of the post-1980s Turkey inscribe a special role for vakıfs. The perceived threats to the republican ideology as well as their influence on civil society organizations in Turkey has placed state and political officials in a position in which they are able to use these organizations for the benefit of the nation and the state. With the military intervention of 1980 and the termination of the communist threat, the Central Asian Turkic communities became a field of opportunity for the expansion of Turkish nationalist ideology. The Turkish state, having realized the potential of vakıfs, supported these organizations in their activities in the former Soviet states. With the establishment of the *Anavatan Partisi* in 1983, the government provided official funds to Turkish vakıfs for activities in these regions. These vakıfs are mainly involved in the research and development of the culture of the Turks in their regions of activity. Moreover, they are supported by funds from the Ministries that are connected to the *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, the ultra-nationalist political party in the country.¹⁷⁸

3.2.3. NGOs and the New Development Paradigm

Linking up with the arguments in the previous chapter on the globalizing of a civil society and development policies on a worldwide scale, it is clear that NGOs have helped take a broader perspective of the notion of ‘good governance’ by bringing in the importance of civil society in addition to the traditional actors in the political arena. In

addition to NGO influence in the formal political system through lobbying, civil society organizations also advocate change in less traditional ways, such as directing participatory democracy to the level of grassroots mobilization and helping state institutions function more effectively and efficiently. As stated earlier, through the innovations of NGOs, a new development paradigm has emerged in the last two decades emphasizing a more participatory and hence democratic development, stressing the significance of social justice and harmony through cultural expression, environmental health, and equality between the sexes. The importance of the role of civic participation and empowerment has been emphasized in this new development paradigm,¹⁷⁹ thus encouraging the global growth of local civil society in developing countries.

Concerning NGOs in the Middle East, and particularly in Egypt, Masonis El-Gawhary distinguishes the recent transformation of nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations that have functioned as amateur institutions run by volunteers, to the more ‘professional NGOs’ run by permanent staff and an extended budget usually including ‘generous foreign funding.’¹⁸⁰ The focus has thus shifted from charity activities such as the distribution of goods for those in need to NGOs that strive for alternatives to development. Distancing themselves from the framework of orthodox Islamic thinking to a more universal philosophy based on justice and humanity, these have included NGOs that deal with alternative education aiming at a change in mentality to those that strive to genuinely tackle the root causes of the gap between the poor and the better off through participation and empowerment.

¹⁷⁸ Çizakça, *A History of Philanthropic Foundations*, 103.

¹⁷⁹ Mayo and Craig, “Introduction,” 1.

However, the growth of the third sector in Turkey has been very different, for instance, from that in South Asia and particularly India where grassroots activity and local movements developed in response to the challenges of acute poverty and social injustice.¹⁸¹ The long-standing tradition of a strong state and weak civil society has shaped both the regional economic and social inequalities and the underdevelopment of grassroots initiatives and NGOs in Turkey today. Given the catchwords of ‘culture’, ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ in the new development paradigm, development activities of a global nature have started revolving around reflexivity and are reflected in the changes in civil society. According to Kadioğlu, however, the official republican ideology in Turkey prevents the formation of self-criticism and reflexivity. The possibility of enlightened debate and democracy in the country requires a distance from the ‘republican epistemology’,¹⁸² which seems to be the greatest challenge for NGOs in Turkey.

Moreover, it is important to consider the special case of Turkey, given the country’s position as a western country and the aspiration for becoming a member of a supranational arrangement, the European Union. On the other extreme, the large amount of loans from the World Bank, the importation of structural adjustment schemes through the IMF, and the implementation of large-scale development projects through international development agencies all suggest the international positioning of Turkey as

¹⁸⁰ Masonis El-Gawhary, “Egyptian Advocacy NGOs: Catalysts for Social and Political Change,” 38.

¹⁸¹ Sinclair and Goodhand, “NGOs and Governments in Central Asia,” 67.

¹⁸² Kadioğlu, *Cumhuriyet İradesi [Republican Will]*, 20-21.

a country in need of development. This positioning accentuates the different dynamics operative in the Turkish context.

As indicated in the discussions given above, the main problematique of the current research is precisely this dilemma of national NGOs in Turkey, their interactions with global civil society, their relations with the target group, and their standing with respect to the Turkish state. I intend to look into the expected benefits of projects carried out by NGO-state collaboration in Turkey through this alternative channel, to find out the internal dynamics of national NGOs, and the nature of their relations with the state as well as the beneficiaries of development projects in the country. An introduction to the empirical research of the thesis and the characterization of the location of the case study is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV:

SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA AND THE ÇATOM PROJECT

The empirical study of the current thesis is based on women's empowerment centers specific to the Southeastern Anatolia region in Turkey. These women's community centers are called ÇATOMs in Turkish, abbreviated from *Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri* or Multi-purpose Community Centers. The Turkish word for these centers is used throughout the thesis. ÇATOMs which are under the supervision of the larger Southeastern Anatolia Project, shortly referred to as the GAP project (from '*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*' in Turkish), have a semi-civil character due to the involvement of national NGOs in this women's project. ÇATOMs are an interesting case for study given their positioning within the development paradigm, the gender dimension of the project and NGO involvement. Perhaps most important for the purposes of the current thesis is the role of the ÇATOM in creating the foundations for a healthy study of NGOs and their relations with the target group as well as the relevant state authorities and institutions in the region. Prior to an in-depth analysis of the Southeastern Anatolia Project, the 'gender' dimension of the project and the structure and operation of

ÇATOMs, an introduction is made to the social, cultural and economic characteristics of the Southeastern Anatolia region. The special cultural demands that originated in the region, the specific conditions of the Turkish state in relation to the Southeast, the difficulties of civil societal organization in the region, and the particular situation of Southeastern women make up the contents of the initial sections of the present chapter.

4.1. The Southeastern Anatolia Region

Despite the fact that Turkey was among the top ten countries with the most rapid economic growth rate during the 1980s, the country ranked below average in the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Program. Turkey's ranking is still low, with social inequalities, especially those of gender, in the East and Southeastern regions of the country especially striking.

According to the 1990 figures, the population of the Southeastern Anatolia region is 5.2 million, around 9% of the country's total population. The region's contribution to the country's GNP is a mere 4%, indicating the low level of economic production in the area. Southeastern Anatolia is still highly rural with 56% of the region's population inhabiting the cities. The annual population growth rate in the Southeast is 3.5%, which is above the country's average rate. In 1989, when the number of children per woman in the whole of the country was 3.4, this figure was 5.7 for Southeastern Anatolia, reaching 6.1 in the rural areas. In 1990, the literacy rate was 76% among men and 44% among women in the same region. In 1993, the percentage of children attending primary school

was 75%, secondary school was 34% and high school was 14%. During the same year, among university-aged youth, the percentage of university attendance was a mere 0.3%, compared to 12% in the whole of the country.¹⁸³

Due to its historical background, the social, cultural and ethnic composition of the Southeastern Anatolia region is highly diverse. The traditional tribal system [*aşiret* in Turkish], which determines socio-political organization within the tribal community as well as the household and regulates social behavior, is a semi-feudal and semi-nomadic arrangement. Despite its transformation over time, particularly with the migration from the rural areas into urban settlements, the tribe system is still predominant in the region. Extended families with a large number of children, marriage within the tribe at an early age, and patriarchal household arrangements are some of the features of social and cultural life in the Southeast. In general, social hierarchy in the region is determined according to ancestry, age, sex, and economic status. Women and children are the traditionally disadvantaged groups of the society in the Southeast.¹⁸⁴

4.1.1. Resurgence of Demands for Cultural Recognition

The Turkish republic, built upon the religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the Ottoman Empire, rejected all heterogeneity and celebrated the unitary nature of the ‘Turkish’ nation. Within the boundaries of the new nation-state, it was clearly stated that all ethnicities of Anatolia were united as members of the homogeneous Turkish

¹⁸³ GAP: *Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Programı [Sustainable Development Program]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, September 1997).

nation.¹⁸⁵ After 1925, the non-Turkish population living in Turkey accepted ‘Turkishness’. The Kurds, by contrast, were cut off from the rest of the country by their remote location in the mountains of East and Southeastern Anatolia, and were socially and politically organized around tribal lines, with distinct features of cooperation and division. The Kurds were economically dependent on the local landed elites. Given physical isolation and economic dependence, the Kurds remained largely unaffected by the new regime’s policies of Turkish nationalism and modernization.¹⁸⁶ Although the Turkish state does not distinguish according to ethnic origin in national censuses, it is estimated that Kurds make up around 20% of the country’s population, with Southeastern Anatolia their original location of settlement.¹⁸⁷

Given the Kurdish ethnic identity of the Southeastern Anatolia region, serious claims of political difference were first made through the PKK, Kurdistan Workers Party, which made itself heard for the first time in the late 1970s. In fact, the PKK originated in 1974 with a small group of Kurdish university students organizing an association to gain official recognition for the Kurdish language and cultural rights. However, within a radical leftist orientation, Party members advocated a Kurdish Marxist republic in Southeastern Turkey, with the ultimate aim of creating an independent Kurdistan uniting Kurdish regions in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Armed struggle was advocated as the only method by which this goal could be achieved. Consequently, the struggle for

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Gülistan Gürbey, “Türkiye’de Bir Sivil Toplum Oluşumunun Önündeki Siyasi ve Hukuki Engeller [The Political and Legal Obstacles to Civil Societal Formations in Turkey],” in *Ortadoğu’da Sivil Toplumun Sorunları [Problems of Civil Society in the Middle East]*, eds. Ferhad Ibrahim and Heidi Wedel (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997), 118-119.

¹⁸⁶ Doğu Ergil, “The Kurdish Question in Turkey,” *Journal of Democracy* 11:3 (July 2000), 125.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 125.

Kurdish independence started with the launching of a number of major attacks on Turkish targets throughout Southeastern Anatolia.¹⁸⁸

At the time, state authorities in Turkey described this newly emerging Kurdish militia resistance as the work of ‘a group of bandits’. Since the establishment of the PKK, the region has been the scene of prolonged armed conflict, with peak violence during the early 1990s. With a distinctly Kurdish identity and a strong dose of Kurdish nationalism, the guerrilla activities led by Abdullah Öcalan were initially underestimated in the ultra-political climate of the pre-1980 period in Turkey. Following the end of the Cold War, the PKK gave up some of the Marxist-Leninist claims of the party but intensified its military campaign for ‘Kurdish liberation’ during the late 1980s. The Turkish military responded harshly with a strong reaction varying from armed struggle with its ‘special forces’ to the forced evacuation of villages in order to create ‘security buffer-zones’.¹⁸⁹

Forced evacuation both by the PKK and the Turkish armed forces, and the destruction of villages in the Southeast continued, reaching a peak in 1994. Since the PKK attacks in 1984, the Turkish government stated that more than 30,000 people were killed in the region. At the end of 1994, the Minister responsible for Human Rights declared that around 2 million people in the region were left homeless. The Minister of Interior stated in 1995 that 2,297 villages and sub-villages had been fully or partially destroyed and

¹⁸⁸ Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 94-95.

¹⁸⁹ *Forced Displacement of Ethnic Kurds from Southeastern Turkey* (New York: Helsinki Watch, October 1994).

emptied.¹⁹⁰ Kurdish organizations argued for the displacement of 3 million people from over 3,000 villages and smaller settlements.¹⁹¹ Most affected settlements have been evacuated since 1990.¹⁹² As a result of the armed conflict, huge numbers of people fled into the towns and city centers of the region. The displacement and consequent migration has been so tremendous in that the population of Diyarbakır, for instance, more than doubled in four years from the initial 400,000.¹⁹³

The economic and social poverty in the Southeastern Anatolia region, coupled with the ‘denial’ policy of the Republic tends to make the situation in the region highly complex. Neither the Turkish state nor the PKK managed to abandon their political-military discourse, leaving no space for a potential Kurdish opposition movement with relatively liberal and pacifist tones. The political party heritage, tracing back to the early 1990s with HEP or *Halkın Emek Partisi* (People’s Labor Party) and DEP or *Demokrasi Partisi* (Democracy Party) continues to live today with HADEP or *Halkın Demokrasi Partisi* (People’s Democracy Party), despite the numerous court decisions taken to close down consecutive parties. In 1993, several parliamentarians accused of ‘collaborating’ with the PKK were taken from parliament, arrested and imprisoned according to the respective legal procedures.¹⁹⁴ Although the consecutive Kurdish parties gained

¹⁹⁰ Jonathan Rugman and Roger Hutchings, *Atatürk’s Children: Turkey and the Kurds* (London: Cassell, 1996).

¹⁹¹ Ergil, “The Kurdish Question in Turkey,” 128.

¹⁹² Gökhan Aydın, *Bölge Valisi Sayın Gökhan Aydın’ın Basın Toplantısı [Press Meeting of the Regional Governor Mr. Gökhan Aydın]* (Diyarbakır: T.C. Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valiliği, Nov. 14, 2000).

¹⁹³ For more on village evacuations, see *Human Rights: Yesterday and Today*, daily reports by the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, Ankara, January 1995.

¹⁹⁴ The parliamentarians were arrested and imprisoned according to articles 125, 168 and 169 of the Turkish Criminal Code which will be elaborated in the following section.

impressive amounts of votes in the Southeastern Anatolia region, they never managed to gain the required minimum to have the right of representation in parliament.¹⁹⁵

Apart from PKK and HADEP, the Kurdish opposition remains fairly poor. Some pacifist figures criticized the militant policies of the PKK but remained fairly marginal. The Kurdish Democracy Platform aimed at distancing the Kurdish movement from violence and militance, however, ended up 'being squeezed' between the denial policy of the Turkish state and the armed encounters of the PKK. Despite due changes in the last years of the 1990s, the political discourse on the 'Kurdish question' continues to be determined through the legitimacy of armed struggle.¹⁹⁶

For many years, for an average Turkish citizen on the street, the word 'Kurd' signified something derogatory.¹⁹⁷ Kurds signified 'people living in the mountains', 'uncivilized', 'rural' and perhaps most importantly, 'terrorists'. The PKK undeniably changed the perception of the Kurdish image at least among the Kurds themselves providing an element of self-confidence. Even though, among the majority of the Turkish population, there is still the refusal of the existence of a separate Kurdish culture and identity, this bares little convincing capacity in a country where books, magazines and music are readily available in the Kurdish language. The public use of the Kurdish language which was banned in 1980 became legal again in 1991. In today's Turkey, the existence

¹⁹⁵ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997).

¹⁹⁶ Ismet G. Imset, *The PKK: A Report on Separatist Violence in Turkey (1973-1992)* (Ankara: Turkish Daily News Publications, 1992), and Poulton, *Top Hat*.

¹⁹⁷ The recently invented phrase '*kıro*' in Turkish stands for, in a highly derogatory way, the 'failure' of the rural migrant to adapt to ways of the urban life style. '*Kıro*' means 'boy' in Kurdish.

of a separate Kurdish language is no longer ignorable.¹⁹⁸ For instance, a Kurdish weekly, in the name of Welat, is published in Istanbul in the various dialects of the Kurdish language.

In the early 2000s, the armed conflict in the region has now become minimized, following PKK ceasefire after Abdullah Öcalan's capture in 1999. Even though there is less military repression by the state compared to two decades ago, the Kurdish population in Turkey is still yet to be recognized by the state and the wider mainstream Turkish population. However, irrespective of what goes on at the state or society level, the Kurdish minority is on the route to finding ways of expression that are no longer militant.¹⁹⁹ Particularly during the last few years, there is an explosion in expressions of Kurdish culture, illustrating itself through mythology, folklore, literature, theatre, cinema, music, and language. Although the Kurdish language preserves strong differences in itself, Kirmanji is the most commonly used dialect in Turkey. The broadcasting of the former Med TV and the recent Medya TV via satellite seems to be effective in the use of Kirmanji as the standardized Kurdish language in the country. Years of guerrilla struggle obviously played a role in breaking ties with the semi-feudal structure of the rural setting. For some young Kurdish women, given the deep traditional and religious social structure prevailing in the region, being a guerrilla fighter of the PKK or working for HADEP means 'emancipation'. The Kurdish liberation movement, to a certain extent, was the only means to coming closer to the cultural

¹⁹⁸ Ergil, "The Kurdish Question in Turkey."

¹⁹⁹ The following observations are made from raw data collected by Kerem Karaosmanoğlu during March and April 2002 in preparation for his doctoral thesis in the Media and Communications Department at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

expressions of Kurdishness. In that sense, a standard, homogenized language was of utmost importance.

However, during the earlier years of armed struggle there were priorities over cultural matters and the reform in the Kurdish language did not seem to pose an immediate urgency. Abdullah Öcalan, himself, once noted that his first language was Turkish and not Kurdish.²⁰⁰ Indeed, it is now possible to argue that the old generation of the Kurdish movement represented by the PKK, HADEP or *Özgür Gündem* (the newspaper of the Kurds published in the Turkish language) is being replaced by a new generation of Kurdish youth who is keen on learning the Kurdish language and heritage more than ever before. Establishing and maintaining a Kurdish network through language seems to be the primary concern in urban centers such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Mersin, Antalya and Diyarbakır. To be ‘culturally’ recognized as a Kurd in Turkey is the ultimate wish and aim of many young Kurds living in the metropolis.²⁰¹ Nothing can illustrate more vividly their determination to gain their rights to learn Kurdish in schools than the thousands of petitions signed at universities during the year 2001, in spite of harsh reactions from official authorities. It seems that the PKK lost the armed struggle for a Kurdish nation-state, but the young Kurdish population in Turkey seem determined in obtaining their right for cultural recognition.

²⁰⁰ Poulton, *Top Hat*, 230, and Imset, *The PKK*, 333.

²⁰¹ From field data collected by Karaosmanoğlu.

Despite no concrete moves of the Turkish state towards a policy of ‘recognition’ rather than ‘denial’ and the persistence of Emergency Rule²⁰² in the East and Southeastern regions for the past two decades, current discussions on the right to learn Kurdish in schools and the right to undertake radio and TV broadcasts in Kurdish have the potential of opening a new page with respect to the Kurdish minority in Turkey. Particular effects of the possibility of Turkey’s accession into the European Union has accelerated the discussions of the recognition of Kurds as an ethnic group in the country. Such developments have the potential of benefiting especially the population in Southeastern Anatolia who are tired of military operations, terrorist attacks and emergency rule in the region.

4.1.2. State and Civil Society in Southeastern Anatolia

Top-down authority and one-way communication characterize the Turkish bureaucracy both internally and in relation to the society. Unresponsiveness to social problems is prevalent in high-level, ministerial conferences, where no discussions and debates are encouraged from stakeholders. These are platforms where the various relevant authorities view a single ideal, that of the official ideology as inherited from Mustafa

²⁰² Some provinces in the region have been more affected by armed conflict than others. As of December 2001, the 11 provinces that have traditionally been the most active in terms of armed conflict are grouped into what is called the Region of Emergency Rule or *Olağanüstü Hal Bölgesi* (OHAL). The region comprises the 4 main OHAL provinces of Diyarbakır, Tunceli, Şırnak, and Hakkari. The remaining 7 provinces of Bingöl, Muş, Bitlis, Van, Siirt, Batman, and Mardin are classified as the *mücadele* provinces or provinces of secondary importance.

Kemal Atatürk. This is the practical manifestation of what scholar Kadioğlu theorizes as the dominance of the ‘republican will’ over ‘enlightened debate’.²⁰³

In a ministerial conference on the ‘Solutions to the Problems of Southeastern Anatolia’, which took place on 23 November 2000 in Ankara, participants included members of the Ministry of Interior, governors in the region, high ranking members of the Turkish armed forces, journalists and academicians. Although the conference was organized by the Association of Turkish Administrators, no representatives of other associations and vakıfs were present. Despite high participation in the conference, all participants were in strong agreement of the same views on the issue, thus leaving no room for debate or questioning. Members of parliament with Kurdish origin were asked to attend the conference. With no emphasis on their Kurdishness, these parliamentarians voiced their dedication to Turkish national culture. The high-level officials, mainly members of the military, were quick to reprimand the occasional slightly stimulating words that were uttered. A governor from Van was the only person with a few different remarks to make. He was a man who had obviously had confrontation with concepts of participatory development, and advocated a ‘people-centered development’ as the best solution to the ills of the Southeastern Anatolia region. He received no questions from any of the authorities present at the conference. The only reaction that the governor did receive was from the army General who quickly raised a questioning eyebrow and reminded the governor that he must be careful about such fancy words as ‘people-centered development’. “The delicate condition of the region is clear” he argued, and

²⁰³ Ayşe Kadioğlu, *Cumhuriyet İradesi, Demokrasi Muhakemesi [Republican Will, Democratic Reason]* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1999), 12-14.

“so we must be determinant about how we want to proceed.” As the best solution, the answer was clear: village towns (*köykent* in Turkish) must be created all over the East and Southeastern Anatolia region to keep the population out of small settlements isolated in mountains, to help mix the Turkish and Kurdish populations in the cities of the East, and dissolve the feudal and tribal structure of Kurdish communities in an attempt to dissolve the socio-political bond among Kurds. This option was strongly voiced as the single solution by all members of the Turkish military present at the conference, and was forcefully confirmed with the slamming of a fist on the table.

A highly negative attitude was portrayed towards civil society organizations active in the region because they were regarded as ‘too political’. Instead of the dozens of nongovernmental organizations working on issues of human rights in the region, an army General noted the necessity for and urgency of NGOs eager to implement the ‘development model of Atatürk’, urging the ‘support of social movements leading to social solidarity’ in the region. The same General asserted that organizations like the Association of Human Rights²⁰⁴ could not be considered as NGOs.

The example above portrays well the attitudes of state and military bureaucrats with respect to the development of the Southeastern region and the evaluation of civil society organizations. With the effect of the military intervention in 1980 and the subsequent depoliticization of Turkish society, there was a sudden decrease in the number of civil society organizations in the country. This, undoubtedly, had a negative effect on the

already scarce civic initiatives in Turkey. The effects of the increase in political pressure exerted by the state continue today. Coupled with the armed conflict in relation to PKK activity in the Southeastern Anatolia region, prolonged state pressure added to the existing pattern of vertical power relations. These phenomena have played a significant role in the curbing of any kind of civil organization and social mobilization in Southeastern Turkey.²⁰⁵

In addition to the hierarchical social and political organization of the population in the region, problems of representation through political parties in the Southeast have had a negative influence on social representation. Political party organization in Turkey, and more specifically in the Southeastern region, builds upon the unevenness of social power relations and leads to the further confirmation of these relations. Despite the scarceness of civil society organizations in the region, civic organizing on a voluntary basis and with a non-governmental character has nevertheless been observed as the most active in Diyarbakır.²⁰⁶ However, it is important to note that since political representation is not maintained through political parties, civic initiatives reveal themselves within a political discourse, in the form of politically loaded civil society organizations. This, in turn, perpetuates the existing state pressure in the region through the use of military and

²⁰⁴ Association of Human Rights [*İnsan Hakları Derneği* in Turkish] is an NGO that has received particular attention in Turkey due to its strong claims for the rights of the Kurdish population in the country, along with its strong rejection of official ideology and negative stance against the Turkish state.

²⁰⁵ Nurcan Baysal, “Sivil Toplum Örgütlerinin Toplum Kalkınmasındaki Yeri ve Rolü: GAP Örneği [The Place and Role of Civil Society Organizations in Community Development: The Case of GAP],” in *Sosyal Hizmet Sempozyumu 1999: Bölgesel Kalkınma Sürecinde Sosyal Hizmet [Symposium of Social Work 1999: Social Work in Regional Development]*, eds. Ümit Onat and Aycan Altay (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, 2001), 333.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 334.

police force. This eventually leads to a highly negative relationship between the state and civic initiatives in Southeastern Anatolia.²⁰⁷

The constitutional and other specific restrictions such as the Law of Associations of 1983 pertaining to the establishment and operation of civil society organizations in Turkey in general apply even more harshly to such organizations in Southeastern Anatolia. Other legal limitations are put forth by the Turkish Criminal Code, Anti-Terror Law, and the OHAL Law within ‘Applications of Emergency Rule’ specific to the region.²⁰⁸

Baysal portrays the grim picture of court cases against civil society organizations in the OHAL region. Court cases in Turkey as well as the Southeast are easily filed against apparently suspicious organizations and individuals within the Turkish Criminal Code. Most cases are analysed under the offense of “provocation to commit a crime” and “threat for the purposes of creating fear and panic.” More specifically in relation to individual and organizational activity in Southeastern Anatolia, article 125 is used for the analysis of crimes, which asserts that “with or without the use of violence, those who attempt at territorial disintegration or a distancing from the sovereignty of the central authority will be punished with execution.” According to another article within the Code, if a meeting or demonstration is to be held, the organizers must inform a number of authorities in state institutions, including the respective governorates, the security forces and the regional governorate of the OHAL in Diyarbakır. However, in practice,

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 334.

the requirement goes far beyond a mere information and the organizers are forced to get the full permission of all authorities before any kind of demonstration and group event can be held in the region.²⁰⁹

The Anti-Terror Law in general, and article 8 in particular, is yet another piece of legislation which is flexibly used against civil society organizations. The justification is the “use of propaganda against the unity of the state.” Any action, both verbal and physical which is considered as a threat to the official ideology of the state is taken into court consideration under this article. Similarly, article 159 of the Turkish Criminal Code includes “crimes that have been committed against the state forces, referring to the police, gendarmerie, and the military forces.”

Article 169 of the Turkish Civil Code has also recently been frequently used for the hindrance of the organization of civil society in the OHAL region. According to this article, “whoever knowingly provides shelter, assistance, ammunition, weapons and clothing to such an organization [*cemiyet* and *çete* in Turkish connote an illegal organization] or provides unconditional support will get imprisonment from 3 to 5 years.” Although this article requires physical action, most court cases filed under article 169 have included verbal action as a proof to be used within this article. This, along with other legislation, clearly restricts freedom of thought and expression, especially in this part of the country. Due to the intensity of such court cases, civic

²⁰⁸ Gürbey, “Türkiye’de Bir Sivil Toplum Oluşumunun Önündeki Siyasi ve Hukuki Engeller [The Political and Legal Obstacles to Civil Societal Formations in Turkey].”

²⁰⁹ Baysal, “Sivil Toplum Örgütlerinin Toplum Kalkınmasındaki Yeri ve Rolü: GAP Örneği [The Place and Role of Civil Society Organizations in Community Development: The Case of GAP].”

initiatives aiming at social development, health care, improvement of education, gender equality and others are naturally discouraged.²¹⁰

Articles 9 and 10 of the OHAL Law also impede the activities of civil society organizations in the region. In an OHAL condition, among the precautions that can be taken to ensure general security, the protection of public order and the prevention of violent incidences include the separate investigation of each association and the cessation of association activities for up to 3 months. Their assets can subsequently be confiscated. The fact that both articles are broadly defined and that means of objection to the decisions of the OHAL administration are nearly impossible, let alone successful operation, the survival of civil society organizations becomes challenging.²¹¹

Because of such difficulties, there are cases in Southeastern Anatolia in which organizations are established as private sector organizations but function as voluntary, nonprofit organizations. One such example is KAMER [*Kadın Merkezi* in Turkish], established in Diyarbakır. Despite the fact that it is registered as a private business company, KAMER is accepted and functions as a third sector organization. The NGO works for the raising of awareness among women in the region on their legal rights as women. In a round table meeting organized in May 2001, a number of civil society organizations in Diyarbakır had the chance to talk about the situation of such organizations in Southeastern Anatolia. In addition to problems pertaining to NGOs in general in Turkey, problems and aspirations specific to the Southeast were discussed.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

The greatest problem in the region was voiced as the armed conflict and political instability witnessed during the last two decades.

According to the observations of scholar Diken,²¹² as the organizer of the round table meeting, due to limited political representation in Southeastern Anatolia, nongovernmental activity in the region is highly politicized. Given the national limit of 10% for representation in parliament, in localities where there is as high as 60% support for HADEP, there is severe confrontation and conflict between state institutions in the region and organizations with a more civil character. In such a highly politicized environment, there are also nongovernmental organizations cautiously maintaining their ‘unbiased’ stance with respect to state ideology. For instance, the Democracy Platform in Diyarbakır, a forum of local NGOs, portrayed a stance very much in reaction to and against the state. But some other NGOs who were offered to join in the Platform rejected the offer in the justification that they were politically neutral.

Under normal circumstances, syndicates, chambers, and public and private professional organizations would not be considered as NGOs since they are interest groups working for the benefit of their members. Altruism and voluntarism is not a characteristic of these organizations. However, in Turkey and especially the Southeastern Anatolia region, these interest groups have gone beyond their own specific interests to the wider platform of lobbying on a larger scale. In this regard, these organizations have become

²¹¹ Gürbey, “Türkiye’de Bir Sivil Toplum Oluşumunun Önündeki Siyasi ve Hukuki Engeller [The Political and Legal Obstacles to Civil Societal Formations in Turkey].”

²¹² Şeyhmus Diken, *Güneydoğu’da Sivil Hayat [Civil Life in the Southeast]* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2001).

prominent as ‘civil society organizations’ in the region. In most cases they act as pressure groups for the benefit of the society at large. The Diyarbakır Chamber of Trade, for instance, was once highly oppositional and hence political. Their starting point was that “if there are no democratic rights, there is no trade.”²¹³ Similarly, GÜNSIAD, the Association of Southeastern Industrialists and Businessmen [*Güneydoğu Sanayiciler ve İş Adamları Derneği* in Turkish], have on their agenda issues such as political reform and changes in macroeconomic policies. While acknowledging and experiencing the obstacles to such activity, interest groups and the nonprofit sector in Southeastern Anatolia explain that they have no other choice but to lobby for solutions to political problems in the region and in Turkey. Another factor for the prominence of syndicates, chambers and professional groups in the region is their relative freedom of association. Unlike other organizations of a more civil character, these organizations do not confront as many legal obstructions.

Difficulties of organizing and mobilizing civil society were recounted by NGO representatives present at the round table meeting in Diyarbakır. An environmental NGO member, trying to collect signatures for a campaign against the construction of a power plant in Siirt, confronted such reactions from the locals: “You are going to burn our house down. The people involved [in the campaign] are probably against the state. They will recognize our signatures and then we will all get in trouble.”²¹⁴ Such fear, NGOs agree, is another significant obstacle behind the leasing of civic energies in the region. In such a situation, it is agreed that there are mainly two types of civil society

²¹³ Ibid., 268.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 272.

associations in the Southeastern Anatolia region. One group consists of civil societal formations created as a reaction to state and military dominance and a result of subsequent high levels of politicization in the region, while the other group is made up of associations and vakıfs that are an extension of the state, such as the associations for Fight against Tuberculosis of the Turkish Red Crescent Society. It can be concluded that in a region where the word ‘organization’ [*örgüt* in Turkish] is automatically associated with terrorist activities, impediments for the organization of civil society are evidently tremendous and diverse.

4.2. The Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP)

Given the armed conflict in Southeastern Anatolia for over two decades, the overall quality of life in the region has been deteriorating as people are forced into the unhealthy outskirts of urban settlements, consequently losing their self-reliance on the land on which they were able to at least provide for their subsistence livelihoods, such as the production of their own food. Given the high rate of fertility, low productivity, and high unemployment in the region, along with the insecurity of available jobs, the Turkish state is no longer able to cope with these problems on its own. The Turkish state has listed the provinces in East and Southeastern Anatolia as the priority in terms of social and economic development. Regional inequalities in Turkey have been acknowledged starting with the fourth 5-Year Development Plan, in which Priority Provinces and Regions (*Kalkınmada Öncelikli İller ve Yöreler* in Turkish) have been detected. Followed up in successive plans, regional development has become a national aim. The

seventh 5-Year Development Plan places emphasis on human resource development along with equality among regions within the country. In the early 1980s it was decided that a major step must be taken in that direction. Hence, a large-scale development project in the name of *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi (GAP)*, Southeastern Anatolia Project, was initiated by the Turkish state.²¹⁵

The Southeastern part of Turkey, which is the area covered by the administrative provinces of Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa and Şırnak, is also referred to as the GAP region. The Southeastern Anatolia Project, or GAP project in short, is a multi-sectoral and integrated regional development effort based on the principle of sustainability. Aiming at the full scale social and economic development of the region, the Project involves the construction of dams, hydraulic power plants and irrigation schemes on and around the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris, as well as investments in the fields of rural and urban infrastructure, agriculture, transportation, industry, health, education, housing, tourism and various other sectors. The GAP project consists of 13 sub-projects.²¹⁶

The aim of the GAP project is to remove the socio-economic gap between the project area and the more developed regions in the country as well as the inequalities within the region itself. The basic strategy adopted for the achievement of this goal is the development of land, water and human resources of the region. At the moment, nearly

²¹⁵ *GAP Review*, 7:13 (Ankara: GAP Regional Development Administration, 1999).

²¹⁶ *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi Master Plan Çalışması: Master Plan Nihai Raporu [Southeastern Anatolia Project Master Plan Workshop: Master Plan Final Report]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, June 1990).

70% of the economically active population in the GAP region is engaged in agriculture where productivity is low. Traditional production methods still predominate in most areas. With the implementation of the GAP project, agriculture in the region has started modernizing. When the project is completed, the ratio of irrigated land to the total GAP region will increase from 2.9% to 22.8%. As a direct result of the introduction of irrigation, agricultural production and crop variety will increase substantially, rendering the region attractive for domestic and foreign investment. It is projected that this will radically change the economic structure and significantly improve the living standards of the local population, increase their per capita income, and create employment.²¹⁷

4.2.1. New Development Strategies and the Social Dimension of the GAP Project

The GAP project comprises not only the construction of dams and irrigation systems for the promotion of agro-industry but also investments in social services such as health care and education, particularly for women and children. Taking into consideration the social and environmental aspects of development, ‘sustainable human development’ has been declared as the official policy of the GAP project, as published in the Official Gazette on 18 March 1997. The policy of sustainable development has been promoted initially by intergovernmental organizations in the Rio Conference on Environment and

²¹⁷ *Türkiye ve Dünya Tarımı içinde GAP’ın Yeri ve Önemi [The Role and Importance of the GAP Project in Turkish and World Agriculture]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, July 1996).

Development that took place in 1992. The Turkish state has adopted this approach in its Master Development Plan for the Southeastern Anatolia region.²¹⁸

The GAP Administration has determined that the success of the project in terms of attaining its targets of social development requires a penetrating knowledge and information on the existing social structure. This is essential for the design and implementation of sustainable development projects that involve the participation of the local people. Taking this into consideration, during the period 1992 to 1994, the GAP Administration, with the help of NGOs and academicians, undertook a series of social research studies to guide development efforts, identify the basic principles of development in the region, mobilize community participation and to identify the ways of mitigating disparities and imbalances by integration of the disadvantaged sections of the population into the development process. The resultant GAP Social Action Plan was prepared to form the general framework for project activities aiming at sustainable, equitable and participatory social development.²¹⁹

With its official policy of sustainable human development, the GAP project is an ambitious initiative. Through international pressure on the Turkish state, national NGOs as civil society organizations have been assigned consultative tasks and small-scale social development projects in the region. However, this approach is a new one in terms of development policy and planning in Turkey. A number of UN agencies in Turkey

²¹⁸ GAP: *Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Programı [Sustainable Development Program]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, September 1997).

²¹⁹ *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi Sosyal Eylem Planı [Southeastern Anatolia Project Social Action Plan]*. (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, May 1995).

have helped in promoting the sustainability and human dimension of the various development projects comprised within the larger GAP framework. These include the Intergovernmental Social Development Policy Committee (ISDPC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations International Development Organization (UNIDO), World Health Organization (WHO), and United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), among other agencies. Most of these agencies, which provide technical assistance, have been particularly influential in the adoption of this development strategy as UN-related agencies work in direct collaboration with respective Turkish governments.

Under the ISDPC, established in Turkey in 1995, the UN works in cooperation with the Turkish state for a sustainable human development in the GAP region. The objectives are the creation of employment possibilities, enabling an environment supportive of sustainable human development, improvement of the status of women, and the conservation of local natural resources which are essential for the sustenance of local communities in the region. The principle of local people's participation is determined as the tool of implementation in all projects within this extensive program. ISDPC, together with the UNDP, designed a program consisting of 28 projects entitled 'Supporting Integrated Regional Development and Alleviating Socio-Economic Inequalities in the GAP Region', which was launched in 1997.²²⁰

²²⁰ GAP: *Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Programı [Sustainable Development Program]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, September 1997).

According to the 1992 UNDP Human Development Report of Turkey, inequalities in terms of age, gender, ethnic origin and region must be brought to a balance if human development in Southeastern Anatolia is to be attained. These imbalances become particularly acute in the case of the GAP region. The human dimension of development is prioritized through participatory and human-centered strategies of human resource development and basic social provision including education, health, housing, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and capacity building both at the institutional and community level.²²¹

These strategies were planned as a result of the Situation Assessment Report²²² of 1993 which detected a number of developmental constraints in the region. In terms of human resources, the constraints in the Southeastern Anatolia region are low literacy and school attendance rates particularly in rural areas and among women; high fertility rates in rural areas; inadequate knowledge and application of issues of health protection, hygiene, and nutrition; intensive outmigration resulting in the loss of already scarce skilled labor in the region; and the low status of women.

With respect to social services, problems arise from the inadequacy of education and health facilities in the region; the lack of personnel, financial, and technical capacity of local administrations; low health conditions resulting from environmental pollution and a lack of sufficient sanitary water, sewage systems, and urban and industrial waste management systems; the scattered nature of rural settlements which impedes the

²²¹ Ibid.

efficient provision of services to these units; and the intensity of inter-regional migration resulting in overpopulated urban centers in a manner that hampers the provision of public services.

The Report foresees the importance of encouraging local participation, given the top-down approach of state planners and implementers on the one hand, and the strict social organization and hierarchy hindering participation among members at the community level on the other. Local participation becomes particularly essential in the case of inequalities among population groups, men and women, and urban and rural.

Disadvantaged population groups in the region have been determined as landless farmers, families with small plots of land, women and children, resettled communities, and populations living in migrant neighborhoods. Projects designed for women have been labeled as participatory development projects.

As portrayed in the GAP Master Plan, two approaches are used with respect to planning. One is the approach of integrated development and the other is sustainability. The approach of integration denotes a cooperation among the various development sectors such as agriculture, industry, education, and health. Sustainability becomes an inevitable aspect of this approach. In this respect, the GAP project is not merely an economic growth project but also a project of social change. As Bennet asserts, “this new approach to development replaces centralized with decentralized structures; it promotes accountability over control; and it assumes that the downtrodden, divested of

²²² *Durum Belirleme Raporu [Situation Assessment Report]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, May 1993).

the shackles of bureaucracy, will attain their true potential through pluralism and participation.”²²³ It is the purpose of this thesis to analyze to what extent such progressive development approaches encourage local participation and grassroots mobilization in the Southeastern Anatolia region through the engagement of tools of civil society in Turkey.

4.2.2. Gender Balanced Development

Gender equality, a significant dimension of the sustainable human development approach, is adopted by the GAP Administration as an essential prerequisite for social development in the region. The emphasis on gender issues within the social field has been the result of several international developments as well as local indicators of the quality of life in Southeastern Turkey. It is common knowledge that national policies of rural development have almost always focused on male farmers.²²⁴ As a result, most rural women are negatively affected by mainstream economic development processes. Despite efforts on the contrary, studies of third world women in the 1990s indicate very little benefit of development projects to rural women.²²⁵

After the first UN Conference of the International Women’s Year in 1975, an observable increase in studies on the effects of rural transformation on women has been noted. One

²²³ Jon Bennet, “Introduction,” in *NGOs and Governments: A Review of Current Practice for Southern and Eastern NGOs*, ed. Jon Bennett (Oxford: INTRAC Publications, 1997), 9-10.

²²⁴ Kathleen Cloud, “Women and Agriculture: Household-level Analysis,” in *Capturing Complexity: An Interdisciplinary Look at Women, Households, and Development* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994), 126.

²²⁵ Gina Koczberski, “Women in Development: A Critical Analysis,” *Third World Quarterly*. 19 (1998), 395.

major attempt to bring together analytical and systematic studies of women's role in rural development was the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) series that took place in 1985. In 1988, the World Rural Sociology Congress was organized around the theme of changing gender roles. Other smaller scale conferences have pulled together studies on the topic. After analyzing a number of these conference outcomes, Jiggins comes to the conclusion that the impact of agrarian change and rural development on women can hardly be universalized.²²⁶ Recent data shows that oversimplifications are no longer scientific as the social change that is experienced in a rural setting depends on many different variables.²²⁷ The best generalization that can be made, according to Jiggins, is that agrarian change will mostly be unfavorable to women, especially to the poorest, and in almost all cases men experience greater benefits compared to women, finally suggesting that the topic is still under-researched.²²⁸

In terms of issues of gender equity in development, practical and strategic needs of the particular group of women are defined. For purposes of women's development projects, 'interests' as the prioritized concerns are translated into 'needs'.²²⁹ Women's interests, or better to say gender interests are drawn upon Molyneux's distinction of 'practical' and 'strategic' needs.²³⁰ Practical needs are responses to immediate necessity and they work with women in their socially accepted roles as women. Strategic needs, on the

²²⁶ Janice Jiggins, "Agricultural Technology: Impact, Issues, and Action," in *The Women and International Development Annual Volume 1* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

²²⁷ Cloud, "Women and Agriculture", 129, and Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), 80.

