Imperceptible Multitude: Transformation of Feminist Subjectivities and Political Practices in Contemporary Turkey

by

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and Political Practices in Contemporary Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Imperceptible Multitude: Transformation of Feminist Subjectivities and Political Practices in Contemporary Turkey.

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This dissertation examines the transformations in feminist politics and the forms of subjectivities in the post-2000s period in Turkey. It raises the question of what explains the termination of independent feminist organizations in Turkey, despite the apparent increase in the number of women+ participating in feminist night marches and the remarkable diffusion of feminist ideas to everyday life. It is based on a mixed-method study with a combination of qualitative and quantitative research with women+ taking part in the feminist night march in Istanbul. The qualitative part of the research includes in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of the founding journals in feminist history, while the quantitative part of the research includes an extensive survey of participant in the Feminist Night March in İstanbul. The dissertation argues that the feminist movement expands beyond the confines of a narrow activist circle and emerges as a broad, pluralistic, decentralized grassroots movement. This brings with it a change in class and spatial composition of the movement. While the class composition of the

movement changed from the middle and upper-middle class to the lower classes and towards precarious and cognitive labor, the movement tended to expand spatially from city centers to peripheries and from middle-aged to younger generations. It argues that while the movement manifests itself in the form of street protests, marches, and social media campaigns at some critical moments, it is predominantly evolving towards a prefigurative politics that prioritizes everyday life in the form of rhizomatic networks.

Keywords: feminist night march, feminist politics, feminist subjectivities, everyday life, decentralization, grassroots feminism, multitude, rhizomatic networks, digital feminism.

ÖZETÇE

Algılanamayan Çokluk: Günümüz Türkiye'sinde Feminist Öznelliklerin ve Politik Pratiklerin Dönüşümü

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Sosyoloji, Doktora, Temmuz, 2022

Bu tez Türkiye'de 2000 sonrası dönemde feminist politikanın ve öznellik biçimlerinin dönüşümü inceliyor. Tez, feminist gece yürüyüşlerine katılan kadın+ sayısındaki belirgin artışa ve feminist fikirlerin gündelik yaşama doğru giderek daha fazla yayılmasına rağmen, Türkiye'deki bağımsız feminist örgütlerin kapanmasını nasıl açıklanabilir sorusunu ortaya koyuyor. Tez, İstanbul'da feminist gece yürüyüşüne katılan kadınlar+ ile nitel ve nicel araştırmaların bir arada kullanıldığı karma araştırma yöntemine dayanıyor. Araştırmanın nitel kısmı, derinlemesine görüşmeler, katılımcı gözlem ve feminist tarihteki kurucu dergilerin içerik analizini içeren etnografik araştırmaya dayanırken, araştırmanın nicel kısmı İstanbul'da Feminist Gece Yürüyüşü 'ne katılanları içeren kapsamlı bir ankete dayanmaktadır. Bu tezde feminist hareketin dar bir aktivist çevrenin sınırlarının ötesine geçip daha çoğulcu, merkezsiz bir taban hareketi olarak belirmeye başladığını iddia ediyorum. Bu ise, hareketin sınıf, demografik ve mekansal bileşiminde anlamlı bir değişimi beraberinde getiriyor. Hareketin sınıf bileşimi orta ve üst-orta sınıftan alt sınıflara güvencesiz ve bilişsel emeğe doğru değişirken, hareket mekansal olarak şehir merkezlerinden şehrin çeperlerine doğru, yaş dağılımı olarak ise orta yaşlardan daha genç kuşaklara doğru bir genişleme eğilimi gösteriyor. Bu bağlamda tez,

bazı kritik anlarda sokak protestoları, yürüyüşler ve sosyal medya kampanyaları şeklinde kendini gösterirken, hareket ağırlıklı olarak gündelik hayatı ön planda tutan prefigüratif bir siyasete doğru evirildiğini iddia ediyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminist Gece Yürüyüşü, Feminist Politika, Feminist Öznellik, Gündelik Hayat, Merkezsizleşme, Çokluk, Kök-sap Ağlar, Dijital Feminizm

TEŞEKKÜR

Bu tez pandemi döneminde hepimizin evlerine kapanmak zorunda kaldığı, aynı anda politik ve ekonomik zorluklarla cebelleştiğimiz bir dönemde yazıldı. Bugünden baktığımda, bu tezi yazmamı sağlayacak kudreti her şeye rağmen nasıl bulabildim sorusunu sorarken buluyorum kendimi. Elbette tek başıma olmadı. Doktora tezimin son halini almasına doğrudan ve dolaylı katkı sağlayan koca bir kalabalık var bana eşlik eden. Bütün entelektüel, politik ufkumun şekillenmesine katkı sağlayan, hayata tutunacak kudreti veren, hep orada olduğunu bildiğim koca bir kalabalık… Bu kalabalığı oluşturan herkese teşekkürü borç bilirim.

Öncelikle tez danışmanın **Prof. Dr. Fatoş Gökşen**'e en içten teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim. Tezime danışmanlık yapmayı kabul ettiği andan tezimi bitirdiğim ana tüm süreçte ihtiyaç duyduğum her türlü desteği bana sunduğu için kendisine minnettarım. Uzun yıllara dayalı akademik yetkinliği ile kendisi benim için sadece bir tez danışmanı olmadı, takdiri, sevgisi ve şefkati ile bana devam edebilecek gücü veren bir büyüğüm oldu. Bu kadar zorlu bir yolu varlığınız yanı başımda hissetmeden bitiremezdim.

Prof. Dr. Begüm Özden Fırat ile tanıştığımdan beri yolumuz hem akademik hem de politik ortamlarda kesişiyor. Tez izleme komitemde yer almayı kabul ederek bu bir aradalığa bir ilmek daha attı. Politik ideallerimle akademik ideallerim arasındaki makası olabildiğince kapalı tutmak konusunda ilham aldığım nadir insanlardan birisi. Tez izleme

buluşmalarımızda yaptığı yorumlarla tezime çok değerli katkılar sunduğu için kendisine en içten teşekkürümü iletmek isterim. Yine tez izleme komite üyem **Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Başak Can Bulut**'a en içten teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim. Hem Doktora ders dönemimde kendisinden aldığım derslerden, hem de tez izleme buluşmalarında yaptığı katkılardan çok şey öğrendim. Yine **Prof. Dr. Demet Lüküslü** ve **Doç. Dr. Ayşe Zeynep Akalın Özdemir'** e hem tez jürimde olmayı kabul ettikleri hem de savunmamda yaptıkları yorumlarla tezime katkı sundukları için kendilerine teşekkürü borç bilirim.

Saha araştırmama katılan bütün kadınlara en içten teşekkürlerimi iletmek istiyorum. Deneyimlerini beninle uzun uzun paylaşan, duygularının en çetrefilli yanlarını bana açmakta beis görmeyen genç feminist militanlara minnettarım. "Umutsuzluğa kapıldığımda" hâlâ onlarla görüşmelerimizi hatırlıyor ve her şeye rağmen devam edebilecek gücü onlar sayesinde buluyorum.

Meslektaşım, amcam, arkadaşım, yoldaşım **Bülent Küçük'e** en içten teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim. Kendisi neredeyse bütün yaşam serüvenime tanıklık etti. Basitçe bir dışarıdan izleme hali değildi bu. Hep yanı başımda oldu. Doktora tezimi okuyunca ne düşüneceğini ne yorum yapacağını en çok merak ettim insanlardan birisiydi. Yaptığı yorumlardan sonra savunmayı geçmiş kadar mutlu olduğumu hatırlıyorum. Yorumları, önerileri, uzun birlikte yaptığımız uzun sohbetlerimiz tezimin içerik olarak çok daha zenginleşmesine katkı sundu. Ne kadar teşekkür etsem azdır.

Newal Tan ve Murat Bayramoğlu'na teşekkürlerimi bir borç bilirim. Bütün zorlu yolumu onlarla yürüdüm. Onların evi tezimi yazdığım ikinci evim oldu. Her yeni aşamayı ilk onlara anlattım. Dostluğun koşulsuz sevgisini şefkatini ve desteğini benden hiç esirgemediler. Newo ile dostluğumuz çok daha gerilere gidiyor. Çok yoğun, derin, zorlu ve bir o kadar güzel bir dostluk…. Başıma gelen her güzel şeyde benim kadar

sevinen, takdirini benden hiç esirgemeyen, beni hep değerli hissettiren, sevgi dolu, neşe saçan dostuma, kızkardeşime, yoldaşıma en içten teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim.

Ilgın Erdem'e en içten teşekkürlerimi iletmek istiyorum. Tezimi bitirmeye koyulduğum son düzlükte, tezimden başka bir şey düşünemez hale geldiğim en zor evresinde tanışıklığımız artık dostluğa evrilmişti Ilgın'la. Farklı kıtalarda da olsak konuşmadığımız, yazışmadığımız tek bir günümüz bile geçmedi o dönemde. Geç kalmış bir arkadaşlığın açığını telafi eder gibiydik…Sohbetlerimizin önemli bir kısmı tezim ve onu etrafında şekillen duygular üzerine oluyordu. Yazdıklarımı her okuduğunda sonrasında uzun ucun sohbetlerimiz oluyordu. O sohbetlerin her biri önce yazdıklarım üzerinden ilerliyor, sonra birbirimizi daha derinden tanıyabildiğimiz derin sohbetlere dönüşüyordu. Benzer düşündüğümüzü fark ettiğimiz her noktada heyecanlanıyor, yeni başlayan dostluğun zamanla daha da pekişeceğine olan inancımız artıyordu. Nitekim öyle de oldu. Ilgın aklıyla, duruşu ile hep dost kalmak isteyeceğim biri oldu benim için.

Demet Bolat'a, kadim dostuma, yoldaşıma teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim. Onun aklı, duruşu, önerileri benim için hep çok kıymetli oldu. Üniversiteden mezun olduktan sonra farklı şehirlerde yaşamaya başladıysak da yollarımız hiç ayrılmadı. Benzer konulara heyecan duyduk, aynı feminist platformlarda buluştuk, aynı akademik yolu yürüdük. Birlikte büyüdük bir nevi. Doktora tezi yazmanın zorluğunu birlikte deneyimledik. Zorlandığımda, işin içinden çıkamayacağımı düşündüğüm tez aşamalarımda ilk aramak istediğim insanlardan birisi oldu benim Demet. Hep dostum olarak kalacağından çok eminim…

Kürşad'a, sevgilime, teşekkür etmek ona hissettiğim minnettarlık duygumu ifade etmeme yetmiyor. Kürşad tezimde bana yardım eden, destek veren biri olmadı. Onu tezimin organik bir parçası olarak görüyorum. O yüzden teşekkür etmek onu dışarlıklı konumu pekiştirmesinden çekiniyorum. Birlikte başardık demek geliyor içimden. Tez

konumu seçimimden tez savunmama kadar her bir adımımı ilk onunla konuştum. Tezim üzerine konuşmadığımız tek bir günümüz bile olmadı. Her sohbetimiz bana yeni ufuklar açıyordu. En sıradan olanında bile not defterim elimden düşmedi. Sadece entelektüel ve editoryal bir katkı değildi yaptığı. Kaygım ile baş edemediğim, devam edebilecek gücü bulamadığım, geceleri uyuyamadığım zamanlarım oldu. Bütün hepsinde onun desteği, sevgisi beni ayakta tuttu. Pandeminin en güzel haliydi onunla aynı evde yaşamak. Sevgilim olduğu için kendimi çok şanslı hissediyorum. Bir de **Rüya** vardı yanımızda. Haftanın tamamını değilse bile yarısını onunla geçirdim. En stresli hallerime tanıklı etti. Elinden çok bir şey gelmeyeceğinin o da farkındaydı ama ne yapabildiyse, neye gücü yetiyse onu yaptı. Benimle birlikte endişelendi, sevindi, odasını ben daha iyi çalışabileyim diye hazırladı. Tez savunma günümü dört gözle bekledi. Çünkü hayatımda tez yazma telaşımın olmadığı birlikte uzun vakit geçirebildiğimiz, tatil yapabildiğimiz günlerin gelmesini bekliyordu bir an önce. **Yüksel'**imiz de yanı başımızdaydı hep. Ona da en içten teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim. Kendisi saha araştırmamda erişim imkânımın olmadığı kadın gruplarıyla beni temasa geçirmek için çok gayret etti.

Ayrıca, hatırlamakta güçlük çektiğimde feminist hareketin geçmiş örgütlülük deneyimlerini sorabildiğim, kafamın her karıştığında hareket içindeki uzun yıllara yayılmış deneyimlerini benimle paylaşan feminist yoldaşlarım oldu. Bana bütün hafızalarını seferber eden **Lale Bakırezer**, **Esen Özdemir** ve **Filiz Karakuş'** e en içten teşekkürlerimi borç bilirim. Ayrıca Sosyalist Feminist Kolektif içinde bir arada feminist politika yaptığım arkadaşlarıma çok teşekkür etmek isterim. SFK'da biriktirdiğim deneyim akademik ve politik ufkumun şekillenmesine çok katkı sundu.

Ayrıca gece yürüyüşü sırasında kalabalığın içine dalıp benimle birlikte anket yapan **Zehra Akçay**'a, metnimi okuyup değerli yorumlarını benden esirgemeyen **Delta Meriç Candemir**'e, anket sorularıma bakıp analiz sırasında çıkabilecek olası zorluklar

hakkında beni önceden bilgilendiren **Aslı Aktı**'ya; tez boyunca çok sık ve yoğun vakit geçirdiğim ve bu vakitlerin önemli bir kısmını tezimin içeriğini konuşmakla geçirdiğimiz **Emre Genç**'e katkılarından dolayı çok teşekkür etmek isterim. Benim için hep "orada" olduklarını bildiğim ve kardeşlerim olduğu için kendimi çok şanslı hissettiğim **Handan Küçük** ve **Arda Küçük**'e teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim. Ayrıca beni hep özgür bırakan anneme ve babama çok teşekkür ederim.

Son olarak, Türkiye Feminist hareketin kurucu aktörlerinden Şirin Tekeli anısına düzenlenen *Şirin Tekeli Araştırma Ödülü'ne layık görüldüğüm için* Sabancı Üniversitesi Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Mükemmeliyet Merkezi'ne çok teşekkür ederim. Doktora tezimin Şirin Tekeli anısına düzenlenen bu ödülle desteklenmiş olması benim için bir onurdur.

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ABBREVIATIONS

SFK: Sosyalist Feminsit Kolektif / Sosyalist Feminist Collective

YFK: Yoğurtçu Kadın Forumu / Yogurtçu Park Women Forum

IFK: İstanbul Feminist Kolektif / Istanbul Feminist Collective

BİKG: Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi / Women's Initiative for Peace

KBG: Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü / Women are Strong Together

İKD: İlerici Kadınlar Derneği / Progressive Women's Association

ÖDP: Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi / Freedom and Solidarity Party

EŞİK: Eşitlik İçin Kadın Platformu / Women's Platform for Equality

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, recent years have witnessed both a decline in the policy-shaping capacity of feminist organizations and the simultaneous dissolution of some of these organizations, which historically had played critical roles in the organization of women's movements since their establishment. For instance, following prolonged internal tensions, conflicts and/or separations, several established feminist organizations such as the *Socialist Feminist Collective (SFK), Amargi*, *İstanbul Feminist Collective, and Filmmor* have been completely terminated, while many are experiencing similar conflicts and separations even if they have not yet been dissolved. On the other hand, the number of women participating in the Feminist Night March in Istanbul has been noticeably increasing every year. The number of feminist contemporary art works, research and theory books, and large-follower-base websites has been steadily expanding. Moreover, gender-egalitarian language is increasingly being adopted on social media and leftist platforms. These developments beg the question of what explains the weakening of feminist organizations in Turkey despite the apparent increased interest in feminism. In this dissertation, I examine this specific puzzle evident in feminist politics in Turkey. My research asks the following questions: Is it possible to discuss the emergence of new aspects of feminist practices different from conventional political forms? Where do these new feminist practices emerge, and how do they differ from previous forms? How can this differentiation be related to the structural transformations and changing forms of subjectivity in Turkey's labor and work regime? How can this transformation in the feminist movement be discussed concerning the similarities and differences from the

current course of feminist politics in the world? Finally, what does it mean for women to emerge as a collective body in feminist night parades in today's political/economic atmosphere, which is often associated with individualization and deinstitutionalization? I examine emerging new forms of feminist politics and changing forms of feminist subjectivity in today's Turkey around these questions. I consider the Feminist Night March as a critical "event" that would allow me to trace the answers to these questions. It also unveils the relation between feminist subjectivation and feminist night march at empirical level.

1.1 Feminist Night March as a "Political Event"

The Feminist Night March in Istanbul was featured on the first page of The New York Times on March 9, 2018, with a bird's-eye view photograph covering the part of İstiklal Street from Taksim Square to the front of Galatasaray High School.

Figure 1: The image from The New York Times (March 9, 2018) shows the Feminist Night March (2018) in İstanbul.

Source: https://static01.nyt.com/images/2018/03/09/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf

This shot, which depicts about half of the approximately 1.5kilometer street, revealed that this portion of the street was completely covered by women+ protestors. Despite the police barricades and heavy rain, the crowd on the street was estimated to be over 50,000. The feminist night march, which was held with tens of thousands of women every year, especially after the momentum created by the Gezi resistance, peaked in 2018 when it was last allowed by the Governor's Office and attracted worldwide attention.[1]

The sheer volume of participants indicates that the feminist movement is still vigorous at a time when the democratic public space in Turkey was gradually closed to social protests after 2015. Even in this most challenging period, feminists continue to stage both the Night March and other street protests against all odds. However, the Night March, in particular, is a social protest that has come to be regarded as a leading sign of the women's movement's prevalence, influence, and diversity in terms of its agendas. I consider the Feminist Night March as a critical "event" that allows me to trace the answers

[1] Before the Feminist Night March was defined by that name, it was first organized by a small group of feminists on March 8th, 2003. The march included posters of war criminals such as Hitler, Mussolini, Sharon, Milosevic, Bush, and Saddam, as well as a banner reading "All Men, Is This a Coincidence?" with the signature "Women Against War. Following the 1999-2001 period of the rise of global anti-capitalist mobilizations, the alter-globalist insurgence focused on the US war and invasion attempt on Iraq in 2003." The anti-war protest in Ankara in 2003, which drew 100,000 people, was the pinnacle of a series of anti-war demonstrations. Following this period in which the feminist movement had begun to gain traction through anti-war and anti-militarism, femicide became a focal point of the second march in 2004. In Taksim, women carried a banner that reads "Shelter, not Grave" with the signature "Feminist women." In 2005, a consensus could not be reached in the discussions of women's groups, most of whom belong to unions, parties, and political groups, to hold a joint meeting, and it was decided to hold three separate rallies in Istanbul. A group of feminists, who think that the colour and voice of feminism become invisible and muffled in the joint rally, called for an independent march melded completely by feminist demands, with the signature "Feminists." The banner "We Don't Obey the Male Order / Feminists" was unfurled during the march. The following year, the banner word was "Feminist Revolt." This banner word coincides with a march where the feminist night march was named for the first time. This march, which was held with the participation of approximately one hundred people, reached its peak level with the participation of approximately 50 thousand people in 2018 and continues with the participation of tens of thousands of women despite the bans in the following years. Moreover, in recent years, apart from Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, it has spread to Antalya, Çanakkale, Fethiye, Bodrum, and Mersin. Feminist politics, initiated by a small intellectual nucleus, gradually expanded its field within the political stage and became the main agenda of leftist circles over time. Today, when the feminist movement is mentioned, we must understand not a closed intellectual group, but the vast network embedded in all social opposition organizations and daily life. Feminist night march has the feature of being a march that includes this wide variety. Sources: https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/cemre-baytok/neydi-bu-feminist-gece-yuruyusu,25857
https://catlakzemin.com/?s=feminist+gece+y%C3%BCr%C3%BCy%C3%BC%C5%9F%C3%BC

to these questions I raised above. Event is a rupture from the dominant state of the situation (Badiou 2007, 2005). It suspends the repetition of existing order and destroys the illusion of normality, existing hierarchies, and semiotic orders, accepted bodily appearances. An event has the capacity and potentiality to build an alternative truth, not only to destroy the existing order. It heralds the possibility of another world and spark the process of a subjectivation through exhilaratingly transformative atmosphere. What was once deemed to be impossible become conceivable and imaginable in that atmosphere. For Badiou, an event unveils the inconsistent multiplicity who are excluded from the symbolic and social order. Inconsistent multiplicity, however, does not remain silent and erupt in the form of event. The feminist night march appears as an event in this respect.

1.2 The Atmosphere of the Night March

The women set out for Taksim from different routes of Istanbul long before the start of the march. They convert every street they pass by on their way to Taksim into a joyful festive protest zone. A shot from this atmosphere is the experience where dozens of women+ play drums and chant slogans inviting the by-standers to the march on a ferry passing from Kadıköy to Karaköy. At 19.30 pm, Taksim's regular rhythm is suspended and replaced by a feminist rhythm, an "event" that cannot be repeated throughout the year.[2] With their banners, carnivalesque clothes, and whistles, the women are ready to march. The banners and slogans reflect all the richness in the perspective of a wide-ranging social protest that deciphers gender inequality, the normative codes of the binary gender system, and violence. We witness the pioneering of the feminist movement in revealing creative forms of contentious politics and innovative action repertoire that

[2] https://twitter.com/dokuz8haber/status/971778467850309632?s=20&t=yiK3t3l1OokoYOr5xSuT9Q

subverts normative cultural codes. In many of the banners, one can see a synthesis of the critical acumen of a social scientist and a humoristic performance artist developing creative tactics to ridicule inequality: “Kalkıp çayını kendi alamaz 8 Mart’a geleceğim diyor”[3], “Dağları delme Ferhat evi süpür”[4], “Topla saçlarını Rapunzel, deyyus merdivenleri kullansın,”[5] “Erkeklik nedir? Küçülebilen bir şeydir,”[6] “Dolapta zıkkımın kökü, sokakta isyan var”, “yuvayı kuran dişi kuş olmayacağız”[7], “Burjuva ideolojisi babandır,”[8] “Kadın kadındır çiçek babandır,”[9] “Jın Jiyan Azadi,”[10] “Çocuk gelin yoktur, tecavüzcü erkek vardır”[11], “Allah mısınız, Aileniz batsın”[12].

1.3 What Does the Feminist Night March Show Us?

The Feminist Night March is neither a mere commemoration of a historical day, a protest against the inequalities and violence faced by women alone, nor a demonstration of a political movement. It includes them all at once and goes further: It is an invented ritual in which radical protest and carnival intertwine, where women+ challenge an entire social structure to reclaim the night and the streets while also sharing the empowering, therapeutic experience of acting together. The march presents an image of an emancipated future, a moment when a feminist utopia comes to life, albeit for a while, with the founding power of togetherness, as revealed in the slogan “*The world would shake if women were free*.” But that's not all. Everyone participating in the march instills a lasting

[3] He does not even bother to get his own tea but claims wanting to come to 8th March
[4] Ferhat, don’t drill mountains, Sweep the House
[5] Tie your hair up Rapunzel, let pander use the stairs
[6] What is masculinity? Something that shrinks
[7] We will not be the female bird that builds the nest
[8] Bourgeois ideology is your father.
[9] A woman is a woman, a flower is your father
[10] Woman, life, freedom
[11] There is no child bride, there is a rapist man.
[12] Are you God, let your family go bankrupt

power that subsequently affirms their existence with the virus of this collective joy as the slogan, "*Remember this march when you are in despair!*" suggests. Collective joy creates a temporary autonomous zone in which patriarchy is canceled through the sense of trust, solidarity, and love for one another. Hegemonic masculinity becomes a mockery, while femininity becomes something to be embraced rather than shamed: "Just as I am about to be chaste, a laugh haunts me instead." [13] This affective environment encourages women to build self-confidence, courage, and strength to fight patriarchal power in subsequent moments of their daily life.

The Feminist Night March is a site of encounters for women to form permanent bonds with each other, with their ever-diversifying subjects such as Kurdish, LGBTI+, vegan, socialist, anarchist, and Muslim – across a wide demographic field. It contains the entire agenda of the feminist movement and its discussions on the tensest issues. It also reflects the government's reactions to the feminist marches. It also appears as a reference point for socialist groups and even governmental actors in describing their political stand. Since the LGBTI+ movement's Pride March were banned in 2016, it has become a mere collective action in terms of LGBTI+ visibility and feminist-LGBTI+ alliances.

With all these aspects, the Feminist Night March includes a wide variety of subjects in terms of understanding the feminist movement. Rather than portraying the organized feminist movement, the Feminist Night March simultaneously embraces the broad spectrum of people, whether organized or autonomous, who identify as feminists or are on the verge of doing so. When viewed from the outside of the Feminist Night March, the feminist movement presents a social movement that consists of women+ with a more defined, well-established ideology and more specific experience. However, when viewed

[13] "Tam iffetli olacağım bir gülme geliyor!" This slogan was created in response to Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç's statement in 2014 that "Women ought to be chaste and able to distinguish between what is private and what is not. She shouldn't laugh in public ". See, https://t24.com.tr/haber/kadin-herkesin-icerisinde-kahkaha-atmayacak,265891

from the night march, it presents a panorama of the diversity of becoming woman, which goes beyond the grasp of even the feminists themselves, constantly goes beyond each act of definition, and allows us to see how feminism emerges as a concrete entity rather than an abstract conceptual entity. In this respect, the Feminist Night March, in all its diversity, offers a frame, and a starting point, where I can access new forms of subjectivities. To put it more precisely, the Feminist Night March is not my object of study but a point of departure that allows me to get to the core of my subject of study. My object of study is the backstage that makes this walk possible. That is, the feminist multiplicity that emerged as a swell on İstiklal Street on March 8th but then retreated into daily life constitutes my research object.

1.4 Beyond the Rise and Decline of Feminist Politics: Theoretical Starting Point

In this current political atmosphere in Turkey, where organizational ties are decreasing, central/institutional practices are replaced by more decentralized forms, and the capacity to act collectively to more autonomous practices is a part of the global trend. Thus, a trend toward understanding this current development has emerged in the global feminist literature. The literature on the contemporary feminist movement is divided into two different categorical poles oscillating between the narrative of co-option/decline/retreatment and resistance/insurgence/re-emerge.

1.4.1 Discussions on the Narrative of Decline

Neoliberal developments and concomitant restriction of the political realm, which manifests themselves with authoritarianism, have led some feminist scholars to articulate pessimistic explanations about the ongoing trajectory of feminist politics. Some argue

that feminist ideas have reconciled with the capitalist strategies by being confined to palliative solutions in contemporary times and have, in turn, lost their anti-capitalist character developed by the second wave in the 70s, which addressed the systemic transformation of women's emancipation struggle (Fraser 2009; Eisenstein 2010). They introduce the concept of “dangerous liaison” to explain how neoliberalism incorporates feminist ideas into the key ingredients for the new spirit of capitalist accumulation. For example, the feminist notion of “women's empowerment” has been reduced simply to the right to participate in the market economy and be able to crack the glass ceiling for middle-class women in the west, while lower-class women such as female temps, low-wage service employees, sex workers, migrants, and microcredit borrowers have become the engine of the market's need for cheap labor.

The idea of co-option also appears in the field of popular culture. McRobbie (2009) discusses how young women in the UK turn into the key actors of consumer culture dominated by the endless and repeated self-measurement, self-production compliant with the vocabulary of personal choice, hedonism, fantasy, and personal gratification. Riordon (2001) suggests a similar argument for the USA, where feminist rhetoric of empowerment has been commodified by the culture industry and prevents women from acting as a collective body as they did in the 70s. Such a comparison between past and present also appears in Lynne Segal's study, where she asks how feminism 'grew rapidly as a mass social movement, peaking in the mid-1970s before dissolving as a coherent organization by the end of the decade' (Segal 1999, p. 9). Likewise, Bagguley (2002) argues that the contemporary feminist movement falls into a “state of abeyance” when the social and political environment within which it exists is not receptive to mobilization under hostile socio-political factors caused by neoliberalism.

There is also a body of literature that arises from the Global South claiming the co-optation of feminism as a result of NGOs introduced by neoliberalism. Alvarez (1999) develops the concept of the "NGO boom" in Latin America to describe the increase in the number of NGOs which operate radically transformed the feminist ethical principles by introducing professionalization, bureaucratization, and managerialism. Feminists who were employed in these feminist NGOs turned into professional "gender experts" who fulfill the government's political agendas about women's issues. This transformation is exactly what Sabina Lang (2000) defines as "the NGOization of feminism." Utilizing this concept, scholars show how NGOization in countries like India has caused the women's movement to lose its capacity to shape the language of the protests and how it produced a high-income elite class of Feminists at a time when women's poverty was becoming more visible in the age of neoliberalism (Roy 2015; Tellis 2012; Kamat 2002; Sangari 2007; Dave 2012).

1.4.2 Discussions on the Rise of Feminist Politics

The recent developments in feminist politics do not pose the feature of decline but rather pose the characteristic of re-emergence in the form of much lively, vibrant, and transnational features. Walter (1998) argues that young women are increasingly inclined to adopt the feminist ideas and language in the popular media, although they do not explicitly pronounce feminism. Furthermore, this increase is not only realized at the individual level, but a wide variety of campaigns and organizations determine new goals and plan to adhere to the feminist perspective. She acknowledges the noticeable decline of the organized feminist movement. Yet, she presents these recent developments as evidence of feminist ascendance that appears in unfamiliar and more extensive forms. Similarly, Nash (2002) advocates the idea that feminism is on the rise by looking at

mainstream political organizations. She argues that many critical feminist issues that were unheard in the 60s and 70s are now diffusing into mainstream politics and becoming the common values of diverse political actors. By providing a series of gains achieved by feminist struggle, she shows how classical literature on social movement does not allow to include these transformations into a social movement insofar as they are not organized in the form of mass protests. Baumgardner and Richards' (2010) address the changing needs and concerns of young women, which lead them to adopt different methods from their previous generations. Based on various empirical research Redfern and Aune (2013) claim that a considerable proportion of young women are becoming more likely to reclaim feminism despite all negativity disseminated in the media. They state that people are generally inclined to think that feminism reached its peak in the 1960s and 1970s such that the year between the 60s and 70s can never be experienced again, which ultimately underestimates the role of new tools such as social media available to young women.

We have also witnessed a rise of new literature that moves beyond the thesis of "NGOization paradigm" and discusses the role of NGOs in the increase of women's movement in the South. The literature provides a nuanced picture of the relationship between the feminist movement and NGOs by avoiding seeing neoliberalism as an absolute power capable of controlling the agendas of NGOs and highlighting the empowering aspects of NGOs for women in changing contexts (Hodžić 2014; Roy 2015; Helm 2014; Bernal & Grewal's 2014; Alvarez 2009). Helms (2014) takes this perspective one step further, introducing the concept of "Movementization of NGOs," which radically reverses the idea of "NGOization of the feminist movement. Based on Bosnia-Herzegovina context, where post-socialist democratization and marketization are promoted and post-conflict reconstruction is targeted, she shows how the proliferation of NGOs fulfills an important gap for women. Similarly, Leve's research (2007) on NGOs

in Nepal demonstrates how women in Nepal have adopted a Maoist perspective rather than being neoliberal individuals after NGOs' educational activities in the region.

Lastly, there is also literature that draws attention to the international feminist movement and protests, which erupted in some regions but subsequently spread to other parts of the world. Palomo (2016) discusses the Spanish "Movement of Squares," which emerged as a response to the withdrawal of the welfare state from key women-friendly public services and conservative politics targeting women's sexual and reproductive rights, including the struggle against the abortion law in 2014. She claims that these actions were critical in uniting disparate segments of the feminist movement in Spain, which had been split prior to the protests. Since 2016, Spain also witnessed a feminist strike wave addressing the recent austerity policies that target women's labor and their body. International women's day has constituted an important rallying point for women to raise their slogans against those repressive policies (García et al., 2018, p. 35). Feminist strikes in Spain were influenced by Argentinian women's strikes in 2015-2016 via Hispanic social media (p. 36). Argentinian feminist collective launched a grassroots movement against femicides called *Ni Una Menos* (Not one woman less) immediately after the murder of 14-year-old Chiara Paez. *Ni Una Menos* collective has called for an International Women's strike planned to coincide with the international women's day. These protests resonated in the other countries, including Brazil, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, and in many other Latin American countries as well as the USA, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Spain, and Turkey. Likewise, the "Black Lives Matter" movement in the USA is overwhelmingly shaped by the feminist perspective by unveiling latent forms of violence black women experience differently from black men (Cohen and Jackson 2016). Synder (2006) is another scholar who rejects the idea of feminist retreatment, providing a picture of a considerable amount of women's movement across the world between the 1990s and

2000s (Snyder 2006, p. 48 cited in Dean 2010, p. 23). Elsewhere, Krook (2008) discusses how campaigns for gender quotas constitute a substantial part of a new global women's movement to empower women across the world (p. 105).

1.5 Beyond the Narrative of Rise or Decline

I situate my theoretical stance closer to the narrative of the rise from/among these two poles while trying to understand the current state of the feminist movement in Turkey. However, I think that the feminist movement in Turkey has a unique character that either of these two poles cannot explain. Hence, I take my argument one step further, claiming that the contemporary feminist movement in Turkey holds a qualitative transformation in its demographic, spatial, and class structure as well as in the ways in which feminist politics is enacted. Therefore, I distance myself from an explanation model stuck in the duality of the rise and decrease.

I observed that first- and second-generation feminists, who took an active part in the feminist organization in Turkey, tended towards the first of these two poles. Although these segments accept that the feminist movement has become widespread in Turkey, they think that the movement has gradually lost its collective and radical character and that much more individual forms of feminism have begun to be adopted. From this point of view, it is claimed that the reason for the decrease in the tendency toward the feminist organization in Turkey is that young people avoid practices that require taking responsibility and acting collectively and that they experience feminism as a form of individual empowerment. I think that this perspective stems from an understanding of politics and collectivity that is largely based on macro-political indicators such as visibility, massiveness, and street protests.

Based on my field research, I argue that this perspective does not reflect the transformation of the feminist movement in Turkey. When I shifted my epistemic and methodological focus from macro-political indicators to more micro-political ones, I encountered a rather different sociological picture from this highly pessimistic perspective. When I looked at this picture, which is unnoticeable from the established political lenses and is excluded from the frame of politics, from a different conceptual and analytical framework, I observe a collective body that can mobilize both at regular periodic intervals and/or spontaneously on an issue-specific basis. Then, what is my conceptual, theoretical framework?

1.6 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: Feminism as a Practice of Becoming

My field research covers a wide range from first-generation and second-generation feminists who have been involved in the construction of the movement from the very beginning to young women who have only recently begun to participate in the movement. Such a wide age distribution allowed me to examine the change in women's experiences involved in different periods of the feminist movement, as well as the dynamics of articulation and differentiation of different generations. Although young women between the ages of 17-35 constitute the predominant body of today's feminist movement and the driving force of politics, I observed that the change took place by including previous generations. Nevertheless, there are variations in how they perceive and practice feminist politics. However, this difference does not occur in a way that isolates generations from each other.

This emerging trend is not always manifested in a concrete political form that women consciously articulate using appropriate concepts and terminologies. Instead, it

often emerges at the level of the intuitive register, the unconscious flow of desire, and affective intensities that precedes all acts performed at the conscious level. Before their theoretical and political explanations, negotiations and justifications, young women are subject to the affective intensities that occur at the level of pre-consciousness. The patriarchal oppression which traverses women's body since their early ages lead them to flow into varied feminist interactions and encounters where they experience solidarity, love, care, and many other affective intensities, although it is not yet or always named feminism: Feminism appears for women as a line of flight where desire tends towards emancipation from oppressive regimes.

Feminist women are turning all their living spaces into a field of feminist interactions where sexist practices and discourses are discredited and invalidated. In these fields, feminists not only build a barrier that does not allow sexism but also pro-actively weave feminist relations that fuel the process of becoming a feminist and thus the production of feminist subjectivity. Before explaining what I mean by becoming a feminist, I would like to briefly explain the concept of "becoming," which is a strategic conceptual tool for the thesis.

The key concept underlying Deleuze's rupture with traditional ontologies, in which entities are characterized by their static forms and fixed essences, is becoming. The ontology of becoming creates a universe in which each single entities are an assemblage of connection of multiple forces. However, the surrounding forces are in constant flux, which persistently reshapes and regenerates that particular entity as well as it is itself transformed by it. Entities are understood not by their forms but through their relational forces and their dynamic interaction. The ontology of becoming, therefore, has nothing to do with forms having a distinct beginning and an end, but they are always in between which, never ceasing to become (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 277). Such an ontology

defies the question of "what" as it seeks to address the static forms of entities and replace it with the question of "how" to address processual relationality. The "How" question also disrupts binary oppositions as it implies processual relationality, unlike the "what" question, which establishes a universe of dualities as its answer would include either *one* or the *other*.

Such an understanding also applies to every single body. The body is not an entity in itself that can exist outside and beyond these multiple, heterogeneous, and complex relationships; it is instead a *potential* that is constantly reshaped through these changing relationships. These disparate relations or lines cannot be mapped onto pre-existing explanations, expectations, and generalizations. In other words, the unsteady movement of these lines in a relational way reveals the unpredictable capacities and potentialities of the human body. That is exactly why Deleuze and Guattari say "you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination" (1992, p. 627).

What this ontology means for feminism is that feminists can no longer be seen as those who achieve a complete "feminist" identity by fulfilling a discursive requirement of a given theoretical-political narrative. The question of "what is feminism" and "who is feminist" establishes a rigid representation order. It establishes dualisms, excluding certain practices and subjects from the feminist field while also attaching no importance to the process and in-betweenness: You are either a feminist or not. However, the feminist struggle proceeds along open-ended, unpredictable multi-faceted lines, which facilitates "feminist becoming" to flourish on a differential ontology. Women experience "becoming feminist" as they cease to identify with the identities established by the patriarchal gender regime and draw lines of flight to take place in feminist interaction.

Becoming feminist is not an acquired or merited identity but the actuation of virtuality by women. Women are capable of unleashing unforeseen forces in a given combination, arrangement, an encounter: No one can predict how subversive becoming woman will be in these encounters.

My field research reveals that young people practice feminism as a unique experience, a process of discovery and invention. Every single feminist leads a "feminist life" (Ahmed, 2017) to the extent that the economic, political, and cultural combination surrounding them allows. They create their own minor social arrangements or field of interaction in their living spaces. Their interactions establish a field of encounters that produce joyful affection that would allow them to become an active power in terms of affecting and being affected by other bodies in contact. In such a context, feminist becoming is conditioned not necessarily by belonging to a feminist organization and institutions but rather by building a space of interactions where women constantly transform together.

Here, I would like to state that I do not see becoming feminist as a result of a conscious choice. I think that as much as a conscious process, becoming a feminist is also an unconscious process, which is transcendentally determined by an ecology of interactions that feminists produce from all angles while simultaneously being produced by them. This ecology of interactions activates a potential that will tend to produce their own counter subjectivity rather than adopting given gender codes. To put it another way, for many women, feminist becoming is not realized through political education of a kind or conscious awareness acquired through propaganda offered by institutionalized organizations. I see it as the production of a machinic process that ignites the production of feminist subjectivities as a result of multiple interactions leaking into the conscious and unconscious of the women. In such a context, feminism emerges as a line of flight

that allows women to flow out of the lines of power that surrounds them and as a movement of desire toward emancipation.

Unlike socialism or many other revolutionary ideas, feminism is distinguished by the abolishment of the private-public divide and the incorporation of private and everyday life within the realm of politics. Therefore, micro-politics existed inherently in all currents of feminism. The reason for this lies in the fact that patriarchy, unlike state power, is a form of power that penetrates deeply into the interactions between bodies and affection in daily life, and in this respect, it often assumes a micro-political character with its invisible forms. However, patriarchy manifests itself not just in this microcosm but also in the most apparent forms in the macro realm, such as laws and institutions. Patriarchy in its micro and macro manifestations does not persist in isolation from one another but rather by mutually generating one another. So, what is new about the change that I claim is emerging in the feminist movement in Turkey today?

In the 30-year period from the early 80's when feminism first appeared on the political scene until 2010, the prominent form of the feminist movement has mainly been institutionalization, public visibility, journalism, campaigns, and street protests. Although the politics of the private sphere have not been fully suspended, feminist politics has prioritized the creation of such a central collective body until the 2010s. I argue that the distinguishing feature of the feminist movement of the last decade is that it has shifted predominantly to the micro field. While claiming this, I do not claim that macro-political practices have disappeared from the political realm. Women continue to come together on various platforms to form a collective body and exhibit practices of public visibility. These practices are undoubtedly the founding backbone of the feminist movement and will continue to do so. However, these macro-political fields consist of reactive rather than pro-active political forms. I employ Proactive political forms in the sense of

establishing alternative relationships, organizing life within these relationships, and organizing joyful encounters that would stimulate desire. Everyday life increasingly becomes the place where such proactive forms are established. These foundation activities manifest in a form without a political center, in which women spontaneously establish small groups and expand throughout the social realm by forming a network. I define this feminist network as the *rhizome*.

A rhizome is a botanical term. It is a subterranean stem that "expands underground horizontally, sending down roots and pushing up shoots that arise and proliferate not from a single core or trunk, but from a network which expands endlessly from any of its points"(Mansfield, 2000, p. 143). Deleuze and Guattari develop the model of the rhizome as an alternative to the model of a tree ("arborescent") which has been the basis for the intellectual model of modern western thoughts. The tree arises on a single root which is followed by a trunk, branches, and leaves, respectively. This model is hierarchical, linear, and one-dimensional as the root appears first and constitutes a base for the rest part of a tree. Each part of a tree is ordered hierarchically according to its functions. The entire social system, including gender, age-related hierarchies, information systems, classifications in science, and taxonomy, is based on hierarchical, dichotomic, and linear reasoning and categorizations. The rhizomatic model, on the other hand, rejects this structure and offers an alternative image of thought. Unlike tree structure, the rhizome is made of decentralized multiple lines which expand endlessly in any number of paths (Mansfield, 2000, p. 143). De-centered multiple lines constitute a network (or a map in Deleuzian terms) of horizontally connected lines on the surface. The map, they argue, is "open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 12). I argue that the hierarchical model in which politics is produced from certain centers and spreads linearly to the

periphery is now replaced by a more horizontal, decentralized, hierarchical, and non-linear rhizomatic form. It is a network of heterogeneous assemblages such as solidarity groups, platforms, affinity groups, social media, and WhatsApp groups that proliferate in multiple centers without having the claim to represent the whole. It is quite difficult to map this rhizomatic form, which erupts from everywhere and escapes everywhere. I nevertheless attempt to draw a map that would allow me to comprehend the general pattern, albeit not the entire map. Based on such a map, I argue that the contemporary feminist movement can no longer be associated with certain actors, groups, organizations, action repertoire, and spaces. It consists of both visible assemblages in the macro field and the sum of singular existences and small togetherness in the micro field.

Such a framework allows for a sociological and political understanding that goes beyond the rise and decline narrative I discussed above. It allows me to question familiar and established political frames that suggest the feminist movement loses its radicality as it expands, the tendency to act collectively decreases, concepts are emptied, and collective feminist empowerment is turned into individual empowerment. From a position where politics is generally considered as macropolitical collective action, mass organization, and public visibility, a picture of a feminist movement that has lost its radicalism is likely to emerge. In the current environment, however, young women are putting into practice the changes that past generations fought for in their own lives. The current generation openly and proudly embraces their feminist identity, just as the preceding generation did, and refuses to tolerate sexism in any situation in which they participate, making their voices known and standing by their labor and bodies. More importantly, all these practices are grasped in constant interaction with all dimensions of macro politics in the world.

1.7 Overview of the Structure of the Chapters

In this dissertation, I examine the transformation of the feminist movement in Turkey as well as the factors that enable it and the forms in which it manifests itself. Instead of explaining the condition of the transformation solely through the internal dynamics of the feminist movement, as is the common trend in the literature, I try to create a topography in which multiple actors and causalities are agents in different ways and degrees. This topography includes changes in labor and working regime, digital channels and the encounters these channels provide, interactions that take place both at the global level and at the local level; affects such as desire, passion, hope, anxiety, fear; changing cultural codes; changing parenting patterns and family structure; changing semiotic register of the contemporary hegemonic and counter-hegemonic political realm; political and legal processes that operate at the government level and the global level; changing temporalities and spatialities; All these multiple flows traverse feminist bodies and produce feminist subjectivities. Each of these factors is potentially in the scope of this dissertation and deserve to be the subject of a separate study. However, instead of dealing with each of these components in separate chapters, I opt for discussing them simultaneously under three main chapters, which are economy, politics, and digitality. The readers will be able to trace each of them in different intensities under these three main chapters, although they may not see each of these components as a separate title or chapter.

In the following chapter, I discuss the methodology of the research at length. Analyzing a movement that simultaneously includes micro and macro-forms required me to conduct an extensive field research. The qualitative part of the research includes in-depth interviews, participant observation in feminist events and in various feminist

WhatsApp groups (which increasingly become a significant component of everyday life and political engagements) between 2019-2021, as well as the content analysis of the founding journals of feminist history. The quantitative part of the research, which includes an extensive survey, demonstrates a broader picture of the transformation, reveals the movement's changing demographic structure, and also elucidate the political-economy and historical dynamics that enabled this transformation.

In Chapter three, I examine how changes in the quality of labor and work alter the way young people interact with feminist politics. More precisely, I attempt to figure out how young women's attitudes toward feminist politics evolve at a time when the line between work and non-work life is blurring, insecurity is becoming more prevalent, and the need for cognitive labor is becoming more apparent. In such an environment, young people go through an experience where they need to constantly invest in themselves to equip themselves with high qualifications and to become preferable actors in the labor market. I introduce the concept of *investmentality* (a semiotic combination of investment and mentality) to describe the emerging subjectivities shaped around these anxieties. I argue that in the regime of Investmentality, political forms that require intensive time and effort (both physical and cognitive) are no longer sustainable for young generations. In this chapter I also investigate how changing labor and the working regime transform the demographic and class composition of the movement. As feminism spreads horizontally towards the grassroots, the movement tends to expand in a way to include the younger generation and lower and lower-middle classes. In this respect, I point at the emergence of a new form that is quite different from the movement formed by the first- and second-generation feminist women. However, I am not discussing this transformation in the work and labor regime as merely a negative transformation in feminist politics but as an ambivalent process with several political potentials and ramifications.

In chapter four, I present the historical course of Turkey's feminist movement from the early 1980s to the first decade of the 2000s. I hope to expose historical continuities and ruptures in comprehending the current condition of feminism through this extensive historical examination, and I believe that historicity and memory play a part in the evolution of today's subjectivity and politics. However, while providing such a historical trajectory, I do not consider feminist movement to be a self-proclaimed or standalone phenomenon. On the contrary, I investigate how it has evolved over time in different historical contexts with different global and local social movements as well as macro processes and regulations at the political level. Such a broad picture enables me to distance myself from the tree-like model that relates the current transformation with a single root cause, which is the internal dynamics of the Feminist movement. I instead embrace a rhizome-like model that incorporates multiple causalities intertwined with each other with a rootless form.

In this long historical path, I examine the first decade of the 2000s period in further detail. This decade witnessed the establishment of two feminist organizations that were founding and critical to the feminist history of Turkey: *Amargi* (2002) and *Socialist Feminist Collective* (2008). This chapter embarks on a comprehensive examination of these organizations as they offer important hints that would help us better grasp the present. I reserve a special place for the dynamics that cause them to close. The reason for this is not that I trivialize the positive legacy they left to the feminist movement. On the on the contrary, they, I believe, no longer correspond to the need of the new political forms and subjectivities. That is, their simultaneous termination is not a coincidence, but it heralds a new period in feminist movement in Turkey.

Chapter 5 covers the post-2010 period following the closure of SFK and Amargi. Although one can hardly draw a clear line between the pre and post the 2010s, I

nevertheless believe in some critical developments prompted an axis shift in feminist politics in Turkey, such as radical social movements in Europe and the United States following the global financial crisis of 2008, and occupation movements in 2010, the transition to a distinct authoritarianism in the state structure in Turkey, increased visibility of the LGBTI+ movement after 2010, chronical impasses experienced within feminist organizations, the restructuring of the radical social opposition as a broad network in which the Kurdish movement and many other social movements converge; Gezi resistance in 2013 and lastly proliferation of digital platforms and widespread use of social media.

This chapter aims at addressing the newly emerging forms in feminist movement. In other words, I examine how the feminist multitude, which erupted in the form of explosions in the night marches and various social media campaigns, implements feminist politics in the everyday settings where they later retreated. Despite their closeness to the idea of organization, I examine why they do not prefer to organize in the already established mode, what kind of associations they form in their daily lives instead and how these associations transform the concept of collectivity and activism.

Chapter 6 deals with the digital field as another factor in the production of feminist subjectivities, similar to the effects of the labor regime and political field I discuss in the previous chapters. It deals explicitly with Twitter and WhatsApp, as the two most prominent digital platforms that appeared in my field research. It reveals how these two digital channels integrate feminist politics into everyday life, influence the ways women+ engage in feminist politics and how these engagements transform what we understand from collective feminist action and activism. Through the WhatsApp affinity groups women+ participate in, they build seamless forms of political engagement and solidarity, turning everyday life into the center of politics. Each feminist WhatsApp affinity group

becomes a nodal point of a larger network in a rhizomatic form, and every single nodal point becomes a constituent element of the larger collective feminist body. In this sense, the subject of the feminist movement gains a decentralized and multiple characters such that one can hardly point to a single center, actor, and space. The larger rhizomatic network interconnected by multiple latitudes and longitude lines constitutes the subject of the feminist movement henceforth. WhatsApp also has the feature of being the backstage of both the mass hashtag campaigns on Twitter and the street protests. The constant interaction on WhatsApp ignites the production of feminist subjectivity and becomes the undercurrent of unexpected mass explosions. Women+ recognize that they are more than just their WhatsApp groups and feel part of the collective body thanks to the hashtag campaigns they participate in on Twitter. In this sense, WhatsApp and Twitter function as two different channels that complement each other. I also discuss the role of digital platforms for women+, particularly in an atmosphere of distrust towards the state institutions regarding increasing violence against women and femicide in Turkey. This discussion couples with the question of how digital feminism in Turkey is shaped by national political processes and forms of activism at the global level.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

This study pursues *mixed methods* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) design with a combination of the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. For the quantitative phase of the study, I conduct online and offline surveys with women+ having a different affinity with the feminist movement in Istanbul. The qualitative phase of the study includes participant activist observations, in-depth interview, and content analysis. If not for all studies, for this study specifically, quantitative, or qualitative methods alone are insufficient to capture the diverse aspect of the field. The scope of this study requires the combination of both methods to complement the multiple faces of a single issue.

2.1 The Quantitative Phase of the Research: Online and Offline Survey

2.1.1 The Difficulty of Empirically Framing the Field of Research

This study examines the political subjectification of young feminists and the ways they practice feminist politics in contemporary Turkey. The argument is that feminist politics which previously was limited to certain central places, institutions, actors (institutional figures, public intellectuals, and activists), and conventional political practices have been multiplying and diffusing into the capillaries of quotidian life since the 2000s in Turkey. I conceptualize this expansion as the "deterritorialization" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005[1987]) of feminist politics. The deterritorialized character of feminism after the

2000s poses a significant transformation in the political subjectification of young feminists and the ways they practice feminist politics. This transformation is a remarkable sociological phenomenon that cannot be explained simply by changing political practices of a handful of feminists. Thus, the quantitative phase of the research examines a large number of women+ to better grasp the structural dynamics of the field. To that end, I conducted an extensive survey that would reveal the demographic structure of the field by addressing the social composition of the feminist population by age, occupation, income distribution, educational status, marital status, and working conditions. I aimed at going beyond merely portraying demographic structure by also addressing the women+'s changing political channels, practices, and subjectivities.

This research revolves around the question of how to approach the simultaneous dissolution of feminist organizations in a conjuncture where feminism has multiplied and spread across the periphery of urban space. This problematic bears some methodological difficulties in addition to pointing a very concrete dilemma regarding contemporary feminist politics. The difficulty of this research lies in the excessive and uncodable character of the research object. To put it another way, I've been preoccupied for a long time with the question of *how can such a deterritorialized, feminist politics flowing towards the periphery be embodied in the way of being the object of the research*. More specifically, we are dealing no longer with concrete and established addresses that one can point with a finger and knock the door. I wanted to cover the field with all its heterogeneity but had a problem with limiting the scope and framing the field.

I have already had pre-established ties within feminist political channels where I could have circulated my survey. However, this would have meant to include only specific kinds of subjects who have already been politicized for a long time. Navigating within the safer and comfort zones would exclude "imperceptible" (Deleuze and Guattari

2005[1987]) feminist actors outside of these familiar feminist channels. How could I have traced the new feminist actors in their concrete practices in the age of decentralized politics? Under this structural transformation of the field, it made sense to zoom into the Feminist Night March in Istanbul that would offer valuable insights about the social and demographic structure of the field in İstanbul.

2.2 Why Feminist Night March as a Starting Point?

Feminist Night March was, for the first time, held in Taksim in 2003 with the call of feminists. Since then, feminists have been organizing the march every March 8 to voice their demands, anger, desires and show their decisiveness that they do not leave the streets at nights. About a hundred women participated in the first march. This number has increased exponentially every year and reached tens of thousands, especially after the 2010s. The establishment of the Socialist Feminist Collective in 2008, the campaign for women's murder (kadın cinayetlerine isyandayız) organized by İstanbul Feminist Collective in 2010, the mobility created by the Amargi have further revived the soul of the march. In 2012, women's resistance against the abortion ban implemented by the AKP government, and the subsequent platform of "Kürtaj haktır karar kadınların" (Abortion is a right, the decision is women's) have had a further impact on increasing women+ participation to the march. In 2013, Gezi resistance escalated an already increasing women+'s involvement in the rally. The participation of feminists considerably influenced the overall atmosphere of the Gezi resistance. Feminists circulated their long-standing experiences and language against the patriarchal patterns that emerged in Gezi. This had great repercussions on the political attitude of women+ and therefore on the number of women+ participating in the march in the following years. In 2018, the number

of women+ taking part in the march reached almost 50.000 women, such that *the New York Times* and some European newspapers took a cover photo of the march which run along the İstiklal Avenue.[14]

This overcrowded public meeting has been possible despite the public opposition being blocked in various ways after Gezi resistance. In 2014, the police attacked women+ and did not allow them to reach the destination where the march would end. Between 2015 and 2019, the police intervention manifested itself in reversing the rally route (from French Cultural Centre to the tunnel) even if not in the form of attack on women+. In 2019, thousands of women+ gathered in front of the French Cultural Centre (the first meeting point), despite the partial, if not wholly, blockade of roads leading to Taksim. However, the police did not allow them to continue their march by again attacking them with tear gas. In 2020, the march was completely prohibited. The roads leading to the Taksim were entirely closed, and public transportations to Taksim were out of service.

Nevertheless, women+ achieved to reach Taksim in their own ways. However, they marched to the Karaköy district when the organizing committee decided on the spur of the moment to march down Sraselviler Street, a small side street of stiklal. Consequently, women+ have been gathering every night of 8 March despite the prohibition of Taksim to any kind of political gathering since Gezi resistance. In other words, in a conjuncture where social opposition has been completely disconnected from Taksim, women persistently continue to march by piercing the ban on political gathering in Taksim.[15] The persistence on the march reveals the constitutive and critical role of the feminist night march in the history of the feminist movement since 2003 in Turkey.

[14] https://static01.nyt.com/images/2018/03/09/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf
https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/gesellschaft/weltfrauentag-tausende-demonstrieren-in-istanbul-trotz-ausnahmezustand-a-1197193.html

[15] The reason behind insisting on Taksim lies in its political history. In the political history of Turkey, Taksim stands out as a symbolically loaded urban space located in İstanbul (Küçük and Türkmen 2020; Farro and Demirhisar 2014; Gül et al. 2014). It has appeared as a site of struggle for hegemony between

Feminist Night March has the characteristic of being independent of any kind of political organizations. Instead of concerning about representing their political organizations or making them visible, women+ prioritize to freely shout their different forms of existence arising from being a woman+. They freely perform their various forms of existence during the march, as the march is completely closed to the participation of cis[16] men. Autonomous character of the march from organizational symbols and men's participation creates an independent atmosphere in which women freely affirm their sexuality and body, shout their demand; feel strong, and confidence arises from the sense of togetherness. Women+ from diverse ages, statuses, classes, ethnic groups, sexual orientations, political engagement, and beliefs constitute the heterogeneity of the march.

These different categories are divided horizontally as feminist and non-feminist[17] women. This adds a further dimension to the heterogeneity of the march. Feminists are situated within a wide scale engaging in feminist politics with different forms and degrees depending on their age, political background, class, ethnicity, and many other demographic variables. On the other hand, the non-feminist consists of those who either have not yet met feminism or those who are involved in women's movement[18] or those

state and social movements as well as the between secular and Islamic governments. Since the 1976s, it has been a site of labor movements and May Day rallies. After the state's brutal attack on May Day in March 197, when 34 people were killed and hundreds were injured, Taksim's place in political memory has been further consolidated. Since then, May 1 demonstrations have continued either with pirate actions in the years when the march was declared forbidden or with the participation of hundreds of thousands of people in the years when the ban was lifted. Taksim is not only the venue of the May 1 marches but also a place where the Kurdish movement, women's movement, the feminist movement, and LGBTI+ movement, especially since the 90s, have held their press statements and protest and marches. Since the 2000s, Taksim has witnessed Akp's projects of building a mosque and demolition of Atatürk Cultural Center (a symbol of the Kemalist modernization project) and building a new one in its place, while it has also witnessed the Gezi resistance, pride, and Feminist Night Marches.

[16] Cis is used to describe anyone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth: https://www.thesun.co.uk/fabulous/6227596/cis-cisgender-woman-man-meaning-transgender/

[17] Leaving aside the discussion about what the unifying principles of feminism are and who determines these principles, I would state that I draw this distinction between feminist and non-feminist on whether women define themselves as such or not.

[18] Women's freedom struggle in Turkey rest on a fundamental division between the feminist movement and the women's movement (Kadın Hareketi). The women's movement emerges as a sub-branch of movements whose political agenda does not only consist of woman issues but other social struggles such as socialist or Kurdish movement. Here, woman issue is problematized on the ground where men are also involved, and organizations have a broader political agenda alongside women's issues. On the other hand, the feminist

who deliberatively avoid of being positioned under an identity or definition. I think the involvement of non-feminists seems critical to the inclusive nature of the field. Feminist studies usually focus either on the feminist platforms created by feminist actors and their feminist principles or they confine into the question of "who are the subjects of feminism" (See Ahıska, Sirman and Savran 2011; Bora 2021; Mutluer 2007; Savran and Sirman 2019). This, however, excludes actors who pursue feminist practices but do not identify themselves as feminists for the aforementioned reasons or who lack the participation channels. This means taking for granted the boundaries of the field established by certain actors within specific historical contexts. By remaining within the already established zones, the researcher reproduces a priori assumptions based on self-evident and incontestable truth. This prevents the researcher from capturing unusual and changing feminist practices that have been taking place within the realm of activism. This runs the additional risk of dismissing potentialities that imply what is about to come. In other words, even if some women+ do not engage in any form of feminist practice either because of the anxiety to be identified under a certain political identity or because they have not yet had the opportunity to meet feminism, this does not mean that they will not eventually become feminist. The political realm includes potentialities as much as it includes actual and/or visible practices. What I mean by potentiality is a process of becoming that has not yet been actualized under a certain identity. More precisely, women's participation in the march is a sign of their emerging political subjectification that has already begun for some time before the march but not yet actualized under the feminist identity.

movement deals with a single issue which is patriarchy and women's freedom. Here, the question of women's freedom is an autonomous issue that can neither be carried out with men, nor can it be a sub-branch of other major social problems.