²²⁸ Jiggins, "Agricultural Technology," 25-30.

²²⁹ Caroline O. N. Moser, *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice, and Training* (London: Routledge, 1993), 37.

²³⁰ Molyneux cited in Moser, *Gender Planning*, 38.

other hand, challenge the socially accepted role of the female. These needs, when satisfied, help bring women out of their traditionally subordinate position in society.

Today, many specialists working in various fields of development share the view that development plans, programs and projects still neglect the role and importance of women. Yet, it is widely known that women, today as in the past, take equal or even heavier burdens and responsibilities than men in almost every field of family and community life, although the weight of burdens and responsibilities may vary with respect to the level of development and structure of culture.

It was first in the 1970s that the position of women in the process of development found a firm place on the agenda. It was in the 1980s, during which equalitarian policies determined project approaches, that the gender dimension of development became more acute. Today, women's projects cover such headings as women's role in the process of development and participation in the work force, their status in terms of access to modern institutions such as training, credits, health, and other social services, and possibilities of enhancing their control over the outcomes of their own labor and daily lives. Gender imbalance was thus defined as a basic problem, which is assumed to be originating from both gender structuring within the family and from the nature of relations established with the market in the process of development. In this context, the approaches of gender balanced development aim at the creation of institutions and

processes which will empower women for participation, mobility and initiative taking.²³¹

All these developments found their reflection in Turkey as well. The place and functions of women in the process of development were considered, in 1991, as an important parameter by the GAP Administration for the objective of an integrated and human centred regional development project. At the initial stage, there were investigations and surveys to depict the tendencies, problems, expectations and social relations of women in the region which ended up with a model developed to make them active actors in development. Prior to a description of this GAP model for women's empowerment, I will provide a short overview of rural and urban women in the GAP region.

4.2.3. Women in Southeastern Anatolia

Taking a look at the region-specific indicators of development, one can easily observe that the women in the region lag far behind the men in terms of quality of life. The women in the region are under the negative impacts of both traditional social stratification and gender imbalances where their roles and status are socially and culturally determined. This situation becomes more apparent in the rural areas of the Southeast. In the rural parts of the region women participate much less in decision making and household management, benefit less from basic health and education services, face difficulties in having access to sources of income and are unable to benefit from the facilities of modern technology compared to the men in the region. Lack of land and high levels of fertility further increase the work burden of women. In addition

²³¹ Yakın Ertürk, "Gender Differentiation and Equality in Sustainable Development," paper presented at the Seminar on "Sustainable Development and Southeastern Anatolia Project", Şanlıurfa, Turkey, March

to routine farming activities, other domestic chores of women include preparing and conserving food for winter, making bread, fetching water,²³² washing laundry, fetching firewood and attending children.

Education level among rural women is very low. According to 1994 figures, the rate of literacy among rural women is about 25%. The low level of education decreases the accessibility of women to public social services and their participation in the public domain. According to research undertaken in the region, 37% of young girls get married under the age of 15 in rural Southeastern Turkey. Marriage at an early age naturally increases the number of children, reaching the average level of 5.1 children per woman in rural areas and decreases women's control over her own body, as indicated in the statistics that only 12.4% of married women had been married on their own will. More than a half of urban women in the region get married within the ages 15-19, with 17.5 being the average age at first marriage. For the majority of urban women, their own opinion on the decision of marriage is taken into consideration by the family members. As is the case in rural areas, early ages at marriage in urban areas also results in a large number of children throughout the marriage. A contributing factor to this is the extreme importance of the male child within the family. The average number of children per urban family is 3.5.²³³

1995, 27-29.

²³² Making bread takes an average of 2 hours daily, while the fetching of drinking water is a troublesome chore especially in remote mountain villages and can take up to 4 hours a day.

²³³ All statistics are taken from *GAP Bölgesinde Kadının Statüsü ve Kalkınma Sürecine Entegrasyonu Araştırması [Research on Status of Women in the GAP Region and Women's Integration into Development]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, September 1994).

The level of education among urban women is relatively higher than rural women, with a literacy rate of about 56%. Despite the trend of an improvement in women's positioning within the family in urban areas, the hierarchical structure of decision making is still predominantly male based, with 71% of the men taking the decisions at home. As far as expenditures related to household matters are concerned, women's role is considerable in both decision making and practice. However, the main economic and financial decisions are at the discretion of men.²³⁴

Within the framework of gender roles, women in each specific community or area have peculiar patterns of relationship with men, with other members of the community, and with each other. These peculiarities are culturally determined. Furthermore, communities assign certain functions and roles to each individual. However, there are usually considerable discrepancies between what communities assign as roles and functions, and what individuals perceive as their own roles and functions. Thus, gender roles are specifically related to tradition and cultural values. Details on gender relations in the region are provided in the following chapter, as extracted from field data.

The weight of gender discrimination and women's inferior position prevent their move to a status in which they are equally able to control and manage resources. Nevertheless, one should not infer from this reality that women contribute less than men in the welfare and well being of their families and communities. Observations that gender discrimination increasingly plays against women, especially in developing regions, have made the issue of the role and function of women in development a more urgent one. It

²³⁴ Ibid.

is argued that there are two main reasons for addressing gender issues specifically in development programs. The first one is the obvious argument that women have the right to better living conditions and access to these resources just as much as men.

Additionally, if women, constituting half of any given population, are neglected, a potential is left idle and it is impossible to fully reach the targets of development. The second reason, as revealed by various surveys, is related to the fact that any investment in women has more immediate effects on the welfare of children, families, and their respective communities.²³⁵

Although displacement and migration within the region have already started changing the social structure and organization of households and communities in Southeastern Anatolia, traditional structures still persist and influence daily life. In this overall structure, women are still particularly affected by gender imbalances. While rural women have an active role in production, this is not the case for urban women for such reasons as low levels of education and skills and somewhat adverse market conditions. However, the idea of the GAP project is to create non-agricultural employment opportunities for women. In the squatter migrant settlements of the region, a small number of women and young girls are employed in marginal jobs of a contingent nature such as weaving, embroidery, machine knitting, tailoring, and so on. Albeit limited, women living in urban poor neighborhoods occasionally have the opportunity of engaging in low status and labor intensive non-agricultural activities.

²³⁵ 21. Yüzyılda Kadın ve GAP [*Woman and GAP in the 21st Century*] (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, September 1997).

4.2.4. The ÇATOM Model

Given the approach of sustainable human development and the adoption of a policy of gender balanced development for the region, the ÇATOM model was designed in the light of such progressive understandings of regional development. The women-centered ÇATOM project is advocated as one of the participatory and integrated schemes of the larger GAP project. These multi-purpose community centers for women originated from a search for an alternative gender balanced development and socio-cultural change, with the guidance of findings of the survey on women's status in the GAP region and the possibilities of their integration into the process of development in the Southeast.

The GAP Administration, together with NGO personnel and academicians, designed a community center for the empowerment of women, their families, and eventually the community within which the center is situated. The ultimate aim is the creation of self-sustaining women's centers for empowerment and development. At these centers, where flexible and modular programs are adopted, the overall aim is to raise the status of women, to contribute to gender balanced and sustainable human development and to develop relevant and replicable models geared to these aims. Influenced by the Resolution of the 1985 UN Conference for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the ultimate objective of the ÇATOM is to render 'invisible' women 'visible'. By working with women, ÇATOMs help create an environment of healthier and fruitful dialogue between the most needy sections of the community, local state authorities and voluntary organizations.

ÇATOMs carry out a large number of projects in which the aim is the participation, training, and empowerment of the individual, family, and the community through activities of personal development and community cooperation. ÇATOM activities are carried out under the three general headings of social programs, income generating programs, and health programs. Each participant has the chance to attend all three programs, and in fact are encouraged to do so. There are also social and cultural activities accompanying these educational programs. In addition, there are mobile health cabins working under some ÇATOMs. These mobile units are used in reaching out to those who have difficulties in access to health services and health training.

It is claimed by the GAP Administration that these centers aim to bring together women and to create an arena in which they are able to discuss their common problems, share their anxieties, and come up with probable solutions and other activities. They are able to acquire the skills to facilitate their daily lives, including literacy, health education, hygiene, mother-child care, and nutrition. Upon demand, they are also trained in activities which might later provide income. The GAP Administration asserts that the aim of the ÇATOMs is not to tell women what to do but to show them what they are capable of doing. The aim is to develop women's resources and build capacity in order to make them aware of their potentials. The objective is to enable women to choose among alternatives as well as urge them to create further alternatives. Characteristics such as the ability to organize and get organized, advocacy, leadership and coordination qualities, skills in the division of labor, and knowledge on basic civil and human rights are all aspects of capacity building that are believed to enhance the situation of women

and eventually lead to community development. The above mentioned skills are particularly important in migrant neighborhoods and communities which have been formed from people with a wide range of differing experiences, interests, and worldviews.²³⁶

The ÇATOM tries to create a model in which local resources are mobilized in an attempt to improve the conditions of women in the region and their respective neighborhoods. The intention is for the local young girls and women to be trained and educated by local instructors, and the management of the ÇATOM to be provided by local means through local initiatives. This is done through coordination by the local ÇATOM field worker selected from among the young girls in the region.²³⁷ This field worker, acting as a leader, is the main responsible for the management of ÇATOM activities. The model envisages the field worker to be supported by a democratically elected committee which gives assistance in the decision making, planning, as well as implementation phase of all activities. The ÇATOM committee consists of 3 to 5 persons elected by and from the ÇATOM's participants. The committee is present in the management of the ÇATOM on behalf of all participants. This scheme is expected to contribute to the building of managerial capacity among local women as well as increase democratic decision making and implementation within the ÇATOM structure. In this sense, ÇATOMs are centers which train future local female development specialists.

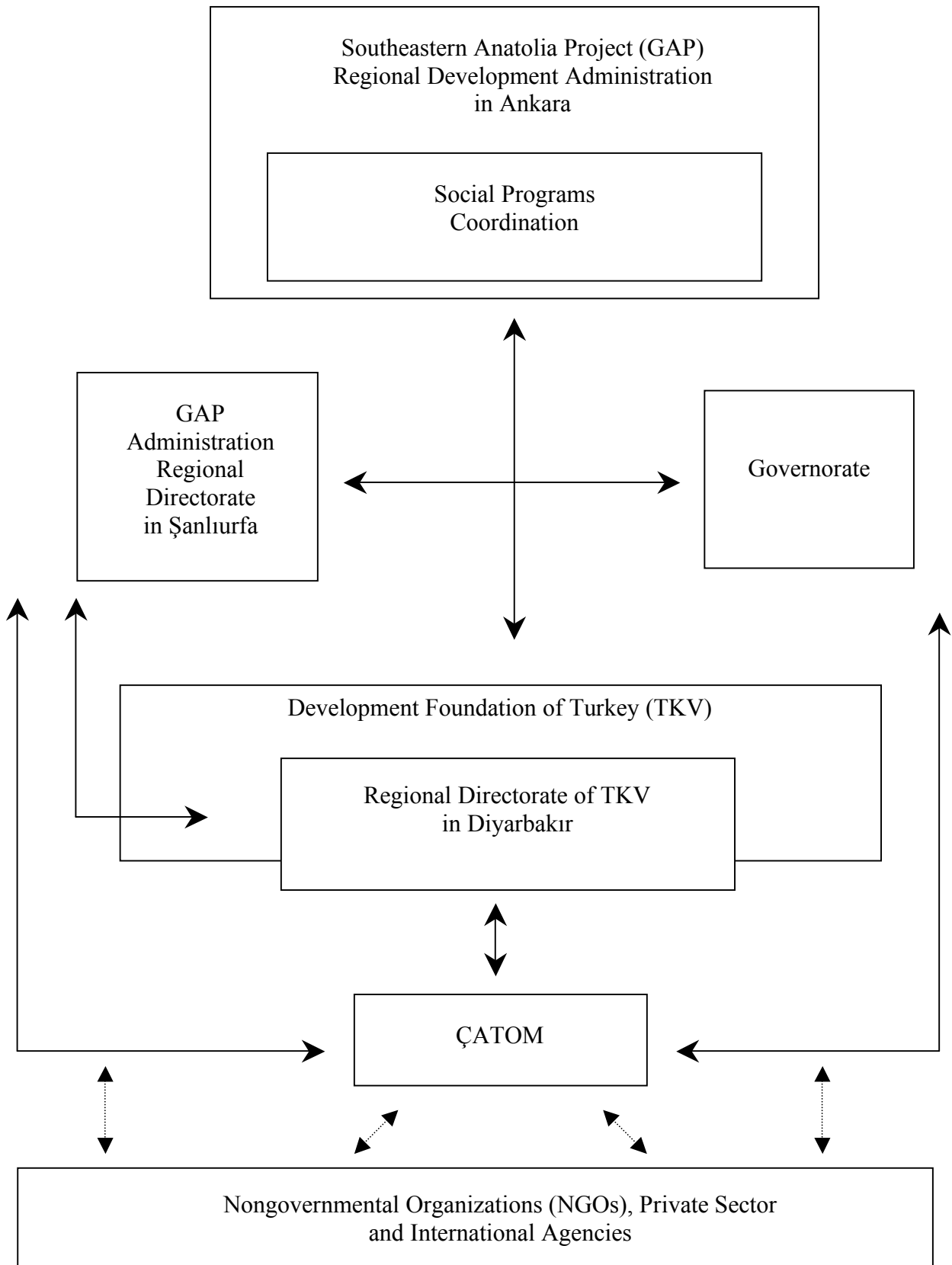
²³⁶ *ÇATOM: Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri [ÇATOM: Multi-purpose Community Centers]* (Ankara: GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, January 2000).

²³⁷ Except for one male leader in the 22 ÇATOMs, all others are female.

ÇATOM centers became functional in November 1995. Since that date, 22 ÇATOMs have been established in 8 of the 9 GAP provinces, with the last ÇATOM center completed in February 2000. There is one ÇATOM building in Adıyaman, 2 in Batman, one in Gaziantep, one in Kilis, 5 in Mardin, 4 in Siirt, 3 in Şanlıurfa, and 5 in Şırnak.²³⁸ ÇATOMs are mainly established in urban squatter neighborhoods inhabited mostly by those who have migrated in from rural areas, while several ÇATOMs operate in rural settlements of a somewhat central location. In the ÇATOMs, where activities are tailored in an integrated, participatory and sustainable approach, the direct target groups of programs are women and young girls of age 14 to 50. ÇATOMs are established under the respective province governor through a memorandum of understanding between the GAP Administration and the province governor. The activities of the ÇATOM are planned and carried out in cooperation with relevant local state authorities and to a lesser extent with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. The organizational scheme of the ÇATOM is given below.²³⁹

²³⁸ ÇATOM: Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri [ÇATOM: Multi-purpose Community Centers], 21.

²³⁹ The organizational scheme is taken from ÇATOM: Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri [ÇATOM: Multi-purpose Community Centers], 13.



4.2.5. NGO Involvement in the ÇATOM Project

Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı (Development Foundation of Turkey), or TKV in short, is the one national NGO that has been involved in the ÇATOM project since the very beginning of the design and planning phase. Given TKV's work experience on economic and social development projects in various parts of the country and the organization's extensive research and applications in the field, TKV carried out a research project on the situation of women in Southeastern Anatolia and put forth an action plan on possible projects that could be implemented for women's empowerment in the GAP region. After the involvement of TKV and the effort of the GAP Administration in attracting NGOs for cooperation on the ÇATOM project, a number of other national NGOs started supporting the activities of the ÇATOMs.

The main task of TKV in the ÇATOM project is the periodic training of ÇATOM field workers. Through the training sessions of the TKV, ÇATOM field workers learn the importance of conducting field surveys in order to derive more information and knowledge about the households within their communities, to assist them in guiding the target group in realizing their potentials, and to help ÇATOM field workers in the planning of programs, monitoring and evaluating the implementations, and the writing of periodic reports. In addition to the practical knowledge of operation in the field, ÇATOM field workers are also trained on the more abstract notions of gender equity, local participation, democracy, and sustainable human development. Hence, TKV is involved with the building of the capacities of ÇATOM field workers, with the intention

of a trickling down of knowledge and experience from the management level of the ÇATOM to the participants of young girls and women.

According to the statements of the GAP Administration, TKV is involved in all aspects of the ÇATOM project, including the detection of the target group, provision of educational and income generational tools, the selection of ÇATOM field workers and instructors, education and training of field workers, monitoring and evaluation of the ÇATOM project, organization at the grassroots level, marketing arrangements for income generational products, and assistance in the engagement of national NGOs in the ÇATOM project. All NGOs other than TKV are stated as being involved in rather limited fields of activity, including the planning of educational and training programs that are in agreement with the local conditions and needs of the respective communities, assistance in the programs of ÇATOM cooperation with state and non-state institutions, and the selection of specialists for the project.²⁴⁰ The actual engagement of NGOs in the ÇATOM project and their activities are the focus of chapter VII.

4.3. Case Study and the Related Methodology

The progressive approach of the GAP Administration to development and the semi-civil character of ÇATOMs place these women's empowerment centers in a special position. ÇATOMs create the ideal milieu in which state-NGO relations can be studied, in addition to NGO-target group relations, thus giving clues about the nature of NGOs as

the possible link between state and the community. The target group of women in the respective community, the involvement of the GAP Administration, related province governorates and other local state institutions, as well as NGOs in ÇATOMs create the circumstances for an analysis of NGOs as intermediaries between the target group and institutions of the state.

The conceptual framework of the current thesis has been formed through the review of literature on development issues on a global level and its changing counterparts in Turkey. The role of civil society organizations and their respective relations with the state have contributed to an understanding of the internal and external dynamics of NGOs in development. Monographs and academic journals were consulted in preparation of the theoretical chapters of the thesis.

A larger section of the thesis includes the field findings and analysis of the empirical study. ÇATOMs, taken as the case study, were used as the setting for an analysis of the interaction among the three actors of the target group/community, NGOs and state institutions. For an evaluation of the stated relationship, I have chosen to collect primary data by use of qualitative methods. Participant observation was the main technique used for data collection during intermittent visits to the Southeastern Anatolia region and the ÇATOMs in the period between June 2000 and December 2001. Of the 22 ÇATOMs, 7 were selected for the purposes of the current study, the details of which are given in the following chapter.

²⁴⁰ *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri (ÇATOM): Vizyon 2010 ve Stratejik Plan [Southeastern Anatolia Project Multi-purpose Community Centers (ÇATOM): Vision 2010 and Strategic*

In terms of research within the selected ÇATOMs, data collected revealed the perceptions of the target group and their progress with respect to personal development and self-empowerment. In addition to data collected from ÇATOM participants, their families and neighboring community members were also contacted for an understanding of local socio-cultural relations and an evaluation of the extent of community organization. Focus group meetings and in-depth semi-structured interviews were frequently used, with a simple quantitative survey utilized with the target group of participants in the selected ÇATOMs. Statistics Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the computerized statistical analysis of the questionnaire used for collecting data among the target group of the ÇATOMs. The results of the analysis of these three groups, comprising direct participants, their families and the community are given in chapter V.

The ÇATOM structure itself was also analyzed in an attempt to understand the success and failures of ÇATOMs in helping instigate a gender balanced sustainable development in the region. This included an insight into the internal dynamics of ÇATOM centers and their relations with both the local state institutions and NGOs. Considering the management of the ÇATOM to be the most critical factor in the success of the model in terms of ensuring sustainability, the management structure of the ÇATOM and the effectiveness of the field workers and instructors were assessed. The impacts of the ÇATOM approach were measured at the local state level, including all local public institutions with which the ÇATOM is in cooperation.

Data pertaining to the second agency of state authorities was collected in the field, as local state authorities and their institutions were contacted during visits to respective ÇATOMs. This data led to findings on the perceptions of local, regional and central authorities on the ÇATOM project, including the GAP Administration, provincial and county authorities, and other related civil servants working in public institutions with activities similar to the ÇATOMs, whose results are presented in chapter VI. The collection of data at this level comprised the contacting of province and county governors depending on the location of the ÇATOM, and other local state institutions with which the ÇATOM has contacts, mainly in the form of public instructors. These included the conducting of semi-structured and open-ended interviews mostly with directors and other responsables of the Directorate of Education, Public Training [*Halk Eğitimi* in Turkish], Health, and the local representatives of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency [*Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu* in Turkish].

As no NGO representatives working in ÇATOMs or related NGO regional branch offices were confronted during visits to individual ÇATOMs, a list of NGOs collaborating on the ÇATOM project was obtained from the GAP Administration in Ankara, as the starting point for an analysis of NGO activity in the ÇATOMs. Except for two NGOs on the list, all other civil society organizations directly or indirectly involved in the ÇATOM project were contacted, leading to data collection among 9 NGOs. Visits were made to their offices in Istanbul and Ankara, where semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with NGO representatives for the collection of raw data. Hence, NGO involvement in the success and failure of the ÇATOM project

was evaluated through the words of NGO representatives, rather than through field observations of their relations with the target group and state authorities in the region. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this absence of NGOs in the field was in fact an indication of their role as intermediaries between the state and community in Southeastern Anatolia. The results of the NGO study are depicted in chapter VII, with a concluding chapter of an evaluation of NGOs as the link between state and society within the framework of the ÇATOM project in Southeastern Turkey.

In addition to research in the selected 7 ÇATOMs, extensive use of the research technique of participant observation was also used for the observation and understanding of certain processes of social and cultural interaction in Southeastern Turkey. This approach assisted me in the understanding of relations of hierarchy, both at the inter-household and bureaucracy level, providing glues of local gender power relations, among others. In addition to the specific case study of the ÇATOMs, during the time of empirical research, I had plenty of time to visit both the villages and the urban settings of Southeastern Turkey. The numerous conferences and symposiums that I attended during the two-year research also provided valuable input.

CHAPTER V:

WOMEN’S PERSPECTIVES ON THE ÇATOM PROJECT

5.1. The Southeastern Anatolia Region: Views from the Field

5.1.1. The Economy of Southeastern Anatolia

The majority of the population in Southeastern Anatolia is made up of Kurdish tribes (*aşiret*) living mainly in the rural areas, exhibiting a semi-nomadic character. Given scant industrialization in Southeastern Anatolia, most families earn their livelihoods from animal husbandry and the cultivation of land. Pastoral production is the main economic base along with the trade of livestock and their produce. Although the region is highly mountainous and the larger part of land is used for pastures, there is still arable land for cultivation and gardening. In addition to crops like cereal, corn, and rice, the region is suitable for the plantation of sesame, grapes, and walnuts, for which the region is infamous. Families grow plenty of vegetables in their gardens including potatoes,

radish, turnip, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, onions, pumpkin, and cabbage. Fruit orchards in the region contain apricot, plum, mulberry, fig, pear, and peach trees. The produce of fields and gardens is largely for household consumption and some barter with other villages. The main source of income in the rural Southeast, however, is the smuggling of herds. This is done in addition to the raising of mainly sheep and goats and selling their produce. Animal trade is organized by local traders through an unofficial or black market. The animals are smuggled either legally or illegally to Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

It is perhaps more appropriate to talk about these activities in the past tense, as since the start of armed conflict in the region nearly two decades ago, livelihoods have rapidly changed for a large number of families in the region. The endless pastures are no longer available for the raising of sheep and goats in the mountains of the Southeast, as concerns of security make the pastures unsafe to use. Fields and gardens are abandoned together with entire villages and districts.

Nowadays, particularly in the smaller sized settlements, it is the civil servants and members of the security forces that keep the economy running to a large extent. Of the places that I visited for the empirical part of my study, this was especially the case in Beytüşşebap where all the merchants in the county are somehow in contact with the military. Providing for the military, which has an immense presence in Beytüşşebap, guarantees the survival of the small businessmen in the locality. Prior to the intrusion of the military in the region, a large number of the families in Beytüşşebap and in the surrounding villagers were involved, in one way or another, in the plantation and

trafficking of cannabis. The chief military commander in charge in Beytüşşebap explained the discovery of cannabis plantations in the mountains of Beytüşşebap. Prior to the armed conflict with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) in the region, the military had no idea of the extent of illegal cannabis plantation on these territories. Now that the security forces have patrolled a large section of the mountains in the region, the plantation and trafficking of cannabis has declined considerably.

Again in Kurtalan, a town of Siirt province, the only buyers of the kilims woven by the young girls are the civil servants who have temporarily come to the region. The families of police officers, teachers, doctors, and members of the military are the only sources of income for kilim weavers. The local population is thus dependent mainly on this sector of civil servants. This, as has always been the case in this region of Turkey, results in unstable, inconsistent, and insufficient revenue for the local producers and merchants in Southeastern Anatolia.

Seasonal work has become an essential source of income for a large number of families in the Southeast. While a large number of families have migrated from the villages to the towns and the outskirts of the cities of the East and Southeast, an even larger number of families have migrated from cities in the East to cities in the West of the country. In both cases, the absence of the male members of the family have disrupted the social structure of traditional families. Seasonal work has become such an essential part of household subsistence and income that even some young girls in the region are routinely involved in seasonal migration for work such as for hazelnut or cotton picking.

5.1.2. Socio-cultural Life and Social Capital in the Region

The traditional community in Southeastern Anatolia has the extended family and the *aşiret* as its fundamental social and cultural base; this tradition persisting even after a transition to the urban setting. Relations within the family as well as the tribe community are organized mainly along vertical structures of power, with the male head of the family or the tribe leader at the tip of the pyramid. As in all patriarchal societies, men are the final decision takers as opposed to the subservient role of women and children.

What makes the notion of a ‘tribe’ important in the region is tribal relations and networks based on patrilineal descent, territorial attachments, common history and culture within the tribe community. In the region, territory is the most indispensable consequence of being associated with a particular local tribe. This is because land in the region is traditionally divided according to tribal boundaries and the use of these traditional lands is possible mainly on a contractual basis, although this is rarely done by way of legal procedures. The ambiguities resulting from ‘traditional’ or ‘tribal’ land has resulted in fights over these lands, leading to alliances and fissions among tribes.

Close relations within the tribe community leads to the exchange of labor, goods, and visits on a regular basis. Labor is exchanged within the community in the form of communal work. Each household sends one member of the family to the family in need, and at the end of a hard day’s work, the host household provides a meal to those who

have provided assistance. Households with the lowest labor force are exempt from these responsibilities, and they are provided with assistance in the form of alms-giving. The same social rules of communal exchange apply also to women.

It is interesting to note that, even though there are strong horizontal relations and egalitarian rules among the members of the same village, vertical bonds are nevertheless prevalent both inside and outside the village setting. Patron-client relations are dominant with respect to traders and leaders within the tribe as well as public authorities such as the headmen, governors, politicians and other figures of power. Personal networks gain prominence over mutuality and cooperation.

5.1.3. Changes after Internal Displacement and Migration

As stated earlier, armed conflict in the region for over two decades has resulted in rapid social change among the population in Southeastern Anatolia. Because a large number of villagers have left their original settlements after the start of attacks of the PKK, both cultivation and pastoral production, as well as animal trade has come to a near halt in Southeastern Anatolia. Most villages near to the borders with Iran and Iraq have been emptied. However, when a village is forced to migrate, the immigration process usually takes place as a whole, with the entire village allocating itself in another location. A few of the younger male members of the village who decide to go their own way, such as migration to a larger city, may do so, however, a large proportion of the village remains intact even after the migration process, with men leaving home only for purposes of

seasonal or daily work. Traditional customs have loosened as a result of the dislocation and there is constant change in the economic configuration of the community.

Territorial changes resulting from internal displacement of families and communities result in the weakening of tribal relations. Both physical proximity from the tribe leader and other members of the tribe, and residential dislocation has been factors affecting the loosening of tribal networks among displaced communities. Tribal networks thus witness a degree of degeneration, both in the new settlement as well as in the host community. Families are now obliged to pay money for the goods they were once able to plentifully produce. Financial problems, on the other hand, result in malnutrition among migrant families.

While the elder members of the community express their longing for their ancestral lands and the women are discontent about the absence of the males in the family, the younger generations, both girls and boys, are happy about the better opportunities for education in the new area of settlement. As migration takes place into the outskirts of towns and larger cities of Southeastern Anatolia, education facilities are giving the youth a better chance of education. However, the darker side of the coin shows us that due to financial problems among the same families, the facilities that are present are not necessarily accessible. A woman explained that in her former village, although there were no health facilities, they could easily come into the nearest town or city for a health check-up and treatment, as they owned the money to pay for the health services. Now

they are closer to these health facilities but no longer possess the money to pay for these services.

5.1.4. Deprivation of Women in the Region

While carrying out my fieldwork in Southeastern Anatolia, I came across a report published by the Family Research Institute²⁴¹ on the increase in suicides among young women in Batman province. The phenomenon was further elaborated by a number of journals and newspapers in the country during the winter of year 2000. In fact, I had also come across a few girls both in Batman and Siirt talking about other girls in the vicinity they had heard commit suicide.

The women in this deprived region of the country are particularly affected as the recent changes taking place do not seem to make an improvement in their socio-cultural status as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers. The patrilineal pressure that women face result in their secondary position as female household members, and their limited access to education and other social services in the region. The harsh local traditions give women no chances of making choices that affect their own lives, including the decision as to the number of children she bears during her life time, who she marries at what age, how many wives her husband will have, how much say she has inside the household, and how much space she has to maneuver. Added to this is the absence of possibilities of social interaction and the problems of domestic violence performed against female household members. For instance, projects such as asylum homes for battered women

are not implemented in the East and Southeastern parts of the country. Since the revolt of women are regarded as unacceptable within the tribal arrangement of the Southeast, women in the region who seek asylum must be taken away from their home environment and their address of asylum kept secret. Seeking asylum in the region is particularly difficult for women given the frequent use of firearms in the region. To solve this problem, the few women that seek asylum are taken by relevant state institutions to homes in the western provinces in the country.

Authorities noticed that the number of suicides among women in Batman showed an unusual increase during the year 2000. Out of 60 suicide attempts among women in Batman, 31 ended in death.²⁴² A closer study of the statistics indicated that during the first 8 months of the year, Batman witnessed double the amount of suicides than the average in Turkey.²⁴³ Compared to the previous year, suicide rates increased by 52%. However, acknowledging the fact that the number of suicides in 1999 was already higher than average is a further indication that the phenomenon was not specific to the year 2000. There are estimations that the same case is also valid for the East and Southeastern Anatolian provinces of Diyarbakır and Muş, two provinces that also need to be researched in terms of their increasing suicide rates. In any case, it would not be incorrect to conclude that since 1999, suicide rates in Batman and the rest of the Southeast are currently on top of the list.

²⁴¹ *Aile Araştırma Kurumu* is a public research agency under the Prime Ministry.

²⁴² Ayla Önder, “Batman’da Kadın İntiharları Kolay Açıklanamıyor [No Easy Explanation to Women’s Suicides in Batman],” *Pazartesi*. 68 (Nov. 2000), 11.

75% of the suicides in Batman are committed by the youth in the age range 13-25 and 80.8% of these are young girls,²⁴⁴ a finding highly particular to Batman. This becomes especially alarming when considering the fact that in all suicides committed worldwide, including Turkey, on average, men are in higher percentage than women. Of the suicide cases in Batman, studied by the Family Research Institute, 53% of the women were married and the remaining 47% were single. 65% of these were young women that were either single or newly married below the age of 25. Of the 11 suicides committed in the center of Batman, 7 were in squatter migrant neighborhoods. A research carried out in Diyarbakır also reveals that the majority of suicides in that province take place in the squatter neighborhoods formed by families fleeing their villages,²⁴⁵ making suicide a reality among low-income, internally displaced and violence-struck women and young girls.

One factor as influential in the suicides in Batman, and possibly the greater Southeast, is the rapid social change as a result of migration from the villages to the city centers. Given the armed conflict in the region, this displacement and spontaneous settlement of rural families in various cities and province centers has resulted in the disruption of strict socio-cultural structures and has changed social expectations. The differing socio-economic status of the migrants is so prevalent in Batman, for instance, that the city is divided into two separate invisible sections, with the migrant squatters being referred to

²⁴³ *Batman’da Artma Eğilimi Gösteren İntihar Olaylarının Ön İnceleme Raporu [The Preliminary Report of Suicides on the Increase in Batman]* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık, Aile Araştırma Kurumu Başkanlığı, Oct. 2000).

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁴⁵ Önder, “Batman’da Kadın İntiharları Kolay Açıklanamıyor [No Easy Explanation to Women’s Suicides in Batman],” 11.

as ‘other Batman’.²⁴⁶ Such slum areas formed by internal migrants are not specific to Batman but are widely seen in almost all the centers of the provinces in East and Southeastern Anatolia. In addition to their disadvantage as poor women, these women are also in an inferior position given the male-dominant power relations in the region. Hence, this resultant rapid social change reveals itself in the gap between the outside world and the world of the interior. At the same time, greater access to television, including all the national channels as well as the international ones, has made young girls aware of lifestyles and identities very different from their own. This applies particularly to tabloid type TV programs. With patrilineal pressure inside the home and images of a completely different reality outside the home, young girls find themselves in contradiction. All these contrasting phenomena lead to even greater pressure on young girls who have a hard time matching the two realities.

Psychiatrists analyzing the situation of the population of Southeastern Anatolia emphasize the importance of the change in world-views brought by ideological conflict in the region. People in the region have been torn from their traditional ways of life on the one hand, but have not been fully supported by the replacing ideology, on the other. Hence, they find themselves in poorer living conditions in squatter neighborhoods, with no means of support. They are unable to live the new emancipations they have been promised and thus find themselves in the midst of uncertainty.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ *Batman’da Artma Eğilimi Gösteren İntihar Olaylarının Ön İnceleme Raporu [The Preliminary Report of Suicides on the Increase in Batman]*, 6.

²⁴⁷ Önder, “Batman’da Kadın İntiharları Kolay Açıklanamıyor [No Easy Explanation to Women’s Suicides in Batman],” 11.

These women, their families and communities constitute the target group of the 22 ÇATOMs established in the Southeast. ÇATOMs, aiming at improving the social and economic status of women and eventually the community in the region, are confronted with such a population in rapid social change. The profile of participants and the effects of ÇATOM activities on the status of participating young girls and women are evaluated in the current chapter.

5.1.5. Selection of ÇATOMs for Fieldwork

In addition to practical reasons such as proximity to one another, the ÇATOMs that I studied for the purposes of the current research were selected based on three main criteria. One was the years of operation of the ÇATOM, which would guarantee an observation of the settled impacts of the ÇATOM on the participants, their families, and the surrounding community. A second criteria for the selection was the type of settlement in which the ÇATOMs are located. Of the 7 ÇATOMs I have selected, one is situated in a village, 4 are situated in counties [*ilçe* in Turkish] and 2 in province centers [*il merkezi* in Turkish]. This was a representative spread of the 22 ÇATOMs that are operational in the region. A final criteria was the diversity of the composition of the target group in each community.

Uluköy ÇATOM is in a village setting in which the women still work outside as well as inside the house. Given the decrease in the number of animals that are tended in this village of Kurtalan town of Siirt province, young girls and women still handle animal

husbandry as well as the gardening. The village is also important as half the families in the village earn their money as village guards.²⁴⁸

Of the 4 counties which I selected, Beytüşşebap, a county of Şırnak province, is the most isolated from surrounding settlements as it is covered by all sides with high rocky mountains. The inhabitants say that Beytüşşebap was a village with all families from the same tribe. The village then expanded to become a municipality and now it is a county of Şırnak. The whole of Beytüşşebap is now made up of families from two kin tribes. Cizre, another county of Şırnak province, is in high contrast to Beytüşşebap as it is a vibrant city with its diverse local population. Being close to the borders with Iraq and Syria, border trade in Cizre has made a number of families quite wealthy. Due to the trade of diesel oil and other goods, which used to be more vibrant than it is today, Cizre has seen the emigration of a large number of families from other provinces over the years. In the populated city, there are families of Arab origin as well as Kurds who have evacuated their villages, along with a small population of non-Muslims. The most striking aspect of Cizre is its *kara çarşaf* women, women wearing the black veil. The women say that since the times of Prophet Noah,²⁴⁹ it is the tradition that women in Cizre wear the *kara çarşaf*. In this sense, the women of Cizre presented one of the most interesting combinations in terms of veiled and conservative, but urban and economically well off women and young girls. The target groups in the ÇATOMs of the

²⁴⁸ Village guards are armed villagers who are in charge of the protection of their villages against any possible attack by armed militia. This system is brought by the Turkish security forces as a solution to the armed conflict in the region, in which a critical number of men in a strategically important village are given arms to defend themselves and their village.

²⁴⁹ Prophet Noah's tomb is found in Cizre. While some legends talk about Mount Ararat [*Ağrı dağı* in Turkish] as the mountain in which Noah was suspended from the great flood, legends originating in Cizre believe that mountain to be the one of Mount *Cudi*.

two other counties, namely Şirvan and Kurtalan of Siirt province, were similar in that both were situated in communities that were witnessing waves of labor migration of male household members to the larger cities of Turkey. The difference between the two was the more settled community of Şirvan ÇATOM as opposed to the migrant community of Kurtalan ÇATOM.

The two province centers of Siirt and Batman revealed yet other aspects of women in the Southeastern Anatolia region. The local population of Siirt is of Arab origin with some Kurds also living in the city. With the internal displacement in the region, families and communities from the villages have formed migrant settlements in Siirt center. A community referred to as the *göçerler*, or the Kurdish gypsy nomads form a distinct form of the portion of the population, distinguishable in their physical appearances and lifestyles. It is in one of these mixed communities that Siirt ÇATOM is located.

Batman, on the other hand, is a large and populated city which has attracted a fair number of families from the surrounding settlements given its resources of petroleum oil. The armed conflict in the region has resulted in the additional migration of a large number of families into Batman center. Batman ÇATOM is located in a neighborhood that is newly formed and is still receiving families migrating from the villages.

In the field study undertaken in these ÇATOMs, my primary aim was an understanding of the realities of the women in the region. I intended to find out the Southeastern Anatolian woman's perception and awareness of her womanhood, her problems as a woman, and the solutions she offered to these problems. In the second part of my field research, I investigated how the involvement of women and young girls in the ÇATOMs

had affected their lives; what they expected and what they found at the ÇATOM environment. In all the ÇATOMs, it was striking to observe that despite the very little difference in education levels of all women, their exposure to the urban revealed critical differences among the same group of women.

5.1.6. Effects of Migration

Migration has become an important factor determining the social and cultural development and change in the Southeastern Anatolia region. Migration, both from village to town and from a city in the East to a city in the West, has led to the *mélange* of various dynamics in the region. Experiences of migration differ for both men and women in the region. Migration has led to changes in nutritional habits, the use of languages, household structures, status of women in the family and community, and so on. Despite the unrelenting influence of religion and the traditional social relations in the region, exposures to the unknown world, through TV and access to traveling, has made young girls and women experience a wide variety of changes in Southeastern Anatolia. The process of migration has affected rural women differently than urban women. I observed, for instance, that gender awareness is prevalent only among the few women who have seen and lived in the western parts of the country, which are mainly women of urban origin. It is these women who are also aware of a conception of the ‘West’ and the ‘East’.

5.1.6.1. Rural-Urban Interactions

After the start of armed conflict in the Southeast, a large number of villagers in the region had to leave their settlements in search of safer places to live. Talking with a group of women in a home gathering in Kurtalan, during a cold Ramazan night in the winter of 2000, I realized the isolation in which these families were living prior to the migration process. Despite 7-8 years of arrival in the town of Kurtalan, I had the impression what most women were still living in the same isolation of their former villages. In the village, women used to work in the fields and tend the animals while the men would take care of the marketing of produce in nearby towns or cities. Even in the larger settlement of Kurtalan now, the women go into the marketplace only for specific events. This is usually for an occasion such as the preparation for a wedding. Otherwise, the appearance of young girls and women in the public sphere is seen as inappropriate by the men in their families and communities.

Because of the isolation of villages, none of the rural women except for the young girls were literate. In most focus group meetings, elder women had no understanding of the Turkish language while the women in their 30s and 40s were able to understand but not respond in Turkish. Although most young girls had an understanding of Turkish, they were sometimes reluctant to speak Turkish, as they felt insecure with the language. They preferred to speak Kurdish while a young girl who was fluent in both languages translated.

Although not the same situation in the ÇATOMs, in focus group meetings in homes where there were women and young girls from the same extended family, the eldest women were the most comfortable in their dealings with me. Even though I wanted to keep the conversations informal in which everyone felt free and comfortable to speak out, I could sense the authority of the elder women in the family. The younger women, especially the daughters-in-law, placed themselves in a secondary position after the mother-in-law, the mother, or the grandmother. They would wait for the elders to speak first before they joined in the conversation. The eldest women, indeed, would wait for this gesture of courtesy. Similarly, during the translations, the young girl who was translating was precautionary about giving the eldest the first word. The daughters-in-law were uneasy about talking next to their mothers-in-law, while the young girls felt apprehensive about speaking out in the presence of their mothers. This was an indication of a woman's changing status with age within the family.

While life in the city is easier in many aspects, it is also more difficult. Women are conscious of the fact that they are nutritionally in a much poorer environment in the city. They declared that in the village they would always grow fresh fruits and vegetables in their gardens. They had plenty of tomatoes, aubergines, and grapes in their vineyards, both for subsistence consumption and to sell in the marketplace. They used to make their own cheese and yogurt from their own sheep and goats, while now they have no choice but to pay money for their subsistence food items. Moreover, they complained about the bad quality of the produce they were obliged to buy. Since their arrival in the city, they stated that this situation was getting worse by the year. In the villages, the women had to “work like the men”. Their workload was heavy as they spent their time

both inside the home and out in the field. Although life in the village was harsh, they were happy about the fertility of the soil, abundance of the produce, better chances of nutrition, and the relative stability of income. Women now have less work responsibilities in the city setting but most, especially the elder women, still prefer their life in the village. The young girls, who do not even remember life in the village, are happy about the opportunities of city life. Some girls do not want to give up the chance of schooling. Despite the difficulties of seasonal cotton-picking work, these girls are happier about living in the city.

Similar to the issue of nutrition, access to health facilities was also stated as a problem. Although women are now closer to health facilities in the city, they complained of not having the financial means to go to the doctor. In the village, the hospital was further away but at least at that time, they could sell their wheat, lentils, or barley to pay for their treatments in the city. Now, they neither have their land nor their health.

The migration process has forced a large number of the males in the family to further migrate to the western parts of the country. With Istanbul being the main city of seasonal and temporary employment, other cities include Izmir, Mersin, Antalya, and some busy seaside resorts. Hence, most homes in the migrant neighborhoods had at least one male in the family who was missing. As was the case in the village, certain tasks are still carried out by the female household members. For instance, in areas of water shortage such as Kurtalan and Uluköy, young girls spend most of their time in the collection of water from public fountains. For the daily household consumption of 20-30 jerry cans of water in Uluköy, the girls go to the fountain 3-4 times a day, each time

spending around 2 hours. In addition to that, girls help their mothers with the chores around the house as well as take care of their siblings.

In a focus group meeting in Siirt, of the 14 women of ages 20-42, 8 were of Arabic origin and 6 were Kurdish. All the Arab Turks were urban and had no problems with the Turkish language, while some of the Kurdish women had recently migrated from the village. The difference between the urban and rural women was very clear in this one focus group meeting. The urban women were well dressed with their carefully pinned headscarves, while the rural women were still wearing their cotton daily headscarves.²⁵⁰ The headscarf is a good indication of the level of urbanity, which in turn determines a woman's standing and status with respect to her husband, community, and surroundings. Women who have seen the cities of the West, Istanbul and Ankara in particular, are conscientious about their physical appearances, namely their headscarves and overcoats. The effects of the fashion of Islamic dressing, as revealed mainly in Istanbul, on Southeastern women can easily be detected, which is especially the case for young veiled women. These women, however, were extremely small in number, compared to the vast majority who had experienced very little positive change as a result of migration, either to cities of the East or the West.

The rural women, on the other hand, were also distinct in their clothing. But maybe what is more important is the introversion of rural women. In general, I found it easy to sense among women the gap between the private and the public spheres. This revealed

itself most evidently in the usage of language. For Kurdish women and young girls who could speak only a bit of Turkish, speaking their mother tongue, which is the language of the ‘home’, was much simpler than speaking Turkish, which was the language of the ‘outside’. Furthermore, Kurdish women who had only very recently left their villages lived through even greater difficulties of expressing themselves, even if they were speaking in their mother tongue. For these women, the meaning of the word ‘home’ was literal. Even speaking at the ÇATOM was difficult for these women who were probably not very verbal even in their own homes. Speaking in public, despite in a group of women, these women covered their mouths with their cotton headscarves, whereas the younger girls would turn their heads in another direction while speaking. Urban Arab women, on the other extreme, were boisterously verbal, both in Turkish and Arabic.

The urban women in the region were better able than rural women to compare themselves with the situation of women in the western part of Turkey. Unlike the rural women who still live in isolation in the city despite the move from the village over a decade ago, urban women in Siirt, for instance, talked about the positive influences of their contacts with the wives of civil servants who were in Siirt on a temporary basis. When the wives of security personnel in the same apartment building called these local women over for tea or coffee, the women stated that they see and adopt the different ways of these ‘western’ women. As one woman put it: “In this way we are confronted with different cultures. Before it was only Kurd and Arab.”

²⁵⁰ The white cotton headscarves that women in villages wear (referred to in Turkish as *yemeni*, *yazma* or *tülbent*) are now worn by urban covered women only under their non-cotton headscarves. Urban veiled

It was only a few times that the dichotomy between the 'East' and the 'West' was brought up by women in conversations. In all cases, it was urban young women who had traveled to Istanbul or Ankara and who had some work experience that made the comparison. Referring to the entire Southeastern Anatolia region, one urban woman explained: "The West does not want to see the East. So much money is being spent, we'd like to see some of that money spent on the East. Yes, there is the GAP project but more attention can be paid to the East. Actually the East has slowly been changing, mainly with the help of the GAP project. For instance, you are here now talking with us, which would have never happened before the GAP project." However, when the urban women talk about the 'East', they are in fact not talking about a homogenous 'East'. This is revealed later in their talks about the different 'people' in the region:

The Arabs in the region have always looked down upon the Kurds, sometimes because of their accents and sometimes because of their physical appearances. The Kurds who have migrated from their villages are all begging now in the city of Siirt. Once you label them, you see them as all the same. But we mustn't have contempt for these people because in a way they have no other choice. We all share the responsibility for these people. The situation of the Arabs is much better. They are rich from the family because they are the local inhabitants of Siirt. There is some kind of a mixing with the Kurds who live in apartment flats but the Kurds who live in squatter neighborhoods are very far from us. (Siirt)

As clearly seen above, urban women in the region are more in command of a particular terminology that the rural women are completely unfamiliar with. Having migrated to the western parts of the country and seen the broader opportunities in these cities, these women are better situated to evaluate their positions in Southeastern Anatolia. Their awareness of gender issues is also more heightened compared to their rural counterparts.

women follow the fashion for Islamic dressing as they pin their headscarves in a variety of fancy ways.

5.1.6.2. Awareness of Gender Relations in the Region

I must admit that I was quite surprised with the level of unawareness of gender issues among most women in Southeastern Anatolia. I realized that these women had never thought of themselves as ‘women’. An identity based on sex is completely unfamiliar to the women, as is an identity based on the individual. As women have always seen and known themselves as a member of the extended family and community, the question I posed about their womanhood almost always came back to me in the form of blank faces. I could see that the women in front of me had no idea of what I was saying and asking. It was at that first focus group meeting²⁵¹ that I so severely realized the differences in their realities and terminologies. A phrase that was so clear to me had no meaning whatsoever for these women.

When asked about their problems as ‘women’, following a period of hesitation (because they were not quite clear as to what I was asking), some respondents emphasized their broken up families: “Our only problem is that our husbands are away for work. We want them to come back home so we can be a whole family again. We want the head of the family to be here with us because sometimes we get sick and need to go to the doctor or the hospital but we have no man to lead us.” Following from this, most women had a hard time understanding my inquiries on their relationship with their husbands. For instance, I wanted to understand what had changed in the relationship with their spouses

²⁵¹ My first group meeting was in a home of migrant women in Kurtalan; a home that had still intact the strict social structure of the traditional household and the community.

as well as in their household structures after the migration process. As they could not understand my question, I was unable to get a reply. Their only timid response was that their husbands were not there with them. Most others merely stated that nothing had changed. Upon my insistent question of whether women and young girls could more freely access spaces outside the home now that the men in the family were away, I received only negative replies. As I tried to make women speak about their general status within the family, the women explained to me the social control mechanisms of the family and community and the pressures exerted on female household members. If anything, migration further restricted women's presence in public. Since they no longer have their fields to cultivate and animals to graze, they equally had no reason to leave the home environment.

Women's explanations of the practice of polygamy, for instance, was an indication of women's inferior status within the family and the different dynamics that are present within the socio-cultural structure of the GAP region. I was told by the women themselves that polygamy (*çok eşlilik* in Turkish or *kuma getirmek* in the more colloquial version) was a frequently occurring phenomenon in the region. Despite the jealousies among spouses, a woman explained the peculiar situation of a friend of hers: "A friend of mine is unable to have children. She went back to her village to find another woman to be her *kuma*.²⁵² Now the other woman had a baby, and my friend takes such good care of both her *kuma* and the baby. They get along very well. If I was to have such a good relationship with my *kuma*, I wouldn't mind having one." For women who are unable to conceive, another advantage of the *kuma* is cited as follows:

“A woman who is unable to have children thinks, if my husband dies tomorrow, all his money and his property will be shared among his family and his siblings.²⁵³ Instead, she chooses or agrees to marry her husband to another, fertile woman, so that the money stays with them after the man dies. For this reason, the first wife treats the second one with care and affection.” The young girls in Siirt, for instance, also confirmed the tradition of polygamy in the region, but this was stated to be more a custom of the Kurds rather than the Arabs.

Although seen less frequently, another custom that one comes across in the region is marrying the woman with her husband’s brother after the husband dies.²⁵⁴ An anecdote from the community was recited: “They wanted to marry a widowed woman with the younger brother of her husband. When the boy said he didn’t want his sister-in-law as his wife, the man’s family arranged the youngest brother who was away doing his military service. He didn’t really want her either but the family convinced the boy by telling him they would buy him a car if he married his sister-in-law.”

In conversations and focus groups with young girls, on the other hand, the experiences narrated were slightly different, but a continuation of the same strict patriarchal social structure. I found out that, with a few exceptions, a large number of the girls in the

²⁵² *Kuma* is the name in Turkish given to the other wives that come into the family.

²⁵³ First wives usually do not have official marriages. Women who later become aware of the dangers of unofficial marriages attempt to find such solutions to their problems. Moreover, there is the high possibility that incoming second or third wives who are young and attractive are aware of the advantages of official marriages.

²⁵⁴ As there are no words in Turkish or Kurdish to denote this phenomenon, Yalçın-Heckmann labels this occurrence as ‘wife inheritance’, in *Tribe and Kinship among the Kurds* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), 224.

region are merely literate with no school diplomas. Some of these girls had learned to read and write at the ÇATOM. As a result, most girls could speak Turkish although some were too shy to do so. Some girls in Siirt, for instance, said it was their own decisions that they did not continue school, but almost all of them said they were regretful of this fact. One girl admitted that even though her mother took her by the hand for school registration, she herself refused. On the other hand, a large number of girls said that their parents would not allow them to study further if they wanted to do so. But even if girls are not sent to school, boys are allowed to continue studying for as long as the family finances permit.

The fact that daughters are not sent to school revealed itself as a problem during several conversations. For girls who attend school, they are taken out of school either before or right after the completion of primary level education.²⁵⁵ Mothers noted that they would send their daughters to school to study further if they were given the decision. Because the man is the final decision maker at home, it was not difficult to sense the mothers' feelings of helplessness. Decisions that will affect the entire family, such as the starting up of a new business, are taken solely by the men in the family and the female members are reminded to keep quite and not get involved. One woman reminded me that in the region, "everything starts and ends with the man". A woman agreed by telling me that her husband would kill her if he knew she was there talking with me. Another Kurdish woman stated that she could not give me her name without the permission of her husband. In a focus group meeting with over a dozen women, the others made no

comments about her statement. Another woman stated her hopelessness: “Even if we know it is wrong, custom is custom. This is the way things have always worked around here. There is nothing we can do about it.” Local traditions also dictate the age of marriage of a young girl. As a mother pointed out: “When a girl reaches 14-16 years of age, they say the girl has lost her chances of marriage (*evde kalmış* in Turkish), so we are obliged to marry them off at an early age.”

For younger girls who are more aware of the situation and see the possibility of a light of change, some mothers are lenient towards their daughters while some others do not accept different attitudes by their daughters. Even those mothers that are somewhat accepting of their daughters stress that certain things must still be done in good manners and within the norms of society: “in a well-mannered and submissive way [*terbiyeli ve uslu bir şekilde* in Turkish], without going against their families and future husbands.” Hence, when the fathers disagree to a daughter’s demands, the women convince their daughters to obey their fathers. They stress once more that women have to endure all sorts of hardship because there is nothing else they can do but accept their situation. Women are afraid of divorce by their husbands, otherwise they would be “left alone with no resources to live on their own.”

The main focus of conversation with the girls was the pressure exerted by the family as well as the surroundings. They complained about the restrictions on clothing and meeting publicly with friends: “It is very difficult to be a young girl here because there

²⁵⁵ When compulsory schooling was 5 years, girls noted that it was easier for them to receive at least primary school diplomas. Now that compulsory education is increased to 8 years of schooling, girls

is tremendous pressure from the family, the relatives, the neighbors, everyone. A young girl, especially if she has reached the age of marriage, can't leave her home very easily. The decisions are taken mostly by the fathers, uncles (brothers of fathers), brothers and sometimes by the mothers.” It is for this simple reason that many young girls are banned from coming to the ÇATOM.

Young girls stated that the neighbors and relatives were usually influential in the decisions taken by the family:

The neighbors say, ‘what use is sending your daughter to school; it wouldn't do you any good anyway.’ They say that if the girl starts working, she will only be useful to her husband and her husband's family; not to her own family back home. The son is always esteemed and appreciated more than the daughter because when the son grows up, he will be looking after his family, whereas the daughter will get married and leave the home. This is one of the reasons why they don't let us go to school. (Şirvan)

Sometimes the fathers can be more lenient and tolerant towards the girls, but it is, in fact, the brothers who act as the main guardians of a young girl's chastity and the family's honor. As the brother reaches a certain age, the father hands his task over to his son(s). Even if the brother is younger than the girl, he still has an authority over her. For instance brothers and fathers do not always allow their daughters, sisters and wives to wear pants. Girls are sometimes not allowed to speak even with their female friends. In a situation like this, receiving the greeting of a male friend becomes unimaginable. The notion of chastity is so peculiar in most urban settings of the Southeast that it is forbidden for a woman to even be seen out in her balcony. The girls think that, despite

mentioned the unfortunate situation of the difficulty of receiving a diploma.

the effect of unemployment and low levels of education on gossip within the community, customs and traditions are another factor that keep women and young girls under such strict social control. Education is seen as the best possibility for change, however, the distance and discretion of families towards other cultures makes change in the region tremendously difficult to arise.

I could clearly observe that the urban girls voiced greater freedom and comfort at home compared to girls of families recently migrated from the villages. Girls are mostly married off at an early age and marriages are mostly arranged by the family, but the urban girls noted that if they do not consent, they are usually taken seriously by their parents. Although to a limited level, parents allow communication between recently engaged couples. The telephone is the most widely used means of communication between lovers and engaged couples. There are even young girls who make marriages based on love. Different opinions were given on arranged marriages between relatives. Most young girls are still being married to direct kin, mostly the children of aunts and uncles. In one focus group meeting, girls engaged to relatives noted that this did not matter as they were both in love with their arranged partners. On the other hand, there was a high level of awareness concerning the dangers of marriage between close kin and a large number of girls said they knew that this was wrong. They added that a boy from outside the extended family tends to treat the girl much better than a boy from inside the family. They recited such cases in which the girls were further exploited by their husbands upon support from their relatives. Despite the fact that girls are now less willing to make marriages with close relative boys, all the girls agreed that the will of the boy to marry a girl from outside the family was more effective than the girl's wish to

do so. Girls who are forced to get married against their will sometimes run away from their own home to the home of the boy they love. There was one case of a girl committing suicide because her family wanted her to marry a boy whom she did not want.

When asked about their opinion on the ideal age for marriage, except for a few girls who said 15-16, most girls agreed on 18-19 years of age. Speaking to the young girls about having children made them shy at first. Except for one girl who said she did not want any children, and a few that said 1-2 children, a majority declared they would like to have as many as their post-marital finances allow. When women, on the other hand, were asked about the number of children they would have chosen to bear were they given the decision, most stated that they were happy with the number of children they currently had. Even a woman with 11 children said she would still want 11 children. Given the culture of compliance, obedience and gratitude to God, women had difficulties imagining their lives otherwise. They felt that wishing for things to have been differently was a sign of complaint against God's will, which made most women uneasy. They readily and faithfully accepted their fate as 'written' by God. The number of children considered as 'normal', however, was given as 4-5.

5.1.6.3. Health Issues in the Region

Contraception is rarely used in most regions of Southeastern Anatolia. While some methods, such as spirals, are not allowed by husbands, others are not used either because they are found too expensive or because they are regarded as 'sinful'. Some women do

not even go to the gynecologist for the same reasons. Even though some women know beforehand that their children will be born handicapped, they do not allow for medical interference on the basis that God will take care of them (*Allah riskını verir* in Turkish). Mothers and mother-in-laws influence their daughters and daughter-in-laws to give birth to a large number of children, using the same line of thinking. After weeks of sessions on mother-child health care training, an instructor nurse at the ÇATOM (who has one child herself) described the discouragement she felt upon hearing this comment from one of her regular participants: “Does she think she is a woman, with one child? Let’s see her bear 10 children.” This is an indication that womanhood in the region is measured by the number of children a woman bears. The nurse was especially disappointed when she saw that the comment was made by a fairly young woman. This same attitude was conveyed by a number of women themselves in focus group meetings. The comments made by women included such statements as these: “We bear a lot of children but there is a huge difference between a woman who bears 5 sons and a woman who bears 5 daughters. When the baby is a boy, they say ‘may God keep away the evil eye’ [*maşallah* in Turkish], but when it is a girl, they say nothing.” The nurse stated that she realized the difficulties of such reproductive health care training in the region without an accompanying change in mentalities and world visions. The mentality of women in the region is peculiar with respect to other issues as well. There are some women, for instance, who believe that the money a woman earns is sinful.

The women in the region resort to archaic modes of treatment for their health problems. Unhealthy and dangerous means of miscarriage are being used. When unprotected women become pregnant against their husband’s will, they try different techniques at

home to give themselves a miscarriage. A local general practitioner in Cizre stated that she has periodic patients who come to her with their miscarried babies still inside them. Some women are even unaware of the situation until their bleeding doesn't stop and they come to the local health center for a check-up. Very unpleasant and disturbing stories about women's health situation were told by some local practitioners in the region.

5.2. Profile of ÇATOM Participants

Given the present situation of Southeastern Anatolian women, ÇATOMs aim to raise awareness among women in the region on gender issues and help them ameliorate their status as women in the community. In order to get an understanding of the activities of ÇATOMs and the profile of women that they serve, I prepared a questionnaire to be distributed to the participants of 5 ÇATOMs. This, I believed, would give me a fairly good idea about the profile of ÇATOM participants and their satisfaction concerning ÇATOM activities.

In order to cover a range of different settings and participant profiles, I decided to undertake the survey in a total of 5 ÇATOMs; two in the city center, two in the county center, and one in a village:

- Beytüşşebap ÇATOM
- Batman ÇATOM

- Cizre ÇATOM
- Siirt ÇATOM
- Uluköy ÇATOM

I was careful to select ÇATOMs that had been functional for approximately the same time period. For the group that I selected, ÇATOMs had been operational for about 3 years. This created harmony in terms of the internal dynamics of the ÇATOM management as well as in the relations of the ÇATOM with local public authorities. Participants had been attending ÇATOM activities for a variety of durations but this evened out upon the inclusion of a wide range of participants. In addition to the responses given to the questionnaire, the survey helped me in the initiation of topics not covered by the questionnaire. Responses given to the questionnaire were further elaborated through focus group meetings, one-on-one conversations and in-depth interviews.

The survey was carried out among a total of 186 ÇATOM participants.

5.2.1. Age of Participants

ÇATOM	Min. age	Max. age	Mean	Median*
Beytüşşebap	11	37	20.4	20
Batman	12	35	17.5	17
Cizre	11	38	17.7	16
Siirt	14	37	17.9	17
Uluköy	11	17	14.2	14
Total	11	38	18.5	17

* The median, as another measure of central tendency, is the value for which 50% of the observations, when arranged in order of magnitude, lie on each side. Since the median gives clues about the dissymmetry of the range of data, it is considered to be a more informative value than the mean.

The age of ÇATOM participants ranges from a minimum age of 11 to a maximum age of 38. Average age of participants is 18.5 and the median is 17, with 95% between the ages 13 and 24. The largest age range of participants was in Cizre, where I observed women with children attending activities at the ÇATOM. This was caused in large part to the better income levels of families in Cizre. Uluköy ÇATOM participants, on the other hand, were the group with the lowest average age among participants. The youngest participant in Uluköy was 11 and the oldest was 17. This was an indication that urbanized women are more integrated into the ÇATOM environment compared to rural women.

Given the target group of young girls and women of ages 14-50, the statistics above indicate an inadequacy on the part of ÇATOMs in reaching the intended range of women. Succeeding meetings and interviews with ÇATOM participants revealed some of the reasons behind the low age levels of participants. The assessments, detailed in chapter VIII, evaluate the effects of participant ages on women's organization and community mobilization.

5.2.2. Education Levels

ÇATOM	Education levels of participants (%)					Median of scale (0 – 4)
	Illiterate (0)	Literate but no diploma (1)	Primary school (2)	Secondary school (3)	High school (4)	
Beytüşşebap	10.4	20.8	31.2	13.0	24.7	2
Batman	14.3	14.3	57.1	9.5	4.8	2
Cizre	21.1	23.7	47.4	7.9	-	2
Siirt	20.7	20.7	41.4	13.8	3.4	2
Uluköy	4.8	85.7	9.5	-	-	1
Total	14.0	28.0	36.6	10.2	11.3	2

Of the 186 ÇATOM participants that were surveyed, 14% were illiterate women, 28% were literate but had been unable to complete primary education, 37% were primary school graduates (completed the first five years), 10% were secondary school graduates, and 11% were high school graduates. Interestingly the highest illiteracy rate was in Cizre with 21% of the participants, indicating the immense confinement of women and young girls to the home environment, despite the relatively better income levels of families in the county. The black veil worn by most women and young girls in Cizre was an illustration of the strong religious beliefs and traditions, along with the high level of communal activities conducted by religious brotherhoods [*tarikât* in Turkish]. Hizbullah,²⁵⁶ for instance, was discreetly stated as having a strong impact on the beliefs and practices of most families in Cizre.²⁵⁷ Finally, the fact that one fourth of ÇATOM participants in Beytüşşebap are high school graduates is either the result of the peculiar composition of the local population or that the ÇATOM is unable to reach the intended target group of the most disadvantaged women and young girls.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Hizbullah literally means Army of God. As indicated by the name, this strictly orthodox Islamic brotherhood has a militant arm.

²⁵⁷ Upon my inquiry as to why there was no female presence in a local restaurant in Cizre, the restaurant owner explained to me that even though families were relatively well off, women were never taken out of the home, even for purposes of eating out with the family. The monopoly of the public sphere was still strongly in the possession of men. The restaurant owner went on to explain the sex industry in Iraq for truck drivers who would sometimes return home with Iraqi women as second or third wives.

²⁵⁸ The governor of Beytüşşebap, however, did mention the high rates of school attendance in Beytüşşebap compared to the surrounding counties. Beytüşşebap derives its name from a Northern Iraqi tribe from which a small group within a sub-tribe separated, left their tribal lands, and settled in the location of present Beytüşşebap, upon their desire to no longer abide by the rules of the main tribe in question.

5.2.3. Economic Status of Family of Participants

ÇATOM	Status of income of family of participant (%)							
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
Beytüşşebap	2.6	20.8	28.6	11.7	-	10.4	11.7	14.3
Batman	15.8	26.3	15.8	-	-	15.8	5.3	21.1
Cizre	28.9	31.6	5.3	-	-	5.3	13.2	15.8
Siirt	6.9	44.8	13.8	-	-	13.8	6.9	13.8
Uluköy	15.0	30.0	10.0	25.0	20.0	-	-	-
Total	11.5	28.4	18.0	7.7	2.2	9.3	9.3	13.7

The codes used in the table above are as follows:

Code	Explanation
a	No job
b	Daily, monthly or seasonal work (such as construction worker)
c	Civil servant (such as teacher or municipal civil servant)
d	Village guard
e	Farmer
f	Retired (with pension)
g	Own business (such as a small market)
h	Minimum wage (such as night guard)

Among the ÇATOM participants, there are young girls and women who come from a variety of backgrounds in terms of economic status. It is only in villages like Uluköy that we found participants whose families were involved in agricultural activities.

Otherwise, the families of 28% of participants have instable sources of income such as daily, monthly or seasonal temporary work. 18% of the participants noted that there was a civil servant in the family and 9% of the families were receiving retirement pensions. 14% of the participants are from families who earn a minimum wage. 9% of the responses indicated incomes from own business, while a further 12% stated that there were no male members working in the family.

5.2.4. Migration Status

ÇATOM	Migration status among participants (%)		
	Not migrated in the last 10 years	Migrated from the village	Migrated from another city
Beytüşşebap	87.0	6.5	6.5
Batman	90.5	4.8	4.8
Cizre	71.1	10.5	18.4
Siirt	86.2	10.3	3.4
Uluköy	85.7	14.3	-
Total	83.9	8.6	7.5

Of the young girls and women who attend the activities of the ÇATOM, the families of 9% have recently migrated from the village. Another 8% have migrated from one city to another, either from a city in the West back to the Southeast or from one city to another within the same region, with Cizre indicating highest numbers. The families of the rest of the ÇATOM participants, making up a high majority, have either never migrated or have lived through the migration process over a decade ago.

5.2.5. Attendance in ÇATOM Activities

ÇATOM	ÇATOM activities attended by participants (%)			
	Literacy	Health education	Income Generation	Home economics
Beytüşşebap	7.8	79.2	98.7	6.5
Batman	28.6	57.1	100.0	19.0
Cizre	31.6	89.5	89.5	78.9
Siirt	17.2	93.1	100.0	55.2
Uluköy	33.3	57.1	95.2	-
Total	19.4	78.5	96.8	29.6

Of all participants, 19% have become literate as a result of coming to the ÇATOM.

Literacy courses are the most popular among young girls at the village level. Since a

large number of men are out of town, some completing their mandatory military service and some working in another city, the women keep in touch with their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons through the telephone. But they are also eager to learn how to read and write so that they can write to their loved ones who are abroad. Beytüşşebap, with the highest average education level of participants, naturally has the lowest rate of attendance in literacy courses at the ÇATOM.

Of all courses at the ÇATOM, handicrafts and other income generation courses are the most popular. The fact that family incomes are low in the region is one reason that young girls are interested in learning a skill which they might be able to use later on, if and when job opportunities become possible. Young girls want training courses opened according to their skills and interests. Given the recent economic hardships, families are now more flexible about allowing their daughters to attend income generation courses. However, one other factor influential in the popularity of handicrafts courses, given under income generation, is that most single young girls are only interested in preparing their truceau [*çeyiz* in Turkish] for use after marriage. Other than that, a small number of young girls have interest in income generation. And that is so mostly upon the wishes of their parents for them to attend such courses as kilim weaving. With 97%, handicrafts and other courses on skills for income generation have the highest attendance rate among all courses at the ÇATOM.

Health education sessions are also a success among ÇATOM participants. These sessions are particularly popular as the young girls and women have the chance to select the health topics that they want to be informed about. Participatory education sessions

draw a large number of attendees to these courses. However, some ÇATOMs have problems in arranging their health sessions on a consistent basis, due to the inadequacies in public health personnel at the town or provincial level. Other than that, as sessions take place on a continuous basis, 79% of ÇATOM participants take part in health education. Among topics that receive the highest interest among participants, especially young girls, are issues of contraception and health concerns during and after pregnancy.

Home economics courses are given only upon the availability of personnel. In these courses participants learn how to preserve food, increase the nutritional value of meals, prepare healthy dishes, and anything else of interest to them. The instructors for the courses also makes a difference in the attendance rates of certain courses. This became very clear in Cizre, for instance, where literacy and home economics courses were given by two volunteer instructors, one was the wife of a police officer and the other was the wife of a military personnel.²⁵⁹ The volunteer instructors had initially started coming to the ÇATOM just to pass time, but as they enjoyed the friendly atmosphere of the ÇATOM, the enthusiasm of the girls, and the flexibility of activities, they decided to stay on. The young girls in Cizre paid particular attention to these instructors, as they were women who had seen the larger cities of Istanbul and Ankara, and who were familiar with a completely different culture than their own. Compared to themselves, these women, who were more independent, empowered, relatively freer in their choices, took good care of themselves, and lived a life of aspiration, were almost mysterious to the young girls of Cizre. Spending time with these western women, sharing their

²⁵⁹ The peculiar effects of these volunteer instructors are elaborated in chapter VIII.

experiences, and learning from them made the young girls in Cizre more excited about some activities more than others.

5.3. Effects of the ÇATOM

5.3.1. Effects on the Participants

ÇATOM	Effects of ÇATOM on the participant (%)					Median of scale (1 – 5)
	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	No effect (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	
Beytüşşebap	-	-	1.3	55.8	42.9	4
Batman	-	-	-	47.6	52.4	5
Cizre	-	-	-	15.8	84.2	5
Siirt	-	-	-	48.3	51.7	5
Uluköy	-	-	4.8	47.6	47.6	4
Total	-	-	1.1	44.6	54.3	5

On the question of the overall effect of the ÇATOM, 99% of the participants declared that attending activities at the ÇATOM had a positive influence on them, while 54% noted this effect to be very high in terms of personal development. The positive effects felt by the young girls and women result mainly from an agreement between what the participants expect from the ÇATOM and what is offered. If the ÇATOM leader and the instructors are good in bringing out the demands at the local level and are responsive to the needs of the young girls and women that come to the ÇATOM, they are generally also better at keeping attendance and satisfaction levels high. Failure in keeping this close contact between the management level of the ÇATOM and the participants results in lower levels of satisfaction among participants. Hence, a crucial factor that determines personal satisfaction is the mutual contact between participants and

instructors, support personnel, and the ÇATOM field worker. This accounts for the 5% of participants in Uluköy who declared that the ÇATOM had no effect on their personal development.

Another factor affecting the results of the current question was the educational level and expectation of participants prior to their attendance in ÇATOM activities. This was striking in the case of Cizre in which 84% of participants noted the very positive effects of the ÇATOM, while high education levels in Beytüşşebap resulted in more moderate responses. In Cizre, where uneducated and veiled young girls and women have no access to the means of personal expression and development, ÇATOMs are an indispensable opportunity.

In addition to the many different skills and practical knowledge that they gain at the ÇATOM, the participants are very happy about spending time outside the home in the friendly atmosphere they find at the ÇATOM. This is especially important as girls have hardly any other occasion to leave their home environment. They are satisfied with the interactions among each other, their instructors, and the ÇATOM field worker. The attention they receive makes them feel important, particularly when their opinions are asked for and they get the chance to participate in the decisions taken at the ÇATOM. Becoming a member of the ÇATOM committee, young girls are able to assist in the decision making, planning, and implementation of ÇATOM activities. This, in turn, helps plant the seeds of personal initiative and mobilization, a quality that needs to be urgently developed in the region.

Enthusiasm about the ÇATOM was described by one young participant as follows:

We learn from the ÇATOM things we didn't know before. The instructors are very nice to us. We enjoy the health education sessions. With the money we make from the kilims, we buy ourselves clothes and *çeyiz*, and other things. Our parents like it that we are no longer a burden on them. We learn different recipes at the ÇATOM. We learned love, respect, and how to greet others properly. We have changed completely. I love even the name of the ÇATOM. (Uluköy)

Some participants are so attached to the ÇATOM that they have managed to continue despite all the difficulties confronted:

We are 6 siblings. I am 22 years old and a secondary school graduate. I continued the handicrafts courses at the ÇATOM for 2 years. I have learned a lot there and it makes me feel so good, I feel that my status in society has changed. Because I am more motivated than the other girls at the ÇATOM, I was elected member of the ÇATOM committee, and I started taking an active role within the committee. To meet my own needs and the needs of other girls at the ÇATOM, I would frequently go to the bazaar. Slowly my relatives and some acquaintances started feeling uncomfortable about this. These people complained to my uncle's (brother of father) son about me. He came home one night and beat me in front of everyone at home. He forbade me to go to the ÇATOM. But because I was a member of the committee and I knew my responsibilities towards my friends, I secretly continued going to the ÇATOM. For a while, because our house was very close to the ÇATOM, I continued classes from my window to the window of the ÇATOM. I did not give in. I bought a sewing machine, I cut models from books and stitch almost everything. Wherever I am stuck, I go to the ÇATOM and get help from my instructors. My mother does not want me to disobey my uncle's son. She keeps repeating that I have to comply with their rules, and wants me to do house work all day long. But they can't stop me. I just need time. Maybe I can become a teacher at the ÇATOM. Then I can get rid of the stress and pressure at home. (Beytüşşebap)

In addition to the intended impacts of the project, a participatory method of assessment revealed other benefits of the project that were not foreseen. Young girls in the region are under immense pressure from the family, mainly the father and the elder brothers. Lack of educational and other opportunities, along with restricted mobility create

additional stress for the young girls and women in the region. Talking with the participants about the ÇATOM environment unraveled the importance of the center in the psychological healing of young girls and women. Young girls who come to the center admit that one of the most crucial aspects of the ÇATOM is its friendly and cozy atmosphere, a place where women and young girls can talk about their problems, share their experiences, and thus partially alleviate stress. For some of them, coming to the center to learn how to weave a kilim or how to stitch a skirt is only an excuse to escape the depressing home environment. Hence, psychological healing becomes an essential outcome of the ÇATOM project, an outcome that was initially not planned or intended:

After I started coming to the ÇATOM, I went on trips with my friends at the ÇATOM. I had never left Beytüşşebap before. The house used to be like a prison for me. I learned nice things after coming to the ÇATOM. I have a skill now, but even if I don't do anything at the ÇATOM, I let off some of my stress here. I find people here that I can talk to about my problems. We share wonderful things here with the instructors that we don't share at home. For example we celebrated my last birthday here at the ÇATOM. It was great. (Beytüşşebap)

The positive effects of the ÇATOM are also felt by mother participants:

I am 35 years old and my daughter is 15 years old. My daughter and I, we both come to the ÇATOM. My daughter has been coming for 1.5 years but I started only this year. I have 4 children and I come to the literacy course. I have also improved my stitching skills here. I earn 5-10 million for each piece that I stitch and thus keep the family going, because my husband is unemployed. The ÇATOM is like our family. My daughter is trying to get her secondary school diploma here at the ÇATOM. Ever since I started coming to the ÇATOM, I have better relations with my children. I listen to the problems of my daughter. I don't like sitting alone at home. The ÇATOM environment attracts me. I love it here. (Batman)

Apart from the participants themselves, the mothers have also made comments on the positive effects of the ÇATOM on their daughters:

We recently migrated to Beytüşşebap from the village. There are 7 children at home. One of my daughters is deaf. It is very important for me that my daughter is happy and that she does not feel inferior next to other girls. The ÇATOM has helped her achieve this. At the ÇATOM she has made lots of friends. She is happy and better now when she comes back home. This makes me very happy as well. She knows what is going on around her. She has also started being useful inside the house since she started going to the ÇATOM. She has changed a lot. She speaks to people now, she matured, and she has become more tidy. We have money problems but because the girl likes it so much, we try to send her to the ÇATOM as long as finances permit. (Beytüşşebap)

5.3.2. Effects on the Family of the Participant

ÇATOM	Effects of ÇATOM on the family (%)					Median of scale (1 – 5)
	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	No effect (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	
Beytüşşebap	-	-	19.5	62.3	18.2	4
Batman	-	-	14.3	47.6	38.1	4
Cizre	-	-	-	47.4	52.6	5
Siirt	-	3.4	17.2	51.7	27.6	4
Uluköy	-	-	-	38.1	61.9	5
Total	-	0.5	12.4	53.2	33.9	4

13% of the participants have noted that the ÇATOM either has no effect or a bad effect on their families. The remaining 87% declared that their own participation in ÇATOM activities and courses has a positive effect on their families. This is crucial in terms of the broader impact of the ÇATOMs, as most participants then carry the knowledge gained at the ÇATOM into their home environment. A good example is provided by the health sessions. Young girls and some women that come to the family planning and health education sessions at the ÇATOM feel content about having learned the various methods of contraception in addition to other practical knowledge they can use in their homes. In most ÇATOMs, however, this education is mostly attended by young girls of pre-marital age. Mothers are usually unable to attend these sessions as they are busy

with the children and the house chores. Some ÇATOM instructors have found a solution to educating those women who are unable to attend the courses during the daytime. For these women, educational sessions are undertaken during the night time when a few women are able to get together in a house.

Another way of reaching these women is through the indirect flow of knowledge from the participants to their family environments. Although participants do not always make direct use of the knowledge they gain at the ÇATOM, they transfer it to family members in the household. For instance, the young girls educate their sisters, sisters-in-law, their mothers and other relative women on issues of health. For women in the region who are timid about consulting medical staff, especially male staff, receiving essential health knowledge through their daughters becomes highly critical. As young girls are lectured on the importance of health facilities where appropriate, girls are also influential in convincing family members to make more frequent use of the health services, including the use of mid-wives at child birth. If I were to retrieve data merely on the results of this education inside the ÇATOMs, I would not have been able to realize the potential of the ÇATOMs. Using the participatory approach of attending the night sessions inside the homes, talking to young girls, their mothers, other community members, and the instructors, I was able to see the holistic picture of the process of health care education and its subsequent effects on the young girls and the women in their respective families.

The transfer of knowledge was explained by a young participant:

Whatever I learn at the ÇATOM, I go and tell everyone at home.
Although my mother sometimes gets embarrassed about the things I

say, everyone is interested. The neighbors want me to keep on talking and they like what I tell them. For example, we learned about child care, I told my sister-in-law [*yenge* in Turkish] all about it. We also learned about family planning. I told my mother about it, and after she listened to me, she went to the health center to have her ovaries tied. (Siirt)

Other effects on the family and friends was explained by one girl as follows:

I come to the ÇATOM to learn new things for my *çeyiz* and I help my family by doing this. This makes my parents very happy. Also, when I learn something different and new, I make my friends and relatives presents from what I have learned at the ÇATOM. We make decorations for the house. Everyone likes them. I sometimes teach what I have learned to friends and relatives. I like teaching others. For example, I taught macramé to a friend who was not allowed to come to the ÇATOM. (Batman)

5.3.3. Effects on the Community

ÇATOM	Effects of ÇATOM on the community (%)					Median of scale (1 – 5)
	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	No effect (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	
Beytüşşebap	-	-	22.7	44.0	33.3	4
Batman	-	-	23.8	23.8	52.4	5
Cizre	-	-	2.7	35.1	62.2	5
Siirt	-	-	20.7	69.0	10.3	4
Uluköy	-	-	5.0	70.0	25.0	4
Total	-	-	16.5	46.7	36.8	4

The participants have noted that on average, the effects of the ÇATOM on the community are the same as the effects on their families. A woman explained the changes:

I come to the ÇATOM together with my daughter. She learns embroidery and I learn how to read and write. I am very happy with the ÇATOM. I learned a lot about family planning, and told the other women and my neighbors about what I learned. They were all very happy with this information. The effects are felt in the neighborhood. My relatives and neighbors ask me; they want to learn. In the beginning, women used to forbid their daughters to go to the ÇATOM

but now they allow it. There are actually a large number of girls who want to attend on a regular basis but their homes are far away and they can't always come because of other work in the house. Unfortunately women don't come to the ÇATOM; they say 'it is past us now' and instead send the younger ones at home to the ÇATOM. (Batman)

The primary school director of a school building close to a ÇATOM declared that the fathers in the region leave their homes early in the morning and return late at night.

They pay no attention to their daughters. For this reason, he stressed that the ÇATOM is essential in the neighborhood. The fathers' responses on the effects of the ÇATOM on the community were as follows:

We don't know the GAP or the ÇATOM. ÇATOM responsables had previously come to my house to speak with my daughter. I believe they offer stitching and embroidery courses. I wouldn't care if my daughter wanted to attend such courses. But the ÇATOM has no effect on the community. It also doesn't do anything for the neighborhood. The ÇATOM can't make itself heard. More activities can be implemented, for example, in the garden of the ÇATOM; trees can be planted, the animals can be prevented from entering the garden. When the governor came to visit the ÇATOM, I went especially to talk to him and asked him that maybe the activities of the ÇATOM can be multiplied. He said okay but nothing ever happened. (Siirt)

It is interesting to note that the comments made above were about the perception of ÇATOMs in the community, rather than a mutual relationship between the two. Instead of the effects of the ÇATOM on changes in the community such as grassroots organizing and local mobilization, comments were made about the community's perception of the ÇATOM and its activities.