I understand the Feminist Night March as an "Political Event" that creates further raptures and differences in the political subjectification of participants. The joyful atmosphere created by "joyful acts" (Bergman & Montgomery 2017), slogans that stimulate the sense of solidarity, empowerment, togetherness creates a difference in women+'s affection and thoughts. This paves the way for women+ to act differently and knit alternative encounters in the following days after the march. The march, therefore, is neither an end nor a beginning. It is a moment that harbors potentialities for oncoming subjectification. Methodologically, feminist night march offers very important empirical opportunities to include those potential actors of the feminist movement. It has the capacity to represent the scale that includes all the diversity within the feminist territory ranging from those who have not yet defined themselves as feminist to those who have identified a long period of their life as feminists.

2.3 Why Istanbul Only?

I conducted my fieldwork in İstanbul. The reason does not reside in my limited access to feminist actors outside of Istanbul. On the contrary, the online survey techniques could have provided enormous opportunities for transcending geographical borders via online channels. The reason neither lies simply in the representative capacity of İstanbul. It is true that İstanbul has a representative capacity as it includes a wide scale of feminist subjectivities and feminist politics of any kind. However, İstanbul offers more than being an adequate representative case for the feminist movement by displaying a constitutive and central role for the feminist movement (Berber 2020, p. 111). The constitutive role of the city of Istanbul lies in the fact that it has hosted critical beginnings and significant turning point in the history of feminism in Turkey. The first consciousness-raising

meetings, the first translation groups for feminist classics, the first publishing activities, the long-term campaigns, platforms with wide participants, public protests were initially held in İstanbul. For example, the "purple needle" campaign, which was the first large-scale revolt against sexual harassment was launched in İstanbul in 1989.[19] This campaign followed by the series of protests (again in İstanbul) against article 438 of the Turkish penal code which reduced the sentence given to a man who raped a sex-worker.[20] (Leake 2012; İlkkaracan 2010; Sirman 1989). Similarly, solidarity organizations, which combat violence against women such as *The Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation,* were first established in Istanbul. As was previously mentioned, Istanbul also hosted the first feminist night march. It afterwards spread to Ankara (2006), İzmir (2014) and progressively extended other cities such as Antalya, Mersin, Çanakkale and Muğla in the past few years. İstanbul has also become the center of women's forums that emerged after the Gezi resistance. The prominent role of İstanbul is also acknowledged by Aksu Bora, who has long displayed feminist politics in Ankara. In the interview she delivered to the first issue of the *Kaktüs*[21] magazine in 1988, Bora says: "we appeared in the street for the first time on May 10, 1987. At that time, we had been impressed by the campaign that started in Istanbul".[22] Consequently, İstanbul is not simply a case that provides samples representative of the overall feminist politics in Turkey. Aside from its representative capacity, İstanbul has always been a distinctive, avant-garde, and trend-setter basin for understanding the political orientation of feminism in Turkey.

[19] Çatlak Zemin - https://www.catlakzemin.com/2-kasim-1989/
[20] In addition to various meetings, distributing leaflets, feminist issued a press statement at Zürafa street at Karaköy (İstanbul), where brothels were condensed (https://www.catlakzemin.com/18-subat-1990-butun-kadinlar-438e-karsi/). Their struggle resulted in the article to be repealed in 1990. This is a significant achievement in the history of the feminist movement in Turkey.
[21] *Socialist feminist Kaktüs* magazine, which started to be published in 1989, is the first publication of socialist feminists in Turkey.
[22] http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/pdf/Kaktus1.pdf

2.4 Survey Design

I define March 8 Feminist Night March as a moment when the feminist movement manifests itself in the form of an explosion for one night in a year. I have already discussed the representative capacity of samples recruited from this panoramic moment. Based on this samples from the march, I designed my surveys in a way that I can understand the transformation in both the political subjectification and political practices of feminists in the present context as well as the demographic structure of participants.

In both the online and offline questionnaires, I began with questions on women's demographic features. Then, acknowledging the role economic parameters (neoliberal context particularly) play in the subjectification and the way women pursue politics, I devoted a significant number of questions to women's working conditions, income levels, and their future imaginations shaped by economic conditions. This was followed by questions on political dynamics in women's subjectification. Lastly, I devoted the rest of the questions to the ways women engage with politics, the channels they create and/or include in political networks, and reasons behind their current political attitudes.

Although offline and online surveys relied on this structure, the number and quality of the questions in both surveys are not exactly the same. The offline survey has consisted of 56 questions formulated in less detailed forms. The paper-based questionnaires conducted in person during and immediately after the march when women+ were already tired enough of prolong standing up. This has sometimes caused the quick and half-baked responses. On the other hand, an online survey held a distinctive advantage over its paper-based counterpart. First of all, I could easily increase the number of questions (60) as it was based on self-administration. The self-administrative nature of the survey had yielded higher-quality insights by allowing respondents to answer it when

it was more convenient for them. More importantly, the tools provided by the software program allowed me to upgrade the questions and design them in multiple and more sophisticated forms. This has enabled me to recruit more comprehensive and detailed responses. (See Appnedix for the online Survey).

I expected the participants to meet the following criteria: All women and non-binary individuals who have participated in the Feminist Night March in Istanbul at least once. Four hundred twenty people who met these criteria participated in the online survey since June 2020, when I first circulated the survey in the online platforms.[23] This number reaches approximately to 500 with the paper-based survey, which corresponds to a much higher number than I have targeted in my proposal.

2.5 Implementation of the Offline Survey

For the offline survey, I created a research group of 15 women who attended the March regularly every year and thus familiar to the overall atmosphere and internal dynamic of the March. Each interviewer was expected to conduct 12 questionnaires lasting about 15 minutes during the night march of 2020. I created a WhatsApp group to discuss essential details and go over the questionnaire. We devoted most of our time to discuss the following question: How and at what stage of the march should we conduct the survey so that we are interrupted less by the noise and chaos confusion that may arise from the participation of thousands of women? After a long discussion, I decided to conduct the survey as people stand around Taksim Square in groups and wait for the start of the march. Conducting the survey before the march started would allow me to complete it before a

[23] The overall survey status will be open until next September.

possible police intervention.[24] After discussing all these details and developing strategies for unpredictable situations, just one day before the march, we learnt that governorship banned the march. Following this news, I had to reconsider the viability of my initial plan and whether the interviewers would keep their commitment against the risk of possible police intervention. Only one of the interviewers withdrew from the survey, stating her anxiety about possible police intervention. Based on their previous experiences, the rest of them stated that police intervention might not be too brutal and thus insisted on their eagerness.

However, unexpected developments occurred on the day of the march. Social media and online communication platforms were awash with the news that the roads leading to the Taksim were completely closed, public transportations to Taksim were out of service and Taksim square was completely blocked. This unexpected development resulted in a heated debate in our WhatsApp group. We reconsidered all our plan and decisions according to this new situation. After a long conversation, which was also accompanied by great disappointment, we were convinced that the conditions for conducting the survey had completely disappeared. The reason behind the withdrawal was not simply technical impediment and inconvenient conditions. It also seemed unethical to me to conduct a survey in an environment where the police did not even allow women to gather.

If not for the survey, I was sure that I would push the conditions to enter the Taksim square as an activist like many other women in İstanbul. Women started to flow into the Taksim by developing various strategies for the march that will start in the evening. They shared their experiences about the ways in which they were able to enter Taksim via online platforms and groups. I also achieved to enter Takim by utilizing their

[24] In 2009, women were able to meet in Taksim square, but could not start the march due to police intervention.

experience a few hours before the march get started. The scene I encountered when I entered Taksim astonished me: The vast majority of women somehow managed to reach Taksim. Some of them were writing banners, and others were following breaking news via Twitter and Facebook in groups at the surrounding cafes while they were waiting for the march to start. At that moment, I handed over 20 questionnaires that I brought just in case to the nearby women. Unfortunately, I did not take the entire questionnaires with me, as I could not imagine that I could have had such an opportunity. I reorganized a small team by urgently calling a few interviewers from the already established WhatsApp group. I, first, copied the questionnaires in an internet café, then we dispersed to the surrounding cafes where women were in groups. We conducted 40 surveys in this stage of the field before the march got started.

Shortly before the start of the march, the organizing committee announced on social media that the march will be held in Sıraserviler Street. This news reached everyone in a very short time, and the crowd which had dispersed in various parts of Taksim began to pour into the Sıraserviler Street. After a long negotiation with the police, the march route was determined as Kabataş, and we headed towards the Kabataş. Even though I was not able to conduct the survey with 180 women, which was the number I targeted at the beginning for the offline phase of the survey, I, nonetheless, managed to conduct about 80 surveys despite the extraordinary conditions.

All these details, which might seem unnecessary at first sight, reflect the difficulties of conducting field research in the repressive and authoritarian political environment that has arisen in the last decade in Turkey. Even before encountering the state's concrete barriers that manifest itself in the form of ban on the march, police violence against those who break the ban, the fear and anxiety caused by the blockade of the most central street of İstanbul and the presence of the police force in their full capacity,

I found myself challenged by the arbitrariness and unpredictable character of the authoritarian settings in the process of designing my offline survey: Would the governorship allow women to march? If it does not, what kind of police prohibitions would women be exposed to? Would the police attack women? If it does, at what stage should I conduct the survey so that I could conclude it before the police attack? In this case, do I risk the interviewers who will work with me? These questions address the uncertain circumstances in which I needed to develop multiple plans and strategies to be prepared for unexpected situations.

This was also accompanied by a set of moral self-judgments and dilemmas. My effort to conduct a sufficient number of the survey while women tried to resist the ban cause a tension between my activist and researcher positions. Lastly, I realized that I partly internalized the authoritarian rules by limiting myself, particularly in designing the questions which directly address the state violence. In a conjuncture, where freedom of expression is dramatically curtailed, I either completely removed or softened some questions that could make the respondent feel uncomfortable. This repressive setting that resulted in interruptions in the process of data collection directed me to trace a supplementary path, that is an online survey.

The online survey offered tremendous opportunities for overcoming relevant obstacles caused by the physical world. However, it had a further role beyond this capacity for my research. The online platforms reflect the ethos of the contemporary world. The ethos directs the conventional politics to a new register by offering new vocabularies and language; a new way of resistance, alliances, encounters and networks; a new form of activisms and organizational possibilities; new spatiality and temporality, a new form of accessibility to knowledge and new communication and technical skills. Consequently, the online survey offered advantages in three different ways: a) to increase

the representation capacity of the field by covering a larger number of people, b) to overcome the challenges caused by political atmosphere, c) to catch the ethos of the contemporary digital world.

2.6 Implementation of the Online Survey

I used SurveyMonkey software to structure my questionnaire (See attached pdf file). I circulated the online link that I obtained from the software directly on the online channels I have been already involved in. Firstly, I shared the link in the e-mail groups such as *Barış için Kadın Girişimi (Women's Initiative for Peace), Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü (Women are Strong Together), Ritim Kolektif (Rhythm Collective), Yoğurtçu Parkı Kadın Forumu (Yoğurtçu Park Women's Forum)* and *Sosyalist Feminist Kolektif (Socialist Feminist Collective)*.[25] I also shared the link in my WhatsApp groups such as *Kampus Cadıları (Campus Witches)*, Koç University *Kadın Dayanışma Klübü* (Women's Solidarity Club) and many other small groups consist of feminist women having intimate relations. In the third stage, I emailed to the professors in the women's studies department of universities in Istanbul, such as Sabancı University and Istanbul University and asked them to share my survey link with their students. I also emailed to the gender, and LGBTQ+ themed student clubs in various universities in Istanbul. As the next step, I directly messaged to women I think may have attended the Feminist night march in Istanbul at least once, via Facebook and Twitter. When I requested them to fill my survey, I also asked them if they could share the link with other groups, they were involved in. Snowball technique provided me to enlarge the network by having access to groups that I am not included in.

[25] Detailed information will be given about these groups in the relevant section of the thesis. Socialist feminist e-mail group is politically inactive but still used as a communication platform.

In the beginning, I avoided sharing the link directly on my Facebook and twitter timeline as the publicly accessible link might risk the reliability of my data. I thought that using my already established ties provided a safeguarded channel against the manipulation by non-sampling groups such as cis men and those living outside of İstanbul. However, I realized the restrictive aspect of this way after a while, because these channels were consisted of women who have already been introduced to feminism, had a chance to involve in the feminist networks and mingled with numerous discussions on feminism in these networks. I realized a recurring pattern in the political profile of the respondent, which would prevent me from covering the heterogeneity of the field. Hence, I decided to circulate the direct link both in my own social media account and some other accounts with high followers. In a pandemic environment where people were tired of filling out the online surveys, I was convinced that no one would respond to the questionnaire that took more than 15 minutes. I thought that even if a few people appeared for deliberate manipulation, this would not make a meaningful difference in the reliability of the data.

Except for its nature to be manipulated by non-sampling groups, I would highlight a fundamental limitation of the online survey regarding my field. The online survey assumes that all actors in the field are Internet users in general and social media users in particular. Although this assumption is valid particularly for young women, there are many women who do not use the internet or social media for different reasons or are deprived of technical skills required for filling out the questionnaire. The paper-based survey had been an essential tool for me to overcome this limitation. Based on random sampling during the march, an offline survey also allowed me to interview those who I was unlikely to come across in online platforms. In this respect, online and offline surveys have become complementary methods by covering each other's shortcomings.

2.7 Qualitative Phase of the Research

I carried out multimodal qualitative research comprised of in-depth interviews with women from diverse demographic/political/cultural categories and of participant observations in feminist meetings along with the participation to 8 March feminist organization meetings in 2019 and 2020. Qualitative phase of the research also comprised of feminist journal review that have been prominent in the feminist history. Lastly, it also based on observation and analysis of ongoing interactions in various feminist WhatsApp groups, which serve as a platform of practicing feminist politics.

2.7.1 Participant Observations

The qualitative part of my field started in August 2018 with my participation in the three-day summer camp held in Balıkesir by Campus Witches[26], a feminist organization established to combat gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence at universities. I attached great importance to attending this camp, since a group of young women from university students would constitute an important part of my sampling in understanding emerging feminist subjectivities and politics. As soon as I saw their camp announcements on Twitter, I sent a long message in which I introduced myself and explained my motivation to join the camp. They were very welcoming, such that I was immediately included in their WhatsApp group. My interactions, and in-person dialogues during the three-day camp, my observations on the content of the camp schedule provided me to follow the political agenda of young women. Yet, the significant part of the data comes from my three-year-long observations (between 2018-2021) on their continued conversations and content sharing over WhatsApp. I am still part of this WhatsApp group as of today. WhatsApp is currently the most common instant messaging app across the

[26] http://www.kampuscadilari.com/

globe (Colom 2021, p.2). It increasingly plays a key role in people's daily lives (Newman 2018, Valerina and Vaccari 2018) as well as in collective action, collective identities, political participation, accessing political knowledge, bonding, building social networks and in many other political engagements (Valenzuela et al., 2021; Skoric et al. 2016; Flesher Fominaya, 2010; Abubakar and Dasuki, 2018). The impact of this global trend has also reflected in social science research methods. The traditional qualitative methods based on in-person interaction have increasingly been adopted into online equivalents and accompanied with new methodological considerations among social scientists (Colom 2021; Boydell et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2012; Hooley et al., 2012). Having born into such a digital environment, this thesis is partly based on data I observed on *Kampüs Cadıları* WhatsApp group. Voice messages, links, images, and many other files as well as text-based discussions shared among members allowed me to grasp the political agenda of the group. But my observations are not limited to synchronous discussions in *Kampüs Cadıları*, I have also been involved in many other feminist WhatsApp groups such as *Femiritmik, Yüzdeçoğuz, Feminist Bellek, Koç University Women's Solidarity Club*. Based on these observations, I tried to comprehend how women were integrating feminism into their daily lives through consistent contact in WhatsApp groups, as well as the new forms of organization and solidarity that these interactions gave rise to. I employed the MAXQDA software program to expose the frequency of recurring themes and analyze the repetitive patterns. Apart from that, I also participated in the organization meetings for the feminist marches of 2019 and 2020. The weekly meetings of the organization committee started about three months before the night of March 8. In these meetings I tried to observe which actors participated in the organization meetings, how the technical tasks progressed, how the topic of the march's main banner was designated, how the current political developments shaped the content of the march, how the decision-

making processes progressed. I also tried to regularly follow the talks and discussions on varying feminist topics held in Feminist Mekan under the name of "Cuma Buluşmaları" (Friday Meetings) and in *Yoğurtçu Women's Forum*. [27] Another platform has been *Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü* (Women are Strong Together) which consists of not only feminists but also women form diverse political lines. My involvement in these platforms provided me with a significant insight on the women's agenda of the period.

My dual involvement (as a researcher and an activist) has caused some difficulties as well as conveniences throughout the field research. The significant advantage has been my organic interaction with the field, which considerably reduced the risk of instrumentalizing the field and the interaction therein for the sake of my academic curiosity. My dual position has enabled me to settle in the "outsider within" positioning instead of adopting the utterly "outsider" which has been claimed to be a necessary condition of being "scientific" (Rofel and Wolf, 2003; Anderson, 2012). Apart from these epistemic concerns, another advantage of my organic relationship with the field was that I had easy access to actors where I could directly ask my specific questions about the field. Lastly, the organic relationship with the field helped me to be equipped with the terminology and founding principles of the field. This allowed me to avoid several potential difficulties during my field research. For example, while engaging with the Muslim women, Kurdish women, and LGBTI+ interviewees, I knew quite a lot about the conceptual sets and founding values of each field. I experienced having such an insight as a methodological privilege throughout the field research.

[27] Yoğurtçu Women's Forum is one of the forums created in different districts of Istanbul with the Gezi resistance in 2013. The forum, which first convened on June 26, 2013, in Kadıköy Yoğurtçu Park upon the call of the Istanbul Feminist Collective, has been continuing regularly every week on the basis of feminist principles since then. Due to the pandemic restrictions that started in 2020, the meetings were held on Zoom as of April.

On the other hand, my activist researcher position also caused some difficulties and limitations. First of all, it has been frequently stated in the non-positivist method discussions that it is not possible to claim objectivity isolated from value, prejudices, experiences, in short, from the subjectivity of the researcher. Non-positivist methodology has long rejected the claim for an objectivity immune from the values, prejudices, and experiences, in short from the subjectivity of the researcher (Bourdieu 1990, Latour and Woolgar 2013, Harraway 1991, Harding 1995). A bird's eye view free of value would only be "god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere" (Haraway 1988, p. 581). This inevitably applies to my research. My research interest and questions have directly rooted in my personal political story. My insider positioning, however, does not mean that my research has been shaped by speculative explanations away from the claim of objectivity. As a researcher, I would underline that I do not want to give up the claim of objectivity, although not in a positivist sense. My claim of objectivity relies on the critical self-reflection (Hussey 2012, p.7, Bourdieu 1990) in which I constantly reflect on my peculiar position as a researcher and take a critical distance from my position. However, critical self-reflection has not always been easy to achieve as my political subjectivity is embodied in my body in a way that I cannot easily discern through conscious self-reflective practice. To be more precise, my entrenched perspectives, analytical and political categories, drawn from my past political experiences at SFK and the broader feminist platforms, have frequently haunted me throughout my field research. My established feminist perspective provided me with a ready-made explanation to analyze the facts. For example, I noticed that I was highly inclined to label certain political discourses and attitudes as neoliberal individuality. I was also inclined to idealize the practices and believe in how organizations of any kind necessarily empower women until my field revealed rather different results. I was also quite ready to associate

"disorganizational" forms directly with neoliberal individuality. Instead of understanding the complex and multi-layered dynamics of the field, these ready-made frameworks had provided me with a comfort zone in the early period of my field research. After a few in-dept interviews, I realized how I structured my questions in such a way to confirm my existing frames. Having noticed that, I strived to suspend my given explanatory categories and prioritize the field itself to better grasp with its all nuances, ambivalence, and complexity. For example, I restructured my questions immediately after a few interviews, and began to hear more what my field was telling me. When I partially succeeded in this, not only did my epistemological lens, through which I see social facts with different eyes, changed, but my understanding of politics in general and feminist politics in particular began to reshape. I realized that "today's youth" who are claimed to be over individualized are experiencing different forms of collectivity which significantly transformed the meaning of individual and collective political attitudes.

Another epistemological difficulty caused by having experience in a feminist organization was that I sometimes tended to fall into the illusion of situating my past organization at the core of the feminist movement feminist movement. While I was aware at the conscious level that it was not the case, my interaction with repeating affects, encounters, and same actors in a closed loop within a certain political terrain inevitably shaped the limits of my perception and political horizon. This could have run the risk of leaving the "new" out of the frame. However, the scope of my thesis, which includes new forms of feminist subjectivity and politics, has constantly reminded me to go beyond my closed feminist circle.

2.7.2 In-depth Interviews

My first in-depth interviews were with women I met at the Campus Witches camp. After I introduced my thesis in detail on the WhatsApp group, I requested those who want to

have an in-depth interview to contact me privately. Upon my message, 6 women stated that they wanted to be interviewed.

Another group was volunteers who came to support the night march support the organization of Feminist Night March of 2020. Preparations for the 2020 Night March had begun in January 2020. Just like every year, a few days before the Night Walk of 2020, the organization team called for support from women+ via social media to get set of work items done together (such as writing the banners and placards, designating those who would carry the photo blocks during the march. Responding to this call, about 15 young women+, with an average age of 19 to 25, came to the Feminist Mekan to be involved in the preparation process. The picture below which also includes the young people who came to the Feminist Mekan upon a call from Twitter, was taken during the preparation of for the feminist night march.

Figure 2: This picture was captured during the main banner and placards writing process of feminist Night March (2020), which I took part as a participant observer.

I met those and took their contact info to be able to conduct interview after the marching rush was over. I contacted this group about a week after the walk rush was over. I was able to interview 5 of the ten people I contacted.

The overwhelming majority of my in-depth interviews consists of women+, whom I reached through the online survey. I added the question of "Would you like to participate in the in-depth interview, which is the next step of this research?" 141 people in the online survey and 15 people in the offline survey ticked "yes" option by also adding their contact addresses. I was aware that this number was too much for an in-depth interview, but I still contacted almost all of these people, thinking that most of them would not respond to my e-mails. Just as I expected, some of them did not return to my e-mails at all, while some of them stated that they were not available within the time interval I specified. In the last case, I was able to interview with 48 people.

I also made in-depth interviews with 11 women who I think are active figures in the movement, by contacting them through my own network. Thus, I interviewed 70 women in total. I deciphered 45 of entire interviews as this number appeared sufficient in capturing recurring pattern. However, undeciphered records also contributed to the formation of a map in my mind. One of the factors that enabled me to conduct such a large number of in-depth interviews was the Zoom, as the most prominent communication channel throughout the pandemic.[28] I had conducted 7 face-to-face in-depth interviews before the pandemic lockdown and then, completed all the remaining interviews via zoom. When I first contacted my interviewers via e-mail, I stated that the interview would be held via Zoom. When I started my in-depth interviews in July 2020, most people were already familiar with the technical infrastructure of the zoom platform. I think that zoom

[28] In 2019, the COVID 19 pandemic broke out, thus I was forced to conduct a sizable portion of the fieldwork under unexpected quarantine circumstances. This inexorably led me to conduct the majority of in-depth interviews using zoom, one of the Pandemic's widely used communication tools.

made it easier for women to accept my interview request, as it did not require any spatial mobility and also made it possible to allocate less time than face-to-face interviews as well as exempting from in-person participant expenses. Normally the maximum face-to-face interview would have been 2 in a day, but thanks to the convenience provided by zoom, the number of interviews I could conduct in a day has reached four.

The limited number of interviews I conducted prior to pandemic gave me the chance to measure the quality of the interviews I conducted via Zoom. For my case, I can easily ensure that the quality of the interviews I conducted via zoom did not make significant difference compared to the in-person method.[29] Once I was convinced that the zoom interview is equally valid as an interview channel, I continued my meetings over zoom even during the intervals when the pandemic restrictions were relatively loosened. It wasn't just my choice to move on via Zoom. My interviewers also preferred the zoom option because face-to-face meetings would cause a temporal and physical cost for them. Zoom increased my recruitment from different sociological backgrounds residing in an array of locations across İstanbul as well as it increased the number of participants. Physical distance, transportation, and temporal issues and many other difficulties that could have limited opportunities both for me and my participants to conduct interview in person were removed significantly.

In my interviews with young women+, I basically tried to understand how they practiced feminist politics. While trying to understand this, I thought it would be important to make comparisons with the previous generation, because it was necessary to

[29] The Covid 19 has sparked methodological discussions on the validity of zoom interviews and most importantly given rise to reconsideration of what we understand from fieldwork (See Howlett 2021, Lobe et al. 2020; Archibald, et al., 2019; Reñosa et al. 2021; Oliffe et al. 2021). Despite a number of disadvantages, they consider online methods as equally valid and legitimate approaches albeit not appropriate for every type of research (Hawlett 2021, p.4).
It should also be noted that online research has already been in use for a long in social science. Researchers have been conducting online surveys, digital ethnographies, 'netnographies,' (See Beaulieu, 2004; Bluteau, 2019; De Seta, 2020). interviews over computer mediated channels such as Skype, e-mail has been conducted by social scientisits for many years (Cater 2011; Sullivan 2012 cited in Hawlett 2021, p. 2).

give a picture of the "old" while expressing what the "new" was like. With this in mind, I also interviewed women between the ages of 35 and 60 who once took part in feminist organizations but continued in broader women's platforms after their organizations was terminated. With the exception of a few interviews that lasted five hours, most of my interviews lasted between one and two hours.

2.7.3 Content Review of Feminist Journals

I reviewed the magazines *Kaktüs* (1988), *Feminist* (1987), *Pazartesi* (1996), *Amargi* (2006), *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar* (2006) and *Feminist Politika* (2009). Feminist groups have pursued the path of public visibility through publishing practices from the very beginning. The first feminist public visibility started with the *Somut* (4. page), and the subsequent differences in their feminist perspective were, appeared again through magazine publishing. Therefore, I found it important to examine these feminist magazines to understand how feminist politics has been shaped in Turkey in different historical contexts. I intended to trace the historical continuities and ruptures evident in feminist politics, while trying to understand the contemporary forms. As a final note, I should point out that what I was trying to do was not a content analysis. Content analysis is based on an interpretation of the meaning through an analysis of the relationship of certain themes and concepts in specific content (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976; Hsieh et al. 2005; Prasad 2008; Kohlbacher 2006; Elo and Kyngäs 2008). I intended no to draw inferences by interpretations to unfold implicit meaning, latent patterns in the feminist journals. Rather, my goal was to map out the issues covered in magazine, to examine how these issues were discussed, and to keep track of changing feminist agendas.

Chapter 3

NEOLIBERAL IMPACTS ON EMERGING FEMINIST SUBJECTIVITIES IN TURKEY

This thesis aims at understanding emerging feminist subjectivities and changing political practices in feminist politics since the last two decades in Turkey. I try to map the complex dynamics having a constitutive role in newly emerging subjectivities and changing political practices. Among these complex dynamics, I, in this chapter, focus specifically on economic pillar which has been frequently ignored in understanding contemporary faces of feminist movement in Turkey. More precisely, I will examine the post-2000s aspect of neoliberal labor regimes and subjectivities to better understand the changing engagement of young women with feminist politics in Turkey. I will argue that a transformation towards precarity and cognitive labor through increased universitization since the 2000s has changed the class composition of the contemporary feminist movement in Turkey. This ultimately results in new subjectivities that are predominantly shaped by the logic of *investmentality*. This will be followed by the argument that existing transformation has conditioned very new political practices that requires less time and effort but spread more into everyday life. While doing this, I underline the political possibilities created by new forms by advocating affirmative account, rather than the pessimistic one that frequently crystallized in the discourse of de-politicization, de-institutionalization, and extinction

3.1 The Logic of Investmentality in the Age of Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a mode of governance that deals simply not with a set of economic policies and accompanying political, cultural, and social restructuring, but it is also a mode of governance producing subjectivity. [Brown, 2005; Lemke, 2002; Read, 2009; Lazzarato, 2014; Burchell (Eds) et al., 1991]. This means that intensified privatization, destabilization of the job market, promotion of corporate profit as a pivotal point of neoliberal rationality do not remain limited to the economic realm. They also facilitate a particular form of subjectivity accompanied by the fundamental axiomatics of *neoliberal governmentality* in the Foucauldian (1979) sense.

Neoliberal governmentality is a new subjectifying power regime in which individuals internalize extrinsic neoliberal prescriptions and inscribe them in their practices. Individuals consider their internalized conduct as something that resulted in their own preferences. In other words, they are expected to regulate their own behaviors according to the invisible prescriptions of the new power regime. Foucault defines this gradual and indirect effect as "conduct of conduct" (Burchell et.al., 1991, p. 2). This means that the new art of government does not directly curtail or determine the acts of individuals; "rather, it acts on the conditions of actions" by operating on interest, expectations, desire, aspirations, and imagination (Read, 2009, p. 29). In this way, individuals are expected to govern themselves rather than passively waiting to be imposed by immediate prescriptions of power as previous power regimes (sovereign and disciplinary power) did. This is a much more sophisticated and efficient way of exerting power over individuals as it bypasses the need for repressive state apparatuses that would lead to an economic and political burden for governments. This way is also profoundly

efficient in terms of its capacity to produce subjectivity. Rose (1998) explains the capacity of this new power regime to produce subjectivity as follows:

> "We have been freed from the arbitrary prescription of religious and political authorities, thus allowing a range of different answers to the question of how we should live. But we have been bound into a relationship with new authorities, which are more profoundly subjectifying because they appear to emanate from our individual desires to fulfil ourselves in our everyday lives, to craft out personalities, to discover who we really are. Through these transformations we have "invented ourselves" with all the ambiguous costs and benefits that this invention has entailed" (Rose, 1998, p.17)

As is seen, "individualization" appears as a fundamental strategy in framing the conditions of actions in this new context (Beck and & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Bauman, 2013). Promoting individual health insurances and individual pension systems, individual contract instead of a collective agreement between labor and capital owner, increased precariousness and indebtedness, and many other individualized practices constitute the basic principles of the new regime. The right to education, health, pension, and secure working conditions, which were once thought of as welfare state service, are now being delivered on the shoulders of individuals (Lemke, 2002, p. 12). The possibilities and opportunities that can be expanded with solidarity networks and collectivity are tried to be erased from people's future imaginations and expectations. This resulted in fulfilment of all social responsibilities to be a matter of personal provision (Rose, 1996; Lemke, 2000; Dean, 1999). Assigning the individual as the "responsible" actors accompanies transferring lifelong risks such as occupational accident, unemployment, illness into the terrain of individuality (O'Malley, 1996; Lazzarato 2014). Hence individuality, which often presented as a space of absolute freedom, turns into a nightmare where people bear their responsibilities and risks alone.

In this context, people who left alone and vulnerable in the labor market as well as in their every aspect of social life turn into an entrepreneur of self to reduce economic risks they may face throughout their life. Parents, for example, equip their children with

multiple skills starting from their youngest ages to eliminate the risk of unemployment that they may encounter in the labor market in the future. They also try to provide private individual health and pension insurance for each member of families (in line with their economic capacities) in addition to their state-based retirement. White-collar workers cease to be preferred subjects in the market when they cannot adapt themselves to new software, programs, and many other innovations. Having a university degree does not guarantee a job anymore. The preference criteria in the labor market are measured by the number of qualifications you add to your university education. In this environment, even having a doctoral degree is alone insufficient unless one holds a post-doc degree. The motto "publish or perish" evolves into the "publish and perish" in the academic world. Even if you have a job, you should watch out for others since you never know when you might lose it. This entails constant seek for a social network that would compensate the loss in any unexpected unemployment. Hence, it is inadequate to equip yourself in diverse forms, you are also supposed to create a social network.

In this dissertation, I develop the concept of *investmentality* to define the tendency to increase personal capacity ceaselessly.[30] The concept of *investmentality* consists of the semantic combination of the "investment" and "mentality". The term investment basically belongs to the fields of economics and finance. The act of investment has the goal of allocating money, time, and effort to generate income for greater value over time. The logic of economic rationality and relevant logic of investment expands all over the social life in the neoliberal regime. Most of the actions and decisions are taken in the hope

[30] I was inspired by Foucault's concept of "governmentality" (government and mentality), which implies how the logic of government has shaped the overall mentality of individuals. However, by suggesting investmentality, I direct the focus onto the logic of capital rather than the logic of government in the production of subjectivity. My intention here rests on Lazzarato's idea that governmentality has increasingly meant the government of private enterprise in neoliberal times (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 37). Following the concept of investmentality is also important in the sense that it is based on Guattari's attempt to overlap field of desire, subjectivity, and political economy. For Deleuze and Guattari, the question of production is inseparable from that of desire (Guattari), such that political economy is no more than a "subjective economy" (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 50-51).

of generating future revenue in this new context. Any attitude that does not provide an economic benefit in the future is associated with being vagrant. In this context, the body itself also turns into a source of investment that needs constant work on self. It becomes a field of investment that decreases in value when it fails to renew itself and thus is doomed to disappear in the market over time. Just as a phone manufacturer (or any other commodity manufacturer) is destined to disappear in the competitive market when it remains incapable of expanding its product range and fails to adapt itself to the latest technological improvements, the same is true for human subjects in contemporary times. The human individual is also expected to ceaselessly work on and add value to the self in order not to disappear in a labor market dominated by competent and well-equipped people.

The notion of mentality, on the other hand, refers to "bodies of knowledge, belief and opinion in which we are immersed" (Dean, 1999, p. 24). Mentality thus deals not with the individual mind and accompanying individual attitudes but refers to the collective forms of thoughts and consciousness (p. 25). In this regard, the concept of *investmentality*, suggests that constant investment in the self by enlarging the limits of our qualifications has become a norm and a hegemonic mode of thought in shaping our cause of life. In this new normative setting, mentality is subsumed under neoliberal logic. One can claim the redundancy of the concept of *investmentality*, reminding similar concepts such as "Self-entrepreneurship" and "Homo-economicus" or "Human Capital" (Brown, 2015; 2005) that have already been in use for some time. However, these concepts fall short of encompassing an emphasis on a mentality that also bears traces of subjectivity. In other words, the concepts of self-entrepreneurship and homo-economicus are based on the idea of a rational subject which appears not as a production of power regime but as a sole agent of his/her decisions and behaviors. Moreover, neither concept

has been produced within critical social science but have been produced by neoliberal elites within the field of the neoliberal economy. Critical social scientists include both concepts in their work not as analytical or explanatory tools but as concepts that should be criticized. On the other hand, I consider *investmentality* as having an explanatory capacity within the field of critical social sciences. More importantly, *investmentality* refers to a never-ending process, and a constant state of becoming, while others have to do with the rational subject that has already taken its final forms. In this respect, Homo-economicus" or "Human Capital" draw a picture of subjectivity that was once produced and fixed as such. Additionally, these concepts address not a subject of failure in psychoanalytical terms. The subjects of Homo-economicus" or "Human Capital have been successfully produced exactly as is desired as well as their economic behaviors serve for the sovereigns, not for themselves. On the other hand, *investmentality* also addresses the subject of failure, a failure in terms of fulfilling what is expected from her. To put it more concretely, despite her reluctance, she might constantly invest in herself, such as useless certificates and training just for the sake of necessity and none of these investments might work. Last but not least, *investmentality* includes the possibility that investment in self may not necessarily return as a benefit for capital, but for subjects themselves: one cannot imagine what a body that constantly invests in itself can do!

When I claim that *investmentality* has become the hegemonic mode of thought, I do not mean that all segments of society invest in themselves to the same extent and in the same ways. Undoubtfully, the logic of *investmentality* is adopted in different ways depending on the gender, class, ethnics, and generational parameters. There are even social categories that are unable to invest in themselves at all. I nevertheless insist on the generalizable aspect of the logic of *investmentality* in the sense that it no longer only characterizes the mentality of economically advantageous groups. It is rather increasingly

spreading across the entire society and become a normative ideal of people in current times. In another saying, once the logic of *investmentality* is established, it becomes the condition of self-assessment, and measurement, even for people who are unable to invest in themselves. When lower-class people are unable to make adequate investment in themselves due to economic inequalities, they either feel incomplete, inadequate and even useless, or they take on a tough struggle to compensate for this feeling of inadequacy. Consequently, *investmentality* becomes *zeitgeist* of the society whereby people rate and measure their self-competence in line with the general matrix of economic rationality. People's desire and inclinations begin to be deemed valuable only when they are adopted to the logic of capital.

Ironically, subjectification of this kind is promoted as the ground of opportunities and possibilities as well as the ground of absolute freedom. Individuals are being endowed with the promises of being able to achieve what they wish to become by constant investment in themselves. In this way, it is claimed, they will not only be better equipped against possible risks in unstable economic conditions but will also multiply the possibility of a better life in stable economic conditions. This presupposes the assumption that people's "failure" results from their inertia regarding not having enough investment in themselves. People who feel the burden of success on their own shoulders try all possible ways that make themselves competent, as they know what it might cost if they are not adequately equipped in a highly competitive labor market. To avoid the risk of unemployment and accompanying blame for "failure", they tend to expand the scope of employment possibilities which provide them with a room for maneuver in the labor market.

From this point of view, I argue that the insecure employment climate caused by precarity, conditions the very logic of *investmentality*. In another word, *investmentality*

appears as a mode of being supposed to reduce the unfortunate and risky situations in the labor market. The logic of *investmentality*, as I put it, has begun to root in a considerable degree in the age of precarity that characterizes the contemporary aspect of the neoliberal labor regime. In other words, precarious conditions have already existed since the beginning of neoliberalism in the 1980s and thus are not specific to the last two decades. However, what makes the current era distinctive is that precarious dynamics have deepened and crystallized in the form of a new class and labor structure only since the 2000s. The structural transformations which have gradually been implemented since the 1980s and 1990s have resulted in a new phase since the last two decades.[31] These are the change in accumulation from industrial production to financialization; transformation of class formation from proletariat to precariat; transformation of labor regime from secure, full-time, and permanent jobs to insecure, flexible, and temporary jobs. The exponential growth of precariousness literature by the 2000s reveals that framing and naming these nascent categories as such has become possible only after the last two decades. Considering that precarity conditions constitute one of the basic dynamics that characterize the post-2000 period, I think the discussion on precarity would be important to better grasp young women's political subjectivation. Any attempt to understand multiplication and deterritorialization of feminist politics without discussing the latest labor processes at the global level would necessarily be incomplete and insufficient. While having acknowledge this, I also bear in mind that young women's changing engagement with feminist politics cannot be simply reduced to transformations in the Labor regime.

[31] Although it is problematic to mark historical continuity or discontinuity with specific years, I still believe in the analytical power of underling certain years.

3.2 Discussions on Precarity as a New Mode of Labor Regime

Precarity refers to the contemporary working conditions revolved around the high level of labor insecurity, uncertainty, and instability (Kalleberg, 2009; Standing, 2011; Wilson and Ebert, 2013; Bone, 2019). Insecurity, uncertainty, and instability in precarious employment conditions are associated with high employment, contingent jobs[32] and a low level of rights and protections over wages, working conditions and hours (Buchtemann and Quack, 1990; Campbell and Price, 2016; Bone, 2019, p. 1218-1219; Krestos 2010, Rodgers, 1989). Precarious work manifests itself not in the form of a homogeneous category but constitutes a range from "hyper-precarity" (Lewis et al., 2015) to "hypo-precariousness" (Campell et al., 2016). Hyper-precarity is attributed to the extreme form of exploitation, such as migrant workers, while hypo-precariousness is associated with the relatively less severe effects of precarious working conditions.

However, insecure, uncertain, and unstable aspect of precarious work does not simply characterize the working conditions or associate with objective working dynamics in employment. They have a pervasive impact on the concrete lives of workers such as on their personal and family relations, on their affective world as well as on the ways they relate to institutions such as education, health, and welfare provisions (Bone, 2019; Campbell and Price, 2016). They also have far-reaching consequences for democratization of political realms (Kalleberg, 2009, p. 2). Consequently, the dynamics in precarious employment remain not limited to the workplace, but also affect workers' lives outside the workplace. Here, instead of dealing with this broader aspect of precarity discussions, I would rather narrow the scope by dealing with the ways young people experience precarity and how precarity influence their political subjectivity. More

[32] Contingent job is first introduced by Krestos (2010) to refers to part-time, temporary jobs.

specifically, I will try to examine how precarity in employment shapes the ways young women engage in feminist politics in Turkey.

The literature on precariousness is divided into a subcategory depending on the age variable (as it is divided into the gender and ethnics parameters). This literature deals specifically with the ways young people experience precariousness differently from their older counterparts (MacDonald, 2011; MacDonald et al. 2019; Schilling et al. 2019; Roberts, 2011; Côté, 2014; Blossfeld el.al. (Ed), 2006; Furlong (Ed.), 2009; Watson, 2013; Furlong et.al. (Ed), 2006; Furlong et.al. (Ed), 2005; Bone, 2019; Leccardi, 2005, 2012; Woodman and Wyn 2014). Some of these scholars consider precarity to be defining characteristic of today's young generation such that "youth-as-class" began to appear as a new phenomenon in many countries in their account (Côté, 2014; Woodman and Wyn 2014; Krestos 2010). Côté, for example, discusses the systemic "proletarianisation of the entire youth population" by providing statistics that shows the downward trend in youth wages in many OECD countries (p. 527). He shows that younger males earned nearly half of their older counterpart by the early 1980s, and this decline stabilized as such until 2008. This ratio, he says, has been falling continuously since 2008 (p. 532). A gradual decline in the wages also the same for young women+, albeit at different rates. By 2010, the wages of the young female have been declining to nearly 60% relative to their former female generations (Côté, 2014, p. 532). Although Côté acknowledges the importance of studies that point to inequalities by class, gender, and race among young people, he shows how these explanations unable to grasp the adverse transformation of the economic situation for the entire youth segment. In a similar vein, Krestos (2010) develops the concept of "precarious generation" to discuss how young people across Europe experience more difficulties than older workers in having access to the labor market despite their higher level of educational accomplishment (p. 7). By providing statistical

evidence from OECD, Eurostat surveys, he shows how the economy of E-15 countries is predominantly based on a wide atypical branch where mostly young people have been involved for three decades now (p. 18). The impact of precarity conditions is even more brutal when it comes to gender (Vosko et al., 2009) and third world countries.

The significant position young people occupy in the precarious labor market, and concomitant objective conditions become embedded within their life outside the workplace. Entire life-course trajectories take new forms under their objective material conditions such as indebtedness; having lack of accesses to health insurance; delay in retirement age; the nature and scope of the social network they are involved in; the ways young people approach themselves; the relationship young people establish with their families and immediate surroundings; delay in their marriage and childbearing commitments; mental disorders and related social constraints and impediments and many other adverse impacts upon their life. The main motif of all these changes in the life-course trajectories is uncertainty and instability.

Apart from the concrete and material transformation in life-course trajectories, the detrimental effect of labor-market insecurity has also intangible and immaterial consequences in the lives of today's youth generation such as the way they experience and imagine temporarily (Leccardi, 2005, 2012, 2014, 2017; Bone 2019). Given that the collective temporal rhythm (social time) is experienced depending on the changing social structures and pattern (Bergmann, 1992; Muzeetto, 2006; Hassard, 2000; Rose, 2013), it comes no surprising to coincide with discussions of today's increasing temporal rhythm. Harvey (1999) introduces the notion of "time-space compression" to depict the postmodern condition. Undoubtedly, the acceleration of social time is not unique to postmodern times. Industrialization from the very beginning of 18th century gave rise to the acceleration of collective temporal rhythm particularly through the advent of

transportation and communication technologies. By the 19th century, the way of perceiving and experiencing social time had changed drastically as the new transportation and communication technologies facilitated the rapid circulation of capital, goods, information, and people. The Zeitgeist of the period was revolving around the sensation that "that time was 'getting away' and that what once had gone at a walking pace was now galloping" (Leccardi, 2012, p. 61). What makes postmodernism (last few decades in particular) distinctive is the further acceleration of collective temporal rhythm. To depict postmodern condition, Harvey discusses a speed-up in production and "an acceleration in the de-skilling and re-skilling required to meet new labour needs" (p. 285). Speed-up in production processes, he argues, is accomplished by reversing Fordist organizational structure towards vertical disintegration (sub-contracting etc.) (p. 284). The organizational shift is accompanied by just-in-time delivery systems in both production and consumption processes. New technologies of electronic control in production and electronic banking and plastic money in consumption provide great acceleration in every step of the economy which has resulted in further momentum in the last few decades in the daily organization of social life (p. 284-285).

The acceleration in social time also reverberates directly to the contemporary temporal experience of young people, especially on the way they envisage the present and future. Leccardi (2017) explores young people's relationship with the future based on the results of an international survey conducted in 2008 and on many other empirical studies carried out between 2012 and 2014 in both northern and southern European countries. Based on this research, Leccardi shows how young European people's visions of the future revolve around the sense of insecurity, hesitation, and anxiety (Cavalli and Leccardi, 2013; Leccardi, 2017). Although northern European countries, compared to Southern Europe, display a relatively low level of these negative sensations through

efficient welfare provisions, they nevertheless provide some segment of young people (especially academically inclined young Norwegians) with fewer opportunities insufficient to reduce their future anxiety. In the Southern European countries where high unemployment rates and inefficient welfare provision characterize the society's social fabric, the sense of insecurity, hesitation, and anxiety spread across much wider segments of the young population. Under these circumstances, Leccardi (2017) says that the relationship with the future –as the future is the source of insecurity, hesitation, and anxiety– is either excluded or redefined and shaped by young generations (p. 355). At the point where the future gets away from their imagination, the present turns into an absolute temporarily and constitutes the single element of young people's temporal horizon. That is, the desires of young people are confined merely into the present by "seeking fulfillment in the present, without having to translate into a plan proper" (p. 354). The goal of the action is disconnected from the future, and it turns simply into the action itself "which begins and ends in the present" (p. 354). She argues that the long-term plan has begun not to be seen as realistic and plans on an ad hoc basis have become the norm. Young people's temporal horizon and expectations, therefore, are reduced and remain limited to the scope of what preset time offer.[33] The present time, she argues, ceases to be a bridge between past and future and replaces the future (p. 355).

Domination of the present over the future is also a salient theme in the study of Bone (2019). Bone develops the concept of "continuous present" to explain how the idea of the future is deferred from the young people's vision and the present occupy the young people's temporal zone. The lack of control over the contract types, she argues, cause insecure feelings about the future, which exclude young people from long-term plan and

[33] Nonetheless, it is worth underlining that Leccardi thinks that the way young people relate to the future should not be approached from a completely pessimistic and fatalistic framework. She also reveals how many young people engage in reinventing various affirmative relationship with the future (Leccardi 2017, p.367).

commitments about their future (p. 1232). This leads young people to be stuck in the present and perceive the future as something far away from us that can hardly be reached. She says that the future is absorbed within the present by being folded back into it (p. 1232). In this way, the present extends towards the temporal horizon and become the only unit of the temporal zone.

The new dynamics in the way young people relate to the future is accompanied by changes in the "construction of young people's biographical time" (Leccardi, 2017, p. 353) and their "biographical subjectification" (Leccardi, 2005, p. 126). Lacking the capacity to navigate their future and well-delineated transition to the job market as well as having cognitive baggage surrounded by the irrationality of making a long-term plan not only result in the constant delay of biographical time but also in the formation of "hybrid qualification" (Davey and Fuller, 2013). This also leads to internalized self-critique and self-devaluation accompanied by definitions such as "vagrant" and "adult-child" (Bone, 2019, p. 1231).

In this thesis, I will utilize the idea that uncertainty and instability are two constitutive dimensions of today's zeitgeist. In discussing Turkey's context in the following section, these two dimensions will continue to exist as a leitmotif of young people's construction of political subjectivities. However, based on my field research, I will partially take the side road while discussing the ways young people experience temporality. The literature I have discussed above hinges on the idea that the future folds back into the present. According to the literature, this results in the expansion of the present all over the temporal horizon and the gradual disappearing of the idea of the future from young people's political and economic imagination. However, I will argue the opposite that is the future gets compressed into the present and the present turns into a lost time. More specifically, young people's insecure feelings towards their future push

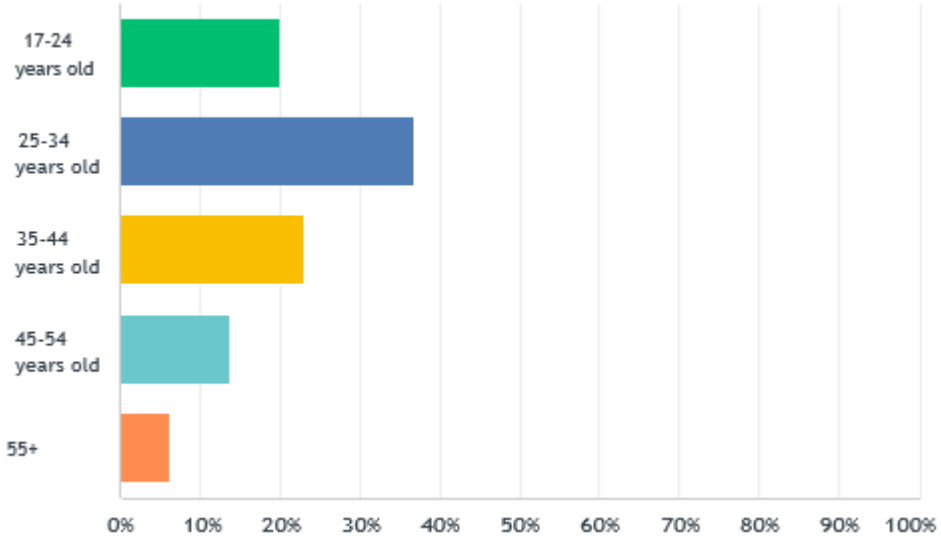
them into a sequence of life practices that might assure a sense of security for their future lives. These practices consist largely of an investment practice. This considerably coincides with the concept of investmentality I develop throughout the chapter. Within the logic of investmentality young people began to cling to the idea of future which causes them not experiencing present moments. In other words, when the present inundate with the anxiety of the future and fierce struggle to secure it, the present is reduced simply to the fulfillment of immediate impulses. This impedes young people to experience and discover the potentialities of the present. In this way, present turns into a missing and devastating time where young people suspend or delay the practices that they are normally expected to experience just in time. From the vantage point of investmentality, the idea of the future assimilates the present rather than the present assimilate the future. The logic of investment is woven with the idea of the future, which means that existing potential and resources are deployed not for the present but the future benefit. Experiencing the present becomes by no means a socially acceptable ideals in the logic of investmentality. Socially acceptable ideals are no longer tied to some political inspirations and imaginations but tied to guarantying the future. Therefore, the concept of investmentality also implies the hegemony of the idea of the future over the present. The ultimate consequence of this logic would inevitably be the slipping away of life from young people's hands for the sake of secure the future.[34]

[34] At this point, I would make clear that it is not the future experience that dominates the present but the idea of the future that dominate it. I would also like to make an explanation about the domination of the future over present. One would argue that there are many young university graduates who can't save the day, let alone invest in the future, and thus are trapped in the boring and repetitive work of everyday life. I do not deny the existence of these groups. However, I think investmentality points to an inclination for those who are incapable of investing in their bodies at all. To put it more clearly, those who cannot invest in themselves tend to explain their inadequacies by being incapable of adequately equip their bodies in various ways despite their graduate degree. In this respect, investmentality emerges as a reference point for today's young generation while reference point was the university degree for the previous generation.

3.3 Empirical Findings from the Field

This section relies specifically on the economic and demographic aspect of the field results that I obtained from both online survey and in-depth interviews. I will initially focus on the online survey to provide insights on age, income status, working conditions, sectoral distribution by age, educational status, and then try to interpret what these results mean in terms of the new feminist politics and subjectivities. This will be followed by the analysis of the narratives I obtained from in-depth interviews to have a detailed understanding that would help to contextualize the concept of *investmentality* and associated economic transformations.

Figure 3: Age distribution of the respondents in the online survey



Out of the 420 respondents, 6,19% (26 people) consists of women over 55+ age range; 13.81% (58 people) consist of 45-54 age range; %23,10 (97 women) consists of 35-44 age range; % 36,90 (155 women) consist of 25-34 age range, and finally % 20 (84 women) consist of 17-24 age range. The figure above reveals that young women under 35 (17-24

and 25-34) constitute more than fifty per cent of the movement. According to this chart, it is seen that the movement has grown exponentially with the new generations coming every period, but as it spreads towards the youth, the growth rate of the movement increases. Given that the feminist movement is growing in the form of snowball effect with the increasing participation of young women, I draw the conclusion that one of the components that characterize the contemporary feminist movement in Turkey is its young and dynamic feature. This requires a detailed examination of young women under the age of 35 years.

Young women under the age of 35, who constitute the largest age segment of the movement, have spent their youth and adulthood in post-2000's economic and socio-political atmosphere.[35] Their political expectations, attitudes and desires have considerably been shaped by that period's economic conditions, albeit not entirely. At this point, it would be crucial to examine the economic atmosphere of the post-2000s that we have been passing through in Turkey. I think that the economic conditions of last two decades appear as a significant variable (among many others) in the formations of today's feminist subjectivities.[36]

3.4. Economic Atmosphere of Post-2000s in Turkey

[35] The political atmosphere will be the subject of the next two chapters.

[36] Neoliberal dynamics of the post-2000s, in no doubt, manifest a continuity with the pre-2000s period in many respects. This continuity disvalues the making of a knife-edge distinction between the post and pre the 2000s. Nevertheless, I prefer to focus on the post-2000s period instead of drawing a long durée framework to better clarify this continuity. The reason lies in two significant factors. First, the scope of my thesis is limited to the post-2000s period. Secondly, the post-2000 period contains discontinuities and ruptures in many aspects, as well as it harbours continuities simultaneously. I think that any attempt to understand the dynamics of the transformation of political subjectivity requires examining discontinuities and ruptures.

The economic atmosphere of post-2000s was predominantly formed around the regulation of privatization in the Constitution in 1999[37], and economic crisis in 2001 as well as the economic agenda of the *Justice and Development Party* (hereafter AKP) government that came to power immediately after the crisis in 2002. The unstable economic conditions of the 90s and the following crisis in 2001 have largely served AKP's promise for economic stability to find ground in Turkish society. Immediately after it came to power, The AKP government accelerated the implementation of neoliberal procedures, which were signed with the IMF in 1998 but could not be fully implemented. Limiting public expenditures to prevent disruption of foreign debt payments, accelerating privatizations, promoting insecure and flexible employment forms are only a few of those implementations. These regulations have served to ensure economic growth and stability to a certain extent. However, the short-term economic growth and stability have been possible through consumption and construction-oriented growth models based on consumer credit and individual indebtedness. In the report on *Indebtedness, Insecurity and Economic Concerns* released by Konda in 2016, Ümit Akçay and Yasemin Yılmaz draw attention to the enormous increase in household debts ratio to the national income.[38] This report reveals that the average credit card debt reached 3.4 times of household income in Turkey in 2016 (Konda report, 2016, p. 22). Similarly, while the ratio of individual debt to GDP was around 3.0 per cent in 2003, this ratio reached 23.8 per cent in 2013, increasing approximately eight times. (BSB, 2015, p. 169).[39] The increase in personal and household indebtedness resulted from the

[37] While privatizations proceeded only with various legal regulations until 1999, it was first regulated as a constitutional amendment in 1999 with article number 4446. (See https://ms.hmb.gov.tr/uploads/sites/6/2020/06/yasalcerceve1.pdf). Hence, the overall transformation of the state apparatus in the direction of neoliberalism accelerated only in 1999 when the privatization clause was added to the Constitution. See https://www.evrensel.net/haber/425824/siyaset-bilimci-sebnem-oguz-anayasa-tartismasina-ortak-olmak-iktidari-mesrulastirir

[38] https://konda.com.tr/rapor/25/borclanma-guvencesizlik-ve-ekonomik-kaygilar?l=en

[39] This book, published by Yordam Publication under the name of *AKP'li Yıllarda Emeğin Durumu* is the product of a collective work called *Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler* (BSB, Independent Social Scientists)

institutionalization of consumer loans in 2005. In 2005 and the following few years, consumer loans started to be encouraged excessively by the banks and loan applications were made much easier than previous years. Individuals, whose real wages had already fallen, inclined excessively to loans in a climate where consumption was so encouraged. Loan applications were facilitated to such an extent that loan debts were tried to be settled with other loans. According to the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (Bankacılık Düzenleme ve Denetleme Kurulu) data, household indebtedness increased from 3.4 billion in 2002 to 55.8 billion in 2006, 111 billion in 2008, 143 billion in 2010, 250 billion in 2012 and finally 355 billion in 2013 ((BDDK, Financial Markets Report, 2014). The amount of these debts reached such a level that the government had to take measures, including restructuring the loan debt and limiting the purchases made with credit cards.

With the increase in consumption through indebtedness, the burden of creating employment in the economy shifted mainly to the service sector, and the employment rate based on industrial production decreased significantly. Both the decline in the capacity of the industrial sector to create jobs and the lack of sufficient industrial production to employ the surplus labor that is disconnected from agricultural production resulted in the further expansion of the reserve labor force. The high unemployment rate resulted in low rates of unionization and collective bargaining. Çelik (2015) shows that the rate of workers included in the collective bargaining agreement decreased from 27 percent in 1989 to 14 percent at the end of the 1990s, and 7 per cent in the early 2010s (p. 180).

The fall in real wages, accompanying indebtedness, de-unionisation, and many other developments mainly resulted from precarity as one of the most important pillars characterizing post-2000. In fact, Turkey has never been a country where secure job

opportunity has been ensured. The employment creation capacity of the economy has always been inadequate in Turkey. However, the regulations implemented in 2003 made precarity a rule that constituted the labor market's structural character. The law numbered 4857, enacted in 2003, constituted the legal basis for subcontracting, flexible and part-time work (Özdemir and Yücesan Özdemir, 2006; Akçay 2018, p. 8; Duman, 2014, p. 145; Koç, 2003, p. 219).[40] Since then, precariousness has become more acute in low wages, high working hours, part-time, contractual, and informal work. According to ILO data, the share of the national income of the working population in Turkey, which was 52.2 percent in 1999, declined to 29,7 percent in 2011 (Akçay and Yılmaz, 2016 Konda's report 2016, p. 29). This report provides striking data on the decline in real incomes. Similarly, according to the Konda Barometer (June 2016), approximately 70 per cent of the working population is in a continuous cycle of job changing and job search, while full-time and permanent employees make up only 32 per cent of the working population.[41] Göztepe (2007), on the other hand, clearly demonstrates the change in average working hours between 1988-2006 in her study, which shows the distribution of the employed population by actual working time. According to her study, the rate of employees working more than 40 hours in 1988 was 56.8 per cent, while this rate reached 61.5 in 2000 and 68.8 in 2006 (Göztepe, 2007, p. 103).[42] In addition to the increase in working hours, another transformation has been the change in the rate of full-time and part-time employment implemented in legislative regulations in 2003. Based on the OECD data[43], Duman (2014) shows the figure of a steady increase in the number of part-time workers

[40] Although, flexibilisation policies of the labor market first introduced in the second half of the 1990s after the economic crisis in 1994 in a legislative framework, economic regulations regarding the law remained very limited. The regulation in 2003 is a huge and radical step towards completing this unfinished process.
[41] https://konda.com.tr/rapor/25/borclanma-guvencesizlik-ve-ekonomik-kaygilar?l=en , p. 32)
[42] This increase can be considered to be related to the determination of the weekly working time as 45 hours in the first place. However, there is a similar increase in the share of employees who work for 50 hours or more in employment. While the rate of the population working 50 hours or more per week in 1988 was 37.4 per cent, this rate reached 40 per cent in 2001 and 50 per cent in 2006 (Göztepe, 2007, p. 104).
[43] See, https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=FTPTC_D#

between 2004 and 2009 (p. 150). While in the year 2009, when part-time employment was subjected to TUIK data for the first time, 2,4 million people were employed in part-time jobs, it increased to 2,8 million people in 2016 (Akgeyik, 2017, p. 49). [44]

When it comes to youth and women, indebtedness, insecurity, and flexible working have become more striking. Since young women constitute the vast majority of the field, these segments become even more important for my thesis's scope. According to the ILO data, Turkey's labor force participation rate for women is lowest among OECD countries (İKV, 2019, p. 13). While the employment rate of women in Turkey is 27.1 per cent, the OECD average is 57,5 per cent (Keskin, 2018, p. 7). Turkey has accelerated the implementation of regulations to increase women's employment since the second half of the 2000s in order to approach the OECD level (Acar et.al., 2013, p. 33).[45] We see that the labor force participation rate of women, which was 26,6% in 2000, reached 33,6% in 2017 (İKV, 2019, p. 11).[46] Although female employment has gained relative momentum in recent years, a significant gap between men and women employment rates continues. While the labor employment rate of men was 72% in 2016 and 72,5% in 2017, it was 32,5% and 33,6% for women, respectively, by the same years (İKV, 2019, p. 11). As is seen, even though the gap has shrunk a bit, male employment is still about 50 per cent higher than that of women. The government has utilized flexible and insecure work conditions as an opportunity to both reduce this gap and improve the emerging picture of its place among OECD countries. The government tried to raise women's employment rates in statistics by "crowding women under low status, low wage, irregular and flexible

[44] I would like to highlight that I relate these transformations not simply to AKP's policies that have been implemented since 2002. On the contrary, all these developments are inherent in today's global capitalism and the recent economic transformations in Turkey cannot be isolated from it.

[45] http://www.ceidizleme.org/ekutuphaneresim/dosya/366_1.pdf

[46] https://www.ikv.org.tr/images/files/%C4%B0KV_Degerlendirme_Notu_AB_Kat%C4%B1l%C4%B1m_S%C3%BCrecindeki_T%C3%BCrkiyenin_Kad%C4%B1n_%C4%B0stihdam%C4%B1_Karnesi(2).pdf

forms of employment" (Acar et.al., 2013, p. 50). Therefore, the partial increase in recent years has been made possible by women's employment in part-time and insecure jobs rather than full-time and secure jobs. Turkey continues its backward position on gender equality in employment despite this partial increase.

A similar picture is also true for young generations. The field research titled "Youth Well-Being in Turkey ("Türkiye'de Gençlerin İyi Olma Hali") conducted by Habitat Association in 2019 offers valuable findings on youth unemployment and insecurity. This research offers a comparative analysis with the report on youth released by the same association in 2017. According to this comparative analysis, while the youth employment rate was 53 per cent in 2017, this rate decreased to 44 per cent in 2019, and the rate of job seekers increased from 8 per cent to 13 per cent (Habitat Report 2, 2019, p.8).[47] The main point worth to be noted is the difference between the unemployment rate of young women and the unemployment rate among young men. According to Turkstat's Household Labor Force Survey between 2014-2019, while the unemployment rate was 16,6 for men ages between 18-24 in 2014, this rate is 20,4 for young women of the same age group in the same year. In 2019, this ratio increases to 25.4 for young men and 30.6 for young women. These statistics reveal that youth unemployment rate and the gap between young men and women in employment have been increasing (The gap between young men and women in employment reaches 36 per cent in 2019, while it was approximately 23 percent in 2014).[48] The report released by the Habitat Association also shows that 68 per cent of young people are in relative poverty, and this rate rises to 72 per cent for single women (p.5). Furthermore, the report shows that half of the young people are indebted deepening insecurity and poverty among young people (p. 5). It is

[47] https://habitatdernegi.org/wp-content/uploads/turkiye-de-genclerin-iyi-olma-hali-raporu-2-ozet.pdf
[48] See statistical tables in the following website: https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Search/Search?text=Cinsiyete%20g%C3%B6re%20gen%C3%A7%20i%C5%9Fsizlik,

stated that credit cards and consumer loans share make up the highest portion of youth's debt.

Another research in this field that verifies Habitat Association's findings was published in 2020, titled "Youth Insecurity in Turkey: Working, Living and Life Perception".[49] Similarly, this study indicates that indebtedness is one of the most important factors that deepen young people's insecurity and poverty. The report shows that a significant portion of the working young people participating in the research have credit card debts and spend their monthly income on these debts (p. 30). It is also stated that unemployed young people participating in the study use their families' credit cards in many cases (p. 30-31). The research also reveals that indebtedness by credit cards or consumer loans increases the feeling of uncertainty and insecurity in young people, which is an important indicator of youth precarity. Insecurity and the accompanying feeling of anxiety reflect on the life satisfaction survey conducted with young people. The report conducted by IstanPol[50] titled Youth *Insecurity in Turkey* reveal that while the ratio of young people who stated that they had their happiest year in 2011 was 69.9%, this ratio decreased to 55.4% in 2018, reaching the lowest level of the last eight years (p. 14). [51]

The data I have obtained from my field research is largely in line with these statistics. While 61,6% of my survey participants (420 women in total) are in wage-earning employment, 38.3% of the participant are not. Those who are not in wage-earning employment consist of students (51%), job seekers (24%) and retired (17%). The remaining 8 per cent, on the other hand, consist of those who are supported by their family or partner, those have sufficient economic resources and those who are unpaid domestic

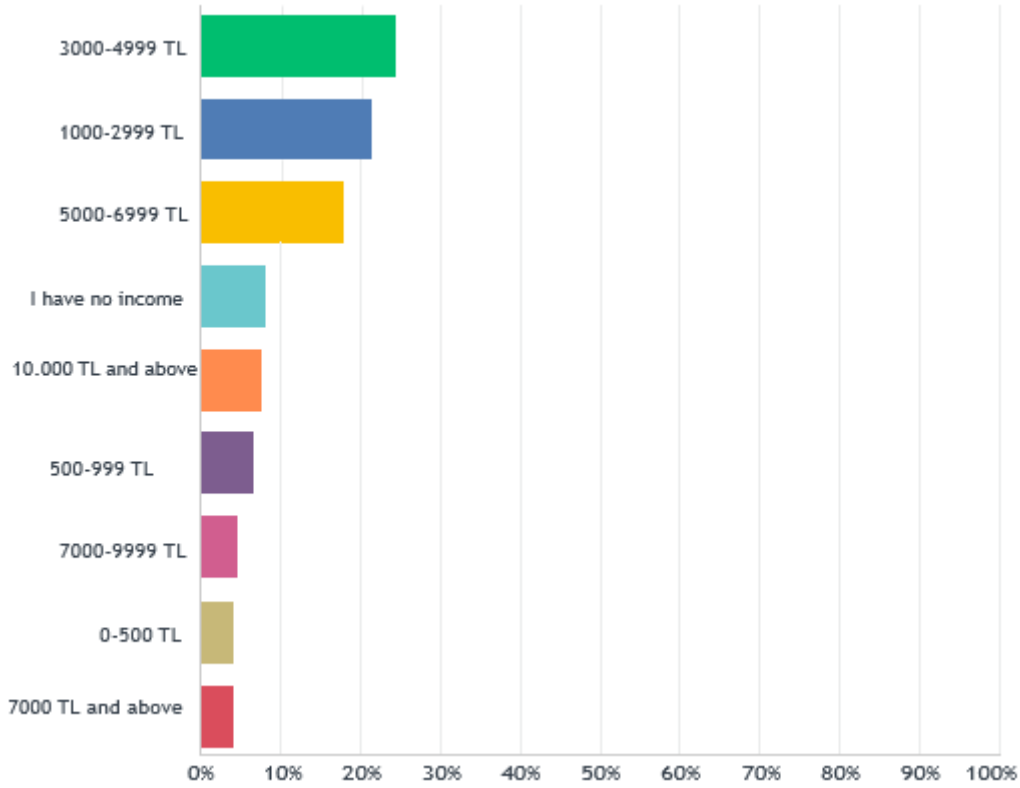
[49] https://d4b693e1-c592-4336-bc6a-36c134d6fb5e.filesusr.com/ugd/c80586_da3b8ef31e414cbeba0d83a2eee60639.pdf
[50] https://www.istanpol.org/
[51] https://d4b693e1-c592-4336-bc6a-36c134d6fb5e.filesusr.com/ugd/c80586_da3b8ef31e414cbeba0d83a2eee60639.pdf

workers. Having considered the students as the ones who have not yet employed in a job but as a potential workforce of the future, and the retired as a sub-category of the working women because of their previous work experience, my field research shows that women in the feminist movement are virtually (current employees), potentially (students), historically (retired) and overwhelmingly included in wage-earning employment regardless of the satisfactory quality of their economic income. In other words, given that the proportion of unemployed women constitutes a tiny segment of the interviewee, I see a picture in which the composition of feminists consists of working women. Based on this finding, I conclude that the participation rates of feminists in the workforce are above the average of Turkey in terms of women employment rate.[52] This was the same for the first- and second-generation feminists in the 70s and 80s. In this respect, a continuity appears between past and present in terms of the relatively high share that feminists occupy within Turkey's women employment rate.

I observe that this continuity is significantly broken when it comes to income situations. Although the overwhelming majority of these segments are composed of the working population, I see that their employment does not make a significant difference in income levels when I look at the income distribution I obtained from the survey.

[52] According to the latest data released by Turkstat, women employment rate in 2020 in Turkey is 28,7 per cent. See the relative figure in https://tuikweb.tuik.gov.tr/HbPrint.do?id=37221

Figure 4: Income distribution.[53]



The figure shows that the survey participants rank on a scale from those with no income to those with more than ten thousand incomes. We see that those with no income and those with an income of over ten thousand forms two extreme poles, and the bell curve inclines to the range between 1000-2999 and 5000-6999. Considering that the minimum wage is 2,825 TL as of 2021, the figure reveals that the income distribution is concentrated at a level that one can call the lower-middle class.[54] Moreover, In the case of Istanbul conditions, these incomes become even more insufficient for a good life. At this point, I would remind the division between *hyper precarity* and *hypo-precarity* I

[53] In June and July 2020, when I circulated the survey, $1 was equivalent to around 6.85. https://www.tcmb.gov.tr/wps/wcm/connect/TR/TCMB+TR/Main+Menu/Istatistikler/Doviz+Kurlari/Gosterge+Niteligindeki+Merkez+Bankasi+Kurlarii/

[54] The criteria by which class categories are determined is a very comprehensive topic of discussion. Here, I made a categorization based on income level, which is quite contentious from Marxist class categories. However, I think the Marxist class definition also remains insufficient in understanding contemporary class dimensions.

introduced in the literature review section. Hyper-precarity is attributed to the extreme form of exploitation, such as migrant workers, while hypo-precarity is associated with the relatively modest effects of precarious working conditions. In this respect, it would be mistaken to consider survey participant within the category of hyper-precarity. They are rather involved in the category of hypo-precarity. Nevertheless, what they have in common is taking part under the umbrella of precarity with the exception of the participants with an income of over ten and seven thousand. Taking the fall of real income and accompanying poverty into account, especially in the last decade, I think this figure shows consistency with Turkey's overall economic climate.

A significant rupture emerges between the previous feminist generations in the 80s and the present in terms of class composition. First-generation feminist women predominantly consisted of the middle and upper-middle class. They were composed of segments with social, economic, and cultural capital who could access highly prestigious colleges and universities in Turkey. Those who continued in the academy were able to obtain a doctorate degree in European and American Universities. This provided them with extensive opportunities to encounter feminist ideas and literature abroad. They, indeed, formed translation groups and journals around the feminist ideas they encounter abroad. The canonical books they translated and published, the political groups they formed became the constitutive and prefigurative steps of the following feminist politics in Turkey. On the other hand, those who continued in the field outside the academy had high-income and secure jobs. This segment, for sure, continues to exist in today's feminist movement. However, as I discussed, they remain marginal and do not constitute the main character of the feminist movement in contemporary Turkey. Hence, I raise two related arguments. First, feminism began to spread to the grassroots, and this results in a changing class composition drastically towards the precarity.

When I look at the intermediate categories (aged 25-34 and 35-44) by sectoral distribution, excluding the aged between 17-24 since they have not yet entered the labor market and aged 55+ since they are mostly retired, we see the Table 3 below.

Figure 5: Sectoral distribution of the 25-34 age group

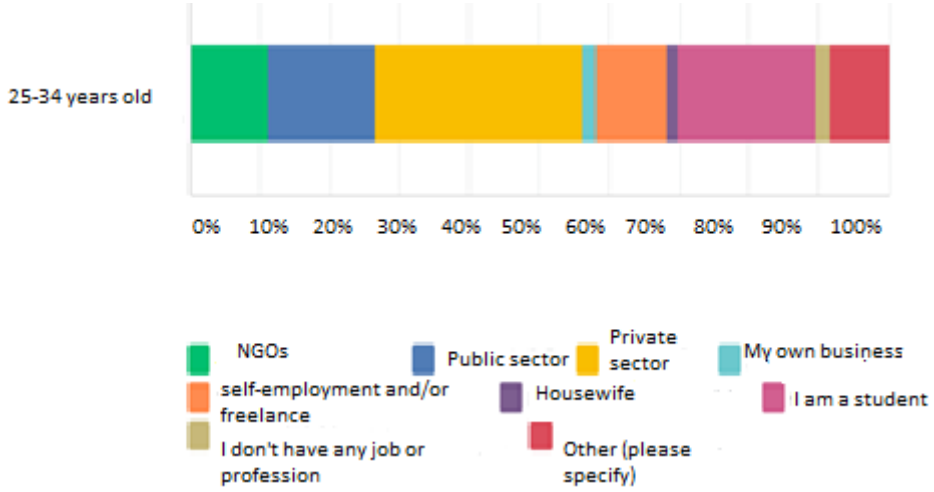
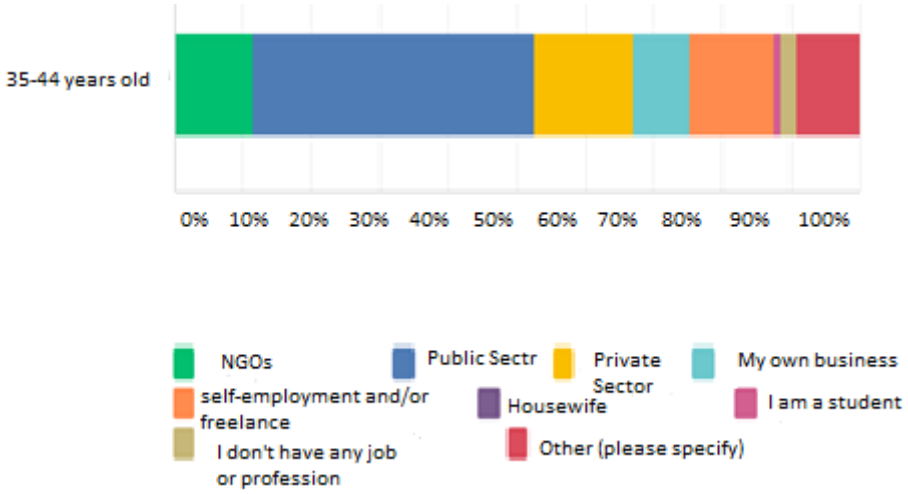


Figure 6: Sectoral distribution of the 35-44 age group

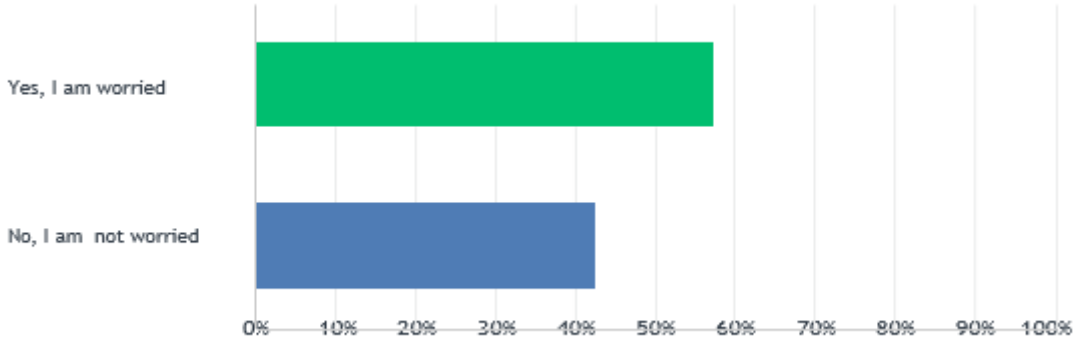


The Figure 5 and Figure 6 reveal the obvious difference between the two different age categories in the public and private sectors in employment. While the private sector has

a much wider proportion in the age between 25-34, it is the public sector that constitutes a larger segment in the age between 35-44. This picture displays consistency with the sectoral distribution of employment in the last two decades in Turkey. As the privatization has increased and the share of the public sector in employment across the country has decreased accordingly, the young people's opportunities to find jobs in the public sector have also shrunk significantly since 2000s. As neoliberal transformations have gained momentum for the last two decades, the decline in the share of the public sector has created a significant difference in the sectoral distribution of employment even for the two age categories closest to each other.

The two tables above, which show the sectoral distribution of employment and monthly income, contain significant clues about the latest neoliberal transformation young women have been passing through. However, destabilization and insecurity are limited not only to the material and legal processes in the labor market, but also cause the production of fragile subjectivity (Lorey, 2015). This fragile form of subjectivity is produced through material processes such as poverty and precariousness, and then spreads to the body in the form of affective transformations and outputs. Affective transformations include anxiety, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, hopelessness for the future, depression, vulnerability, and many others. Based on my field data, I observed that the fragile form of subjectivity, coming out as a symptom of anxiety, is a common pattern among employees, students, and non-employees survey participant. By dividing the unit of analysis into three categories (employees, students, and non-employees), I aim to better reveal the affective outputs. The Table 5 below indicates a question directed to the segment of the employee.

Figure 7: The percentage of people who are anxious about losing their work.

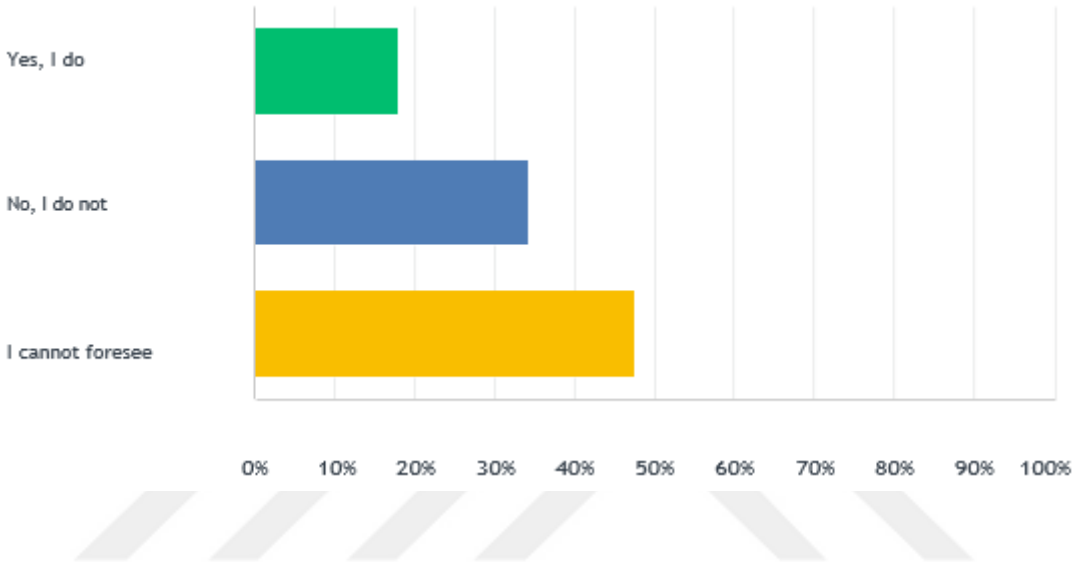


In the Figure above, 57,40 per cent of 277 people who answered the relevant question stated that they were worried about losing their job, while 42,60 percent stated that they did not share such a concern. When I went through a more detailed analysis of these figures, I saw that the vast majority of those who did not worry about losing their jobs were over the age of 35 working in the public sector. I, therefore, observed that young people under the age of 35 are more concerned about losing their jobs (See the table number 1 in Appendix A)

This is consistent with the widely accepted argument that uncertainty, unpredictability, and instability are not an exception but gradually become a founding character of today's labor regime. As seen from the survey, this transforms the affective dimension of subjectivity in a way that includes anxiety, and thus, anxiety becomes the most important component of our existence. Our decisions or indecisions for the future, our entire relationships with our families and with the extraneous world, our leisure times, as well as work, and non-work life shape around this sense of anxiety. Hence, it would not be mistaken to argue that the neoliberal labor regime, which crystallized in the form of precarity, produces "anxious subjectivation" (Lorey 2015, p.88). In this sense, my data display parallelism with the general picture of Turkey, which I discussed above and the labor regime at the global level.

Precariousness, as the founding dynamics of the neoliberal labor regime is also applicable to the segment of the unemployed. The question[55] directed to the non-employee about their expectations for finding a job reveals the Figure 6 below.

Figure 8: Unemployed individuals' thoughts on obtaining work in the near future



Only 18% (22 people), among 122 women who responded to the question, answered *Yes*, 34.43% (42 people) answered *No* and 47,54% (58 people) answered as *I cannot foresee.* The total rate of those who say *No* and those who say *I cannot foresee* reaches approximately 82%. The largest portion of this 82% is again under the age of 35 (See tables number 2 "*No"* and 3 "*I cannot foresee"* in Appendix A)[56]. From this point of view, I can say that unemployed women experience stratified anxiety because of unemployment and the fear of not finding a job. On the other hand, the rate of those who

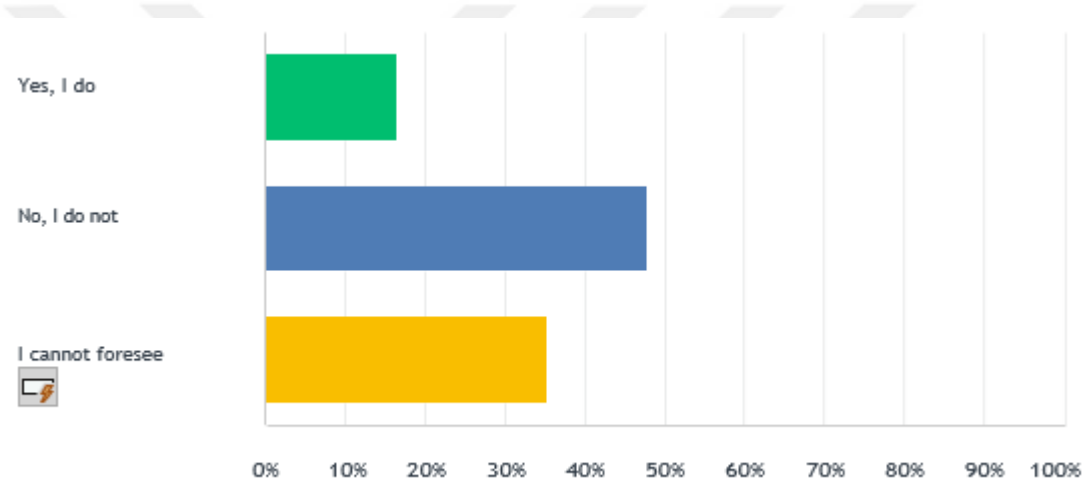
[55] The question asked to the participants was that: If the reason you are not working is that you cannot find a job, do you think you will find a job soon?

[56] The survey results show that the age between 17 and 24 is more optimistic about finding a job than the age between 25 and 34 within the age group under 35. I think the reason is rooted in the fact that university students or those who recently graduated have not yet experienced the labor market's difficulties. This makes them more optimistic as they have not completely lost their hope for finding a job. On the contrary, 25-34 age range experience the difficulties of job market much longer which makes them much more desperate.

say *I cannot foresee* reaches almost 50%, showing how uncertainty has become a shared pattern of today's labor regime.

When I look at the students aged 17-24, I notice that the state of anxiety stemming from insecurity and uncertainty constitutes an important pillar of their subjectivity. When I asked students about their future prospects for employment, I came across the table below.[57]

Figure 9: Students' opinions on whether they will be able to find work after graduation

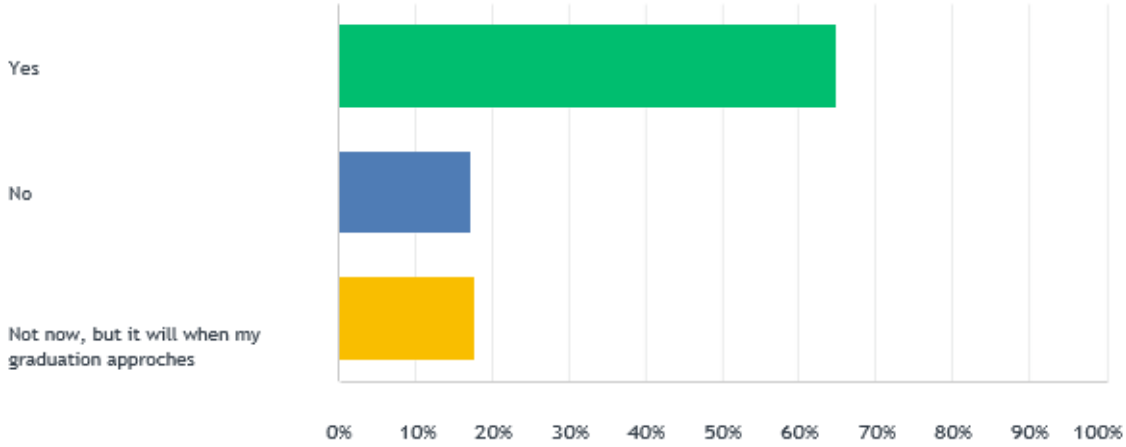


Only 16 percent (24 people), a small fraction of 144 students who responded to the question, believed that they could easily get a job upon graduation, while 48 percent (69 people) believed that they could hardly find a job and 35.42 percent (51 people) thought that they could not anticipate their future. There is a bulk of studies which discusses the diminishing capacity of universities in providing job in Turkey. (See Bora, A. et all., 2016; Erdem, E., & Tugcu, C. T, 2012; Ersoy-Kart, M., & Erdost, H. E., 2008). The findings I obtained from the field seem consistent with the increasing poor relation between being a university graduate and guaranteeing a job. This results in an unbearable

[57] The question asked to the participants was that "If you are a student, do you think you can easily find a job when you graduate?"

sense of anxiety, which drives young people into an intense effort throughout their university lives. When I asked the young students whether they have any effort to avoid being unemployed after graduating from university, I obtained the following result [58]:

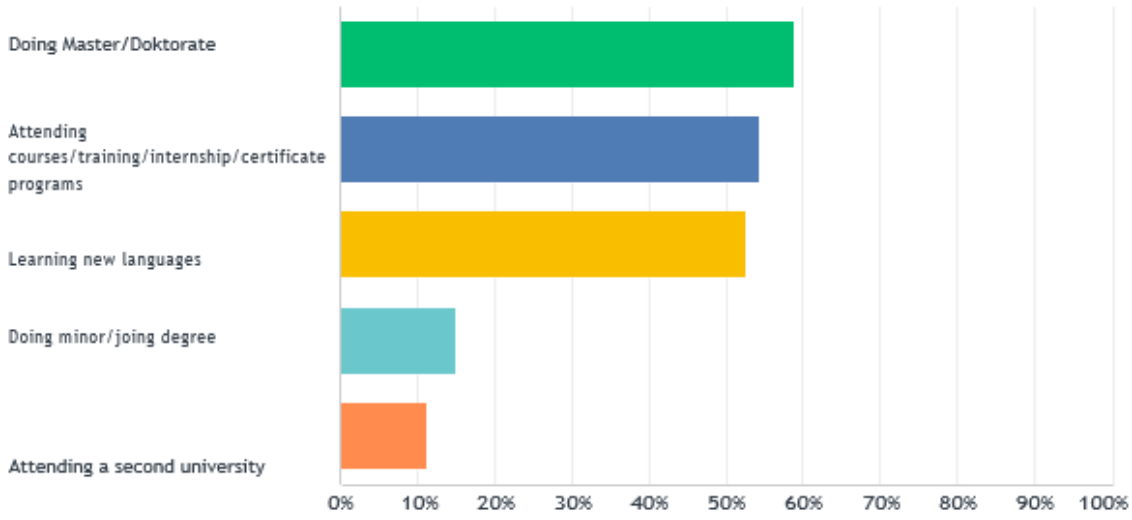
Figure 10: Whether students make any effort to avoid unemployment after graduation.



Only 17% (24 students), a small segment of 139 students who responded to the question, stated that they had no effort, while 64% (90 students) stated that they had effort. 18% of the students (25 people) selected the option "not for now but will be when I close to graduation." When I asked what kind of practices these efforts involve:

[58] The participants were asked: If you are a student; Do you already take any steps to avoid being jobless when you graduate?

Figure 11: The type of efforts made by students to avoid being unemployed.



Among 114 participants, approximately %59 stated that they are trying to enroll in masters/Ph.D. programs, 55% to attend training/internship/certificate programs, %53 to learn a new language, %15 to do minor/joint degree and finally 11% to attend a second university to get an additional degree. In the 14 different comments in the "Other" box, I noticed that the efforts to create a network in the field, to prepare for KPSS and to save money appear as the most recurring themes. These diversified efforts point to precarity conditions, attesting to the fact that a university degree alone is not sufficient for guaranteeing a job. Most of them are implementing more than one of the above options at the same time. For example, the number of women who have both a minor/joint degree and a master's degree and attended various training programs is too high to ignore. These efforts have gradually become a necessity and a rule rather than simply a choice to become preferable actors in the labor market. The concept of neoliberal investmentality I introduced above refers precisely to bodies that will not survive if they remain incapable of meetings these requirements. It underlines the emerging subjectivity based on turning the body into a means of investment to overcome the highly competitive labour market.

My field research reveals that young feminist women are increasingly embodying this form of subjectivity shaped around the logic of investmentality.

Within the framework of this logic of investmentality, knowledge and expertise based on profession alone are meaningless in the labor market. Bodies are supposed to actively modulate themselves and be equipped with as many different and varied abilities as possible. This active practice gives rise to the emergence of patched / hybrid biographies under precarious conditions. Young women from the field believe that if they equip themselves adequately, they may partially reduce the risk of unemployment, albeit not completely be eradicated. The idea of investmentality, in this chapter, express the tendency of young women to organize their lives on the basis of self-protection against the difficulties they may encounter in working life.

3.5 The embodiment of the Logic of Investmentality in Young Bodies in Turkey

In Turkey, young women have been looking for ways to alleviate their vulnerability as much as possible, either consciously or unconsciously, by investing in themselves since the 2000s. One of my interviewees with whom I had an in-depth interview, 23-year-old Pınar, who has just graduated from university, stated that she is in the following efforts to reduce the risk of unemployment:

> "I started the Master this year. During the lecture period, I realized that the academy is not for me. I'm interested in academia, but what I really want is to be on the field. But I still wanted to continue my master's degree so that another door would be opened. I thought that if I would go abroad or stay here, it would provide me with better job opportunities. I started my master's degree with these thoughts in my mind. But in the future, maybe I would like to return to the academy, just in case, I wanted that door to be open for me, in worst case. I know I'm a bit of a cautious (garantici) person. I wanted to use it when I had the chance… I want to create more social impact, working in the field of social impact. Apart from my classes, I did internships in non-governmental organizations and social enterprises throughout my school life. I did an internship in the Global Aid program. Although I work voluntarily there, it has helped my CV a lot. I also participated in the social impact trainings of Global Learning and Leadership to improve myself in the field" (Pınar, feminist, 23).

Pınar grew up in a family with high economic and cultural capital. Her mind is very clear about the field she wants to be involved in. She, indeed, states that she participates in many international social impact programs, including her overseas education, to achieve this goal. However, despite its clarity about her working area and her constant investments in this direction, she wants to keep the academy as an option, although she feels distant. Although the expression "cautious person" articulated by Pınar to describe herself might simply be considered as an individual attitude at first glance, it is, in fact, a manifestation of today's neoliberal subjectivity crystallized in the form of investmentality. Garanticilik, in her saying, which emerges in the form of "if this option does not happen, let it be the other" turn into "if civil society organization does not happen, let it be the academy" in Pınar's narrative. This results in hybrid biographies.

Hybrid biography is not only specific to the middle or upper-middle class young women with higher economic, social, and cultural capital like Pınar, but it also characterizes lower-class young women's inclinations. Although interviewees from my field under the age of 35 lack the economic and cultural capital to apply for international high-standard programs such as GLLP, they are inclined to evaluate options such as obtaining education formation, preparing for KPSS, and learning languages, working in projects.

One of my interviewees, Meral who is currently a master student in department of philosophy at Galatasaray University, stated that while she was continuing her graduate education, she received formation training to be able to teach, prepared for KPSS (Public Personnel Selection Examination), received language training, and tutored to gain experience for the chance of being employed in private teaching institutions. She adds that these are not what she really wants to do. What exactly she wants is to continue at the academia. When I asked her to talk about herself and what she was busy with at the

time, at the beginning of the interview, she described the lines of work in parallel to her master education, saying that:

> I work in a private teaching institution (dershane). I teach Turkish to high school preparatory students. Apart from that, I periodically supervise the exams in which the French Consulate gives language certificates. This is one of the reasons why this week is busy, and I forgot the interview with you, time is passing very busy, there were times when I worked like 10 hours a day. Apart from that, I sometimes give private lessons to preparatory high school and middle school students. In these days, we are conducting a project with an academician from the university. We started a project on the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism in Turkey… Apart from that, I am at the thesis stage, I am trying to deal with my thesis (Meral, 29)

Meral is from Diyarbakır, a member of a lower-class family of seven. Her narrative poses an excellent example of the notion of hybrid biography. Creating a hybrid biography in her life turns out to be a necessity as well as multiplying the alternatives. This shows that she experiences precarity in a more layered way differently from her middle-class counterparts (as seen in Pinar's narrative). However, insecurity and uncertainty appear to be a prominent theme in both narratives, albeit to the varying degree of severity. I would say that precarity is gradually becoming a more common shared phenomenon throughout society. This is exactly what Lorey (2015) means by normalization of precarization. Following Judith Butler's study on precarious life, Lorey argues that dynamics of precarity "are no longer to be found (only) in the unreasonable political and economic impositions to which the marginalized are subject but consist rather in the normalization of precarization throughout the whole of society" (Lorey, 2015, p. 60). The idea of "shared precariousness" is so evident in Lorey and Butler's studies that they consider it as an opportunity for building political alliances between different segments of society. Lorey explains this as follows:

> Judith Butler argues in favour of no longer regarding common shared precariousness as threatening and dividing it up into hierarchized protected differences, but instead recognizing existential vulnerability and considering it as an affirmative basis for politics. For Butler, precarity in its different extents forms the starting point for political alliances against a logic of protection and security for some at the cost of many others (Lorey, 2015, p. 91).

Investment in self is not limited to a four-year university education period, nor it simply be limited to anxiety about finding a job. My young participants find themselves in an endless struggle to either find a better job or be able to continue in their current jobs. I observed that the precarity conditions reveal themselves in the following scale in my in-depth interviews I conducted with university graduate women under the age of 35: those who cannot perform their graduate profession (13 women); those who can perform their graduate profession only after they have been adequately equipped and gained sufficient experience in the labor market (5 women); those who have to constantly improve their capacities to be able to continue in their existing jobs (11 women); those who work insecure and temporary jobs for a long time until they move into their own professions (9 women); those who consider the academy as an alternative to temporary and insecure jobs that make women feel worthless (7 women); those who apply to post-doc degrees as they could not find an academic position after their doctorate degree (3 women). I observe that zig-zag movements until one settle in their profession is becoming a rule among young people, in general, and young women, in particular. The fragmented biographies involve sequences of efforts that serve young women to be better equipped professionally requiring continuous investment in self. The elements of subjectivity based on constant investment in self are clearly visible in Özlem (36) narrative, a computer engineer working in the field of software at the bank.

> I was working in a bank. There is always a pressure to learn new technologies in our sector. I did not feel this pressure directly while working at the bank. It was something I did on my own. But the fact that the institution devalues you also affects the emergence of this kind of pressure. I recently changed jobs. Being open for learning new technologies has been the reason I have been hired to the startup company I am currently working…They are more focused on my communication skills. But I will continue to learn more techniques, while the knowledge at my hand can already open many doors for me. There is a mechanism where you will remain idle, if you don not renew yourself (Özlem, 36, Engineer, Feminist).

In Özlem's narrative, the statement "…a mechanism in which you will remain idle if you do not renew yourself" is a statement that summarizes why a subjectivity based on

investmentality has been emerging for more than the last two decades. To avoid the risk of remaining idle in the labor market, learning new technologies is insufficient alone. You are also expected to develop a subjectivity. Her statement "…being open to learning was the reason for being hired" shows how labor market demand for those who have succeeded in making learning an important part of her existence. We understand from her accepted for the job that Özlem could achieve to develop such subjectivity by internalizing the necessity of being open to learning. The necessity of being open to learning, however, complies not with the direct impositions of external forces. It rather deals with transforming psychic aspects of individuals in the way people consider their conduct as something resulted in their own preferences, as seen in Özlem's statement of "It was something I did on my own. This is very clear in a statement made by Margaret Thatcher. In an interview in Sunday Times two years after she came to power, Thatcher said that "Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul". [59]

I hardly encounter such a subjectivity crystallized in the form of investmentality in the generation above the age of 55. Fatma, a 70-year-old financial advisor, currently working as a volunteer at The Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation, depicts the period when she was in her 20s and 30s as follows:

> When I graduated from university, I graduated from economics at Marmara Economics, there was no such problem as unemployment. So, we have never experienced what you are going through. We couldn't get our diploma immediately after our graduation. We would first have been given a temporary printout with the phrase of "graduated" on it. That printout was respected. For example, I started working at the American Bank the next day with that printout. Many of my friends, like me, started work the next day.

I observed from the interviews I conducted with women older than 55 that they experienced an environment where a university degree guaranteed a job, developing multiple skills was unnecessary. In this environment, women felt relatively more secure

[59] https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475

in their jobs and enjoyed early retirement. One dimension of their subjectivity is produced through a less fragmented and more linear life path. They were more likely to graduate from university and continue in the same job until their retirement. More importantly, they had conditions where non-work life was rarely colonized by work life. This provided them with more time in their non-work life, which had a large share in the construction of their subjectivity. I observed that the effects of relatively more secure conditions have begun to decrease for the age segments between 35-44. The statement "ok, we knew that we could experience a period of unemployment at most, but we also knew we could find a job eventually after one year or one and a half year" articulated by Ayşe aged 44 years, shows that this age segment had a hope that they could find a job after a while, if not the day they graduated from university. The picture is quite the opposite for the sample group under 35 years old who experience the only remnants of stable and secure work conditions, as can be traced in above discussions. Since it does not directly fit into my thesis's scope, I will not further detail how participants from different ages experience precarity (see number 4 in Index for further examples). Instead, I will focus on how precarity conditions directly affect the way young women relate to feminist politics.

3.6 Feminist Politics in Precarious Conditions and in Accelerated Temporal Rhythm of Everyday Life

The most obvious change caused by precarity conditions is the increase in the rhythm of time. Considering those young women participating in the survey engage in multiple efforts at the same time and that about half of them have to be employed in part-time jobs while they are university students (See the table number 4 in Appendix A), one would admit how the daily collective rhythms of today's subjects are accelerating. Acceleration

of daily rhythm caused by the constant investment in the body as well as intense working hours significantly transforms the way young people relate to feminist politics. The question of how this temporal transformation affects feminist politics will be discussed in the next section. What I am trying in this section is to construct a framework that conditions the changes in the way young women relate to feminist politics. This framework is largely shaped around practices in which the distinction between work and non-work life has increasingly disappeared and thus work life is increasingly becoming a fundamental part of subjectivities. Özlem explains how her working conditions negatively affect her relationship with feminist politics as follows:

> **Özlem**: I have no day or night. I had also been working overtime at my previous job, but after I move into the bank, I encountered a heavier order where night and day were mixed because of the overloaded domains I am working with. I mean, they wake you up at 03:00 at night, you connect to the computer, then you solve the problem which is probably a serious problem…… Working conditions are very intense. You come home in the evening with a pulp. You can't focus on anything. You just say, "let's rest". You know, you can't do anything for yourself. I mean, after a while, it makes you unable to do anything for your purpose or to act for something you know believe, because you don't even have time to sleep. I have such an unpleasant sequence.
>
> **Bermal**: You said like "It keeps you from doing the things you believe". Can you explain this a little bit more?
>
> **Özlem:** Sure. It is exactly what I feel. For example, two years ago, I joined the "Women Engineers Commission" in the Chamber of Computer Engineers. We said "let's do something" there as women. Being a female engineer is very challenging in computer engineering department as in other engineering departments. You know, you always retreat because of exhaustion, while you are also quite eager to "let's do something" eagerly. There is such a rush. Because you can't stand it. At some point you need to rest. You make a choice there; you must keep making money to stand on my feet. You ask yourself, "Am I able to spend time for this". The answer often becomes "no". There is always a situation of being interrupted in the things that you are enthusiastic about. Since I came to Istanbul, I have also tried to be included in feminist groups. For example, I went to Amargi but I had to leave it too. There has always been such a cycle in my life (Özlem, 36)

Özlem's experience poses an excellent example of gradual dissolution of institutions in contemporary world. A process in which working life colonizes leisure time also interrupts young women's engagement with institutions. It erodes the conditions for voluntary involvement in institutions such as conventional professional chambers and unions. It also forces the subject to choose between work and politics as is crystalized in

Özlem's statement of "You make a choice there; you must keep making money to stand on my feet." However, women who are forced to make a choice do not take their hand away from politics. On the contrary, they continue to enact politics in the form of creative and amorphous affinity groups. This will be the subject of my last two chapters where I will discuss digital feminism and everyday life feminism.

A similar theme appears in the narrative of Irem, a 23-year-old graphic designer and working in an advertising agency. I met İrem for the first time at *Feminist Mekan* during the preparations for writing a banner for the great Feminist Night March. Upon the announcement made by the organization group on social media, İrem, who wanted to come to Feminist Mekan to be part of the preparation process, explains why she can hardly involve in such activities despite her passionate desire to participate any event on feminism.

> **İrem**: I can't go to feminist events other than the March 8 night walk. For example, I know that there are Friday Meetings at the Feminist Mekan, but I can't go (…) I wasn't working yet when I first came to that preparatory meeting for Feminist Night March. Afer that meeting, I started working. As I started, my life is over because they called me on my job application. I thought that they would say "come after the bayram", but they said "be here tomorrow at 9 o'clock". I went at 9 o'clock that day and could not get out of there.
>
> **Bermal**: how many hours do you work per day?
>
> **İrem**: Sometimes up to 16 hours
>
> **Bermal**: 16 hours in a day?
>
> **İrem**: Yes
>
> **Bermal**: How many hours do you work at least?
>
> **İrem**: 12 hours
>
> **Bermal**. too much really
>
> **İrem**: Yes, it's too much, they don't tell you how long your shift is. You have a task that needs to be delivered tomorrow and you have to work until it's finished (…) I'm tired now, for example, I say I have to go out because I need to sleep. Sometimes I sleep 5 hours a day, sometimes I don't go home at all and sleep in the agency.

The statement such as "Then I started work. My life has been over since then" and "I went at 9 o'clock that day and could not get rid of it" dramatically explain the nature of

precarity conditions. My field research reveals that time constraint is a recurring theme in the narrative of most, if not all, working young women who are unable to attend feminist events. The statement such as “Let alone going to Taksim, I don't even have time to take a shower.” (Mualla, 32) or “Sometimes I forget to even cut my nails” (Seda, 28) which point temporal restrictions caused by working conditions indicate that most of the women lack opportunities in devoting time to feminist events although they are willing to participate in them. In an environment where a large part of the leisure time is devoted to meeting the basic individual needs, and the rest is devoted to investing in self, political practices that require spatial movements[60], hour-long discussions, taking responsibilities and spending mental efforts are increasingly becoming unsustainable practices.

I argue that think this transformation is largely about neoliberalism's growing appetite for appropriating social surplus value since the last few decades, rather than only appropriating the industrial surplus. Hardt and Negri (2000, 2017) introduce the concept of “social factory” to unfold the transformation in the capital accumulation and value creation process (Hardt and Negri, 2000, 2017). They mean by the concept of social factory that “the capitalist production of value…, no longer takes place primarily within the walls of the factory. Value is produced in the social factory that stretches across the entire social terrain and throughout the sites of production and reproduction” (Hardt and Negri, 2017, p. 175). In this climate, the distinction between work and non-work life is increasingly getting blurred and our daily practices are increasingly made part of the value creation process. Berardi expresses this transformation as follows:

> “Our desiring energy is trapped in the trick of self-enterprise, our libidinal investment is regulated according to economic rules, our attention is captured in the precariousness of virtual networks: every fragment of mental activity must be transformed into capital” (Berardi, 2009, p. 23)

[60] For example, getting out of the house and going to Taksim or Kadıköy where meetings take place.

Berardi 2009) defines the new class that emerges from the axiomatics of capital shifting towards cognitive labor, as "Cognitariat" (combination of cognitive and proletarian). Cognitariat refers to the widespread and fragmented flow of labor in the social sphere. In the environment where work has become central of our life and the core of our identity, cognitive capital expects us to deploy our emotional, affective, creative, and aesthetic capacities in work. In this way, every field in which we continue to exist turn into a "immaterial factory", site of immaterial production and thus contribute to the capital accumulation.[61]. The change in the capitalist valorization points not only to the displacement of the centers of production (from factory to society) but also to the increasing trend from commodity production towards the production of life and subjectivity (Hardt and Negri, 2017, p. 122). It is because, the production of subjectivity with the current dramatically increased productive capacity conditions the production of all other commodities and services as well as the overall value system of the economy[62]. The system of values is based on a new way of existence. The most important component of this form of existence (or form of subjectivity) is a self-investment-oriented existence that I define as investmentality throughout the thesis.

[61] This becomes more possible through digitalization where our cognition constantly exposed to excessive informative stimulations. Berardi argues that Cognitariat cannot resist psychopathologies arising from stress which is followed by the sense of anxiety, panic, and depression. These psychopathologies are by no means individual but the symptom of the common social syndrome. Therefore, Berardi points to a context in which psychological flows and economic processes are intertwined. Berardi suggests that the way out of a regime of psychopathological subjectivity, in which desire has lost its vitality, can only be possible through political togetherness. The interactions we establish there would rekindle our desire for life and thus heal us.

[62] This is exactly what Deleuze and Guattari mean by univocity of the concept of production, namely the production of materials and production of subjectivity or in a much broader sense the indistinction of the "political economy" and "subjective economy" (Deleuze and Guattari, antioedipus). This leads to the idea that the production of goods and services have no meaning unless subjectivity that is fueled by the desire is produced simultaneously.

3.7 Dual Character of Neoliberal Investmentality

In the theoretical and empirical framework above, I have discussed neoliberalism's regime of subjectivity shaped through objectification (in terms of transforming the entire life into a process of value creation), and individualization (in terms of targeting the investmentality of individuals), and fragility (in terms of detaching individuals from their rights and capacities). It may seem that this discussion has produced a rather pessimistic picture, which (at first appearance) contradicts the claim that feminism is becoming more and more socialized, which I have expressed throughout the thesis. In fact, the question of how it is possible for feminism to become more and more social in such a pessimistic atmosphere seems like a pointed question in this respect. However, I argue that these pessimistic developments have transformed the way young women engage in politics, not removing the ground for politics. More clearly, I believe that power is not such a repressive and omnipotent structure, but a form of relationality that is always doomed to leave space for counter subjectivity that resists and transform the power relations. In claiming this, I rely on the Foucauldian theory of power, which reveals the dual character of power (repressive and productive).

In his study History of Sexuality: An Introduction Foucault overtly rejects the negative power paradigm, which is characterized by unilateral, repressive, rule-based, and prohibitive from the top to down hierarchy. This model would have been domination rather than a power in his account. He, instead, offers a positive and productive notion of power. The traditional power paradigm is based on an asymmetry between those who hold power and those who are deprived of it. Power is centralized in the hand of those who hold it to repress and prohibit behavioral and intellectual actions of others. Foucault, however, suggests ceasing to consider power in negative terms, negativity in the sense that power “excludes”, “represses”, “censors”, “conceals” (Foucault 1977, p.194). Power

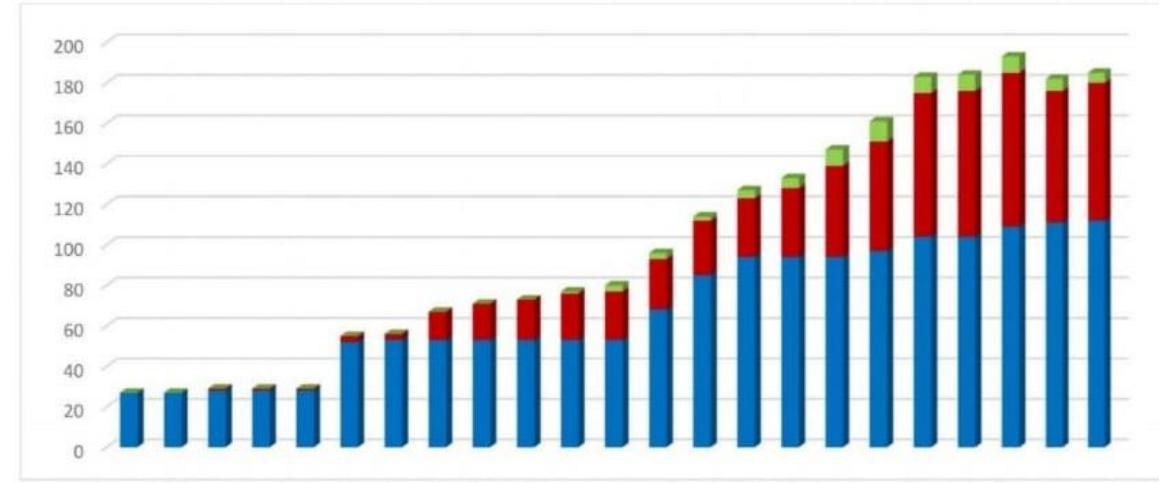
is not an entity or all-encompassing force above individuals but a relation that dissipate through all society in the way of constant flux and negotiation. Defining power as a relationship that pervades society abolishes the omnipotent nature of power. This inevitably results in two related consequences in his account: the fragility of the foci that are often attributed absolute power is exposed on the one hand and the possibility of political agency and resistance of different segments of society is recognized on the other hand. Relying to this account, I think that the adverse developments in the field of economics that I have tried to frame above are not only a repressive process but also a productive process in terms of allowing alternative forms of political agency to be invented. In other words, I am trying to reveal the dual character of adverse developments caused by neoliberal regime in the light of Foucauldian power notion that discloses the ambivalence quality of power, ambivalence in the sense that repression and production are equally intrinsic in power relations. The most striking indicator of the dual character of these adverse developments can be traced by focusing on the social and economic effects of a new trend concerning universities in the last two decades.

3.8. Universitization in the Post-200s: An Unexpected Opportunity for Feminism

Since the late 90s and early 2000s, the qualitative and quantitative transformation of universities have constituted one of the most important pillars of neoliberal restricting. Privatization and commodification of education has accompanied by the increase in the number of universities in Turkey, especially since the 2000s. The Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD, the top business organization in Turkey) have been releasing reports since the 1990s that address the need for a reform in education to play a role in global capitalism (İnal and Akkaymak, 2012, p.xıv). In line with these reports, the

AKP government has initiated an educational reform in 2004 that is more compatible with neoliberal principles. One of the important steps has become an increase in the number of universities since 2004. The table below shows the numbers of higher education institutions between 1984 and 2018.

Figure 12: Number of Higher Education Institutions by Years.



	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018
Vocational School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	2	4	5	8	10	8	8	8	6	5
Non-Profit Foundation	0	0	1	1	1	3	3	14	18	20	23	24	25	27	29	34	45	54	71	72	76	65	72
State	27	27	28	28	28	52	53	53	53	53	53	53	68	85	94	94	94	97	104	104	109	111	129

Source: See page11 in the following website https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Yayinlar/Yayinlarimiz/2019/Higher_Education_in_Turkey_2019_en.pdf

I think that the underlying reason for the drastic increase in the number of higher education institutions, especially in the last 20 years, is the decisive and comprehensive transformation of global capitalism, including the composition of labor. Turkey has been witnessing a change in the economic model, that is, a transformation from industrial production to financialization and the service sector since the 1980s. There has been a huge growth to create market share in banking, insurance, finance companies as well as in radio and TV broadcasting and related entertainment, advertising, marketing sectors, since the 80s. This has been followed by the growth in internet use since the late 90s and in the mobile communication industries since the early 2000s and finally in digital

marketing in the past two decades. Similarly, the quality of labor has changed in many of the sub-sectors brought about by an economic model based on import, export, transportation, logistics, and consumption as well as the construction sector. Additionally, rapid growth in sectors such as energy production and distribution, healthcare, and education has similarly had a major impact on the changes in the quality of labor. These developments imply a growing need for cognitive labor.[63] To meet the increasing need for specialized labor in all such fields, the number of universities has increased rapidly since the 1990s and has increased exponentially in the 2000s. The increase in the number of universities has led to a proportional increase of the university graduate labor within the total labor. One might think that the process of commercializing education and political concerns of governments for development parameters are determinant here. However, what really happens is the growing need for cognitive labor based on specialized cognitive skills in the enlarging service and finance sector. In this environment, highly educated labor is no longer a privilege of the middle and upper classes, it becomes a necessity for a growing section of the working class. In this environment, University degree no longer provides an opportunity for upward mobilization as it used to be. On the contrary, for the first time in history, the economic situation of the younger generation is much lower than that of their parents, and their future visions are quite pessimistic. Although universitization can no longer fulfill this function, it continues to enable women to become free in various forms (breaking off from the family, etc.) and politicized through encounters in campuses.

The changes in the composition of labor since the 60s in the global North and 2000s in Turkey have direct impacts on the rate of (university) graduate women both

[63] Cognitive labor refers to a post-Fordist phase of division of labor and capital valorizations in cognitive capitalism (Varcellone, 2005; 2015) this new phase relies heavily on the increasing role of information and immaterial content in the value creation process within the capitalist system of production. Cognitive labor is the producer of this informational content of the commodity (Lazzarato 1996).

within the overall working population and particularly within overall women workers. The Table below, which I created based on the Higher Education Institution's (YOK) latest statistics shows a comparative picture of the proportions of women and men in education.

Table 1: Higher Education in Turkey 2019

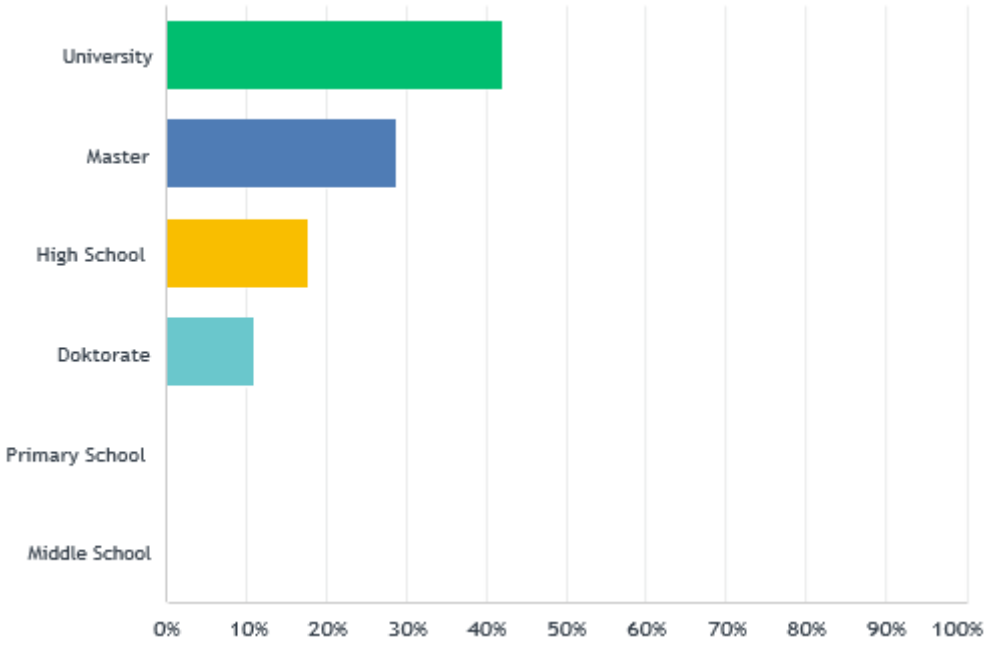
	Associate's Degree	**Bachelor's Degree**	**Master's Degree**	**Doctoral Degree**	**Total**
Male	51%	54%	61%	43%	4.047.302
Female	49%	46%	39%	57%	3.513.069
Total	2.768.757	4.241.841	454.673	95.100	7.560.371

Source: See page18 in the following website https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Yayinlar/Yayinlarimiz/2019/Higher_Education_in_Turkey_2019_en.pdf

Although men's share in higher education is greater than that of women, the number of women in higher education has never been closer to the number of men. I think we are witnessing a historical period when the number of women in higher education almost equals to the number of men. The proportion of women has increased tremendously compared to the past years. In the table above, we see that the numerical difference between men and women with master's degrees is relatively large. It can easily be inferred that this difference is the result of a strategy men employ to postpone military service.

The increasing share of women in higher education has direct repercussions on my research field in terms of the number of feminists with a higher education degree. My survey reveals that the vast majority of women participating in the research are university graduates.

Figure 13: Participants' most recent education degrees.



The fact that all women surveyed between the ages of 17 and 70 are university graduates indicates a common trend across generations. That is, feminists have always had high education degrees in Turkey. However, distinctive character of present day lies in the fact that higher education has spread to cover such a wide segment of women. This uncovers a positive association between being a university graduate and being a feminist that deserves to be analyzed in terms of the sociology of the feminist movement. The positive association is also appeared in my research participant' responses to the question of "If you describe yourself as a feminist; How did you encounter with feminism? While 180 participants out of 374 total respondent state that their education life had a great impact on their encounter with feminism, 137 people stated that education had a partial effect. This means that 317 people state that education is, somehow, a factor, albeit to varying degrees. 57 participants, on the other hand, stated that was not a factor at all. I see that the overwhelming majority of women consisted of those in the 45+ age category when I

applied a detailed examination of result using tools of the software. Accordingly, I argue that one of the most significant variables in the spreading of feminism to the grassroots in the last decades is rooted in the rapid increase in the number of universities established in the past two decades.