5.3.4. Changes in Attitudes of Families towards Participants

ÇATOM	Effects of ÇATOM on attitudes of families (%)					Median of scale (1 – 5)
	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	No effect (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	
Beytüşşebap	-	6.6	21.1	46.1	26.3	4
Batman	-	-	19.0	28.6	52.4	5
Cizre	-	-	-	26.3	73.7	5
Siirt	-	3.4	44.8	31.0	20.7	4
Uluköy	-	-	19.0	52.4	28.6	4
Total	-	3.2	20.0	38.4	38.4	4

I decided to pose a question to the participants on the changes in the attitudes of their families in order to find out whether any of the girls and women had lived through changes to an extent that this would be noticed by their families. This, I believed, would give me clues as to whether some challenges on issues of gender were in fact taking place. Of all the replies given to all the questions posed in the survey, this question received the highest replies on the bad affects of the ÇATOM. Although this percentage is small with 3% on average for all ÇATOMs, this is nevertheless an indication that some challenges are taking place. 20 out of 100 families are indifferent about their daughters coming to the ÇATOM, while 77% of the families are happy about seeing a daughter, sister, or wife attend activities at the ÇATOM. Two young participants, one in Cizre and the other in Batman, explained the changes:

Before coming to the ÇATOM, I would never speak with my mother. Since I started coming, we are more like friends. I tell her everything now. My parents become happy when they see what I am capable of doing. My younger sister has started taking me as an example. She wants to come to the ÇATOM as well but there are lots of things that need to be done inside the house. She stays to help my mother. My father also treats me nicely now. He lets me do some things which he didn't before. He tells me that if we were in Istanbul, he would take me to watch football matches. Sometimes we discuss football. My family has started trusting me now. (Cizre)

In the beginning my parents would not let me come to the ÇATOM. But then they saw how I changed; how I became attached to life. And after seeing the cozy atmosphere of the ÇATOM, they now support me in coming here. Before they would never let me go outside the house. Now I am more free. When someone in the family needs to be taken to the hospital, I take them. I take care of problems at home. Now my family really trusts me. (Batman)

In addition to the trust gained in the family, some participants explained that their families started respecting them when they were able to earn some money after attending the activities of the ÇATOM:

In tailoring, I earn 3 million per skirt, 2 million per shirt, and 6 million for every suit that I stitch. The person who gives the order brings me the cloth of her choice. I get orders mostly from civil servants in Cizre and my neighbors. I give a large portion of the money I earn to my family. With the rest, I buy food. Sometimes with a bit of the money I buy myself some clothes and sometimes I save it. Some of my friends buy golden earrings or necklaces for investment. Since I came to the ÇATOM, I have not been receiving any money from my parents; instead I earn my own money with the orders I get. Sometimes I am even able to give small allowances to my younger siblings. My family has started respecting me because of this. (Cizre)

However, I realized that the age of the participant was directly influential in the attitudes of the parents towards their daughters, rendering ÇATOM attendance and earning money irrelevant:

My parents would not let me come to the ÇATOM in the beginning. I would run away from home to learn how to weave a kilim at the ÇATOM. Now my family does not say anything about me coming here. I have even started earning money, but there is no change in the family. My parents still find me too young and don't include me in any of the decisions taken at home. (Uluköy)

The setting (rural in the case above) and the perceived needs within the family are also effective in attitudes towards daughters that attend ÇATOM activities. Although some girls earn money through the ÇATOMs, their families have sometimes displayed

uneasiness about this, while others have had to accept this fact given the family's urgent need for extra revenue. Hence, financial problems have become important factors leading to the acceptance, albeit sometimes reluctant, of young girls gaining skills and earning money. This, in turn, has helped in the young girl's exposure to the domain of the public.

My daughter attends the income generation courses and I want her to get a diploma. If she gets a diploma, she might later have the chance to become an embroidery teacher. Then she can stand on her own feet. Her father does not allow it, but I let her go. But my daughter leaves in the morning and she does not come back until night time; she's at the ÇATOM from 8 in the morning to 6 at night everyday. I am scared that her father will find out. If he does, he will get angry at both of us. Because their father loves them, he does not want to let the daughters go. If our financial situation were better, he would never let the girls go, but because we need money, he sends them to the kilim weaving course. My husband is a worker at the municipality and he started sending the girls to the ÇATOM because he has not been getting paid for a year. (Siirt)

The mothers and fathers have usually had different stances with respect to their daughters' attendance of ÇATOM activities:

Our sons do not want the girl to leave the house, but because her mother wants her to go to the ÇATOM, they try to keep quiet. If it was up to them, they would never let the girl go. The ÇATOM is good because they learn some things for themselves, as well as for us. My daughter has stitched me a shirt. She also makes things for her brothers and her mother. She even makes them for the neighbors. But if the girls open up too much, then they start going against traditions. They start putting their noses into everything; they like themselves too much. Women's hair is long but their minds are short.²⁶⁰ (Cizre)

As seen above, the fathers were more interested in preserving traditional gender roles and the inferior status of women. Another father made similar comments noting that men would never attend the educational courses and activities at the ÇATOM simply

because “men are not interested in such topics.” But fathers relent to their daughters attending ÇATOM activities for the mere reason that they “learn how to make their *çeyiz*.” Traditional gender roles are further perpetuated: “I don’t send my daughters to the Public Training Center [*Halk Eğitim Merkezi* in Turkish] because all the instructors there are men. There was also some gossip about the girls who attended courses there. The ÇATOM is better; there is no problem at the ÇATOM.”

Some families see the ÇATOM as a workplace where girls go only to earn money. Families in Uluköy, where participants are able to earn money from the kilims they weave, talked about the ÇATOM as if they were talking about an employer:

Our daughter is still the same; nothing has changed since she started going to the ÇATOM. We send her so that she makes use of her free time. The kilim weaving course is no good because it has not guaranteed her a future. It does not bring much money. Our daughters are being exploited there. Moreover, the girls are not given a diploma for having completed the course. It would be better if there was a stitching course. They would make things for the family and they would make things for their *çeyiz*. We are satisfied with the instructors but there is not much going on at the ÇATOM. The GAP Administration must not leave the ÇATOM alone here in Uluköy. (Uluköy)

5.3.5. Feelings of Self-confidence among Participants

ÇATOM	Effects of ÇATOM on feelings of self-confidence (%)					Median of scale (1 – 5)
	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	No effect (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	
Beytüşşebap	-	1.3	5.3	51.3	42.1	4
Batman	-	-	4.8	19.0	76.2	5
Cizre	-	-	-	24.3	75.7	5
Siirt	-	3.4	10.3	44.8	41.4	4
Uluköy	-	-	23.8	42.9	33.3	4
Total	-	1.1	7.1	40.2	51.6	5

²⁶⁰ This is direct translation from a Turkish proverb frequently used to belittle women.

Over half of the ÇATOM participants stated that the ÇATOM environment has been very helpful in the gaining of their self-confidence, with a total of 92% positive replies. 8% of the participants have declared either no change or a change for the worse in terms of feelings of self-confidence. This is how the participants explained the change:

I am married. I was very shy about leaving the house and going outside. I would feel that everybody on the street was staring at me. I would turn completely red. But now I feel less scared about being outdoors; I don't let anybody bother me. Before I couldn't even go out to the bazaar. Now I am even able to pay the bills. The ÇATOM has an incredible effect on me. I go to the post office to make phone calls when I have to. Before I was so shy that I didn't enjoy being in a crowd, but now I amuse myself in different settings. I am much more comfortable about going to the doctor. The ÇATOM has given us all a sense of self-confidence. (Siirt)

I am 32 years old and the mother of 5 children. I come to the ÇATOM for the literacy course. I always say, I wish the ÇATOM had opened 3-4 years ago, it would have been so much better. My husband used to be embarrassed of me because I was illiterate. Now that I come here, I have learned how to read and write. A friend of my husband called one day from Istanbul. My husband wasn't home so I wrote down the number and gave it to my husband after he came home. He was very happy about this. It pleased and amused him tremendously. I felt very good about myself. I have a proposal that a room in every school building should be turned into a ÇATOM. If ÇATOMs are multiplied, more and more women like me will read and learn. (Cizre)

A younger participant recited her experiences as follows:

I am not shy about talking to boys anymore. I was very shy but now I have opened up. Coming to the ÇATOM, learning new things, talking with friends have all helped me gain some self-confidence. Now I can shake hands with boys. I couldn't trust myself with anything; I would go out to the bazaar with my mother. Now I am scared of no one; I can be tougher. (Cizre)

5.3.6. Feelings of Self-expression among Participants

ÇATOM	Effects of ÇATOM on feelings of self-expression (%)					Median of scale (1 – 5)
	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	No effect (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	
Beytüşşebap	-	-	7.9	46.1	46.1	4
Batman	-	-	4.8	33.3	61.9	5
Cizre	-	-	-	29.7	70.3	5
Siirt	-	-	20.7	58.6	20.7	4
Uluköy	-	-	15.0	25.0	60.0	5
Total	-	-	8.7	41.0	50.3	5

To the question of whether the ÇATOM was influential on the improvement of their self-expression, the responses given were similar to the responses of the previous question on feelings of self-confidence. Participants said that they express themselves more easily now in the family environment as well as in other gatherings. The changes were also felt in the ÇATOM environment, as participants were initially very timid about asking questions in class. As time went by, with the help of the instructors, participants became more comfortable and freer to express themselves and ask questions during educational sessions at the ÇATOM. Participants have even stated that they can go against their instructors when they feel that they are right or when there are things they want changed. A participant recited her experience:

I never used to talk with anyone before. I was always grumpy and couldn't stand anything. After coming to the ÇATOM, I learned how to talk and be patient with people. There have been enormous changes in my thoughts and I can express them much better now. My mother used to be angry at me because of my behavior. After this change in me, she is no longer resentful.

family, mainly from the male members of the household, and the scarcity of places like the ÇATOMs where participants are given the chance of self-expression, young girls and women rarely get the chance of expressing their views and opinions. Hence, psychological healing seems to be an essential outcome of the ÇATOM project.

If you had come here right after I had started coming to the ÇATOM, I would not have been able to tell you any of these things, because I wouldn't know how to speak then. I would be too shy and timid to talk. I was scared that I would say the wrong things. But now I am able to talk comfortably everywhere, with everyone. (Cizre)

5.3.7. Prospects for the Future

ÇATOM	Effects of ÇATOM on participants' prospects for the future (%)					Median of scale (1 – 5)
	Very bad (1)	Bad (2)	No effect (3)	Good (4)	Very good (5)	
Beytüşşebap	-	-	6.9	51.4	41.7	4
Batman	-	-	15.0	25.0	60.0	5
Cizre	-	-	-	26.3	73.7	5
Siirt	-	-	20.7	37.9	41.4	4
Uluköy	-	-	9.5	23.8	66.7	5
Total	-	-	8.9	37.8	53.3	5

Asked whether they were optimistic about their future, 53% of the participants responded that they were very positive about their future. Only 9% of ÇATOM participants noted that the ÇATOM had no influence on how they regarded the future. Factors that made the participants optimistic about their future included their ability to earn money as a result of newly gained skills, the possibility of earning money (even if they do not already do so), and the prospects of becoming instructors at the ÇATOM (as some participants have already done). Young girls were happy about the fact that the ÇATOM gives them some sense of direction in life. As participants noted:

At the ÇATOM we learned what sorts of things we can do in the future. We wouldn't have known if we were just sitting at home all day. Before I used to only think of getting married and having children. Now I want to learn more and have a job. I learn more and more every year. In case of financial problems, I know I will be able to work and stand on my own feet. I would have never imagined that I was going to feel this way, but now I know that everything is possible. (Beytüşşebap)

My mother encourages me about learning stitching. She says that as women, our future is very insecure. She wants me to gain a skill which will later help me stand on my own, if I need to. I want to open up a tailoring shop and stitch my own clothes to earn money. We looked for some shops but the rents are about 1.5 billion per year. I don't have the means to do this now but my dream is to open a tailoring shop one day. (Cizre)

Some other participants, on the other hand, were not as enthusiastic about their future:

My sister and I, we go to Bursa and Manisa for seasonal work. We stay there until late autumn. We would like to become businesswomen but our dreams will never come true. We never stay in the ÇATOM courses long enough to learn anything new. The only thing that is possible for us is to gather girls together and be the organizers of seasonal work and go to Manisa. We can't do anything else. (Batman)

5.4. ÇATOMs and Social Change in the GAP Region

Talking to women and young girls about prospects for the future was the hardest part of the empirical research carried out in the region. Although less so for the young girls, married women had no vision of how they would like to see their lives changed in the future. Talking about their dreams and how they would envision an 'ideal' life did not mean anything to most participants, as they could not grasp what could possibly be meant by this query. I realized that the scope of their current lives limit the scope of further imagination concerning these lives. For instance, hardly any women had

knowledge of the GAP project. Their seclusion from the outside world was limited to a much smaller area than their districts.

The young girls, however, were slightly more vocal in the imagination of alternative lifestyles, which was especially the case in Cizre. Although girls were wearing the *kara çarşaf*, the fact that many had relatively wealthy families and had traveled to Mersin, Gaziantep, and even cities in the western parts of the country, widened their scope of imagination. Many others spoke of stories they had heard about lifestyles in other parts of the country. Of the young girls who had seen others parts of Turkey, almost all of them dreamt of leaving their current settlements for the larger cities of the west. Again, it was only those girls that had seen a city in the west who were able to imagine a life there. Friends or relatives in the west constituted points of reference for these young girls who were left behind:

Some of the girls in Uluköy have gone to Istanbul or Ankara either for health purposes or for visiting relatives. And they all liked it very much there. We don't like village life. Life is hard in the village; there is too much work to do, both inside and outside the house. The village also has water problems, so we spend lots of time everyday in getting water. It is also hard to go cotton-picking every year. Life in the city is more comfortable and there is more freedom. We can't travel around or go anywhere here in Uluköy. We are not free. In the city we would have more rights. We would make new friends in the city, we would go traveling and we would find new places and ateliers to work. I have an acquaintance that got married and is living now in Istanbul. She is very happy there. (Uluköy)

Again, young girls in Cizre were particularly articulate in narrating the lifestyles they saw on TV. They would explain to me how they enjoyed watching TV shows like *Televole* and how beautiful they thought all the women were. They smiled about lifestyles like the ones they saw on such shows and repeatedly mentioned how the lives

of women in Istanbul were so different from their own. Girls in Cizre were intrigued by these ‘beautiful’ women and imitated them in some aspects. Veiled girls would come to the ÇATOM and once in the ÇATOM, they would take off their black veils and feel very much at home. Some of the girls would have tight shirts and pants on, clothing that some other young girls would not even be allowed to wear in their own private sphere. The relative wealth of these girls was evident in their clothes and the make up material they would bring to the ÇATOM. Girls were interested in learning how to put on make up, which was one of the popular pastimes among young girls in Cizre ÇATOM.

5.4.1. Adhering to Local Traditions

These same girls, who were so excited about the stylish lifestyles that they saw on their TV screens of the nightlife scenes in Istanbul, were at the same time intimidated by such lifestyles. Voicing the concerns of their parents and others in the community, they mentioned that these girls were in fact leading a decadent life; at times displaying gestures of pity for these women. They gave the impression that they would like to be as pretty as them but never as indecent. Turning more to the practical aspects of life in Cizre, asked about whether they would not like to get rid of the black veil, to my surprise, young girls stated that they were happy with their veils because it made them ‘free’. Freedom was defined as the ability to walk around in the streets of Cizre without being noticed by the father, brother(s), or any other male relative that might have control over the young girl.²⁶¹ Hence, despite their knowledge and imagination of diverse

²⁶¹ The black veils in Cizre are worn in a way that the face, including the eyes, are concealed, rendering women completely invisible in public.

lifestyles, these young girls in Cizre were limited to the ‘freedom’ of their black veils. They had no other choice but to restrict themselves to the conditions of their surroundings and the limited opportunities offered by these circumstances. The boundaries of personal development were pre-defined. In the case of Cizre this was the black veil.

Young girls in other ÇATOMs were not as explicit in their imaginations as the girls in Cizre. In any case, however, it was always the younger participants who were better able to imagine what they would like for their life in the future. Talking about the number of children they would prefer, for instance, some girls specifically stated that a small number of children would enable them to lead a less burdensome life. With the experience of their mothers and the large number of children in their own families, they said that having to take care of a large number of children wears off a woman too quickly. Some stated that they would prefer to spend more time for themselves rather than just on their families. This was an indication of the increasing importance of individual values as opposed to the determining role of the family and community. Albeit the increasing awareness of individualism observed among some young girls, they were still not very assertive about their desires for more individualistic behavior. They were still not self-confident enough to pursue their dreams on their own, and were still highly accepting of traditional gender roles. As the same girl continued: “I want to be happy with my husband in the new life that we will start together. I want us to get along very well. I want us to raise our children together. But if things don’t turn out the way that I would like, then I have no choice but to accept the situation.”

Other social, cultural and especially religious traditions imposed on women further prevent them from accomplishments they would otherwise be able to achieve. Even though some young girls were aware of the scant possibilities of a different lifestyle for themselves, they were still insistent on some behavioral practices such as their religious obligations. Despite the desire and self-perceived ability of higher education, young girls stated anxiety about the sacrifices they will have to make upon the pursuit of certain goals in life. For instance, in a joint program of the Kurtalan Governorate and the Directorate of Public Training, young girls who have certificates from Public Training Centers are able to start work as instructors in these centers, on the condition that they have their high school diplomas. The problem voiced by some girls was that, despite the good intentions of the program, a large number of girls were automatically exempt from this opportunity. Although a girl had nearly 10 years of experience in kilim weaving, she was unable to ever become an instructor due to the fact that she was wearing a headscarf. Her reluctance to adjust to official policy on the issue of the headscarf placed this young girl and many others in a complex situation:

They try to uncover the heads of girls who attend schools and the Public Training Centers. Especially during these last two years, including the stitching classes and the handicrafts courses, there is a reaction against girls whose heads are covered. No girl's parents would send their daughters to such places under these conditions. For this reason, there are parents who do not send their daughters to schools or training courses, although they would like to. For instance, we are a group of friends whose grades at school are quite good and we would like to take the university entrance exam, but we are not sure anymore because we will have to uncover our heads at the university. We don't know what to do. This is sincerely a greater obstacle for us than the university entrance exam itself. We are confident that we will enter a university. But it is after the exam that worries us. We have been wearing head scarves since we have known ourselves. For example I have been wearing it for 11 years and uncovering seems so hard, no matter how much you want it. And I have hundreds of friends like myself, they are all in the same situation, living through the same

worries. It is really difficult to make concessions. Some see it differently, they say we do it for political reasons, but we have always worn head scarves; this is what we have seen in the family; this is how we know ourselves; and this is what we think is right. (Kurtalan)

5.4.2. Narrow Imaginations for Work Possibilities

As is the case in all aspects of social life, traditional gender roles in the economic sphere mostly go unchallenged. The belief that men are the bread-winners and financial providers of the house were confirmed by most women in the Southeast. Although they were unhappy about their husbands and sons being away for work, their solution to the economic hardship in the region was, nevertheless, the sole employment of their men. Some young girls noted, conversely, that the economic destitution in the region has led some families to be more flexible about allowing their daughters to work. Therefore, young girls want training courses to be opened according to their skills and interests. However, the girls made it clear that there are conditions on the types of places in which they can work. As girls themselves stated:

We will work in any job for which we are fit, but there are women's jobs and men's jobs. We will do anything as long as it is women's work. We would like to work especially if it is a job with a consistent income. We learn some things at the ÇATOM but we are not able to earn money as there are no workplaces. In the west [of Turkey] there are ateliers, such as textile ateliers, in which women work. Because there are plenty of jobs, all women can find work. But here it is different. Because job opportunities are limited, employees hire the most highly qualified girls. This means that girls must obtain the proper training and certificate for the few jobs that are available. Nobody says this girl is in need of work, let's give her a job. (Kurtalan)

Young girls and women who had never been exposed to a condition in which women are employed could not imagine the sorts of environments they would want to work as

women. The most enthusiastic responses to work prospects were given by some young girls in Şirvan. The Şirvan Governorate had constructed a building to be hired as a small textile atelier in the county. A businessman from Şanlıurfa equipped the inside of the building and girls worked there until the atelier went bankrupt after three months. A number of the girls that I interviewed had worked there and earned a small amount of money. Because of such an experience, the girls in Şirvan were more creative about possible prospects for work. Insufficient family income in most households in Şirvan was said to lead a large number of families to consider sending their daughters to work outside the home. Nevertheless, the girls themselves said they would not work without certain restrictions: “We are willing to work as long as it is a closed, sheltered workplace not too far from home.” Similarly, young girls in Uluköy stated that they would like to work as long as they do it from inside the house.

As work alternatives, the young girls in Şirvan came up with options such as kilim weaving ateliers, carpet weaving ateliers, and hairdressers. Although some girls were able to imagine work possibilities, as stated earlier, the control of the men on female household members is extended to the economic sphere. Despite the difficulties of making ends meet, a large number of men were not in favor of allowing their wives and daughters to work outside the home. A 19 year-old illiterate young woman who recently got married had been working in a factory for 7 years in Istanbul before she was involuntarily sent to Siirt for an arranged marriage. Although her husband had a hard time finding work and worked only on a daily basis, he did not let her step out of the house without his permission. She expressed feelings of helplessness in the face of this

situation. A number of other newly married young women complained about similar strict controls exercised by their husbands.

Attending seasonal work such as cotton or hazelnut-picking does not necessarily bring about a change in the position of young girls within the family. Only a few number of girls reported that such work gave them a degree of autonomy in terms of spending their own money. On the other hand, there were some girls who were desperate to challenge gender roles only if the opportunities were given:

I don't want to sit at home. Sitting at home is boring anyway, there is nothing else to do except house work and handicrafts. Me and my friends, we are active people, or at least we see ourselves like that, but there are no appropriate jobs for us. It would be great if they were created. For example there are no such possibilities in public workplaces. Here we are talking about our problems and possible solutions to these problems, but don't you have any opportunities you can present to us? I say that we are also human and we want to achieve something and earn some money with our own means. I think this is our right, our most natural right. We know that nowadays women who earn their own money are in a very different standing. I say all these but I don't really expect a solution. I just wanted to say them, that's all.
(Kurtalan)

Like the young girl quoted above, there was at least one woman or young girl in every gathering that stood apart from the rest of the group, although these young women were no doubt a staggering minority. One such urban woman from Siirt summarized well the situation of women in the region:

I am now 23 years old. I completed primary school. After 7 years of marriage I recently divorced my husband. I live in my mother's house with my 2 children. We are 7 siblings at home. I was married off with an arranged wedding when I was 14 years old. My husband and I, we migrated to Istanbul due to financial problems here in Siirt. It is very difficult to leave a slum neighborhood [*varoş* in Turkish] and live in a metropolis. I realized we had nothing here in Siirt. Once you end up in

a metropolis, that is when you really start living. You have to catch up with the pace of the big city and the job possibilities there are really not that easy. My husband started working as a taxi driver there and I would work as small daily jobs came along. But you have to be continuously working there because you pay money even for the water you drink. The lifestyle makes this the rule. If you don't work one day, you are hungry that day. My husband was constantly working; earning money became his only struggle. This led to the disruption of the harmony in our family. Even though we were husband and wife, we came to a point in which we were no longer sharing anything. In such hardships, both the love and respect between us withered away. A man who goes there from the East starts seeing the many different facets of life. His own family environment is no longer satisfying. As you see here, most women are covered, but over there, women are freer. You find all sorts of women in the big city and the men that go there lose control. While he starts living more freely there, I can't because I still have my community, my neighbors, and my relatives there. People start talking about how so-and-so's daughter-in-law changed.

Now I am divorced. I am in Siirt and even though I wasn't covered before, now I am [she wears a headscarf and an overcoat; has make up and looks quite stylish] because everyone said, 'look at how free she is even though she is divorced.' So I had to cover up. My family also wanted it; they don't want to hear rumors from the neighbors. Of course I have to think of my family as well. When there is a rumor about one person in the family, the whole family gets the blame. I have to think of the future of my sisters, so it is important that I cover up to stop drawing attention to the family and myself. But this has changed nothing inside me. It has taken nothing away from my ideas. I still feel the pressure of the community and the relatives, but I am lucky in one thing: at least I don't have any brothers. At least I don't feel their extra pressure.

I want to do good for society. I don't want to depend on someone for the rest of my life. I am sure I am full of treasures, and I would like to bring them out to the surface. I don't like the community's outlook because they say how can a divorced or a widowed woman work? But at a time when even university graduates are not able to find work, what can I do as a primary school graduate? The community is slowly changing, for example, we have gotten over these as a family, but not everyone is like us; they still like to talk about others. I see myself as having made progress, but it is really very difficult to live in the East. You probably won't be able to understand this; we live in a strongly patriarchal society here. I would have loved to do something good, even something with little pay. But everyone asks, is it worth the hassle for 30-40 million a month? I think it definitely is. (Siirt)

5.4.3. Limitations of the ÇATOM

Despite the many positive aspects of ÇATOMs for the women in the GAP region, their span of operation is usually not very wide. The location of the ÇATOM building is very important for the girls to come and attend the activities. Hence, it is only the close surrounding within the community that the ÇATOM is able to serve. Almost all the girls and women emphasized that the location of the ÇATOM must be in a ‘secure’ and ‘sheltered’ place for it to attract participants.

I observed during the surveys, focus group meetings, and informal conversations with the young girls and women that the more deprived and illiterate participants have noted the highest levels of satisfaction of the ÇATOM. Some girls welcome the ÇATOM like arid lands welcoming the rain. But young girls and women who have attained a certain level of knowledge and education are in search of something more from the ÇATOM. They have reached a level in which they are ready to mobilize themselves in the attempt for further personal improvement, but lack the know-how. The ÇATOM, however, is unable to assist these young women in reaching their full potentials. This is due to the fact that after a certain point of activity, the ÇATOM field workers and instructors are unable to utilize their own potentials, which in turn highly affects the trickling down process of benefits to the lower level of participants. Although the ÇATOM field workers do receive periodic training on essential issues such as gender awareness, women’s empowerment, and participatory development, this knowledge does not necessarily percolate into the grassroots level. Most young girls and women are still

highly unaware of the imbalances in gender roles. Because there is not much scope for imagination among the women and even the young girls in the region, it is clear that other techniques must be developed and utilized for raising awareness, grassroots participation and local mobilization.

CHAPTER VI:

THE STATE'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE ÇATOM PROJECT

6.1. The Turkish Military

6.1.1. Views on Development Assistance

Given the national importance of internal and external security concerns, Stockton points out the 'authoritarian approach' to the resolution of internal conflicts and subsequent humanitarian relief assistance as opposed to 'participatory distribution systems.'²⁶² In Southeastern Anatolia, the Turkish military has an understanding of development that is relief oriented, based on the 'mercy approach' rather than the right to development or the 'justice approach.'²⁶³ Excluding or ignoring the notion of human rights, or rather cultural rights, the development process of the Southeast is under close surveillance by the Turkish armed forces.

²⁶² Stockton cited in Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Humanitarian Intervention and Beyond: Introduction," in *World Orders in the Making: Humanitarian Intervention and Beyond*, ed. J. N. Pieterse (London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1998), 8-9.

²⁶³ DeMars cited in Pieterse, "Humanitarian Intervention," 8.

Now that at the end of the decade armed conflict in Southeastern Anatolia has declined, the Turkish military pays more attention to relations with the people in the region.²⁶⁴ They now focus on economic, social and psychological healing in the region. They realize that Turkey can develop only with a ‘happier’ society and this is the general attitude with which the armed forces approach the Southeast.²⁶⁵ In terms of humanitarian assistance to the Southeast, Turkish armed forces personnel go to the region with a qualified team of people, including health personnel, sociologists, lawyers, and so on. With the support of the Regional Governorate, they carry out a variety of projects in the region. Doctor Selma Şardan, for instance, is a senior lieutenant who visits mountain villages in Southeastern Anatolia to teach women how to read and write while informing them on issues of family planning. There are many other female military personnel in the region, and like Doctor Şardan, they are dedicated to ‘educating the mothers.’

Other significant activities of the armed forces in the Southeast make up the ‘Embracing the Citizen’ [*Vatandaşla Kucaklaşma* in Turkish] campaign. During the year 1999, these activities have included literacy courses to 19,770 people, university preparatory courses to 2,412 students, computer courses to 1,216 students, foreign language courses to 980 students, distribution of school stationary to 1,108,920 students, official marriages to 2,760 couples, circumcision to 4,895 boys, tours to visit the large cities of

²⁶⁴ Necati Özgen, Paper presented at the Conference on “The Problems facing East and Southeastern Anatolia and Possible Solutions,” Ministry of Interior, Ankara, Turkey, Nov. 23, 2000.

²⁶⁵ Yalman cited in Fikret Bila, “Orgeneral Yalman’ın Çağrısı [The Call of General Yalman].” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, May 28, 2000, 16.

the west to 340 students, health check-ups to 1,936,597 people, distribution of medicine to 269,005 people, teeth scanning to 99,242 people, distribution of clothing items to 160,443 students, 85 km. of electricity lines to 77 villages, 158 km. of water pipe lines to 112 villages, 7,416 km. of roads to 1,028 villages, the repair of 155 damaged school buildings, the repair of 114 health centers, distribution and repair of 5 radio and TV reflectors, 2 drinking water projects, 1 carpet weaving project, and the plantation of 2,500,000 oak trees and 1,500,000 saplings.²⁶⁶

Proud of their extensive activities and projects in the region, senior General Yalman, in a press release during the year 2000, called out to the Turkish society and civil society organizations to come to the region: “I would like to make this call especially to civil society organizations. Associations working for civilization, namely education, health, and family, must include the Southeast in their fields of operation. They undertake very good, very successful activities. Some examples are the Foundation of Education Volunteers [*Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı* in Turkish] and the Family Planning Foundation [*Aile Planlaması Vakfı* in Turkish], among other similar organizations. The Southeast needs activities like these. Civil society organizations should take us as an example.”²⁶⁷

Talking about their achievements in Southeastern Anatolia, members of the Turkish armed forces portray the relationship of the soldier with the villager in highly positive terms. As Necati Özgen, a retired army corps commander who served in the East and

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 16.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

Southeastern parts of the country, recited: “In Digor²⁶⁸ there was a village that provided support to the militants of the PKK during their attacks. We went to this village and asked the headman about the problems in the village. He stated his most urgent need as the lack of water in his village. We went there, a brigade commander, a colonel, a sergeant, some soldiers, and myself. We managed to provide the village with running water. On our last day, we were greeted with joy and a large number of flags. We received hugs from the villagers upon our departure. Now this village in Digor is the most nationalist village.”²⁶⁹ It is precisely this relationship and dynamics that the armed forces want civil society organizations in Turkey to take as good examples of development in East and Southeastern Anatolia.

The peculiar structure of vertical relations within the local community, as well as with respect to outsiders has resulted in the use of a specific language in the region. The patron-client relations in the region coupled with the presence of the armed forces in the same region during the last two decades has resulted in the further endorsement of the ever-present strong vertical relations in Southeastern Anatolia. So much that it has affected the terminology of the local population. For instance, when talking about the governor or the village schoolteacher, locals would refer to them as ‘*Vali Paşa*’ or ‘*Komutanım*’. Both *paşa* and *komutan* are labels used for high-ranking military officers in the Turkish armed forces. Hence, some locals colloquially used these labels when referring to the province governor or the teacher at their village school. Because of such relations, during the interviews and daily conversations with the community members,

²⁶⁸ A town in Kars province in Northeastern Turkey.

²⁶⁹ Özgen, Paper presented at the Conference on “The Problems.”

some of the locals, thinking I was a civil servant or some other outsider to whom they had to pay due respect, would refrain from answering questions, or they would conceal certain things by telling me that I would know better than them. I realized how the local population has always been subservient to the elder members of the community, as well as anyone coming into their community from outside, and they are not at all used to answering questions about themselves. The political fragility in the region, undoubtedly, adds to the precaution of daily conversations with outsiders.

The fact that the local inhabitants call the governor '*Paşam*', on the other hand, is pointed out by members of the armed forces as a sign of compliment to military personnel who comment on the situation of the locals in Southeastern Anatolia. The high regard of members of the armed forces for their own deeds was recited by General Özgen with pride: "There was a boy from a village in Uludere."²⁷⁰ He had been taken out of school by his parents when he was a young boy. He ran off to Northern Iraq and fought against the Turkish armed forces for 3-4 months. Upon his return to the country, I said 'let's educate this boy.' 'Of course *paşam*' Ünal bey replied and we called for the Director of National Education at Uludere. The boy was sent to the west [of Turkey] and his full funding was supplied by the Turkish armed forces. We then transferred him to a boarding school on the Black sea coast. He is now a respectable young man, much more useful for his country."²⁷¹ The military also deals with activities of mass circumcision for the boys in the region. Military personnel talk about such vital needs in

²⁷⁰ A town in Şırnak province in Southeastern Turkey.

²⁷¹ Özgen, Paper presented at the Conference on "The Problems."

the region, with a harsh tone: “There are fellows who have reached age 20 and are still not yet circumcised. This is unacceptable.”²⁷²

Hence, it is evident that the Turkish military views the inhabitants of the East and Southeast as ‘grateful children’ rather than ‘angry adults.’²⁷³ With similar delusions, members of the Turkish military view most nongovernmental activity in the region as dubious and threatening rather than useful, complementary and accommodating. The situation of civil society organizations in the Southeastern parts of the country is particular given the continuation of strong military presence within Emergency Rule procedures and the high politicization of the region. The details of the problems confronted by civil societal initiatives in the Southeast in particular were described in chapter IV.

6.1.2. Views on ÇATOMs

In terms of the specific relations with ÇATOMs, while a small number of military personnel make the effort to work cooperatively with the local ÇATOMs in their vicinity, most observe these centers from a distance, and maintain the privilege of having full control over the activities of the ÇATOM. Two extreme examples illustrate the varying attitudes of military personnel in locations where ÇATOMs are situated.

²⁷² “Doğu’da 20 yaşına gelip de sünnet olmamış herifler var. Olacak şey değil.” in Turkish.

²⁷³ Walker cited in Pieterse, “Humanitarian Intervention”, 9.

The senior lieutenant of the gendarmerie in the Beytüşşebap county of Şırnak was aware of the significance of the ÇATOMs and believed the particular approach of the ÇATOM project to be appropriate for the characteristics and needs of women and young girls in the region. He was further encouraging of the ÇATOM in Beytüşşebap by declaring that the ÇATOM had not yet reached its full potential within the community.

We have almost become one with the ÇATOM here in Beytüşşebap. The Public Training Centers [*Halk Eğitim Merkezleri* in Turkish] have market-oriented goals through the development of occupational skills, while we know that the ÇATOM is more concerned about educating the citizen and improving their capacities. The ÇATOM is definitely a must in the region, but their activities are insufficient. Activities must be multiplied and varied. There must be a diversity and strength in terms of financial revenues for the ÇATOM. There is also a greater need for people with leadership qualities. There should be greater coordination among institutions. We will continue our assistance to the ÇATOM building. (Senior Lieutenant of the Gendarmerie, Beytüşşebap)

It is clear from the above interview that, despite the full support provided by the gendarmerie to the ÇATOM, the armed forces make sure all activities are transparent and are organized upon the supervision of the local armed authorities. Although the ÇATOM field worker in Beytüşşebap is in very good terms with the senior lieutenant of the gendarmerie, she recited an appalling story of a humiliating interrogation she faced during a trip she organized for ÇATOM participants. On the way back from a day trip to Silopi, another county in Şırnak near the Iraqi border, she was stopped with a group of ÇATOM participants at a control point and nearly tortured by the security officers on guard and held captive overnight. The wife of a military officer happened to be one of the organizers and participants of the trip and she was also closely interrogated.²⁷⁴ The

²⁷⁴ The wife of the military officer, who has now an active role in the ÇATOM, talked about her husband's initial reservations about her going to the ÇATOM and mingling with the local population.

ÇATOM field worker later found out that the trip organizers had carelessly chosen the day before Nevruz, a signal of the coming of spring and a time of festivities for most people in the region. The incident took place in March 2001, a time when PKK attacks were no longer a threat to the security of the region.

An extension of this is the other extreme in which the army commanders and other military officers had no other relations with the ÇATOM except for regular informal and sometimes inconspicuous visits in order to ensure that all activities are put into practice as foreseen. An incident was witnessed in one of the training sessions for ÇATOM field worker girls which took place in the social facilities building of the Atatürk Dam in Şanlıurfa. After a hard day's work, in an informal gathering one evening, the participant girls sang local songs in both Turkish and Kurdish. We were all enjoying the warm atmosphere of a sincere get-together when a tough, hard-faced young man leaned to one of the NGO instructors and notified him that the provincial army corps commander was waiting to speak to him. Upon provocative questions to the NGO instructor as to what they thought they were doing, the commander was told by the instructor that the aim of the ÇATOMs and the assisting NGOs was to 'help spread democracy at the grassroots level'. The army corps commander reminded the instructor that he was well aware of the activities of both the ÇATOMs and NGOs, and that all their activities were under close scrutiny.

This is an indication of the mistrust and suspicion that military officers bear for the locals in the region. They are also not in favor of socializing with the local population as they regard themselves culturally different, in most cases superior.

In general, I could see that the ÇATOMs in smaller settlements had an overall easier time with the members of the armed forces. Except for occasional unpleasant incidences, ÇATOM field workers did not complain about their relations with military personnel. In one case where the ÇATOM building was too close to the command headquarters of the gendarmerie, the ÇATOM field worker complained that many families were reluctant to send their daughters to the ÇATOM specifically for this reason. She talked about the families' persevering reservations about military, gendarmerie, and police personnel and stated the advantages as well as the disadvantages of being too close to the building of the gendarmerie commandship. I realized that the smaller the settlement and the more supervision they have over the activities of the ÇATOM, the more cooperative and helpful the armed forces are in their dealings with the ÇATOM. The fact that the ÇATOM is a well-reputed institution in a particular settlement, and that the wives of some personnel of the security forces attend the activities of the ÇATOMs helps ease the tension between the ÇATOM and the armed forces in the region. This is especially true for local authorities as the armed officials in larger institutions keep more of a distance with the ÇATOM and maintain more aggressive relations, if any at all. This relationship is perpetuated by the fact that most ÇATOMs in larger settlements such as province centers are located in migrant neighborhoods which are perceived by the security forces as spots of tension.

In addition to these observations, it is hard to miss the peculiarities of the terminology used by military personnel. As picked out from the above interview with the senior lieutenant of the gendarmerie in Beytüşşebap, the lieutenant confirmed their close connection with the ÇATOM, implying stringent supervision in addition to assistance.

Although ÇATOMs are initially designed for the women in the region and mainly serve for the needs of these women, the senior lieutenant preferred to use the words ‘citizens’ and ‘people’ while talking about the target group of ÇATOMs. He reminded me, in his gender-neutral word choice, that the ‘people’ in this region, irrespective of sex, are the ‘citizens’ of the republic. He refused to recognize the gender-specific project of the ÇATOMs, while at the same time verifying that the people in the region are members of a unitary nation, hence revealing the strong ideological load in his words. He refused to see or to emphasize the political implications and dimension of the ÇATOM project.

The lieutenant’s main concern, irrespective of the project at hand, was the “education of citizens and the improvement of their capacities” again as citizens of the republic, hinting at the adoption of the same objectives and top-down means inherited from the times of the Empire and the republic. Through his words, he was helping propagate the same vertical structures of decision making, as he stated his belief in a greater need for ‘people’ and not ‘women’ or ‘young girls’ with strong leadership qualities. Instead of valuing the ÇATOMs for their ability to raise awareness and mobilize the young girls in the community, the lieutenant in Beytüşşebap was more concerned about the limited financial resources of the ÇATOM. Finally, the senior lieutenant re-emphasized the gendarmerie’s paternalistic relation to the ÇATOM and gave the guarantee that he would be providing full infrastructural support to the ÇATOM building for the activities to come.

Despite the negative and off-putting attitudes displayed by members of the Turkish armed forces, they were nevertheless in an effort to bring NGO activity into the region.

Realizing and stressing the importance of humanitarian and development agencies in the region, it was reported that, within the National Security Council²⁷⁵, there was a project in progress for the possible coordination of NGOs that intended to be active in the Southeastern Anatolia region.²⁷⁶ In addition to possible good intentions, it must be considered that the motives behind such an encouragement of NGOs and a coordination initiative might go back to the same old intentions of the strict supervision, filtration and control of nongovernmental activity in the region, as well as national and international publicity, and a way to garner additional international funding for development that are available only through NGOs.