The increasing share of women in cognitive labor contributes to the increase in awareness against gender inequalities and hierarchies produced by patriarchal capitalism in addition to the partial economic autonomy women gain by being involved in cognitive labor. This cannot be limited to the changes in women's economic status who have become financially advantageous. It also affects the women's status in society, who take a more active role in administrative processes and hold higher positions in administrative hierarchies and decision processes. I think, the cognitive and intellectual capacity women acquired through their access to universities provide them with a variety of opportunities, including upward mobilization both in employment and in society.[64] It seems to me that these opportunities stem from the unique character of cognitive labor. Historically, industrial production has been a form where women were mostly employed in secondary positions based on the ridiculous claim that women have physical and biological constraints. So-called physical and biological constraints have been the reason for women's isolation from women from work items that required muscle force. Unlike the industrial sector, cognitive production, relies heavily on an intellectual capacity where women can no longer be easily subordinated. Today, one can hardly claim the incapacity of women in cognitive tasks. Women, just like their male counterparts, are employed in high-status jobs by having accesses to highly prestigious departments of highly

[64] Here, I would like to underline one point once again. As I mentioned above, university education does not necessarily provide upward mobility and increase women's economic status. Especially nowadays, this role of the university seems to be decreasing gradually (See Bora et al. 2016). However, it still offers potential. Although the recently established provincial universities do not contain this potential, this opportunity is still available for young people who graduated from the old well-established universities.

prestigious universities. These developments may seem very simple and ordinary to us. The following question may indeed arise: are we expected to celebrate women's rights to access high-prestige departments in the 21st century? I consider the rate of women increasing exponentially in universities, which might be non-distinctive and ordinary for some of us, as historically and socially distinctive rapture.[65] We are just beginning to experience the sociological effects of this rupture. I suggest this thesis to be considered a modest step on the political implications of this newly emerging sociological phenomenon

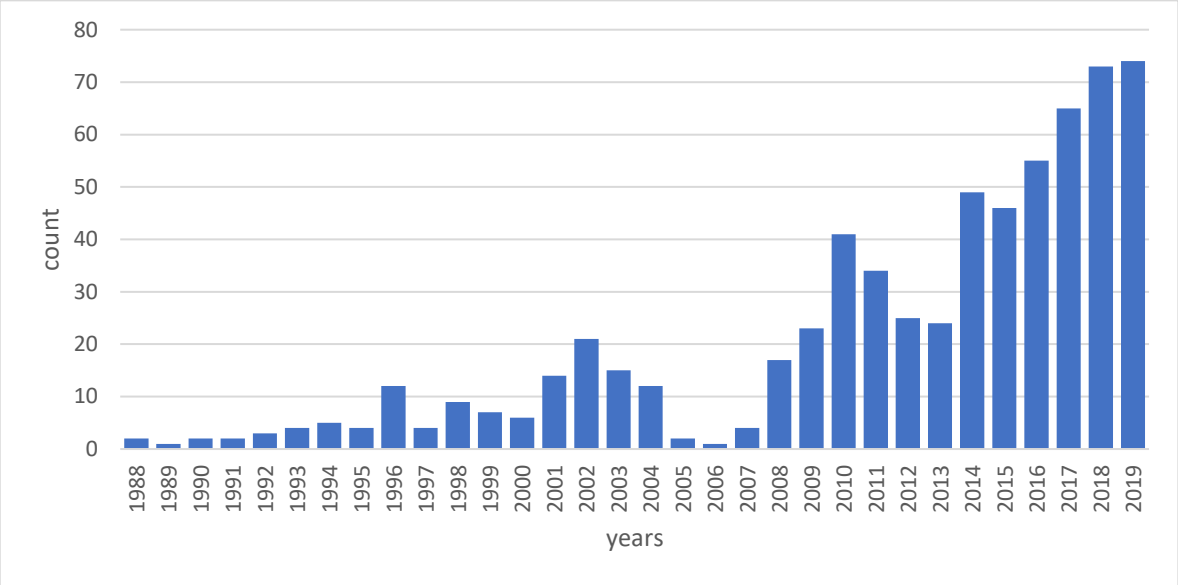
In addition to developments in employment, universities also provide women with cultural, political environment where young women encounter feminist ideas and perspectives embodied in political bodies and upspring in different units within the universities, such as student clubs, organizations and committees address sexual violence in universities.[66] Considering women's studies and gender studies departments, feminism and gender equality-based courses, the increasing number of feminist academics and the doctoral and master's theses they supervise, contributions they make as jury members in academic theses, I observe that universities are important centers where young women encounter feminism, especially in the last decade. This promising atmosphere in universities manifests itself in the number of theses involving the concepts of feminism, gender, Lgbti +, queer. The Figure 9 below shows the number of doctoral and master's

[65] Some will even rightly put forward the following argument: Even as the number of women entering the university increases, the top positions are still occupied by men (See, Jarret 2015). I do not claim that equality between women and men has been achieved. Undoubtfully, both the wage inequality still continues, and men can still reach higher positions much more easily. However, the idea of gender is spreading irreversibly. As this culture spread, unequal practices become more and more questionable. Additionally, women have much more legal opportunities to fight inequalities. Now, one can hardly defence normative ground of gender inequality. We need to admit that transformation towards equality will take long time. Even worse, equality may never be fully achieved in capitalist economy as socialist feminists would have argued. However, women experience a permanent transformation and continue to empower even in unequal situations.

[66] Universities also provide young women the opportunity to separate from their family units which is a key repressive sphere (as a social institution) in the lives of many women in a conservative country like turkey

theses by years that appear when “feminism” is entered as the keyword in the keyword box located on the website of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK).

Figure 14: Numbers of Feminism-Themed Theses by Years.



This figure represents the overall 682 records of master and doctoral thesis (written between 1988 and 2019 in Turkey) whose keywords include feminism. We see that the curve increases rapidly after the 2000s, except for the obvious decrease between 2005 and 2007. When the concepts of queer, gender, Lgbti + are added to keyword preferences, the numbers would further increase.

I consider these developments to be unexpected consequences of government policies implemented to meet capital’s cognitive labor need. Today, we need to accept that cognitive labor and its creative capacities are the motor force of contemporary capitalism (Revel, 2016). However, cognitive labor’s creative potentialities can be appropriated and abused by power groups but never completely be captured (Revel, 2016, p.160). This capacity would always have unpredictable consequences for power. I think

the rapid engagement of young women having access to universities in feminist politics is an unpredictable and unintended result of power's regime of subjectivity. To put it more plainly, one of the important dimensions of the dual character of power's productive capacity, in the Foucauldian sense, is the irrepressible feminist subjectivities. We are witnessing that the conditions created by the government to meet the demand for cognitive labor turn unexpectedly into a condition of production of feminist subjectivity.

This is quite similar to the process that created the 68 revolutions. There was a remarkable increase in the number of universities, especially in central capitalist countries, to meet the period's qualified labor force demanded by industrial capitalism. The rapid economic growth, the increase in the number of universities, and the communication leap caused by television after the 60s resulted in a rapid cultural revolution in central capitalist countries first and then in peripheral countries. The prominent subject of this revolution was "youth" rising from campuses. In other words, this cultural revolution that went down in history as the 68 movements and paved the way for a new social movement resulted from the change in the quality of labor that flourished from universities (Balibar 2018; Hobsbawm and Cumming 1995, Arrghi et al. 2012, for the 68 movement in Turkey, See Lüküslü 2019; Alper 2010; Toprak 1998). Federici and Caffentzis (2007), in their article *Notes on the edu–factory and Cognitive Capitalism,* discuss similar cases that occurred as a result of the increase in the number of universities in Italy in 1974, in the 60s in Africa. They state that:

> "In Italy, for instance, with the contract of 1974, metal–mechanic workers were able to win 150 hours of paid study leave per year in which, together with teachers, mostly from the student movement, they organized curricula that analyzed the capitalist organization of work, also in their own workplaces. In the US, since the 1960s, the campuses have been among the centers of the anti–war movement, producing a wealth of analysis about the military–industrial complex and the role of the universities in its functioning and expansion. In Africa, the university campuses were centers of resistance to structural adjustment and analysis of its implications. This is certainly one of the reasons why the World Bank was so eager to dismantle them." (Caffentzis and Federici 2007).[67]

[67] https://transversal.at/transversal/0809/caffentzisfederici/en)

Caffentzis and Federici use the concept of "edu-factory" to define the role of universities in the struggles. They state that factories that were once the site of struggle between workers and capitalists are now being replaced by universities. In their saying:

> "Where once the factory was a paradigmatic site of struggle between workers and capitalists, so now the university is a key space of conflict, where the ownership of knowledge, the reproduction of the labour force, and the creation of social and cultural stratifications are all at stake." (Caffentzis and Federici 2007."[68]

Today, although we are far away from passing through a radical transformation similar to the one that happened in the 60s, it would not be wrong to say that we've made significant progress in terms of feminist politics. Here, I do not consider the increase in the number of universities and the accompanying number of women having access to these universities as the only source of rising feminist subjectivities. Rather, I do claim that the increase in the number of universities is one of the significant pillars of emerging feminist subjectification in contemporary Turkey.

The counter-subjectivity caused by the increase in the number of universities can also be produced in precarity conditions. Following Butler's study on precarity, Lorey argues that precarity should never be considered merely as a lack as "it also holds out the opportunity to invent new and appropriate forms of political agency on the basis of precarious living and working conditions." (Lorey, 2015, p.9). Precarious bodies always invent alternative relationships and living and solidarity networks in the post-Fordist conditions of precarious production (p. 10). This is exactly what I mean by the productive aspect of precarity. Lorey expresses this ambivalent relationship as follows:

> "The economization of the social, the coincidence of work and life, the demand for the whole person to be involved in performative-cognitive, affective labour, in other words, the capitalization of modes of subjectivation these processes are not at all total, all-encompassing or wholly determined. Excesses, potentials for the articulation of resistance, always arise. Modes of subjectivation are not always subsumed into normative political and economic calls

[68] https://transversal.at/transversal/0809/caffentzisfederici/en)

> for flexibility, mobility and affective and creative work. In uncertain, flexibilized and discontinuous working and living conditions, subjectivations arise that do not entirely correspond to the neoliberal logic of valorization, and which may resist and refuse it" (Lorey, 2015, p.103)

Gill and Pratt also underline the ambivalent character of the precarity saying that "the new moment of capitalism that engenders precarity is seen as not only oppressive but also as offering the potential for new subjectivities, new socialities, and new kinds of politics (2008, p. 3). Relying on such a perspective, I claim that the subjectivation shaped around the logic of investmentality does not necessarily mean absolute subordination and enslavement. Under the precarity conditions where investmentality appear as a strategy for people to reduce vulnerability in the labor market, no one can imagine what a body equipped with multiple qualifications is capable of. While investmentality may be both the cause and the result of the capitalization of subjectivation, it may also be the source of counter- subjectivation by conditioning the self-empowerment that cannot be controlled by power. Young female subjects, whose time and energy are absorbed by the market, might be detached from certain places and institutional forms, but this does not mean that they are excluded from politics. On the contrary, we witness that they develop ad-hoc forms under these new conditions which would bring more horizontal and democratic ground. The following chapters will elaborate on this specific point.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the political economy dimension, transformation in labor regime particularly, to unfold structural dynamic that conditions the change in women women's political subjectivity. More specifically, I have argued that the precarity conditions and transformation in the quality of labor (transition to cognitive labor) influence the formation of subjectivities and that such subjectivities affect young women's

engagement with feminist politics. I claimed that in an environment where working life colonizes every aspect of daily life and participation in the labor market requires high-level qualifications, young women either interact with feminism through digital networks instead of time and labor-intensive political practices as their previous generations were able to do, or they tend to build “affinity groups” instead of involving in large collectivities. I have evaluated this claim not as a negative transformation in terms of feminist politics but as an ambivalence process that contains alternative political potentials. I exemplified this ambivalence based on the booming number of universities since the 2000s in Turkey. I have tried to show how universities, which emerged as a strategic move of the state and capital to meet the need for cheap and cognitive labor in the labor market, have unpredictably turned into a mechanism that provides serious opportunities for women's feminist encounters and thus opens space for their political subjectivities. I also exemplified the similar ambivalence through anxious subjectivities that resulted from contemporary neoliberal developments. Undoubtfully, contemporary forms of anxious subjectivities indicate a decline in the economic capacity of the young compared to first- and second-generation feminists in Turkey. In this respect, it may seem very difficult to assert the affirmative potential of anxiety firsthand. However, based on Butler and Lorance's perspective, I have discussed that precarity and anxious subjectivities caused by it have increasingly become a shared experience between different class, cultural and political positions which may unlock the potentialities for further political alliances between these different groups. Hence, based on the Foucauldian analysis of power, I approached neoliberal subjectivity not only as a negative process but also as a productive process in that it allows for the emergence of counter-subjectivities.

Chapter 4

UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST POLITICS AND SUBJECTIVITIES THROUGH THE HISTORY OF FEMINISM IN TURKEY

In this chapter, I will distance the field of economy and zoom specifically on the political area, which poses another constitutive dynamic in the formation of today's feminist subjectivities. More specifically, this chapter focuses specifically on the period between the 1980s, when the Turkish feminist movement began, and 2010, when organizations began to be terminated. Post-2010 will constitute the subject of the next chapter. Based on my field research, I observe that the concrete dynamics of the transformation in feminist politics, which I examine throughout the thesis, have become evident in the last ten years. Hence, I preferred to include the last ten years, which form the core of the thesis, as a separate chapter. I will try to discuss the recent and long-term history of the feminist movement in relation to the broader political developments and the course of social movements in Turkey. The historical and political analysis of the feminist movement in Turkey is generally limited to the internal dynamics of the movement itself. That is, the achievement of the movement and gaining public visibility are often associated with journals they published and action repertoires by different feminist sections (see Coşar and Kerestecioğlu, p.4; Tekeli 2010, p.32; Bora 2021). While I acknowledge that this claim is significantly valid, I think both past and present forms of the feminist movement need to be placed in a broader context as it has evolved in constant

relationship and interaction with more comprehensive social movement networks. I tried to cover the larger dynamics in this chapter. However, I was still cautious at times to stick by the scope of the thesis while covering the larger picture. Since this thesis focuses on the contemporary forms of the feminist movement rather than its past appearances, I will deal with the global debates more in the next chapter. Although the scope of the thesis is not to analyze feminist politics in all its historicity, such a background will enable us to understand what has been inherited from the past or what has been left behind. By revealing the continuities and ruptures in the political sphere, the distinctive character of the present will become more evident.

4. 1 A Brief History of The Feminist Movement

4.1.1 Formation: From the Late 70s to the Early 90s

Introducing a brief history of the feminist movement carries several risks. One of the biggest of these risks is to make invisible and ignore the various experiences and actors that have influenced feminist history. However, my aim in this historical narrative is not to elaborate on the movement in detail but to highlight specific points that will make the fundamental dynamics of this chapter comprehensible. In highlighting these points, I will draw heavily on primary and secondary sources on feminist historiography in the literature. However, when utilizing secondary sources, my narrative and method will not be a simple repetition of previous sources but will acquire a retrospective perspective enriched by new research. At the same time besides my subjective political perspective and experience, the unique perspectives offered by the current feminist political processes will also reconstruct my view of the past.

The historical roots of today's feminist movement go back to the politicization process of women in the socialist movement in the 1970s[69]. Politicization within socialist organizations resulted in women leaving their socialist organizations and establishing independent feminist formations in the 1980s. The reason why the feminist movement in the literature is started in the 80s lies in the fact that women started to define themselves as feminists for the first time in this period and came together in small groups under the name of feminism (Tekeli, 2010; Sirman 1989).

A small feminist group (5 women) embraced the name of feminism for the first time when the magazine called *Somut* released by the Writers and Translators Publication Production Cooperative (Yazarlar ve Çevirmenler Yayın Üretim Kooperatifi, YAZKO) reserved its fourth page to feminists in 1983 (Aytaç Torun, 2020; Tekeli, 2010).[70] While they had come together through consciousness-raising meetings and theoretical discussion groups, this small group of women took the first step to ensure the public visibility of feminism with the 4th page of *Somut* Magazine. Stella Ovedia from the small feminist group put that "a tiny symbol of feminism was stood extremely shyly in the corner of the page" (Ovedia, 2005, p.65). Although this step was suffused with their shy and timid attitude towards emerging as a feminist group at that time, it was still quite

[69] The history of the feminist movement in contemporary feminist historiography in Turkey goes back to the late Ottoman period. During the II. Constitutional Monarchy period in the late Ottoman Empire, there was a women's movement that addresses the inequality between men and women and criticizes the definition of womanhood that confine women to motherhood and wife status as well as demanding the public visibility of women and their equal participation in working and social life (Çakır, 2010; Baykan ve Basket 2009; Özdemir, 2009). In an atmosphere where the desire for westernization and modernization of the late Ottoman Empire increased, these demands of women were shaped mainly under the influence of the Suffragette movement, which fought for the right to vote, and many other international women's struggles and publications (Özdemir, 2009). These demands, however, were not voiced under the name of feminism in Turkey. Feminism had not yet attained the political power to give its name to a social movement at that time. After the nineties in Turkey, the Ottoman women's movement began to be the subject of rightful interest of feminist historiography (See Çakır 2010; Kandiyoti 1997; Zihnioğlu 2003; Sancar 2012). These studies aim to reveal the missing history of women in the modernization period, male-dominated political culture, and building bridges between the past and present. Hence these studies are not directly about the feminist movement but the social history of women's struggle. Consequently, Although the women's movements in the late Ottoman and early Republican era can be seen as a proto-feminist movement, it has not left a political legacy to contemporary feminism in Turkey.

[70] This beginning is referred to as the Somut 4th page in feminist historiography.

influential as the initial step.[71] Their shy, diffident, and timid attitudes actually stem from efforts to seek legitimacy and gain acceptance within the socialist movement of the period.

The small group of women gathered around the *4th page* consisted of urban, middle- and upper-class women and were educated in highly prestigious schools in Turkey. Many of them had master's and doctorate degrees abroad and thus had the opportunity to meet with the feminist movement and feminist publications in the west (Diner and Toktaş, 2010, s.45; Acar Savran, 2005, p.82, 122; Özdemir, 2016, p.3; Demir, 1994). The member of the small group also emphasizes similar class characteristics and the accompanying cultural capital. For example, in the book *Özgürlüğü Ararken* (2005), Şule Aytaç is asked the question of "What do you attribute that your participation in this movement coincided with those years?" and she answers saying that " I had a Ph.D. in England and met the feminist movement there" (p. 51).[72] Gülnur Acar Savran (2005), a member of the group, also highlights the class character of the group as follows:

> I think we experienced a period that one can define as ideological fermentation; the question of "what feminism is" began to be discussed in a very narrow and quite elite circle. Meetings were held in Istanbul, where self-employed, university graduates, and older women came together (p.82).

Another common ground of these women is that they were either involved in leftist/socialist organizations of the period or adopted the leftist/socialist ideas, albeit not directly involved in the organizations. The pre-1980 period, before the feminist movement had emerged, was the time when the 68-student movement and the left/socialist organization were a hegemonic force in the public opposition in Turkey. However, this socialist/leftist atmosphere was influenced not by the libertarian, anti-

[71] The circulation of the magazine reached approximately 36 thousand after the page was reserved for women, and it decreased to 5 thousand when the feminists left the magazine (Aytaç, 2005, 49).
[72] The book called *Özgürlüğü Ararken* is a compilation of Amargi's interview with the founding feminist figures who were also activists in the feminist struggles in the past.

authoritarian cultural and political ideas of the global north but was influenced either by the colonialism and anti-imperialism discourse of third-world country models or more sectarian, authoritarian, and centralist Chinese and Soviet models (Erdem, 2021; Alper 2010, 2016). A very distinct patriarchal culture also shaped these centralized and rigid organizations. There was a political climate in the organizations where only men took part in decision-making mechanisms, women's words were not valued in the organization, women's roles in the organization often appeared as an extension of their domestic labor, and women were seen as “sisters” who should be protected, rather than as a political actor. (Mater, 2009; Arat 1994; Tekeli, 1995). This political climate was largely fed by the male culture of the rural. The working class migrated to the city through the rising industrialization and the students through education in that period. Both social categories carried the feudal culture of the rural rather than settled urban culture. Hence, the left/socialist organizations of the period, consisting of those workers and students, had their share of this feudal culture to a large extent.

Towards the end of the 70s, women who encountered feminists in the west through education, were influenced by feminist ideas through publications, and were influenced by the libertarian atmosphere of the 68 countercultures, began to problematize the patriarchal culture and their unequal position in the socialist organizations. In 1975, Progressive Women's Association (İlerici Kadınlar Derneği, İKD) was founded as a result of women's dissatisfaction within the organizations. This was also influenced by the United Nations' declaration of 1975 as the International Women's Year and the following decade as the International Women's Decade (Akal, 1996, p. 91). The 70s was also the period when left/socialist organizations began to diversify in Turkey. The Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) was one of the period's most influential and massive organizations. It was also an organization pioneered in establishing of a Progressive Women's

Association (İKD). However, İKD used to define itself not simply as a sub-initiative of the TKP but as an independent women's organization. The members of the association did not consist only of women organized within the TKP.

İKD was a sort of umbrella association that included women who were not affiliated with any organization but adopted leftist ideas, as well as women in organizations other than TKP (Akal, 1996, p.97). Consequently, the second half of the 70s was a period when the gender-egalitarian perspective gradually took place in the agenda of leftist organizations, and various steps, albeit small, began to be taken in this direction.[73] Although these steps were essential in criticizing male culture, women were still at the initiation stage of these criticisms because it was still a period when men considerably dominated women's internal discussions or self-organization. Although few in number, some women who would later call themselves feminists, felt at that time that they could not get rid of male domination in politics as long as they organized together with men and that a radical liberation would only be possible by establishing feminist organizations independent of men (Özkal, 2005). In addition, another problem that began to crystallize gradually in the following years was the emergence of a political impasse that could not be reduced to the male-dominated culture in organizations. In the left paradigm of the period, the idea was that the liberation of women would only be possible with the abolition of private property and the arrival of a classless society. [74] This was an idea the feminist movement would have to struggle with the most in its later years, and it was only in the last two decades that the idea began to fade within the socialist left. Nevertheless, the İKD experience had critical importance in the emergence of feminist

[73] Another sign that the gender egalitarian perspective started to emerge in this period is the magazine named Kadınca (1978), under the editorial directorship of Duygu Asena. This journal is an important feminist journal that was widely read at the time it was published and has an important place in the spread of feminism in a popular discourse in Turkey.

[74] The books of many socialists such as Women and Socialism (August Bebel, 1977), The Origin of the Familiy (Engels) Zetkin's and Lenin were the most basic reference books at that time.

politics, despite its shortcomings. Özkal (2005) expresses the importance of the İKD experience for women who will define themselves as feminists in the following years:

> We pondered over the state of womanhood; We questioned our own lives. We joined the feminist movement with the lessons of this experience. History does not begin after 1980; there is before. Even if there are mistakes, there is a history from which lessons are learned. (Özkal, 2005, p. 35).

Due to the infamous military coup of 1980, these leftist organizations, which started to diversify in the 70s, were either closed or subjected to state violence in the 1980s. These closings were undoubtedly a heavy blow for the left opposition in Turkey. However, some feminist activists and academics consider these closures as an opportunity for women to come together and become visible under the feminist identity (Coşar ve Kerestecioğlu, 2017, p. 6; Arat, 1991; Ovadia ve Ahıska 1988; Sancar, 2012; Savran 2005a; Özkal, 2005; Kılıç, 1998). These authors claim that the space left behind by the organizations closed with the coup, and the male cadres who got arrested or had to flee abroad allowed feminists to open a path for themselves in the political arena.

Savran (2005) defines the first period of the feminist movement that emerged after 1980 as the period of "ideological fermentation," and Tekeli (1989b) defines it as the period of "seeking legitimacy." The idea behind the concept of "ideological fermentation" is that theoretical and political discussion that would lead to the subsequent forms of feminism had newly begun in the first half of the 80s. The concept of "seeking legitimacy," on the other hand, refers to the effort to gain acceptance within the left/socialist movement, which will continue until the 2000s. Although the left/socialist movement was weakened by the coup in the 80s, it was still the dominant paradigm of the period at the intellectual level. The socialist movement has been hostile to the feminist ideology from the moment feminism first appeared in the political arena with the 4th page of *Somut* Magazine until the 2000s, claiming that it divided the class movement and belonged to the bourgeois ideology (Özdemir, 2020, p.2). This hostile attitude was

revealing itself against feminists in the form of derogatory expressions such as 'ugliness' and 'lesbianism,' 'bourgeoisism' (Savran, 2007, p. 1146, cited in Özdemir 2020, p. 3). Some leftist circles even went further and labeled the feminist formations of the period as “Eylülist” to imply that feminists were turning the post-coup depression into an opportunity (Tekeli, 2010). In such an atmosphere, the feminists of the period sought legitimacy within the left by highlighting their anti-systemic and revolutionary character. In fact, this effort has always been evident since the 4th page and continued in different forms, albeit lessening, until the last twenty years, when feminism was accepted within the left.

This fundamental conflict between the socialist and newly emerging feminist politics stemmed from the socialist paradigm that was limited to seizing political power by overthrowing capitalism. The struggle of the feminist movement against power relations surrounding daily life and its distinctive political line focusing on gender inequality in micro fields could not be comprehended or even was underestimated by the socialists of the period. Socialists tended to postpone the objective of gender equality to the post-revolution moment and approached feminism as a symptom of political liberalism that divided the socialist movement. From this point of view, it is possible to say that feminists, from the very beginning, have been a pioneer in the reconstruction of alternative social opposition by addressing the present instead of the future and problematizing the daily life and patriarchal power relations.

In *Somut* magazine, for the first time in Turkey, feminists embraced a perspective that went beyond the usual political framework by expanding the boundaries of the political to include women's “private lives”. The politics of the private sphere on the page 4th page covered various themes and experiences, such as the unequal division of gender roles in the home, domestic violence and sexual abuse by their husbands, fathers and/or

older brothers, abortion, birth control methods, motherhood, pregnancy, and many others (Özdemir, 2020, p. 48). Such a space provided by the feminists on the 4th page was considerably important for women as they had difficulties existing in male-dominated platforms. Women were able to share and convey their affects, desires, experiences, and thoughts either through "reader letters" or by writing an article on the page. The left accused this new form which paid particular attention to the private life of not being political enough and even being liberal at that time. The politics were predominantly associated with macro-political goals such as overthrowing the state and capitalism by socialist male activists.

On the *4th* page, feminists also deciphered both the media and everyday use of sexist language and the hostile attitudes towards feminists within the left (ibid). Thus, feminists, for the first time, have begun to articulate radical libertarian politics not only against the oppressive morality of society that controls women but also against the resilient mechanisms of this moralism that operate within the left. Feminists decided to withdraw from the magazine after six months due to the changing management staff of *Somut* Magazine (Tekeli, 1989b, p. 38). In 1984, the same core group came together again under the name of *Kadın Çevresi* (Women's Circle). The experiences of the post-1980 feminist movement, which had first manifested itself in the form of smaller groups over consciousness-raising and theoretical discussions and then continued with the *Somut* 4th page, was followed by a distinctive experience where feminists had an independent place and publishing house for the first time with *Kadın Çevresi*. They, first of all, began to translate the leading founding feminist books of the period into Turkish.[75] They also organized a series of meetings, both involving their own small groups and women from

[75] *Feminism* (Andrée Mitchel) in 1984, *Woman's Estate* (Juliet Mitchell) in 1985, *Wedlocked Women* (Evlilik Mahkumları) in 1986, *I Am a Feminist* (Simone de Beauvoir) and Shout Out, Let Them All Hear You (Bağır Herkes Duysun) in 1988 which is an output of the Campaign Against Beating in 1987 were published (Özdemir, 2020, p.56).

the wider circle, established inter-women solidarity networks and built various initiatives to support women who were exposed to violence (Özdemir, 2020, p. 56-57). As it was a magazine-based initiative, feminists' experiences in the *Somut* were not organized in such a way as to enable face-to-face encounters among women. The place of the Women's Circle, on the other hand, created a ground where different women frequently visited and socialized and thus became politicized through the meetings. Unlike *Somut* 4th page experience, many women of different ages, statuses, and political views were able to interact with each other through the meetings organized in *Kadın Çevresi* and were able to discuss their diverging experiences face-to-face. These meetings were clustered around the themes of abortion, motherhood, sexuality, and women's labor (ibid, p. 60). In a short time, the Women's Circle became a center of attraction for women and aroused curiosity in left-wing circles.

Acar Savran defines the *Kadın Çevresi* as the last formation of the period she describes as the "ideological fermentation." The experience of *Kadın Çevresi* resulted in political division among feminists who founded it. This division was an expression of the crystallization of theoretical debates into certain feminist positions during the "fermentation process." Two different magazines based on different feminist perspectives, named *Socialist Feminist Kaktüs* (1988-1990) and *Feminist* (1987-1990), were published. While radical feminists gathered around *Feminist*, socialist feminists gathered around *Kaktüs*.[76] [77] Both radical feminism and socialist feminism correspond to the historical turn described as the second wave in feminist literature. Even though the women who gathered around the *Kaktüs* made various criticisms of Marxism on the grounds that it was gender-blind, they still felt ideologically close to Marxist politics and

[76] For the details of the division, see (Özdemir, 2020)
[77] Some feminist women did not belong to either group. But the main trends were clustered around radical feminism and socialist feminism at that time.

thought that socialism was a prerequisite for the emancipation of women. The political tie that binds socialist feminists to Marxism is the organic relationship they establish between capitalism and patriarchy. Accordingly, capital accumulation is not possible without patriarchal forms of exploitation such as women's unpaid labour reproductive labor in the domestic sphere. In the *Kaktus* magazine (the issue dated 1988), the articulation between capitalism and the patriarchal system was expressed as follows:

> In short, we think not only that feminism cannot exist without socialism, but that socialism cannot be fully realized without feminism (Socialist Feminist, *Kaktüs*, 1988b, p. 15).

Drawing on such an approach, they covered highly sophisticated theoretical discussions that revolved around some fundamental concepts such as domestic labor and the sexual division of labor. Women around the *Feminist* magazine, on the other hand, rejected the symbiotic relationship that socialist feminists have established between capitalism and patriarchy, and they considered both as two separate systems. Accordingly, patriarchy was a system of exploitation in itself without the need for capitalism.[78] This signaled the need for independence from mixed-sex socialist organizations and the need for an ideological break with Marxism.[79] However, this did not mean that radical feminists at that time were far from socialist ideology. Many of them used to describe themselves as socialists, but they did not associate their understanding of feminism with socialism. For them, feminism should have been an independent ideology. Ayşe Düzkan, one of the radical feminists of the period Özdemir (2020) interviewed for her thesis, expresses herself as follows:

[78] During this period, radical feminists in Turkey adopted the materialist perspective of Christine Delphy. Materialist radical feminists adopt the Marxist capitalist form of exploitation into patriarchy. Accordingly, the unit of production is not the factory but the family. Women constitute a class category in which men in the family gratuitously appropriate their labor and sexuality. Despite many differences between them, women share common experiences just because of being a woman, and the dynamic that makes them a class in itself is these commonalities.

[79] Another difference between Kaktüs and the women in the feminist magazine was the age gap experienced while doing politics together during the Women's Circle period. (See, Özdemir, 2020)

> There was a discussion at that time. Someone said that I am a socialist and a feminist therefore I am a socialist feminist. I said that I am both a socialist and a feminist, but not a socialist feminist. Because I was thinking, why should socialism be the precondition for women's liberation?" (Ayşe Düzkan, cited in Özdemir 2020, p.81)

Women from *Feminist* magazine, unlike the *Kaktüs*, advocated independence from left/socialist organizations both politically and organizationally. For this reason, compared to the *Kaktüs*, the *Feminist* magazine adopted a more critical and less defensive publishing policy against the socialist left. Considering that a critical attitude is a different form of engaging dialogue, albeit not the same way that *Kaktüs* engaged in, one can hardly assert that women from the Feminist magazine could fully achieve the intended break (Özdemir, 2020, p. 98). The reason, for me, lay behind the hegemonic position that socialism hold within the radical opposition. Marxists appeared as a "Big Other" (Lacan, 1957-1958) by whom feminists wanted to be recognized and were critical of them at the same time[80]. No matter what type of feminism they adopted, Marxist organizations were the primary sources of reference for feminists of the period, both by inheriting concepts from Marxist terminology (such as oppression, exploitation, appropriation, accumulation) and by constantly addressing Marxism in positive and/or critical ways. Another indicator of feminists' positioning themselves according to Marxism was that the concept of "Independence", as the founding motto of feminist politics, also implied independence from Marxist organizations (Ovedia, 2005, p. 72).

Aside from the difference in their feminist perspectives and the ways they dealt with the left, both magazines' publishing and organizing practices were based on feminist principles. Contrary to the centralized and hierarchical structuring of the Marxist

[80] A similar situation can be seen in the emergence of Islamic/Muslim feminist women in Turkey. Muslim feminists are taking shape by positioning against and addressing male dominance within the Muslim movement. For example, at the end of the 80s, Mualla Gülnaz Kavuncu responded to Zaman newspaper columnist Ali Bulaç's article 'Feminist Kadınların Kısa Aklı' (The Short Mind of Feminist Women) from a Muslim feminist perspective Similarly, the Muslim feminist site Reçel Blog, which will be established in 2014, ironically overturns Dücane Cündioğlu's statement that entitles women to the role of making jam (See, http://recel-blog.com/recelden-bir-roportaj-daha/ ; Sıla Türköne, M.A thesis)

organizations where they were once involved, feminists were adopting the horizontal model of intra-organizational democracy based on voluntarism, not on responsibilities and obligations where decisions were taken collectively within the widest participatory climate and minority opinions were also included in the decision processes. They were also applying the *rotation* method in performing tasks to prevent specialization and provide a ground for members to be competent in internal affairs. (Paker, 1989c, p. 67 cited in Özdemir p. 140).[81] Lastly, based on the feminist motto, the "personal is political," they redraw the boundaries of politics in a way to include women's domestic lives and prioritize a ground where women turned into the actor in transforming their own lives instead of being exposed to top-down consciousness-raising methods. Ovedia (2005) states that the strict adoption of these principles by the feminists of the period stemmed from the tedious models of the Leninist organizations they came from (p. 78).

The political activities of the *Feminist* and *Kaktüs* circles were not limited to publishing activities. They also carried out a series of political activities in the form of protests, petitions, and meetings organized together with the cooperation of those not included in both magazines. All these political activities enabled the accumulation of a capacity by which feminist were able to arrange mass protests such as the March Against Battering of women in 1987. In 1987 (February), a judge in Çorum rejected the divorce request of a woman who was exposed to violence by her husband, saying that "Kadının sırtından sopayı, karnından sıpayı eksik etmeyeceksin" (You will not miss the stick from the woman's back and the colt from her stomach). Feminists revolted against this decision by organizing petition campaigns and protests, which, after a while, evolved into a mass march against the battering of women (Sirman, 1989). Approximately 2500 women

[81] There have also been many cases where these idealized principles were violated or could not be implemented. For example, even though removing the hierarchy was their primary concern, the hierarchy within the organization has been one of the most contested issues both within the Kadın Çevresi, Feminist, and Kaktüs as well as within following feminist formations in the future (Ovadia, 2005, p. 78).

participated in this march held in Yoğurtçu Park (Kadıköy), and it was the biggest women's march of that time in feminist history (ibid). They protested traditional sayings like "Beating comes from heaven," which permeated patriarchal cultural codes in Turkey, by reversing them in their slogans: "We don't want the heaven that beating comes from" and "Beating comes from family." They also expressed that they had zero tolerance towards beating and would be in solidarity among themselves against instances of beating with the slogans like "Women in solidarity against beating" and "Enough! Now women will talk!".[82] This was accompanied by a meeting called "Feminist Weekend" organized by *Ankara Persembe Group* in 1989. They invited the feminists from İstanbul, and they all together decided to organize a campaign against sexual harassment called the "Purple Needle" campaign. Feminists from Ankara and Istanbul distributed purple needles in various public spaces, evoking women to defend themselves against sexual harassment.[83]. Moreover, in 1990, as a continuation of the campaign against the battering of women, the Purple Roof Women Shelter Foundation (*Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı*) was established with the contribution of many independent feminist women, women from Feminist and *Kaktüs* Magazines, and women from the Women's Association Against Discrimination (*Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Derneği*). [84]

4.1.2 Proliferation: From the Early 90s to 2015

After the campaign of *battering of women* gained an institutional character with Mor Çatı in the 1990s, the 90s witnessed many more institutionalization efforts (Yılmaz, 2008, p.545). Women's Library (Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi) in the 1990s to bring women's

[82]This march was followed by the publication of a booklet called Bağır Herkes Duysun ("Shout and Be Heard"), which included testimonies of women who had been subjected to violence by the men closest to them. These testimonies revealed that women in Turkey were subjected to domestic violence regardless of their status, class, education, and ethnicity. See http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/pdf/Feminist7.pdf s.2
[83] For details of the campaign, see https://catlakzemin.com/2-kasim-1989/
[84] http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/pdf/Feminist7.pdf s.2

themed works together; Women for Women's Human Rights Association in 1993 (Kadının İnsan Hakları Derneği); Başkent Women's Platform in 1995; KADER in 1996 to increase women's political participation and political representation; Flying Broom Association (Uçan Süpürge) in 1996 to build a network among women's institutions; KAMER in 1997 to combat violence against women in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions were established (Özkan-Kerestecioğlu, 2004; Bora and Günal, 2014; Diner and Toktaş, 2010; Kandiyoti, 2019, p. 87). Another area of institutionalization in this period was women's studies centers in universities (Bora and Günal, 2014; Diner and Toktaş, 2010; Yılmaz, 2008). Women's research centers at Istanbul University, Marmara University, Ankara University, METU, 9 Eylül University, and Çukurova University were established during this period (Diner and Toktaş, 2010, p. 46).

Institutionalization in the 90s coincided with the period when neoliberal dynamics in Turkey began to be felt explicitly. This period was the historical turning point when international funding organizations started to pour resources into third world countries through civil society organizations. Institutionalization paved the way for receiving foreign funds, and many institutions began to receive funds with the projects they initiated. This had repercussions in the feminist politics of the period. Practices such as opening women's shelters, increasing the women's education level, and prioritizing women's health, which should have generally been under the responsibility of the state, were transferred to the responsibility of institutions and non-governmental organizations in this period (Coşar and Kerestecioğlu, p. 8, Bora, 1996[85]). In the words of Bora (1996), this was the period when "feminist politics was treated as a kind of development program." The vacuum created by the withdrawal of the state became less noticeable as non-governmental organizations began to emerge. Projects designed in line with the

[85] https://birikimdergisi.com/dergiler/birikim/1/sayi-83-mart-1996-sayi-83-mart-1996/2281/kadin-hareketi-nereden-nereye/5031

frameworks imposed by the funders also limited the political capacity of the feminist movement at that time (Yılmaz, 2014, p. 558).

Some of the international funds (especially EU funds) that caused this institutionalization were disseminated through the mediation of the Ministry of Social Policies. In other words, women's institutions had limited direct access to these funds, and the Ministry used these funds to transfer them to women's organizations through the projects they applied for. This led to the consolidation of the relationship between women's organizations and the state through their contacts with ministries and governorships. Bora (1996) defines this trend as "state feminism."[86] The definition of state feminism was that, in addition to lobbying activities with the state, the projects designed by women's organizations were shaped by the framework deemed appropriate by the Ministry.[87] Bora summarizes the outcome of this close relationship with the state as follows:

> The 80s' richness, color, and vibrancy gave way to a more stable structure, one that defines itself through projects and works rather than ideas and dreams, one that can never be accused of being vagrant, but in which, interestingly, women can only establish self-interest... as if feminism were the state's work, and some women appear to be helping the state's business...(Bora, 1996, Birikim, Volume 83)

Although the emphasis on state feminism pointed to a distinct trend of the period, the number of feminists who avoided such close relations with the state and found it politically wrong was still substantial. With the influence of the radical left, they once engaged in these feminists preferred to organize a grass-roots movement instead of the

[86] Ibid.

[87] The issue of equal representation of women in the political arena was one of the main agendas of the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995. Feminists from Turkey also attended this conference. After this conference, many women's organizations, NGOs, and human rights associations, including feminists, began to think of ways to overcome the obstacles in front of women's political participation in Turkey. KADER, of which some feminists are co-founders, was established as an organization to ensure equal representation of women. The involvement of women, who were influential figures of the feminist movement, such as Şirin Tekeli, in this association has caused criticism among some feminists as Kader's methods were deemed to be liberal.

top-down transformations by the mediation of state. Let alone these political conflicts between two poles, with the collaboration of feminists and prominent non-governmental organizations such as the Human Rights Association, the significant changes had been achieved in the Turkish Penal Code. The repeal of Article 438 (reducing the punishment of rape of prostitutes) in the 90s, amendment of Article 159 (the article requiring women's work to be subject to their husbands' permission), the removal of phrases such as virgin, widowed, and divorced from their identity cards, and the decriminalization of adultery were some of those legal gains (Kerestecioğlu, 2004; Uçan Çubukçu, 2004).

The 90s were also years when the Kurdish issue in Turkey was on the agenda in relation to the war between the state and the PKK. This was a period when Kurdish parties were closed down, and the legal status of the Kurdish language was not accepted, as well as village evacuations, deputies' arrests, disappearances in custody became common war tactics of the state. These state practices led to the further politicization of Kurds living in Kurdish cities and western cities in Turkey. In this politicization process, women in the Kurdish movement became more visible with their political action and the responsibilities they undertook in the movement compared to their previous roles (Diner and Toktaş, s.48). One of the reasons behind this politicization was that the war conditions influenced women more intensely than men. For example, during the years when Kurdish women/mothers as one of those leftist groups inspired by the protests of mothers in Plaza de Mayo square in Argentina, gathered in front of Galatasaray High School every Saturday under the name of Saturday Mothers and started to ask questions about the fate of their children who disappeared in custody (Can 2022; Kandiyoti, 2019, p. 82; Diner and Toktaş, p. 48)[88]. Another indicator of the emergence of Kurdish women on the

[88] These protests first started to ask about the fate of the disappeared children (Hasan Ocak) of a zaza and Alevi family, who do not define themselves on the basis of their Kurdish identity. Hasan Ocak's family, with the support of a group of feminists/leftists working for the Human Rights Association, started the

political scene as an independent power was the publication of two Kurdish feminist magazines, *Roza* (1996) and *Jujin*, which were founded in those years. *Roza* followed an independent and critical editorial policy from the Kurdish movement (Kutluata, 2002, pp. 36-37). It adopted a two-line editorial policy, both focusing on how Kurdish women experienced the war and also criticizing masculine practices within the Kurdish movement. Violence (both state violence and male violence), sexuality, honor and family constituted the fundamental themes in the magazine (Tokdoğan, 2013, p.42; Açık, 2002). Due to disagreements within the magazine, a group of women who left *Roza* founded *Jujin*, which had a similar political vision to *Roza* (Tokdoğan, 2013, p.42; Açık, 2002).[89]

In this period, the interaction of feminists with the Kurdish women's movement was not homogeneous. Some feminists have never turned their face towards Kurdish women's experiences such as state violence and rape, poverty, discrimination, militarism that were raised throughout the war. This negligence was traced back to feminist politics in the 80s.

When we look at the contents of *Kaktüs* and *Feminist* magazines published in the second half of the 80s, we see that the Kurdish issue was not on their agenda. This neglect continued until the first half of the 90s. Gülnur Acar Savran, the most known figure of *Kaktüs* Magazine, explains the reason as follows:

> At that time, we could not be sensitive enough to the different emphases of Kurdish women's understanding of feminism. What caused this to happen? I don't know, maybe we had a deep-seated chauvinism that we weren't conscious of... But I don't believe it was the major cause; I believe the true reason was the effort to protect feminism with jealousy. At that time, Kurdish women took refuge in the discourse of motherhood against the state, and we were regressing from it. We were concerned that feminism would be overshadowed by other issues, forcing women's demands for identities to take second place. As a result, our preoccupation with establishing an autonomous and separate political space in the name of feminism rendered us partially oblivious to this difference and hierarchy at the time. (Savran, 2005, p. 124).

protests. Over time, Kurdish mothers become more dominant in the group, but the group never defines itself through Kurdishness (For further details See Can 2022).

[89] Apart from these magazines, *Jin u Jiyan (1998)*, *Yaşamda Özgür Kadın*, *Özgür Kadının Sesi* were published in the 90s.

While Savran expresses that “feminism would be overshadowed by other issues”, she reminds the feminists’ concern about the risk of women's issues becoming a secondary issue in the context of the Kurdish women’s movement which seemed to prioritize national liberation in their politics. Undoubtedly, this concern stemmed from the political memory and experience in the socialist movement during the 1970s and 80s, where the women question was always reduced to a class issue and became invisible. Hence, the struggle for establishing feminism as an independent movement from socialist organizations and legitimize in the political terrain was followed by an inclination that appeared in the form of adhering to the idea of independence so as not to “lose” it to other movements. This changed significantly with the establishment of the magazine called *Pazartesi*, especially after the escalation of the war between PKK and the state in Turkey in the second half of the nineties.

Women with different feminist perspectives established *Pazartesi* magazine in 1995. Feminists gathered around the magazine already knew each other from their previous experiences in *Kaktüs*, *Somut*, *Feminist*, *Kadınca*, and *Kim* magazines and from the campaign they organized together (Düzkan 2005, 154; Arat, 2004, p. 283). These women did not constitute a politically homogeneous group. After the closure of *Kaktüs* and *Feminist* magazines in 1990, feminists were scattered and did not have much contact with each other until the second half of the 90s. They used to come together only through specific tasks, and their political capacity largely disappeared (Koçali, 2005, p. 138). The state of inertia was also caused by the wind of institutionalization of the period. Many women dispersed in different institutions were busy with their internal agendas. The motivation for establishing the *Pazartesi* magazine was to “tidy up this mess” (Şeran, 2009) and rebuild relations.

The *Pazartesi* adopted a publishing policy concerned about the war in the Kurdish regions and the ways Kurdish women experienced it (Şeran, 2009; Arat, 2004, p. 289). For example, the rape of women by soldiers and evacuation of the villages in the region due to the State of Emergency, the harassment and rape of women under arrest or detention, Mothers of Peace, poverty caused by the war and disappearances in custody were some of those themes in the magazine (see *Pazartesi* issue 14 and 53, p. 7).[90] Despite this solidarity, some critical points that characterized the Kurdish Women's Movement have always constituted a tension for feminists from the western cities. This tension led to occasional outbreaks in the common platforms where they encountered.

One of those contentious issues was the discourse of motherhood emphasized by the Kurdish women's movement. While the Kurdish women's movement embraced the experience of motherhood as a category politicized by the unsolved murders and disappearances of their children under custody, feminists have problematized such an embracement arguing that women were being confined and reduced to motherhood by this rhetoric that celebrated motherhood. Women from the Kurdish movement criticized feminists on the grounds that they acted on universal feminist principles without taking Kurdish women's unique political realities into account and accused them of being white. In short, in this period, the way feminists encountered and interacted with the Kurdish Women reflected both solidarity and political tensions simultaneously.

Pazartesi also provided a solid ground for understanding the ways in which feminists related to women in political Islamist circles in the 90s. The headscarf bans, which were implemented in 1982 as a result of the military coup in 1980 and continued until 2007, became more and more politicized in the 90s, especially after the February 28 coup (Kandiyoti, 2019, p. 87; Diner and Toktaş, 2010, p. 42). University students wearing

[90] Issue 14: http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/pdf/14.pdf and issue 53: http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/pdf/53.pdf

headscarves began to protest the ban, claiming their right to education and their right to exist in the public sphere with their headscarves. The headscarf issue, which became more visible with these protests, became a tense issue for feminists and posed difficult questions regarding how to take political positions. While some feminists defended the headscarf based on women's rights to education and public visibility, others were against it as it was deemed a mechanism of religious oppression against women. However, it would not be wrong to make a generalization based on the discussions in *Pazartesi*. Reserving the criticism that the headscarf was reactionary implementation in the sense that it oppressed women's bodies, most of the feminists, including those in the *Pazartesi*, defended the right to wear a headscarf to stand in solidarity with women (Koçali 2002; Şeran, 2009; Arat, 2004).[91]

Apart from the Kurdish and political Islam issues, *Pazartesi* also covered many other topics such as the economic crisis, elections, the earthquake in 99, the IMF, globalization, etc. In addition to these macro-political agendas, it also attached equal importance to micro agendas such as being a woman, being a mother, prostitution (issue 2), sexual harassment and rape against women, femicides, marriage, chastity, divorce, Lesbian experience (number 11), fantasies, love, menstruation, orgasm (issue 25), pornography, menstruation bleeding (issue 33), cheating (36), cellulite, getting old (issue 34), anal sex (issue 40), menopause (issue 41), fashion, gender discrimination in advertisements (issue 32), ugliness/obesity (issue 55).[92] It is seen that between the years 1995-2000, both macro-political agendas such as the headscarf/headscarf, sharia/coup, economic crisis, war, and more micro-political agendas such as the body and sexuality covered by the magazine. In short, in *Pazartesi*, patriarchy began to be considered not as

[91] Pazartesi, issue 43: http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/pdf/43.pdf
[92] In this spectrum, we see that the topics of femicide, motherhood, sexual harassment, rape, and violence against women are mostly covered in the magazine.

an abstract theoretical concept as it was discussed in the 80s, but as a system that emerged as substantial effects on women's lives and bodies by permeating current politics, popular culture, media, and daily life. The critical point here is that feminists at that time were no longer limiting their political horizon to making room for themselves in the left opposition, as in the 80s, but were beginning to create their own political positions and making statements on the country's agenda.

Another critical threshold for the feminist movement of the period was the establishment of the *Freedom and Solidarity Party* (Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi, ÖDP) in 1996. The left/socialist opposition, which was suppressed by the 1980 coup re-emerged in the 1990s and entered a kind of recovery period. Their reappearance differed somewhat from the socialist organizational models of the previous period, however. In this period, a need for a new political and organizational model appeared within the socialist left in order to catch up with the contemporary political transformations, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This required abandoning the traditional leftist mentality. In the seventies, the socialist opposition advocated a vanguard party model based on Marxist-Leninist principles. The leftist organizations of this period had widely adopted illegality as the basic principle of a secret revolutionary organization against the state. The hierarchical model in which certain actors were at the center began to be questioned, especially after the gap left by the cadres who were imprisoned or had to flee abroad after the coup and the organizational weakening caused by the inability to fill this gap with new activists. With the newly emerging wave of social opposition in the 90s, a wave for a legal, political party model emerged that would meet large masses on the legal ground, including the new social movements of the period and responding to the changing characteristics of the working class. ÖDP was one of the most important parties

of the period that represented this wave.[93] ÖDP represented a critical historical moment in demonstrating the tendency of different left/socialist sections to come together under the same roof. ÖDP included greens, conscientious objectors, socialists, and anti-war opponents to unite large opposition groups with the Rainbow Coalition Project. It also called on feminists to be part of the party and represent the feminist agendas in the ÖDP. Most, if not all, of the women from *Pazartesi*, individually responded positively to this call and decided to join the ÖDP (Şeran, 2009).[94]

Feminists who persistently wanted to separate themselves from the left in order to establish an independent feminist field in the 80s came together again under the umbrella of ÖDP. This can be seen as an indication that feminism was becoming a constitutive figure of the leftist political realm and thus beginning to be accepted by some segments of the socialist left (including *Birikim* magazine) who were trying to keep up with current developments. It also implied that the anxiety of "getting lost in another movement" was getting weaker as feminists began to strengthen.

In addition to institutionalization, another reason for the disconnection among feminists and political stagnation in feminist politics during the 90swas the orientation of feminists to the newly emerging socialist organization, particularly to the ÖDP (Karakuş, 2005, s. 96-97). This, however, turned into a process where the ÖDP experience did not have a positive effect on the development of feminist politics. On the contrary, feminists did neglect feminist politics by turning their face more towards socialist politics (Düzkan, 2005). Normally ÖDP provided a ground for each organization it included to pursue their own independent agenda. This was also true for feminists. Feminists could have focused on their specific agenda and developed methods on the ways in which ÖDP might have

[93] Other parties other than ÖDP (Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi, Freedom and Solidarity Party) are SHP (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti, Social Democratic Populist Party), TBKP (Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi United Communist Party of Turkey, BSP (Birleşik Sosyalist Parti, United Socialist Party).
[94] Ayşe Düzkan, Gülnur Acar Savran, Filiz Koçali were among the feminists included in the ÖDP.

been steered in a feminist direction. However, the process was reversed, and feminists found themselves renouncing their own politics. While Karakuş describes this process as "the dissolution of the women's movement," Ayşe Düzkan, based on her experience in *Pazartesi* and ÖDP, expresses the negative impact of ÖDP on Feminists as follows:

> After I became a member of the ÖDP, I, like all ÖDP members, started to think about issues that only leftists were interested in, such as direct democracy, gradual revolution, intra-party democracy, and socialized with leftists. When I look at my own writing experience, I can clearly see that this had an effect... Some of our friends were busy with practical work within the party. Their condition became worse; because being involved in politics must have a certain nurturing of ideas. But running around in a party work did not feed the idea... For these reasons, I think that ÖDP had a negative effect on me and my friends. I mean it didn't divide us; but we entered that world and began to look through the window of that world. It really had limitations. (Düzkan, 2005, p. 158-159).

Düzkan states that after she joined the ÖDP, her perspective and conceptual repertoires began to take shape from within the left/socialist ground represented by ÖDP rather than the feminist one. She also notes that there was nothing left to discuss in their independent feminist platforms as they spent all their intellectual and political capacities for ÖDP (ibid, p. 169). Lastly, Düzkan states that, unlike men in the ÖDP, feminists were expected to work hard in tasks that did not require cognitive and intellectual capacity. This, she says, caused women to remain incapable of equipping themselves intellectually. Consequently, the 90s were the years of institutionalization as well as the years when the LGBT movement, the Kurdish Movement and political Islam were included in the political scene, and thus the identity politics began to dominate the political environment (Kandyoti, 2019, p. 84; Diner and Toktaş, 2010, p. 42). [95] Düzkan describes this transformation as follows in the 36th issue of *Pazartesi:*

[95] During this period, university student movements were also quite high. High school student actions were organized by the High School Students' Union, protests and signature campaigns were organized due to the 300 percent increase in student fees, and radical actions such as hanging a banner reading "No to fees" were carried out in the parliament. It is a period when the state violence against these actions increased on the one hand, and on the other hand, the socialist left tended to spread through the mass party and more independent rights struggles intensified. Moreover, it was a period when the anti-nuclear movement rose, environmental and anarchist movements emerged, Lambda in Istanbul (1993) and KAOS-GL (1995) were founded in Ankara, and thus new social movements began to appear.

> In the past, women were predominantly treated as a social stratum that was oppressed and exploited (each of which was adopted separately or together by various feminist women). It is currently widespread to think of womanhood as simply a social identity. This has various consequences. The most significant outcome for me is that feminism has been narrowed down to a sensitivity from a field of struggle and it is really difficult for me to substitute a project like remaking the entire world for women for "Let's be sensitive to women while doing our job." (Düzkan, 1998, s. 5).[96]

In the excerpt above, Düzkan complains that while the dominant feminist conceptual repertoire of the 80s consisted of concepts inherited from Marxist terminology such as oppression, exploitation, and confiscation (of labor and body), in the 90s, this terminology was increasingly replaced by identity debates and feminism was reduced to an identity issue. This, she argues, decreased its political capacity.[97]

Feminist politics in the 90s could only be heard by a narrow audience through magazines (*Pazartesi*) and could exist in "women's commissions of mass organizations" (for example, ÖDP). This shows how feminism was still far from spreading grassroots and marginalized within social life (Sayılan, 1995; Arat, 2004, p. 283). Feminists in the 1990s were no longer few in number as they were in the 1980s. However, the feminist movement was still consolidated in certain centers such as institutions, magazines, and organizations and composed of women who know each other personally, albeit not in the form of close friendship as in the fermentation processes at the beginning. Although it did not spread to the social base and was still deemed to be marginal, a transformation towards being gradually accepted by the socialist left was obvious in that period. In this period, feminist politics began to take a new form in the sense that it could adapt itself to

[96] http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/pdf/36.pdf

[97] This is largely due to the gender mainstreaming approach that came to the fore at the Beijing conference in 1995. The Beijing Conference is the fourth of the United Nations world women's conference series, the first of which was held in Mexico in 1975. Gender mainstreaming aims at introducing gender dimension to institutional structures requiring equal opportunities in all policy domains and decision-making processes (Stiegler 2000; Walby 2005). The pressure to fulfil the requirements of the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), which was signed in 1985, increased during this period. Institutions took some steps to implement gender equality during this period. However, these steps have been considered as ostensible steps by those feminists who have been out of mainstream frame like Ayşe Düzkan.

the changing political environment and the problems of radical politics of the period and could even impact it. Another characteristic feature of this period was the transformation in the feminist rhetoric of "independence." While the emphasis on independence from leftist/socialist organizations was dominant in the 80s, independence began to refer to separation from state and capital bodies in a conjuncture where international funds and their dissemination through state institutions were the fundamental trends in the 90s. The discourse of independence from state and capital would continue in the founding principle of SFK and Amargi in the 2000s' atmosphere where NGOization and project feminism would further increase.

4.1.3 Post-2000 Feminist Politics in Turkey

The increase in the NGOsitaion after the 2000s was also accelerated with the impact of Turkey's affirmation as a candidate country for EU membership in 1999. [98] The democratic atmosphere brought about by this political development allowed various non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Association across the country to put pressure on the state to take steps in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Many feminist institutions and activists were trying to turn this wind in favor of women through lobbying at the national and international levels (Gülel, 2019). These efforts have made it necessary for the state to introduce a series of penal and civil code changes to harmonize Turkey's domestic law with the European Union. For example, Article 34, which covers human rights and fundamental freedoms, was introduced in 2001. Article 41 was amended in a way to redefine the family as equality between spouses, and thus

[98] The Marmara earthquake in 1999 also reinforced the importance of NGOs at that time. While the state was late to intervene in the damaged areas, non-governmental organizations poured their capacities into these areas to reduce the impact of the destruction. State's inertia, in that case, caused the power of the state to be questioned by citizens, and it reinforced the importance of the NGOs in the eyes of citizens (Özdemir, 2009, p.35; Atauz, 1999).

the disadvantageous position of women compared to men was legally eliminated (ibid, p.5). Moreover, the phrase "Husband is the head of the family unit" was removed from the civil code and the law that gave equal status to spouses in family life came into force. In 2004, Article 10 was amended to give women equal rights and make the state responsible for establishing this equality. A new regulation was introduced to recognize the supremacy of international agreements on women's rights. Just like legal changes in favor of women, which entered the legal texts of the EU, have been achieved through the struggle of the feminist movement in Europe, their adaptation to Turkish law has undoubtfully been possible thanks to the long-standing efforts of the feminist and the women's movement in Turkey.

However, these changes were not met with enthusiasm by some feminist groups, including women from *Pazartesi* Magazine. In her article titled "Will the EU save women now?" in issue 58 of *Pazartesi*, Tura (2000) stated that the European Union candidacy was a result of the search for rapid integration into globalization, as well as the increasing demand of the global market for women's cheap labor force where flexible working conditions began to dominate the labor market in post-2000s in Turkey. She added that transformations made under the influence of the EU process could not go beyond the abstract equality between men and women. (Ibid, p. 20-21). Tura concluded her statement as follows:

> Although we know that the economic conditions that EU membership will bring for women will make it even more difficult to reach real equality, we have no choice but to fight using the political legitimacy it offers us. It seems that the conflicts and cracks between the promises of equality and real life will form the basis of the struggle.

While Tura stated that these regulations would not be sufficient alone without reflecting on concrete transformations in daily life, she reminded the need for much more radical social changes. This idea was shared by the other women in the *Pazartesi*. They thought that a permanent transformation could be possible only through radical action repertoires

such as street movements, and they distanced themselves from feminist activists whose field of struggle was limited to legal transformations. Therefore, just as the opposing ideas on accessing EU among the left/socialist flank, feminists also were not homogeneous in this respect.[99] However, I would note that the anti-globalization and anti-capitalist view, which crystallized in the debates on the EU, was quite common among feminists, especially among those who were situated within the radical left.