6.2. Public Administrators

6.2.1. Public Institutions and Social Services

Most local administrators in the region possessed views similar to those of military personnel. Despite the fact that ÇATOMs are registered under the supervision of province governors, it was again these governors that portrayed the most negative

²⁷⁵ The military has a special positioning with respect to politics in Turkey. Historically, the military has been an essential component of the Ottoman state structure. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the republic, was a member of the military. The Turkish military has traditionally been considered a stabilizing factor in politics and the guardian of Kemalist principles. The influence of the military in the political system is constitutionally supported. The National Security Council, as the institutional form of the military in Turkish politics, was established by the 1961 constitution. In practice, it is not only matters of internal and external security that are the concern of the National Security Council, but all aspects of societal life. Policies of ‘national security’ include a wide spectrum of issues, ranging from economics to health and education. For further details look at Gülistan Gürbey, “Türkiye’de Bir Sivil Toplum Oluşumunun Önündeki Siyasi ve Hukuki Engeller [The Political and Legal Obstacles to Civil Societal Formations in Turkey],” in *Ortadoğu’da Sivil Toplumun Sorunları [Problems of Civil Society in the Middle East]*, eds. Ferhad Ibrahim and Heidi Wedel (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997), 118-119.

²⁷⁶ Özgen, Paper presented at the Conference on “Southeastern Anatolia.”

feelings about ÇATOMs and their operations. Perhaps the one interview that reflects so well the general attitude of public administrative personnel is the one with the governor of Siirt about his views regarding the ÇATOMs and their activities in the province of Siirt:

The GAP Administration has many diverse projects in Southeastern Anatolia. ÇATOMs are institutions that have been created by intellectuals [*enteller* in Turkish] sitting in classy and snobbish coffee houses, taking decisions about the women in this region. For 40 years there is an established system utilized by Public Training Centers, and these Centers can operate much more effectively with their highly qualified instructors. The system is perfect, but we are unable to operate optimally given the drawbacks of limited financial resources. For instance, *telkari* silver handicrafts and the *oltu* handicrafts of Erzurum were developed and marketed for the first time by Public Training Centers. The Kurtalan kilim course was an initiative of the Public Training Center. The only difference of the ÇATOM is that the staff members get paid more money than those of the Public Training Centers. There are only two staff members who belong to the ÇATOM. The rest are personnel from Public Training Centers, the Health Directorate, or the Directorate for Agriculture. In my opinion, even if the ÇATOM fails to exist, Public Training Centers will always be there, and we will not notice the absence of ÇATOMs.

In our Community Centers [of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency; *Toplum Merkezleri* in Turkish], we have pre-school education and we have opened a selling point for the handicrafts produced there. Such a system is far better than the ÇATOM. In our Community Centers, we provide essential courses on citizenship. We teach the flag, unity and solidarity, and the essentials of the republic. We also have literacy courses for adults, courses on religion, and everything else. Under a progressive system, Kur'an courses could be enormously effective in the Community Centers.

ÇATOMs survive merely through publicity. They get good publicity because they were designed by the GAP Administration. There is absolutely nothing special about the ÇATOMs; they are nothing more than a waste of public resources. The GAP Administration makes it sound as if the ÇATOM is a new invention. Like I said, there is an established system that has been operational for 40 years, but the GAP Administration wants to create something new out of this. The GAP Administration is trying to make it appear like a grandiose project, just because the ÇATOM has the name of the GAP. Ankara uses well the current sensitivity towards the Southeast in its decision making mechanisms. It is nice that you have come to carry out research on the ÇATOMs, but why don't you do the same for the Community Centers

or Public Training Centers and prefer the ÇATOMs of the GAP? The GAP Administration is not an administrative agency, it is not a planning agency, it is not an education or health specialist. People are more disturbed of the GAP than appreciative of it. In Siirt I am going to close down the ÇATOM and convert it to a Community Center, because I am very uneasy about the government's resources being divided up and wasted. There is no need to re-discover America. We can open up evening courses at the Public Training Center. Instead of creating more ÇATOM buildings, we must come up with a system in which we can provide more support to the already existing Public Training Centers.

Pelin *hanım* [the field worker of Siirt ÇATOM] is a successful, enthusiastic, hard-working, and a qualified person, but the ÇATOM has started repeating itself. For this reason, Community Centers are far better than the ÇATOM. Actually we can't say the ÇATOM is a failure. With the special efforts of Pelin *hanım*, some activities are being carried out, but if I were to move Pelin *hanım* to the Public Training Center, she would be producing much more.

In the Community Centers, during the time when the girls are busy with kilim weaving, we give them an hour of useful courses. Also during the literacy courses, we provide the participants with some essential messages that we want them to absorb. The girls that first started coming to the kilim weaving courses were backward and untamed, whereas in my later visits I couldn't tell which ones were the students and which ones were the instructors. I was surprised by how much these girls had changed; they were all dressed very well and they had become refined. I am planning on providing internet access to the girls so that they become better acquainted with the outside world. The girls are going to be able to chat with others through the internet. (Governor, Siirt)

The most striking aspect in the words of the governor was the immense competition perceived between the governorate and the GAP Administration. The governor of Siirt drew a large distinction between the established public institutions for social provision such as the Public Training Centers and the Community Centers, and the more flexible ÇATOMs. Despite the fact that all three centers are indeed public institutions, the governor made a sharp contrast between ÇATOMs and the other two institutions. Although he half-heartedly accepted the success of the ÇATOM project, the governor had nothing positive to say about them and rather emphasized that ÇATOMs merely

‘survive’ through ‘good publicity.’ While he illustrated his full confidence in the Public Training system and Community Centers, he vulgarly dismissed the structure of the ÇATOMs and their modes of operation. He drew a sharp dichotomy between ÇATOMs and their personnel being too distant from their target group, while at the other extreme he provided examples of the close contact between public personnel and local participants in Public Training Centers and Community Centers.

The governor of Siirt was highly protective of these two public institutions, possibly due to two reasons. On the one hand, he might be perceiving as a threat the larger involvement of women in the ÇATOM project, while on the other hand, he might not be too content about private and semi-private funds being channeled through ÇATOMs, whereas public social services remain slack and under-funded. Despite his awareness of the current ineffectiveness of such public institutions, he drew attention to the lack of financial resources, while not mentioning the inefficiency of the operation of state offices and their bureaucratic institutions.

The Siirt governor was not aware of the semi-civil character of ÇATOMs and the involvement of NGOs in the project. He did not realize that ÇATOMs worked more flexibly and less bureaucratically than the other two institutions of Public Training and Community Centers. It was precisely because of these inefficiencies that some NGOs prefer to work in the region through ÇATOMs as opposed to working through Public Training Centers and Community Centers. Despite Siirt ÇATOM’s operation in the province center for over 3 years, the governor had not visited the center and was hence unaware of the personal changes and transformations witnessed by most young girls and

women attending the activities of the ÇATOM. He was blinded to the benefits of ÇATOM activities due to his intense reaction against the GAP Administration. This detestation was further heated by his own ignorance of the status and functioning of the GAP Administration. In spite of its equally public character, the GAP Administration was surprisingly regarded and treated as otherwise.

In the words of the Siirt governor, we are again confronted with the terminology of the official ideology. The governor proudly spoke of the courses on citizenship in which kilim weaving girls are taught about the significance of the Turkish flag, the unity and solidarity of the Turkish nation, and the essentials of the Turkish republic. The governor gave hints on the official policy of using religious sentiments and the Kur'an for the enforcement of republican and nationalist ideology. The legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his understanding of development linger in the state officials' views on the locals as 'backward and untamed'. Progress is regarded only as a manifestation of the exterior, as observed in the Siirt governor's understanding of good clothing and a 'refined' look as an indicator of and essential to progress and development.

Similar to the comments of the governor of Siirt, the deputy governor shared parallel ideas about the uselessness of ÇATOMs. Although the deputy governor stated the higher number of participants in the ÇATOMs and admitted the ineffectiveness of the Public Training system, he still lacked positive views about the ÇATOM. In fact, the deputy governor was highly negative of both the participation profile and the approach of the ÇATOM towards its participants.

I don't believe the ÇATOM serves its true purpose. We were told that there are a total of 80 participants, but when I visited the building, there were no more than 20 participants. All ÇATOMs do is create a chaos in the provision of social services. If the Public Training Center sends instructors to the ÇATOM, then this is a Public Training course. For example, this is the case for the stitching and embroidery courses. All institutions are in the scene for a show. I am absolutely not of the opinion that ÇATOMs are useful. Similarly, when I visit the courses of the Public Training Center, I see no more than 3-5 people. In that sense, we need, in fact, a reform both in the Public Training Centers and the Community Centers. The ÇATOM uses health personnel from the Health Directorate, and other staff from other institutions. Community Centers are the same. In Siirt, the carpet weaving courses of Sümer Carpet are going well, but if we generalize, the number of participants for these is also not very high.

The GAP Administration has no concrete investments in this region. For this reason, people are fed up. When officials from the GAP Administration come here, they do nothing but talk and tell us what to do. But we already know the problems in the region and the solutions to these problems. All we need is financial support; not people telling us what to do. The TOKAP project [*Toplumsal Kalkınma Projesi*, Community Development Project of the Siirt governorate during the office of the previous governor] was a flawed project because it made the people in the region get too used to receiving something for free. Everyone is so used to it, they all expect something from us. We call the girls to come over to learn kilim and carpet weaving, the families say they won't send their daughters unless we give them something. And there is no difference between the TOKAP and the ÇATOM. I now have a system in which girls who come to the kilim and carpet ateliers to weave and earn money also have to take 10 hours of home economics courses per week, environmental health, and other topics that are important for them. We are already trying to do the best we can for the region. ÇATOM does not bring an alternative approach to social services. (Deputy Governor responsible for ÇATOMs, Siirt)

The contradictory words of the deputy governor of Siirt reveal the confusion with respect to the provision of social services in general. Even though the deputy governor realizes that a reform is needed in terms of institutions of social services, he talks about a system that the Siirt governorate has developed in which girls who work at the kilim and carpet weaving ateliers of Sümer Carpet are obliged to take certain hours of classes. The governorate has developed such a system since Public Training Centers and Community Centers are unable to attract participants. Through this system, the genuine aim is not

the provision of social services, but the instruction of young girls. Given the fact that ÇATOMs do not explicitly support and help perpetuate the essentials of official ideology, they are regarded by dedicated public administrators as unsuccessful and useless.

Some authorities that criticized the GAP Administration's mode of operation stated their belief that this deficiency of the GAP had its reflection on the workings of the ÇATOMs. This was a good example for understanding the confusion that state officials had in terms of organizational structures. On the one hand, ÇATOMs were criticized for being left unattended and on their own, and suggestions were made that they needed supervision from the top. This implied that they were not too happy about the decentralized operational structure of ÇATOMs. On the other hand, they also seemed to be in favor of a more decentralized mode of operation in which experts spend more time and energy in the field, instead of taking decisions at the top level, from their offices in Ankara. Finally, however, the terminological confusion culminated in the Cizre governor's statement that 'centers' should be created in the 'localities'.

I fully agree with the aims and objectives of ÇATOMs as they appear on paper, but we are confronted with a different situation when it comes to implementation. ÇATOMs have to be supervised on the spot and qualified people are needed for the coordination of the project. Voluntary agencies and the GAP must work together in a missionary spirit and in an efficient manner. The best communication with the local population is created out in the streets, so activities have to be planned and implemented not from the center but through field studies and working on the spot. It is essential that psychologists and sociologists come to the field and work for at least a month. A rotation of this kind can be arranged within the GAP. The Administration ought to establish its center in the locality to which it relates. For this reason, the GAP Administration must definitely be re-structured. The most important sections of society are children and the youth, therefore the target group must be correctly selected. Qualified academicians must

work in the region and directly in the field. The ÇATOM must be more active. (Governor, Cizre)

As observed in the comments above, among state officials, in general, one of the most frequently made comparisons was between the ÇATOMs and the Public Training Centers. The ÇATOMs were sometimes recognized as a positive initiative for the women in the region, while others emphasized that Public Training Centers have a wider range of beneficiaries, are more disciplined, and their infrastructure is more established. Irrespective of whether the comments were encouraging or discouraging of ÇATOMs, most comments about the two institutions were confused.

6.2.2. ÇATOMs and the Provision of Social Services

This tension between ÇATOMs and Public Training Centers was also confirmed directly by the related state officials, namely the directors of Public Training and National Education. Some Public Training directors who regarded ÇATOMs as an extension of their own institution conveyed the opinion that they had to keep ÇATOMs under their supervision. This, in turn, created problems with respect to certificates provided by Public Training Centers. They believed the lack of expertise among ÇATOM instructors to make cooperation among institutions difficult.

We have placed the ÇATOM into its current building. [The building that the ÇATOM uses is the old building of the Public Training Center.] We need to regularly monitor the ÇATOM because they have problems with certificates. It is not possible to issue certificates without a permission from the Directorate of National Education. The ÇATOM has problems with expert instructors but we still try to ignore their deficiencies [*alttan alıyoruz* in Turkish] and cooperate with them in the provision of certificates. But the ÇATOM must remember that the

instructors have to be qualified and they must be selected carefully. In any case, it is encouraging to know that they don't do anything without notifying us. There is mutual trust between us. (Director of Public Training, Beytüşşebap)

As noted in the words of the National Education director in Beytüşşebap, ÇATOMs have in fact brought positive competition in an environment where Public Training Centers were traditionally the sole providers of such social services: “The courses and activities at the ÇATOM are successful but there is competition between the two institutions because the ÇATOM took over the courses of the Public Training Center.” The fact that ÇATOMs have encroached into the region with aims specifically designed for women and a more flexible and active team of field workers, Public Training personnel are confronted with competition that they are unpleasantly aware of. Despite the positive effects of this kind of competition between the two institutions, vertical relations of power and control are still maintained within and among institutions. Instead of the recognition of positive interaction, Public Training authorities are eager to establish and maintain a decisive role over the ÇATOMs: “There are tendencies to open up new courses without acknowledging the Directorate of Public Training. When instructors are to be appointed at the ÇATOM, the views of the Public Training must be consulted. Our Public Training Centers are disciplined whereas ÇATOMs lack this kind of discipline. In fact, there is really no need for ÇATOMs.”

Despite the generally negative attitudes of Public Training and National Education directors, some other directors and field personnel such as those working for the Directorate of Health generally displayed a more positive picture of the ÇATOMs. One

of the reasons for this was the similarities in the approach of the ÇATOMs and the Directorate of Health:

As an institution [meaning the Directorate of Health] we are used to regularly working directly in the field. For this reason, we highly appreciate the approach of the ÇATOM and their relationship with their target group. For the health education sessions at the ÇATOM every Friday, we organize the classes upon demands coming from the participants. These sessions are designed and given in a way that they attract the full attention of participants. So much that sometimes there are 85-90 participants gathering in one session to listen to the class. In terms of the approach to participants and the quality of the sessions that are given, the ÇATOM is much better than the Public Training Center. The best example of this is that the opinions of participants are taken with the help of the field workers. I can assure you that the quality and the content of the health sessions have increased as a result of demands coming from the participants. The courses are different from those given at the Public Training Center; they are richer and more diverse. When their interest is tapped, participants are enthusiastic and ready to learn; there is an enormous potential. (A Nurse at the Directorate of Health, Beytüşşebap)

Similar to the comments of the doctors and nurses at the Directorate of Health in Beytüşşebap, the only NGO field worker I came across in the region made similar remarks concerning the ÇATOM's mode of operation in Siirt and its difference with other public institutions with similar objectives.

Actually the activities of the ÇATOM are more extensive than what we do at the Willows Foundation; we work only on family planning. I find Pelin [field worker of Siirt ÇATOM] successful in a number of aspects, for instance, she raises awareness about health issues and convinces people that going to the health center is essential. I have seen girls who started earning money from weaving kilims at the ÇATOM and girls who have earned certificates for literacy. I know that at the ÇATOM, people are consulted prior to the start of an activity or a course, because different communities have different interests and demands. I know this as a person who is constantly in the field. Solidarity among girls at the ÇATOM is high and the participants are able to comfortably convey their problems. A Public Training director can't see the work of the ÇATOM in the same way as I do. We constantly work in the field and we know what this means. Pelin works very well in this respect. They don't understand the meaning of this at Public Training Centers because

they look at development from an official viewpoint. (A Field Worker of the Willows Foundation, Siirt)

In addition to this, I came across other positive attitudes concerning ÇATOMs. Those who were optimistic about ÇATOMs were eager to bring constructive criticisms. These were comments resulting from more sober understandings of the importance of cooperation among institutions for a better provision of social services. As the governor of Beytüşşebap stated, “there must be dialogue between the two institutions. The two must be able to complete each other’s deficiencies. Coordination must be established between the two in order to prevent the waste of resources utilized in different projects and activities.”

Similarly, some public administrators were well aware of the alternatives brought by ÇATOMs to the region in terms of the provision of social services and eventual social development. Despite an awareness of the bottom-up approach of the ÇATOMs, they still found the actual operations of ÇATOMs in the field insufficient and ineffective: “There are places where the ÇATOM field worker is unable to reach. The field worker needs to organize more visits to homes in the community and raise more awareness among the families in the community. The closer you are to the community, the more successful you will be. The best way to reach people is to listen to their problems and learn their needs.”

Other positive reactions were confronted in the field during interviews with local authorities who pointed out the various benefits of ÇATOMs in the region. Some, for instance, stated the greatest advantage of the ÇATOMs as their ability to attract a higher

participation of young girls and women within the community. These officials acknowledged, albeit reluctantly and in a patronizing manner from time to time, the more positive aspects of ÇATOM activities, their mode of operation and more importantly, their potential for improvement:

Participation in the ÇATOM is higher compared to participation in the Public Training Center here in Beytüşşebap. One of the reasons for this is that the ÇATOM has a better reputation among the community members. The ÇATOM is very similar to the Public Training Center, but Public Training is official and disciplined, whereas the other is flexible; so flexible that in a way, the ÇATOM is like a woman's coffee house [*kadın kahvehanesi* in Turkish]. This kind of a discipline, created by the women themselves, is better than school discipline. I am here for two years and have been observing the ÇATOM. In the beginning there was no planning, there was a kind of randomness in their activities. But now this year they are better. In the beginning the ÇATOM did not really have an effect on the target group, but now they work with more experience and consequently there is more participation from the community. Again in the beginning, the activities were not really suitable for the target group. In general there is a tendency for improvement. (Governor, Beytüşşebap)

While some state officials complained about the deficiencies and lack of expertise of ÇATOM field staff, others conveyed the opinion that ÇATOMs were successful merely due to the exclusive efforts of its field staff. Instead of associating the efforts of field workers to the entire philosophy and organizational structure of the ÇATOM, they tended to see the success of the ÇATOM as the product of a single individual:

I find the ÇATOM highly successful. The flexibility and success of the ÇATOM is a result of the good work carried out by its field staff and personnel. Batman ÇATOM is equivalent to Şükran *hanım* [the field worker of the ÇATOM in Batman center]. Ankara channels lots of funds to Batman but our main problem is that we are unable to make efficient use of these funds. I give these funds and other additional support to Şükran *hanım* because she is very good at making excellent use of the available funds and she is successful in making the ÇATOM a functional institution, unlike our own institutions. (Governor, Batman)

This revealed the fact that ÇATOMs are sometimes the sole initiative of individuals rather than a participatory project based on joint planning, organization and action. The fact that some NGO representatives also spoke about the outstanding efforts of individual field workers unraveled the peculiar organizational structure of ÇATOMs in which individual efforts are the primary mobilizers of ÇATOM activities. Some comments of related local administrators revealed the inability of ÇATOMs to encourage local participation at the community level and mobilize the grassroots. This lack of institutionalization was in fact a characteristic that I observed even within the NGO structure and organization, which I analyzed in the following two chapters of the current study.

It was clear from the interviews that ÇATOM existence and activity was highly dependent on the personal tendencies of the local administrators, with the province and county governors being especially determinant. This was evident in the comments that while some of the local authorities noted the unfortunate absence of financial resources of ÇATOMs, others claimed that the only factor influential in the success and effectiveness of the ÇATOMs were their abundant resources. In any case, I was able to conclude that the dependency of ÇATOMs on respective governorates for resources and financial support decreases their chances of sustainability. The words of the Batman governor was highly revealing in this respect:

I am unable to obtain funds for the ÇATOM through the Special Administration [*Özel İdare* in Turkish] but through the Directorate of Village Affairs [*Köy İşleri* in Turkish]. The support that is given to the ÇATOM depends largely on the attitude of the governor. I am in favor of and willing to help the ÇATOMs but the governor after me might not be so cooperative. The ÇATOM has to somehow secure its resources.

An organization with possibilities of production and marketing becomes very important. A more professional approach to trade must be developed among the people of this region. For instance, we have farmers who are ashamed of going to the market place to sell their produce. Marketing possibilities must be discussed and implemented. (Governor, Batman)

6.2.3. Attitudes of Public Administrators

To summarize the results of the data collected from local state authorities in locations where the 7 ÇATOMs are situated, several points became visible. None of the interviewed state officials, including province and county governors, mentioned the importance of a holistic outlook on issues of development. Almost all authorities were absorbed in their daily dull workloads and spoke within the framework of their narrowly defined understandings of social provision and development. Similarly, the role of nongovernmental activity and civil society organizations was barely acknowledged and mentioned. The words of the governor of Batman was typical of state authorities in the region: “Every institution carries out activities on literacy and health education, but this is no simple matter. People in Turkey believe social projects and activities like the ones carried out by Public Training Centers to be the easiest of all tasks. Vakıfs and associations come here for such projects but this is a difficult task. There is plenty of publicity around this matter but this is the kind of work that necessitates dedicated voluntarism.”

The words of the Batman governor continued to once again typify most local state authorities’ understanding of the actors of development and cooperation among these

actors: “In reality, the ÇATOM is an unnecessary institution because there are already institutions that do the same kind of work as the ÇATOMs. In fact, in addition to agencies such as the Social Services, the Directorate of Health, and the Directorate of Public Training, there is also the Gendarmerie and the Security Forces that are involved in the same sort of activities with the same objectives as the ÇATOM.” As clear in the preceeding quotation, local state officials in Southeastern Anatolia have tended to normalize the involvement of the armed security forces in issues of development.

On the issue of gender awareness, only one public administrator mentioned the importance of and the need to tackle gender imbalance in the region and the specific approach of the ÇATOM project in this regard. Despite an awareness of gender issues, however, women are still seen as an extension of the family rather than an individual in her own right.

The women in the region lack behind in terms of education and culture. For this reason it is highly important that we educate our women. Compared to the Public Training Centers, the activities of the ÇATOM are more diverse, and the education given to the women is more extensive. Woman is the foundation of the family, but unfortunately we have women at the lowest levels of society. These women have to be educated in topics such as family planning and child care. This is highly important for a peaceful and secure family environment. (Director of Agriculture, Siirt)

Despite the interpretation of women in the region as possessing a ‘low’ and ‘backward’ culture, and the need to educate them within the understanding of republican ideology, it was nevertheless heartening to find a male state official mentioning the deprivation of women in the region.

The second important observation concerning ÇATOM relations with local state authorities was the functioning of ÇATOMs in a highly tense environment. There was a general failure among local state authorities for the understanding and recognition of the approach and working philosophy of ÇATOMs. Even the governors did not bother to understand the different dynamics and approach of ÇATOMs. Perhaps due to the local absence of NGOs and their representatives, the semi-civil character of ÇATOMs was completely missed. Because of their failure to understand these dynamics, most public administrators made confused comments about the ÇATOMs. Some praised their decentralized and flexible work mode while others condemned the lack of discipline.

Perhaps most important was the observation of the difficulties faced by ÇATOMs with respect to cooperation with institutions of the state. The highly negative atmosphere in terms of the existence of several institutions with similar objectives made cooperation almost impossible in the eyes of local public officials: “If resources are provided and courses are opened in every community, then ÇATOMs will be active in places where Public Training Centers are passive. But if Public Training Centers are active, ÇATOMs are doomed to be passive.” This reveals the mentality that no two institutions are able to function collaboratively side by side, but that one institution eventually withers away in the powerful existence of another. The vertical power relations inherent at the bureaucracy level was possibly one of the reasons behind such a conception of social provision. Horizontal relations and modes of operation seem to be inconceivable among local state authorities.

Perhaps the most peculiar relationship of ÇATOMs with the related public administrators was in the province of Siirt. There was a particularly negative attitude on the part of the governorate and related directorates in Siirt towards the ÇATOM and its staff members. The lack of incentive for cooperation was especially prevalent in Siirt where I realized that the large scale TOKAP project, the Community Development Project of the previous Siirt governor, refused to collaborate with the ÇATOM despite the similar intentions of community development. The Education director of Siirt explained that the fundamental reason that ÇATOMs lagged behind in development was the promotion of Community Centers under the TOKAP project: “Plenty of funds were channeled from various provinces to Siirt specifically for the TOKAP project. The governor at the time focused on Community Centers [of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency] but showed no interest for the ÇATOMs. The ÇATOM seems very passive because it has insufficient resources and staff. The ÇATOM has no team and no vehicles. The Center even applies to the governorate for its fuel during the winter months. The ÇATOM can operate better if it is provided with resources and qualified staff.” However, the same authority seemed unaware that it was largely in the hands of the governor to decide how active the ÇATOM in Siirt would become.

Despite the many signs of appreciation for ÇATOM field workers, there was nevertheless an incomprehensible reaction against the ÇATOM in Siirt, as in many other locations. In spite of such negativities, there were some local administrators in Siirt who argued that the ÇATOM had, in fact, set an example for the TOKAP project: “It seems to me as if the objectives of the ÇATOM and the TOKAP were initially the same

although changes appeared later on during the implementation of the project. In fact, I believe the TOKAP project was created by taking the ÇATOM as a model.”

The director of the Security Forces in Siirt confirmed the same assertion: “With the TOKAP project, the previous governor actually wanted to do the same things as what Pelin *hanım* [field worker of Siirt ÇATOM] is doing now in the ÇATOM. So logically, the governor should have been more than eager to cooperate with the ÇATOM under the TOKAP project; especially when there is a personnel like Pelin *hanım* who works with incredible sacrifice and hardship, but unfortunately some administrators don’t want to see it this way.” Finally, the Siirt representative and field worker of the Istanbul-based Willows Foundation made similar comments: “The previous governor in Siirt started the TOKAP project which was in fact the same project as that of the ÇATOM on paper, but in implementation things turned out differently. With the distribution of food packages to families, the governor announced that the TOKAP project had helped people develop. Now people are used to this kind of an approach and still expect the same kind of treatment from every institution that comes in to help them.”

It was only the directorate of Health in Beytüşşebap that exhibited the willingness for cooperation: “A joint conference was organized by the ÇATOM and Directorate of Health in Beytüşşebap. It set a great example to coordination among institutions.” In addition to the mainly negative attitudes and several positive signs of cooperation, other opinions were of a neutral character, stating the indifference of ÇATOM existence in the community. Opinions were given on ÇATOMs not yet setting an example in their respective communities: “The ÇATOM has not reached the point where it sets an

example or a model to other institutions.” However, there was in fact one clear case of the ÇATOM setting an example and influencing the activities of other institutions. The director of Public Training in Cizre explained the effect of the ÇATOM on their work:

We work very closely with the ÇATOM; we open exhibitions together and we help them in planning and organizing their activities. The group workshops at the ÇATOM attract particular attention. For instance, the 8 March International Women’s Day festivities were especially successful. The ÇATOM was the first to celebrate 8 March, and then we decided to organize a second event. There is great interest for the ÇATOM but if there was a service bus, there would be a larger number of participants coming to the ÇATOM. In fact, the ÇATOM building should be more in the center of the city so that more girls can attend the activities.

6.3. GAP Administrators

6.3.1. Understanding of Development

I was confronted with a completely different approach to issues of development after having contacted the administrators of the GAP project, both in the headquarters in Ankara and the regional administration in Şanlıurfa. The authorities at the GAP Administration were highly atypical in their views and understandings of development and gender issues compared to other public administrators and members of the military active in the GAP region. The initial major difference I observed was the positive attitudes of GAP administrators towards NGOs and their eagerness to integrate the local population into the development process, as opposed to the more top-down approach of conventional developmentalists. Unlike the approach to development as foreseen and adopted by almost all local state administrators active in Southeastern Anatolia, all GAP

administrators acknowledged the values of and advocated a more people-centered approach to development in which more egalitarian relations are strived with the target group and the beneficiaries of projects. This importance attached to a participatory approach to social development was prevalent in almost all the interviews carried out with GAP personnel.

Members of the GAP Administration demonstrated their awareness of women and gender issues in the region: “One of the main problems concerning women in the region is that, both rural and urban women are limited to the spaces in their homes. They do not easily leave the private space of the home. It is really difficult to reach the women in the region. They have a large number of children, and their workload is tremendous – both inside and outside the home.” In terms of their understanding of the local community of women as their target group, their participatory approaches to development and their eagerness to encourage cooperation, the assistant to the Social Programs coordinator at the GAP Administration recited the following words:

Our main concern was, how do we help women leave their home environments, how do we get in touch with women? For this purpose, we came up with the idea and model of a ÇATOM. We thought that we could only reach the people in the region again through people from the same region. We thought of a space in which we could provide services designed for the needs of the women in the region. The person to reach this woman would again be a local from the region. Who can do this sort of thing? We thought of women who could act as a model for the other women, someone who can attend educational seminars and has the capacity to develop herself.

In the determination of the programs to be implemented, we had direct contact with the target group, focus group meetings, and so on. Not only the women but we also had meetings with the husband, the mother, the father, neighbors and so on. We determined on the one hand, their needs, their potentials, and what we can offer on the other. We prepared a program in which all these aspects met. And then we

figured out from where we can get what support: what can local municipalities provide, what can local administrators provide, what can local NGOs provide, what can international organizations provide.

Concerning the more specific issue of the ÇATOM project, GAP personnel at the Social Programs Coordination were aware of the common comparisons of ÇATOMs with Public Training Centers. GAP administrators were quick to respond by a comparison of the modes of operation of the two respective institutions, namely the GAP Administration for the former and the Directorate of National Education for the latter:

People say that ÇATOMs are no different from Public Training Centers. This is not at all the case. The main difference between the two is that in the ÇATOMs, women themselves decide what kind of activities they want. But in Public Training Centers, the curriculum is pre-set and there is more of a centralized planning and operation. One other major difference is the ÇATOM committees [made up of 5-7 members, of which 2 are instructors and the others are participants] in each center. Women and young girls get a chance to have a say in the decisions that are taken at the ÇATOM. Without letting us or TKV know, they can organize small scale projects such as trips to nearby sites of interest, because every ÇATOM has a monthly budget. Through the committee, participants get a chance to make plans, implement them, as well as organize the ÇATOM budget. These are important developments for the region because these are 'seeds of mobilization'. Whereas young girls were never involved in any such organization, they have collectively started doing something for themselves. Another important outcome of the ÇATOM is that once the girls have started producing something at the ÇATOM, mostly handicrafts, they are able to market them on their own. They sell them to neighbors, friends, and relatives. Some girls even get orders from villages and other neighborhoods. This becomes essential when you consider that as ÇATOMs, we have reached 47,000 women and young girls as of the end of 2001.

Administrators of the GAP project were eager to describe the peculiar positioning of their organization compared to other state institutions and their relatively different understanding and mode of operation. Aware of the gap between the state and the people in Turkey, the GAP administrators defined their role as 'a bridge', attempting at

covering this gap between the top and the bottom. They believe in their capacity to play this role given their 'flexible, comfortable and unbureaucratic working system' at the Administration and their 'high capacity to maneuver'. GAP administrators clearly defined their 'mission' of development as "the creation of values centered on the environment and the human." They stated their vision as "global thinking and sustainable human development within the framework of local resources and conditions." GAP officials revealed the main instigators of such alternative approaches to development:

We are very different compared to the organizational structure and working philosophy of other state institutions. Our managers have an international vision and this is important in giving us direction. The rest of the personnel and staff within the GAP Administration are all familiar with this vision. The fact that we are in close collaboration with international agencies such as the UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, WHO, and UNFPA, facilitates our access to both national and international literature on development which we constantly review. For instance, the GAP project started off as a program for the development of water, soil and other natural resources, but through the influence of the 1992 Rio Summit, sustainable human development became an objective of the GAP project. It was slowly realized that people must be placed at the center of development efforts. So now, instead of infrastructure as the focal point, the development of human resources is the focal point.

Our main philosophy is an integrated approach to development, and we also take care that the projects implemented are sustainable. The projects are not just for today. We are also interested in creating models, which is another factor of sustainability. Equality is another essential principle in our activities. We never think that A should be getting more than B. Similarly, we don't focus on one group. We deal with all the disadvantaged groups in the region.

It was clear that the administrators of the GAP project viewed themselves very distinct from other state officials. One official made this very clear in her words: "Despite the fact that we are a state institution, we work with a 'civil' spirit." There was clearly the influence of personal contacts and prior work experience in NGOs for some public

officials of the GAP Administration. GAP officials went on to explain their sharp differences with other civil servants:

The fact that we have highly qualified staff here at the GAP Administration is one of the determining factors of why we are different. Although our headquarters is in Ankara, we work a lot in the field. We don't produce at the table but out in the field. We don't work from 8.30 in the morning to 5.30 in the evening. We also work on the weekends. We think professionally but work with an amateur spirit. We all have faith in our projects, in what we are doing. And we always think collectively as 'the GAP Administration', never as I or he or she. We don't work for money here because after all we get paid the same as all the other civil servants. The only difference here is that we definitely have occupational satisfaction. For example, me, as a sociologist, I feel that this is the best place I could be working. Being stuck with a fixed time schedule, I think, kills all creativity.

In further explanations for this difference in vision and approach, GAP personnel mentioned the importance attached to training opportunities:

Another important difference of the GAP project is that training is given top priority. We attend plenty of educational seminars and training sessions because we are open to improvement as an institution. We have access to technology that other state institutions don't have. For instance some public personnel still don't have access to the internet. As an institution, we are open to the outside world, which helps us expand our vision. We attend many different international conferences. We are encouraged to prepare papers for presentation. But we also take initiatives as personnel. If we see problems somewhere, we are encouraged to propose suggestions, and design project proposals as we like. There is always support and encouragement from the managers for this kind of initiative. There are no restrictions, we are encouraged to communicate with any other institution we like. In that sense, we are very flexible.

6.3.2. Views on the Role of NGOs

In the light of their vision and mission, GAP administrators confirmed their priority for the inclusion of NGOs in their activities and programs. As a result of this policy, the

Administration receives technical and educational assistance for the ÇATOMs from the Development Foundation of Turkey or *Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı* (TKV) in Turkish. The NGO is responsible for the maintenance of certain personnel in the ÇATOMs and also for the periodic training of the ÇATOM field worker girls, including topics such as the preparation of reports, planning and implementation of projects, and access to the target group through appropriate communication skills, hence helping build a bridge between the state and the community.

GAP staff boasted about having attracted other NGOs to the region: “Until the last 2 years, no international or national NGO had done anything in the region concerning assistance to women. An important outcome of the ÇATOMs is precisely this; that NGOs have started focusing on women-centered development in the region.” In addition to creating a space in which NGOs can freely get together with public officials and institutions for the development and implementation of projects, GAP administrators are also proud to have pulled into the region the interest of the private sector in Turkey. Through the ÇATOMs, private initiatives have started taking shape in Southeastern Anatolia: “ÇATOMs have started attracting the attention of the private sector. The first such initiative is taken by Procter and Gamble. They approached us with 15,000 USD which we used for the establishment of Siverek ÇATOM in Şanlıurfa and the company will support its operation for a one year period.”

The GAP staff’s understanding of global development was tied to the progressive approach of the GAP Administration as an institution. The critical outlook on issues of development was such that the coordinator of Social Programs even noted the

insufficiencies of NGOs in Turkey: “When you look at the development of NGOs in Turkey, especially in the GAP region, there are very few ‘volunteer’ organizations in the true sense of the word. In terms of volunteer work there is not much activity in the region. It is concentrated more outside the region, in Istanbul and Ankara; the roots are there. A lot of NGOs are still in the tendency to work very much like commercial organizations; there aren’t very many volunteers. They undertake projects in exchange for funds; quite like a business company.”

On the same issue, further criticisms were made of NGOs in the Southeastern region as well as the whole of Turkey:

NGOs in Turkey have the tendency of working like an extension of the state; they work as long as resources are provided. Instead of mobilizing certain social and communal resources and working for a social domain, they are in the tendency of receiving funds from the state and providing a service in exchange for this funding. Some NGOs are in the status of organizations of ‘public interest [*kamu yararına kuruluş*’ in Turkish]. They can receive funds from public institutions and from the state’s investment program. For instance, TKV is in the status of a ‘public interest’ organization. When such NGOs are financially in trouble, they can ask for funds from the state. For example, in the ÇATOM project, TKV in no way uses its own funds for this project. They don’t go searching for funds. Their funds are met by the state. So they work like our extension. In reality, a lot of NGOs are in the same situation in Turkey. When they work like this, they intend to organize like a public institution. When you look at a lot of NGOs, a lot of them really do have this bureaucratic public organizational structure; this hierarchical structure.

In interviews with GAP administrators, sophisticated comments were made on the historical development of state-society relations in Turkey and their reflections on issues of development today. The role of NGOs was recited by a GAP personnel:

When we look generally at NGOs in Turkey, it is more in the form of an intellectual movement. Intellectuals in Turkey have problems which are based in history. Because there are no connections with the grassroots, they look at problems from the top. This is why they are like extensions of the state; there is the idea of ‘enlightening the masses’; the idea of ‘modernization’. Hence, the notion of looking from the top downwards is very common among NGOs in Turkey. When you look from the top, you are unable to fulfill your task of mobilizing the grassroots. The main task of NGOs in Turkey should be the representation of those whose voices are not heard; to be these voices; to defend these voices. But here we see the opposite because this is an intellectual movement, and intellectuals have historically been interested in the enlightenment and the modernization of society. This approach has revealed itself in the form of intellectuals traditionally being insensitive of and disregarding certain sensitivities within society for the aim of creating ‘modernity’ in the form of the adoption of western ideologies. In this regard, I believe that NGOs have a hard time in establishing organic bonds with the society in Turkey.

To what extent these criticisms of NGOs have foundations in reality is the subject matter of the following chapter, based on an analysis of 9 NGOs that are directly or indirectly involved in the ÇATOM project of the GAP Administration.

CHAPTER VII:

NGOs' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ÇATOM PROJECT

The fieldwork of the thesis included in-depth interviews and meetings with representatives of various NGOs that have links with the ÇATOMs. These were the Development Foundation of Turkey, *Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı (TKV)*, Mother-Child Education Foundation, *Anne-Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı (AÇEV)*, Foundation for the Support of Women's Labor, *Kadın Emekçini Değerlendirme Vakfı (KEDV)*, Association for Support to Contemporary Life, *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği (ÇYDD)*, Turkish Foundation for Education, *Türk Eğitim Vakfı (TEV)*, Tuvana Foundation for the Education of Motivated Children, *Tüvana İstekli Çocuklar Eğitim Vakfı (TOÇEV)*, Foundation of Education Volunteers, *Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı (TEGV)*, Women's Center, *Kadın Merkezi (KAMER)*, and *Ana Kültür*²⁷⁷. Apart from KAMER which is based in Diyarbakır in the Southeast and TKV which is based in Ankara, the remaining NGOs have their headquarters in Istanbul. For all NGOs that were

²⁷⁷ Ana Kültür does not have an English translation because the word 'ana' in Ana Kültür stands for the 'ana' in Anatolia as well as the meaning of 'main' and 'mother' or 'matriarchy' in Turkish, with 'kültür'

interviewed, their activities in the ÇATOMs and the Southeast in general is being handled from the headquarters. This is the case even for ÇYDD who have field offices in the region. Only TKV has an operational branch office in Diyarbakır from where they partially handle activities related to the ÇATOMs.

I gathered the names of NGOs active in the ÇATOMs during my visits to these centers as well as through my interactions with GAP officials, both in Ankara and in Şanlıurfa. Although I visited these NGOs in the hope of finding out about their activities in the ÇATOMs, at the end of my meetings and interviews with the respective NGOs, I was surprised to realize how little information I had in fact gathered related to these activities. In addition to Ana Kültür and KAMER who were working specifically on women and gender issues only in the Southeast, the two other NGOs aware of women's realities in the Southeast were TKV and KEDV. Ana Kültür was the only organization working specifically on gender issues in the Southeast with activities only in the ÇATOMs. TKV, as responsible for the periodic training of the ÇATOM field workers, was able to provide the most extensive information and evaluation of the ÇATOMs given the organization's longest involvement in the ÇATOMs since the very beginning of the design of the project. Although KEDV dealt closely with the mobilization of women particularly in the Istanbul area, no KEDV projects were yet realized in the ÇATOMs. Similarly, TEGV was still in the discussion phase of a possible collaboration with the ÇATOMs. Apart from a one-time connection with the ÇATOMs, KAMER, an

referring to the ancient cultures of Anatolia. Given the matriarchal structure of most ancient Anatolian civilizations, the name of Ana Kültür has a particular connotation with a feminist statement.

advocacy association²⁷⁸ working for women's rights in the Diyarbakır area, had no other contacts with the ÇATOMs. ÇYDD, TEV and TOÇEV have relationships with the ÇATOMs based solely on convenience.