The EU candidacy process was followed by the AKP's coming to power in 2002. In its first relatively more "democratic" period (2002-2007), the AKP took a pro-EU stance, unlike the Islamic tradition it raised from (Gülel, 2019; Kubicek, 2011, p. 914). AKP proposed several reform packages to the parliament, including some of the legal regulations mentioned above. Recognizing the cultural and political rights of minority groups, freedom of expression, freedom of association, the release of political prisoners, and the restriction of the army's power were some of these democratization steps (Güler, 2019, p. 5; Kubicek, 2011, p. 914). TRT's attempt to broadcasting in Arabic, Kurdish, Zazaki, Circassian, and Bosnian as of 2004 was one of the steps towards the recognition of the cultural rights of minority groups. With the EU's suggestions that certain political and cultural rights of minority groups and ethnic affiliations should be secured, the government took some steps to address the identity problems of Kurds, Alevis, Roma, and Armenians. The most comprehensive and most controversial of these attempts was the steps taken towards Alevi and Kurdish identities. In 2009, two political processes of opening called the Kurdish opening, and the Alevi opening were introduced. Moreover, when the AKP came to the government, it made some constitutional amendments that reduced the role of the military in politics in the name of expanding civil society on the

[99] Minority rights, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the hope that these would pave the way for political deadlocks such as the Kurdish issue in Turkey were met with enthusiasm both within some left groups and within the Kurdish movement. On the other hand, anti-EU sentiments equally hegemonized the political space.

ground that the coup constitution was still in force. All these developments significantly affected the cultural, political, and social atmosphere in the early 2000s. Moreover, the AKP's ability to mitigate the effects of the 2001 economic crisis that broke out just a year before its rule has contributed to creating a more relieving environment for the society which experienced unstable and economic and political conditions of the 90s. In short, the first decade of the 2000s was a period in which multiculturalism based on cultural difference and identity was partly experienced, albeit not in the form of European-style multiculturalism.

The early 2000s was a time when global social movements found their expression in a series of actions and protests in Turkey. Anti-war movement (2003), anti-militarism and conscientious objection movement, Anti-Nato Libertarian Coordination (2004), Global Peace and Justice Coalition (Küresel BAK)[100], BarışaRock Festival (2003-2008)[101], Mesopotamian Social Forum (2009) [102], Diren Istanbul Coordination[103], and many other global movements due to the 2008 global economic crisis were important developments of the period in terms of social movements.[104] The common aspect of these

[100] In 2003, Küresel BAK organization was established as an anti-war platform in Turkey after the signature campaign of global anti-war intellectuals against the US invasion of Iraq. (http://www.kureselbak.org/)

[101] BarışaRock arose in 2003 as a reaction against the Rock'n Coke Festival organized by Coca-Cola. It was thought that Coca-Cola, as a symbol of international capitalism, used rock music to manipulate young people through such festivals. (https://www.evrensel.net/haber/219200/barisarock-kazandi).). It was not only a music festival but also a festival where workshops were held on current political agendas such as the Kurdish problem, the anti-nuclear movement, and organizational issues. It is estimated that around 80,000 people attended this festival, which lasted for six years.
(https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar%C4%B1%C5%9Farock)

[102] The Mesopotamian Social Forum was established in 2008 as a result of the solidarity network of social organizations, initiatives, unions, non-governmental organizations, local governments and similar formations in the world saying "Another World is Possible" on Mesopotamian lands. (https://m.bianet.org/bianet/genclik/132735-mezopotamya-sosyal-forumu-basliyor). The second meeting was held in Diyarbakır and activists from Germany, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, Italy, Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine, Russian Federal Kurdistan Region, Iran, Armenia, France and many other countries participated in the forum.

[103] This coordination, which was established to protest the arrival of the IMF and the World Bank in Istanbul, was basically an initiative that showed the ways out of global capitalism and was established to organize a libertarian anti-capitalist life. (https://direnistanbul.wordpress.com/)

[104] In the 2000s, A wide range of movement forms emerged, such as farmers' movements, water basin protection movements, movements against urban transformation, food security movements, consumer cooperatives, the struggle for animal liberation, solidarity movements with immigrants, social forums, free

movements was that they described themselves as anti-capitalist, anti-globalization, and peace movements. Unlike hierarchical and centralized classical Marxist organizational models, these organizations embraced horizontal and non-hierarchical models as well as the participatory and pluralistic democracy in organizational affairs. I think there are two crucial dynamics in shaping such a model. The first one was the inspiration from the Zapatista movement that arose in Mexico and the anti-hierarchical movements in Argentina. Academic and political studies on these movements were translated into Turkish throughout this period. The second important dynamic was the changing intellectual and political atmosphere of the 90s, which I will discuss in more detail below. Without understanding this atmosphere, one of the important pillars of the conditions for the formation of feminist organizations such as Amargi and SFK would be missing.

From the beginning of the 1990s, a tendency emerged in social science where a significant part, if not all, of the Marxist intellectual left the classical Marxist paradigm and turned their face to New Marxism. The studies of Frankfurt school theorists, studies involving Gramscian discussions of civil society, studies involving the concepts of radical democracy shaped around the ideas of Laclau and Mouffe, Habermas's study called *The Structural Transformation of Public*, and many other studies shaped around post-structuralist and post-modern theories have been translated into Turkish in succession as an alternative to orthodox Marxist studies that reduced Marxism to simply economic determinism. With these translations, the Third Worldist, Stalinist, Maoist socialist perspective that was dominant until that time was gradually being replaced by studies that dealt with Marxism in its intellectual dimension, without simply reducing it to a sort of "political action guide". The *Birikim Magazine*, *Birikim Publishing*, and *Ayrıntı Publishing* were the leading actors that contributed to the formation of this field by

software movements, new forms of the feminist movement, plaza workers and labor movements solidarity networks.

covering and translating related studies on new Marxism. [105] [106] Discussions on horizontal and non-hierarchical organizations model had gained importance and made a lot of noise within the socialist left when the study of figures such as Hard and Negri, who differed from the classical Marxism and studies on Seattle protests translated into Turkish, as well as the studies on Zapatista movement.[107]

Most of the intellectual and academic figures involved in Amargi passed through this theoretical corpus accumulated during the 90s and were also influenced by these new social movements, focusing on the issues of ecology, militarism, war and globalization. However, this interaction was not unidirectional. Many anarchist/anarchofeminist/queer activists from Amargi also took part in these movements, and they constantly carried their perspectives to those movements.

4.2 Amargi (2001-2012)

Based on the multiplicities of women's experiences, *Amargi* set out as a feminist organization where women from different ethnic origins, religions, sexual and class identities can express their distinctive experiences. *Amargi* had made this principle the most basic motto of the organization by stating that "coexistence of difference is one of our priorities" in its initial manifesto. In this respect, it emerged as a new feminist positioning that differed greatly from previous feminist perspectives. The conditions for this different epistemic positioning emerged within the historical and political context

[105] Gülnur Acar Savran's book, Civil Society and Beyond: Rousseau, Hegel, Marx (Istanbul: Alan Publishing, 1987), based on her doctoral study (1983, University of Sussex), is one of the first examples of studies in this field.
[106] As I mentioned previously, the ÖDP and the Greens party were founded in response to such a search for a new left.
[107] Such that small-scale socialist organizations used to read this transformation as a deviation from Marxism with a reactionary attitude and criticized these theorists.

that I tried to map above. To summarize the fundamental pillars of this context once again; The epistemological transformation (neo-Marxist, post-structuralist Marxist, post-structuralist anarchist paradigm) in the intellectual and political arena that started in the 90s; the new social and anti-globalization movements accompanying this transformation, the European Union wind in the early 2000s, the ceasefire process between the state and the PKK between 1999 and 2005, and the relatively democratic, multicultural atmosphere that coincided with the first periods of the AKP were critical processes in the shaping of the feminist politics of the period.

Apart from these factors, another significant development that enabled the establishment of *Amargi* was the resonation of third-wave feminism as of the late 90s in Turkey. The repercussion of third-wave feminism, which started in America in 1992 with the phrase "I am the third wave" by Rebecca Walker (2006), in Turkey roughly coincides with the second half of the 90s. Third-wave feminism emerged as an objection raised by lesbian, black, and lower-class women in Global North to the political form that embraced a universal category and experience of "womanhood", and accordingly, that ignored differences between women and accepted the experience of advantaged women's groups as universal norms (Heywood, 2006b; Heywood & Leslie L., eds., 2006a; Heywood & Leslie & Drake, ed., 1997; Gills & Howie & Munford, eds., 2007; Tamara, 2000). Unlike the homogenizing and universalizing perspective of the second wave, third-wave feminists emphasized the fragmented, multiple, intersectional, and ambiguous character of identity (Heywood, 2006a, p. 257–58). This was heavily caused by the fact that the great universalist narratives such as Marxism were replaced by the fragmented narratives of post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-colonial theory and deconstructionist theories in Europe and America after the 80s (Synder, 2008, p. 183).

Until the 2000s, feminist politics in Turkey was predominantly under the influence of the second wave. Second-wave feminists in Turkey emphasized commonality among women, regardless of class, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, through the discourse of "sisterhood." They were, for sure, expressing a difference in experience among women coming from different hierarchical social, cultural, and economic positions, but the political discourse was inclined towards commonality among women at that time. Undoubtedly, a newly emerging movement needed to emphasize the commonalities in building a collective subject essential for the movement. However, such emphasis was related mainly to the universalist/modernist paradigm of the period rather than a simple need. Most of the feminists speaking from within this paradigm considered that women similarly exposed to the patriarchal system were potentially class in itself, just as the working class was a class in itself in the face of capitalist exploitation, regardless of their identity differences. Socialist and radical feminists in Turkey have been revolving around this perspective. The prominent discourse was shaping within such a frame until the late 90s and early 2000s. *Amargi* differed significantly from the feminist paradigm that preceded it by directing the emphasis on "differences" rather than "commonality."

Amargi bore the traces of the third wave, emphasizing the difference in experience among women, saying, "We set out by saying that patriarchy surrounds women with different mechanisms depending on their place in the social hierarchy." (*Amargi* Collective, closing text).[108] While feminists tended to categorize themselves under certain definitions such as radical feminist, socialist feminist, and Marxist feminist in the previous periods, *Amargi* circle embraced an inclusive political line without the need to define itself with such concepts. Such that "*Amargi* belonged to everyone" and it had a

[108] See, http://www.baskahaber.org/2012/12/amargi-kadn-akademisi-kapand.html

desire to "make itself belong to everyone" (ibid). This inclusive political stance is in direct parallel with Heywood's definition of the third wave. According to Heywood (2006a), the most characteristic feature of the third wave is having the idea of "a form of inclusiveness" (xx). This inclusivity included not only the coexistence of women from different social groups but also the intersection of different identities under one single body (ibid). Amargi's inclusive policy was reflected both in the content of its magazine and in the diversity of identities of its founding and subsequent members.[109]

Here, I am not implying that second-wave feminism in Turkey ultimately ended, and a new era started when *Amargi* was founded. Although the wave metaphor carries the risk of implying that one era ends and another begins, I agree with feminist scholars who criticize the wave metaphor by expressing that each new era carries the traces of the previous one and that the "old" can always situate itself within what we call the "new" (See Bora, 2020).[110] Indeed, *Pazartesi*, which began its publishing in 1995 in collaboration with socialist and radical feminists, continued its publishing life until 2006, that is *Amargi*, and *Pazartesi* coexisted in the feminist political landscape for five years between 2001 and 2006.

Amargi was founded in 2001 by a tiny core group of women. It set out with the principle of being independent of the state and political parties and not resembling those organizations.[111] They used to come together in *Pazartesi*'s Place in Beyoğlu and hold their initial internal meetings there. (Özakın, 2012, p. 52; Özdemir, 2009, p. 55).[112]

[109] It included white, middle-class women like Pınar Selek, as well as Kurdish, trans, and middle-lower-class women in its initial phase.

[110] Criticism of the wave metaphor was that it made the continuities between periods invisible and interrupted history. (See, Aikau, Erickson, and Pierce 2007 (Feminist Waves, Feminist Generations: Life Stories from the Academy. Minneapolis: University
of Minnesota Press); Jervis 2006a (The End of Feminism's Third Wave: The Cofounder of Bitch Magazine Says Goodbye to the Generational Divide).

[111] See, https://amargigroupistanbul.wordpress.com/about-amargi/information/

[112] Amargi was first established in Istanbul. Later, branches were opened in Adana, Antakya and İzmir. But for a while, most branches became inactive. They continued with only Izmir and Istanbul branches.

Women from *Pazartesi* and founding members of *Amargi* already knew each other from very narrow feminist channels (Özdemir, 2009, p. 55). During this process, they discussed whether they could involve in *Pazartesi* organization, but they decided not to be included in the *Pazartesi* because of the differences in their feminist perspectives and organizational model (ibid). Based on interviews with Amargi's founding actors, Özdemir (2009) states that *Pazartesi* was far away from meeting their expectations because *Pazartesi's* political activity was limited to publishing a weekly magazine where they simply displayed reactive politics rather than a proactive one. Another reason behind their reluctance, as Özdemir's study shows, was the political stance of the *Pazartesi* shaped heavily by the second wave, which did not fit their perspective. The most concrete indicator of this difference in perspective is embodied in the following statement of Özdemir's interviewee, that is, "we began to read international black feminist literature" (cited in Özdemir 2009, p. 55). This discourse foretells the political position of *Amargi* that would situate itself in close line with the Kurdish women movement as the black bodies of Turkey. Indeed, Amargi's manifesto essentially bears the traces of the Kurdish movement's conceptual repertoire and political line.

Amargi was founded as an organization during a ceasefire (1999-2005) between the PKK and the state. Its political stand was heavily on anti-war and anti-militarism, claiming that war cannot be isolated from sexism. To that end, the *Amargi* launched a series of campaigns on the struggle for peace and anti-militarism. These campaigns aimed at deciphering the organic ties between war and women's oppression and were based on the idea that the struggle for peace was ultimately a women's struggle. They also organized various events, seminars and campaigns on anti-militarism and the struggle for peace, bringing together women of different ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientation on the ground that the war destroyed the commonality between Kurdish and Turkish

women and solidarity between them.[113] The main aim was to create a social ground that would pave the way for permanent peace and eliminate militarism that fosters masculinity through social peace. Pınar Selek's anti-militarist and peace activist role played a major role in achieving this goal.[114]

In addition to the seminars on the Kurdish issues, war, and anti-militarism, lesbians, and bisexuals in *Amargi* also organized seminars on homophobia, heterosexism, and sexuality in 2003 (Özakın, 2012; p. 97).[115] All these seminars allowed the emergence of mutually stimulating encounters with different identities in *Amargi*. [116] For example, while lesbians and bisexuals who had not thought about racism and nationalism before

[113] The first campaign took place in 2001. A group of writers, journalists and artists from Istanbul went to Diyarbakır and Batman and met with the women there. Later, as a continuation of this campaign, a meeting was organized in Istanbul. Women from Diyarbakır, Batman, Gölcük, İzmit, İzmir, Manisa, Ankara, Şırnak and Bursa attended this meeting (see, https://bianet.org/bianet/kadin/4520-kadinlar-baris-icin-sozlestiaccessed 8/23/2021). In 2002, another campaign called "Women are marching towards each other" was organized, aiming to bring women from different Turkey provinces together in Konya. Women from Adana, Ankara, Antakya, Batman, Bursa, Istanbul, Izmir, Mersin and Niğde came to Konya and had the opportunity to listen to each other's problems and experiences (see, https://catlakzemin.com/12-temmuz-2002-katagi-amarginin-de-katildigi-kadinlar-birbirine-dogru-yuruyor-kampanyasi/). In 2004, Amargi started another project called Istanbul Social Ecology Project (ITEP). The concept of *social ecology* was inspired by Bookchin, a constitutive figure for the Kurdish movement in shaping their political agenda. This project was basically a project that enabled different minority groups in Istanbul to come into contact with each other through non-violent communication and non-hierarchical methods (Ülkü Özakın, 2012, p. 70). This project was initiated by receiving funding, but problems such as the hierarchy caused by the division of labor involved in the wage relationship occupied Amargi's agenda for the first time (ibid). In 2005, the Amargi theater group was founded. This group wrote a play called "The things that dropped from the scarf" (Yazmadan Dökülenler), which deals with different experiences of women. However, this group also had problems over the hierarchy issue, as in the ITEP experience, and dispersed. Women who had not participated in Amargi until then became a part of Amargi after a while through all these events and campaigns. Thus, both the numerical and demographic characteristics of Amargi began to change. Pınar Selek was a pioneering figure in organizing these campaigns and events. These Seminars were not only open to feminists but also lower-class women living in the periphery of Istanbul.

[114]Pınar Selek's doctoral research was on the Kurdish movement and their use of violence in their struggle for independence. She was accused of having organic ties with PKK, based on this research, and detained in 1998 (International Judicial Observation Mission Report, p.4, see http://www.omct.org/files/2014/04/22642/turkey_mission_report_pinar_selek_2014.pdf). She was expelled from Mimar Sinan University, where she was doing her Ph.D. after being investigated for these allegations. This process caused her not to be able to complete her doctorate.

[115] Selek's organic relationship with the LGBT movement was also influential in the organization of these seminars. Selek published her master's thesis on the exclusion of Transvestites and Transsexuals into a book titled "Maskeler Süvariler, Gacılar" in 2001. She conducted ethnographic research within the scope of her thesis, which enabled her to build many relations with her research participants.

[116] Ülkü Özakın (2012) underlines that this transformation was possible by going through complicated and tense processes. He also emphasizes that it was not easy to overcome the heterosexism imposed by the patriarchal system for Kurdish women and nationalist prejudices imposed by the official ideology for lesbians.

began to question the nationalist stereotypes imposed by the official ideology, Kurdish women realized that sexual orientation is another form of suppression (Özakın, 2012; p. 101). In this respect, Amargi differed significantly from previous feminist organizations, as it provided a real encounter ground for identities who had not been able to do politics together before. They also adopted a new analysis of patriarchy that would allow such encounters. Earlier feminists' analysis of the patriarchal system was either based on a self-appointed system (Radical feminists) or its relation to capitalism (socialist feminism). *Amargi*, on the other hand, brought a perspective that directly associates patriarchy with militarism, heterosexism and nationalism. From the time it started to be published until it was closed, *Pazartesi* also focused on the war and its consequences in the lives of Kurdish women, which were revealed as poverty, harassment, and rape. However, these were not intrinsic to their analysis of patriarchy but instead constituted a sort of relationship of support and solidarity positioned from a certain political standpoint.

Amargi's political line knitted around the axis of pluralism, intersectionality and anti-militarism has become an increasing tendency in feminist politics in Turkey. We see this trend in the political and theoretical line of the peer-reviewed journal, *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar* (*Feminist Approaches in Culture and Politics*) which began to be published in 2006. It describes its publication line as an "anti-militarist and democratic line that promotes the diversity of cultures and identities".[117] In almost every issue, the journal discusses how women are affected by war based on the world experiences. In particular it includes interviews and articles on Kurdish issues which manifests itself in the form of war, militarism, racism, sexual violence against Kurdish women, forced migration, violation of rights in prisons and trauma.

[117] http://www.feministyaklasimlar.org/hakkimizda/

By 2004, various signs were appearing that the ceasefire between the state and the PKK would fade. *Amargi* launched a campaign called the *Women's Peace Desk (Kadınların Barış Masası)* to prevent the resumption of the war and to contribute to the unarmed solution of the Kurdish problem (Cockburn, 2007, p. 150). Women and civilians, not armed forces, were the leading actors in this campaign. These campaigns did not receive sufficient support from the feminists of the period. This was because of the tendency to avoid an engagement in violence for some feminists, and/or because they felt that the theme of the campaign was not intrinsic to feminist politics for others (Ülkü Özakın, 2012, p. 65-66).

In 2006, *Amargi* Women's Academy began to issue a magazine called *Amargi*. With this magazine, *Amargi* Women's Academy entered a different turn in some respects compared to its first period. The idea of "we are together with our differences" persisted in the magazine. However, with the magazine, the idea of the "coexistence of difference" began to be addressed not through street activism, campaigns and events, as in the previous period, but through the articles published in the magazine. (Ülkü Özakın, 2012, p. 72). The women in *Amargi* did not wholly leave the street behind. They continued to be organically involved in common feminist organizations initiated by feminist platforms and continued their specific events. However, in the second period, the main backbone of *Amargi* became the publishing activity. Another point that distinguishes *Amargi* from its previous period was that the weight of Kurdish women and their founding role did no longer persist in this period.

In 2005, PKK ended the ceasefire process, which it started in 1999, by responding to the state operations (Ülkü Özakın, 2012, p. 98). The war climate started to be felt in the whole country more and more in the following years. Pınar Selek criticized the PKK's decision to end the ceasefire based on the principle of being against violence and

militarism in all circumstances, by writing an article titled “if freedom could come through the blood of the people killed” in the pro-Kurd newspaper called *Özgür Gündem* (ibid). Kurdish women in *Amargi* did not defend Selek's ideas but stood behind the decision to end the ceasefire. They thought that war became a necessity for the PKK at a point where its every attempt toward ceasefires remained unreturned by the state, and the state moved in the opposite direction instead of trying to sustain ceasefire conditions (Ülkü Özakın, 2012). Özakın (2012) describes another tension between Selek and Kurdish women at that time as follows:

> There was another dispute in *Amargi* at the same time about the determination of the message in the *Amargi* charter during the forthcoming March 8 demonstrations. Kurdish women insisted that it should again be about women ending the war “We Will Stop the War” (Savaşı Durduracağız), whereas Selek opted for a message to respond to the threat toward Orhan Pamuk by the murderer of Armenian journalist, Hrant Dink, as women “We Will Not Be Well-advised” (Akıllı Olmuyoruz). Selek insisted that the second choice was more important at that time and that the first one had been repeated already by Amargi for the last four years with no success. In the end, the second phrase was used on Amargi’s banner as proposed by Selek (p. 98-99).

This was followed by another tension caused by a publication of an article in the *Amargi* magazine. The article problematized the idea of leadership evident in the Kurdish women's movement. Accordingly, it was unacceptable for a women's movement to see a man as a leader. This caused Kurdish women to take more distance against *Amargi* (Özakın, 2012, p. 99). Thereupon, Kurdish women declared their separation from *Amargi*. This separation was also justified by the fact that *Amargi* moved away from its emerging principle and lost its former radicality with the funding received from the European Union (Özakın, 2012, p. 117). Then, the Kurdish issue was handled as one among all other different identities and topics, rather than occupying a special place in *Amargi*.[118]

[118] Published four times a year, Amargi magazine ceased publication in 2015 when it reached its 37th issue. During its publication period, Amargi covered the following topics: emotions such as envy, irritability/sensitivity, forgiveness which are attributed to women mostly; the spaces where women spend most of their daily lives, such as the kitchen, the house; the ways in which women understood and acted upon motherhood, friendship, sisterhood; themes on body and sexuality, such as sexual orientation, sexuality, beauty, head covering, sexual violence, sex work, abortion, moralism; consequences of global capitalism such as insecurity, poverty, economic crisis; protest movements Gezi protest, March 8 as well

They continued to organize events in addition to publishing the magazine. However, the events in this period were not large-scale unlike the previous era where *Amargi* activists brought together women from different geographies of Turkey, conducted neighborhood studies, and workshops that proceeded mainly on the axis of the Kurdish women's movement. Instead, they organized the *Literature Workshop*, where various examples from the history of literature were discussed and the articles that come out of the discussion were published in a book; *Body-Movement Workshop* to understand and transform women's relationships with their own bodies and each other's bodies; *Gender and Sexuality Workshop* to liberate women's relationship with sexuality and to raise awareness on this issue.[119]

Some of these events were organized as events and workshops open only to *Amargi* members, while others were open to everyone. All these events were held in the *Amargi Cafe and Bookstore* opened in Beyoğlu in 2007.[120] Apart from being the gathering spot where these events took place, *Amargi Cafe and Bookstore* provided an intellectual atmosphere where feminists, anarchists, LGBT individuals, ecologists, and other libertarian groups in İstanbul socialized and spent time and discussed contemporary issues of the period. On the street where the cafe is located, there was also Lambdaİstanbul, Mor Çatı, and *SFK*'s place. This spatial togetherness strengthened both the sociality in the cafe and interactions between the feminists and the LGBT. The

as the law, politics, project-based feminism, September 12 coup and its memory, local politics were among those issues in the magazine.

[119]All workshops held in Amargi were not limited to what I have listed above. Apart from these workshops, they organizes *Philosophy Workshop* to follow philosophical discussions and talk about a feminist philosophy; Article *Discussions and Seminar* series in order to develop feminist analysis and subject daily life to a feminist analysis; *Amargi Translation Group*, which came together voluntarily to translate Amargi magazine into English in order to reach a wider audience; *Oral History Study*, which aimed to transfer the history of Amargi Women's Cooperative to the next generations; *Creative Action Design Group* in order not to repeat the old action repertoire and be able to create new forms as well as Heterosexism workshop, sex work workshop, law philosophy workshop, difference workshop, Relationships between Human-Nature Workshop, general history workshop, non-violence workshop were also held in Amargi (See Özdemir, 2009, p. 59 for other workshops and further details).

[120] Not all workshops were continuous workshops. While some of them were able to continue for a long time to the extent that they met a certain need, some of them faded over time.

socializations enabled by the events, encounters, and interactions in the cafe gave rise to an increase in the number of people who became members of *Amargi* over time (Özdemir, 2009; Özakın, 2012). Thus, Amargi's member profile has changed significantly, both in number and in terms of having economic and cultural capital. Magazine Publishing also had an impact on this increase. *Amargi Magazine*, which created a serious theoretical and political field, made *Amargi* a serious center of attraction for most young academic and/or master's and doctoral students with cultural and economic capital. Except for Pınar Selek, the profile of the first founders had consisted of the lower class and the lower-middle class (Özakın, 2012, p. 122). Another important reason for this proliferation and transformation in class structure was *Amargi*'s distance from the political line of the Kurdish movement in general and the Kurdish freedom movement in particular.

Those who gathered around *Amargi* were roughly divided into three different groups: The organic members, non-members who had a potential to become members, and those who kept in touch without having such potential (Özdemir, 2009, p. 72). All of the members consisted of women, transgender people, and queer individuals. The organization was close to cis men. Although few in numbers, some of the organic members were "professional employees" who worked for a fee at the *Amargi Cafe and Bookstore* and later worked on projects after the cafe was closed (ibid). These women did not only have a professional relationship with *Amargi* but were also active organization members. Normally, paid work was not a preferred form as *Amargi'*s organizational structure relied on volunteerism. Paid work carried the risk of creating certain hierarchies and a certain kind of division of labor between "professionals" and "volunteers." This could have put *Amargi*'s collectivity principle at risk. They, nevertheless, preferred such a path, thinking that volunteer-based ways would cause some problems such as risking sustainability. The reason why I explain this in detail is that professionalism constituted

one of the series of intra-organizational tensions that would lead *Amargi* to the stage of closure after a while.

In *Amargi*, just like during the funding discussions in its first years, the question of paid work in terms of the cafe and the projects also became a tense issue that intimidated all members of the group by creating tensions within the organization (Özakın, 2012, p. 117-118). The reason for this tension was that the volunteers avoided taking responsibility for the maintenance of the work in the cafe and the entire workload was placed on the shoulders of the paid employees. Wage workers had to undertake much more workload than they were paid for. This division of labor, which began to become more evident over time, led to the emergence of problems revolving around the questions of whether this is a commercial enterprise or a political / solidarity collective. One of my interviewees who worked both in the cafe and the project explains another problem caused by paid work as follows:

> you are both an employee and a decision maker, [and one day] you realize that your friends can suddenly act like your boss…

Another case of the increasing tensions in *Amargi* can be attributed to a meeting in 2012, which was organized under the title of "Feminist Cross-Border Meetings." This meeting sought to bring together women and trans people living in different geographies and create the ground for sharing different experiences and knowledge. Women from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asian countries participated in this meeting[121], which was funded by the UN. The UN support of a peace conference provoked opposition from some women in *Amargi*. A 39-year-old activist from *Amargi*, who experienced that period and the debate, describes the process as follows:

> There was also a discussion about getting funding for the conference from the UN; we did not normally get funding. Yes, so we obtained a few modest monies, but we were arguing

[121] https://kaosgl.org/haber/lsquosinir-otesi-feminist-bulusmalarrsquo

> that the UN could not be the funding agency that supports the war in the peace conference. However, the problem was not with receiving funds. When we first started talking about this, I remember we began to be asking, "Are you against violence or nonviolence?" What exactly is violence? So, we asked, is Amargi a place free of all forms of violence? Amargi equals Pınar? And among us, there were people who believed that the political violence is legitimate there was legitimate violence and those who believed that violence should not be accepted unconditionally, and it should be discussed. This became one of the major points of division. On the one hand, there was the claim that "we are against all forms of violence" and that this equaled feminism, while on the other hand, it was stated that opposing viewpoints were not inherent in feminism. we were struggling with these two layers at the same time.

This statement of my interviewee contains many clues about contentious issues that dominated Amargi's internal processes. The first one is the Selek's hegemonic position in the organization, as seen in her expression above. The same interviewee states the following about Selek:

> The *Amargi*'s motto was "we are side by side with differences". This was actually Pınar's approach. Once Pınar herself left, but her shadow was always there. It is impossible to oppose Pınar, to think differently from her. Because there was such a thing as "*Amargi* equals Pınar". It's not something you feel when you're with them, but it's something you see when you oppose them.

The second controversial issue dividing women in *Amargi* into two poles was the difference in the way they dealt with the issue of violence between the state and the PKK in Turkey. Some of the women in *Amargi* took a more radical stance by stating that there could be justified reasons for violence, while others stated that they were against all forms of violence. In the quote above, the interviewee says that they went through a series of long discussions on Selek's anti-violence position and how this position suddenly turned into a political stand of the entire *Amargi*. My interviewee states that there were some other women in *Amargi* whose thoughts differentiated from Selek's ideas, but their feminism was questioned and fell into the non-ideal feminist position as they advocated the opposite. At some point, this tension evolves into a debate on liberalism.

A similar tension that divided women into two poles in *Amargi* emerges during the process of collecting testimonies for Selek's court process while Pınar Selek was abroad. My interviewee describes the event as follows:

> Pınar was abroad at that time, there were these court processes, we were collecting testimonies for Pınar. Sevan Nisanyan[122] wanted to testify. Some of us said that he could not write… some of the us said that they could write testimonies because Pınar's case was very different and that all segments of society could be able to write testimonies against Pınar. We were saying that politics cannot be compartmentalized, so that was the moment we named the first liberalism and separation.

These controversies over changing political stance and hierarchies within the organization resulted in separations from the *Amargi*. A group of women publicly declared their separation by circulating a text that detailed the reasons behind their decision in 2012.[123] This text should not be seen as merely expressing the problems experienced within an organization. It also offers a remarkable macro-assessment on the principles of feminist organization and how commonalities can be established in feminism, which makes it a kind of reference text for future generations. I think the cleavages mentioned in the text crystallize around two fundamental points. First was with regard to the distance *Amargi* has taken against political power, that is, how anti-systemic *Amargi* was. Second was related to *Amargi'*s shortcomings in implementing direct democracy, especially in decision-making mechanisms within the organization. More specifically, *Amargi'*s inability to distance itself from liberalism and its failure to develop mechanisms to prevent hierarchy in the organization. The text includes the idea that a structure that was pluralistic in form but liberal in operation has emerged as anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchical, and democratic decision-making principles have been replaced by the liberal discourse of "coexistence of differences." To concretize what is meant by liberal perspective and anti-democratic mechanism through more specific examples experienced in *Amargi*: the ongoing ethnic war in the country and the approach to the Kurdish issues; the hegemony

[122] Sevan Nişanyan is an Armenian writer living in Turkey. He is well known fiure in intellectual circles through his books and columns. He emptied his feces, which he filled in a jar, on his wife, and feminists protested male violence against women. They called on the board of directors of Agos newspaper, where Nişanyan used to write, to take a stand against male violence. Feminists continue to protest against Nişanyan in different forms.

[123] https://kaosgl.org/haber/quotfeminist-politika-yapma-zemini-kalmadiquot

of the discourse of "being against all forms of violence" that excludes those who embrace political violence as a form of resistance in their struggle; the dominance of only the pacifist variant of anti-militarism; generation of financial resources required for maintenance of the organization through a fund mechanism in a way that contradicts the principle of being anti-systemic; the existence of LGBT individuals within the organization remained representative rather than having political weight; the attitudes that prevent egalitarian participation in a way that nullifies common decisions and discussions; the absence of class inequality on their agenda. Shortly after this text, which belongs to only a small group, went into circulation, *Amargi* declared its total dissolution in 2012.[124]

4.3 Socialist Feminist Collective (SFK)

Pazartesi closed in 2005 and women who left the ÖDP and SDP (Sosyalist Demokrasi Partisi, Socialist Democracy Party in 2006 existed as unorganized feminists until the SFK opened in 2008.[125] Among those who had not yet left the SDP and ÖDP at that period, preferred to continue the feminist struggle not in their socialist organizations but as independent feminists within the feminist movement.[126] At the same time, the atmosphere of the period was shaped mainly around the EU discussions and the liberal policies put forward by the UN, EU, and the World Bank on the axis of women's rights. For example, women's entrepreneurship was encouraged through microcredit, and this was presented

[124] For the entire text see, http://www.baskahaber.org/2012/12/amargi-kadn-akademisi-kapand.html
[125] In this period, socialist organizations, although a few in number, have begun to include the feminist struggle in their own organizations. It was becoming a common belief that a socialist struggle that did not include feminism would not be accepted in the political arena. The women in these socialist organizations continued the feminist struggle in parallel with their socialist struggle. In this period, independent feminists continued to insist that the feminist struggle could not be waged within socialist organizations.
[126] These women were to leave the SDP after the harassment erupted within the SDP in 2007, and the growing controversy followed accordingly.

as women's liberation and empowerment. Many women's organizations were involved in this mainstream wave through projects.

Apart from women's employment, violence against women was also brought to Turkey's agenda through international institutions. For example, the UN launched a campaign against violence against women. The same trend had spread to the mainstream media in Turkey. *Hürriyet* Newspaper launched a campaign called "End Domestic Violence" in 2004.[127] In this campaign, photographs of women subjected to physical violence were circulated and the "victim" position of women was reproduced in this way. In 2005, women who defined themselves as non-system feminists came together under the name of *Feminist Collective* in order to break this liberal wave by recirculating radical feminist politics and producing politics on the country's agenda (Karakuş, 2021). Feminists who left the ÖDP and *Pazartesi*, women from the Invisible Labor Collective (Görünmeyen Emek Kolektifi), *Amargi*, *Filmmor* and *Mor Çatı* were taking place in this Collective. This collective held regular meetings and organized a series of actions under the sign of "Feminists" (ibid). This group also took active role in the organization of the March 8 Night March at that time. In 2007, to expand the narrow circle and build a bridge between different feminist groups and independent feminists in Istanbul, they organized a meeting available to entire feminists (ibid). One of the most important outcomes of this meeting was the idea of holding an event on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the campaign against beating, which was held first in 1987 in İstanbul. Their first meeting was followed by a series of other meetings revolving around issues such as the demands to be foregrounded in feminist politics, United Nations, European Union policies, Republican rallies (Cumhuriyet Mitingleri) and constitutional debates (ibid). The 20th anniversary event against the beating was organized as a festivity. This festival was

[127] https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/hurriyetin-aile-ici-siddete-son-kampanyasi-tam-gaz-6076894

followed by Novamed Campaign to support women's resistance, the revival of *the Purple Needle Campaign*, and the campaign against the SSGSS (Sosyal Sigortalar ve Genel Sağlık Sigortası Kanunu social insurance and general health insurance law.[128] Karakuş (2022)[129] considers these events as a revival of anti-systemic feminism. All these events were carried out with the joint efforts of the feminist movement and the women's movement. This period was also the time when women were following up and protesting the Pipa Bacca and Ayşe Yılbaş's cases.[130]

Meanwhile, a harassment issue broke out within the SDP cadres. In 2008, 229 women issued a statement and resigned from the SDP on the grounds that the harassment in the party went unpunished. The organization's indifference towards harassment reinforced the idea that feminist struggle was impossible in the mixed (mix of men and women) organizations and the importance of independent feminist organizations. Some of the women who resigned would later join the SFK.

A group of socialist feminist women, who knew each other from their experiences in the ÖDP and SDP had already begun to get closer to each other, especially in the course of organizing those events I listed above, such that they would soon start to describe themselves as “Küçük SFK”. There were also women from the Women's Labor Collective which came together around the issue of women's labor, independently of socialist

[128] Novamed, as a medical device manufacturer, is a multinational factory producing in Antalya Free Zone. As in other factories in the Free Zone, most of the employees of this factory are women. The biggest reason for this is the use of women's labor as a cheap labor force. In 2006, 83 workers (81 women and two men) went on strike to protest practices such as queuing pregnancy, restricting the right to the toilet, taking permission to get married, in which the raids on women's bodies and labor were prominent. This strike made a lot of noise both in Turkey and in the international community. A platform called " Novamed Grevi Dayanışma Kadın Platformu" was established to support the strike in Turkey. Some feminists in Turkey took a very active role in this platform.

[129] https://catlakzemin.com/3-mart-2007-feminist-bulusma-2000lerde-feminist-politika/

[130] Italian artist and activist Pippa Bacca planned a long walk that set off from Milan in 2008 for world peace and would end in Tel-Aviv on the route of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine. She was raped and murdered while she was in Turkey. https://catlakzemin.com/21-nisan-2008-pippa-bacca-icin-istanbul-gebzede-eylem/
For Ayşe Yılbaş case (Ayşe Yılbaş is a women who was kiiled by her husband in 2008, See,
https://catlakzemin.com/13-mayis-2008-kadin-cinayeti-davasina-feminist-mudahillik-ayse-yilbas-davasi/
https://m.bianet.org/bianet/gender/116140-life-sentence-for-husband-killing-wife-who-wanted-divorce

organizations. One of my interviewees from the “Küçük SFK” (Tiny SFK) expresses the role of these events in creating excitement for the formation of SFK:

> As a small group, we started to talk about neoliberalism, liberalism, women's employment, and women's labor. We did not have such clear ideas in our minds, but we knew we wanted to pursue socialist feminist work. We were already types inclined towards Gülnur. [131] We were reading her articles. Gülnur was not present in the Küçük SFK, but she was very supportive of us. We called ourselves socialist feminists, but we hadn't named ourselves yet. After that, the critical threshold was actually Novamed. The Novamed process led to the establishment of SFK... Novamed is the idea of Filiz Karakuş. Filiz came and told the Küçük SFK, but she had already prepared the package. We as Küçük SFK agreed within her framework. Politically, we were very much in agreement on this women's labor, neoliberalism. How can I say? I mean we didn't like women's entrepreneurship at all. It was so far from us. So I'm not sure if our leftist politics had an impact here. We first shared the idea of Novamed to other feminists, At the time, we were still known as the Küçük SFK. We sat together as feminists and devised a lovely strategy, program, and structure. Then, in collaboration with the women's movement, we coordinated that campaign, but we coined the phrase.

The research participant attributes particular importance to Novamed experience among the many other events they organized. Women from “Küçük SFK” who experienced a form of proto organization in the course of Novamed resistance and thus became closer to each other, took the first step of establishing an organization by arranging a summer camp in 2008. In this camp, where 42 women from different ages, professions, and cities attended, they discussed the political framework of the prospective organization and the magazine they would issue. In this camp, they also formed commissions that would begin working immediately after the camp, such as a commission for a place would hold, commission for web page, commission for publication, commission for organizing, and a commission for creating a foundational statement (Çerçeve Metni) framing text that would determine the political lines of the organization.

The “foundational statement” commission came together after the camp to build the text that would form the political framework of the SFK. The foundational statement

[131] Here, the interviewee talks about Gülnur Acar Savran. Savran has defined herself as a socialist feminist since the 80s and has many founding studies on the relationship between women's labor and capitalist accumulation. As I mentioned in the text, Savran was a member of Socialist Feminist Kaktüs magazine. Although she was not included in "Küçük SFK", she started to be an active part of SFK in a short time and has become one of the founding actors of SFK's theoretical and political perspective.

was published in the first issue of *Feminist Politika* (2009), the magazine of the SFK, under the title of "Başlarken" (Getting Started).[132] It included a holistic analysis and organizing principles that would be a reference for the years to come. More specifically, the text begins with an assessment of the AKP's legal regulations that target women's labor under the influence of global capitalism and draws attention to the possible risks of liberal actors' partial steps toward meeting women's demand. In the light of evaluations on how women-based policies implemented by transnational organizations undermine the concept of gender and produce new forms of gender inequalities by integrating women into the world system, the text underlines the need for anti-systemic feminism for real emancipation. What they mean by anti-systemic feminism is that women's liberation will only be possible with a revolutionary transformation, that is, with total upheavals in the fields of labor/production, sexuality/body, and family. Based on these principles, they underline the need for a feminist organization independent of the state, capital, and fund-based NGO-type formations as well as independent of socialist organizations dominated considerably by men.

The text continues by highlighting aspects in which they converge and diverge with the different tendencies of the feminist movement. Women's unpaid labor and violence in domestic space play a central role in their understanding of the "personal is political" motto and in the construction of women's subjectivities. By discussing the organic relationship between the exploitation of women's labor and capitalism, they not only offer a holistic critique but also reveal the repercussions of this relationship on daily life. While advocating an anti-capitalist line, they also offer a future perspective to avoid reducing their perspective to simply a reactive position. Socialism is proposed as an alternative that enables the conditions for women's emancipation, albeit not presented as

[132] See, http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/wp-content/uploads/Feminist_Politika/fp_sayi_1.pdf, p. 32

an ultimate and absolute goal. In other words, socialism is depicted not as an absolute condition but as a kind of pre-conditions that would facilitate the ground for real emancipation. Unlike socialist organizations, which describe socialism as a system in which inequality between women and men will be resolved absolutely, *SFK* predicts that a power relationship based on gender inequality will continue in a socialist world. However, they think that the conditions that will ensure the total elimination of this inequality are still possible in a socialist system. While the organic relationship between capitalist accumulation and patriarchy structurally prevents gender equality, the socialist system provides an enormous opportunity for equality as it is based not on capital accumulation but the equal allocation of resources and on the understanding that women as a political subject are allowed to make their demands a part of social organization.

Such a perspective appears as a distinctive feature that makes *SFK* different from *Amargi*. While the anti-capitalist emphasis in *Amargi* did not stand out as a founding element of its feminist struggle, SFK placed it at the center of its politics.[133] Another point of divergence between *Amargi* and SFK is revealed in their approach to differences between women. SFK avoided fixing the difference among women within the category of identity and considered it as an output produced by patriarchy, capitalism, and other relations of domination. In other words, the question of difference, unlike *Amargi*, was situated not at the center of their politics but remained as a sub-item.

The political perspective SFK put forward was considerably inherited from *Kaktüs* (1988) experience, with some exceptions.[134] Neither of them had a self-appointed

[133]Although anti-capitalist emphasis brought SFK closer to the perspective of women's struggle within socialist organizations, SFK differed significantly from women's struggle within socialist organizations in describing its ultimate ground as feminism, not socialism, and advocating organizational methods separate from men.

[134] This continuity was not only a theoretical and political continuity. Some feminists in Kaktüs were also included in the Socialist Feminist collective. For example, Gülnur Acar Savran and Banu Paker were included in both Kaktüs and SFK.

understanding of feminism. They both relied on the idea that gender inequality historically persisted by articulating with different modes of production such as capitalism and thus feminism had to be articulated with the anti-systemic mode of production, that was socialism in their account. It was on such a ground that both groups defined themselves as socialist feminist. However, *Kaktüs* preferred to define the inequality between men and women as an indicator of a sexist system rather than that of a patriarchal system. The concept of patriarchy was precisely used by Feminist magazine (1987), which coincided with the publication period of *Kaktüs* Magazine. Radical feminists who published the Feminist magazine considered patriarchy as a system independent of capitalism, operating with its own internal dynamics. Women from *Kaktüs*, on the other hand, were far away from breaking the organic ties between capitalism and patriarchy in a way to reduce women's oppression to a single system, namely patriarchy (Acar Savran, 2005, p. 86). That's why they preferred the term "sexist system" to the concept of patriarchy (ibid). Acar Savran (2005) states in her article on *Kaktüs* and *Feminist Politics* that they began to adopt the concept of patriarchy in times when they issued *Feminist Politics,* such that it turned into a constitutive concept of *SFK*. This transformation was made possible by recognizing the unique dynamics of patriarchy that operated independently of capitalism (p. 87). While SFK maintained the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy in its analysis of women's paid and unpaid labor, it started to consider internal dynamics of patriarchy rather than capitalist dynamics when it comes to the control of women's bodies and sexuality by men. In the same article, Savran states that this transformation is the result of a criticism directed by radical feminists towards the *Kaktüs*.

There are also several other differences that distinguish SFK from *Kaktüs*. While the issue of women's labor, which constitutes the main political axis of socialist feminists,

had been shaped around the theme of capitalism in the *Kaktüs* period, it began to take shape around the theme of neoliberalism in the SFK period. This, undoubtedly, was influenced by neoliberal processes that blended with AKP's conservatism after 2000, as I have discussed in the previous chapter. Such that, special issue of the first volume of *Feminist Politics* was "Neoliberalism, AKP and Women's Labor," and the subject of the 3rd issue was "Women in the grip of paid/unpaid labor." The articles revolved around the idea that flexible and cheap forms of labor envisaged for women through neoliberal processes such as micro-credits were a more implicit form of reproducing women's poverty and imprisoning women in family life. Hence, they aimed at revealing that the government's policies around reconciling women's family and work-life were not an opportunity for women as claimed by government authorities. On the contrary, they discussed how the burden of care was placed on the shoulders of more women with the gradual withdrawal of women's social rights.

SFK established "Women's Labor Commission" as a separate committee to give extra attention to the issues of women's labor, women's employment, and neoliberalism. The motivation was to spread the issues of women's labor among political circles and to take it to the streets through actions to avoid remaining limited to a theoretical discussion. Women's Labor Commission then started to release a monthly newsletter called "Kitchen Witches" between 2010-2014. It covered quite intense content on issues directly related to women's labor, such as the government's discourse on three children, flexible working, bag law, subcontracting.

The issue of neoliberalism and women paid/unpaid labor continued to be covered in the "labor" section of *Feminist Politics* and in its additional release, *Kitchen Witches*. However, the special issues of *Feminist Politics* were not limited to the theme of women's labor. They also covered the political agenda of the country, the Kurdish issues, LGBT

movement, ecology movement women's body and sexuality, More specifically, the changing appearance of male violence in women's lives which was manifested itself in the form of harassment, rape and femicide; the question of divorce, abortion, love, sexual freedom, sexual pleasure; conservatism, immigration and urban spaces shaped by the Family-Shopping mall-AKP triangle; War, militarism, resistance and women in the axis of Kobane Resistance and Rojava and many other developments from the globe such as Arap spring were themes of the magazine. Among these themes, the issue of violence, harassment, and rape had always been on the agenda of socialist feminists since *Kaktüs*, but the *Feminist Politics* Magazine dwelled specifically on how violence against women was fueled by the state's sexist, conservative rhetoric as well as its legal regulations, and on how these state's practices triggered the increase in femicide throughout the 2000s.[135]

It is seen that heterosexism is one of the topics that was not addressed by *Kaktüs*, but largely addressed *by Feminist Politics.* It is relatively new that heterosexism enters the agenda of feminists in general and socialist feminists in particular. Before the 2000s, women of different feminist stances did not include heterosexism in their political agendas.[136] For example, *Pazartesi* magazine, which was published in collaboration with socialist and radical feminists, did not elaborate on heterosexism from 1996 (when it was first released) until 2006 (Altınay, 2009, p. 147-148). Based on the statement of one of the LGBT activists, Altınay (2009) states that the "Shameful column" of the *Pazartesi* magazine had a heteronormative character in that it only included the sexuality of heterosexual women, and that while it was very sensitive towards Kurds and racism, it

[135] The then-minister of Justice Sadullah Ergin announced that femicides had increased by 1400% from 2002 to 2010 and that an average of five women was killed per day.https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/7-ayda-953-kadin-olduruldu-1159501

[136] This was also related to the fact that the LGBT movement did not have significant political visibility until the 2000s. Kaos-GL was established in 1993 in Ankara and LambdaİstanbuI was established in 1994 in İstanbul, but these two associations did not have legal status at that time and had not yet reached the capacity to influence the political arena.

did not show the same sensitivity when it came to heterosexism (Ibid, p. 147).[137] The feminist movement began to bring the issue of heterosexism to its agenda mainly with *Amargi'*s attempts (Özakın 2007; Altınay, 2009, p. 1489). I think *SFK* was greatly influenced by *Amargi*'s founding role in this field. This issue deserves a separate investigation that I will undertake in the following subsection.

4.4 Feminist Alliances with the LGBT Movement

Lesbian, trans and bisexual identities were among the founding identities of *Amargi*'s motto, "togetherness of differences." LGBT individuals held workshops on heterosexism at *Amargi*, where they discussed how heterosexism worked even among feminists. Thanks to these workshops, heterosexual women had the opportunity to realize how heteronormativity had implicitly or explicitly affected their understanding of feminism. LGBT individuals in *Amargi* moved these workshops to *Lambdaistanbul*, which served the feministization of *Lambdaistanbul* (Özakın 2007, p. 148). Thus, lesbian, trans, and bisexual individuals became actors who brought the feminist and LGBT movement closer to a common ground. Yasemin Öz narrates a similar situation for Ankara as follows:

> Lesbians and heterosexual feminists in Ankara were organized independently until 2005. This relationship has evolved from side by side to tangling since 2005, when a number of lesbian feminists joined the Feminists group of Ankara and volunteered at the Women's Solidarity Foundation." (Öz, 2007, p. 24, *Kaos GL*, Mart-Nisan 2007).

This state of intertwining manifested itself in many areas. There was a climate in which the actors in the feminist movement and the LGBT movement were in intense political and personal interactions with each other. LGBT individuals gained the political power to form their own cortege in the March 8 and May 1 marches (Özakın 2007, p. 148). The

[137] "Shameful column" was a page in *Pazartesi* magazine where women used to write about their sexual experiences and fantasies.

slogan repertoire of feminist women had expanded in a way to include the demands of homosexuals. For example, “Ayşe should be able to love Fatma”, “There are lesbians”, “Homosexuals are everywhere, right next to you” became the common slogans of the feminist movement and the LGBT movement (ibid).

One of the reasons why the LGBT movement became such an effective force in transforming the feminist movement was the various steps undertaken by the government towards recognizing the basic rights of minority groups within the scope of the recognition of Turkey's membership to the EU. The most important of these steps was the entry into force of the new association law in 2004. *Kaos GL* and *LambdaIstanbul,* which had not had legal status when they were established in the second half of the 90s, gained the status of an official association with this law respectively in 2005 and 2006 (Çetin, 2015). This significantly increased the LGBT movement's room for maneuver and thus, its political visibility. For example, *Kaos GL* organized the *International Meeting Against Homophobia* between 2006-2009 to discuss discrimination against LGBT individuals in different cities of Turkey (Ankara, İzmir, Eskişehir, Van, Diyarbakır, and İstanbul). Apart from this, the Pride Parade was organized for the first time in Istanbul in 2003. This March, which was held with the participation of about 40 people, has regularly continued every year since then, forming a tradition (Başaran, 2021).

With the closure case filed against *Lambdaistanbul* in 2008, the course of the Pride Parade has changed in the direction of both increasing the number of participants and diversifying the participant profile (Başaran, 2021). This case resulted in great reactions in the eyes of social movements. Activists from the Kurdish, anarchist and socialist movements showed enormous support for the march like never before. With the participation of HDP deputy Sebahat Tuncel in the Pride Parade in 2008, a deputy participated in the Pride Parade for the first time in Turkey. Tuncel was the only MP who

participated in the March until 2011. This was followed by the participation of another HDP deputy, Sırrı Süreyya Önder in 2011. The symbolic meaning of these participations was enormous. Such that, HDP's attempt paved the way for CHP deputies to participate in the subsequent marches. This wave has subsequently given rise to the socialist movement to establish sub-organizations of LGBT individuals within their own bodies. This transformation has given rise to such a progressive political atmosphere that ignoring the LGBT movement would be equated with archaic political stances within the broader left opposition.

While the LGBT movement had such an impact on even the left/socialist movement, it could not be expected that this movement would not transform the feminist movement. For example, although *Kaos-GL* and *Pazartesi* started their publication life together in the second half of the 90s, *Pazartesi* did not publish an article or an interview on *Kaos-GL* until 2005. The first interview of *Pazartesi* with Kaos-GL became possible only in 2005, with the influence of the developments I mentioned above. *Pazartesi* was a weekly magazine until it was closed in 2005. After it was closed in 2005, it continued as a quarterly thematic magazine for one year between 2006-2007. It is seen that *Pazartesi* started to include lesbian and trans experiences only in its issues after 2006 (Altınay, 2009, p. 147-148). I observed that a similar delay applies to the journal, *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar* (*Feminist Approaches in Culture and Politics)*. As I mentioned above, it prioritized themes revolving around the Kurdish issue after the journal started to be published in 2006. It started to include articles about the LGBTI movement for the first time with its 11th issue dated 2010.

Therefore, when SFK was founded, the issue of heterosexism already entered in the agenda of the feminist movement, with the influence of both *Amargi* and the LGBT movement. From the first issues of *Feminist Politics, SFK* tried to include content on

heteronormativity and lesbian visibility in their magazine as much as they could. More importantly, while the definition of patriarchy by socialist feminists had been understood only concerning capitalism before the 2000s, the heterosexist character of patriarchy began to be taken into consideration after SFK was founded. For example, Acar Savran (2009) states that "heterosexism is one of the strongest pillars of male domination and patriarchy" (p. 151).

However, even this improvement which seemed very progressive at first hand, was lagging behind the current LGBT politics of the period because the anti-heteronormative perspectives of many feminists from previous generations, both among the SFK and radical feminists, mainly were shaped significantly by the "biological appearance" of women and the binary gender regime. The critique of the binary gender regime became widespread through contents produced by *Kaos-GL* on the queer theory since the beginning of the 2000s, the translation of Butler's book *Gender Trouble* in 2008, and again Butler's arrival in Ankara to deliver a speech as part of the *Meeting Against Homophobia* in 2010. Based on Butler's theory, queer activists began to discuss that the biological body could not be built on a binary gender matrix based on the categories of men and women and that multiple sexes included either male or female forms or both at the same time (Küçük, 2021).[138] This perspective was based on the idea of an unstable and fluid existence in which multiple sexes can be continually turned inside out through performance.

The concrete equivalent of this theory in the political arena was the conflict experienced in the 8 March Night March in 2013. Ayşe Düzkan, one of the most well-known faces of the feminist movement, attempted to remove a trans activist from the march on the ground that she had a male appearance which, thereafter, caused huge

[138] https://feministbellek.org/feminizmin-oznesi/

tension among feminist and LGBT sides.[139] This was followed by various meetings held on the question of "who the subject of feminism is" and "what defines womanhood/feminity". For example, SFK organized a series of meetings shortly after the case to talk to transgender people about what femininity/womanhood is. Some women in SFK argued that the feminist movement needs a political subject, as every political formation does, and that a stable category of womanhood is needed for the feminist movement to form this subject, while others (mostly the younger generation within SFK) were closer to the queer perspective by advocating the necessity of destroying the category of womanhood rather than conserving it. In this period, queer politics and trans activism in Turkey have created a ground for rethinking certain concepts such as femininity and biology, which have been accepted as given within the feminist movement. SFK was an organization that produced content not only on the triangle of patriarchy, capitalism, and heterosexism but also on the developments in the Kurdish issue in Turkey and brought this content to both the magazine and its internal discussions. Roboski, Suruç, Ankara Gar massacre, Van earthquake, correspondence with political prisoners in prison, the text of the statement containing the reasons for 1000 feminists to support HDP in the 2015 elections, the issue of mother tongue, and the theme of peace have been the themes that feminist politics has dealt with since its publication life.

Although the publication line of the magazine was in support and solidarity with the Kurdish issue, the way women in *SFK* approached the Kurdish issue differed. The relationship that some had with the Kurdish movement went beyond solidarity and their political and emotional contact with the movement was much more intense than others. Such that, some of them were actively involved in the *Peoples' Democratic Congress*

[139] https://www.demokrathaber.org/kadin/feminist-yazar-duzkana-transfobi-suclamasi-h16446.html https://m.bianet.org/bianet/lgbti/145010-8-mart-gece-yuruyusu-tartismasinda-taraflardan-aciklama https://m.bianet.org/bianet/kadin/145011-ayse-duzkan-in-feminist-gece-yuruyusunde-yasananlara-dair-aciklamasi

(HDK), which was established in 2011. It can be said that one reason for this organic relationship was the socialist tradition that they inherited. Some, if not all, socialist organizations in Turkey have been in constant support and solidarity with the Kurdish movement as the political representative of an oppressed people against state violence and assimilation policies. Some feminists within the *SFK* came within such a socialist tradition. For those who had not been involved in socialist organizations, their close contact with the Kurdish movement influenced this affinity, either because they were Kurds or because they were involved in the political and/or the social network of the Kurdish movement. These close relations caused these women to be described as "Kürtçü" (pro-Kurd(ish)) within the SFK. My interviewee, who was involved in SFK, explains:

> Some people in SFK keep telling us that you're Kürtçü (Pro-Kurds). This is a very bad thing. What do you mean by this? We are talking about Kurdish people, so as a feminist, of course, we will be in solidarity with the Kurdish people, and both feminism and SFK have to have an opinion and action on the Kurdish issue. It made me feel very bad to describe this as Kürtçü.

As can be understood from the quote, there were also women within the SFK who were more distantly related to the Kurdish issue. They thought that the Kurdish issue was not an issue inherent in feminist politics but rather related to the internal dynamics of Kurdish women. The moment where this tension broke out within the SFK was over the issue of mother tongue. One of my 51-year-old interviewees from SFK describes the tension as follows:

> The most contentious issue surrounding the Kurdish problem was whether speaking the mother tongue is a feminist or democratic demand. There was a lot of tension there. We, as those "Kürtçü said that it is, of course, a feminist demand, and everything that concerns women is a feminist demand. When a Kurdish woman goes to a health center, if she cannot explain her problem in her own language, if language creates a barrier for that woman's existence, this has to do with feminism. Some said no, this is not something that concerns feminism, it is a democratic demand.

4.5 Wide-Ranging Campaigns by the SFK and Other Feminist Organizations

Apart from producing content for the magazine and the political discussions, SFK organized two different campaigns called "Erkeklerden Alacaklıyız" (Men owe us) and "Aile Dışında Hayat Var" (There is Life outside of Family) The first one was a campaign based on concrete and practical suggestions demanding men to do the housework and childcare in order to compensate for the time women spent on housework.[140] The second campaign targeted family ideology in general and AKP's conservative policies based on confining women within the family in particular. This latter campaign included slogans and actions pointing to an alternative world where the family bond was not the only form in building solidarity, care, compassion but more collective forms, including friendship, were possible.[141] Apart from these two campaigns, another important event of SFK was the women's labor conference was organized in 2011. The aim was to discuss the policies and debates on women's labor, together with feminists in Turkey and with feminist academics and activists focusing on the issue of women's labor in the international arena. The presentations and discussions made at the conference were published as a book titled "Woman in the Grip of Paid-Paid Labor (Ücretli-Ücretsi Emek Kıskacında Kadın)".[142]

Apart from the actions, campaigns, and conferences, SFK has also been among the organizers of a series of campaigns and activities, together with *Amargi*, *Filmmor*[143], *Mor Çatı*[144], and independent feminists, under the umbrella of the Istanbul Feminist

[140] Kampanya broşür metni için bknz http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/sfk-kampanyalari/erkeklerden-alacakl-y-z/mini-brosuer-metni/

[141] Kampanyanın detayları için bknz http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/sfk-kampanyalari/aile-disinda-hayat-var/aile-d-s-nda-hayat-var-kampanyas/

[142] Konferans kitapçığı için bknz http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/?s=kad%C4%B1n+eme%C4%9Fi+konferans%C4%B1

[143] Filmmor is an organization that aims to increase women's participation in cinema and media, their opportunities to express themselves as well as their representation and production.

[144] It is is a non-governmental organization that works to prevent violence against women, provides psychological and legal support and shelter to women who have suffered domestic violence.

Collective. Campaigns such as "Kadın cinayetlerine isyandayız"[145] (We are in revolt against femicides), "Bey-oğlu'na Feminist Sözümüz Var"[146] (We have a feminist word for the Bey-oglu"), "Kadınlar Hayatlarına Sahip Çıkıyor"[147] (Women Own Their Lives), "Bacağını Topla, Yerimi İşgal Etme" [148] (Stop Spreading Your Legs, Don't Take Up My Space); and organization of feminist night marches (2009-2015), Femicide litigation, organizing protests against the abortion ban, and organizing protests against Mother's Day to object to the "Holy Mother's Tale," were some of those actions among others. Thanks to all these political campaigns, *SFK* had become the most widely recognized organization of its time, like *Amargi*. While they were creating content towards the theoretical ground of the organization through *Feminist Politics*, they were also trying to feed the streets with their actions and campaigns. This greatly increased the visibility of *SFK* among both feminists and the broader left opposition. Political parties like HDP and unions valued *SFK*'s perspective for their gender-based policies.

SFK's visibility in the political arena made it a center of attraction for women to organize. However, this numerical increase paradoxically caused certain problems within the organization. One of my interviewees describes the problem as follows:

> We were very crowded. I really don't think feminism is something that can be done with crowds. I mean, feminism has nothing to do with an organization of 200 people. And I think it is very difficult and impossible to make decisions together. Someone are being excluded, someone is burdened with more work, there are some groupings, you love someone more, you love someone less… Feminism is about our private space, it's about our feelings, so I don't think it can be done with crowds... Such a model can only exist in the socialist organization model not in feminism

[145] http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/istanbul-feminist-kolektif/kadn-cinayetlerine-isyandayz/
[146] http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/istanbul-feminist-kolektif/bey-oglu-na-feminist-soezuemuez-var/
[147] http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/istanbul-feminist-kolektif/kadinlar-hayatlarina-sahip-cikiyor/
[148] https://catlakzemin.com/18-nisan-2014-bacagini-topla-yerimi-isgal-etme/

My interviewer emphasizes that a feminist organization should consist of a narrow group of women on a scale suitable for making the politics of private life that enables their own transformation, and only through this way can they differentiate themselves from the socialist model that prioritizes massification by raising awareness from the outside. However, she notes that the *SFK* did not differ much from the socialist model by targeting quantitative growth and prioritizing street protests. She states that this caused *SFK* to neglect the close contacts within the organization and to move away from a policy that prioritizes their own transformation. Another interviewee expressed similar thoughts saying that "We only discussed other people's families instead of discussing our own families in the course of our campaign, Aile Dışında Hayat Var" which, she continued, "made us move away from making our own lives the subject of politics." While interviewees do not deny that feminist politics should affect the lives of other women, they argue that this cannot be possible with a method of raising awareness similar to the approach of the socialist left, but with an exemplary practice:

> The effect of the feminis's saying is huge, because it is something that enters our house directly. You produce politics, you say a word and that word can affect women's lives somewhere and transform it. In this respect, the influence of feminism is very strong. But not in a way that could be in the socialist way of organization as we know it.

Another interviewee advocates a similar idea as follows:

> Consciousness raising from the outside is a hierarchical method. It implies that the one who transport the conscious is emancipated. no woman is truly emancipated unless all women are emancipated. All women get their share from the patriarchal system, albeit in different ways. Women can only be liberated by giving their own struggles, not when someone from the outside brings awareness to them. That's why feminism is not organized in neighborhoods. feminists produce politics, women are affected by this politcs, and this is how the transformation takes place, in other words, women's transformation happens with their own hands.

This method which can be crystallized in both research participants' narratives, reflects the generally accepted method of organization in feminist politics in Turkey. However, a tension appears between a tendency towards vanguardism that would impose

consciousness from top-down and a non-hierarchical "consciousness-raising" movement, where women lead their own transformation. Regardless of which pole of this tension is given weight, I think the hierarchy feminism opposes cannot be eliminated entirely. Feminist organizations in Turkey have been skating within different degrees of the hierarchical model they are thought to be critical of. In some feminist organizations, a more hierarchical model has come to the fore, while the lower degrees of hierarchies are evident in others. However, in any case, a hierarchical model is implicit in their methodology. The socialism-like hierarchical model expressed by interviewees is evident not only in the *SFK* but also in the expression of radical feminist Ayşe Düzkan.

> Feminism is a Jacobin politics, a top-down politics. Feminism is not a mass movement. Nowhere in the world has women taken to the streets in large numbers, nothing has changed like this. Twenty women do something, lobby or change a law, and women's lives change massively." (Düzkan, 2005, p. 31)

As revealed in my interviewees' words, feminists in Turkey keep a serious distance from socialist methods that prioritize raising awareness from top-down, as it includes the hierarchy of liberated women versus unliberated women. On the other hand, I think that this method does not differ much from the consciousness-raising method of the socialist movement in the last instance, as it is based on the distinction between the intellectual feminists who produce politics versus the ordinary women who are affected by this politics/those who are lack of feminist consciousness. Thus, however idealized it may be, the feminist method as crystallized in the two quotations above carries a tension between two extreme tendencies: Although it includes ways of self-transformation, it carries the risks of becoming an intellectual vanguard-type organization and the hierarchy that it can bring, with a comprehensive understanding of politics that aims to transform others or to become kind of center in feminist politics. I think the reason behind this lies in the fact that socialist tradition, in its implicit or explicit forms, is very determinant in feminist organizations in Turkey. I think this is because the influential figures in the movement

came from within the socialist movement, or even if they did not come from the socialist organization, they experienced an atmosphere in which the socialist culture was hegemonic within the left as of the period they came from. The model of the socialist left to lay the foundations of the organization by issuing a publication centered on theoretical political discussions in the past was similarly adopted as a method by the feminist movement from the very beginning. Feminists have also followed the path of organizing around separate publications in order to create a theoretical-political focus and to reveal their own unique understanding of feminist politics. Although the non-governmental organizations outside this model have a large place in the feminist struggle, the main center of gravity in the formation of feminist rhetoric and politics has been in these theoretical and political journals. The reason for such a theory-centered inclination is that the first generation consisted of highly equipped, intellectually privileged feminists, who acquired their political socialization within the socialist movements and the Marxist left tradition. This point, as I will discuss in more detail later, constitutes one of the prominent features of the differentiation of younger feminist generations in the 2000s from previous generations.

Women from different left organizations not only carried the socialist tradition into the feminist movement but also caused the formation of cliques around their past organizational culture. In my interviews with women from *SFK*, the clique is described as follows:

> There was also a bit of tribalism involved. there were some women coming from different socialist tradition used to attracted especially young women to their side. After all, they carried the tradition they came from to SFK. That's how it went like X's team, Y's team, and Z's team.[149] (A, 51 Years old)

Another interviewee from *SFK* describes as follows:

[149] The intervieweee used names explicitly, but they were coded as x, y, and z to prevent the names from being deciphered.

> We, as the first callers, were the loudest. There was an inequality in this sense, we should admit it. We were acting a lot with the understanding of the organization in our minds. It was like that for me too, and for A, B, C, and partly D.[150]We're sobered up somewhere, because it shouldn't be like this because we've become more and more centralized. In other words, we have not been centralized organically, but knowledge has become centralized. When knowledge is centralized, it becomes monopolized. He controls everything in some's hands, and they can take the control (B, 59 Years old).

The centralization around certain influential figures, the difference in knowledge and experience brought about by age and experience, shows that this difference leads to certain figures being more visible and their voices being heard more. My field research shows that apart from the difference in age and experience, and knowledge, another factor that reinforces this centralization is class differences. One of my interviewees from SFK tells how she experienced the class difference as follows:

> Many things were being discussed in the meetings. Then our friends, sometimes me included when I had money, we used to go a place to eat and drink, many things used talked including critics, gossips and even sometimes even decisions were made there. then they were written to mailing groups. you see that a completely different decision has emerged in the email. It's as if the meeting never happened at all. (A, 51 Years old)

Another interviewee describes her experience as follows:

> Our class affiliations were very different. Our income levels, the time spent in politics, our family relations were different. SFK was a place where I was very comfortable when I didn't have money. There was an age difference, married versus single difference, too. When you are comfortable in class, you can allocate more time to the organization, this increases your sphere of influence, you can hang out for drinks after the meeting until late, then you can return home by taxi, you can live in the city center like me. This situation also increases their sociability within the organization, and those who do not have the opportunity to do so also break away from that sociality, they are cut off from accessing knowledge. These are things that are independent of member's intention (B, 59 Years old)

The inequality created by class difference points to a structural situation beyond the *SFK*'s policies. In fact, most of my interviewees stated that the economic solidarity within the SFK was very high. They used to create a solidarity pool for organizations such as camps, and general meetings, which would require economic resources for participation. In this

[150] The interviewer used names explicitly, but I coded as A, B, C and D to prevent the names from being deciphered.

respect, it can be said that *SFK* was in an effort to eliminate economic differences in certain situations partially. However, the fact that internal organizational issues that concern everyone were also discussed among narrow groups in informal settings caused some women to be excluded from certain processes. This, in turn, led politics to be shaped according to the rhythms of women with certain class and intellectual privileges.

I observed that another tradition that the *SFK* took over from leftist organizations and brought to the feminist media has been idealized political expectations intertwined with a kind of moralism. In the socialist movement, the stereotypical idealized expectations attributed to the revolutionaries emerge as other expectations within the feminist movement. I observed that while being unmarried and being childless was exalted, being married, and having children are the most obvious forms of "deviating from being a feminism." I observed that all the married women with children I interviewed were inconsistent with their positions and even carried a mood that was intertwined with guilt and shame.

> You feel guilty about being married, so I don't think you should feel that in a feminist organization. Yes, for example, I shouldn't have gotten married, why did I get married? But for example, I told it in my own small group in SFK. I said, "I got married to be liberated. Ok, this might be wrong, I should have chosen the way of not getting married, the way of fighting, that's true. But I'm tired of being someone who lied to my family and lied to the homeowner at the door when I entered the apartment... I said enough, I got married so I can have peace. Well, I really got liberated when I got married because I married a leftist man. I don't have a problem with cooking at home, I can enter and leave the house whenever I want. The part about telling the family is over. I was telling all these my conditions and feelings to some of the group member but in any case, I was expected to feel guilty. (C, 44 Years old)

My interviewer explains that she experiences the same feeling of guilt from being married as she has a child:

> Within the SFK, the question was more about what the ideal feminist would be like. That issue within the SFK was more of a question of what the ideal feminist would be like; I mean, if you're a feminist, you don't get married, if you're a feminist, you don't wear a wedding dress, if you're a feminist, there is no such thing as giving birth, holy motherhood. for example, I had said that "I will have a child before marriage" they probably have appreciated me. then I would be behaving outside the norm. But because I got married, I'm considered to be a kind of maintainer of his wheel. In other words, there was no such thing as alternative feminist motherhood. I recall hearing something like "What distinguishes us from other

> women if we marry and have children? Or we were also witnessing the discussions like "do we have to discuss how to get children to camp? Why don't we make fathers responsible for their children instead of debating how to get the kids to come to camp? These questions are actually valuable and worthy of discussion. But the way they state was so problematic, and they did not understand that they exclude those who had not got such a chance. We had a group called "Mothers from SFK" and we talked about these issues a lot. I remember we even had friends who couldn't tell about their pregnancy, we had friends who couldn't share this with the women around them when they had problems with childcare. I was never very enthusiastic about childcare, but there were mothers among us who loved it very much and wanted to spend time with their children. Why should that be something to be judged, I mean, that's her feeling. We also talked about those who do not want to take care of their children, and those who regret after giving birth. If you are a feminist organization, you should be able to discuss motherhood in all its aspects, but we failed.

Another interviewee describes her own experience as follows:

> When I joined SFK, I was already married and had a child. This is actually an advantage for me over those who later become feminists and get married and have children…we had an abortion discussion. we had a friend who objected to abortion, and on the other hand, we had a friend who objected to childbirth. I said "According to these discussions, I am by no means a good feminist then, because I have a child and had an abortion. I think it was a valuable discussion. I saw the same thing in the motherhood debate, I think we were very rude to our friends who had children or got pregnant.

This structure of *SFK*, which gave rise to certain internal problems, caused it to be criticized from certain angles in much wider feminist platforms. These criticisms were based on the *SFK's* rhetoric and attitudes, which, as socialist politics did, were so clear-cut in a way to leave no room for the uncertainty and complexity involved in politics and identified radical politics with such clarity. With this aspect, *SFK* was thought to be close to a kind of "vanguard party" model of the feminist movement.

One of the organizations that criticized *SFK* in this way was *Amargi* based on Özdemir's article in the 19th issue of Feminist Politics. In this article she seems to be implying SFK even though she does not give the name of the organization directly. Özdemir examines how the term "leftist" was used with pejorative connotations in *Amargi* and how they equated remaining somehow untouched with socialist organizations as being uncontaminated. The reason, she argues, is the efforts of women from *Amargi* to distance themselves from hierarchical and sectarian attitudes identified with socialist politics. She states that an approach that prioritizes asking questions rather than giving

clear answers is the most important of these efforts to distance. *SFK*, on the other hand, was thought to behave in the opposite direction, that it was prioritizing the answers rather than the questions, which causes some *SFK* members to be described as "leftist feminist big sister" in *Amargi*.[151] I observed a similar criticism in the narratives of some women inside SFK. One of my interviewees from *SFK* describes this hegemonic attitude of *SFK* within the feminist movement and its reflection on the balances within the organization itself as follows:

> I think that SFK was a very decisive and important organization in the feminist movement. It really organized a lot of things. You know, its synergy and energy were reflected to the movement. But SFK was not the only organization. I mean, there was also "AMARGİ", there was also "Mor Çatı", there were other communities as well. And we acted as the sole representative of everything. Such a strange arrogance developed. For example, this was one of the things that bothered me. You know, the issue of pluralism should be immanent to feminism. I believe feminism is an ideology that should be free of judgment. I think that the increased tendency to exclusion, ignoring, starting everything from itself and perceiving itself as self-appointed and the fact that such tendencies of SFK has become very critical from the outside, disrupted the balance between us.

SFK took the steps of a different process as of 2014 in order to renew itself according to the critics they received from both inside and outside the organization. Another interviewee from *SFK* describes the process as follows:

> We started talking about how a flexible organization might be in the last time of the SFK. Because the SFK was giving the impression of a Leninist organization at some points, there was an expectation that almost everyone should react the same way, feel equally belonging, and equally responsible. And this of course bothered our very young friends. People couldn't be involved in it, and when they couldn't, it causes tension.

4.6 Common tensions appearing in SFK and Amargi

Amargi, with its intersectional and pluralistic approach, and *SFK*, with its anti-capitalist approach, made a big leap in radicalizing feminism by presenting a much more comprehensive analysis than the feminist movements had done before them. They not

[151] Based on her own experience, Özdemir embraces neither a "flu" model in which their political discourse becomes obscure in order to distance themselves from socialist organizations, as in Amargi, nor a model in which clear-cut thoughts which do not leave room for uncertainty dominate the movement, as in SFK.

only ensured the acceptance of feminism within the left, but they also enabled interaction and collaborations with the LGBT movement and Kurdish and Muslim feminists. On the other hand, they did not sufficiently achieve the goal of breaking away with hierarchy-based political forms promised by the feminist method.

In the interviews I conducted for this study, the following themes appeared as continuing issues in the experiences of the feminists who have been members of these institutions: Difference in age, ethnicity, education, the time they can spare for organized struggle, motherhood experiences, having experience in organized struggle, different perspectives and approaches they inherited from different political movements, informal forms of communication that prevents democratic participation in decision-making processes, the burden and responsibility of speaking out on very broad issues, constant expansion in the number of members but failure to restructure its organization based on newly arising needs, the supremacy of the some women's positions in ways that are at odds with feminist principles. The data I obtained from my interviewees are consistent with the texts released by *SFK* and *Amargi* to declare their closure. It is common in social movement organizations that organizations disintegrate and leave their place to other organizations as a result of structural crises that emerge around issues such as the expansion, leadership, democracy, goals, and principles of organizations, the changing profiles of the participants, the economic resources that would ensure their maintenance, policy development capacity. *SFK* and *Amargi* are not immune from these common crises that appear in social movement organizations, despite all the unique dynamics that have led to their disintegration. *SFK* and *Amargi* have been formed as a result of the disintegration of the previous feminist organizations where some feminists from the past and the new generations have co-existed. As it is stated in *SFK*'s closing text,

"Organizations die like living organisms. What matters is the movement itself".[152] Therefore, I suggest that the internal crises of these two organizations and the closure processes caused by these crises should be considered as moments of the transformation process of the feminist movement in Turkey instead of viewing them as problems specific to these two organizations. I see these crises which manifest themselves in the form of the question of whether a strong centralized feminist organization is possible in *SFK*'s closure and refreshing text as well as in statements such as "we started to discuss how a more flexible organization could be possible in our recent periods" appears in the narrative of my interviewee in the previous quote as the symptom of a new feminist politics and subjectivities. I observe that although these feminist organizations differ significantly from the hierarchical and authoritarian model, they have continued to incline to the model they objected to in many aspects, and this makes them incapable of resonating in the world of new feminist subjectivities.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the political processes that enable the transformation in feminist politics. By political processes, I meant the historical transformation of the feminist movement in conjunction with the much broader political process that surrounds it. In other words, rather than treating the feminist movement as a standalone phenomenon, I investigated how the feminist movement co-evolved with other social movements and macro-political processes across time. More precisely, I tried to understand how the feminist movement has historically been shaped in interactions with socialist tradition, the Kurdish movement, İslamic feminism, LGBTI movement, anti-war and anti-system

[152] http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/biz-kimiz/sfkyi-sonlandirirken/

global movements on the one hand, and macro-political processes such as the European Union process, legal regulations, and government policies on the other. The reason behind such a long historical trajectory lies in two reasons. First, I think that historicity and memory are other constitutive dynamics in the transformation of today's subjectivity and politics. Another reason is that it also provides a framework that would help me capture both continuities and ruptures in understanding contemporary feminism.

In this long historical path, I discuss the first decade of the post-2000 period in greater depth, as this period constitutes the backbone of the thesis. The first decade of the 2000s witnessed the establishment of two organizations with very founding importance in terms of feminist history in Turkey, which are *Amargi* (2002) and *Socialist Feminist Collective* (2008). For this reason, I embarked on a comprehensive examination of the establishment processes of these two organizations and the process leading to their closure. However, I focused specifically on the internal tensions that led to their termination such as inequalities due to age, experience, and economic and cultural capital, undemocratic decision-making processes, political tendencies aiming to be visible in macro/public spheres rather than targeting private sphere politics, ideal expectations of being a “feminist” and judgmental attitudes towards those who “deviate” from those ideals, unequal distribution of time devoted to internal affairs of the organization, labor-intensive and dirty work such as cleaning is done only by certain people, and changing political stances that they took over from past left/socialist organizations. It's not because I overlooked the feminist movement's positive legacy left by these two institutions. On the contrary, they became the two most influential and founding organizations in Turkish Feminist history. However, the reason I specifically addressed their closure is their incapacity to contain new feminist subjectivities arising from the grassroots. In other words, these two organizations, which could achieve to

become a focus of interest for women since their establishment, have now lost their capacity to be a center of attraction for young subjects, and thus they have become unable to respond to the way young people relate to feminism. Hence, While the founding of the two organizations almost at the same time signifies a new phase in the feminist movement, I believe their termination almost in the same years is not a coincidence, but it marks the end of a phase in the feminist movement.

Chapter 5

FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN TURKEY AFTER 2010: DE-CENTRALIZATION OF FEMINIST NETWORK

5.1 The General Political Atmosphere of Post-2010s in Turkey

The development that characterizes the post-2010s is the increasing authoritarianism of the AKP government (Tolunay, 2014, Öniş, 2015; Ayan Musil, 2015; Bashirov and Lancaster, 2018; Küçük and Türkmen 2020). During this period, the AKP turned its back on the European Union, and the reform process accompanied by the Europeanization throughout AKP's first period has been replaced by an increasingly authoritarian regime built upon a synthesis of neoliberalism and Islamism (Tolunay, 2014, Öniş, 2015; Yılmaz, 2016). The power regime has crystallized in the form of "monopolized power", leaving oppositional actors such as the alternative media sector, political parties and organizations, individuals with little room to display their alternative agenda (Öniş, 2015). This has been accompanied by disproportionate violence to suppress protests. The most obvious of these has been the excessive use of physical violence during the Gezi revolt, prides, and the March 8 Night March followed by the Gezi and the much more severe use of violence against the Kurdish people. The monopolized power has also been evident in the juridical system. The principle of the rule of law has been replaced by the rule of a "single man," especially after the constitutional referendum in 2010, the presidential election in 2014, and subsequent legislative regulations (Bashirov and

Lancaster, 2018; Yılmaz and Bashirov, 2018, Özbudun, 2014). Despite European human rights court decisions, arbitrary detentions and many other injustice implementations have been the norm across the country, resulting in law corruption. Especially after 2015, the AKP increasingly sought to prevent the rising wave around the pro-Kurdish and leftwing party HDP making it impossible for the different segments of the democratic society to voice their demands and grievances together.[153] In addition, AKP's authoritarian and centralized position also began to manifest itself in the economy. Capital was accumulated in the hands of a narrow circle composed of Erdoğan's family and his party (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2014, Öniş, 2019; Gürakar 2016; Esen and Gümüşçü 2018).[154]

De-Europeanization has also been coupled with more Islamic references in the discourse of government officials and accompanied by a series of regulations in education media, health, family life, the effects of which we observe most concretely on women's bodies. During this time, Diyanet has become the key institution in regulating social norms, rising "pious generations" became the fundamental goal, and the notion of "fıtrat" (purpose of creation) has turned into a prominent theme in government's management strategy (See, Çağatay, 2018). Based on this triangle, the government introduced a series of legal regulations to encourage marriage and childbearing, impose legal limits on abortion, and prevent divorce in a way to consolidate the family institution. These regulations have been coupled with rhetoric articulated by the key figures of government

[153] The most important of these attempts by the AKP has been to condemn the academics who signed a petition which addressed the human rights violations caused by the war (Butler and Ertür 2017; Özdemir et al. 2019; Turam 2021; Tekdemir et al., 2018; Tören and Kutun 2018; Biner 2019; Tutkal 2020; Aydin et al. 2021; Kurt 2019). Hundreds of the signatories of this petition were fired from their jobs, banned from public service, and arrested for some time.

[154] Besides many other factors, this led to an increase in wealth inequality during the late AKP period (Öniş, 2019). In its first period, AKP was able to sustain economic growth by adopting regulatory positions firmly interwoven into the neoliberal economy under the influence of the EU and its institutions, as I discussed in the first chapter (Öniş, 2019, p. 14). For its economic model, AKP's commitment to the EU has been significantly replaced by Russia–China axis (Öniş, 2019, p.10). Russia–China model is far away from deploying checks and balance mechanisms in the economic and political register since the power is centralized in the hand of a single man and/or a group (ibid). This new model resulted in economic corruption, wealth inequalities, high inflation, and currency crises since the last decade in Turkey. The post-2010 is critical as it includes profound changes not only in AKP's political but also in its economic agenda.

that would legitimize the regulations. In 2010, Erdoğan stated that he did not believe in gender equality, justifying himself through the notion of fitrat (human nature) based on the difference between men and women. In 2011, the *State Ministry Responsible for Women and the Family* was first replaced by the *Ministry of Family and Social Policy*, and minister Fatma Şahin urged women to have at least three children in her speech at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.[155]

In 2012, Prime Minister Erdoğan said, "I see abortion as murder…Every abortion is a Uludere," referring to the Uludere where 34 people were killed by the bomb attack of the Turkish Air Force in 2011.[156] This statement was soon followed by the head of religious affairs declaration stating that abortion is haram and murder.[157] In 2013, Erdogan said that the governorships would intervene in the student houses where unmarried male and female students share the same house upon the notification of the neighbors.[158] In 2013, Fatma Şahin, the minister of *the Ministry of Family and Social Policy,* stated that they would provide interest-free loans to married couples between the ages of 18-24 and provide ease of payment in the loan if they have children in the first year. In the same year, The Ministry of Youth and Sports announced that students who get married will be exempt from repayment of student loans and that the past loan debts of students will be deleted.[159] In 2013, Fatma Şahin announced that they are working to reduce divorces by providing compulsory family counseling for couples in the divorce process.[160] In 2013, the head of religious affairs announced that heaven is forbidden to women who divorce without any reason.[161] In 2014, Erdoğan advised women not to be

[155] https://sendika.org/2011/12/fatma-sahin-neden-uc-cocuk-istiyor-61024/
[156] https://www.cnnturk.com/2012/turkiye/05/26/erdogan.her.kurtaj.bir.uluderedir/662524.0/index.html
[157] https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diyanet-isleri-baskani-gormez-kurtaj-haramdir-347552
[158] https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/evlerde-kizli-erkekli-kalmaya-izin-yok-1787437
[159] https://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/ekonomi/96899.aspx
[160] https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/destek-4-seansla-sinirli-kalmayacak-1794719
[161] https://l24.im/oOLN .

picky and to get married as soon as possible.[162] In the same year, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç said, "Women should be chaste (iffetli), and be able to distinguish between what is private and what is not. She shouldn't laugh in public".[163] In 2015, Dowry money, known as Marriage Allowance, has become legal for people who have financial difficulties in getting married.[164] In 2016, it was announced that the concept of "consent" can be applied in the sexual abuse of children over the age of 12. In 2017, the article authorizing the mufti (Muslim religious leader) to marry was accepted, and a change was made in the regulation that abolished the co-educational requirement.[165]

5.2 Changes in Feminist Movements' Agenda

All these oppressive practices have facilitated the formation of a coalition against AKP practices, especially among some leftist, secular, and democrat segments of society across the country. Coalition-type coexistence has also become evident in the women's movement in Turkey (Çağatay 2018). After the second decade of the 2000s, when SFK and Amargi were closed, some women in these organizations continued their political lives in the Women's Initiative for Peace, some in the HDP, some in various NGOs, in feminist campaigns, and most of them continued independently. The Women's Initiative for Peace (Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi – BİKG) was the platform where feminist energy flowed the most within this spectrum. The Women for Peace Initiative was established in

[162] https://bianet.org/bianet/toplumsal-cinsiyet/157312-erdogan-dan-kadin-ogrencilere-cok-secici-olmayin-evlenin
[163] https://t24.com.tr/haber/kadin-herkesin-icerisinde-kahkaha-atmayacak,265891
[164] https://www.milliyet.com.tr/ekonomi/ceyiz-destegi-basvuru-sartlari-nedir-kimlere-verilir-ceyiz-destegi-ne-kadar-basvurusu-nasil-ve-nereden-yapilir-6531476
[165] Introducing Islamic elements into the school curriculum, restriction on alcohol consumption, financial and political pressure on media, firing of critical journalists, an ambiguous definition of terrorism that would encompass a broad spectrum of social stratification, violations of the right to a fair trial, excessive use of police force in public protests are only a few other practices that have a series impact on larger segments of people, albeit not directly targeting women.

2009 to create a permanent union of women who had already been coming together in various peace groups since the nineties to raise the demand for peace against the ongoing war in the country. The conditions of war continued in the country until the resolution process that would start in 2012. Between 2009 and 2012, BIKG deciphered the concrete effects of the war on women's lives and bodies. When the peace process was initiated in 2012, BİKG began to organize a series of conferences and prepared reports claiming that the solution process should not be carried out only with men but that women should also be included in the peace and negotiation processes. By 2015, the peace process had been terminated, and the conditions of war had re-escalated.[166] In an atmosphere where the civil and political space was narrowed, the Women for Peace Initiative became inactive after a while.

After the Women's Initiative for Peace became inactive, women came together around the "Women are Strong Together" (Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü) organization in 2017. This platform consisted of those women from different political parties and organizations in Istanbul.[167] The main motivation that held this union together was to create a counter alliance against the government's moves to take back the rights that women have gained through long struggles. The most critical violations of rights, which enabled women from different political segments to form alliances against the AKP, were increasing role of Diyanet in shaping women's lives, legal regulations for withdrawing women's maintenance rights (nafaka hakkı), arrangements to legitimize the crime of rape, and the

[166] In 2015, some Kurdish municipalities declared "democratic autonomy" as a form of protest after Erdoğan did not accept the electoral success of HDP and renewed the election. The government then declared a state of emergency and responded with heavy military attacks (Çağatay 2018; Göksel 2018; Özpek 2019). After that, many cities were razed and evacuated under military blockade. Under the state of emergency, co-mayors of the municipalities were arrested, a trustee was appointed in their place, and many associations, media, and NGOs were closed under the state of emergency (Özpetek 2019).

[167] For furtfer information about kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü (women are strong together) https://www.sivilsayfalar.org/2018/11/20/kadinlar-birlikte-guclu-birbirimizi-hatirlamak-ve-birlikte-guclenmek-icin-bir-alan/

reversal of gender equality discourse with Islamic rhetoric (Gülel 2019; Ayata and Candaş 2019; Begüm 2020; Çağatay 2018).

In particular, the AKP government crossed a new threshold after 2010 by targeting women's bodies and labor more within the triangle of authoritarianism, populism, and liberalism. As a response, both organized and unorganized feminist and women's organizations established a platform called "Abortion is a Right, the Decision is Women's (Kürtaj Haktır Karar Kadınların) immediately after the statements of Erdogan in 2012, "I see abortion as a murder" and "Every abortion is an Uludere" and the Ministry of Health's announcement that they would bring new legal regulations for abortion.[168] This platform organized simultaneous marches and sit-ins in 22 different provinces of Turkey.[169] In 2013, the *Women's Labor Platform* was established to decipher the attacks on women's paid and unpaid labor proposed by the AKP government's Women's Employment Package. In 2014, feminists established *Emergency Action Group Against Femicide (Kadın Cinayetlerine Karşı Acil Önlem Grubu*) and *Abortion is a Right, the Decision is Women's* to demand urgent action to be taken against the increasing femicides in Turkey. These platforms carried out a series of actions, press releases, marches, and lawsuits against femicides.[170] In 2020, EŞİK (Eşitlik İçin Kadın Platformu, Women's Platform for Equality) was established to make visible the increasing child abuse and violence against women and to protest the government's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention.[171] The EŞİK explains the purpose of its establishment as follows:

[168] https://m.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/138640-erdogan-dan-kurtaj-cinayettir
[169] https://catlakzemin.com/8-haziran-2012-22-ilde-eszamanli-eylem-kurtaj-haktir-karar-kadinlarin/
[170] For the actions of the *Emergency Action Group against Femicide* (Kadın Cinayetlerine Karşı Acil Önlem Grubu) See,
http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/parcas-olduklar-m-z/kadin-cinayetlerine-karsi-acil-onlem-grubu/
For the actions of *Abortion is Right, Decision is Women's Platform* (Kürtaj Haktır Karar Kadınların), See
http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/parcas-olduklar-m
z/platformlar/kurtaj/%e2%80%a2kurtaj-haktir-karar-kadinlarin-platformu/
[171] https://esikplatform.net/hikayemiz/

> Increasingly in recent years, we are faced with very serious dangers and threats to take back the vested rights of women. In this historical period, we live in, we invite everyone and every institution to fight with us against these attacks in order to protect our common achievements and to express our word together and strongly

Such a concern became common sense in the feminist fields since the 2010s. The actual political developments caused the feminist movement to be confined into a reactionary form limited to the protection of existing rights and reclaiming vested rights instead of producing alternative politics. This has given rise to the sense of pessimism and the rise of the narrative of feminist decline. The closure of *Amargi* in 2012 and *SFK* in 2016 and pervasive neoliberal transformations had already contributed significantly to the formation of this pessimistic-melancholic environment. The sense of pessimism has also reverberated into academic studies on feminism. For example, Coşar and Kerestecioğlu (2016) claim that feminist organizing, which was capable of significantly influencing the public sphere after the 80s, now faces the risk of being assimilated into the conservative process that has shaped politics in the last decade (p. 1-2). They further detail this assimilation as follows:

> "…neoliberal politics in Turkey have worked in tandem with conservative sociocultural priorities, which in the final analysis led to the marginalization of feminist politics. In this respect, women's organizations were either turned into a harmonious part of acceptable civil society, or, in case of failure to do so, they were marginalized. Important here is the tactful integration of demands of the women's movement into the neoliberal governmentality requisites" (p. 10).

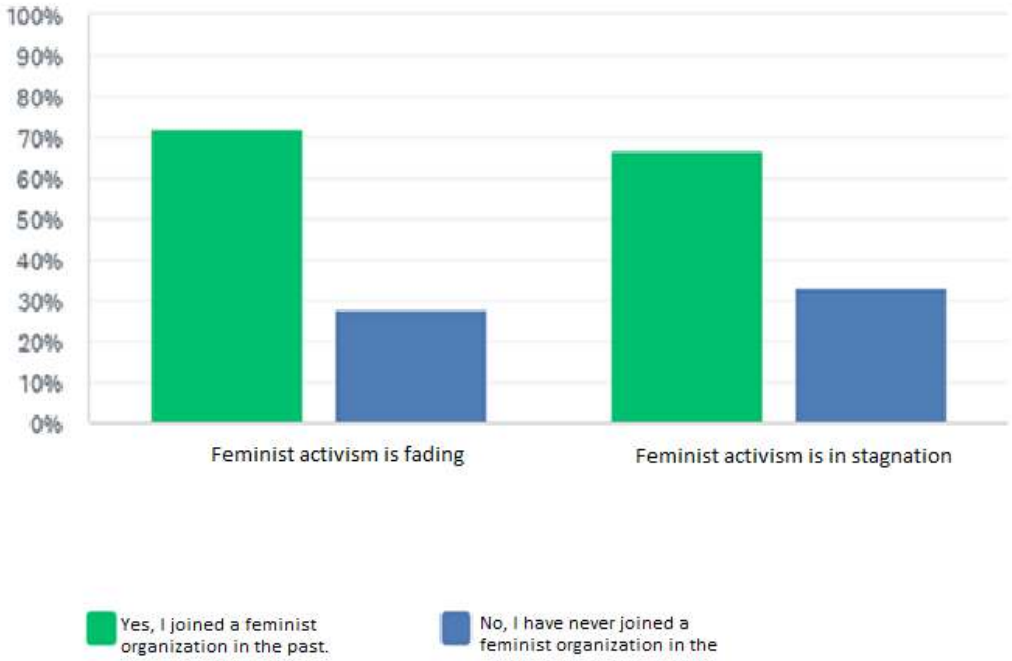
Coşar and Kerestecioğlu define such assimilation as a backlash for women's movement in a way that Eisenstein (2010), Fraser 2009; Faludi (1992), Bagguley (2002), Taylor and Whittier (1997) put forward to describe the current situation of feminism in the global north. Likewise, Gülel (2021) states that the gradual transformation of government's politics from Europeanisation to de-Europeanisation and recently to authoritarianism have hampered the feminist movement's ability to influence legal regulations (p.2). Similarly, Akdere (2020) states that the capital in Turkey has been trying to discredit the

women's movement by claiming that women do not need feminism to be empowered and liberated, and it has imprisoned women in the family by offering flexible work from home as well as undermining and mainstreaming the concept of gender. The worst thing, for Akdere, is that a part of the women's movement in Turkey has responded to this neoliberal call.[172] Berber (2017), in her article where she analyzes the feminist movement of the 2010s, states that out the deadlocks of the feminist movement deepened after Gezi. She says that it has become more important to discuss whether the influence of feminism has narrowed, and the feminism movement has lost its originality and creativity or not.[173] Lastly, Berber and Yılmaz (2016) in their article published in *1+1 Express*, After presenting a detailed framework of the rights that have been lost from the feminist movement due to the AKP government's policies, they state that the agenda of the feminist movement is reduced to " Similar to their everyday relations with men, the agenda of the feminist movement is engaged in redressing what the government distresses, compensating for it and saving it from further damage" adding that "even hands of anger is tied" in such an atmosphere.

I observed that similar pessimism was revealed in my survey. In my online survey, 70 women over the age of 35-45 out of 420 participants stated that the contemporary feminist movement in Turkey is either in stagnation or in the decline phase. More importantly, the survey reveals that majority (%70, see table below) of this segment has once been part of feminist organizations in the past. The table below shows that women who have involved in a feminist organization in the past are much more pessimistic than those who have not been involved in any feminist organization before.

[172] https://kadinsavunmasi.org/pandemi-oncesi-4-dalga-feminist-hareket-cagla-akdere/
[173] https://tr.boell.org/tr/2017/09/18/2010lar-neoliberalizmin-ve-muhafazkarligin-kiskacindaki-yillar-ve-derin-bir-nefes-gezi

Figure 15: Perspective of women+ with and without organizational experience on the current state of feminism.



I encountered a similar picture in my in-depth interviews. In my in-depth interviews, I observed that a substantial number of women over the age of 35-40 think that the contemporary feminist movement is in decline. For example, my 57-year-old interviewee with many years of organized experience in Socialist Feminist Collective describes the current situation of the feminist movement as follows:

> **Interviewee A**: The movement is not rising, but the sphere of influence of the feminist word has expanded a lot… But the movement's tendency to act collectively is on the decline.
>
> **Bermal**: How do you define the Feminist Movement?
>
> **Interviewee A**: The capacity to set its own political agenda. The capacity to carry out collective, systematic activities and set the agenda within the framework of its own political agenda... Okay, now there is an organization for alimony, but it is actually a state of being defensive. So, what I understand from the movement is a capacity where we set our own agenda.
>
> **Bermal**: Isn't there such a feminist movement in Turkey right now?
>
> **Interviewee A**: It's too weak. I am not saying that there is no movement, I am saying that the feminist movement has lost power.

Another interviewee:

> I think social movements have collapsed in Turkey and a nail was hammered into his coffin with the Gezi resistance. In other words, Gezi was a peak, but it was also the beginning of a decline. The closing of Amargi, the banning of Pride and Feminist Night Marches and the being attacked by the police and etc… (38 years old, she first took part in the ÖDP and then in Amargi for a short time. she is currently a member of the Green Party)

The most important reasons for the decline of the movement are associated with neoliberalism. To be more precise, women over the age of between 35-40, who engaged in both socialist and feminist organizations in the past, think that radical feminist activism has been absorbed by neoliberal individualization. While acknowledging the increase in the number of women who embrace feminism, they consider that anti-systemic (anti-capitalist) forms of feminist politics are on the decline. A few examples from my interviews with women aged 35-40 clearly illustrate this inclination

> **Bermal**: What do you see when you compare the current generation with your own generation, what are the differences?
>
> **Interviewee B**: I see more individualization. (59) years old)

Another interviewee (51) who had her first organizational experience within the ÖDP, then took part in the SFK (Socialist Feminist Collective) and HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) articulates a similar idea:

> It's gotten too simple to declare oneself a feminist. Feminism now has many recipients. Being a feminist doesn't mean being a bogeyman as it used to be. In the past, we used to hear so many bad words about feminism. On the other hand, the absence of organizations…if there were organizations of radical feminists, socialist feminists this would create a completely different energy. Now all this is gone. it seems like we are on the defensive position right now… You know, we are protecting our positions against the AKP's war, because it kills, murders, abuse and etc. Of course, the system is very vigilant, it wants to reduce feminism to an identity issue, a kind of label, the system wants to individualize it. However, feminism itself is a collective thing.

I think the consensus over the idea of decline among influential feminist actors results predominantly from their perspective shaped by macro-political indicators and what they understand from collective action. What I mean by macro-political indicators are basically the state policies and the street-based reactions developed against these policies.

Such that, collective action organized by a centralized organization to address the state apparatuses and being addressed (either by force or discursively) by state apparatuses constitute the normative political form in a macro-political perspective. Considering the brutal state policies of the last ten years targeting women's rights by bans on marches, violence, conservative legal regulations, and many others, which I have detailed above, I can partially agree with this pessimistic view. However, when I changed my focus from macro-political settings to everyday life in my field research, I observed that the feminist movement in Turkey is on the rise and undergoing a significant transformation that accompanies this rise. These better fits the narrative of ascending, which constitutes one pole of the literature on the state of feminist politics across the globe oscillating between ascending and decline. The table below reveals the opposite picture of the decline narrative that is predominantly surrounded by neoliberal individualization. Contrary to the claim of the individualization narrative, the overwhelming majority of my survey participants from different generations, classes, and political stands consider that feminist organization is necessary.

Table 2: Participants' thoughts on the necessity of feminist organization.

	Not Necessary at all	**Partially Necessary**	**Very Necessary**	**Total Participants**
Feminist Organization	1,45 %	18,55 %	80.00 %	100 %
	6	77	332	415

Table 16 shows that the proportion of respondents answering “Very Necessary” creates a significant difference. I encountered a similar picture when I asked the question of, “if you are not part of any feminist organization/community/group, would you like to be included?” Approximately 45% of the 223 people who stated that they were not included

in any feminist organization/community/group chose the option “Yes, I would”. Fourteen percent answered as “No, I don't want”; 26 % answered as “I used to want but not anymore”, and finally 13 % answered as “I have never thought about this issue”. We see that nearly half of the participants who are not involved in any feminist organization state that they want to be included in a feminist organization, while nearly the other half do not prefer to be involved. At this point, I think it is worth asking the question of why survey participants are not part of any feminist organization despite their enthusiasm for it. In other words, how can we explain the reluctance and/or disorganization of a significant portion of those women+ who regularly participate in feminist protests/marches and are highly pro-organization?

I traced the answer to this question in in-depth interviews as I prefer to prioritize the interviewee's own voice rather than my highly structured questionnaire. The following themes emerged from the in-depth interviews: “I can't find time to organize”, “I find feminist organizations exclusionary”, “I find feminist organizations hierarchical”, “I feel theoretically inadequate”, “I feel inadequate in terms of activism”, “I can't find an organization which I can feel belonged to”, “I was disappointed due to my past organizing experiences”, “I think the organization will hinder my individuality”, “I find organizations very militant”, “I find feminist organizations trans-exclusionary”, “feminist organizations reinforce my sense of worthlessness”, “I coincided with a period when organizations were shutting down”, “organization is not a need for me”.

One of the most critical themes among this scale that came to the fore both in the survey and in-depth interviews is the theme, “I can't find time to participate in an organization”. Based on in-depth interviews, I have already discussed at length in the previous section how working life colonizes every aspect of social life and thus transforms the ways women engage in feminist politics. This statement crystallizes the

link between changing neoliberal labor regime and its repercussions on the formation of feminist subjectivities. In the survey, 113 of the 220 respondents who answered the question of "What are the reason(s) behind the lack of organization" responded that time constraint poses partial influence for their disorganization, while 38 women responded that it poses an extremely important factor. Therefore, 151 people out of 220 say that the time constraint poses a reason for them, albeit to varying degrees. My in-depth interviews point out that the time constraint is a significant factor, especially for working women under the age of 45. The segment over the age of 45 rarely mentioned the time constraint as a reason for their lack of organization.

I would say that the sense of exclusion poses another reason, especially prominent in the in-depth interviews, in which the overwhelming majority of my interviewees were young people aged 25-35. I have observed that idealized stereotypes of feminist subjectivities and implicit premises in feminist communities cause some women to feel outside of the field and to be excluded indirectly. For example, one of my interviewee Ceren (33), who is married, has two children, and works as a lecturer at a private university, describes the exclusionary patterns as follows:

> I don't have a lot of ideas about women's studies, actually, I don't come from the discipline. but I still try to attend academic congresses or events as much as I can about women's employment or women's general problems. I always read about feminism, I wondered what it is. However, the period when I became a feminist or began to look at inequities in my life through a feminist lens correlates to the time when I had a daughter, or perhaps when I entered family connections. I was able to articulate that the problems between me and my mother-in-law is caused by a patriarchal system, not by me or her. Perhaps I needed to be in a familial connection to understand this. I, like others, didn't acquire this knowledge without experience it. I see the same thing when I enter the field of activism where, for example, it's said that daycare is a right, but I'm being treated like "oh, you have children, what a feminism". It is assumed that I act in accordance with this system because I am married and have children. Do I have to be on the margin, or do I have to swim within the feminism that you have drawn your boundaries? Is it really worth it to try to change these relationships? Or I accepted a man as a leader because I am a Kurd, what do we do now? It is implied that "we have taken this license from you, as you as you pledge allegiance to a man". There is such a point of view. That's why I couldn't actually include myself in the women's studies in academy. Nor have I been able to engage in those discussions among activist feminists.

Ceren objects to the confinement of feminism to specific templates. She explains how her personal story of becoming a feminist does not fit into the familiar trajectory and even pursued in the opposite direction. She shows how being married and having children, which are mostly considered barriers to being a feminist is, contrary to expectations, has been what made her a feminist. In other words, Ceren's experience of normative gender roles unpredictably has been the root cause that enables her to abandon those roles and embrace feminist ideas. Her unique experience corresponds to the Foucauldian model of subjectivation. Political subjectivation, in the Foucauldian sense, is produced through the mediation of power relations in the sense that one becomes subject in praxis by passing through power relations, being exposed to it, or being objectified by it. Ceren's statement, "The moment I realize the inequalities in my life correspond to the times when I had a daughter, maybe when I entered into family relationships," is a concrete expression of the symbiotic relationship between the power dynamic and subjectivation. Ceren complains that only certain forms of subjectivation are idealized and how this idealization excludes her from the feminist political field. Another participant, Duru, 49-year-old school counselor and unmarried woman, experiences this exclusion differently from Ceren. Duru says that feminist organizations are such closed structures that one can hardly be part of them. This theme crystalized in her narrative when I tried to understand the factors that hampered her from taking part in a feminist organization.

> In my 20s, I was able to go to any leftist organization and say, "I want to organize here, I want to do something". Or I don't know, I do a lot of anarchism stuff too. I mean, I've had experiences where I went and attended meetings, participated in interviews, produced ideas and discussed in leftist organizations. Why not with feminist women? It is very comfortable to dive into male sociability and say, "I have a word, too". Maybe to say that in a rage, "I'm here too". But I couldn't do it in the feminist organizations. I don't know why. I have asked myself this question many times. The main reason, I believe, is that they have a closed structure. So, there is a structure there that actually doesn't let you in, so you can't get in. There used to be some efforts, of course, trying to establish communication with me but it seemed like something forced to me. For a long time, I even believed that I was the source of the problem. I was doubting myself because I couldn't, couldn't communicate. When I encountered other similar experiences, I realized that it was not just me.

In the following part of the interview, Duru continues:

> …I feel less myself in feminist communities, you know what I mean. I mean, I feel like I don't have anything to add while listening in the corner at an event. Yes, they certainly have a lot to add to me, but I feel like I have nothing to add. This makes me incredibly uneasy. I can click and read what I want on social media, so I can comment if I want. It is not an exclusionary process at all. But otherwise, I feel extremely uneasy.

Feminism emerged as an emancipation movement separated from the usual political forms, claiming that emotions are also a part of politics (Ahmed 2013, 2010; Pedwell and Whitehead 2012; Berlant 2004, 2008; Braidotti 2013; Stephens 2015). It has been aiming to make a political and theoretical intervention in hegemonic family relations and masculine public spheres, which historically raised on hindering women's way of existence, including their emotions. It has offered the tools and methods for women to regain their self-confidence and provide a safe space free from negative emotions such as judgment and contempt, which women often experience in social life. These are considered to be some of the important mechanisms of women's empowerment. However, in the quote above, Duru is complaining about the adverse effects while hoping to experience the opposite. More specifically, she complains of formidable walls that she can't quite describe and sometimes causes self-judgment and the sense of inadequacy, incompleteness, and anxiety. I observed that these hierarchies cause unequal participation in organizations, as it crystalized in Duru's experience and prevent young women from identifying themselves as feminists. The following quotes I line up below unfold the varying forms of sense of inadequacy that emerged in the narratives of interviewees:

> But I also want to be heard in a variety of ways. However, I do not believe I have attained adequate knowledge or that my opinions have been settled. That's why I consider myself a **fallow feminist (nadaslı feminist)**. I can fill myself up a little more and then maybe I'll be able to express myself clearly. (29 years old, graduated from Boğaziçi University, Department of Literature, completed her master's degree in Women's Studies at Istanbul University she is currently working as an editor in a PR company)

> …when I say, "I'm a feminist", I feel like I will be asked "So, what are you doing as a feminist?". I feel like I will be questioned about how feminist I am. But I can easily describe myself that way over the past few years. Of course, I still feel incomplete at this stage of learning. I often try to read texts about feminism, but that's not my academic field. So, I can't

> be someone who can read a lot compared to the others. Perhaps I feel incomplete at that point. (28 years old, PhD student in Literature, also works as an editor for a children's magazine

> It was my feeling of inadequacy that pushed me away. I mean, those abstract, political things that I don't know and perhaps can't understand... it required prior knowledge, experience to understand. For example, I thought I didn't know enough about the Kurdish issue, I thought I didn't know enough about feminist politics. So, I felt like there was a void that I couldn't get over. (32 years old, PhD student in Anthropology in New York)

> I don't feel very comfortable in that spaces. To be honest, I find it a little supremacist. I don't know, maybe it is just my misperception. Yes, I have I have a lack of knowledge on feminism. I mean I'm not a person who has done a lot of reading in this field, but there are a lot of things that connect us there. I think it would be more unifying and integrative for us to walk through the things that bind us. (25 years old, Master's student at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Department of Art History)

> I feel inadequate. I feel like there is some kind of prototype. I'm afraid I'll be treated strangely if I'm not part of that prototype. How can I say? It bothers me to join women who are really political and say, "I'm not really political enough". (34 years old, an architect in a private company)

> I can say that I am on my way to become a feminist. That's why it feels like I have to eat a loaf of bread to be a feminist[174]… Maybe if I were an activist, I could confidently call say "I'm a feminist". Considering the effort, I'm not sure if simply reading and incorporating feminism into my life is equivalent to people going out and battling with cops on the street. I don't know if there is a degree of feminism, who is more feminist or less feminist, I don't know how to discuss it either. I am very new in this field, I am in my first year of my PhD. I feel like I need to read more theoretically, and I feel like I need to be more active in the field. So, I cannot say that I am a grounded feminist. But, I am enraged, extremely enraged, by everything that has happened to me, as well as the discrimination and harassment that we are subjected to everyday. I believe that feminism is an excellent medium for expressing my rage. (27 years old, PhD student in gender studies at Sabancı University)

As is seen, young feminists underline the insuperable shortcomings when they compare themselves to previous generations of feminists who have had a long experience and deemed to have a deeper intellectual heritage in political organizations. I would highlight that these young women are highly competent in terms of their education and the feminist insights they accumulated throughout their personal experiences. I think one important factor behind young women's sense of inadequacy roots in the class and cultural character of the previous generation who belong to highly advantageous social segments as I detailed in the previous chapter. The class dynamic of contemporary young feminists, however, is expanding toward grassroots in a way to include lower class segments, as I argued in previous chapters. This transformation causes the class difference between

[174] It is used in the sense that she has a long way to go, to be a feminist.

generations to become much more pronounced and thus leads to more challenging encounters. Considering the political experiences feminists from the first and second generation accumulated, the gap deepens such that it creates mental barriers for young people to define themselves as feminists or to be involved in organizations. I would note that those who have not experienced these encounters are much more immune from these mental barriers.

I think that another reason behind the sense of inadequacy and the formation of mental barriers stems from the historical dynamics of the feminist movement in Turkey. Considering the initial conditions, the feminist movement in Turkey followed a different path from its western counterparts. In Global North, feminism emerged as a form of a social movement from below that started with the struggle for suffrage and aimed to destroy the unequal position of women in social life (See, O'Neill 2017; LeGates 2001; Caine 1997; Antrobus 2008). They traced a *path from action to theory*. When feminism began to play a very active role in the revolutionary global scene created by the '68 movement in the north, there was not yet a movement that could be called feminism in Turkey. Feminism was born in Turkey approximately 15 years after the second wave had already emerged in global north and even the third wave was about to begin there. As can be understood from Şirin Tekeli's description of early feminism as a "learning process", feminism in Turkey began rather as a theoretical-political construction, taking as reference the intellectual and collective action accumulation of the feminist movement in the north. Early feminists in Turkey were involved in an intense production process (translation, etc.) to spark a movement by developing ways to bring in the most refined form of feminist experience accumulated in the West. These intense efforts began with translating the canonical books into Turkish and then followed over time by publishing a feminist magazine in which high-level theoretical and political discussions took place. As

I discussed earlier, magazine publishing has always been a constitutive political practice throughout feminist history in Turkey. This means that the founding process of feminism followed a course *from theory to action.* It would not be wrong to attribute the reason behind the movement's following such a path to the influence of the much broader political culture in which feminism has also been embedded. A political tradition in which publishing has been the most fundamental political activity, and the intellectually competent figures have always been at the forefront, has dominated the leftist/socialist wing. The effects of this tradition, albeit in different degrees and forms, have also been reflected in the feminist movement.

I think there is another reason caused by radical political culture (leftist/socialist movement) that makes young women today think that they need to eat "40 ovens of bread" to be able to call themselves feminists or use more timid expressions like "a fallow feminist (*nadaslı feminist)*". The leftist/socialist movement in Turkey has always been shaped by an over-idealized definition and expectation of radicalism. The perpetual attitude of the state to suppress social opposition through violence led the radical opposition wing to sublime actors who can afford state violence (possible police assault, detention, interrogation and torture, and other accompanying forms of violence) and to idealize the form of action that requires counter-violence against the state's brutal attitude. The bar of radical politics has been shaped by these values, criteria, and expectations that are hard to meet. This has been one of the obstacles to the movement's ability to expand. Similar versions of these expectations and idealizations, albeit not in the same way and to the same degree, have also diffused into the feminist organizations. Radicalism in feminist politics required being on the streets, radically rejecting social norms, and risking pejorative stigmas attached to feminists.

I fully acknowledge that feminism has been expanded thanks to brave women who could take risks and afford pejorative stigmas. I do not intend to underestimate the importance of being on the street as it has been the streets that publicize feminist demands and make them heard, as well as encourage women in their struggle against patriarchal practices in everyday life. Collective street protests and transformations in daily life have always been closely linked to each other. What I am trying to emphasize here is that the transformative role of feminism in women's lives cannot be reduced to its visibility on the street alone. Everyday life struggle that proceeds not through the familiar feminist discourses but from different quotidian articulations of specific contexts has not been considered radical enough in political culture, including feminism in Turkey. The definition of radical politics was often attributed to a priori categories and predetermined forms of action. However, radicalism should be understood in relation to the context and contingent character of relations and situations, not a priori categories, normative expectations, and measures (Dean 2008). Political practices derive their radical character from their capacity to establish counter-hegemony against the established dispositive of power and hegemonic discourse attitude. What is hegemonic and counter-hegemonic is contingent, historical, and contextual and is constantly reshaped depending on their continuing relations (ibid). When radicalism is considered not in this way but with puritanical assumptions, then certain actions and actors are very likely to be seen as apolitical.

Statements such as "I am flow feminist (*Nadaslı feministim)*", *"I know nothing I do nothing, whom am I to say I am a feminist", "I am on my way to become a feminist", "I keep my opinions to myself since, my way of activism is not prominent and thus not makes a significant difference"* shows how some young women feel the pressure of circulating ideas and frameworks about what feminist activism should ideally be like.

This leads them to compare themselves to an idealized imaginary of the feminist subjectivity, even as they already perform feminism practically in their everyday life. I should note that although traces of old political values are evident in their narratives or they have partially internalized political frames of the past, they actively pursue feminism in their daily lives with their unique ways and methods that differ from refined feminism. I observe that their bodies simultaneously harbor the political frameworks of both the past and the present. Yet, I consider the political frameworks of the past that appeared in some young women's narratives as the remnant of the "old" whose influence would gradually fade away and would ultimately drift towards the brink of extinction. In other words, I see these values that cause young women to feel incompetent not as a permanent or long-term character of feminist politics but the remnant of the old that is on the verge of being erased in contemporary feminist politics. For instance, Begüm's questioning, "*Considering the effort, I'm not sure if simply reading and incorporating feminism into my life is equivalent to people going out and battling with cops on the street*" and then immediately adding "*I don't know if there is a degree of feminism, who is more feminist or less feminist, I don't know how to discuss it either*" shows how she began to problematize categorical hierarchies and some values evident in the feminist politics. The political perception shaped by compelling values such as clashing with the police on the streets is followed by problematization of the hierarchical reasoning that ranks feminism within itself. I would like to underline once again that although the idealized action model, expectations, and patterns of the "old" are still to a certain extent revealed in some women's narrative, a new one has started to emerge simultaneously, and political codes of the past have begun to dissolve. To remind, I have mentioned earlier that SFK began to discuss more flexible organizational models in order to prevent its closure in its latest

period. Similarly, this is another significant indication of how old political codes have begun to dissolve by leaving their place into new forms.

The above-mentioned reasons behind young women's avoidance of being organized are also valid for middle-aged and over-middle-aged women who involved in feminist organizations in the past. Sixty of the 223 people who answered the question of "If you are not part of any feminist organization/community/group, would you like to be involved?" replied as "I used to want it, but not anymore". It would not be wrong to deduce that this is caused by disappointments they experienced in their past feminist organizations. The reluctance to be involved in a feminist organization is also evident in the meetings I attended as a participant-observer and in my in-depth interviews. A feminist forum was held in 2019, where I participated both as an activist and a researcher. The forum was shaped around the need for an independent feminist organization. Since feminist organizations terminated, some feminists have pursued politics in mixed[175] platforms such as Women are Strong Together (*Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü*). Although they attached great importance to being together with women from different political segments against AKP's oppressive policies, they needed an independent organization where they could pursue their peculiar agenda. They used to complain that feminist ideas were not circulating enough on mixed platforms. My interviewee, one of the forum organizers, explains the process as follows.

> We had an attempt to establish a feminist organization, as a narrow circle consisting of approximately 11 people. We had meetings lasting 2-3 months with independent feminists on these platforms, not with all of them, of course, but with independent feminists who have such a concern, because we wanted to build a feminist organization. We held lengthy discussions about the type of organization we want, how to set it up, and what should we put our finger on. However, we were unable to proceed. It faded quickly after a while, either because we couldn't afford it, or the conditions were not conducive to such an effort. (29-year-old activist who is actively engaged in Yoğurtçu Women's Forumu, Women are Strong Together, and Feminist Night March preparation commission)

[175] I use "mix" in the sense that it includes different political groups other than feminists.

Another interviewee explains the reason why the forum could not evolve into an organization and began to fade after a few meetings:

> A discussion swirled in the meetings, which were references to past events that we did not understand. A tension broke out there between those who left SFK and those who did not. The issue turned into a debate among SFK members, and it was as if we, as the other generation, were left on the sidelines. That, I believe, is why it didn't develop into something else. (Yaprak, 26 years old, Ph.D. student)

Another interviewee describes it as follows:

> I think the organizational model we all wanted was different. For example, I intended to start an organization with a clear political ideology, such as socialist-feminism or let's say liberal-feminism. Because we would not be a large organization in the end, I believe we should direct our resources in a definite direction. I was afraid we wouldn't be able to handle anything. Some wished to be more inclusive, allowing anyone to come and discuss anything. We coul not agree on this issue. (Şahika, 29 years old, dentist)

Although they are few, it is seen that there have been women who are willing to establish a feminist organization. Yet their effort has been unreciprocated. The dynamics that can be summarized as intra-SFK tensions, the inability to agree on the organizational model, and the divergence of political expectations hinder the forum from proceeding. However, I observed that such a failure lies in much more comprehensive and structural dynamics that have long persisted in the feminist organization. My interviewee, who was once actively part of *Amargi* and the *Istanbul Feminist Collective* for a long time, explains her distance towards feminist organizations. I think her following narrative offers a compact explanation of widespread reluctance towards establishing certain types of organizations:

> After leaving the organizations, I felt like I am no longer a part of the feminist movement. and the feminist organizational structure tells you that if you're not in it, you're out of movement. For example, a friend recently told me, "You're never seen around, where are you?". Her perspective is based on being seen, it's not something I care about at all… You learn a lot in politics, it gives you a sense of sociability and many other things. But you can't see everything when you're in it. As long as you're in them, you look like them. I was extremely active when ı was in İstanbul Feminist Collective, but after a while it made me feel like "what the hell am I doing here". Yet, one of the most critical breaking points for me was that only certain types of women could be involved. Women with certain formations and personal characteristics could only be included in İFK, that is, women who are very similar to each other. Another reason why I want to leave was the fact that there was a center, and that center was calling women somewhere. They recognized that center when the feminist movement was addressed. İFK was exactly such a place during the time I left. They define İFK as a center of feminist movement.