It was surprising to find out that except for the two NGOs, namely TKV and Ana Kültür, all the other organizations had only a superficial relationship with the ÇATOMs.

KAMER had the potential of becoming a conscious actor in the move to a gender balanced development, however, activities in the ÇATOMs had been highly random. I saw that none of the other NGOs were in reality acquainted with ÇATOMs and the realities of women in the region. Most NGOs were not able to provide me with a conceptualization of the ÇATOM idea. During my visits to these 9 NGOs, I heard plenty about the problems of children and the youth in Turkey and the Southeast, and projects targeting school aged children, including pre-school aged children in some cases, but much less when it came to issues of gender. Although Ana Kültür was one of the two NGOs that was consciously working for a gender balanced development, the NGO, at the time of the study, was going through financial problems which had already started stagnating the organization's activities in the ÇATOMs. Other NGOs, including ÇYDD, TOÇEV and to a lesser extent AÇEV were indirectly involved in a gender balanced development through their activities for young girls and women in general, including the provision of scholarships, assistance to formal and informal education and training.

²⁷⁸ KAMER is in fact registered as a private enterprise and not as an NGO, due to reasons given in chapter IV.

7.1. Approaches to Development

According to a classification used among scholars and field workers alike, NGOs in the field of development are categorized into 6 main types, although the boundaries of organizations are generally not strictly defined and NGOs can also be characterized as a mixture of the given types. These 6 types or schools of NGOs are given as ‘advocacy groups and networks’, ‘relief and welfare agencies’, ‘technical innovation organizations’, ‘public service contractors’, ‘grassroots development agencies’ and ‘popular development organizations’.²⁷⁹

To attempt a short description of the above-mentioned organizations, advocacy groups, as the name implies, are involved in lobbying activities for a particular issue. One of the main areas of concentration for relief and welfare agencies are the distribution of relief items for those in need. Technical innovators are those that have an area of specialization and are involved in the development of new ideas and approaches on the issue. Public service contractors act as extensions of the state, carrying out activities that are conventionally handled by state institutions. The main concern of grassroots development agencies is the activation of organization at the grassroots level, providing support and capacity building opportunities for grassroots mobilization. Finally, popular development organizations are those that are formed by the local community and are involved in local development activities.

²⁷⁹ John Clark, *Democratizing Development: The Role of Voluntary Organizations* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1991), 40-41.

Prior to an analysis on the basis of this categorization, perhaps it would be more appropriate to note some of the specific features of the NGOs that I studied for the purposes of this research. One of the most visible distinctions in the working philosophies among the NGOs in the study was their standing with respect to the principles of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the conception of *çağdaşlaşma* as described in detail in chapter III. In the interviews and meetings I had with the members of NGOs, I was able to clearly observe the positioning of each NGO within the spectrum of republican ideology.

The most evident was obviously *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*, as the name clearly suggests. Literally translated as the Association for Support to Contemporary Life, ÇYDD is highly closely dedicated to the ‘preservation and extension of Atatürk’s principles and reforms’. As stated in chapter III, the word *çağdaş* which refers to ‘catching up with the times’ has strong connotations of a development project implemented from above. It was a word used intensely during the early years of the Republic when the grand project of modernization was put into practice. ÇYDD almost gives the feeling of continuing the same process of modernization with the same principles and tools. Similar to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s combined project of nation-building and modernization, ÇYDD defines its objective as the support to the *çağdaş* life of *çağdaş* individuals and eventually a *çağdaş* society through *çağdaş* education. As the rural programs coordinator explained:

We say that we must preserve and build upon Atatürk’s principles and reforms; this really is very very important. Atatürk has really done a lot of important work for this country but it is our duty to further build upon his work. Atatürk developed these rules in 1923; in the Turkey of

the 1920s; to modernize [*çağdaşlaştırmak* in Turkish] Turkey during the 1920s; to help Turkey leap into the contemporary era [*çağ atlatmak için* in Turkish]. We are now going to preserve these rules which are Atatürk's ultimate aim of modernization [*çağdaşlaşma* in Turkish]. But we also have to build upon these rules; we cannot preserve them as they were developed in the 1920s. By building upon these rules, our aim is to reach the contemporary individual and the contemporary society through contemporary education.

The highly secular character of the organization and the fear of religion and irrationality were clear in the descriptions of the organization's projects and activities. The members of ÇYDD gave very well the essence of 'Ataturkian modernization' [*Atatürkçü modernleşme* in Turkish] based on the intellect and rationality:

A contemporary individual is one who is rational [*aklını kullanan* in Turkish]; one who rationally processes the information and knowledge given to him; one who questions; one who is aware that he must not live only for himself but that he must also be useful for the society he lives in; one who is sensitive to art, sensitive to the environment, sensitive to the human; one who is respectful of human rights and respectful towards universal values. This is the kind of individual that we are aiming for as ÇYDD.

ÇYDD viewed development through the mere lens of Atatürk's principles and reforms, of which secularism clearly takes undefeated primacy. Their strong dedication to the preservation of secularism was often repeated:

ÇYDD was established in 1989. In the years following 1985, as you know, there was an increase in anti-secular attitudes in Turkey. As ÇYDD, we give high importance to the preservation of Atatürk's reforms, of which secularism takes the highest priority. We are an Islamic country, but compared to other Islamic countries, we are somewhere much much higher. We owe this, although some of us might not be too happy with it, to the secularism principle of the Republic which Atatürk established. For this reason, we must deep-heartedly preserve this very important principle [*olmazsa olmaz ilkeyi* in Turkish]. Why? Because religion is manipulated very easily; because our people are ignorant and illiterate. It is very easy to degenerate them [*yozlaştırmak* in Turkish] under the guise of religion. This is why we give high priority to the principle of secularism. The

increase in anti-secular attitudes after 1983-84 created discomfort among intellectuals and university instructors who felt some responsibility towards their country, as well as others who love their country and their people. It was this discomfort that led to the establishment of ÇYDD. These people saw that something was going wrong in this country, believed that something must be done to correct these wrongs; they said this country is ours and no more wrongs must be done in this country. These were sensitive, academic-rooted people.

The responsibility felt by ‘sensitive’ and patriotic intellectuals in Turkey for the education of the ‘ignorant and illiterate’ masses is clearly evident in the words of ÇYDD personnel. Religion is condemned because of its potential for the manipulation and ‘degeneration’ of the masses. The ‘love for the country and its people’ is the motivating force behind the development projects planned and carried out by ÇYDD.

TEV is another example where we see the continuous replication of the rhetoric and tools of the republican cause. The conservatism of TEV was obvious even prior to any contact with the deputy director of the organization, a lady in her 60s, who had been in that particular position since 1967. The NGO was located in a large multi-floored building and reminded me of a public office. Indeed, the tables all had small Turkish and TEV flags each with portraits of Atatürk in every room and lots of pink government files stacked up in tall shelves. Even in the entrance of the building there was a large Turkish flag, hinting at the philosophy and approach of the organization.

TEV has been providing scholarships to youth at high school and university level who are in need of financial assistance. Of secondary importance, TEV is also involved in the construction of primary school buildings and dormitories. Similar to ÇYDD, TEV portrays characteristics of a welfare agency together with the qualities of a public service

contractor. There was no questioning of the current approaches to and policies of formal education in Turkey. Official policies and approaches are fully supported in NGO projects.²⁸⁰

Perhaps one of the most striking elements of NGOs in this category was their view of altruism as a duty. This republican quality of citizenship is reflected in the following words:

Together with our friends, we try to do something for our beautiful country. Thinking that everyone who is born in this country, studies in the schools of this country, and becomes employed after having studied in the schools of this country, has a responsibility towards this country, we create the time from our private lives and from our leisure in order to carry out our duties for this country. This is not a luxury; this is a duty, but it is also an excitement in our hearts. (ÇYDD)

It is very important to remember that the east, west, north, and the south of our country, we are unitary and we are one. No matter where a person lives, he/she is the person of this country. We are obliged to love the people of this country because we live together. The more we approach them with love, the more they will approach us with love. This is the theme I always emphasize in opening ceremonies and other events. If you ask about the Southeast and the people of Batman, they are attached to us with great love. The reason for this is our warm attention and love. (TEV)

TOÇEV carried out activities similar to that of ÇYDD and TEV, except for the main difference that republican values played less of an essentialism in their project contents and approach. TOÇEV was involved in the support of children who were willing to attend school but were unable to do so due to the financial limitations of their families.

Apart from providing monetary input, the organization supplied assistance in the form of

²⁸⁰ Adopting the rhetoric does not automatically necessitate a full adoption of the tools and means of republican ideology. *Beyaz Nokta Vakfı* is such an NGO where all members are supportive of the principles of the republic but are also interested in creating alternatives. Although the subject matter is

school stationary needs, clothing, food, health provisions and supplementary social activities during the weekends. Of the 300 children supported in Istanbul, another 350 were supported in the Marmara earthquake area and an additional 300 children were supported in the Southeast. Eligible children for the project were either found through personal contacts or the children themselves applied to the organization for assistance. Since all activities were coordinated from the headquarters in Istanbul, in regions outside of Istanbul, the organization received help mainly from governorates, education directors and school teachers.

The other extreme was NGOs with an advocacy quality. They challenged government policies either with respect to the stronghold of patriarchy or the hegemony of national and cultural homogeneity or both. Ana Kültür and KAMER were both feminist organizations, with the former based in Istanbul and the latter based in Diyarbakır in Southeastern Anatolia. While both ÇYDD and TEV only barely hinted at the tensions in the region, the other two organizations overtly mentioned the harsh conditions witnessed by the local people in the Southeast. The suffering of women in particular and their confrontations with armed conflict were made explicit. The most distinct statements of overt expression of the tension in the region were made by KAMER in which the representative pronounced the word ‘Kurdish’ as well as ‘Kurdish women’.

Despite their positions as lobby organizations, what was interesting was the emphasis of both organizations on their remoteness and detachment from politics. Although both

formal education and not an overtly political issue, the NGO nevertheless aims at structural changes within the system, thus working like an organization of technical innovation.

Ana Kültür and KAMER stressed their concerns for being strictly ‘apolitical’, both had different conceptions of the notion. While acknowledging a Kurdish reality, the former NGO voiced their discomfort in the use of ethnic identities such as ‘Kurdish’ and ‘Assyrian’ for the collection of project funds, while the other freely spoke about the reality of Kurdishness and Kurdish women’s rights. What made these two NGOs stand apart from one another were their different definitions of ‘apolitical’. Ana Kültür displayed an attitude similar to the standing of official ideology with respect to minorities and nationality in Turkey. Germany based NGOs including the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Adenauer Foundation and the Friedrich Neumann Foundation were discreetly disapproved for their emphasis on the cultural rights of minorities and diverse identities. Ana Kültür claimed to be operating apolitically by downplaying ethnic and religious differences and concentrating on the Southeastern Anatolia region as a whole. This seems to be a strategy on their part to keep their distance equally from all political parties in the country, even the highly secularist institutions. On the other hand, although KAMER explicitly emphasized their ‘Kurdishness’, they too were wary about not ‘getting involved in politics’, defining politics in the more strict definition of party politics.

Although these two organizations were mainly advocacy groups, they also acted as welfare agencies through the provision of assistance items on a random basis. As needs arose and the NGOs were notified by the target group, personal connections helped in the meeting of needs such as clothing, books, computers, sewing machines and medical treatment of individual cases in Istanbul in the case of Ana Kültür. Hence, even lobby

NGOs had difficulties in the concentration of their projects purely on matters of advocacy. They had expanded their projects to include relief and other activities.

Perhaps the most impressive in terms of mission and approaches were the several NGOs that had a more holistic look at the issue of development. TKV, KEDV and TEGV were particularly distinctive as organizations closest to the typology of grassroots development agencies. Although they all had completely different target groups, their understanding of and approaches to development were based on their motives of the mobilization of the grassroots. Unlike ÇYDD or TEV, these 3 organizations were well informed of the dynamics of NGO activity on a worldwide scale, the most recent developments of the terminology in their fields of operation, and the importance of the local participation of the grassroots. All these factors contributed to their integrated outlook on the various aspects of social development. Ana Kültür, on the other hand, also had some qualities of a grassroots development agency through their awareness raising activities on issues of women's rights among women in the Southeast through the ÇATOMs.

With the effect of cooperation with NGOs in Europe since the late 1970s, TKV had been familiar with development terminology and was already implementing various specialized techniques in the field. In time they became familiar with the concepts of participation, sustainability, human centered development, community-based activities, income generation activities and so on. TKV believed itself to be the only NGO currently in Turkey systematically applying these approaches in the field. It was in fact

the familiarity of TKV with these concepts and applications that created the basis for cooperation between TKV and the GAP Administration.

The second most distinctive NGO was KEDV. Given the ultimate aim of women's empowerment through their local organization and mobilization, KEDV was particularly distinctive in their relations with the target group and their general approach to low-income women's empowerment in squatter neighborhoods. Their main projects involved the creation of income generation activities with the women in centers established by KEDV. To enable such women to gain skills for the generation of income, the NGO had developed a system in which children were placed into day care centers run by the women themselves. Once these women had guaranteed that their children were in safe settings run by women in the same community, they were then encouraged by KEDV to initiate activities that were empowering and would generate income. Through the realization of the full potential of its target group, KEDV had been establishing a fruitful communication with vulnerable and disadvantaged women for their self-empowerment.

Thirdly, TEGV, since its establishment in 1995, was working mainly with school aged children and their families to a lesser extent. Their aim was to help children make effective use of their time outside school hours. The development of mental and physical capacity was encouraged primarily through alternative mind games, physical education and creative drama techniques. In this way, TEGV provided support to and supplemented the curriculum of formal education given in schools. The skills given to 7-16 aged children included the development of their capacities to think freely, to

question and to demand. The activities at the centers of the TEGV also prepared students for tolerance. In order to inform local communities about the activities of the organization and to encourage from below such a demand for the construction of TEGV centers, the NGO notified the use of mobile units in the name of ‘Hope 2000 Buses’, a project which was started after the earthquake in the Marmara region. Through these mobile units which TEGV regarded as the ‘forces of innovation’, local communities were given a flavor of TEGV activities. Only upon the introduction of activities and subsequent demands from the local community does the organization decide for the construction of TEGV educational units and parks.

Finally, AÇEV stood out in particular in terms of their highly specialized, technical nature and approach. AÇEV was the only NGO that could be classified as an organization of technical innovation. AÇEV was established in 1993 for the aim of promoting and protecting the right to education for all through the assistance of children and adults in fulfilling their potential. The NGO pursued its mission through its two areas of expertise, namely early childhood education and adult education. In order to improve and expand the quality of early childhood and adult education services across the country, AÇEV has been developing programs and education models and providing training for the expansion of these programs. While the state provides the framework of such education in Turkey, AÇEV had taken on the task of contributing directly to these efforts through one-to-one cooperation with the respective authorities. More specifically, AÇEV had developed a new program that was being widely used by the Public Training Centers under the Ministry of National Education. It was this ministry that AÇEV had the most direct links with. In addition to working at the policy level,

AÇEV was also involved in the training of public instructors on child and adult education programs developed by the organization. At the time of the study, the NGO was in the process of officializing the adoption of this model by the Ministry of National Education. In spite of an acknowledgement of the difficulties of this cooperation, AÇEV believed to have nevertheless developed positive relations with the respective authorities in terms of the improvement of education programs and models.

AÇEV, with its commitment to social development on a more global scale, had also taken part in regional networks and similar collaborative programs. Since 1997, the organization has had a leading role in a number of networks such as the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development in which AÇEV was the acting representative of the Central Asian region. Additionally, the NGO was appointed in 1999 as the Early Childhood Cooperation Center for Central Asia within the UNESCO Early Childhood Partnership Program. AÇEV prided itself on providing and disseminating the knowledge and know-how on child and adult education in the Central Asia region through the models it developed.

7.2. Relations with the Target Group

As inherited from the Kemalist project of modernization, there is the continuation of a one-way communication between NGO representatives, made up of the intellectuals and academicians of Turkey, and their target group. In their projects, ÇYDD personnel, for instance, “mingle with the local population” [*yöre halkıyla bütünleşiliyor* in Turkish].

Similar to the ‘intellectual’ profile of the republican era, who is responsible for the education of its people, the members of ÇYDD were dedicated to educating the illiterate and righting the wrongs of the country. This was all done with the passion of the love for the country and its people. This attitude was also prevalent in the organization’s Urban-Rural Youth Hand-in-Hand project [*Kent-Köy Gençliği Elele projesi* in Turkish]. The NGO takes “students who are studying in the main universities of main cities to any village or county in any part of Anatolia and have them prepare projects *for*²⁸¹ the people in the region.” Projects were prepared *for* instead of *with* the people.

In all their projects, the mere aim of ÇYDD was the creation of qualified individuals who would be able to further extend the principles and reforms established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Since this was the main drive behind the design and development of projects, ÇYDD had come up with projects in preparation for the 100th year of the Republic:

In Turkey there are Regional Boarding Primary Schools [*Yatılı İlköğretim Bölge Okulları, YIBO* in Turkish] whose number is around 500. There are nearly 200,000 students in these YIBOs. These are children in the age group 7-15. In the year 2023, in the 100th year of our Republic, they will be in the ages 29-37; in other words, they will be the adolescents of this country. Myself and my peers, we might not be around, but we must be supportive of these children in their childhood. We have to prepare and develop these children in a way that we want to see them in 2023, in the 100th year of our Republic. We think of this often and hence pay regular visits to the YIBOs. We detect their needs, what they are missing, and the level of development of the children. The reality we confronted during these visits signaled to us that we must immediately plan a project for the YIBOs. As you know, children in the age group 7-15 are still play children, but in the YIBOs these children have no other access except for the school, dormitory and the dining hall. They don’t even have a swing or a playing ladder with which they can play when they feel the need to.

²⁸¹ Italics are added for emphasis.

Therefore, we urgently brought together 25 YIBO school directors in Ulukışla in Niğde, with the organization of the county governor. The project we came up with was the Support to the Citizens of the 100th Year of the Republic in their Childhood [*Cumhuriyet'in 100. Yılı'nın Yurtdaşlarına Çocukluklarında Destek Olma projesi* in Turkish].

The way ÇYDD kept contact with the target group was through letters. Girls wrote to the headquarters in Istanbul, explaining their happiness in receiving the scholarship while boys wrote telling about the girls in their classrooms who were beneficiaries of the Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey project [*Çağdaş Türkiye'nin Çağdaş Kızları projesi* in Turkish]. When the boys saw these girls showing off as the 'contemporary girls of contemporary Turkey', the boys wrote to the headquarters indicating their desire to become 'contemporary boys of contemporary Turkey'. The hundreds of letters that were received by the headquarters were carefully considered and thus projects were developed. The Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey project was being sponsored by the private company Turkcell and aimed to reach 5,000 girls all over the country, providing educational assistance to girls who were unable to attend school due to their families' financial problems. During the interviews, it was indicated that ÇYDD was trying to find sponsorship for those who wanted to become contemporary boys of contemporary Turkey. All other projects were derivatives of these letters from the children.

As clearly seen above, ÇYDD keep their philosophy alive with the names that they give their projects and they regard primary and secondary school teachers as their local representatives. They use these teachers, school directors, governors and sometimes military units in the selection of their beneficiaries. This philosophy and approach was

very similar to those of other NGOs visited for the purposes of this study. Both TEV and TOÇEV made use of local authorities in order to initiate and maintain their relations with the target group. TEV selected its students according to the inputs of school directors and university deans. They wrote letters to these authorities explaining their conditions and requested them to select students for scholarship qualifications. The progress of students was then monitored in individual files at the headquarters in Istanbul upon receipt of students' final grades. Similar to ÇYDD, TOÇEV visited some of the children it supported through occasional visits to the region. Letters were also an important means of communication between the organization and its beneficiaries.

Ana Kültür, on the other hand, had a similar approach to communication with the target group. Perhaps naturally, given the coordination of activities from the Istanbul office, the modes of communication with the target group in the Southeast were through telephone calls, letters, and occasional visits to the region. Ana Kültür was critical of other NGOs for their one-time presence in the field, arguing that these organizations did nothing more than build up expectations through promises that they did not keep. They viewed other NGOs as lacking a follow-up process while Ana Kültür itself also lacked a professional approach to monitoring their activities. Telephone calls, letters, visits to the region, and conversations with the women in the field [*hal hatır sorma* in Turkish] were regarded as sensitivities towards the region as well as sufficient tools for follow-up. Ana Kültür criticised 'secularist' NGOs for their one-way communication with the target group and regarded a reciprocal communication with the target group as enriching for both sides. However, this was more a personal enrichment and this philosophy did not demonstrate itself on an institutional level or on the basis of projects.

To indicate the other extreme, the relations of KEDV and TEGV with their target group were particularly impressive. KEDV stressed the interaction between the two parties in which both learn from one another, thus bringing a new approach to the unidirectional modes of communication mainly used by NGOs. The responsible for fieldwork coordination at the KEDV recited how these relations were maintained.

The relationship we have with the women is an extremely horizontal relationship. We are not in the position of teaching and instructing. We learn from them and they learn from us. We work with the mentality that they have something at hand and we have something at hand which we then share. This is the fundamental approach of KEDV. This is an organization that undertakes extensive work in the field, directly with the women.

The top three priorities that TEGV listed as the most definitive of their work was accountability, transparency, and the encouragement of the participation of the local community and local elected offices. Indeed, the most innovative aspect of TEGV's work was their strong emphasis on the promotion of volunteers for the activities in their educational units and parks. All TEGV facilities were handled by volunteers that were encouraged from the locality. TEGV emphasized the fact that no officially appointed personnel could be confronted in any of their educational centers, thus describing their style of operation as strictly "civil".

Even if there are no TEGV units in a particular region, we don't open up units there just because it is missing in that region and we think units should be opened up there. If there is a formation there; a formation or a group that wants TEGV to be there, then we are inclined to open up a unit there. What does this mean? This means an initiative has been formed there. We work hand in hand with this initiative. This initiative generally comes from the community leaders in that particular locality. We attach high importance to teaching people how to fish rather than

giving them the fish. We want the people in the region to make our educational units their own.

TEGV sets a good example of how NGOs can integrate the global trends in development approaches with the realities of the local in Turkey.

The sociological character of the Southeastern region is important. How do they see your projects? This is very important. And we have to be very sensitive, an invisible rule which we do not mention in our books or while introducing ourselves. Yes, there is initiative and there is a formation of some sort, but we always have to keep in mind the sociology of the region. What you call creative drama might be like a swear word to a man in the region. Even for younger children, the boys and the girls can't hold hands. For children from different *aşirets*, they are told to not hold hands. You wouldn't believe the kind of things we are confronted with in the field. We do have such limitations but NGOism [*vakıfçılık* in Turkish] does not have a recipe; we learn these things by living. There are examples in the world, and I am well aware of them, but this does not interest me so much. I carry out my activities in Turkey. Of course I get some ideas from diverse projects worldwide, but this is Turkey; we have to work differently. We don't enter the internet and say 'so this is how things work' and then apply that to Turkey. We work entirely with inputs that come from the field.

7.3. Activities related to the ÇATOMs

7.3.1. Involvement of NGOs in the ÇATOMs

It was surprising to find out that none of the NGOs interviewed had intentionally started working in the ÇATOMs. In most cases, NGOs already had their activities in the Southeastern Anatolia region, and the ÇATOMs merely provided an additional space for the implementation of certain projects and activities. The only exception to this was TKV who had been involved in the ÇATOMs since the very early stages of research and

action planning for the foundation of the ÇATOMs. The long-standing involvement of TKV in development issues, their holistic approach to development as well as their extensive experience in the field were factors that contributed to their early involvement with the GAP Administration and the ÇATOM project. The fact that TKV is an ‘established’ NGO also facilitated its cooperation with the GAP Administration.

ÇYDD’s involvement in the ÇATOMs was through their annual ‘education and culture festival’ which started upon the warm welcome of the county governor of Idil in Şırnak province. Festival activities were undertaken in the ÇATOM building due to the mere fact that no other space was available in the county. It was after the design of the above-mentioned project that ÇYDD needed a space to carry out the activities such as discussions, seminars, and children’s activities including painting and theater events, ceramics, story writing competitions, folkloric dancing and so on. Only then did the ÇATOM come into the picture. Additionally, within the scope of the Support to National Education project, ÇYDD prepared booklets for adult women on topics including women’s reproductive health, children’s health care, communication within the family, cooking and nutrition, among others. These booklets, while distributed to public institutions of education, were also distributed to all ÇATOMs in the Southeastern Anatolia region.

The sole involvement of TEV, on the other hand, was their construction of a ÇATOM building in Batman. After the news of increasing suicides among young girls in Batman, TEV decided to do something about the problem. Upon an appointment with the Batman governor, a meeting was held in the governor’s office with a number of

other semi-governmental organizations, and the decision was taken to “have something done to keep the girls busy, to help them gain skills, and to keep their minds off of suicide”. It was decided that if TEV constructed a community center, “these young girls will learn something, and then by selling the items that they have produced, they will be able to buy for themselves what they want and do what they want. Hence, they will be happy.” The reason that this new community center would be handed over to the ÇATOM field worker was due to her popularity among the governor and the local administrators in Batman and the NGOs active in the ÇATOMs as well as her reputation as a hard-working young woman.

Ana Kültür, working differently from ÇYDD and TEV, initially had a diverse approach to the issue of women’s rights and gender balanced development. The founders of the organization, made up of academicians and feminist activists, had gone to the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 and upon their arrival in Turkey, established an Equality Monitoring Committee to follow the implementations on a national level of the Beijing Convention and other related international agreements and blueprints such as the Agenda 21 of the Rio Conference. These feminist activists continued such gender lobbying until one day in 1997 they read in the newspapers about Sevil Gök who was murdered in Şanlıurfa as a result of an honor crime [*namus cinayeti* in Turkish]. The women decided to convert their attention and activities to such cases of a more practical nature and thus started getting directly involved with the women that they represented.

AnaKültür decided to go to Şanlıurfa for the first court trial of the case of Sevil Gök in order to carry out a demonstration. It was during this visit that Ana Kültür became

acquainted with the ÇATOMs and since then, the organization's main activities are carried out in the ÇATOMs. In this sense, Ana Kültür is an organization with a specifically 'gender' agenda that works only in the Southeastern Anatolia region. The members of the organization define their main role as the raising of awareness among women in the Southeast on honor crimes and other issues of the violation of women's rights. Ana Kültür thrives for "women in the Southeast and particularly in the ÇATOMs to become individuals, citizens, and participants in the process of sustainable development through the awareness and acknowledgement of their rights as women".

Despite Ana Kültür's long-standing engagement with the women in the region, the organization's involvement with the ÇATOMs was purely arbitrary. The founder and president of the NGO explained the process:

Our involvement in the ÇATOMs was purely coincidental. I asked around before going to Urfa in 1997, telling people that I intended to carry out some projects there. They told me that the GAP Administration would be helpful in the region. I visited a number of other institutions in the region but the one organization that was really helpful and opened up the path for our activities was the Regional Directorate of the GAP Administration. The local development experts there are really idealist and hard working people who are working whole-heartedly for their own region. By then, there were only 5 ÇATOMs and they had been open for one year. 1-2 years later I got acquainted with the Community Centers of the Social Services Agency, but the bureaucracy and hierarchy was so much more determinant that it was much easier to carry out our activities through the ÇATOMs. In 5 years we carried out 17 festivities. This would not have been possible in the Community Centers. With the ÇATOMs, we were able to act more freely. Also, you can't underestimate the number of young girls and women that come to the ÇATOMs. I can't think of any other way we would be able to reach such a large number of women so quickly. It is also a fact that you can't organize women in the region if you are not cooperating with ÇATOMs or the Community Centers. They [the authorities] don't allow it.

The involvement of TOÇEV in the region was also completely arbitrary. Through the persuasion of personal acquaintances, TOÇEV started supporting children in Tunceli in Southeastern Anatolia. When the organization decided to expand in the region, NGO staff contacted the GAP Administration which provided them with the telephone numbers of the ÇATOM field workers. As a result, TOÇEV started reaching its target group through the assistance of ÇATOMs, among other intermediaries such as teachers and education directors in the region.

In terms of AÇEV's involvement in the ÇATOMs, the representatives of the organization had been on a one-time mission to the GAP region and had carried out their child and mother education program in two ÇATOMs. This was undertaken as a trial and there were considerations of further activities being carried out within the organization's larger program of operation in the Southeastern Anatolia region.

Although talks of such cooperation between AÇEV and the GAP Administration had been ongoing for quite some time, no results had yet been materialized. Similarly, there were still discussions going on of TEGV's possible cooperation with the GAP Administration. Finally, KEDV had been discussing the approach of a cooperation with the Administration, but problems had arisen due to varying opinions on the design of a memorandum of understanding between the two agencies.

7.3.2. Role of NGOs in the ÇATOMs

TKV, as the NGO with closest ties with the GAP Administration due to an extensive agreement between the two institutions, gave the most detailed overview of the role of NGOs in the ÇATOMs. TKV defined the role of NGOs within the ÇATOM project as the creation of a ‘bridge’ between public institutions and the GAP Administration on the one hand and the local community on the other. Once the ÇATOM building is supplied by local administrators or the municipality, and the equipment are provided by the GAP Administration, the organization and operationality of the ÇATOM is handled primarily by TKV as well as other interested NGOs. The way TKV in particular establishes this bridge is their provision of training programs for girls on topics such as gender balanced development, communication and management skills, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and so on. The field workers in the ÇATOMs are regularly invited to other training seminars and similar events by other NGOs, which sometimes takes place outside the region. Other means of establishing this bridge include TKV’s role in the regular assessment and evaluation of the ÇATOM project which is then shared with GAP officials for purposes of feedback from the field. In addition to this role of creating a bridge between the top and the bottom, TKV believes that the ÇATOM project plays the second important role of setting an example for state-NGO cooperation in Turkey. TKV personnel argued that while Turkey displays an administration and planning that is strictly centrally organized, the ÇATOM case has demonstrated the possibility of state-NGO cooperation is possible in Turkey. TKV members view this as significant in that it

has the potential of bringing new perspectives on state institutions, NGOs, development, and participatory democracy in Turkey.

With respect to its role in the ÇATOMs, Ana Kültür's definition of itself as an 'intermediary' is taken both from a macro-level and micro-level perspective. Ana Kültür sees its role as intermediary between the women in the region and the GAP Administration, between the field workers and the GAP Administration, as well as the macro level of the 'west' and the 'east', referring to the two separate parts of the country. Ana Kültür believes that it has helped establish a connection between the two parts through the initiation of friends to become acquainted with the region, the provision of 5 million US dollars for the survival of the ancient site of Zeugma in Gaziantep, and through Adalet, a ÇATOM field worker who was sent by Ana Kültür to New York for purposes of education without even having seen the larger cities of Turkey prior to her departure to New York. The more specific, field-related role of Ana Kültür in the ÇATOMs was explained.

The girls in the ÇATOMs talk to us easily because we are outsiders. If they talk to someone in the community, their family members or their friends, this quickly turns to gossip. They can't establish this kind of a communication with GAP personnel because they are the state. They don't trust the state as much as they trust us. In that sense, we are intermediaries.

Other NGOs that were not directly or systematically involved in the ÇATOM project or the Southeastern Anatolia region were not in a situation to evaluate the role of their organization with respect to ÇATOMs, the local community, the GAP Administration, or other related institutions of the state.

7.3.3. Success and Failures of the ÇATOM Project

In almost all cases, the success of the ÇATOM was associated with the success of the field worker. This was especially the case for the Batman ÇATOM run by Şükran, a 33 year old young woman from the locality. TOÇEV, for instance, viewed the specific ÇATOM field worker as an excellent partner for the selection of children for their projects.

There is Şükran *hanım* at the ÇATOM; an incredibly talented and sweet lady. We are with her every time we go to Batman. We talk to her on the phone every 2-3 days. She is a lot of help to us in Batman. She helps us in the distribution of items and in the selection of our children. And we know that whatever she says, it is ninety percent the best we can do because she sacrifices herself; she is truly altruistic.

Deliberating on their choice of ÇATOMs as centers of operation, TOÇEV staff explained the swiftness and flexibility of the ÇATOM structure. The fact that TOÇEV did not get tangled and delayed with bureaucratic procedures while working at the ÇATOMs was one of the greatest points of attraction.

ÇATOMs definitely get things done much more quicker. Because of their more simplistic way of looking at things they find absolute solutions to everything. Things get done right away. How does this happen? I am talking about the people who are at the head of the ÇATOM. I suppose they know the real motives and objectives behind the ÇATOMs. I mean they know that the real purpose is helping the people there. They think, if someone is bringing us help, then we must absolutely make sure it reaches the right place. Done. It's as simple as that; it gets resolved right away and it's finished. This is an absolute relief for organizations that want to work in the region.

The failures of the ÇATOM project mentioned by NGOs were mostly related to problems of the workings of the GAP Administration. The effect of centralized structures and policies on the workings of the GAP Administration and the ÇATOMs was viewed by Ana Kültür as a problem for the whole of Turkey. The statement was made that even though the GAP Administration does “possess the rhetoric of participatory planning and participatory decision making, they are unable to follow up in the field, because instructions from above are too determinant”. Even if this mechanism was changed, this would not suffice to end the multi-faceted problems in the region. “There is also the problem of the *aşiret* as well as the problem of the presence of security forces in the region”. Despite these realizations, Ana Kültür made the interesting claim that “because Ankara, particularly the GAP Administration, is unable to trespass the *aşiret* system, NGOs are willing to cooperate up to a certain point”, indicating an expectation from the GAP Administration to clear the way in the region for NGO interventions and cooperations. Another expectation of Ana Kültür was that the GAP Administration take into consideration and act upon the studies carried out and conclusions reached by Ana Kültür as a result of their visits to the region. Ana Kültür was highly resentful of not being paid attention to, as recalled by the president of the organization.

In a report I wrote in 1998 - because I used to write reports every time I went to the field which I don't do anymore because people are either angry with what I write or they don't read them – the first thing I wrote when I visited the region in August 1998 was that the ÇATOMs are urgently in need of psychiatrists and guidance counselors. Then we saw what happened in the year 2000. The suicides were in fact nothing new at the time and they continue today. When I look at the issue from this angle, I am very pessimistic. We were really very sincere and we did not demand a single penny from the GAP Administration, but they did not pay attention.

TKV criticized the GAP Administration for being strongly influenced by political motives depending on the Minister responsible for the GAP Administration. It was argued that instead of attaching high priority to demands coming from the locality, the GAP Administration sometimes became a tool of political interest. The decision on the establishment of a ÇATOM building, its location, and the number of personnel employed are taken by authorities at the top. This, in turn, has the potential of hampering the Administration's cooperation with NGOs, as regarded by TKV. On the other hand, although some personnel within TKV acknowledged this aspect of ÇATOMs, they were nevertheless satisfied with the results, such as the employment of field workers who had become highly successful in their positions. The eventual positive results were pointed out.

Of course, political influences have been effective, especially in the Mardin area. But we were lucky in that the girls that came through political connections turned out to be very good in their capabilities. Nevertheless, they were girls from the locality and they were girls who were sincerely willing to work for that particular locality. Supplemented with the educational and training sessions of TKV, the results were highly satisfactory at the end. And we especially wanted them to be high school graduates. And we are now happy with the decision we took that they should not be university graduates. Because in this way they are better at establishing contacts with the local women; they do not look down at the participants from the top. It was also important that they knew the language. (TKV)

Interestingly, neither TKV nor Ana Kültür, as the two NGOs most directly and systematically involved in the ÇATOM project, evaluated the success and failures of ÇATOMs on community organization and grassroots mobilization through the women in the region. It was as if both organizations had not seriously pondered upon the genuine aims and long term objectives of the ÇATOM project.

7.4. Relations with the State

In general, all the NGOs that I visited and interviewed were in good terms with the Turkish state. No harsh criticisms were made by NGOs, although the two organizations closest to the ÇATOMs did have something to say about the GAP Administration. Overall, while describing their relations and interactions with the state, NGO staff mainly mentioned the practical aspects of cooperating with the authorities and institutions of the state.

It was clear from the interviews that NGOs preoccupied with the replication of republican ideology chose to especially work with local and regional administrators appointed by the state, while those more concerned with the mobilization of civil society preferred to cooperate with the municipalities. In the first group are also NGOs that did not have the conscious aim of mobilizing elements of civil society. Thus, in all cases without exception, NGOs reported of their direct links with local state administrations and their institutions, namely the governorates and directorates. Only the TEGV stressed their efforts in working together with the ‘elected’ instead of the ‘appointed’. It is only when municipalities are mobilized that one is able to create access for the mobilization of the community TEGV argued. While some organizations did not make a sharp distinction, others such as AÇEV especially noted their preference to not work with municipalities due to their reservations of political interest.

In most cases, working with local and appointed administrators merely facilitated NGO activities in the region, province or county of operation. TOÇEV mentioned the importance of ‘recognition’ by the governorate, which makes quite a difference in a region of emergency rule, organization members stated. Most NGOs mentioned that operating in a region where authorities are highly suspicious and careful of all sorts of activities was not an easy task:

Two weeks ago we were in the Southeast visiting 7 provinces. We went there together with a theater group from Istanbul. The simple act of a theater play becomes an incredible procedural event in the region. The text of the play, names of the actors, information on the theater group, individual criminal records of actors and a whole list of other formalities are demanded. Establishing good relations with the governorate facilitates these procedures to a large extent. Cooperating with the province and county governors really does take care of the bureaucratic obstacles that we face with respect to projects.

The procedural problems and other obstacles that are solved by governorates during project implementation have a wide spectrum. For example, upon demand from teachers in a school in Adiyaman province, TOÇEV designed a training program on psychological training for students. Despite initial demand, the NGO later confronted reactions from some of the teachers due to internal problems in the respective school. The governor was helpful in resolving the problem. In all cases, the approach to the solving of problems was stated by NGOs as top-down, through the involvement of the related state authorities. No examples were given of conflict resolution based on direct NGO-target group relations.

The reason NGOs gave for not having a representation in the Southeastern Anatolia region was the difficulties confronted in the OHAL governorates. “Establishing an

office outside the region is already hard enough because of the regulations pertaining to vakıfs and associations (*derneks*)” an NGO representative noted and continued, “therefore we are not willing to risk our existence due to problems that might arise in the OHAL region. The smallest mistake can have serious repercussions leading to the closing down of the vakıf.”

Given the fact that NGOs do not have branch offices in the region, they are forced to find themselves partners for cooperation. In most cases these partners are governors, directors or the teachers in a given locality. TOÇEV mentioned its cooperation with local NGOs in the region where it operates, naming the Chamber of Industry and Trade and the Association of Young Businessmen. These local NGOs are chosen as partners due to their convenience in the possible provision of logistical support during project implementation and their assistance in terms of local human resources. For this reason they are chosen from ‘strong’ NGOs in the locality, as a TOÇEV member declared. TOÇEV added that they needed such organizations in order to “run around” for them. What was interesting about the noted partnership was that it was not an arrangement in which both parties were empowered as a result of the relationship. There were no concerns of grassroots development on the part of TOÇEV. What was established was a mere partnership of convenience in cost sharing. The reason TOÇEV found itself a local organization in addition to the governorate was that although local administrators were useful in taking care of bureaucratic obstacles, they were usually unable to provide any kind of other support.

Members of TOÇEV who were well acquainted with the circumstances faced in the region mentioned the different reasons they chose to sign memorandums of understanding with respective governorates. They noted that they were confronted with the negative or indifferent attitudes of public authorities towards the development of the region and the role of NGOs within this process, the restrictions resulting from a lack of initiation on the part of civil servants in the region, and the instability of public offices. Despite the top-down problem solving approaches of public institutions, NGOs still preferred to choose governorates as their partners in the region, indicating their own tactless approaches to project implementation.

We cooperate with governorates because they are usually welcoming of us when we come to the region. Last time we brought a truck of items for distribution but the truck reached Diyarbakır before the scheduled time. We said it belonged to the governorate and left the truck there overnight, which was very convenient. If you go directly to the education director, unfortunately nothing comes out of it. When you go through the channel of the governor, they show more interest; or they are obliged to show more interest. Unfortunately it has to be pressured from above. On the one hand local administrators are incapable of taking initiative but on the other, this is still the OHAL region, so if they don't know the organization they are scared of getting involved. They think, in case something goes wrong, we don't want to get in trouble. One more thing is that education directors change so frequently in the region. I have still not been able to understand why that happens. We are in the region one day, we explain ourselves and our activities to the director, and we go back in two months, the director has changed, so we have to do the whole thing all over again. In the past one year, Adıyaman has seen three different education directors. But the governor is always more consistent and more stable.

Similar to relations with the governor, some NGOs noted of their contacts with military officials. For example, both ÇYDD and TOÇEV had received support from members of the armed forces in project planning and implementation. ÇYDD received assistance from the military unit in the Bahçesaray county of Van province in the selection of

children for scholarships. TOÇEV received labor support from military authorities in the construction of a playground for a school building in Adıyaman province. One NGO stated such cooperations resulting from the fact that no other partners are available, especially in small settlements and rural areas in the Southeast. The gendarmerie, in particular, was noted as providing all sorts of logistical support to NGOs in need. Moreover, for organizations willing to work in rural settlements, no other contacts were available except for the local administrators. Municipalities were available for cooperation only in the more urbanized settlements and for projects of a specific nature.

Of all the above-mentioned NGOs, perhaps ÇYDD was the most conscious of relations with local administrators. The NGO believed that the mere success of their projects resulted from the successful ties they established with local governors. Local administrators, as extensions of the central government, are theoretically in charge of the preservation and maintenance of the principles of the Republic, which is ideologically close to the working philosophy of the ÇYDD. The organization, therefore, attaches importance to the training of county and province administrators on issues of project development and cooperation with NGOs.

We are obliged to work with the local authorities in our project sites, meaning the county governor, National Education directors, Social Services directors, and other province and county directorates. Then, for our projects, we must develop cooperation with local administrators which is important for all NGOs. Indeed, each year, together with the Strategy Division of the Ministry of National Education, we organize conferences and symposiums on cooperation between local administrators and NGOs. These workshops last for a minimum of two full days. Governors attend this event in order to design and develop projects for the development of the people in their own provinces and counties, for the increase of quality of education, for the eradication of unemployment, and for the use of local resources. They bring their own projects to the symposium and we, as NGOs, evaluate these

projects and make suggestions. In this way, we bring together NGOs and local administrators. This is an extremely useful project and is on top of the list of our rural programs. The success of our rural programs is dependent merely on the cooperation of ÇYDD with local administrators. In some places, county governors or National Education directors do not support our projects, but with the ones that do provide support, we are able to be very creative and productive. For this reason, this project is very important for us.

In reality, however, ÇYDD representatives were aware that not all local administrators fully supported the ‘Ataturkian’ cause. Although province and county administrators were appointed by the central government and were therefore not affiliated with any political party, the reality was that political interests of local administrators sometimes came to the forefront. This was primarily why ÇYDD was interested in the training of local administrators. Despite this discrepancy, however, the organization worked with state officials who were close to their philosophy of ‘contemporary life’:

Why do some local administrators not provide us support? I believe this to be a completely political issue. You know that our country is living within a reality; the reality of the Turkish-Islam synthesis. There are some reforms [*devrimler* in Turkish], both implicit and explicit that are developing against the reforms of Atatürk. These are against Atatürk, against the reforms of the Republic as established by Atatürk. They give the impression as if they are getting by, but we are in fact confronted with a Turkish-Islam synthesis that does not really sympathize very much with the Republic. These people are in notable positions; they have become county governors, National Education directors. Again, I believe this to be completely political. Some, on the other hand, are because of ignorance of course. They do not know NGOs or they fear harm from NGOs. So there is both ignorance and purposeful political considerations. Those that have political considerations, in the last years, have also resorted to dissimulation [*takkiye* in Turkish]. They have seen that things get done with ÇYDD, that ÇYDD does productive work, that when ÇYDD comes to a county, school buildings and community centers are constructed, illiteracy rates drop, number of children attending schools increases, number of girls attending schools increases, then they think ‘I must get along with ÇYDD’ and consequently change their roles. But generally we like to work and produce good work with those that provide us complete and honest support.

The other extreme of NGO cooperation with the state was demonstrated by TEGV, which consciously made the distinction between state officials appointed to the locality and administrators that were elected by the community. TEGV highly valued the initiation that came from municipalities due to the reasoning that this initiation was an indication of demands from below, leading to local mobilization. They saw the construction of their educational units and parks as well as the promotion of volunteers for these facilities as an extension of the local community making use of its own local resources:

We are talking about municipalities. In Sivas you have the *Saadet* Party, in Bozüyük you have the *MHP* or the *Anavatan*.²⁸² We keep an equal distance to all. We don't use a political jargon. We have our rules. If people comply with these rules then we go into cooperation with them, irrespective of their political standing. It makes no difference for us. Because we say that that municipality is what the people want. It is for this reason that we think our cooperation with that municipality will bring us into contact with that community. But we don't use a political jargon because there are people in the community who have not voted for that particular party. The best way to involve the local community into our projects is working through the municipalities. But getting in touch with the community is not possible only through the municipality. We work also through the teachers. But it is important that these teachers get involved on a voluntary basis.

TEGV's philosophy of 'voluntarism' is well institutionalized, which extends to the organization's other approaches, including the high importance they attach to the monitoring of the children's personal development, which acts as input to TEGV's evaluation of its own work. Similarly, TEGV displayed an institutional approach to almost all aspects of their work, including their principles of coordination with local officials.

²⁸² All the three parties stated have different orientations. *Saadet* Party has a religious agenda while *MHP* is ultra-nationalist and *Anavatan* is a center-right party.

Our policies are well thought-out from the very beginning of the foundation of TEGV. In meetings where we introduce the organization, they ask us, there is a unit in Erzincan, why don't you have one in Erzurum? Because there is no initiative there. So we don't go there to open up a unit but what we do is, in places where there are no TEGV units or educational parks, we have our '*Ateşböceği*' trucks in which we demonstrate on a micro-scale what TEGV is. These become attraction centers for people in the region and we have many units which we opened as a result of these demonstrations. The last example is in Samsun where the municipality provided 30 decares of land, the university, the Chamber of Industry and Trade, the lawyers, NGOs and everybody else formed a large committee. Within 2 years time, this committee constructed an educational park on this 30 decares of land without TEGV paying a single penny! We are currently only providing them logistical support. In fact, this is the kind of thing we really long for and expect to achieve; this kind of 'civility' and 'localness'. In other words, we want the parks and units to become a part of the people there in the region.

These policies look attractive in approach but in fact there are greater problems to working with municipalities than working with the local administrators of governorates or directorates:

The mayors of Diyarbakır, Van, Hakkari, and Yüksekova are HADEP²⁸³ members. Nowadays the situation is getting better but the municipalities of these locations usually have tremendous problems of resources. Hakkari, for instance, has a debt of 4 trillion TL. from the previous period. Because they have their own internal problems, they are usually unable to provide our activities with logistical support. So we are not always able to secure the local initiation that we would like.

Very different from all the relationships mentioned so far was the one experienced by AÇEV. Being an innovator in its field of operation, AÇEV brings alternatives to models of education. The provision of education being one of the main tasks of the state, AÇEV works in direct link with the policy making level of the Turkish government. However, AÇEV members talked about the tremendous difficulties of operating in this fashion.

²⁸³ The political party with a Kurdish orientation.

Despite their long-standing cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, the organization was still not fully convinced of its role as technical innovator. In fact, and surprisingly so, this role was not something that they emphasized in the description of their projects.

When AÇEV was established in 1993, NGOs were a new concept for the [Turkish] state. So at that time, it was difficult for us to think of ourselves as ‘training’ the state because at that time NGOs were not readily accepted [by the state]. Now, especially after the [Marmara] earthquake, things have changed because the earthquake disaster created an environment for NGOs to make themselves known; to make their voices heard. For us it really wasn’t easy to start giving these new courses on child and adult education. You have to be good, really good for the public authorities to start appreciating your work, your research and your application in the field. You have to prove yourself to the state before you can get recognition. For us as an NGO, to be working on the adoption of our program and model by the Ministry is something very exciting.

7.5. Strengths and Weaknesses of NGOs in Turkey

All the NGOs interviewed were discontent about the current situation of a ‘civil society’ [*sivil toplumculuk* in Turkish] in Turkey. This criticism was made despite the fact that of the 9 NGOs that were surveyed, 6 of them had quite an institutionalized structure, mission statement and working philosophy. Except for 3 NGOs, all the others were relatively up to date on the existing terminology used in their own fields of operation. They made comparisons of themselves with the practices of NGOs abroad. This was particularly clear in the discussions during the 8th NGO Symposium²⁸⁴ which took place in December 2000. NGOs agreed on their deficiencies of capacity and project development. Confronted with certain problems, NGOs voiced their anxiety about the

²⁸⁴ This is a symposium that is periodically organized by NGOs for NGOs in Turkey.

difficulty of finding solutions to certain problems. There were questions at the Symposium of what NGOs in Europe would do in certain situations that were faced by their counterparts in Turkey.

It was clear that NGOs need to build their capacity in the successful design and implementation of projects. This awareness was present among some NGOs that noted their need to become more ‘professional’, indicating that their activities were being carried out based on “emotional” criteria. Even though most NGO staff members were content about the decision making structures within their organizations, some members admitted that the opinion of one, usually the president of the foundation or association, was automatically the opinion of the entire organization. It was agreed that this organizational structure based on the authority of one leader prevented the institutionalization of NGOs in Turkey.

I observed that there was generally not much interest among NGOs in other organizations like themselves. There was little awareness of other NGOs as well as projects similar to their own carried out by other organizations. Even though such cases were rare, international committees and networks established by intergovernmental agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO created platforms for NGOs working on similar issues to come together at the policy making level.

In terms of funding policies and practices, internal fund-raising was observed as an important part of an NGO budget. This included donations, membership fees, the transfer of movable and unmovable assets, and revenue obtained as a result of

professional fund-raising events such as the organization of concerts, festivals, and some other innovative projects. One of the NGOs I interviewed, for instance, had started a campaign in which a small percentage of the price of certain products sold in supermarkets was fed into activities of the organization. Similarly, the entire income of the jubilee match of a famous football player was transferred to one of the NGOs. Another organization had established a ‘foster family’ system in which families donated a fixed amount of funding for the full educational support of a single child and periodic updates were given on the improvement of the supported child. International funding also made up an important part of the budget of certain NGOs. However, this was never the only source of funding; neither was it the most important one.

Despite their strengths, though, none of the NGOs were consciously working on partnerships that provided support to the development of grassroots initiatives. The one organization that worked closest to this mode of operation was the TEGV with its emphasis on the development of ‘voluntarism’ at the local level. Almost all the cases studied consisted of NGOs that had been established either by academicians, industrialists and businessmen, or civil servants and others with connections to public institutions. Except for KAMER, none of the other NGOs had been founded by or had employees who were in any way related to the vulnerable and disadvantaged group in society that they claimed to represent. Perhaps TKV’s Diyarbakır branch office might also be considered as the other case of the employment of locals.

Similarly, none of the NGOs within the framework of the current thesis had innovative relations with the Turkish state. Referring to Clark’s classification of NGOs noted in the

beginning of this chapter, most NGOs acted as ‘relief and welfare agencies’ and ‘public service contractors’ rather than as organizations of ‘technical innovation’. Authorities and institutions of the state were contacted merely as tools for the operationality of relief projects rather than as ends to the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the state. Likewise, NGOs did not have the concern of collaboration with the Turkish state for the purposes of the adoption of policies of global development and good governance.

As summarized in this chapter, the subsequent organizational structure and working philosophy of NGOs in Turkey affects their relationship with the target group on the one hand and the Turkish state on the other. Further analyses of this relationship in general and the particular interaction of NGOs through the ÇATOMs is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII:

NGOs AS THE LINK BETWEEN STATE AND SOCIETY

8.1. Characterization of the Communities²⁸⁵

The communities in which the ÇATOMs were situated carried some characteristics in common. The communities were situated mainly in the outskirts of cities, a characteristic which was more common in the larger cities and province centers such as Batman and Siirt. Relatively smaller, the ÇATOM in Cizre was located in an older part of the city. Similarly, Beytüşşebap being a smaller county, the ÇATOM was somewhat distant from the town center. In the village of Uluköy, the location of the ÇATOM building did not make much of a difference as the entire village space was easily accessible. Nevertheless, except for Uluköy, all other ÇATOMs were selected for settlements that had received (and continued to receive in most cases) migrants from villages and small settlements in the region.

²⁸⁵ I use the word ‘community’ to denote a territorially shared space rather than a locality based on communal identity. I use it as equivalent to what is referred to as *mahalle* in Turkish.

Most communities in which the ÇATOM building was located clearly had infrastructural problems. Despite the fact that some communities had started forming as early as the mid-1980s, most still had the appearance of newly formed squatter neighborhoods, with randomly scattered houses, half-finished house constructions, newly constructed houses with no concrete paste or paint. As the families explained, with every little money that they find, a small part of the house is constructed, so the constructions continue over a long time period in a step-by-step manner. Small shops [*bakkal* or more recently *market* in Turkish] are opened up here and there with the minimal amount of money that is needed to start up a small business as such. As most communities had a relatively long past, school buildings were present in all the communities that I visited for the purpose of the study.

Ethnic²⁸⁶ diversity was more prevalent in the communities of large cities such as Batman and Siirt. As I found out, the local population in Siirt is mainly of Arabic origin while those living in the villages are mainly Kurdish. There was talk about the intermingling of these people with the increase in internal migration from the villages into the city of Siirt. Similarly, Batman revealed its true mixture of peoples in its outskirts neighborhoods. This mixture was also prevalent in Cizre where settled Kurds, nomadic Kurds [*göçerler* in Turkish], Turks, Arabs and other smaller identities all live together. Relations with Syria and Iraq, as well as religious diversity were all elements of cultural richness in the communities that I visited.

²⁸⁶ I use the word ‘ethnic’ to denote “groups with a subjective belief in their common descent” as used by Walker Connor in *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1994).

Despite such diversity on a micro scale, women in the region did not make a statement of differences in ethnic origin, although few comments were made of cultural differences. Only a few women, who had spent some time in Istanbul and other large cities of Turkey, were aware of the growing assertions and claims to ethnic identity. They spoke of differences between Arabs and Kurds although both sides have now started understanding and speaking each other's language due to recent territorial integration of previously separate neighborhoods. This awareness was especially the case for the Arabs in Siirt who, given their traditional settlement in the urban part of the city, made the distinction of Kurds living in rural Siirt. Rather than the assertion of identities other than Turkishness, there was the idealized conception of the 'city', referring primarily to Istanbul, but also to Ankara, Izmir, Mersin, Antalya and Gaziantep, among others. This was especially so among young, unmarried girls whose mere conceptions of Turkishness related to learning the Turkish language only because this would provide access to schooling and the slight chance of visiting Istanbul. Learning Turkish was important because it provided access to a world completely different from their own. Similarly, mothers who explicitly wanted their children to get an education mentioned the importance of learning the language. Women eager to become literate were those who wanted to have more control over daily chores, although some politically conscious men insisted that children be taught Kurdish at home.

In fact, let alone ethnic differences, women in the region did not even have a consciousness of their gender roles as women. As mentioned earlier, only women who had confronted the urban reality of the larger cities in western Turkey made statements

of their womanhood and their relations with the opposite sex. Otherwise, women limited to the realities of their village or settlement in the Southeast had no conceptions of their gender. My questions about what kinds of problems they faced as women yielded little other than blank looks. Concerning their problems in general, however, they mentioned the displacement process from the villages to other settlements, subsequent decreases in relative quality of life, the absence of the men in their families, and the resultant immobility of women. It was clear that most women in the region did not see themselves as individuals and more importantly as 'women'. Now that communities based on tribal relations had been largely dissolved, there was only the family, close kin, and to a slight extent the tribe. Gender identity was barely non-existent.

Although young girls and some women reported a degree of emancipation through the acquisition of skills in facilitating their daily lives and gaining some awareness about issues of health and personal hygiene, they did not exert the abilities of organization, advocacy, leadership or coordination, as foreseen by the GAP project. Besides finding a friendly atmosphere at the ÇATOM, I encountered a limited number of women who had become aware of their potentials in creating solutions and alternatives to their daily problems. The limited empowerment and personal development felt by individual young girls and women were clearly insufficient to be transformed into developments at the family and community level.

It is also important to note, meanwhile, that the ÇATOM project deals with a target group whose characteristics are strongly embedded in centuries of tradition and locality.

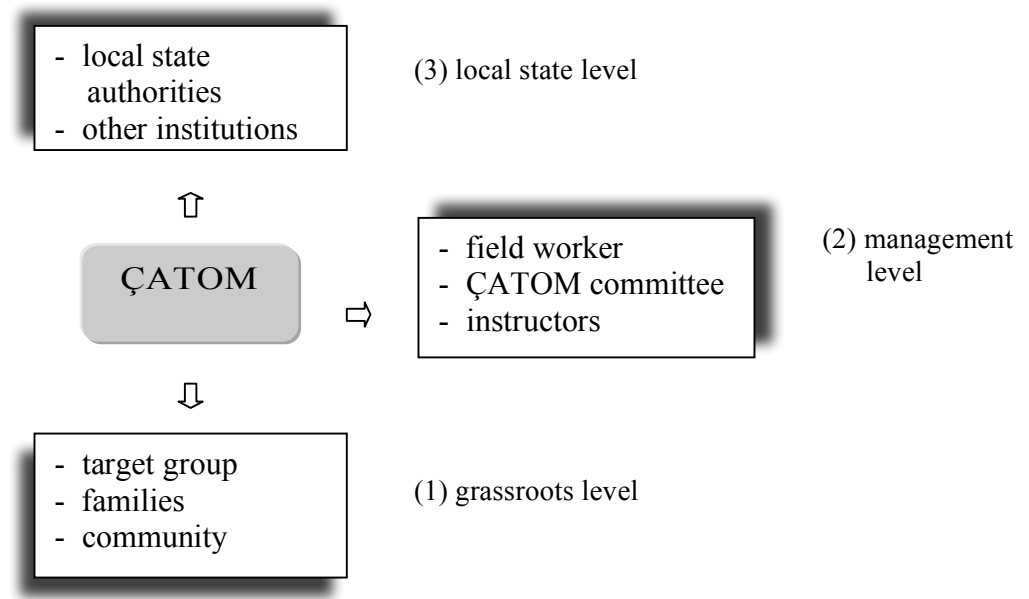
ÇATOMs work with women who believe that their status as women is directly proportional to family income level. For women who had recently left the village, items such as furniture, durable goods and electronic equipment at home, land, golden jewelry, connections with the city, and bearing a large number of children, especially male children, were cited by women as indicators of high status. Improving the status of women in Southeastern Anatolia, therefore, initially entails that these women gain an awareness of gender issues, in order to take a step forward on the strenuous path to gender balanced development in the region. For young girls who live between the two contrasting worlds of the home environment and the life on TV, this change becomes even more pressing.

Further characteristics of realities of women in the region and the effects of the ÇATOM project were portrayed in chapter V, from which I will again try to extend into a greater understanding of why ÇATOMs have been so slow at reaching the greater aim of gender awareness and social mobilization at the grassroots level.

8.2. Role of the ÇATOMs

An analysis of the dynamics within the ÇATOM structure is carried out at three levels. The grassroots level analyzes the interaction of the ÇATOM with its participants of local women and young girls as the target group, their families and the community. The management level looks at the internal organization of the ÇATOM structure, evaluating the decision making, planning and implementation practices within the ÇATOM. The

management level of analysis also includes elements of sustainability of the ÇATOM formation. Finally, the local state level analyzes the interaction of the ÇATOM with institutions of the state and its effects on the effectiveness of these local institutions.



8.2.1. Grassroots Level

Some impressive results of the ÇATOMs were collected at the grassroots level. A large number of participants reported benefits on an individual basis. Especially young girls expressed their enthusiasm for attending the activities of the ÇATOM. ÇATOMs provided for them a space in which they could gain some skills and educational knowledge with practical values. ÇATOMs also act as spaces of socialization for young girls who have extremely limited opportunities for leaving the home environment.

The participants of young girls and women learn a variety of different skills and knowledge as a result of attending the activities of the ÇATOM. The fact that educational sessions are undertaken in a participatory manner, directly involving the participant makes absorption of knowledge more successful. Similarly, skills of high practical use and intended for income generation are provided. Participants learn how to sew for themselves items which they would otherwise have to purchase. The health education sessions, for instance, are particularly interesting for young girls and women as they are interested in the practical knowledge they gain from these sessions. There was also a level of awareness among girls concerning problems faced by many women in the region. Since their attendance in ÇATOM activities, young girls noted that they were now more sensitive towards certain issues such as kin marriages and felt uncomfortable about the large number of siblings and their heavy workload in the home.

In addition to the many different skills and knowledge that they gain at the ÇATOM, the young girls are happy about spending time outside the home in the friendly atmosphere they find at the ÇATOM. This is especially important as girls have hardly any other occasion to leave their home environment. They are satisfied with the interactions among each other, their instructors, and the ÇATOM field worker. The attention they receive from the field worker and the instructors makes them feel important, particularly when their opinions are asked for and they get the chance to participate in the decisions taken at the ÇATOM.

ÇATOMs are crucial in terms of their broader impacts beyond what is given to participants who are actually present in the educational and training sessions at the

ÇATOM building. After having attended the courses, most participants then carry the knowledge gained at the ÇATOM into the home environment. Women and young girls that come to the family planning and health education sessions at the ÇATOM feel better about having learned the various methods of contraception in addition to other practical knowledge they can use in their homes. In most ÇATOMs this education is mostly attended by young girls of pre-marital age. They are interested in contraception methods, health at pregnancy, child-care, and other knowledge they will make use of in their homes especially after marriage. Mothers are usually unable to attend these sessions as they are busy with the children and the house chores. For these women, educational sessions are undertaken during the night time when a few women get together in a house; a time when the men are away at coffee houses.

Another way of reaching these women is through their daughters who inform their mothers and neighbors on what they have learned at the ÇATOM. Although the young girl does not use contraception herself, she educates the daughter-in-law in the house on the various techniques of contraception. Women in the region are usually timid about consulting medical staff, especially male staff, on issues of women's health. Receiving essential knowledge through their daughters becomes highly critical. As young girls are lectured on the importance of health facilities where appropriate, girls are also influential in convincing their mothers, sisters and other family members to make more frequent use of the health services, including the use of mid-wives at child birth.

8.2.2. Management Level

Field workers employed at the ÇATOMs were a special characteristic of the organization. These were young girls from the locality who had been hired to handle and coordinate the management of the ÇATOM. Interviewing the ÇATOM field workers, I was able to observe the effect of ÇATOM work on their ability to plan and organize activities, mobilize certain funds through the local state level, and ensure direct cooperation with NGOs. ÇATOM field workers were situated in such a position that they were able to provide the link between the two levels. On the one hand, the fact that ÇATOM field workers were fairly familiar with the community with which they were working was a great advantage in gaining the trust of young girls, women, their families, and the community members. They were thus able to maintain the respect of the neighborhood, a factor that is highly important in a region where most families are traditionally suspicious of state officials and public services. In the ÇATOMs, participants and their families were confronted with field workers and instructors with whom they could communicate in their own mother tongue. On the other hand, given their knowledge of the locality and their close contacts with the local women and young girls, ÇATOM field workers were in a better position than outsiders to argue for the needs of the women in the region, as well as to demand funds and other direct benefits from the local state authorities. ÇATOM field workers were influential in ensuring the participation of the target group in ÇATOM activities. They were also partially successful in raising public awareness about the specific needs of women and convince

local state authorities that they were sincerely working for the embetterment of women's status and living conditions in the community and in the region.

During interviews, field workers noted the positive effects of ÇATOMs on their personal development. Despite their initial insecurity and inexperience, field workers reported feelings of heightened self-confidence. With the start of field activities, field workers gained experience in carrying out surveys at the household level, gained in-depth knowledge of the problems faced by the women in their localities, and learned how to write, plan, implement projects and reports. This has resulted in support from their surroundings for many of the field workers. Perhaps the most interesting outcome of involvement in the ÇATOM was that of the only male field worker in the ÇATOMs.

As a result of my work at the ÇATOM, I am now softer in my dealings with women. Before I never used to defend women this much, but I realized how valuable they are in fact. I came to understand this as I listened to the girls one by one. My wife is extremely happy about me working here. Before I started working here, my friends criticized me, asking me what kind of a man I was, planning to work for a woman's organization. The fact is, I was also a bit embarrassed in the beginning and I didn't think it was right for me to be doing this kind of thing. Because I didn't believe in women's rights and things like that. When I first started the job, the local instructors would run away from me. They couldn't even drink tea with me in the same room. I was also very timid in the beginning and initially I was unable to participate in the activities. Then slowly as we started having chats and informal meetings, we all started becoming more comfortable. Slowly everything changed and developed. When the participant girls get special attention from me or from the instructors, they become very different. It is easy to observe the changes and improvements with a more participatory approach. When we don't see them for 2-3 days, we call their homes. Their parents see that we are interested in the well being of the girls. This makes both the girls and their parents happy. (Field worker, Cizre [male])

The instructors in the ÇATOMs were of three different sources and all seemed to provide a different input. One group were instructors who were formerly ÇATOM participants themselves and then showed such improvement that they became eligible to become instructors. The impact of the ÇATOM among these instructors in particular was very strong. These were young girls who would have never had the chance to teach in official positions, as they did not have the required attainments as instructors, but in the ÇATOMs they were skilled enough to give participants the basic practical education and training they needed to partly improve their living standards. Moreover, these instructors again had the advantage of easily communicating with the participants as they were from the locality.

I was a student at the ÇATOM for 3 years. I wanted to become an instructor here because I enjoyed the ÇATOM environment very much. When girls start coming to the ÇATOMs, they start experiencing lots of change. The same thing happened to me. I was very different when I first started coming here. I was very timid and would never talk, but now I have changed. My family is also happy about these changes. As a result, there has been changes in the family. They tell me, 'you have learned a lot of things, now you can help us in things that need to be done outside the house.' And this makes me very happy. (Instructor, Beytüşşebap)

Another instructor explained that she gained the trust and respect of her husband after completing the embroidery course at the course and becoming an instructor herself. She recited of her husband being surprised about this development and telling her that he would have never imagined his wife being a teacher. After working as an instructor at the ÇATOM for several months, she was given permission by her husband to work anywhere she liked. This, she recounted, increased her own self-confidence and enthusiasm towards work outside the home.

The second type of instructors were those who were experts in their specific fields as they had undergone the official training procedures to become qualified instructors at public institutions. These were experts in the fields of social work, handicrafts, kilim weaving, adult literacy, nutrition, and mother-child care education, among others. They were official instructors who were centrally assigned to positions at Public Training Centers, Community Centers of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, provincial Directorate of Agriculture, and so on. They were officially assigned by the respective province governors to work in the ÇATOMs. As they were experts in their own fields, these instructors were helpful in the improvement of the local instructors. Perhaps more importantly, these instructors developed themselves personally as a result of working at the ÇATOMs.

I have developed myself tremendously since working at the ÇATOM. My specialization is health issues but I have discovered to look at things more holistically here at the ÇATOM. I was not very enthusiastic about teaching; I would teach my material at the Public Training Center and then leave. But it is not like that at the ÇATOM. We have established much better communication with the girls here. There is a very different atmosphere here at the ÇATOM. I enjoy teaching more here at the ÇATOM. (Instructor, Batman)

A third category of instructors were those who were in the region given other assignments such as school teachers, but had decided to informally and voluntarily contribute part of their time to sharing their knowledge and experience with the young girls and women that came to the ÇATOMs. These volunteer instructors also included self-educated or officially educated women who were in the region due to the jobs of their spouses, mainly members of the armed forces. Given the deprived nature of the cities in Southeastern Anatolia, these women enjoyed passing time at the ÇATOMs

while at the same time feeling the satisfaction of contributing to the development of these young girls. The flexible, participatory and informal structure of the ÇATOM was what attracted these women to the ÇATOMs as opposed to other strictly public institutions. The relatively small age difference between these volunteer instructors and the participants added to the mutual benefit. Volunteer instructors had plenty to recite:

The girls in Cizre have terribly small worlds and they see their homes as prisons. Families earn quite a bit of money from the fuel oil trade across the border, but the rate of girls attending schools is unbelievably low. They are sent to school just enough to learn how to read and write in Turkish. They love to sit and have chats with us, speak about themselves, and ask plenty of questions. They are jealous about the west because they see Istanbul on TV. They get very affected by shows like *Televole*, but at the same time, there is a fear of the west. The things they are most interested in are talking about topics of beauty, make-up, hair models, and love affairs. But this is understandable as the girls in Cizre are severely oppressed inside the home and community. The men in Cizre go home at nights just to sleep; they have no connections with the home but still exert strong pressure on the girls. I am really very sad about the helplessness of the girls here. I am so glad I was not born here. I have realized the value of my husband.
(Volunteer instructor, Cizre)

Other interesting interactions took place between these specific instructors and ÇATOM participants. The interaction between the two was not a one-way flow of knowledge and experience. As these instructors were foreigners to Southeastern Anatolia in general and to the locality in particular, they talked about the enrichment they felt about learning the local culture through their close interaction with the participants in the ÇATOMs. These instructors were particularly happy about the local dishes they learned to make from the young girls and women that came to the ÇATOM. In return, they taught the girls a variety of dishes from their own localities in other parts of the country. Together with other instructors, they were able to combine cooking and enjoying these dishes with an educational session on healthy cooking and preserving techniques, which thus rendered

education in the ÇATOMs more participatory and enjoyable. This two-way interaction between these specific instructors and members of the local community was a crucial advantage in a country in which the western and eastern parts have, for decades, been isolated from one another. This kind of an interaction has the additional advantage of young girls and women from the locality meeting and getting to know women in other parts of Turkey, hence acting as an indirect awareness raising tool on how women in the region can change their status for the better. These were some of the additional intangible impacts of the ÇATOMs, as recounted by another volunteer instructor in Beytüşşebap.

We learn a lot of things personally by coming to the ÇATOM. Together with the girls we make new dishes here and give each other recipes. This way, we learned about the local dishes and herbs in this region. We exchange a lot of information with the girls. The people in this region are incredibly hospitable. This is my first time in the region and before coming here, people always have very different things in mind, but it is actually so different from what you envisage. This was one of the best things that we learned through the ÇATOM. (Volunteer instructor, Beytüşşebap)

This mutual relationship was emphasized by more than one volunteer instructor.

Here we get to know and understand a different culture. The instructors and volunteers that come from abroad live through a process of reciprocal learning. Upon our arrival in Cizre, when I was interested in coming to the ÇATOM, my husband, who is a lieutenant at the military unit, told me that I would be bored of coming here. But I initially started coming for the sole purpose of keeping myself busy and getting out of home during the days. But the attractiveness of the ÇATOM environment, the desperate need of the participant girls, and their curiosity were factors that attached me to the ÇATOM. We prepare local dishes with the girls that come here; we have different chats, and the exchange that takes place here at the ÇATOM is very special. (Volunteer instructor, Cizre)

The ÇATOM management committee, as the last group in the management level category, acted as the main measure of the sustainability of the project. Despite some small scale problems in the formation and maintenance of the committees, interviews with the committee members revealed the interest of the ÇATOM field worker and the instructors in sharing power with the participants. One major outcome of the committee on its members was their enhanced feelings of responsibility towards the beneficiaries. Having become part of a decision making committee, the members enthusiastically recited their increased involvement in the planning and implementation of activities as well as the budget of the ÇATOM. Being in a position to take decisions, the committee members felt more obliged to consult and acknowledge the participants on what was to be planned and implemented in the ÇATOM. The fact that these committees were re-elected every 6 months gave other participants the chance to get a feeling of responsibility and share power. I was able to observe that sharing the process of decision making and implementation became a crucial factor in the enhanced self-empowerment of young women as well as the sustainability of the project.

8.2.3. Local State Level

ÇATOMs did exhibit some success in raising awareness on issues of women, gender, and development among local public authorities. One was a case recited by a social worker in a Community Center of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency. Although these centers do not make a differentiation in terms of gender in their objectives and activities of community development, in one particular case, the social

worker claimed that after the establishment of the ÇATOM in Batman, community development efforts at the Community Center had taken on a gender dimension and women were now given special attention.

On the other hand, Public Training Centers (PTCs), under the Ministry of National Education, felt threatened by the presence of ÇATOMs in most cases. The PTC has objectives similar to those of the ÇATOMs, except that they concentrate more on individual skill development rather than a community orientation like the ÇATOMs. Despite the partial similarities in vision, the authorities of the PTC adopted a negative attitude towards the ÇATOMs. This, of course, made it harder for the ÇATOMs to coordinate activities with this institution. After taking the views of the PTC, it was interesting to learn that in fact, in most cases, a larger number of girls attended the ÇATOM activities and courses compared to those of the PTC. In one case, for instance, although the PTC boasted that it had adult literacy courses and not the ÇATOM, I later found out that it was actually the ÇATOM that first offered literacy courses to illiterate young girls and women in that particular settlement. These findings made it clear that even though the PTC was influenced by the activities and courses of the ÇATOM, the situation portrayed by the PTC authorities and instructors was completely different. This was also prevalent in the PTC's emphasis on the importance of discipline and the lack of such discipline in the ÇATOM environment. In cases where the ÇATOM was highly active and influential among the participants, the authorities of the Public Training Center even tended to argue that the ÇATOM was under the supervision and auspices of the PTC. This was an indication that local public authorities had a hard time

with the idea of sharing power, as well as portraying their inability to coordinate efforts and resources in an attempt to bring together creative energies.

The fact that the authorities at the Public Training Center were highly negative about the presence of the ÇATOM was an indication that they regarded the ÇATOM as competition. This, in turn, helped the PTC improve, or at least try to improve, its own activities. In one case, for instance, the PTC was unaware of the significance of 8 March while the participants of the ÇATOM organized a Women's Day festival on that day. Upon large scale enthusiasm for the festival, the instructors of the Public Training Center decided to arrange their own 8 March festivities, but only managed to organize it for the 25th of the same month.

In short, the ÇATOM managed to prove to other state initiatives with similar missions and activities that participation could be easily ensured and that things could be done differently, that is, resources could be used more efficiently and effectively. The ÇATOM is well on the way of showing how bureaucratic and social constraints can be reduced, and the patriarchal hegemony of state institutions challenged. Although certain changes are difficult to implement given the deep-rooted interests and socio-cultural values involved, ÇATOMs have been able to make changes to a certain extent.

An instructor in Siirt ÇATOM, who used to previously work at the Public Training Center, made the comparison between the two institutions. She said that the ÇATOM is similar to the environment of Training Centers in Turkey during the 1970s. Prior to their specialization, Training Centers used to value the provision of practical knowledge

to the participants, and one instructor used to provide a wide range of different information. But now, she stated, the Public Training Centers are interested only in the provision of certificates of participation. Whether the participant has learned fully is no longer relevant: “There is unnecessary discipline, mandatory participation, a strict curriculum and time schedule. The girl attends the first two classes, but then is unable to attend the third day because of her obligations at home. She is then rarely able to finish the course she started.” The instructor regrets the fact that Public Training Centers are no different from the formal education environment in schools. The instructor assured her satisfaction for working at the ÇATOM where the girls are more relaxed and hence learn better: “the girls sing and dance whenever they like. This is important for them as discipline is the last thing they need in their lives.”

Others in the management level of the ÇATOM have given good overviews of the relative success of the ÇATOMs compared to similarly working public training institutions.

Compared to Public Training Centers, the participants at the ÇATOM are better and more enthusiastic about coming here. The activities at the ÇATOM are different and more diverse. Before the PTC, the ÇATOM started the literacy course for women. When I was working at the PTC, everything was finished after I completed the course at the end of the day, but we take much more responsibility for the girls here. There is very good communication and dialogue between the students, teachers, and Gönül [field worker]. Moreover, household visits are undertaken in the ÇATOM. Compared to the PTC, the ÇATOM has better communication with the people in the community. The cozy atmosphere of the ÇATOM has now become addictive; Saturday and Sunday passes so slowly. Also, there are more girls attending the activities of the ÇATOM compared to the PTC. The ÇATOM is more flexible compared to the PTC and girls prefer this because they have responsibilities at home. When you don't provide them a flexible environment, they don't come; they can't come. While working at the Public Training Center, our dialogue with the director of the center and

the instructors was not always very smooth, but we are very comfortable with Gönül at the ÇATOM. Also, the age difference between us [the instructors] and Gönül is very small, which makes us all very close to each other. (Instructor, Beytüşşebap)

In conclusion, one major revelation of the ÇATOMs in relation to the local state level was the outcome that ÇATOMs help improve the functioning of local state institutions, the most obvious one being the workings of the Public Training Centers. The ÇATOM raises awareness about the fact that things can run differently in these institutions. Instead of applying an outdated and tedious curriculum, and sticking blindly to a strict time schedule in a hierarchical and mechanical work environment, ÇATOMs demonstrate the success of participatory education and training possibilities. Girls are able to come and go as they like which gives them space to help out with daily chores at home while creating time for activities at the ÇATOM and eventually reaching self-empowerment. This makes the PTCs aware of the fact that they can arrange their own curricula in a way that enables a higher attendance of the target group in their own programs.

Given the fact that ÇATOMs have already started creating competition among local Public Training Centers, in the longer run, through their activities, ÇATOMs can play the role of increasing the quality of training and education provided in these Training Centers in the Southeast. In the longer run, once this competition is created and the quality is increased, cooperation between the ÇATOMs and the Public Training Centers will become less relevant.

8.3. Role of NGOs

On the one hand, despite the limitations of organization at the community level, a relatively high level of success is reached on an individual level in terms of the impacts felt by the young girls and women that attend the activities of the ÇATOM. Considering the extremely closed character of the culture in the region, this is in fact a positive development. The internal structure of the ÇATOM and management level activities also exhibit a high potential for internal participation and the practice of democratic modes of decision making, ensuring sustainability among young girls and women at the organizational level. Similarly, despite limited collaboration with municipalities, relations with the state authorities are relatively satisfactory and some success is attained in raising awareness about women and issues of gender at the local state level. Although the management committee guarantee to a certain extent the internal sustainability of the ÇATOM structure, their dependence with respect to finances hamper their potential for transition to an initiative of a fully civic nature, thus endangering full sustainability. A further analysis of the present situation in the ÇATOMs, the role of NGOs within this organization, and suggestions for improvement are suggested in the following sections.

8.3.1. True Nature of NGO Involvement in the ÇATOMs

Interviews with the Social Programs coordinator, assistant coordinator and other personnel of the GAP Administration revealed the true formation of ÇATOMs. In the initial design, ÇATOMs were not thought to have their own personnel, including the

field worker. The initial idea was the employment of social service experts (social workers employed by the Social Services and Child Protection Agency) for the handling of ÇATOM management. In time, however, the Administration realized that this could not be realized because the Social Services Agency did not have sufficient personnel in the region for its own community centers. There is a lack of social services experts working and willing to work in the Southeastern region of Turkey.

Within time, changes from the initial plan were implemented. One such change was the assignment of field workers instead of social workers of the Social Services Agency. Although the idea of a ‘field worker’ was there, as explained by the coordinator of the Social Programs at the GAP Administration, the idea was the provision of these field workers from the Social Services Agency. Hence, although ‘local participation’ was an essential component of the working philosophy of the GAP Administration as determined by the approach of a human-centered sustainable development, the selection of field workers from the locality was initially not the consideration. The GAP Administration was aware, however, that someone was needed in each ÇATOM for the organization and coordination of activities and for the establishment of contacts with the community. Even though social service experts were not available in the region, someone was needed in the ÇATOMs for working with the target group, detecting their needs, and designing projects and activities according to these needs. The decision was eventually taken on the provision of local girls from the community to act as field workers.

It was only after this decision that *Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı* and other NGOs came into the picture. TKV was a natural partner because the organization had carried out the study on women's status in the region prior to any projects on women's empowerment within the GAP Administration. Having laid out an action plan from the research they carried out on women's status in Southeastern Anatolia, TKV was later somewhat present during the planning stage of a women's project. Although TKV personnel believe in their contribution to the design and development of the ÇATOM idea, relevant personnel in the GAP Administration are not particularly impressed with the contributions of TKV and other NGOs. GAP personnel highly value their own knowledge and know-how on issues of social development and they believe themselves to be the pioneers on the rhetoric and implementation of human-centered sustainable development in the region and in Turkey. They regard themselves as paving the way for NGOs in the field of participatory development approaches and practices.

TKV, on the other hand, admits that the planning and implementation processes of the ÇATOMs was not a conscious development on both parts. The matter pretty much evolved haphazardly and ÇATOMs consequentially came to take their current formation. For instance, the introduction of TKV was mainly due to practical reasons of personnel employment for the ÇATOMs. Given the legal status and coordinating role of the GAP Administration, the agency is unable to hire personnel due to obstacles arising from regulations. TKV thus became important for the hiring of personnel to be employed from the locality as field workers. Since these girls would be high school graduates with no particular skills fit for the position, it was decided by both parties that TKV would provide periodic training to these field workers in preparing them for the

approach of participatory gender balanced development in their localities. This was the mindset in which the relationship between TKV and the GAP Administration came about and flourished. The same motives led to the hiring of temporary contractual staff through TKV to work as instructors in the case that public instructors involved in similar activities in public institutions such as the Public Training Centers were not readily available. Both parties are eventually satisfied with the result in the sense that field workers have arisen from within the community instead of being appointed from Ankara.