The critical point I would highlight is that a classical organizational model that is shaped by intra-feminist distinctions such as socialist feminism, radical feminism, and liberal feminism, which appeals to certain subjects who come together around a specific political agenda, seems no longer a desirable form. In other words, I observed that an organizational model that is repetitive in terms of its action repertoire and actor profile which inevitably results in the exclusion of diversity in the grassroots no longer creates excitement among women.

Apart from the quote above, banners used in the Night March offer enormous evidence for tracing this change. I observed that the most circulated banners on social media immediately after the night march have been not those prepared by the core organization group, but the ones written by the women who came individually. Let me explain in detail. In the night march organization meetings, which I also attended as an activist researcher in 2019 and 2020, the stages of determining the main banner slogan proceed as follows. First, all the participants' suggestions were written on a board standing at the center. As a second step, one of those slogans they agreed on was chosen, or a new collage was created among the ones written on the board. This cycle repeats in this way every year, albeit with minor changes. However, all the slogans written on the board are limited to a repertoire frequently used within the feminist movement. The same goes for the process of preparing placards. The banners of the previous years are reused if they fit the country's political agenda. If new developments occupy women's agenda, then a few new banners are added to the old ones specific to that year. However, these new banners are again mostly limited to the familiar feminist conceptual repertoire. I observed that the placards created by women outside the organization group become the ones that are most circulated and most shared in social media rather than ones created by the core organization group. To give a few examples:

Table 3: Some Feminist Night March Placard Samples Created by the Organizing Committee and Individual Participants.

Placards of the Organizing Committee	Individual Placards
Eşitliği yok sayan adaleti sağlayamaz. (Those who ignore equality cannot provide justice.)	*Hayatının kadını olamam çünkü ben kendi hayatımın kadınıyım* (I can't be the woman of your life because I'm the woman of my own life)
Dünyayı ev içi emek döndürüyor (Domestic labor turns the world)	*Kaderimin ağlarını şahsen kendim örerim* (I am the one who weave the webs of my fate.)
Kürtaj yasal ama yasak: kürtaj karşıtı politikalara son verilsin (Abortion legal but forbidden: end anti-abortion policies)	*Namus mu? Kirletmeden duramam* (Honor? I can't stop making it dirty *Kalkıp Çayını Kendi Almaz, 8 Marta Geleceğim Diyor!* He does not even bother to get his own tea but claims wanting to come to 8th March
Çocuk istismarlarını aklayan bir ülke istemiyoruz (We don't want a country that launders child abuse)	*Erkeğin kalbine giden yola sıçayım* (Shit on the road to a man's heart)
Krizin bedelini kadınlar ödüyor (Women are paying the price of the crisis)	*Sütyen bir insanlık suçudur* (Bra is a crime against humanity) *Dağları delme Ferhat, Evi Süpür.* (Ferhat, don't drill mountains, Sweep the House.)
Erkelerin verdiği 3 kuruş nafakayı çok bulan devlet kimin devleti (Whose state is it that thinks 3 cents alimony paid by males is excessive?)	*Topla saçlarını Rapunzel, Deyyus merdivenleri kullansın* (Tie your hair up Rapunzel, let Pander use the stairs)
Göçmen kadınlarla mücadelemiz ortak (Our struggle with migrant women is common)	*Tam iffetli olacağım bi gülme geliyor* (Just as I am about to be chaste, a laughs haunt me instead)
Cinsellikte eşitlik, seçimlerimizde eşitlik (Equality in sexuality, equality in our choices)	*En az üç bira, en az üç sevgili, en az üç orgazm* (At least three beers, three lovers, and three orgasms are required.) *Umutsuzluğa kapılırsan bu kalabalığı hatırla* (Remember this crowd when you're in despair)

I intend not to establish a hierarchy of importance between these two slogan forms. They have different kinds of effects, and both are equally necessary. I am trying to underline that these two forms differ significantly in terms of their capacity to appeal affects and

thus create a subjectivizing practice. Placards of the organizing team in the first column appear as a simple and monotonous repetition of the old one. This traditional semiotics loop simply channels desire into a specific line rather than multiplying flows of desire. For example, the slogans in the first column address the sovereign and remain within the limits of the sovereign's perception of seriousness. A repertoire limited to the macro-political field seems to prevail. Those in the second column, on the other hand, deride the hegemonic language and tend to affirm different aspects of womanhood experience evident in daily life and to a joyful language of resistance (See Bergman and Montgomery 2017; Segal 2017). Those in the first column focus on a politics of recognition or demand-side politics, while those in the second column tend to affirm women's existence without the need for recognition from the state and the society: I am who I am whether you recognize me or not. The slogans in the first column can hardly occupy digital publicity, as they are unable to sufficiently mobilize the affects due to this narrow structure, whereas placards in the second column appear as ones with high impact capacity in activating collective affection. I think one of the reasons behind placards having such a high impact capacity is caused by the fact that conceptual repertoire, the world of meaning, and thus the flow of desire of autonomous group and individual actors have not been shaped within loop repeating in the closed organizational model. Highly structured subjects and pre-established meanings, boundaries, and a predetermined repertoire prevail the closed organizational groups where actors of the organizations wander within that repertoire. Rigidly coded political language within organizations and platforms constitutes the a priori framework of every new act. This a-priori framework interrupts women's quest for leaving their given positions and occupying new ones. This results in the emergence of a model that constantly curls upon itself and fails to go beyond being a simple repetition of itself. In other words, as every closed organization provides a limited opportunity for

multiple and diverse encounters and interactions, they prevent the flow of desires from circulating freely by imprisoning it in a narrow and self-closing cycle. On the contrary, the flow of desire of autonomous individuals is multifaceted, free, unlimited, and has the potential to expand into a different world.

The march is organized by a narrow group that consists of almost entirely the same women every year, with few exceptions. About two months before the night march, they come together once a week and initiate the necessary process for the organization. In the Methodology section, I explained in detail what these requirements include. To remind briefly, it includes a series of technical and labor-intensive tasks such as conducting bureaucratic meetings with the governorship, determining the main banner the placards, writing the call text before the march, putting this text into circulation in mail groups, social media groups, and transmitting it to the press. The group's responsibilities are not limited to the pre-march. It also includes a series of other duties, such as taking the initiative against a possible police attack or other unexpected developments during the march and guiding the course of the march. I know from the meetings I attended as an activist researcher that the effort and time spent by the organizing group to realize the march is invaluable. However, I observed that what gives the march its real character and soul is the way in which the younger generation feminists outside the organizational group experience the march. The slogans they shout, the banners they carry, the activism choreographies they display, their festive performances show the emergence of a new political culture of action.

In the march, there is a form in which identities, statuses, and political differences are suspended, the desire of one group to be more visible than the other becomes as trivial as possible, and the claim of representation completely disappears. A form of multiplicity which irreducible to certain actors and groups appears as a collective will. However,

despite their significant role in constructing this collective will, a substantial portion of this multitude deems itself as inadequate, as I have discussed above. This sense of inadequacy will gradually disappear as the epistemic barriers inherent in the previous model move away from the political arena. Such a transformation has already begun in the last decade. In what follows I will try to understand the traces of this change by looking at everyday life where this multitude shrinks back after they blow up as a collective will in a specific place and time.

5.3 Everyday life: Feminism as a life practice

"Underneath the large noisy events lie the small events of silence"

(Deleuze 1994a, p. 163)

In the previous chapter, I explained how precarity transformed women's working life social division of labor and time as well as the formation of subjectivity through the concept of investmentality. I'll examine how this transformation has affected political practices in everyday life. Hence, I will, here, specifically focus on the everyday life. However, I am not addressing everyday life as an autonomous and self-contained entity, but I situate it within the context of these neoliberal transformations, keeping in mind the question of under what conditions and times I am addressing everyday life. I think that everyday life, today, has become more decisive and a more constitutive element of politics, due to our fragmented and hybrid existences produced by contemporary labor regime.

The most critical point revealed by the spectacular feminist night marches is that women have already gone through countless molecular transformations on a micro-

politics level, and their political subjectivation has already begun for some time prior to the march. In other words, what conditions such a mass march is that women have already oriented to feminism as a line of flight. I define the night march as a joyful moment in which the feminist line of flight is crystallized or compressed in a particular spatiality (Taksim) and temporality (8 March). I would state that the causalities that make this subjectivation and political transformation possible are quite multiple and complex. However, no matter what kind of causalities they may have, women have been passing through a series of encounters and interactions that traverse women's bodies in a way to increase their political capacities, accelerate their subjectivation and result in countless ad hoc and shifting molecular revolutions in their life. I think that the traces of this subjectivation and molecular revolutions that occur through their encounters and interactions can be traced in their daily life.

Everyday life is the field of our multiple encounters and interactions that do not entirely rise to the level of consciousness but somehow influence our being. Bayat expresses that one can trace the unnoticed practices that may be the sign of important social changes in daily life (Bayat 2016, p. 58). Melucci (1989) problematizes social movement approaches that reduce the scope of social movement analyses simply to what is visible and measurable. For him, this is a reductionist approach that "ignores the way in which the visible action of contemporary movements depends upon their production of new cultural codes within submerged networks" (1989, p. 44). Likewise, Lim (2018) proposes that "an analysis of social movements should include an inquiry of the invisible," which mostly took place in peripheries and obscured and hidden spaces (p. 105). Deleuze and Guattari go one step further, saying that

> "It (movement) is by nature imperceptible. Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 280-281).

Inspiring from such an approach, I argue that the daily lives of the younger generations in Turkey are going through a molecular feminist revolution that is silent, not easily be perceived when viewed through conventional political lenses but has permeated all dimensions of daily life. The way it spreads to daily life, on the other hand, is largely related to the transformations in the in the late neoliberal period. I think we cannot capture the political and sociological aspect of Feminist Night March unfolding explosively without considering the invisible practices constantly reproduced in obscure and hidden spaces of Istanbul's peripheries.

I observed that young women are embodied in feminist politics that permeated all the capillaries of everyday life, including their social interactions, work-life, family life, parenting practices, school life, and many other daily practices.[176] I would remind Begum's statement of "I need to eat 40 ovens of bread to be able to call myself a feminist" and "I'm on my way to becoming a feminist" that I have exemplified in another context above. Begüm (27) is a doctoral student in gender studies at Sabancı University, and she is also an assistant in the same department. She describes her leisure time at university as follows:

> I had two friends; they were also assistants. We used to have such male burial sessions in the office, after each class while sipping our coffees (laughter). It was a form of relaxation and solidarity. Those meetings, for example, opened my mind a lot. You know, we had regular weekly meetings that proceeded in the form of a feminist meeting. I had a lot of anxiety for fear of being judged because of past experiences. You know, now I don't have such a thing, for example, now I can talk about my own experiences very easily.

[176] I have no doubt that older feminist generations have also carried feminist politics into their everyday lives. The transformation of everyday life has always been a constitutive component of feminist politics. The difference is that while previous generations have prioritized public visibility and usual/traditional political platforms and collectives, everyday life is increasingly becoming the primary area of politics for young women. This difference is for sure conditioned by changing historical and political processes. However, I aim not to explain the historical political reasons but rather to deal with the ways women perform feminist politics in their everyday life. Let me exemplify these practices in their daily forms.

Begum's routine, which might be seen as a monotone repetition of her work and school life, makes significant differences every time it is performed. To repeat, Deleuze says [1968 (2001)], "is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent" (p. 1). At first, nothing seems to change, "but does change something in the mind which contemplates it (p. 70). Every time Begüm and her assistant friends come together in the office, they begin to take more distance from the normative patriarchal order in every conversation they have; they begin to discover their own desire with each repetition. The patriarchal system, which hurts them in the same way, comes more to light every time they meet, and commonalities arising from being a woman are further consolidated with each repetition. Their seemingly *same* action persistently diverges from its former repetitions (Lorraine 2008, p. 72). Thus, they go through an experience in which they reproduce their feminist subjectivation by constantly differentiating themselves in each repetition. These repetitions occur differently in changing contexts in everyday life, and every different experience contributes to an unpredictable subjectivity creation process. To give another example, a young software engineer, Ozlem describes her work experience as follows:

> I work as a software engineer at a bank, and this is an industry where men are both numerically outnumbered and women engineers are marginalized. In meetings, for example, women are either cut off or ignored, or men speak more. I act as a clerk at meetings where women are interrupted. Let's say someone at the meeting interrupted Türkan, and I began interrupting that person. Or let's say someone interrupted me. I say "Please, Aykut, don't interrupt me; I'm trying to finish this issue." But Türkan cannot do such a thing and we do it for Türkan in collaboration with Melek. We try to bring the word to Türkan with questions such as "Türkan, what exactly you were talking about? Can you say it again?". We have a kind of ball-rolling habit to make each other's voices more visible. Or, when a man tries to claim a proposal that does not belong to him, as if it were his own claim, someone came out and say, "Özlem already have suggested, I see that we are now returning to what Özlem said." We actually take care of each other in a way, and this develop naturally. I do this to women who I'm not very good with.

Feminist politics develops ways and mechanisms, which empower women against their disempowerment by men in all areas of social life. These mechanisms, however, do not offer ready-made recipes in most cases. They need to be reinvented or created in most

experiences. Özlem's experience is remarkable in exemplifying how women collectively develop a strategy to fend off gender inequalities and masculine domination in the workplace. She sparks solidarity between women despite her cautious attitude towards assuming a feminist identity, which subsequently becomes a collective strategy that could serve as a model for the movement. Let me examine another experience narrated by another interviewee, Duygu from Eğitim-Sen[177]:

> I unconsciously interfere with any conversation or problem wherever I go. I do not remain silent and take action. For example, when I was living in Ada, my colleagues tried to persuade me to take the role of Egitim-Sen representative, but I refused at that time. But I accepted this task in my current school, where I was appointed. My friend from Eğitim-Sen insisted on me to accept this role. As soon as I arrived at this school, my Egitim-Sen classmates requested that you be Duygu right away... People put you in a place because of your attitude against the principal, or the words you say to the school administration or at work meetings, therefore they recommend me. My stance towards the principal, the words I say to the school administration or at work meetings cause people to put me in a place, so they recommend me.

In the past when feminism was just beginning to spread, feminists had to risk pejorative and derogatory labels as soon they targeted sexist discriminatory practices in a leftist collective platform. This was the case, at least until the 2000s. Taking an openly feminist stance in the family, friends, or work environment could bring about much more tension than it is today. This sometimes could either cause feminists to remain speechless or lead them to reveal their feminist identity and ideas in safer settings only. This is now changing towards an easy display of feminist identities and ideas, such that it began to be displayed "in an unconscious way," as Duygu puts it. Women can now react much more freely to any situation where women are faced with inequalities without feeling obliged to consider the risks that may arise. It is not difficult to predict the positive impact such freedom, albeit not absolute freedom, will have on Duygu's students. This sense of freedom also

[177] Eğitim-Sen is the abbreviation of *Education and Science Workers' Union* that gathers education workers together. It is a left-wing trade union founded in 1995.

manifests itself in publishing fields. My interviewee (28), who works as an editor at a publishing house and describes herself as a Muslim feminist, explains as follows:

> I work as an editor for a children's publication. I believe it is extremely critical that I write science person (bilim insanı) rather than man of science (bilim adamı). I've been working there for 5 or 6 years, and during that time, all of the bilim adamı became bilim insanı. Such an effect is not achieved by being organized only. People can do anything within their means.I work in the magazine industry and have such a channel. Maybe I'll write a children's book in the future that would radically challenge gender stereotypes...

When we acknowledge the role of press and broadcast industry in creating wider impacts on the circulation of social representations, it can be easily deduced that editorship in a children's magazine would have an exponential social impact in circulation and dissemination of gender-egalitarian representations that significantly contribute children's and parents' semantic worlds. I observed the effect of such publishing through parenting practices in my field research. The following example shows the social impacts of such a publishing practice on the experience of a feminist mother who consciously takes an active role in educating her daughter on a gender-equal basis.

> My daughter is 5 and a half years old, we read a lot together. We start the day by reading a book, we read a book in the evening and so on. And we also have a feminist library in the house, but I speak without using the word feminism with Nar. I rather women, women's right, girls' right and so on. For example, I say "Oh Nar, today is world children's rights day. Shall we read about that? And then we can go out and buy a cheesecake for you, because today is your day" Something like this happened recently. I and Nar were watching the video of Space X's first rocket launch into space. Nar said "Why aren't there any women?" I did not notice when I watched the video (35 years old single mother)

When I asked another interviewee, Ceren (33), how her feminist perspective was reflected in her daily life, she talked about her motherhood practices:

> When my daughter was 2 years old, people said, "Will you not get her ears pierced anymore?" I said, "Of course I won't get my daughter's ears pierced, when they grow up, they will decide it." The conflict with the family member has appeared everywhere, from organizing a mawlid for children and to ear piercing. I wanted to raise my children as genderless as possible. I never said, "girls cannot do this, this is a girl's job, this is a man's job" We have always avoided all of them. We said you can do anything you want. But this can cause problems at school. Recently, my eldest daughter's teacher called me. She said Güneş is not a neat student. I replied saying that do you ever expect any male student to be neat and tidy? She expects my daughter to be like a flower only because she's a girl

In another context above, Ceren pointed how she realized that her relationship with her mother-in-law was a problem of the patriarchal system only after she entered a family relationship. In this excerpt, it is seen that the family relationship that Ceren entered after her marriage was largely shaped by a very Sunni conservative culture, such that she is expected to organize Mevlüt for her children and to raise children in accordance with normative gender roles. But despite these strict conservative values, we see how insists on a gender egalitarian perspective and wages a war against the patriarchal codes that surround her. Apart from work life and parenting practices, another channel where feminism spreads are social and/or kin relations in daily life. When I asked another interviewee, Elif, how her feminist perspective was reflected in her daily life, she first exemplified her close social relations. She explains as follows:

> I believe that women sharing their experiences is extremely valuable, because this is how I learned about feminism. Before literature, I learned all I knew from women through what they told me. As a result, I try to focus my relationships with women on this. For example, I have a group of friends who visit because of my husband, and I strive to build such a rapport with the women that visit. Or I regularly meet with my brothers' lovers having a feminist agenda in my mind and ask them, “Shall we talk about this today?” In fact, this is how I attempt to incorporate feminism into my daily existence.

Elif is a 29-year-old newly married woman. After graduating from Boğaziçi University, Department of Literature, she completed her master's degree in Women's Studies at Istanbul University. She is currently working as an editor at a company. She prioritizes direct interaction between women above all else. She maintains feminist politics in her daily life by building immediate interaction with surroundings without engaging in any mediation, such as organizing in the familiar sense. Another interviewee, Aslihan describes the impact of feminism on her daily life as follows:

> I can say that my first feminist organization has been my aunts and also my cousins. I mean, seriously, I think they are feminist organizations. That is, when one of them fights with her husband, the other gets into the act and threatens her husband and takes him to his house. For example, I remember staying at my aunt's for a very long time when my father and mother separated the house. There was usually a huge outpouring of support. Husband has always been a very bad thing for us. We always like “Oops, he's coming home now, nasty man” etc.

> Maybe I didn't need to organize because I already experienced it. Because we have so much sharing. I mean, there has always been so much sharing within the family that maybe I don't even want to talk about them anymore. But I never see feminist organization as useless. (Aslıhan, 29)

In the above quote, Aslıhan recounts what she understands from a feminist organization. A feminist organization for Aslıhan is not a practice where a large group of women comes together for a specific political goal, but rather is an extension of daily life where its members build a new existence through intimate and constant interaction. She explains the reason behind her reluctance to the traditional organization without underestimating its role in feminist politics. Her definition of the organization also includes a new definition of activism that directly targets the transformation of everyday life. This transformation in the definition of activism was also revealed in other interviews. For example, when I asked Ceylin, a 22-year-old university student, how she practices feminism in her daily life, she said:

> I usually do something by voicing or talking about feminism in my own life or in the lives of my friends. This is the greatest activism I've ever done, and I've never been a part of any large community... I see enough for now. It used to be something that bothered me a lot. I used to believe that if I wasn't part of a group or a movement, I wouldn't be useful at all. But then I started thinking differently. When I discussed about feminism and she says “Yes, let me start thinking about this subject, let me start reading.” Then I realized that even accomplishing this would be a small-scale act of activism. And that's why I don't force myself to be a part of any group, unless I find a group that I feel comfortable in and that I really think I can be a part of.

Ceylin's intense interactions based on feminist themes in her daily life and the concrete transformation brought about by these interactions cause no need for her to be involved in an organization in the usual sense. The way she interacts with her friends replaced the forms she would display in a customary organization.

Attributing a significant role to everyday feminism in social and political transformation might be considered a naïve way of thinking, considering the radical left culture in Turkey, which attaches great importance to practices that require risk-taking. One may argue that patriarchy is a quite historical and structural system that struggles

against it requires systematic, institutional, collective organizations. The tension between everyday life feminism and more collective systematic organization has been frequently addressed in feminist literature. The second wave used to criticize the third wave's emphasis on the transformative impact of individual political attitudes in everyday life, claiming that the third wave overestimates the political potential of everyday attitudes (See, Cullen, 2001; Fixmer and Wood, 2005; Guest, 1998; Kinser, 2004; Mann & Huffman, 2005). On the other hand, the third wave advocates the ways young women create their own political values and methods, depending on their specific concerns (Harris 2001a). Their concerns grow when feminist issues revolve around concrete problems of everyday life (Wood 2012). I have no intention of re-establishing this kind of duality and approaching either pole. Instead, I argue that contemporary feminist politics in Turkey is transforming in a way to nullify these dualities. I think another duality that has been overridden is the one established between individuality and collectivity.

5.4 Constant Flow Between Singular Feminist Existences and Collective Practices

One of the prominent themes that appeared in the interviews I conducted with the first and second-generation participants is how today's young generation becomes distant from the collective consciousness and becomes embedded in their individuality. Referring to the feminist struggles of the 80s and 90s, they complain about how young generations are engaged in a political act limited to pursuing their individual agenda. I have already mentioned above that Leyla responded to my question of "what difference do you see when you compare the current feminist generation with the previous ones?" saying, "I see more individuality." I have also shown how Hilal complained about the decline of the

feminist movement's tendency to act collectively. Leyla and Hilal are in their 50s and have accumulated significant experience in the feminist movement since the late 90s when they first met feminism. Likewise, Acar Savran, a first-generation feminist, states in her article published in the the *Pazartesi Magazine* that "by the end of the century the faith in collective transformations and radical transformations disappeared. A perspective based on piecemeal reforms and local, partial transformations prevailed" (Volume 58, p. 3). Lastly, in her YouTube speech (2020) titled *Feminist Movement in the World and Turkey from the 1970s to the Present,* Aksu Bora talks about how young feminists tend to experience feminism in a much more individual way. In her speech, Bora says:

> There is also the problem of the feminist word's content being diluted; as far as I can see, there are people who appear to be highly political but are actually very apolitical, or who consider feminism as something very individual. As far as I see, there are quite a few young groups who see it as something related to their own life or themselves.[178]

The tendency towards individuality has also appeared as a theme in my in depth-interviews. A substantial number of young women stated that they prefer to experience feminism as an individual practice, while this theme was never revealed among middle and upper middle-aged women. When we talked about the ways they define feminism and their thoughts on the idea of organizational practice, I came across the following narratives:

> In fact, I never find myself suitable for being an organized person. As I said, I'm very individual, and acting collectively somehow makes me feel a little bit like I don't know…, yes, we are all feminist women, but I had fights with people even during my trainings of Mor Çatı. when it is said that we will do this, it does not work for me, and I take distance. I can't dedicate myself. I believe that being organized is about dedication, that is, believing in something and committing to something collectively. I feel distant to the idea of collectively believing the same thing. My own ideas are always very valuable to me. (Elif, 29)

She directly associates the notion of organization with devotion and homogenizing images. She thinks that an organizational practice would prevent her from realizing her

[178] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7d9pf2KUqYI

individuality and cause her to be drifted behind ideas that do not belong to her. This line of thought about the organization is widespread among my interviewees. However, a closer examination would reveal quite the opposite picture. That is, it is not the organizational practice they distance from rather a homogenizing organizational form where they are not allowed to realize their singularity. The results of the survey that I have offered above on how young women attach importance to feminist organizations confirm this argument. In another interviewee's narrative, the emphasis on individuality becomes clear as follows:

> When I look at myself, I believe I am incapable of acting collectively. Otherwise, I join a group at the night march, establish friends with them, and interact with them. Or there are university students younger than me who are members of feminist groups at their respective campuses. I see them, talk to them, and keep in touch with them, but when I ask whether I should be a part of it, I don't see myself as appropriate. (Elin, 26 years old)

Despite her explicit statement that she avoids collective act we see that she is in constant interaction with various groups in her own way and does not lead an isolated life. Another interviewee puts it:

> Feminism's definition is highly subjective. Of course, I believe it is beneficial to organize and to be together. I believe it fosters a strong sense of community. But it had such an impact on me; it's as if my subjectivity might not be the same as someone else's. And I feel like other people define me when I'm in an organization... However, I always participate the Feminist Night March. Because it is a holy cause, it doesn't matter who is who there (o bir dava meselesi, orada kimin ne olduğunun önemi yok). I have to attend to the Feminist Night March because a lot of women are killed in this country. And we have to make it visible because the policies towards it are not implemented. I have to support others in this sense. It's obligatory for me to go there, to be there. It is a symbol for us, I think we cannot lose that too (Aslıhan, 29)

With the influence of leftist political circles' political legacy from the socialist movement, individualization has been surrounded by highly negative meanings in Turkey. Almost all the left, including feminists, agree on the following idea: as people become individualized, they break away and distance from the collectivity. Individuation is deemed to be a form of subjectivity produced by the neoliberal regime, which ultimately serves capitalism. This is not a claim that one can falsify and reject at once. Indeed, I have

discussed in the previous chapters how the decrease in labor and time allocated to collective political practices as the working life has increasingly colonized non-work life and how this transformation in labor regime results in much more isolated lives. However, I have also discussed how such a transformation would have different political potentials in such a way as to nullify pessimistic accounts. Here, I would discuss another aspect that individuality would lead to. First of all, in a context like Turkey, where the patriarchal authoritarian culture constantly suppresses women's freedom and their body, I think that individualization cannot be perceived in a purely negative way; on the contrary, it becomes a necessity for women. It is important to keep in mind that individuation has a liberating aspect that undermines authoritarian relationships (Bayat 2016). More importantly, as can be seen from the quotations, young women who overemphasize individuality do not take distance from collective feelings and even attach great importance to collective action. In other words, every time my interviewees emphasized individuality, they also emphasized the importance of organization simultaneously in various ways. In the excerpt above, right after associating feminism with individuality, Aslıhan describes an experience where individuality is suspended during the night march stating that "it is a holy cause, it doesn't matter who is who there". More importantly, she begins to describe herself as a part of a feminist collectivity, saying that "it is a holy cause". Consequently, in my field research feminist night march appears as a "political event" in Badious's sense which "provides the vehicle for a virtual summoning of all" (Badiou 2006, p. 159). Even if they are unable to participate in the night march due to practical constraints, they consider themselves to be a part of it. Or those who did not know each other before the march become close during the march as if they are members of the same organization; they join each other on the route to the march and arrive at

Taksim; they keep an eye on each other in case of a police attack. Feminist night march emerges as the embodiment of a virtual collectivity.

What is more, women who are claimed to be individual and easily devalued by this aspect become a part of a collective protest when women's rights are threatened. In addition to the 8 March night marches, they were actively involved in protests for the abortion ban, campaigns against femicide, and campaigns against the withdrawal Istanbul Convention. They also became part of hashtag campaigns targeting harassment and rape against women such as #SenDeAnlat, #HandeKadereSesVer, #TecavüzMeşrulaştırılamaz, #ŞuleÇetİçinAdalet, #KadınlarBirlikteGüçlü, #SusmaBitsin, and #ÖlmekİstemiyorumWomen's participation in collective protests is not limited to nationwide developments. Thanks to the opportunity provided by the digital platforms, they can also be a part of global protests. For example, the dance protest organized by the feminist organization Las Tesis in Chile on 25 November 2019 in front of the Chilean Ministry of Women's Rights and Gender Equality to draw attention to femicides in Chile, performed first in Kadıköy on 30 November 2019 and expanded soon to other regions of Turkey including Ankara, İzmir, and Antalya.[179] This new form erases the conventional dualities between what is collective action and individual action, between organized and disorganized form. There is a constant flow from the individual to the collectivity and from the collective to the individual. This mutual flow between two is constantly multiplying in a rhizomatic way. At this point, the subject form, which is claimed to be individual, carries the cores of the collective body in its own body. When it comes to the feminist movement, single practices and subjects can suddenly become part of the global multitude (Hard and Negri 2005). This significantly undermines what has been described as individualization. The mutual flow between the two is also what

[179] https://www.sessizkalma.org/defender/las-tesis-eylemcileri/
For the sample video, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9hLiHiv64U

has been understood from collectivity. For Revel (2006), the political potentiality of the multitude lies in its undeterminable character. He thinks that it is difficult for us to achieve a "we" when nothing seems to be determined, but it is indeterminacy that opens us to the power of the common (Revel, 2006, p. 177). At this point, what we define as "collective action" takes on a new meaning. Collective action cannot necessarily be associated with these practices has to be performed collectively (Schuster 2017, p. 643) and "collective is not a numerical concept" (Badiou 2006, p. 159). Instead, "feminists share a collective identity, and this identity informs the actions of the collective's members in their individual lives." (ibid). Following this approach, I would argue that "Unorganized" feminist practices that we have been experiencing in Turkey is, in fact, a new form of organizations that one calls "dispersed and distant collectives" (Bayat, 2010, p. 26). This implies unintended yet simultaneously exhibiting similar practices. However, Bayat argues that "even though these subjects act individually and separately, the effects of their actions do not come of necessity fade away in seclusion. They can join up, generating a more powerful dynamic than their individual sum total (Bayat 2010 p. 20). The process that the contemporary feminist movement in Turkey is going through highly corresponds to such a conceptualization. It is precisely because of its very dispersed and distant character that the feminist movement can no longer be molded, fixed, and codified. Therefore, any attempt to fix and centralize feminism is doomed to be exclusionary, such that it ultimately becomes fragile and unsustainable.

Based on this perspective, I explain the closure of feminist organizations and the failure of the latest attempt to build an organization. To be more precise, young women's bodies are increasingly becoming a nexus of multiple flows in the contemporary atmosphere where digital platforms constantly open us towards new political encounters. Besides their feminist identities, young women simultaneously sympathize with the

ecology movement, the animal liberation movement, the anti-immigrant movement, the queer movement, the LGBTI+ movement, the anti-racist movement, and the anti-capitalist movements. I think that a feminist organization that does not include these multiple issues in its agenda and appeals to similar subjects is no longer reciprocated among young people.

To continue the issue of individuality, I would take one step further, saying that one of the most important reasons behind the tension within feminist organizations lies not in the individualized character of its members but in the fact that they have not been sufficiently individualized yet. I earlier mentioned how a culture of judgment prevails within feminist organizations, directly or indirectly, on the grounds that some women's different existential tendencies do not fit certain feminist frameworks. We inherited a political culture where singularities of women are not recognized, and personal boundaries are constantly violated. Let alone the recognition of individuation, every single and autonomous attempt, most of the time though not always, is condemned and labeled as individualistic.[180] This is overly seen in one of my participant's experiences:

> Once, when I was working at Mor Çatı, a TV channel requested a speaker from us to appear on a woman-themed program. I proposed myself as a speaker. Because I was enthusiastic, and I thought I could handle it well. I remember a friend of mine in the organization told me, "Let others recommend you."

Here, my interviewer was given the message that what is virtuous is to hold herself back and act as part of the collective body, which ultimately evokes the latent remnants of the cultural codes of archaic communal culture. The important reason behind women's inclination towards feminism lies in the fact that feminism offers a space where women can experience their individuality. Feminism is an ideology that ultimately aims to

[180] I think this culture of violation will change as the new parenting models emerge in Turkey. I observed from some feminist mother social media groups that new parents are more sensitive in teaching personal boundaries, which would serve children to protect their own boundaries and pay regard to others.

emancipate women from patriarchal domination and provide them to explore their individual existence. In societies like Turkey, where oppressive and authoritarian family and state formations suppress women's individuality most, feminism becomes more crucial by providing a “line of flight”. The overwhelming majority of my interviewees stated that they had experienced different forms and degrees of an oppressive family environment. Some participants' experiences of domestic abuse, violence, and their damaging effects (vaginismus) constitute the most dramatic pole of the scale. Other experiences that frequently appeared in the in-depth interview include intervention in the clothes women wear, pressure to marry and have children, pressure to fulfill some religious practices, intervention in the work, friend and partner preferences, punitive and oppressive discourse on sexuality, and prohibition of premarital sex. In this way, women's possible flows of desire towards new becoming are tried to be interrupted, and their exploration of alternative connections is being blocked by constant fixation of their desire into habitual codes (Lorraine 2008, p. 74). This suppressive cultural code is crystalized in one of my participant's (27) statement, “When I first realized that I am a woman, I was severely punished.” A sense of shame, guilt, and regret accompanied each step they took towards being a woman. Feminism is a political form that allows women's empowerment against all these forms of intervention by making women say, “my body, my choice.” Begüm describes her individual empowerment through feminism as follows:

> For example, I'm a relatively overweight person, you know, I'm not such a snappy person. And I used to let myself feel insecure about what guys were telling me about my physical appearance. this used to make me unhappy. For example, I was not aware that this was a dating violence. I learned to love myself for who I am after meeting feminism. Apart from that, the issue of sexuality has also been very critical for me. There was no such thing as being comfortable with my sexuality in my life because I come from a small town with many problems. I was not at ease with it for a long time. It wasn't something I liked, and I couldn't speak openly anyway. I couldn't use to get over the normative body image thinking that if my body would look like this or that when making love. I used to feel bad and insecure. I've read feminism and had a lot of interactions with gender-studying women in our department. We began discussing these issues there, and I realized that I was not alone, that everyone was going through similar difficulties. After realizing that these are the things that the patriarchal system makes us feel, I began to see things in a new light. Anger came into play a lot at this point. I found the strength to say, “You cannot do this to me!”. Also, feminism has been very

> central when it comes to being self-compassionate. I have learned about being respectful to my body, my decisions, my desires, and not to judge them even when I question them sometimes. Feminism has been very guiding in my journey to know myself. I was trying to get compassion that I had never experience from ridiculous people. I learned the concept of sisterhood, solidarity with women after feminism. they came into my life (Begüm, 27).

Feminism appears in my interviewees' lives as psychological healing, a way to gain more control over their lives. They stated that they learned to love themselves as they are, self-respect and self-confidence through feminism. By abolishing the harmful effects of internalized oppression, women can develop a sense of self that serves for personal empowerment (Rowlands 1995, p. 103). My research participant embraces feminism in its collective and political aspects as well as its personal and psychological aspects.[181] Another interviewee talks about her achievements regarding personal boundaries as follows:

> I feel less anxiety in my relationships with people since I became a feminist. Because now I have some red lines and I no longer allow those red lines to be crossed. I used to have people pleasing relationships but I'm not doing that now.

Feminist empowerment offers tools for women in their close relationships. My participant states that she ceased the pursuit of making people happy at the expense of ignoring her own needs and preferences in order to gain acceptance and appreciation in close relationships thanks to feminism. Her individual empowerment inevitably influenced her close relationships, where she became more courageous in setting her own boundaries, protecting her body better, and undoing subordination within relationships. Feminism has become meaningful for women as it offers "a way of self-actualization, the freedom and

[181] For women, psychological healing appears as a way of overcoming the lack of individual autonomy and as a practice of self. I think it is no coincidence that the book *Woman Running with Wolves* in Turkey has had 58 prints as of 2022. This book basically allows women to heal the psychological damage caused by their sense of inadequacy suppressed sexual instincts through fairy tales. In stating this, I have no intention of reducing the impact of feminism to some form of psychological healing or collective therapy. The individual and social aspects of the experience of womanhood are so intertwined that it is necessary to consider the political consequences of individual empowerment and the individuality-enhancing aspect of feminist politics together. That is, there is a constant flow between personal empowerment and collective empowerment in mutually reinforcing ways.

right to exist as who you are," as one of my participants put it. Consequently, feminism allows women to draw "lines of flights" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) in the sense that women can subvert their static positions and constantly seek and explore their capacities and orient towards new experiences. Following Deleuze and Guattarian approach, I use the concept of "line of flight" in the sense that women attempt to redraw the course of their lives by building new connections and alternative paths against the gendered configurations and regulatory power relations over women's desires. (Lorreine 2008; Braidotti 2006; Colebrook and Buchanan 2022; Stark 2016). While feminism provides a line of flight for women, it does not offer them an ideal type of subjectivity. Instead, it provides empowerment opportunities that would open alternative pathways of liberation where they can build their own experiences of femininity along different lines.[182]

My field research also reveals that feminism provides women a safe space where they flee from the psychopathologies created by patriarchal oppression and the psychopathologies created by the precarious working regime accelerated in the last two decades in Turkey. This recently emerging labor regime has been evolving more towards what has been called "cognitive labor." In the first chapter, I have already discussed that universitization in the last two decades is an attempt to meet the need for cognitive labor, which unexpectedly has allowed women to have feminist encounters at universities so that feminisms could spread broader social segments. Berardi (2009), in his work, *The Soul at Work,* defines the new class that emerges from the axiomatics of capital shifting

[182] However, I observed that individual empowerment within feminist closed organizations is not equally possible for every woman, and some women who join the organization with the demand for equality and empowerment experience serious disappointment when they see that certain kinds of inequalities continue within closed organizations, and that they do not have the opportunity to be empowered. Although this situation does not include all the women, the existence of women who have gone through such an experience says a lot for feminist organizations. I observed that women who say that they are empowered within feminism do not come from closed organizations but from much more liberating and flexible feminist friendship groups. I would say that those who say they are empowered within a certain organization already have the political, cultural, and economic capital that provides them with enough strength before joining the organization.

towards cognitive labor as “cognitaria” (semiotic combination of cognitive and proletariat). He argues that the change in class composition towards cogniteria is ultimately about the change in value production. For Berardi, value production is based predominantly on the colonization of the soul that corresponds to the field of desire, affects, and imaginaries. In this way, our existence as a whole becomes part of the value creation and capital accumulation process, which inevitably produces psychopathologies such as depression, anxiety, panic, and many other damages caused by high stress. For him, these psychopathologies are never merely individual but symptomatic of the pervasive societal syndrome. Berardi thinks that the way out of a regime of psychopathological subjectivity in which desire has lost its vitality can only be possible with therapeutic political associations that will revive desire.

I think the triumph of feminism lies in its capacity that heals women's psychopathology by enabling the resurrection of suppressed desires and providing them with a solidarity network. To take the argument one step further, the reason behind feminism becoming the largest social movement in Turkey and across the globe lies in this capacity. In my field research, I observed that the psychopathologies that women go through are not only caused by patriarchal oppression but also by the fragmented and precarious working regime that has become widespread, especially among the youth. I observed that, in the affinity groups which characterize the contemporary forms of feminist politics, as I will detail later, women mostly share their unemployment anxiety, financial difficulty, mobbing they experience at work, and psychopathologies caused by these experiences in addition to their patriarchal-based problems. They try to overcome the difficulties of working life to some extent with in-group solidarity. One of my interviewees, who works as a software developer in a private bank and complain about the potentiality of being called at any time due to the problems that would arise in the

bank system, describes their strategies for coping with this uncertainty and workload as follows:

> We started a WhatsApp group with company's women software developers. Just to have a chat and support each other. It was something that happened naturally. For example, when a mother with a 3-year-old child calls me and say "Özlem, there is a problem, help me", I say "Ok, I'm coming". We are running a mechanism like "let me know, we can handle it". (Özlem, 36)

My dialogue with another interviewee goes follows:

> **Bermal**: How many WhatsApp groups do you have?
>
> **Aslıhan**: We have a group that we formed among the family, I have a group that we formed with my graduate friends, I have a group that I formed with my high school friends, and we also have a group that we formed with the women at my workplace.
>
> **Bermal**: So, what is being discussed in the group you formed with the women at work?
>
> **Aslıhan**: Mostly about work-related problems. But it is also a very serious solidarity group. A solidarity group about the problems we experience at work. Because our sexual identity is often abused here, and we are aware of this. However, because we are such good friends, we occasionally discuss our personal and private experiences.

Passing jobs onto each other, notifying each other about job postings, advising about applications, and providing links to facilitate applicants' admission are the other themes that appeared in my interviews. Todd May (2012), in his book *Friendship in an Age of Economics: Resisting the Forces of Neoliberalism*, argues that close friendship provides tools with which we can defend ourselves against and combat neoliberalism's destructive effects. (p.145). Unlike the competitive, insecure, and uncooperative isolated lives and individuality imposed by neoliberal subjectivity, friendship, for May, establishes an alternative space where we experience hope, equality, and solidarity that would encourage us to challenge the social norms and inequalities.

One of my interviewees describes her WhatsApp group of women saying that "the fact that they're all there makes me feel like they're sitting in my next room. I mean, I feel like if I have an issue here, they'll all be there for me, and I'll be able to get support from them all". Another interviewee describes her WhatsApp group, which was established as

a sub-group within a much larger mother group, as “We are very close to each other, that is, if I do not communicate three days a week I ask ‘Girls, is everyone okay?’ or it turned into a place where I could call for help”. Consequently, my research reveals how feminist affinity groups turn into spaces where friendship and politics are inextricably intertwined and offer opportunities to revive their desire, especially in a world where working life and patriarchal formation invade every aspect of women's existence. Admittedly, feminism from the very beginning has emerged as an emancipatory politics in which women could experience psychological healing, solidarity practices, and empowerment at the intersection of politics and friendship. The feminist motto, “personal is political,” has already aimed at abolishing the understanding of politics as simply a conflict between the state and the masses. However, what's new today is that feminism fulfills this function more significantly in the environment where women's precarity deepens, their life itself becomes more a field of responsibilities and value creation. In such a context, feminism provides women with a space of joyful encounters, which enable women to build affirmative relations with their desires, bodies affect and provide the strength to deal with inequalities of any form. More importantly, feminism has become a way of healing for them. Herein lies the reason why the feminist movement has grown irrepressibly.

5.5 Ecology of Feminist Interactions: Feminism is becoming the paradigm

> “We used to have such male burial sessions in the office, after each class while sipping our coffees. (Begüm)
>
> “We actually take care of each other in a way which develop so **naturally**.” (Özlem)
>
> “I **unconsciously** interfere with any conversation or problem wherever I go. I do not remain silent and take action” (Duygu)

These three expressions reveal three different characterictics of daily life practices. While Begüm emphasizes *the repetitive* character of her everyday meetings by defining it as a

session, Özlem emphasizes the *naturalness*, and Duygu emphasizes the *unconscious* quality of her feminist practices. These three qualities show that these practices of women are not contingent and exceptional, but rather systematic encounters or interactions that enable young women to meet around common affects and perceptions. Young women are born into an ecology of feminist interaction that influences the formation of their subjectivity. The concept of ecology refers to the socio-cultural environment that produces political and symbolic values, affects, methods, language, culture in systematic and coherent ways. Over the last two decades, this ecology has become so pervasive in Turkey that young women inevitably experience various encounters within this ecology that play a vital role in constructing their political subjectivity. I would like to draw attention to the three different statements of the three different interviewees above.

The ecology of interactions that facilitate feminist encounters does not consist of merely human-based composition. The entire semiotic order, such as feminist books[183], serials, films, institutions, NGOs, feminist content in lectures at universities, political actions and protests, news and social interactions over the internet, are all included in the ecology of these interactions. Significant increase in the number of books with feminist content published in the recent period in Turkey, and the spread of gender-equal language in visual and aesthetic culture significantly affects the frequency and quality of feminist encounters. I observed that what facilitates women's desire to flow towards feminism is precisely the existence of such an ecology. The feminist ecosystem has increasingly become a regulative framework for every aspect of everyday life in a way that influences society's value system and becomes society's shared ethos. I devoted one part of the

[183] I examined the number of books published with a feminist theme by years and identified 26 books between 1980-1990; 60 books between 1990-2000;169 books between 2000-2010, and 301 books between 2010-2020. This number will increase even more considering books I missed, queer and LGBT+-themed books. These numbers are not absolute certainty. I acquired this numbers not from certain dataset or source but by using the keyword, “feminism” from book sites and publishing house sites, not from a certain data set or source.

interview to understanding how young women encounter feminism and become a feminist. The elements of this interaction ecology were revealed as varying constellations in each of my interviewees. For example, my 20-year-old Sila tells her story of becoming a feminist as follows:

> The books I read helped me a lot. I was the type of person who can't communicate easily with people, ad hung on to books. And I think the ideas there have had a great impact. Apart from that, my mother has a very beautiful group of women friends. Their thoughts and dialogues, as well as their friendships, have played a significant role in shaping my perception of womanhood. I think this was also effective; You know, my father was never a classic man who says like "Girls do this, boys do that". They even trust me more than my brother. Also, my teachers were always very strong women. what I remember is that you always learn something from such women, starting from primary school and even from kindergarten. And they were all very strong, grounded women.

Sıla is the child of journalist parents. In her own words, "they have a liberal, secular line that comes from being economically middle class and being a journalist." They adopt a parenting model that supports and affirms Sıla's life choices and individual autonomy. This seems to have had a significant impact on Sıla's flow of desire not being interrupted. Sıla's experience bears the traces of a transformation in a parenting model in the urban middle-class settings in Turkey, where the value attributed to the children has increased, the child's independence has become more important, the girl child has begun to be more preferred than the boy child (Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2005, p. 333; Kagıtçıbaşı 1996a, 1996b) and "New Fatherhood" have emerged as a new model. Consequently, this parenting model emerges as an important component of the ecology of interactions of young women growing up in a relatively liberal family model such as Sıla and others like Sıla, albeit they are few in number.

Additionally, the encounters provided by her mother's sociability and the "strong" female teachers she comes across point to a transformation that cannot be reduced simply to positive coincidences or good luck. More young women today have mothers who are feminists and have feminist sociability. Today, there are more feminist teachers in

educational institutions, and this number will increase further in the future. The numerical multiplicity in these areas makes it possible for young women to encounter feminist ideas, images, and emotions more frequently. For young women who do not have a libertarian family model and liberal parental socialization like Sıla, the university appears as the determining factor for such encounters. While Sıla has already been a feminist before she went to university, many of my interviewees expressed that they became a feminist through socialization at the university, as seen in Beyza's (23) experience:

> Even though I didn't review many sources, I could see myself close to feminism when I was in high school. I was reading simpler books, and social media, of course, has an impact. When I came to university, I was able to call myself a feminist very clearly. of course, we are entering a slightly more intense process in the universities. Here are the lessons we learned etc. or the people we meet. So, it's like; somehow, we inevitably acquire knowledge about feminism. Here are the clubs I joined etc. Whether it's the symposiums I've attended or the conversations... and of course, it's all thanks to social media. Because when I entered the university, I especially remember something; Feminist communities started to be formed on Twitter. People started to follow each other and communicate etc. I also had close friends who were also in those communities. We began to share our problems and had intense dialogues. And after a while, I can say that we started to see feminism as the solution to the problems we experienced. University has had a systematic development in the form of informing ourselves theoretically and learning the arguments we can present while discussing with people.

University environment and social media appear to be the two fundamental components of her feminist interaction ecology. Her expression, “We somehow inevitably acquire this knowledge,” points to this extensive ecosystem that transcends the subject's own individual and conscious efforts and allows women to flow towards feminism. The multiple opportunities provided by the university appear in the narrative of Aslihan (29) as follows:

> I think I was in the third year of university. Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı (Community Volunteers Foundation) had a workshop on gender, and we talked to a lot of women at Asos for a week on gender. It was very good experience for me. Afterwards, one of the people working at the Community Volunteers Foundation became my teacher in women's studies. There were such **strange coincidences and encounters**. My extensive knowledge of literature also dates back to that time. There were even those who came from the Mor Çatı, to talk, to share their experience. I met feminism through a non-governmental organization at university (Aslıhan, 29)

Aslıhan is a graduate student at Istanbul University, department of women's studies. The motivation that prompted her to pursue her master's degree in women's studies had been these NGOs she encountered in university in Antalya. “Strange coincidences” that grow like snowballs shape Aslıhan's unconscious flow of desire and result in a final move that crystallizes in the form of assuming a feminist identity. While the founding component of this ecology of interactions for women in the 1960s and 70s used to shape around the Marxist and Socialist paradigm, today, it is feminism that crosscut the young generations from different classes and political wings. Feminism manifests itself in multiplicity where women from different classes and political backgrounds can find a place for themselves. Islamic feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, vegan feminism, ecofeminism, queer feminism, transfeminism, liberal feminism, anarchist feminism is some of the prominent lines in contemporary Turkey. There is a spectrum of feminism that will allow all women to escape the cultural codes of power relations that surround their lives. For example, the narrative of my participant from the Islamic wing shows how Islamic feminism in Turkey creates a line of flight from the patriarchal form of Islam and provides an ecology of Islamic feminist interactions.

> **Gökçe**: We always come across like “Is feminism compatible with Islam?”, “Islam doesn't need feminism?” you are already a Muslim, why do you become a feminist?” These are questions that you may ask yourself from time to time but knowing that there are Muslim feminists like you makes you feel that you are not alone, it empowers you. “HAVLE”[184] has been such platform for me. it allowed me to boldly call myself a feminist. I assumed that I wouldn't fit in with more radical secular feminist organizations, and that they wouldn't welcome me anyhow. There was already a Muslim feminist movement before “HAVLE”. In the last two or three years, there have been situations where I could say, “Oh, there is such a thing, people are talking about Islamic feminism”. For example, the “Women in Mosques” movement had a huge impact on me. Because I am already a person who goes to a mosque, constantly suffers from the issue of women's place in the mosque and worries about it, says something to my circle about it or complains in some way. I was very happy to meet such a movement. [185]

[184] https://www.havlekadin.com/

[185] Women in Mosques Platform is a platform that mainly aims to develop solutions to the problems of women's access to mosques and to improve the experience of women in mosques since 2017. Some of the problems that the platform struggles with are the limited number of prayer areas reserved for women, the neglect of these sections, the fact that they are too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter, and that they are separate from the congregation. For Women in Mosques Platform See http://kadinlarcamilerde.com/

Bermal: When did these complaints start?

Gökçe: when I was in high school, I didn't have the habit of worshiping outside or going to the mosque, because I was going to school and returning home. It actually began in university. You must go out and pray in the mosque. You see a ridiculous atmosphere in the mosque. These are issues that have concerned me since university and about which I have spoken with my friends.

Before Gökçe defined herself as a feminist, she had begun to question the unequal treatment women experience in mosques. The fact that the unequal treatment in mosques has become a questionable issue for Gökçe is the effect of the encounters that she experiences consciously or unconsciously within the ecology of Muslim feminist interactions. *Havle Association*, *Reçel Blog, Women in Mosques Platform* (Kadınlar Camilerde Platformu), Muslims Initiative Against Violence Against Women (Kadına Şiddette Karşı Müslümanlar İnisiyatifi), Women's Minds on Trial community (Kadınların Aklı Yargılanıyor topluluğu)[186] and many others constitute the fundamental component of this ecology. It is through this ecology that Muslim women dare to decode the masculine codes of Islam and recode it in line with feminist ideas.

Although my interviewees designate specific encounters in their narratives as the moment that ignites the spark to become a feminist, they actually go through multiple unconsciously influencing dynamics that cannot be specified easily. These multiple causalities crystallize in the form of encounters. These encounters bring about certain breaks and interruptions in the bodies. They traverse and channel the flow of desire towards feminism which cannot be perceived, at first hand, from the level of

https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/turkiye/2020/05/30/kadinlar-camilerde-platformu-pandemide-camiye-erisim-hakkimiz-korunsun

[186] While continuing to teach the Qur'an at the Diyanet, Fatma Yavuz was fired from her job as she thought that the discourse "Woman has half a mind" contained a slander against the prophet, becasue she argued that God could not have such an approach to its servants, because she did not believe in the general acceptances existing in religion on certain issues, and because she argued that it was possible to believe in another way. Similarly, Zeynep was summoned to testify at the police station in 2020 for reversing one of the rumors that subordinate women and sharing the post "Societies that entrust their jobs to men will not prosper (İşlerini erkeklere emanet eden toplumlar felah bulmaz" on her Twitter account. Thereupon, the Women's Minds on Trial community was formed in order to listen to the proceedings of the case and to show solidarity with the Muslim women who were tried in the courts for their alternative thoughts.

consciousness. It is these unconscious flows of desire that precedes all acts performed at the conscious level, such as participating in the March 8 night marches or describing themselves as a feminist. It is precisely because of this constitutive role of unconscious processes in the production of political subjectivity that leads Deleuze and Guattari (2009[1977];1988) to understand politics not as a set of conscious negotiations but as an unconscious desiring-production. Unconscious desiring-production is above all, shaped by affective intensities. Bodies are subject to the affective intensities that occur at the level of pre-consciousness before our theoretical and/or political explanations, reasonings, and justifications (Birdal 2020, p. 91). In other words, they understand politics as the immanent experience of investments of unconscious desire beyond the field of conscious negotiation of interests and representation of conflicts.

It is pretty ironic that a significant number of interviewees stated that after they read about feminism, they said, "oh, I was already a feminist!" Here, we see that feminism had been perceived and experienced intuitively before it was consciously articulated. Women's bodies are subject to affective intensities that arise in interaction across "desiring machines" before consistent articulations and explanations. Politics is mainly understood through the following formulation. We first try to understand the world we live in by passing through an intense learning process, and then we take action to transform the world with methods that seem "reasonable." That is, political subjectivation is assumed to be realized in a sequence of comprehending first and then transforming. However, I have observed that feminist subjectivation often does not comply with this order or formulation, as the statement of "oh, I was already a feminist!" reveals. Because women unconsciously experience the embodiment of patriarchal oppression in their own bodies from an early age. They again unconsciously flow into the various interactions with their sisters or friends who share similar experiences in the hopes of relieving the

effects of these oppressions. In these interactions, they experience a form of solidarity, love, care, and many other affective intensities, although it is not yet named feminism. The affective interactions and intensities keep their desire to live. Feminist readings and the learning process are the subsequent chain of a subjectivity that has already begun for some time.

Affective intensities refer to an increase in power produced by joyful encounters that increase the capacity of bodies to affect and to be affected (Deleuze 1992, p. 626) Affective intensities through joyful encounters operate as a "desiring machine" in a way to galvanize our attachment to politics by increasing "the ability of bodies to become otherwise? then they are, to press out of their current configuration and enter into new compositions of self." (Bennett 2005, p. 44). Today, feminist subjectivity is shaped around an increase in power and affective intensity that emerges through joyful encounters created by the ecology of feminist interactions. The ecology of feminist interaction endows young women with a power that channels their flows of desire into a new composition of self, albeit at the unconscious register first. As the feminist encounters of young women begin to take a systematic form within the ecology of interactions, they began to cross a new threshold, such that new identifications within the feminist repertoire begins to pour out of their mouths, such as I'm a feminist, I'm oppressed by the patriarchal system.

I observed that the March 8th night walks are an important component of the ecology of feminist encounters and, therefore, the process of feminist subjectivation. Many of my interviewees stated that they started calling themselves a feminist just after they had experienced the collective affect during the night walk. In this sense, I observed that the night march of March 8 operates precisely as a desiring machine that creates affective intensity. The joyful affections created by the participant of the march increase

the power of each woman by traversing their bodies. Below I list a few examples of how the night march affects feminist becoming through the affections it creates.

> With the influence of my roommates in the dormitory, in a time when social media was just getting more and more widespread, we got carried away (Gaza gelmek) saying that "Shall we go to March 8 and see what they are doing?" After seeing the wonderful activists of that March, we started researching and reading more on feminism. That was the point where I called myself a feminist (24 years old)
>
> I remember saying to myself when I first went to the March, "OK, I'm here, this isn't my home anymore," because of the sense of community I felt there. (22 years old)
>
> Of course, I knew about feminism, I always positioned myself on the side of women, but I didn't know that it was such a powerful movement. I was a prep student where I was just starting to settle down something., I met a very large crowd in the march. women had a lot of fun, they were together, they were side by side. It was very impressive to me. You know, it felt like, "Oh yeah, this is exactly where I belong. (Elif, 29)
>
> I participated in my first March 8 parade in 2019, last year, it was one of the best experiences of my life. because it was just my most furious time. You know being a feminist has stages; you first realize things, and then your rage emerges. That was exactly how I felt; I was enraged by everything. So being there was a magical experience for me. I went with a friend, and she was starting to call herself a new feminist, it was an empowering experience for both of us. Then we went to the after-party and for the first time in a setting where I didn't feel threatened; we dance in our bras; I'm not frightened that anything will be thrown in my drink, and someone will touch me; it was a great experience for me. Then I said, "This is my place.". (Deniz, 22, newly graduate from university)
>
> For me, the rupture occurred on March 8th. I said "Yes, we are absolutely correct," for the first time and "OK, I am now a feminist." My family has been quite harsh and controlling. I also witnessed acts of violence and threats. They have inflicted so many border violations on us that we are not even aware that there is a border violation. That is why you must continually monitor your surroundings to defend yourself. I was so exhausted of fighting with all of this at the moment that I wanted to stop fighting. "No, no break," I said after my first 8 march. I thought that the worst thing that could happen to me is that I become a role model for at least a hundred women. (22 years old, art director in an advertising agency)

Before the young women participated in the March 8 night march, we see that they had already been in the process of feminist becoming. Young women's encounters in universities, high school, and social media, which enable them to situate their experiences of violence on a political basis, traverse their bodies in such a way to influence their unconscious flows of desire. This flow of desire becomes the dynamic that enables them to join the march by "getting carried away (*Gaza gelmek*)" in my interviewer's words. Night march becomes a significant link in the chain that sparks the process of feminist subjectivation. Numerous bodies are being traversed by the sense of hope, fear, joy,

courage, anger, solidarity, and these collective affections constitute a critical link in the chain of becoming a feminist, such that it makes women say, "yes, here is the place where I belong to". The March 8 feminist night march appears, above all, as an affective festival or as ritual practices in Durkheimian sense where "collective effervescence" (Durkheim 1995) consolidates and reinforces sense of solidarity and perpetuate the movement. The collective Affects cease to be an entity belonging to every single woman and turn into a subjectivizing element that traverse the collective body as whole and establishes the spirit of collectivity. These affects create a field of virtual possibilities which is impossible to predict, in advance, exactly how these virtual possibilities will become actual in the subject. However, one can still claim that it is this affective flow that increases the power of gathering bodies in a way to open the door for new becomings.

The ecology of feminist interactions goes beyond the local register and includes encounters and interactions at the global level. I would say that the ecology of feminist interactions is a global ecosystem in this sense. It is an ecosystem that constantly transfers feminist values, ideas, action repertoire, artistic and intellectual productions from global to local and from local to global, as well as intersecting and multiplying the resistances of women, their alternative lifestyles, and discourses. Young women are now in a historical turn where it is less likely to not come across the and not be affected by the global network (Terranova, 2004). They encounter feminism not through the programmatic goals of any organization but through the constant interaction with this global digital network.[187] Digital global networks turn into a platform where women initiate their own subjectivation, create their own feminist ethics, and share their experience in the form of classical consciousness-raising meetings, but this time on a much larger scale as we witnessed in the case of the #mettoo movement.