Despite the haphazard and unstructured involvement of TKV and other NGOs in the ÇATOM project, experts at the Social Programs Coordination of the GAP Administration idealized the involvement in and the preference of NGOs to work in cooperation with the ÇATOMs:

Some NGOs have resources at hand that they would like to allocate for the region. Our aims and their aims are in agreement, so they come to us for possible cooperation and we design projects together. There is an institution that works well – the GAP Administration, and there is a center that works well for the benefit of women. ÇATOMs have many successes. NGOs come to us because they have seen the successes of these projects. We haven't gone around looking for NGOs to work with. They are the ones who come to us in hope of cooperation. In terms of the involvement of NGOs, we have reached the point where NGOs go directly to the ÇATOM they want to work with. Moreover, we encourage the ÇATOM field workers to make direct contacts with these NGOs and design and implement projects together without our support. For instance there are NGOs in Istanbul and Ankara that directly call up a ÇATOM and ask for participants in a particular seminar or training session.

One interesting example is the ÇATOM connection with an international NGO in the name of Anatolian Artisans. Two experts came from the US-based NGO, working for fair trade, to take a look at what the girls and women in the ÇATOMs were producing; to see if the products could be evolved into something that is marketable. They

have decided to bring in new designs, fabric, etc. for better products. Once these new items are produced, they will be marketed by the NGO through the internet. Another important exchange of ÇATOMs with NGOs is the Agenda 21 initiative of the Aliğa municipality in Izmir. They have invited 15 women from ÇATOMs to be present at their festivities. (Assistant Social Programs Coordinator of the GAP Administration, Ankara)

TKV involvement has resulted in relatively more conscious field workers in terms of the philosophy of participatory development, communication with participants, and the more technical skills of book-keeping, reporting, and the monitoring and evaluation of their activities. However, not all NGOs involved in the project have a systematic approach to their projects with and in the ÇATOMs. In fact, it is only *Ana Kültür* that has had the most systematic approach to working with the ÇATOMs. Other NGOs have either been involved on a sporadic basis, mostly for reasons of convenience, or indirectly through the use of the target group of the ÇATOMs in the running of their own projects rather than the planning and implementation of projects specifically designed for gender balanced development through the ÇATOMs. Three of the NGOs that I interviewed were only in the process of considering possible coordination with the GAP Administration on possible projects in the region.

8.3.2. Relations with the Bottom: Civic Grassroots Initiation through ÇATOMs

Although the ÇATOMs aim to reach young girls and women of ages 14-50, participant observation and interviews revealed that a majority of the participants were single young girls. At first glance this gave the impression that ÇATOMs were not able to reach the

intended target group. However, participatory assessment of the internal dynamics of extended family life in the region clarified the reasons behind this. As families are large in the Southeastern Anatolia region, young girls and women in the family are responsible for taking care of the children and house chores. Given their heavy workload within the home, mothers are hardly ever available to spend time at the ÇATOM. The large number of children in the family also contributes heavily to a woman's workload. The elder daughters and daughter-in-laws [*gelin* in Turkish] are also kept in the home for support to the mother or mother-in-law. This is especially the case for daughter-in-laws as they are brought into the husband's home primarily for this purpose. Their main task is handling the house chores. In this case, the daughters of the household are relatively freer compared to the *gelin*. Hence, it is the younger girls within the family that were usually the most available to attend activities at the ÇATOM.

Let alone women's organization at the community level, social and cultural constraints at the regional level prevent benefits for women at the individual level. When there are such harsh restrictions to the mobility of a woman as an individual, her mobility within a group becomes unthinkable. In line with the factors mentioned above, it was interesting to observe that the lack of organization was partially a result of women's position within the internal dynamics of the family and household arrangements. Young girls were uninterested in community work as they would most probably soon be leaving their neighborhood after marriage, at a young age, to live with their husbands' families. The main interest of most single young girls was merely building up their truceau and getting ready for marriage. This was the primary drive behind the attendance of most young girls in ÇATOM activities.

Research within the community revealed that it is only through awareness raising among newly wedded women and other married women in the community that self-organization among women can take place. This, however, is not an easy task as these women are assigned other priorities by the men in their families and men still prevail as the dominant figure within the household. In addition to this as a reason of low mobility within the community, I observed a lack of initiative and capability on the part of the ÇATOM field workers to organize women for economic or other purposes. The lack of motives on the part of the ÇATOM field workers can be attributed to the local political history in the region and the traditional modes of decision making. Strictly patriarchal and hierarchical decision making structures have retarded efforts at self-initiation among the local people in the region.

Putnam²⁸⁷ brings a constructive overview of interactions between ‘democratic governance’ and ‘civic community’, which he defines as a community “bound together by horizontal relations of reciprocity and cooperation” as opposed to “vertical relations of authority and dependency”.²⁸⁸ Elements of social capital in the Southeastern Anatolia region, as explained in chapter V, are effective in social organization only within a given community based on chosen tribal relations. Elements of trust set the norms and networks within a village community in Southeastern Anatolia. However, there is also a strong tradition of patron-client relations both within and among village communities in the region, which reveals itself strongly in tribal loyalties and gender relations. In a

²⁸⁷ Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1993).

region where tribal tensions can lead to armed confrontations between community members,²⁸⁹ it can be concluded that relations are primarily vertically structured and horizontally fractured. Moreover, Putnam asserts that such vertical bonds of clientalism easily undermines any kind of horizontal group organization and solidarity, as clients have no incentives of cooperating while it is only vertical ties with the patron that produces results. Hence, the social capital of village communities in Southeastern Anatolia results in cooperation only *within* the community as opposed to cooperation *across* communities. In such a case, the spontaneous formation of civic communities in the Southeast seems quite unlikely.

As Putnam describes, “voluntary cooperation is easier [only] in a community that has inherited a substantial stock of social capital, in the form of norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement.”²⁹⁰ To make the situation even graver, Putnam claims that “ironically, ‘strong’ interpersonal ties (like kinship) are less important than ‘weak’ ties (like friends) in sustaining community cohesion and collective action.”²⁹¹

Communities in Southeastern Anatolia have the characteristic of strong loyal attachments to tribal relations and suspicion of non-tribal affinities. After the internal displacement of communities as witnessed since the mid-1980s in Southeastern Anatolia, non-tribal confrontations have become characteristic of the newly formed migrant neighborhoods. Possessing no historical experience and inheritance of cooperation through ‘weak’ ties of interaction, the formation of civic communities in

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 88.

²⁸⁹ For an extensive study, look at Lale Yalçın-Heckmann, *Tribe and Kinship among the Kurds* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991).

²⁹⁰ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*.

migrant neighborhoods of Southeastern Anatolia becomes an almost impossible task. As Putnam concludes, “building social capital will not be easy, but it is the key to making democracy work.”²⁹²

For purposes of practicality, the main task, then, should be the development of a territorially-based community identity rather than one that continues to value interpersonal ties such as kinship and tribe. The incentive for mobilization within a territorially-based community can be organized around ‘collective consumption demands’ as suggested by Castells.²⁹³ Community members can collectively demand the satisfaction of their basic needs such as shelter, water, sewage, education, health, and food, among other necessities. The community might equally be interested in the acquisition of a healthier and safer living environment through improved garbage collection or the raising of awareness on environmental issues. Through collective action, communities can easily be more demanding of their municipalities for the efficient and effective use of resources, thus acting as a control mechanism for local administration. Direct and indirect political participation of community members in processes of decision making can be encouraged.

ÇATOM field workers have to be made aware of such subtleties in social and community organization, and approaches to grassroots mobilization and community development. The role of women in this new conceptualization becomes crucial and

²⁹¹ Ibid., 175.

²⁹² Ibid., 185.

²⁹³ Castells cited in Heidi Wedel, “Gecekondulu Kadınlar ve Yerel Siyaset [Women in Squatter Neighborhoods and Local Politics],” *Defter*. 9:28 (Summer 1996), 45.

determinant. Women, as the main target group, are especially well positioned for such collective action at the community level. Despite their limitations as oppressed members of the household and community, action for the purpose of collective consumption is less threatening than the direct action for a demand in the change in gender roles. Through mobilization for collective action aiming at the benefit of the entire community, women will get the chance of becoming more active members of their community, indirectly challenging gender roles, while upgrading the living conditions in their localities. Having carried out extensive field research on women's political participation in the squatter neighborhoods of Istanbul, Wedel²⁹⁴ admits the manifold obstacles faced by women in terms of social organization and mobilization, but she also points to the fact that compared to men, women are effected more by the problems arising particularly in squatter neighborhoods and they are in possession of better local and social capital, thus rendering them more effective in community mobilization. However, women are in need of being made aware of their potential in community activation. Wedel observes that only recently women have been making use of this potential by slowly rendering ineffective the traditional obstacles against their mobilization and voicing their demands for their assertion as active members of the community.

Progress on an individual level is attained by almost all girls that attend the activities at the ÇATOM, but this progress has not yet extended to the family or communal level. Similarly, the training provided to field workers has given them tremendous potential in

²⁹⁴ Heidi Wedel, *Siyaset ve Cinsiyet: İstanbul Gecekonduarında Kadınların Siyasal Katılımı [Politics and Gender: Women's Political Participation in Squatter Neighborhoods of Istanbul]* (Istanbul: Metis

their communication with the target group and has enabled them to comprehend and appreciate a more human centered approach to development issues. But what needs to be developed in the ÇATOMs among the field workers is their ability to mobilize the community, hence revealing the urgency of training of field workers on topics such as the techniques for community organization, supplemented with a case-oriented approach of actual stories of women's organization and the potential benefits. Some ÇATOMs organize small scale projects such as visits to nearby sites of interest, through the ÇATOM management committee where existent, and through the use of the ÇATOM's monthly budget. GAP personnel view this as 'seeds of mobilization', which might be important to a certain extent, but more profound collaborations of a collective type must be organized for a more deep-rooted grassroots mobilization.

Although some NGOs talk about grassroots development and participatory democracy, I was able to observe no cases of NGOs assisting women in the community to organize around a certain issue. For example, in Siirt ÇATOM where the garden around the building is left stranded with goats grazing on the little greenery in the surroundings, no efforts are made by the field worker or the participating girls and women in organizing the garden so that they have a small green space to share during the summer months. Such activities of gathering girls together for which concrete results are obtained, participants will understand what it means to work collectively. While helping to beautify their surroundings, they will simultaneously be learning to mobilize one another for a simple collective purpose.

Other similar collective projects for girls and women can easily be organized by field workers. More serious organizations can also be undertaken for the more essential needs of the community. Many communities in Southeastern Anatolia have inadequate social services such as water, roads, garbage collection, health and educational facilities. Young girls and women can be encouraged into activities promoting the provision of such services. Acknowledging the difficulties of the region, both at the social and communal level as well as the management level, training by NGOs on the more concrete means of community mobilization would perhaps bring the true spark to the functioning and sustainability of ÇATOMs in Southeastern Anatolia. Although training sessions are provided to field workers by NGOs other than the TKV, it is dubious as to whether this training trickles down to the instructors, the management committee, and eventually the participants.

Schuurman and van Naerssen,²⁹⁵ pointing to elements of emancipation by way of collective action, mention the possible role of communities in the prevention of segregation based on religion, race, gender, social status and territoriality. Some NGOs that I interviewed mentioned only indirectly the graveness of ethnic consciousness in the Southeastern Anatolia region. Especially noticed among the male youth in the region, during their visits to the Southeastern provinces, NGO representatives talked about their confrontation with attitudes of segregation in the form of ‘us’ versus ‘you’.²⁹⁶ Activities of some Istanbul-based NGOs operating in the Southeastern Anatolia region are seen by some locals as further assimilation projects of the Turkish state. In order to put an end

²⁹⁵ Schuurman and van Naerssen cited in Heidi Wedel, “Gecekondu Kadınlar ve Yerel Siyaset [Women in Squatter Neighborhoods and Local Politics],” *Değer*. 9:28 (Summer 1996), 46.

to tensions associated with ethnic identification in Southeastern Anatolia, two NGOs mentioned their idealized projects of conflict resolution in the region. As the tension reveals itself most strongly among male Kurdish youth in the region, one NGO talked about the importance of bringing together youth from the western and eastern parts of the country in an effort to resolve conflict through the building of tolerance for one another. “It is only through such confrontation that both sides will be able to ease the tension” argued one NGO member. The second NGO representative concretized this project with the suggestion of the use of sports events as a force of binding among the youth. It was argued that mixed football teams of Kurdish and Turkish youth in regional football tournaments would help ease the tension in the Southeastern Anatolia region. Although different from the direct objectives of the ÇATOMs, such projects of social harmony were encouraging as an indication of the capability of NGOs in producing ideas for possible projects of an innovative and sustainable nature, aiming at the core problems within society in Turkey.

8.3.3. Relations with the Top: Ensuring Sustainability

In terms of the problems with top level authorities, mainly the governors to which ÇATOMs are procedurally linked through protocols, ÇATOMs seem to be in the disadvantage of being a project of the GAP Administration. As clearly stated in chapter VI, local administrators in the Southeastern Anatolia region have negative perceptions of the GAP Administration. Little is understood of the coordinating position of the Administration as local state offices are only interested in institutions with financial

²⁹⁶ ‘Us’ meaning Kurds and ‘you’ meaning Turks.

resources. Otherwise, when officials from the GAP Administration make suggestions for cooperation, local administrators smear at the ‘pure talk’ of the GAP officials. Local administrators argue that they are very well aware of the problems in the region and all they need is funding to implement their projects.

Internal relations and organizational structures at the state level show staggering resemblances to those at the community level. Hierarchical modes of decision making and centralized structures of authority are prevalent within the state institutions. Turning to Putnam’s²⁹⁷ argument of the impracticality of constructive cooperation in the presence of vertical structures of authority and dependency, it makes sense that efforts of the GAP Administration at coordinating activities are met with no enthusiasm from the local state officials.

The main reason for this negative attitude towards the GAP Administration relates to its function as a coordinating agency as opposed to an implementing agency. There is confusion on the part of the governors and other provincial and county directors as to the functions of the GAP Administration. Given that fact that public institutions and their personnel are not used to the concept of cooperation, any new initiative is seen as a threat rather than an opportunity. The organizational structure, behavior and approach of bureaucracy in Turkey, which has always used vertical lines of authority and communication, is not in a position to understand the significance of horizontal lines of communication. Hence, any institution with this kind of an approach, regardless of

²⁹⁷ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*.

whether this is a public institution, is marginalized and left to struggle in its own circle of affairs.

Moreover, the same structure and web of relations are prevalent in terms of ÇATOM interactions with the local administrators. The patronizing attitude of governors towards ÇATOM field workers was evident in observations of their confrontations. The fact that ÇATOM field workers are young girls from the locality might very well be influential in the further belittling of the responsibilities and capabilities of the field workers and subsequently the ÇATOMs.

Unlike the possibility of ÇATOM improvement by NGOs through training for grassroots mobilization at the community level, NGO assistance in terms of relations with the local state seems a task that is nearly unattainable. Two factors are influential in this regard. One is the fact that NGOs themselves are not fully aware of their roles as intermediaries and the means through which they can satisfy these roles. Second is the internal deficiencies of NGOs in their own institutionalization and sustainability. Both discussions are elaborated in the following section.

ÇATOMs are established through a memorandum of understanding with the province or county governor but the ideal would be their full cooperation with the respective municipalities. Since municipalities are elected offices, one would assume their responsiveness to their respective community. Some NGOs have noted of their occasional collaboration with responsive and interested municipal authorities while merely one NGO stated their intentional effort at collaborating with municipalities as an

indication of civil initiation from the grassroots. In most cases, however, NGOs did not distinguish between cooperation with local governorates and municipalities.

Collaboration at the state level was mainly arbitrary and one based on convenience rather than a conscious decision to mobilize the grassroots. It seems as if the diversion of relations and communications with governors to initiation from municipalities will greatly help establish a more civil character for the ÇATOMs. If a municipality requests the establishment of a ÇATOM in a given locality, this can be taken as an indication of the readiness to support women's organization in that locality. Through this kind of an initiation, funds from the municipality can also be secured to an extent. If ÇATOMs were encouraged in locations where there is full support from the municipality, this would guarantee the civic sustainability of the centers.

While the GAP Administration stressed ÇATOM's involvement with province governors, the only example that NGOs provided of support from the municipality was the ÇATOM in the Yeşildere municipality of Gaziantep where there was a demand and full support from the authorities. One NGO defined the mayor of Yeşildere as a truly 'civil societal person' [*sivil toplumcu* in Turkish]. Otherwise, if the municipality is uninterested, then even if a ÇATOM is established in a locality, sustainable cooperation with the municipality will most probably not be maintained, hence resulting in continued dependency on governorates. This is especially the case in a region where vertical lines of power and patriarchal structures are even more established than those in other parts of the country.

Despite the idealizations above, however, as one NGO representative mentioned, municipalities in Turkey do not undertake their appointed responsibilities and in most cases are not in fact responsive at all to their electors. Although they come to office through the votes of the electors, there is not an established system in which elected administrators work in correspondence to the needs of the community. Relations are again maintained through vertical lines of power, much as an extension of the same situation within the community. One NGO representative in the region even defined the elected authorities as resorting to ‘dirty politics’, thus choosing to refrain from municipal authorities.

On the other hand, given the role of ÇATOMs as an alternative to the existing models of public institutions, their survival is essential for the purposes of competition and their role in the increasing of quality of other institutions with similar objectives. Given the negativity on the part of the governorate as well as provincial and county directorates, the positive effects of the ÇATOMs on the functioning of Public Training Centers are devalued and competition results in tension among institutions. If ÇATOMs had a municipal character rather than the character of a public institution, the existing competition might have created greater avenues for the constructive outcomes of this competition.

In the current organizational structure of the ÇATOMs, governors have full control over the existence and survival of ÇATOMs. In such a situation, the better field workers are at encouraging participation and creating competition, the more they risk being closed down by the governor. Since most governors regard ÇATOMs as nothing but a waste of

public resources, they tend to view hard working ÇATOM field workers as potential instructors in public institutions. This risks the closing down of the ÇATOM and an end to the competition created by these centers, thus putting an end to the potential of ÇATOMs in increasing the effectiveness and performance of state institutions.

The reasons behind the ineffectiveness of services provided by public institutions are partly political. Political interests in the ineffective organization of public institutions and services, and the inability of others to voice their discontent of this arrangement both lead to the exacerbation of the problem. The thesis has already stressed the underlying behavioral factors contributing to the distortion of incentives for better performance and effectiveness at the state level. Of these necessary incentives, World Bank experts emphasize the importance of ‘greater competitive pressure’ among public institutions and ‘increased citizen voice and partnership’ for a better outcome in terms of the provision of social services and eventual development.²⁹⁸ The ÇATOMs, as clearly seen, pose an incredible potential in undertaking both incentives for the creation of more effectively working state institutions, namely greater competition and increased local grassroots visibility.

8.3.4. NGO-GAP Relations and Deficiencies of NGOs

Even though the GAP Administration does have a more progressive and up-to-date approach to development issues, implementations, in most cases, do not go further than

²⁹⁸ *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

what is written on paper. This is due to three main reasons. One is the criticism that NGOs point out about the GAP Administration, which is the importance they attach to the image they pose to the outside. The Administration spends large amounts of funding for the promotion of the region and the GAP project abroad through numerous publications. If, NGOs claim, more attention was paid to the internal development of the Administration, projects would be carried out more successfully. Both Administration personnel and NGO staff acknowledge the fact that the GAP authorities give importance to personal and departmental development through attendance in international seminars and a variety of training programs abroad. In that sense, Administration employees are up-to-date on the latest developments in their fields. However, they are viewed as weak in the further internalization of this new knowledge and know-how, as well as the reflection of expertise and policies into the field.

Second is the influence of the State Ministers responsible for the Southeastern Anatolia region. Depending on the Minister, ÇATOMs have become tools of manipulation of these authorities, as the Minister has decided on the construction of ÇATOM buildings, their locations, and the personnel to be employed in these buildings. This, clearly, renders ÇATOMs far from civic initiation at the outset. The third reason is the fact that there is tremendous criticism of the GAP Administration on the part of province and some county governors in Southeastern Anatolia. These negative feelings naturally prevent a fruitful cooperation between ÇATOMs and the governors, as ÇATOMs are regarded merely as a waste of public resources. Governors made no difference between ÇATOMs and Community Centers or Public Training Centers, thus unaware of the ‘civil’ character of ÇATOMs as emphasized by the GAP Administration. In most cases,

governors reluctantly support ÇATOM activities. Even though all governors that I interviewed were highly satisfied with the ÇATOM field workers, the only problems they had were with the GAP Administration itself. Because of this reaction to the Administration, field workers mostly suffered in terms of project implementation.

Nevertheless, the approach of the GAP Administration towards issues of development is highly progressive and there is a potential environment for NGO cooperation. Both the personnel of the GAP Administration and NGOs that are acquainted with GAP officials acknowledge the fact that the top administration of the GAP is highly welcoming of NGO initiatives and collaborations. Some NGOs, most notably *Anne-Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı*, have noted the insistence of the GAP Administration for their involvement in ÇATOMs. However, it is interesting to note that while NGOs are easily critical of the GAP Administration, they are not equally involved in the creation of systematic solutions to the problems that they so easily voice. They are well aware of the impediments to greater success in the region through the ÇATOMs, but are not motivated to improve the situation, either through more intense involvement with the target group or through an exchange of knowledge and know-how in the field of gender, participation and development. They do not make the effort to ameliorate their own relations with the Administration, help establish better communications among institutions, and get into closer, horizontal relations with their target group. This was partially due to the vertical structure of relations prevalent in NGOs themselves, albeit to a lesser extent, as observed within the community as well as the state institutions.

An NGO noted of the problems faced in terms of cooperation with the GAP Administration for the training of field workers. *Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı*, similar to its women's empowerment projects in the outskirts of Istanbul, wanted to train the field workers of the ÇATOMs in the essentials of mobilization at the grassroots level. However, they wanted the GAP Administration to supply a part of the funding for the project. While KEDV would be providing the costs of training and other related expenses, they requested the GAP Administration to supply the traveling and accommodation costs in Istanbul, where the training would take place. Due to disagreement on the conditions of cooperation, the project was not realized, although meetings were still ongoing at the time of study. While NGO representatives voice their dissatisfaction with difficulties of receiving no assistance from the GAP Administration in the operational costs of project implementation in the ÇATOMs, GAP personnel equally complain of NGOs demanding too much from the Administration in terms of assistance in funding. GAP representatives complain of NGOs seeing the Administration as the 'GAP Bank'. Both NGOs and GAP personnel have problems in setting the terms of reference for what they call 'partnership'.

Inadequate funding is indicated as another great impediment to such projects, but it is clear from organizations such as the *Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı* that there are a variety of ways for creative fund-raising. TEGV has succeeded in raising enough funds to construct its numerous educational facilities and employ 170 full-time personnel all over the country. The raising of capital for the construction of these units and the maintenance of their personnel involves a certain degree of institutionalization and professionalization. Most NGOs working with the ÇATOMs in this region lack the

institutional prerequisites for systematic involvement in the region and the creation of productive ideas and eventual sustainable projects.

It is interesting to observe that all NGOs that are relatively more institutionalized are those that are involved in the field of education. Fund-raising for the benefit of children and for the provision of scholarships seems to be a relatively easier task compared to, say, the capacity building of local administrations and municipalities or the mobilization of women in the Southeast. More concrete projects such as scholarships and target groups such as children are no doubt easier to promote in terms of fund-raising, but it is clear that some NGOs possess the techniques and means of fund-raising. Plenty of events such as concerts and festivals are organized by NGOs for purposes of fund-raising.

There is the other issue of being geographically far from the target group. NGOs in Istanbul and Ankara are involved in ÇATOMs with no representation in the region. All activities are planned and implemented from the headquarters, which creates a distance from the target group. In women's empowerment projects where the NGO is physically close to the target group, such as KEDV's projects in the suburban districts of Istanbul, successful results are obtained. NGOs with the sufficient capacity and funding are able to successfully mobilize women into becoming empowered individuals and members of their community. This physical and sometimes psychological distance creates barriers between NGOs and the young girls and women in the region. This is, of course, partially the result of discouraging regulations pertaining to NGOs particularly operating in Southeastern Turkey, where there is still emergency rule.

Despite this distance, Ana K lt r has been able to systematically carry out Women’s Day celebrations in the  ATOMs for the past 5-6 years. Although problems have arisen in the last year, both in the publication of their bulletin and the last women’s day festival event, the organization has managed to carry out these activities with only a small number of staff. Given their reluctance for systematic fund-raising, their projects in the region with the  ATOMs have unfortunately come to a halt. Examples such as these are discouraging for other NGOs who are trying to become active with and for the women in the region. It is difficult to talk about the sustainability of projects when the sustainability of NGOs themselves is questionable. It is nearly impossible for an NGO to think long-term and concentrate on the sustainability of its activities when its own organizational existence and sustainability is under threat. This threat is both an internal threat including the lack of funding and the level of institutionalization as well as an external threat in terms of obstacles presented by the laws and regulations relating to NGOs in Turkey.

Turning back to NGOs within the  ATOM project, even TKV, which is considered the most systematic and established NGO in the  ATOMs, deals only with the training of field workers, acting solely like an organization of technical innovation. Even though TKV has a holistic approach to development and uses professional techniques in the field, the organization is not concerned with the actual mobilization of the target group. Although training is provided in a participatory manner, the knowledge transferred still remains highly theoretical as little practical examples are provided. No simulations and concrete examples of success stories are provided to enhance results at the grassroots

level. The training is too shallow and abstract for it to be converted into anything sustainable at the grassroots.

8.4. NGOs as the Link between State and Society?

On a rhetorical level, NGOs in Turkey seem to be contributing to the promotion and maintenance of a world culture which represents humanity. However, when taken with respect to their operations of social development in the field and their relations with the state, NGOs in Turkey, to a large extent, merely help propagate the official national culture. Similar to the concerns of the Turkish state, they believe that any assertions of cultural diversity is a threat to the unity of the Turkish nation-state. Although the organizational structure of NGOs in Turkey seem to be less bureaucratic and more informal than traditional organizational structures in Turkey, their approaches to decision making are nevertheless hierarchical.

It has been interesting to observe that, despite flaws in project planning and implementation, the GAP Administration is more embracing of a global culture. As clearly seen in the analyses above, the partial successes that are attained through ÇATOMs are in fact not the result of NGO involvement, but largely the result of efforts of the GAP Administration at local participation and gender equality in Southeastern Turkey. In carrying out field assessments and research among the target group, it is GAP policy that women and young girls in the ÇATOMs be given the freedom and opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongues. Even though the GAP

Administration makes no further assertions on the importance of the maintenance of local culture for a human-centered and participatory development, the authorities are nevertheless willing to accept the fact that there are non-Turkish minorities in the region and make the efforts to include them into the phases of project planning and implementation. This development policy and approach is progressive to the extent that other state administrators in the region explicitly note their negativities and criticisms of the GAP Administration.

State-funded Community Centers and ÇATOMs are only premises in which NGOs undertake development activity, consisting mainly of relief assistance. Longer term projects aiming at grassroots mobilization and community organization on the one hand, and the improvement of the efficiency of the state structure on the other are not concerns of NGOs in Turkey. Hence, these organizations make only small scale contributions towards the move to good governance in the country. Such ‘indifference’ of NGOs is regarded as the lack of a ‘democratic culture’²⁹⁹ in Turkey, revealing itself in hierarchical power relations from the local community level to the level of state institutions. Hence, it is only to the degree that such grounds are laid and directed by public policies and practice that NGOs in Turkey are able to function as mobilizers of a global culture. In other words, mainly due to their institutional resources and access to greater funds through intergovernmental development agencies such as the UN agencies and the World Bank, it is in fact state policies that open the doors for the further globalization of civil society in Turkey.

In that sense, a global development policy is realized in Turkey with the initiation and leadership of state authorities. Although NGOs in Turkey are strongly influenced by elements of a global development policy, it is only after concrete steps taken by the Turkish state in that regard that these organizations can assert specific development policies of a global nature. Hence, the changes taking place with respect to state policies and their institutions are not mobilized by NGOs at the national level, but by other actors at the global level. Although the new global politics predicts that states no longer have the monopoly on the governing of society and the setting of policies, it is interesting to observe that the Turkish state still has the monopoly on the setting of development policies in relation to civil society at the national level. The Turkish state strictly determines the activities of civil society organizations and the limits of good governance in Turkey. This is partly the result of the lack of institutionalization and professionalization on the part of NGOs in Turkey.

In conclusion, the Turkish state, and specifically the GAP Administration as the focus of the thesis, is being transformed more by the reflections of a global civil society rather than by civil society groups at the national level. In that sense, NGOs at the national level are not in a position to reconcile the state with society in Turkey. On the contrary, the Turkish state's direct interactions with a new global politics as shaped by numerous actors at the global level, including international NGOs and multilateral

²⁹⁹ *Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Gelişme Sürecinde Demokratik Örgütlenme ve Hukuki Düzenlemeler [Democratic Organization and Legal Arrangements in the Process of Economic and Social Progress]* (Istanbul: Friedrich Ebert Vakfı, 1993).

development aid agencies, brings about its transformation; more so than NGOs at the national level.

CHAPTER IX:

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of both the external forces of global culture and their internal reflections in Turkey were highly prevalent in the current study. With the involvement and encouragement of NGOs, a gender balanced and sustainable human development is strived in the Southeastern Anatolia Project through the ÇATOMs, as the locus of activity for projects designed for and with women in the region. Global factors and their local reflections intermingled with forces at the national level constitute the interesting dynamics of relations in terms of NGOs, their target group and the state in Turkey. The Turkish state, while preoccupied with the management of its own domestic affairs, is progressively influenced by international pressures. Such is the case for the GAP Administration's adoption of the policy of 'sustainable human development' for the closing of the gender gap in the Southeastern Anatolia region.

Despite the stronghold of official ideology as inherited from the early years of the republic, GAP administrators are relatively more flexible in their outlook on the social structure and culture in Southeastern Anatolia. They are also critical of the traditional

top-down approaches of Turkish developmentalists, speaking freely of the Kurdish population in the region as well as the need to listen and to directly involve the target group in the activities undertaken in the ÇATOMs. Thus, albeit not overtly promoting these values, the social development programs of the GAP project include a regional development strategy that does not place under threat the dissolution of local cultural expressions and the collective identity in the region. This, on the other hand, is an arduous task as there are obstacles to this kind of an alternative approach to development. The Turkish armed forces are strict in their persistence of the non-recognition of a cultural identity different from the unitary nation of the Turks. However, the approach of participatory development and the task of NGOs active in the region is somewhat facilitated with the assistance received from international development aid agencies, a force which the Turkish state, like many other developing states, finds hard to contravene.

Similarly, I observed that NGOs in Turkey are quick to adopt the principles and approaches of a global development policy. The personnel of both the GAP Administration and NGOs have international contacts in terms of training and conferences, and are thus updated on the latest developments in their fields of operation. These global processes combined with the inheritance of the Ottoman-Turkish social and political culture display community-NGO and NGO-state relations highly peculiar to Turkey.

During the entire history of the Ottoman Empire, the state was the sole source of authority and was keen on keeping its power and privileges. Even in a country in which

Islam had such a strong hold, the state was the sole decision maker on the route to be taken concerning development. Considering the Empire's infatuation with the ways of the West, the ruling elite did not let Islam get in the way of Westernization. It is clear that NGOs in Turkey have followed a similar policy of adapting to the ways of the globe. The rhetoric of a globalized alternative development was present in some of the NGOs contacted for the purposes of the current study. Comments on adopted development approaches included 'local participation', working at and with the 'grassroots', 'empowerment', 'governance', multiculturalism', and 'sustainability', among many others. It is clear that global development policy, through intervention, legitimizes the discourse and application of identity politics and a politics of difference. The aim is an increase in the quality of life through the establishment of development efforts on the foundations of culture and thus the creation of multicultural societies as those that are evolving in countries of the West. This is evident from the growth in the numbers of local scale projects being carried out through the participation and empowerment of the beneficiaries, thus giving them the chance to decide on the direction of their own transformation.

However, despite the use of such fancy words pertaining to a global development policy, none of the NGOs within the scope of the current study were in fact in the process of implementation of such approaches in the field. It was as if these concepts had been imported and were symbolically there, as I observed no revelations of such approaches in actual project implementation. The main reasons behind this deficiency were observed as the lack of institutionalization and professionalization at the NGO level. Although some sporadic efforts are made at successful projects, inconsistencies in

funding as well as organizational structures impede the establishment of professional and sustainable field applications and cooperation with other NGOs as well as related state institutions. For instance, despite the influence of global social policies and the adoption of new perspectives of development for the GAP project, the design of the ÇATOM project, in actuality, evolved in quite a conventional manner. It was only by coincidence that the design of the ÇATOM centers reached their final structure, including the assignment of local field workers to be trained as local development specialists. The ÇATOM was initially designed as yet another community center of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency.

Formed as part of the women's movement in Turkey, spiritual feminism was the drive behind the establishment of one of the NGOs that I interviewed. In the words of the head founder, the organization aimed at the establishment of a bridge between the women-centered cultures of ancient Anatolia and the culture of patriarchy as presently experienced by women in the country. The aim was the building of capacity from the power inherent in this ancient culture. Thus, the desired outcome for women's development was "a synthesis and fusion of the traditional and the local with the current and the modern". Despite such a hybrid philosophy and prescription for women's development, no specific projects had been implemented by the respective NGO that pragmatized this approach. Hence, this philosophy remains as a mere inspiration for women's rights advocacy rather than the foundations for an actual working tool.

Similarly, except for one NGO that mentioned the word 'multiculturalism', none of the others referred to the existence of a diversity of particular cultures in the Southeast. The one NGO that did mention the concept, however, clearly directed no efforts to that cause

in its projects. Some civil society organizations present at an NGO symposium in Istanbul also mentioned the global move towards multiculturalism, but no discussions were made of its possible reflections at home and in the field.

This is in lines with the observation of NGO definitions of politics. All the NGO representatives that I interviewed referred to politics in the narrow definition of the concept, confining it to party politics. Even though involvement in politics was regarded as crucial for the society in Turkey, it was only through the involvement of party politics that the concept was discussed. Thus, NGOs were cautious to state their abstinence from ‘politics’ as conventionally defined. Despite the global trend of a blurring of boundaries between the political and the nonpolitical, Turkish NGOs were distinct in their maintenance of this boundary. This was possibly due to the highly political context of the discussions revolving around NGO activity in the country. Any statement regarded as overtly political draws sharp attention to the survival of that NGO. Hence, as strategies of survival, NGOs prefer to refrain from political judgments.

This was the partial explanation behind the nationalist stance of several NGOs. Some NGOs specifically stated their caution in being ‘unbiased’ which they made in reaction to statements that challenged the official policies and regulations of the Turkish state. Even an Istanbul-based NGO with a lobby character acknowledged but refrained from advocating the diverse cultures and identities of its target group in the Southeast. The most accommodating were the comments of the Diyarbakır-based advocacy NGO working specifically for Kurdish women’s empowerment in the region: “We are women with different ethnic identities but we all think as citizens of the Turkish republic.”

Members of the latter NGO confirmed the prejudices of the state in the Southeast with respect to nongovernmental activity, but assured that such prejudices and other inconveniences were changing with the positive effects of the country's integration process into the European Union. It was thus clear that, despite reservations, a claim for cultural difference was the most proudly made by the one local NGO that I contacted, as opposed to NGOs based outside the region but working for the people in the region.

Another observation in lines with the proceeding argument is the loaded development terminology in Turkey. Even though NGOs keep track of the activities of the voluntary sector on the international scale, and are acquainted with the updated terminologies in their fields of operation, their definitions of the respective concepts are highly contextual. They are sometimes defined through the use of Kemalist rhetoric, and the adaptations of the relevant terms are in line with the current social, cultural and political realities in Turkey. In practice, 'local participation', for instance, did not connote working with and for the local community, or the word 'grassroots' did not imply an activism from the bottom but an assistance from the top, thus hinting at the traditional social interactions based on vertical power relations and hierarchy. In one case, the concept of 'grassroots' was used to simply denote 'fieldwork'.

There are the extreme cases of this phenomenon in which development is defined both rhetorically and pragmatically along the lines of republican epistemology. The standpoint of such NGOs were strictly Kemalist and had no intentions of losing anything from their republican roots and attachments of 'educating the masses' and elevating them from their ignorance. These NGOs were almost more concerned about the

educating of people to act as carriers and perpetuators of Atatürk's principles and reforms rather than the provision of social welfare for the needy. The positioning of such NGOs was very similar to that of the state which is centered around the maintenance and strengthening of the nation-state in the determination of policies in all fields, including social development. Hence, in this respect, such NGOs are nothing but the mere extensions of the Turkish state, both in practice and rhetoric.

As they are unable to pragmatize the principles of global development, NGOs in Turkey act mainly as assistant providers of public services, as they are so viewed by the state. NGOs mainly function to fill in the roles not covered by ineffective state projects and programs, hence acting as duplicators of state programs and ideologies. Only one NGO that I interviewed showed qualities of a systematic collaborative interaction with state institutions, in which the quality of state programs were being improved with the innovative nature and assistance of the respective NGO. As a result of this interaction between the NGO and the related state officials, public administrators were being trained by NGO staff. This slightly more egalitarian relationship between the NGO and respective state officials was undertaken by the NGO in an apprehensive manner, showing signs of insecurity. My questions on the verification of this kind of an interaction was met with precaution by the NGO representative as she bashfully reminded me that the NGO had no intentions of taking over the responsibilities of the respective state institution. I did not observe NGO-state relations of a more ideal nature in which state institutions seek the representation of NGOs on all aspects of government policies and programs. In that respect, there is a long path to yet be covered by NGOs in Turkey.

What I did observe, however, and which I regard as an accomplishment of the ÇATOM project is the potential of these women's empowerment centers in the increasing of the effectiveness of related state institutions. In addition to the raising of awareness among certain public administrators in the locality, ÇATOMs displayed qualities of raising the standards of Public Training Centers and Community Centers in the region with similar objectives to the ÇATOMs. There was even an incident in which many observers noted that the ÇATOM had set a model for a larger community development project in a province of the Southeast. This positive effect of the ÇATOMs, however, is undertaken in an atmosphere of severe tension and negativity. The intense competition felt by local state institutions in respective localities is such that it also blocks all possible interactions for healthy and systematic cooperation with ÇATOMs. The positive effects of the ÇATOM in terms of increasing the effectiveness of local state institutions in terms of their responsiveness to the needs of the community is nevertheless one of the most important outcomes of the ÇATOM project. In conclusion, even though the main objective of ÇATOMs is the empowerment of women within the framework of sustainable human development and the building of local women's resources and capacity, the current study revealed the impact of the project on other stakeholders, namely the functioning and effectiveness of local state institutions.

What is interesting here, however, is the trivial impact of NGOs on the specific positive effects of the ÇATOM project. In the case of social development in Southeastern Anatolia, NGOs are unable to advocate the principles of global civil society and hence the demands and voices of the local community unless such an approach is tolerated by

authorities and regulations of the state. The policies and practice of the GAP Administration, exceedingly different from those of other state administrations and the armed forces in Turkey, in fact, take the lead in acting as a mirror to developments of global culture. Only after the further adaptations of such development approaches by state authorities and the relaxation of regulation restricting the activities of civil society will NGOs be able to contribute to and help sustain a global culture in Turkey. In that sense, NGOs in Turkey are unable to provide the link between state authorities and the local community.

Similar to the modernizers of the republic, NGOs use merely the rhetoric of a global social and development policy, as practices of alternative development approaches are not implemented in the field. The Ottoman-Turkish heritage of social and political culture is prevalent in all levels of society. Vertical relations of authority and dependency is a characterization both of the local community in which the ÇATOMs operate as well as the macro level of state structures and institutions. This, naturally, also has its effects on the organizational structure of NGOs in Turkey and the decision making processes within these institutions. Although these are characteristic of NGOs all over the country, they are particularly important as impediments to NGO activity in Southeastern Turkey.

Given the potential loss of the stronghold of nationalist ideologies and hierarchical decision making structures within the Turkish state and bureaucracy, development initiatives in the GAP region through an international compliance to the requirements of a global sustainable human development, and the relaxation of military presence and

subsequent prejudices in the region pose tremendous opportunities for the further involvement of NGOs in initiatives such as the ÇATOM project. Such developments and changes in the country and particularly in the Southeastern Anatolia region create remarkable avenues for the existence and operation of Southeastern NGOs that are culturally sensitive, gender aware, and participatory. Although there is currently little activity with respect to genuine grassroots initiatives in the Southeast, the positive changes taking place on a global scale generate their share of reflections at the local scale in Southeastern Anatolia. This was clear in the words of the representative of the local women's NGO in Diyarbakır: "Civil societal activity in the Southeast is rare and the NGOs that manage to exist are highly politicized. We are involved specifically in feminist politics, therefore we confront less obstacles compared to local NGOs working on issues of human rights. Even though we have always been legal and open, we used to confront tremendous problems in the region. But since the last 3-4 years Turkey is rapidly changing. We really feel the effect of the European Union integration process. We feel it immensely. There is an incredible relaxation in the region during these last several years. Prejudices in the region are changing and we are full of hope."

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