[187] This will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter.

5.7 Transversality:

The feminist ecosystem I mentioned above does not happen in a closed loop. In addition to their feminist identities, my online survey participants also identify themselves as associated with other social movements, as seen in the table below. In my online survey, I raised the question of "How do you define yourself politically," where participants had the option to tick more than one option simultaneously. The resulting table is as follows:

Table 4: Participants' Political Stands

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Feminist	87.14%	366
Socialist	53.81%	226
Ecologist	32.86%	138
Anarchist	14.76%	62
Kurdish/Patriotic	10.00%	42
Social democrat	9.05%	38
Kemalist	3.81%	16
Liberal	3.81%	16
Apolitical	3.10%	13
Muslim	1.67%	7
Nationalist	1.19%	5
I never thought	0.95%	4
Islamist	0.24%	1
Total Respondents:		420

I added the "other" option, considering the political stances that I may have neglected. The political stances that appeared in the "Other" box were as follows "with multiple identities but without any identity where it is not necessary," "a Kurdish and Alevi woman

who is in solidarity with the queer movement and transfeminism," "ecofeminist," "anarcho-communist feminist," "vegetarian" "abolitionist vegan," "animal rights defender," "queer," "Green," "Lgbti+ activist," "human rights defender," "anti-capitalist." The reason behind the highest percentage that socialism occupies in Table 5.4 is related to the socialist movement's appropriation of feminism as a political identity in the early 2000s and the existence of a significant number of women with socialist ideology in the independent feminist movement. I added the question of "Have you ever been in a practice/relationship of solidarity with the following social movements?" to understand their interaction with political views other than their own stand.[188] The following picture emerged.

[188] practice/relationship of solidarity covers all kinds of practices such as participating in protests and marches, providing financial support, participating in social media actions, being organized within the movement itself

Table 5: Participant's solidarity with social movements other than feminism

	Yes, I have been in a relationship of solidarity once or more than once	No, I have never been in a relationship of solidarity	I have not been in a relationship of solidarity until now, but from now on I would like to.	TOTAL
Kurdish movement and/or Kurdish women's movement	76.19% 304	16.29% 65	7. 52% 30	100% 399
Dissident Muslim movements and/or Muslim feminist women	29.34% 103	54.99% 193	15.67% 55	100% 351
LGBTİ+ Movement	86.90% 345	6.30% 25	6.80% 27	100% 397
Animal liberation movement	52.25% 197	20.69% 78	27.06% 102	100% 377
Ecology movement	72.73% 288	12.63% 50	14.65% 58	100% 396
Leftist/socialist organizations	79.17% 323	17.16% 70	3.68% 15	100% 408

The table reveals the feminist women's interaction with other social movements, which offers remarkable insights into the political character of contemporary feminist subjectivity in Turkey. The feminist movement in Turkey has never actually existed in isolation from other political movements in Turkey. Interaction with socialist ideas, albeit not with organizations, interaction with the Kurdish movement, with LGBT+ movement, and Islamic, albeit in varying degrees and forms, has been occurred as can be remembered from the previous chapter. To briefly remind, early feminism was trying to be autonomous without maintaining an organic connection with the socialist movements from which it emerged. Their primary goal was to build feminism which posed the characteristics of the second wave. The actors were also relatively homogeneous. They were women from almost the same age group with similar cultural capitals and socio-economic backgrounds. With the partial expansion of the movement in the late 80s, political patterns

emerged, and they split into socialist and radical feminism. By the 90s, the political scene was occupied by the socialist movement, which had begun to recover after the 1980s coup, by the Kurdish movement, which had newly emerged as well as by the LGBT and Islamic movement. Feminists who gathered around *Pazartesi* magazine at that time were trying to maintain an interaction with these movements when it came to women's issue, albeit with tension. Over the years, the feminist movement has diversified as the new political problems have dominated the political scene and as old problems took on new dimensions. The greater acceptance of the Kurdish movement in the social and political arena, Muslim women's inclusion in the political scene with their feminist identities, increasing interaction of socialist movements with feminist ideas and the gradual disappearance of pejorative discourses and perceptions towards feminism and feminists, involvement of the women from newly emerging ecology movement in the feminist movement, intense interaction and cooperation of LGBT+ movement with feminist organizations, the activities carried out by gender-egalitarian non-governmental organizations and rights organizations in which feminists have also taken part, and feminist-themed studies in the academic field have contributed to accumulation of insights and experience. As this accumulation spread, radical political subjectivities of all kinds (other than feminist ones) began to be established precisely through the filters and mediation of feminism. Increasing interactions between the feminist and other movements have minimized the possibility of feminists being racist, transphobic, speciesist while also reducing the sexist tendencies of other social movements. Today, many young women say that after being involved in the feminist movement, they started to break down their prejudices against the Kurdish movement and Muslim feminists. These interactions also created a relationship of solidarity between movements, as shown in the table above, as well as the political actors being the subject of more than one

movement at the same time. I think this transformation corresponds to a form that Guattari (1984) describes as a transversal movement.[189] For Guattari, transversality is realized "when there is a maximum communication among different levels and, above all, in different meaning (p. 18). However, Guattari's deployment of transversality has nothing to do with a model that characterizes the communicative and connectivist aspect of movement's interactions (Brunner and Rhoades, 2010). In other words, transversality does not simply mean that different movements come together in the form of a rainbow and communicate with each other. In the additive or rainbow model, movements interact with each other by preserving their own boundaries and forms of existence. The concept of transversality, on the other hand, constantly opens a new register where different political territories are constantly being reshaped in every single entanglement and engagement (Brunner and Rhoades, 2010, p. iii). Transversality implies central linkages and lines that "do not necessarily even cross anywhere, lines of flight, fault lines, continuously eluding the systems of points and their coordinates" (Rauning 2002, p. 3). It has

[189] I prefer not the appropriate concept of intersectionality in explaining the women's multiple political positioning for several reasons. The concept of intersectionality is basically a theory of identity. It underscores the multidimensional aspect of identities. It was first introduced by Crenshaw in 1989 to show how black women's life experiences are shaped by a specific interaction of race, class and gender which sought to be considered as an indivisible axis of power's operation (Crenshaw 1989; 1991). This concept soon has turned into the "gold standard" for analyzing the experiences of identity and oppression within the field of social science (Nash 2008, p. 2) and also has extended in a way to include other experiences of oppression such as class, sexuality, ethnicity, age, ability, nation whose intersecting interaction produce distinctive experience in a way that deepen the inequalities for marginalized groups (Collins 2015). The concept of intersectionality has been subjected to diverse criticism as well as widespread use. The idea of intersectionality traps into the pitfall of identity politics which reified identities while neglecting unequal power relations within the same group (Yuval-Davis 1999, p. 97; 2017, p. 157). Assuming an illusionary homogeneity reinforces boundaries of identities that would diminish and even prevent the interactions among diverse political groups (Dinçer 2019). Another critique raised for the idea of intersectionality is that intersecting of multiple identities cannot only attribute specifically to the black women or other marginalized positioning, but the entire identities are already shaped by multidimensional power axis (Nash, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 1999, 2006; Patil, 2013; Kwan 1996; Zack 2005). It can neither be reduced to certain types of oppression nor can it be only associated only with oppressed positions. For example, a straight white man's identity is also intersected by the identities of whiteness, straightness, and heterosexuality (Kwan 1996). I am convinced of the ideas contained in these criticisms, which in turn incite me to move onto a different ontological ground that is transversality. Transversality has nothing to the with identity politics and the politics of representations by refusing to speak for and in the name of others.

to do with the process having no goal of permanent synthesis and thus defying closure (ibid, p.4).

Decentralized lines across the movement and manifold positionings along the transversal matrix produce specific forms of subjectivation, which Rauning (2002) names "transversal modes of subjectivation." What characterizes transversal subjectivation is the "interactive flux of heterogeneous and polyphonic aspect of subjectivity interwoven through individual and collectivity" (Bryx and Reynold 2012, p. 291). The contemporary feminist movement in Turkey is largely generated on the basis of multidimensional political axes, not on a single or a few axes. This form of subjectivity has been provided by multiple yet highly connected dynamics, including the effect of the Gezi Resistance, Akp's repressive policies that have united different dissident segments on the same ground, and the unlimited information flows and encounters provided by digital space as well as the rhizomatic interactions of the feminist movement in itself and the interaction of the feminist movement with other social movements. These have resulted in feminist bodies being traversed by a multi-political matrix. In the in-depth interviews I conducted, I observed that while women over the age of 35-45 mostly define themselves through two identities, such as feminist and socialist, feminist and Muslim, feminist and Kurdish, the group under 35 tends to describe themselves more than two political stands such as ecologist, socialist animal libertarian and anti-capitalist at the same time. I have also observed that the historical tensions between Kemalist and Kurdish women, or between Muslim and secular feminists, between trans men and cis women, have significantly diminished. A 28-year-old Islamic feminist participant, who was active in *Havle Women's Association*, describes this transformation as follows:

> As third-generation Muslim feminists, we are far more receptive to forming coalitions than previous generations. With our Muslim identities, we participate in broader feminist platforms. We're open because the previous generation's grudges haven't been passed down to us. My mother finished college only after I was in high school. She is a woman who was

> unable to attend university due to the turban prohibition. Because of the ban, many women are unable to obtain an education. They have a loaded trunk. We didn't inherit that grudge. Because the feminists they faced are not the same as the feminists we encounter today. In other words, a lot of water has flowed from there, they have been transformed. I see now that the feminists we encounter are not the feminists that the previous generation resented. That's why the background or something loses its meaning for us.

One of my interviewees from the Kurdish movement responded my question about their relations with feminists as follows:

> The feminists are the first to react when Kurdish women's institutions were closed in the state of emergency, when men were appointed in the women's directorates in the municipality, when female actors were arrested and exposed to the rain of sentences with empty indictments or when there was a detention operation in Diyarbakır... When news of a death comes in, they say let's compose a text, prepare a press text, but they also go out on the street... This is what I've noticed over the previous 5-6 years. This is really encouraging; they are truly with us in all circumstances I think it was before the pandemic, women faced harsh intervention in kayyum protests. They were detained, some friends were severely fined, etc. but they never gave up which is a very good thing. Or they didn't say that the process got very tough, you know, if we give support, they will do the same thing to us. They did not think like this. This has already become something that makes us stronger.

It is possible to trace this increasing rapprochement between the Kurdish movement and the feminist movement in other fields as well. For the first time in history, feminists have called for voting for a political party. Feminists called on women to vote for the HDP for the general elections of June 7, 2015, by releasing a text signed by 749 feminists.[190] The gap seem to be closed for the trans movement and the feminist movement as well. Trans people's Participation in night marches with their “male” appearance has become unquestionable by large segments. Until recently, while the call for feminist events invitation to feminist events was circulated with the phrase “open to women only,” this phrase has now been replaced by the “open to women and trans only.” Consequently, although the feminist movement has never been distanced from these movements, the quality and frequency of these interactions gained a new dimension as we approached the present

[190] https://t24.com.tr/haber/feminist-kadinlardan-oyumuz-hdpye-aciklamasi,293614

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter begins with a general picture that characterize the post-2010 atmosphere of Turkey. I discussed how many feminists in Turkey have adopted decline narratives as a result of adverse developments, particularly since the second decade of the 2000s, akin to global discussions on decline and rise. However, I have argued that this pessimistic view is not just about recent political developments but stems from the political lens that causes a narrow understanding of politics, especially among middle-aged and left-wing feminists. In this chapter, based on my field research with young women, I have tried to show that this pessimistic view does not reflect the current state of feminism in Turkey. Having expanded on this, I zoomed into the practical and affective experiences of young women, relying on field data to demonstrate how the feminist movement in Turkey is not in the midst of a decline but rather experiences a growth accompanying a significant transformation.

I argued that this transformation manifest itself in the form of decentralization and zoomed onto reason behind the decentralization of the movement. While structural changes in the labor regime reduce conditions for young women to participate in organized politics in the traditional sense as I discussed in chapter three, I argue that the introverted structure of feminist organizations poses another factor that removes conditions for young women to be included in organizations. To put it another way, idealized political aspirations inside organizations, as well as the fact that feminist politics is built on high-level theoretical-political discussions rather than actual life experiences, result in the formation of hierarchies that may make young women feel inadequate. In addition, the increasing prevalence of feminism and the growing precarity of the younger generation crystallize the class and cultural difference between previous generation women and younger women. Lastly, young women have a distinct tendency to realize their singular existence, where their singular existence does not melt into the collective one. However,

the escape from these central organizations towards daily life does not indicate that young people have become detached from the idea of collectivity. On the contrary, I observed that young people imagine themselves as part of the collective feminist body, both de facto and imaginary. While experiencing their singularity, they articulate with the collective movement in different ways and degrees. As a result, there is a constant reciprocal connection between collective and individual experiences, which reduces the seeming conflict between the two.

In this chapter, I also sought to figure out why feminism has received much more resonance than other social movements. One reason is that feminism equips women with the forces necessary to draw their own lines of flight where they could leave their sickening and debilitating lives in areas involving micropower relations and shift towards affirmative encounters that are healing, life-affirming, and increase their empowerment. Through the feminist rhizomatic networks, women create a space where they can escape from patriarchal oppression and increasing poverty, unemployment, as well as all the psychopathologies caused by them.

Chapter 6

DIGITAL FEMINISM: IS THERE A NON-DIGITAL FEMINISM TODAY?

> "*Radical change has always come from young people.... Those of us who come from a different generation of activists have to recognize that it is time for the younger generation to take the lead and show us the way"*[191]
>
> *Angela Davis*

Since the 2010s, digital platforms have not only emerged as a means of communication and organization for social movements but has also led to the transformation of political subjectivities in Turkey. While previous chapters have addressed the economic and political background in transforming contemporary feminist subjectivities and politics, this chapter deals specifically with digital platforms as another component within the extensive topography of the transformation. In doing so, I will also attempt to question some dualities that are frequently reproduced within the digital feminism literature and the political field. I will start by interrogating the existence of a "non-digital feminism," which is implicit in the concept of "digital feminism. To put it more precisely, I will be tracing the question of "is a non-digital form of feminism possible in a world where we exist as digital nomads?" The interrogation of such a duality will be accompanied by another one: "street activism" versus "social media activism" surrounded by highly moral and political value hierarchies such as sincere versus insincere and "real" versus "fake." I will argue that what is assigned as "real" and "fake" is essentially part of the same

[191] http://www.mtv.com/news/3119634/what-angela-davis-wants-young-activists-to-know/

ontological register. I think such interrogations will erode various conceptual, categorical, and political barriers, as a result of which we can better understand the changing ways in which young women relate to feminism.

I will also situate digital platforms within the context of ecology of feminist interaction where women encounter feminist actors, ideas, discussion, and memory and thereby participate in the process of political subjectivity. While doing this, I will discuss how, despite some of their impasses, digital platforms offer a line of flight and space of freedom. It opens a space for young women to escape from forms that are limited to certain actors, discourses, spaces and surrounded by hierarchies and insurmountable barriers. Additionally, Young women are involved in a constant flow and interaction as deterritorialized nomads on digital platforms. This interaction makes them part of an endless complex and multiple becomings. That is, they become part of transversal becoming that appears in constant interaction with other social movement as well as with changing version of feminist politics. Lastly, Conventional political practices which required intensive time and effort have become unsustainable in the context where working life colonizes everyday life, and our subjectivity is shaped by the logic of investmentality. In this environment digital platforms become an alternative site for women to perpetuate their relationship with politics. The unpredictability of extensive digitization converts everyday living into a political hub.

6.1 The Literature Review on Digital Turn

The discussion around digital media, particularly social media, is shaped by the questions of whether digitalization promotes democratization or authoritarianism, whether it individualizes and atomizes people, or whether it is a tool that facilitates social

interactions (Küçük 2017, s. 44-45; Aroncyk 2014; Turner 2019). The idea is, for the techno-affirmative view, social media provided participation and visibility to the silenced and excluded segments of the society who had previously been unable to be heard in the public sphere because of the hegemony of media monopolies. Furthermore, new technologies facilitate the dissemination of knowledge by breaking the monopoly over knowledge and transforming individuals into active citizens as well as offering possibilities for transnational communities and movements to build alliances by bridging physical and symbolic distances (ibid). On the other hand, techno-skeptics arguments center on the idea that digital channels become a tool in the use of authoritarian regimes to manipulate and interact directly with the masses (See, Turner 2019). Just as great atrocities were carried out through modern bureaucracy in the past, social disasters today are possible with the deactivation of these institutions and the direct mobilization and interaction of the masses (Küçük 2017, s. 44-45). This seems more possible than ever with the rapid spread of lying through new media, especially in the post-truth era.

The discussions over new media, which peaked in the 1930s with the Frankfurt School, persist today with similar concerns and themes around social media and other new digital technologies. I believe that Benjamin's (2012[1935]) ideas on the complex and contradictory character of media technologies of the period are still relevant and hence applicable to the current discussion. He discusses the political and cultural implications of mass media technologies. He explains how the development of mechanical reproduction dispels the mystification around artistic production, enables the ordinary people to access cultural artefacts as well as transforms the condition of visibility in favor of the working class, all of which ultimately serve for the democratization of cultural field. These ideas, in Benjamin’s work, coupled with the dark side of the new

media tech, which simultaneously enables fascist regimes to channel their ideas in a way to manipulate the masses.

My field research reveals that in a context where fragmented and precarious labor structures have become the norm with the transformation of the working regime and electronic media spheres have narrowed with increasing authoritarianism in Turkey over the last decade, new digital technologies provide serious opportunities for women to engage with feminist politics. I also observed that new digital channels open up democratic space for access to feminist knowledge and experience, particularly in an environment where feminist politics is consolidated around narrow groups and organizations, and certain age, class, and geographically distant segments of women find it difficult to participate in certain political experiences. These new channels undoubtedly provide a basis for certain alt-right and right-wing Conservative/Islamist views to disseminate their ideas which ultimately return to women's bodies as a form of violence. It can also lead to rapid reactions, cancel and lynch culture arising from unproven information, even among opposing left groups. Hence, I do not attribute an absolute affirmative account to these new channels and the subjectivities produced through these channels. However, the narratives of my field participants, particularly those under the age of 35, about social media show that negative experiences remain rather minor compared to what social media has contributed to the way they engage in feminist politics.

6.1.1 Feminist politics in the age of digital turn

Feminist politics have been experiencing a "digital turn" (McLean et al., 2019; Ash et al., 2018) where feminists' default mode of interaction is formed through digital channels,

and almost every single individual turn into a "digital native" (Jouet 2018, p.136), especially since the 2010s in Turkey and across the world. This turn is described as "digital feminism" and "online feminism," whose most salient tool has been social media. Social media, above all, offers a new public sphere (Lister et al., 2008; Papacharissi 2002) and "new terrains of political struggle" (Kellner 2002, p. 182) where marginalized and silenced groups can voice their demands and thus contribute to social justice and women's empowerment (Chen et al. 2018; Rosenbaum et.al., 2020). It facilitates a participatory and non-hierarchical way of communications and interactions (Wasserman 2007). It also enables a rapid dissemination of information at an unprecedented speed, coordination of collective action and protest organizations as well as transforming engagement with political issues, which ultimately transform what we understand from social movement, activism, and politics, in general (Segerberg and Bennett, 2013; García et al., 2018; Rosenbaum and Bouvier 2020, p.120; Howard and Hussain., 2011; Carstensen 2013), and the feminist movement, feminist activism, and politics, in particular. It is characterized by the "lack of central organizing body" (Rosenbaum and Bouvier 2020, p.121) and constantly changing, tumultuous, unidentifiable, unstable relationships and attitudes (Vaast et al. 2017; Juris 2016; Rosenbaum and Bouvier 2020). In my field research, Twitter and WhatsApp appeared as the most prominent platforms for feminists to enact feminist politics. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I will specifically focus on WhatsApp and then focus on Twitter, among other social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.

6.2. Rhizomatic Networks Through WhatsApp Groups

Digital feminist literature's understanding of digitally relies mostly on social media. In this chapter, I hope to contribute to the literature by extending the notion of digitality to

include WhatsApp. A bulk of the literature has begun to pay attention to the pervasive role of free encrypted messaging apps in mobilizing social movements and transforming quotidian activities since 2009 when it was first released across globe (See Valenzuela et al. 2021; Treré 2020; Cruz and Harindranath 2020; Abubakar and Dasuki 2018; Valeriani and Vaccari 2018; Yamamoto et al. 2018; Tapsell 2018; Lazar et al. 2018) Some of them focuses specifically on Global South where the number of WhatsApp users are higher than its westerns counterparts (See Cruz and Harindranath 2020) and poses economically and politically volatile dynamic such as Chile, India, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, Columbia and many other countries. It is argued that WhatsApp become a kind of weapon in the hands of people living in these countries, where authoritarian regimes prevail.

Within this literature, few of them constricted their research focus even further and examine the role of WhatsApp, particularly in coordination of women's movement in these undemocratic and volatile countries where freedom of association and expression is either absent or relatively more minor. For example, Abubakar and Dasuki (2018) show how WhatsApp empowers women in Nigeria by providing them with space for voicing their opinions in such a way to hold elected officers responsible and to be involved in political decisions within the societal register and influence their everyday agendas (p.16). They also show how it enables women to enhance their information capabilities, improve their media literacy, gain insights on health and education, provide a sense of belonging and employment opportunities as well as improve their sense of security (p. 17).

I think that WhatsApp is a founding pillar of the women's and the feminist movement in Turkey, as in many global southern countries. Based on my field research, I observed that everyday life has turned into a rhizomatic network in the form of feminist

affinity groups over WhatsApp. [192] About 98 percent of the participant, I conducted in-depth interview with stated that they belonged to one or more WhatsApp groups, including women only. These groups are:

a) Women's solidarity groups organized against sexual harassment and abuse in universities
b) Feminist lawyers group united around femicide and sexual harassment rape cases
c) feminists who are active in trade associations and unions,
d) Numerous closed feminist groups on social media such as Feminist Psychotherapy, Feminist Research Group, self-defense groups and many others,
e) music groups such as *Femiritmik*, *Koromor*, *Korospu*,
f) Feminist football group,
g) Feminist Reading groups,
h) Self-defense and vendo groups,
i) feminist association such as *Havle*,
j) Feminist contemporary art and curator groups,
k) Feminist theater group such as *Tiyatro Boyalı Kuş*,
l) colleagues who come together against sexual discrimination in the workplace,
m) feminist and gender egalitarian mother groups,
n) vegan feminist groups,
o) trans feminist groups,

[192] Although WhatsApp might be considered as a topic that should be covered in the next chapter (digital feminism), I am discussing WhatsApp in the context of the ways feminism is practiced in everyday life. I consider groups established over WhatsApp as part of the private sphere, because such forms of communication are more directly embedded in interpersonal daily life practices. In another word, WhatsApp is an encrypted communication tool with certain borders and participants. That's why it has a character that can be included in the private/intimate sphere. While the channels such as Twitter and Facebook pose the character of public medium, encrypted communication tools such as WhatsApp operates mostly with the codes of the private sphere. It has the feature of being a safer application for women. also, since it is addressing an invisible public, performance anxiety is a minor handicap. Thus, it offers a more sincere and unmediated existence and communication opportunity.

p) Affinity groups of close friends remaining from the terminated feminist organizations such as *Amargi*, *SFK*, and *Filmmor*,

q) Women met on Twitter, various NGOs in which feminist are active,

r) Affinity groups that come together around digital feminist journalism such as *Çatlak Zemin*, *5Harfliler*, *ReçelBlok*

s) Family and kin WhatsApp groups such as cousins and sisters.

These groups I listed above pose the characteristic of rhizome in the sense that they are interconnected in a horizontal and non-hierarchical way. In other words, they do not arise on a single feminist root (certain centers, organizations, platforms), but each group itself becomes an autonomous center alone. They expand and decentralize in all directions within everyday life and transform normative relations of patriarchal culture in a way that one cannot fully measure its influence. These groups get this transformative power not from a certain political center but from endless irregular, non-linear interactions among themselves. Constant intragroup interactions create a collective feminist intelligence that subsequently feedbacks every single group.[193] Despite the heterogeneity of these affinity groups, they share significant common features. They are established independently of any central decision-making processes or without an extension of certain organizations. They also function as a solidarity and care group against inequalities caused by patriarchal and neoliberal/authoritarian disempowerment.

[193] This model of organizations differs considerably from the previous forms centered around certain spaces, organizations, and actors. I do not claim that feminist politics through central platforms have completely disappeared. Feminists still come together and execute politics on several platforms I have listed above. But these platforms are neither permanent nor are they merely consist of feminists. They are politically heterogeneous. Lastly, these platforms become the center of reactive politics. Proactive or constitutive feminist politics is being executed in everyday life. One of my feminist interviewees taking part in the "women are strong Together" platform describes the platform as follows: "There is an emergency room atmosphere there. There are always problems that need to be solved urgently. For example, if you share a personal problem with a few people on the platform, they can't care about you and ask what happened next. From time to time, the platform reminds the function of health tents in a war situation."

It is difficult to bring these groups together in a homogeneous pot. They undoubtedly have a heterogeneous character in terms of their organizational dynamics, demographic, sociological, and their member's political differences. This heterogeneity is not only a difference between groups, but in-group members are also highly heterogeneous. One of the significant differences between these groups is that while most groups consist entirely of women who identify as feminists, some include those who do not or have not identified as feminists yet. However, I have observed that these groups, which include feminists and non-feminists at the same time, are basically inspired either by a feminist collective intelligence or feminist individuals within the group. This is precisely what pushes those non-feminists into a feminist becoming. Family and kinship groups, colleague groups, some friend groups, some social media groups are included in this category. Some are built on a specific problem; some are simply set up as a communication group. But after a while, it has turned into a platform where they discuss women's issues that are also on the agenda of feminist politics, such as sexual harassment, femicide, violence, sexual experiences, and many other issues. I will provide several dialogues from my interviews that would represent the formation of such affinity groups. Below, you will see dialogues that pose a sample for family and kinship groups, colleague groups, friend groups, and social media groups separately. For example, my interviewee, Pınar's narrative exemplify family and kinship groups

> **Pınar**: …. For example, there is a group of cousins, and there is a group of female cousins. I have a sibling group and also a separate group with my sisters. Or we had a Facebook friend group at work. All of the men left the group after a while. We remained alone with the women. We continue to communicate from there. We poke each other when something happens, we use it as a communication network.
>
> **Bermal:** You said, "There's a group of cousins, and there's a group of female-only cousins" Why did you feel the need to form a group with only women? And I was wondering what is being talked about in that group?
>
> **Pınar:** Let me go over the sister group first, not the cousins. We are six siblings, as I previously stated. The need to shout complaints from my father and two elder brothers was the major cause for forming the group with our sisters. First and foremost, a WhatsApp group was for this reason and became an uncensored complaint area for us (Pınar,26, psychologist)

Pınar and her sisters come together against the patriarchal forms of oppression and inequality within the domestic space and create an autonomous space where they freely share their feelings and thoughts. Although not every single individual in these groups formed by women in the family defines themselves as a feminist, they take part in the struggle for liberation against male violence and develop. Let me elaborate on a case from the group of colleagues at work:

> **İlke:** I was interning at a law firm. We had a lawyer who described himself as a leftist. But he highly assumes the title of boss-lawyer. We formed a group with the women working there including lawyers, an assistant, a cook, and we continue to meet with them from time to time.
>
> **Bermal:** Were there any men where you did your internship?
>
> **İlke:** of course, there was
>
> **Bermal:** I understand that you formed a group, especially with women.
>
> **İlke:** Yes
>
> **Bermal**: Why did you need this?
>
> **İlke**: We were already quite helpful with each other when we has a problem with Mr.Mehmet. He was known for his aggressive rhetoric, particularly against women outside the Office, yet he never did it to us. He was more cautious around us. However, Mr. Mehmet's nasty speech outside the workplace behind the backs of the women worried us much. there was also this. We were always busy with the food-related issues in the Office and discussing why this was the case. Also, women were not dispatched to some foreclosures, for example, since we are thought to be attacked. This was aslo something we were always discussing. (İlke, lawyer, 30)

An example of university friend groups:

> **Deniz**: I have a group with my high school girl friends. I have also a group with my college girlfriends. For example, we have a group called "olduracağız (we will have it done)", there were also men in that group, but then we opened another group called "Olduracağız Kadınları". I noticed that there is always separation from men like this, I noticed it.
>
> **Bermal**: What do you think is causing this separation?
>
> **Deniz:** Probably to be able to speak more freely and comfortably. For example, sexuality is something that is taboo in our society, even going to the gynecologist is such a thing, my father does not know for example. I learned from my friends in the group that I should go to the gynecologist. And we start go together. It has turned into a kind of event for us.
>
> **Bermal**: Going to the gynecologist as a group of friends?
>
> **Deniz**: After the gynecologist's examination is completed, we enjoy dinner or lunch. This is something that should happen because women rarely discuss these issues. And, for example, I have engineering pals with whom I discuss their mobbing issues, we get angry with guys,

> and we get angry at the world order. But we always discuss these issues... Then I tell my mother about it. From now on, my mother is also fed up with men. (22, master student)

Another example of women leaving relatively larger groups and forming their own subgroups is seen in neighborhood solidarity networks.

> **Pınar:** I live in Kurtuluş and a women's solidarity network has been created here. This is how it first appeared: There is already a neighbor solidarity network here. It's a social media group where people sitting here ask each other all sorts of questions and seek help from each other. The women in this group formed a separate network to talk about the problems they experienced in the neighborhood. We have an emergency group, and we also have a WhatsApp group. In the group we share our experiences and even come together to strengthen ourselves. Many of them are not feminists, or I don't know, who are we to call a feminist, anyway, many of them do not define themselves as feminists.
>
> **Bermal:** Are you talking about your own experiences?
>
> **Pınar:** exactly, being a single woman, a single mother, or married and going through a lot of things. There are many women who live in various ways, and we are constantly in contact with women's experience. It works as a solidarity network and also as a social solidarity space.
>
> **Bermal:** How was the Kurtuluş Solidarity Network established?
>
> **Pınar:** It started during the pandemic period, I'm not sure it could be the beginning or the middle of the pandemic. Well, women started to share certain posts in the Kurtuluş neighborhood's solidarity network. For example, being followed on the road, or harassment of tradesmen. By the way, something like this happened before; there was an abusive man, he has a small market. And this event came out, witnesses etc. This was discussed in the group, and then, as the women of the neighborhood, we went over the issue, of course. When these kinds of incidents increase, things like harassment and stalking in the neighborhood, a woman from the neighbor network proposed to establish a separate group of women. (Pınar, 31, Search Engine Optimization expert)

There are also women's groups that set up their own small WhatsApp groups by separating from the crowded social media groups established to discuss and exchange information on a certain subject. Two of them are the mother group named *Nurturia* and *Hemşire Notları.* These groups are a kind of experience-sharing group where women ask their questions about growing a child share their motherhood concerns and many other child-centered issues. My interviewee, Ayşe (35), is a single mother with a 6-year-old baby. She describes the group she involved, *Hemşire Notları (Nurse Notes),* as follows:

> Actually, I can say that "Hemşire Notları" is like an organization of mine. My tribe, more precisely, it is a tribe and a tribe of women. I have other core groups that were born from that

> group. For example, a group called “Solo Anneler (Solo Mothers)” came out of it. Because in the process, many women separated from their husbands and divorced. For example, the reasons for our divorce, the attitudes of the men after the divorce, the situations we were left behind are so similar, ... We are making circles, now we are holding a “Solo Mothers” meeting. We decided to meet every three weeks. We have another 6-person women's group on WhatsApp, called “Derin Hemşireler (Deep Nurses)”, consisting of those moderators of that group. We, now, transitioned into a sort of eternal relationship together. We passed on to a kind of eternal relationship with them. They are all feminists. I'm very close, so if I don't communicate three days a week, I ask “Girls, is everyone okay?” It has turned into a place where I can easily call help.

In this group, which she sees as her organization, she has separate subgroups according to the degree of closeness. In these subgroups, they talk about the politics of the private sphere, and they are also involved in the practice of mutual aid and solidarity. They experience a form of attachment in which they experience a sense of care, compassion, and trust that reinforces the sense of belonging (Chatzidakis et al. 2020; Yuval-Davis 2016). Similarly, Gülcan (50) from the *Nurturia* group narrates:

> I joined a mother-child website called *Nurturia* after my son was born. Initially, we discussed sleep issues, additional food, kindergarten, and other topics pertaining to children. when our children grew up and we returned to ourselves, we began chatting about everything in our lives, including women's difficulties, marriage, how we may avoid gender roles while raising children, love, sexuality, and even the country's political agenda, and it has been going on for years. It's also a fantastic women's solidarity group. There are also a lot of feminist women in it. We also have friendships and friendships that we carry over from the virtual world to the real world. Additionally, there were also WhatsApp groups that came out of here. I'd say the woman friends I made there now make up the majority of my life. Not only do we discuss about parenting, but we also talk about our femininity, society's idea of beauty, health fetishism, kinds of violence, harassment, and sexuality. We have a mother-child holiday every year in our group. We schedule introspective evenings at least a couple times over the holidays. We discuss childhood abuses, our lover's psychological aggression, workplace mobbing, ex-husbands' immaturity, the female body, sexuality, and sexual orientations, among other topics. (Gülcan, journalist, 50)

Nurturia is a very crowded platform in Turkey consisting of a predominantly educated, middle-class working mother and very few fathers belonging to the same class and cultural capital. Mothers on these platforms adopt a more liberal and egalitarian model following new parenting styles based on contemporary pedagogical approaches. While *Nurturia* was initially advancing through a forum-type communication network that required connecting over a computer to be a follower, autonomous small WhatsApp groups began to be formed within *Nurturia* with the spread of online instant messaging

after 2013-2014. After a while, some of them wrote books, some of them became an influencer on social media and YouTube. The content they produced relies on advocating libertarian parenting model and critiques of dedicated motherhood who devotes her life to the child and underlines the importance of an autonomous womanhood experience that is not stuck in the identity of motherhood. They also created a space where the experience of single mothers has also been discussed as a model of parenting. Thus, it contributed to a transformation in understanding the ethos of motherhood. How do women create such large groups (Hemşire Notları ve Nurturia) simultaneously and begin to discuss issues in a way to adopt a feminist perspective? I think that the answer should be traced within large-scale socio-historical and political-economic processes such as the rise of cognitive labor with increasing universitization and its increasing role in women's employment as I have discussed previously, the acceleration of urbanization and women's increasing involvement in urban life, the increasing working hours, and impoverishment in neoliberal capitalism, the disappearance of extended family models in which women can share the responsibility of childcare, the rapid increase in women's access to information with digitalization and a series of awareness brought along with it. Apart from all these macro processes, I think that this transformation should be sought in the semiotic plane, encounters, and political memory produced by the feminist movement. All these developments lead to the formation of a women's common experience that traverses all identities, albeit in different degrees and forms.

The interaction that begins with sharing experiences contributes not only to the rise of friendship among women but also to the production of counter-subjectivity in the feminist direction. These groups do not aim to address certain goals, nor do they aim to be part of larger active feminist groups that have a specific political agenda in the first place. As some, if not all, feminist members of the group are also involved in wider

political networks, they constantly carry knowledge and experience from the larger political platforms to these small groups. This flow contributes to the non-feminist member in the group to interpret current political developments and everyday experiences from a feminist perspective. This is overly evident in Ayşe's narrative. Ayşe is a member of *Hemşire Notları*, and feminist existence in the group affect the groups' dynamics as follows:

> I mean, I cannot call the group a feminist, but the attitudes and behaviors that shape the group and knead the dough were created by feminist women. the group was founded in February 2015. Our children were very young before, So, we used to keep saying "it vomited like this.", "The color of his poop is this and so on. But soon we started meeting. We were meeting in Moda Park, in Fenerbahce Park and so on. One day, political and feminist side of me poked me and I asked "Doesn't anyone have a sexual life, why aren't we talked about this? Or why don't we talk about negative feelings towards our children?". Unless we discuss these difficulties, we may believe that I'm the only one who has a bad sex life with his wife, I am the only one who might get fed up with her child, I'm the only one who feels guilty about it, only my wife treats me badly…It's not like that, you're not alone. The group's dynamic had changed dramatically, and it had a significant impact on the relationships there. We formed a community that allowed people to publicly state, "I despise my child."

Apart from these groups of which only some of their members are feminists, another category consists of those affinity groups whose entire members define themselves as a feminist. *Kampüs Cadıları* (Campus Witches) exemplifies this category. Its members are quite heterogeneous, consisting of those from diverse classes, cultural and political settings, except that they belong to the same age range. The common cause that holds them together is the struggle against sexual crimes in universities. However, their political practices move beyond campuses. Through their WhatsApp group, they organize specific feminist events workshops on numerous feminist issues mobilize to participate in key feminist marches, protests, and hashtag campaigns. They also ask for a non-sexist gynecologist for their routine heath control or unexpected health issues such as genital warts or ask for a feminist lawyer to consult when they have been sexually assaulted or having trouble with other legal issues. They also seek advice on employment and internship opportunities in addition to congratulating and sharing personal or collective

political happiness, gains, and achievements. Their language of interaction is sometimes quite serious while sometimes pervaded by irony, sarcasm, humor, and mockery towards masculine codes, attitudes, and language. Their language towards each other is quite loving and trusting, pervaded mostly by heart eye emoji, purple heart emoji, grinning face, clapping hands, sparkling heart, hugging face, kissing face, rainbow. They all together create an affective environment that reinforces young women's belonging to the group and provides them with the "strength and the motivation not to give up," as an interviewee from Treré's (2020) study states. This environment has another role beyond reinforcing internal group solidarity and belonging.

Another feminist affinity groups are the ones whose members largely know each other from various feminist platforms or organizations they were once took part in Amargi, SFK, Mor Çatı, and Filmmor. Although every single member of the group define herself as feminist, they prefer not to call themselves as an organization, nor do they have a specific political agenda. Discussion topics mostly revolve around feminist issues, but wider political and personal issues also become the subject of their discussions. Their interaction relies not only on instant messaging but also on face-to-face meetings. There are also feminist affinity groups emerged out of these platforms such as Eşik (Eşitlik için Kadın Platformu, Women's Platform for Equality), İstanbul Convention Platform, Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü. These platforms were established to prevent the withdrawal of women's vested rights, and they pose the characteristics of single issue-based platforms. They are also quite heterogeneous regarding political stance, age, class positions. They include both feminists and those who prefer not to define themselves as a feminist. Some feminists tend to create subgroups either to continue the friendship they developed while pursuing politics in these large platforms or to be more organized among themselves to influence the platform's dynamics in a feminist way or both.

Similar to experiences in these southern countries, the economic and political instability that has worsened over the past decade cause an increase in care and solidarity practices among women in Turkey. I observed that feminist WhatsApp groups function as a platform where women seek ways of generating economic capabilities. They share the emotional burden of high inflation and develop strategies to deal with it. They also have turned into a platform where women share and discuss news, especially after the change in the "media ecosystem" (Valenzuela et al. 2021, p.7) and opposing people to become more critical and distrustful against mainstream media over the last decades in Turkey. Women disseminate mass media and social media coverage of events in their WhatsApp groups to initiate a political discussion on that relevant content, express their anger, hope, happiness and discuss what can be done for that specific case, circulate signature campaigns, or they motivate each other to take part in an already started organization. The constant interaction among women and accompanying affections in WhatsApp groups not only strengthens intergroup reciprocal ties of solidarity. It also functions as submerge network or backstage behind large-scale online and offline protests and campaigns (Treré 2020). Hence every single affinity group operates as a submerged network of what I call the contemporary feminist movement. The constant state of interaction that continues as an undercurrent on WhatsApp also allows feminist politics to spread across everyday life and prevent it from being compressed in particular temporalities and spatialities. Until recently, the feminist movement has been associated with certain actors and organizations, but today these multiple nexuses or local units detached from the centers and overflowed into the social life constitute the feminist movement. This is what I called the deterritorialization of the contemporary feminist movement throughout the thesis. As a final note, while the constellation of these nexuses forms the contemporary feminist movement, the feminist movement is constantly

influencing these nexuses through some kind of feedback. Thus, a sort of feminist ecosystem is formed that would enable the shared values and meaning system, affections, and experiences to be revealed. This ecosystem functions as an “apparatus of capturing” that attract women like a magnet and transform them into actors of feminist-counter subjectivities

All groups of different sizes form a network. This networking, which is connected to each other in a rhizomatic way, works like a snatching device that attracts women who have entered a certain female sociality and who have been involved in an educational process where they can reach a certain cultural level and transforms them into actors of feminist counter subjectivity. None of these groups that make up the networking functions as a stand-alone organization/organization or subjectivation center. A subjectless feminist process is at work, which exists independently of each small group and its members. By entering the domain of this network, it turns into a meaningless discussion at what stage to call a woman a feminist who has entered a process of counter subjectivation without a pre-defined definition or a self-established feminist. Here, the definition of feminism is as much about the self-declaration of that person as it is about the inherent tendency of the multitude of which this whole subjectless process is a part. The process itself works as a feminist practice, and this subjectless feminist process produces the effect that enables these women to go through a Self-transformation process and then become a subject, leading to the inclusion of women who enter these small circles into larger Networks.

6.3 Twitter: "I'm a Twitter feminist, any objections?"

Apart from being a socializing space and communication tool, Twitter is also a site of power struggle, where converging and diverging ideas encounter and act on each other in a way to manipulate, dominate, promote and/or encourage each other (García et al. 2014; Vicari 2013). Compared to the other social media platforms, Twitter is more "open" in the sense that users can follow others without sending a friendship request (García et al. 2014; Vicari 2013). This provides users with more comfort zones and opportunities for having access to diverse accounts. While Facebook and Instagram are mostly used for visual content, Twitter relies more on text-based content and provides more interaction with government officials and politicians as well as with ordinary people (García et al. 2014; Vicari 2013). The most widespread and familiar form of the collective feminist action repertoire on Twitter is hashtag campaigns such that political practices enacted through hashtags have begun to be called hashtag feminism and "hashtivism" (Larrondo Ureta et al., 2021).

Hashtag feminism brings women together online and creates a virtual space of "digital sisterhoods" (Fotopoulou, 2016) where women develop a sense of connectedness, empowerment, build collective consciousness, and articulate protest in shared vocabularies, affects, codes, and meanings (Dixon 2014; Khoja-Moolji 2015; Chen et al. 2018; Eagle 2015; Loza 2016; Carstensen 2013; Barker-Plummer & Barker-Plummer 2017; Berridge and Portwood-Stacer 2015; Xiong et al., 2019). Twitter hashtags, in this sense, create a "virtual feminist community,", especially for those who have difficulty taking part in physical spaces (Chen et al. 2018, p. 200). *#YesAllWomen* (Thrift 2014; Jackson et al. 2018; BarkerPlummer & Barker-Plummer, 2017; Rodino-Colocino, 2014), *#MeToo* (Mendes et al. 2018; Rodino-Colocino 2018; Jackson et al. 2018),

#BeenRapedNeverReported (Mendes et al. 2018) are only a few of among many other campaigns in the USA. Global South has also witnessed similar campaigns that address the legalization of abortion and violence against women since 2012. #NiUnaMenos (Not one woman less) was launched first in Argentina to address femicides and then resonated in other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Uruguay. Just like in the world, hashtag feminism in Turkey emerged around the themes of femicide, anti-abortion law, and physical and sexual violence against women.

6.3.1 Feminist Hashtivism in Turkey

In 2012, Prime Minister Erdogan's statement that they would introduce new restrictions on abortion caused serious objections and protests from women's organizations and feminists. This statement is followed by a hashtag campaign called #*BenimBedeninBenimKararım* (*My Body, My Choice*) (Çatlak Zemin 2021; Eslen-Ziya 2013, p.866). [194] The campaign was the first hashtag campaign organized by Bianet, a leftwing online news portal – not directly by women's and feminist organizations. Although the campaign received support from women with a Twitter account in 2012, it remained a rather narrow attempt compared to the following campaigns since Twitter was not a widely used medium at the time.[195]

The first and the most prominent hashtag campaigns, in which feminist and women organizations were also actively engaged in an organized way, was #DirenKahkaha (resist laughter), #BacaklariniTopla (Roll Up Your Legs),

[194] The protests also included an online petition, building a website called *abortion Cannot be Banned*, in addition to meetings in Taksim where women organized a skype call with women organizations from different cities of Turkey to address the rising common opposition nationwide. (Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı 2012; Çatlak Zemin 2021; Eslen-Ziya 2013, p. 866).

[195] In the short interview we made on WhatsApp, Filiz Karakuş stated that men were also included in the campaign with their posts such as "her body, her decision" and that it was not considered as a campaign of the feminist movement since it did not receive enough support from leftist feminists. She also reminded me that most feminists did not have a Twitter account yet in 2012 and that the real boom started after Gezi.

#YerimiİsgalEtme (Don't Occupy My Place), #SenDeAnlat, #HandeKadereSesVer (Give Voice to Hande Kader), #TecavüzMeşrulaştırılamaz (Rape Cannot Be Justified), #ŞuleÇetİçinAdalet (Justice for Şule Çet), #KadınlarBirlikteGüçlü (Women are Strong Together), #SusmaBitsin (Don't Be Silent So That It Ends), #İstanbulSözleşmesiYaşatır (Istanbul Convention Saves lives) (Candemir, 2020, 2021; Akyel 2014). #DirenKahkaha (resist laughter) campaign, which was inspired by the #DirenGezi campaign and many others starting with the tag #Diren (Resist), was launched against Bülent Arınç's statement "Women shouldn't laugh aloud in public"[196] in 2014 (Akyel 2014; Kaya 2018; Candemir; 2020; ÇatlakZemin 2019[197]). Many women, enough to make it a trending topic on Twitter, shared the photos they took while laughing in public with the hashtags #kahkah, #direnkahkaha, and #direnkadin (Akyel 2014; ÇatlakZemin 2019).[198] The # BacaklariniTopla (Roll Up Your Legs), and #YerimiIsgalEtme (Don't Occupy My Place) hashtag campaigns protested men's sitting style on public transport with their legs wide enough to touch the legs of the women sitting next to them and occupy the latter's rightful place (Aktaş 2017).

In 2015, Özgecan Aslan, a young university student in Mersin, was killed while resisting attempted rape, similar to Perez's murder case, which sparked the #NiUnaMenos campaign in Argentina.[199] After Özgecan's murder, women gathered around the #sendeanlat (#youtoo) label, where they shared their sexual harassment stories to outcry their rage against male's sexual violence, misogyny, and femicide (Candemir 2021; Dede DedeÖzdemir 2015; Alikılıç and Baş 2019). This was followed by *the campaign*

[196] https://www.cnnturk.com/haber/turkiye/bulent-arinc-kadin-herkesin-icinde-kahkaha-atmayacak
[197] https://catlakzemin.com/2010-2020-feminist-hashtaglerle-dijital-aktivizm/
[198] This campaign was supported not only by women from Turkey but also by women from various parts of the world with the tags #ResistLaughter and #ResistWoman. For example, Emma Watson supported the campaign with the tag #ResistLaughter attaching her photo taken while laughing. (See, Akyel 2014, Kaya 2018, Çatlak Zemin,2019)
[199] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-37731501

#HandeKadereSesVer (give voice to Hande Kader, a trans woman who was raped and set on fire in 2016)[200], *#ŞuleÇetİçinAdalet* (justice for Şule Çet, a 23-year-old student who was thrown out of the 20th floor of a building after she had been raped in 2018), *#SusmaBitsin* (a campaign initiated by women from the movie sector, TV, and theater to decipher the harassment, violence and mobbing in the sector in 2020, after the #MeToo movement across the globe). #İstanbulSözleşmesiYaşatır campaign (2021) was organized against withdrawal of Turkey from İstanbul Convention, which aims at preventing violence against women. These are only a few among many others which become trending topics on Twitter in Turkey. What was the background that made such massive hashtag campaigns possible?

Digital feminism in the literature points to a new feminist wave rising with the spread of social media. In other words, as can be seen from the literature review above, there is a digital feminism perspective limited directly to social media and hashtag campaigns. However, the change in the organizational structure of feminism through digital networks goes back to the late 90s and 2000s when social media wasn't born yet. The use of the internet on personal computers at the end of the 90s enabled email groups to become an effective tool for political groups where activists could pursue their internal discussions and communications and coordinate meetings and protests.[201] It rapidly entered the political life of feminist organizations in the early 2000s through web pages, individual blogs, instant messaging software, and online discussion forums as well as email groups. However, these channels were only available for those who have a reference from an "insider." Hence, they were not groups with a high number of members; instead, they were micro assemblages limited to feminists' narrow environment.

[200] https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/rossalynwarren/a-transgender-woman-was-raped-and-set-on-fire-and-people-are

[201] Internet Service Provider companies that provide internet service to users in Turkey emerged in 1996. (See,

Therefore, the extent of digitalization was not yet developed enough to establish a large counter public.

With the advent of social media, the scope and speed have changed radically. Although the official foundation dates of Facebook and Twitter are 2004 and 2006, respectively, Facebook became widespread in 2007 and 2008, while Twitter's prevalence was delayed until the Gezi Resistance in 2013.[202] What enabled these two social media platforms to grow rapidly was the boom in the Turkish smartphone market in the early 2010s (Yazıcıoğlu and Irak. 2012, p.31-32). The exponential increase in the use of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter on smartphones made the interaction between social media and social movements permanent in Turkey in the early 2010s. Besides providing fast communication and decision-making opportunities, Smart GSM mobile phones enabled the development of citizen journalism with their live video streaming opportunity. This has resulted in a change in the entire communication structure.

From the 1980s to the early 2000s, the feminist movement was formed around face-to-face relationship groups, journals, feminist organizations, NGOs, and women's studies in the academic field. Feminism, a small movement among feminists in the non-digitalized environment of the pre-2000s, expanded to the grassroots in the internet age of the post-2000s. Hence, it can be argued that digital technologies constitute a key factor that gives impetus to the post-2000 feminist movement in Turkey. However, the first and the second decade of the 2000s differ significantly from each other. The internet use in the first decade of the 2000s had relatively less impact on the organization of the movement compared to the second decade, when the internet-based communication led to a great leap forward in the rapid development of organizational reflexes and the production of network-based political subjectivities with the widespread use of the

[202] Although not as widespread as in the period of the Gezi Resistance, Twitter was partially widespread in 2011 when the Turkish software option was first available.

internet by smartphones (İnceoğlu & Çoban, 2015; Castells, 2015). I would say that today's feminists are, above all, part of a networked political space regardless of their age, class, and location. This political space facilitates constant interaction (including following, sharing, commenting, liking, and diverse affections through emoji) for feminist digital nomads. This means, for feminist politics, the erosion of implicit hierarchies that have historically been the subject of tension or conflict within feminist organizations in Turkey.

6.4 Empirical findings from the field

Twitter appears not only as a communication tool in the use of young digital natives, but it is also a production site of feminist subjectivity and enacting feminist politics. I consider Twitter one of the founding elements of the feminist ecology of interaction which I discussed in the previous chapter. In my field research, the most recurring themes regarding young women's use of social media in general and Twitter, in particular, were as follows.

Twitter as;

1. A space of feminist becoming: the first encounter and following interactions
2. A space of the changing form of consciousness-raising practice
3. A space of enforcement mechanism for all forms of violence against women
4. A space of live information flow before, during, and after a collective action
5. A space where women are empowered through the erosion of hierarchies
6. A techno-sceptic account on Twitter: "social media is very important But…"

6.4.1 A space of feminist becoming: the first encounter and following interactions

In Turkey, young women have begun to face their first encounters with gender-egalitarian discourses and ideas through their interactions on social media, particularly Twitter, before encountering them on university campuses.[203] Although my field research did not include high school students, seven women out of 12 women between the age of 17-and 25 stated that they encountered feminist thoughts in high school through social media. Although this number holds a very narrow share out of the total sample, it would still not be wrong to assume that feminism will expand more towards high school students over time. Hence, feminism is not only expanding economically to the lower classes, as I discussed in the first chapter, but it is also expanding more towards the younger generations. One of my 44-year-old interviewees, who had met feminism only after her 30s, regretted that she was not a feminist at an earlier age. However, a first-generation feminist with whom she co-existed in the SFK had said to her, "One cannot become a feminist without realizing that they are a woman; you could not be a feminist at the age of 19 anyway". She told how she felt relieved after this sentence. Today, this situation is changing radically. Young women now become feminists in high school, well before they are 19. The narratives of the three university students below demonstrate the importance of Twitter for young women in enabling them to meet and interact with feminist activists, learn about feminism, and follow intra-feminist differentiations and current debates.[204] In this respect, three different quotes below exemplify how Twitter turns into a kind of "school" for young digital nomads in contemporary Turkey.

> For example, following my initial encounter with feminism in high school, I never picked up a feminist book and read it. Because the tweets I was reading already revealed to me different

[203] While claiming this, I leave out the cases of feminist or gender-egalitarian parents as their children were born into a gender-egalitarian environment. These segments occupy a tiny place in the total population, but it would not be wrong to speculate that they will take up a more considerable place over time.

[204] Ancak bu durum ilk karşılaşmalar için geçerli olduğu kadar, feminizmi benimsemiş, kadın hareketine dair canlı tartışmaları takip eden ve öğrenmeye ve araştırmaya devam eden daha ileri yaş kadınlar için de geçerli: **Duygu***: Takip ettiğin insanlar gerçekten çok şey hani hayırlı insanlar benim açımdan birçoğu. onların önerdiğini kitapları, makalleri ciddiye alıyorum, yazdıklarını ciddiye alıyorum. Bir nevi aslında hayvan gibi bir kütüphaneye girmişim gibi hissediyorum. (Duygu, 51 Yaş)*

> points of view. And I was debating various points of view, trying to figure out which one was best for me. Later on, I became interested in feminist literature. Because just following Twitter for three or four years helped me think about it, to comprehend what was going on and how others were thinking. My goal in using Twitter has always been to follow and participate in feminism. Because I've been learning about femicides from Twitter rather than news sites since I started using it in high school. Or when a harassment event occurred, the information was shared on Twitter. (Ceylin, 22)

Another young interviewee explains the importance of Twitter for herself as follows:

> Twitter opened my eyes, I started to follow many activists from there, I started to read their discussions. I would miss a lot if I don't followed Twitter even for a single day to keep up with the feminist field... (23 years-old)

Another young interviewee;

> I had no idea what gaslighting was until I saw it on Twitter, then I read a few articles on it, and realized I was in the middle of a study on violence against women... podcasts are shared; you listen to them, books articles are shared, and you read them, and so on. they had a huge impact. (22)

Twitter also provides women with an opportunity where they can follow actual feminist discussions:

> Well, I'm an active social media follower. For me, Twitter serves as a platform for following feminist debates and current politics. And it's a place where I spend maybe 2 hours a day. I can't say this for other social media apps, but I can say it for Twitter. Therefore, it is a place where I actively use, follow, and see different views. For example, I can actively follow the recent terf-trans discussions on Twitter (Elif, 29)

One negative image that comes to mind regarding socializing on social media usually proceeds as follows: young people embedded in their individuality interact through fictional personas in a cyber environment. However, except for one of my young interviewees who said that Twitter is a very "toxic place," all of my interviewees between the ages of 17 and 25 stated that their Twitter interactions remain not limited to virtual space but are carried over to face-to-face relationships. This shows that Twitter feminism functions as a social hub where like-minded digital nomads can find each other on shared codes, such as language, symbols, terminology, and build permanent relations.

> I actually meet a lot of people on Twitter. Sometimes I even meet people who knows someone I know via only Twitter. In other words, Twitter opens many doors for interaction (…)For example, there are people that I have never met at school although I am at the same school,

> but I've started seeing after meeting them on Twitter. Some of these people will stay in my life permanently because I can foresee who a person is on Twitter before meeting them face-to-face. I look at a person's tweets, what she retweets, I see what she supports, I can somehow figure out what kind of a person she is. Then, when I meet a person, it becomes much easier to find common stuff to talk about. Usually, we first send mentions to each other on Twitter, send direct messages, and then, one day we find ourselves planning for going to the night walk together – we say "let's go to night walk together on November 25" or something.

While Beyza says that there are some cases where she first met people on Twitter before she met them at school, we see that the interactive potential of the online space prioritizes the offline one for her (Ureta et al. 2021). We see that what people share, what they retweet, and what they like offers significant insights into their political codes, which subsequently may spark the friendship close enough to join the protests together. Being a part of the same march or protest and breathing the same atmosphere together further strengthens the affective bond. Therefore, there is always a flow of desire from Twitter to the street and from the street to Twitter. Furthermore, the shared feminist codes unite digital nomads on Twitter, and they fight against patriarchy by reporting or blocking a sexist or abusive person, commenting on a sexist post cooperatively, rushing to support their "digital sisters" who are thought to remain alone and vulnerable in a discussion, inviting each other to a #challengeAccepted campaign, which together turns them into digital warriors against patriarchy. Besides participating in marches and protests together, I observed that being involved in such twitter practices made them feel like part of the same organization.[205]

Twitter, which offers a much wider variety of encounters than the face-to-face encounters of daily life, enables young women to engage in interactions that go far beyond their cultural and local experiences and imaginations. This explains why conservatives view Twitter as a "dangerous" place. Feminism, which is in constant conflict with the

[205] What is more, what binds them together is not merely their political ambitions, but they may also build lasting friendships. Thus, the social networks established on Twitter contribute to feminist interaction networks that expand in circles, where the experiences of friendship and activism are intertwined.

conventional morals and cultural values in society, offers women myriad of encounters that would provide them with lines of flight from conservative and oppressive settings. When I asked Betül (23) from a highly religious family, how she became a feminist, she replied:

> I think I experienced that break with the effect of social media. I always went to schools where religious people and conservative people were in the majority, I grew up in those regions. If I had only followed the television channels and newspapers that my family followed, I probably wouldn't have had such a chance... There is another world out there and it somehow attracts you.

Her encounter on social media also spreads to her daily life in the form of a wave. She says that:

> I didn't live the way my parents expected me to. I did the first of everything in our home and I witnessed the punishment from my family. they got offended with me, didn't talk to me etc. But when my brothers started acting like me, they were more prepared for it… and since I left the house, my siblings have always come and stayed with me, we used to go out together, I made them have their first drink, which is normally a big sin in our family. They smoked their first cigarette with me. I studied at Boğaziçi, but I also attempted to make them experience it. Its consequences were unavoidable. They both went to Istanbul University, both in good departments. There was, of course, an interaction. They fell in love with feminist women.

Twitter also offers a space for these women to express themselves as they are. Another interviewee, Gizem (27) also comes from a Sunni-İslam tradition. Her first encounters with feminism did not happen via Twitter. She instead began to identify herself as a feminist when she met Islamic feminist women in offline settings. However, Twitter has become a vital medium for Gizem, as the one who cannot display her feminist identity in her daily environment. She says that:

> For example, my family does not know that I am a feminist. my relatives don't know either. I don't share my feminist views on Instagram or something. But I'm not like that on Twitter. I mean, the audience I follow on Twitter is more like my intellectual audience. I mean, my teachers, my students, with whom I met on a more intellectual scale like publishers, writers, etc., That's why expressing myself as a feminist on Twitter makes me feel better. At least I can express myself there. At the very least, I can say “that's me.” I say this to myself and to my followers. “guys, Know who I am,!”

6.4.2 A Space of the Changing form of Consciousness-raising Practice

My field research also reveals that Twitter as a virtual space turns into a site of consciousness-raising practice. Consciousness-raising emerged as a method, a model of organization, and ultimately an alternative politics for women who gathered around the motto of "the personal is political," which was put forward by second-wave feminism. Gathering around small groups of 5-10 people, women open up their experiences to one another. In this way, they realize how their personal experiences, which they have once thought of as personal "failings," are instead their shared experiences caused by patriarchal oppression. These trust-based meetings have always been "sites where they uncovered and openly revealed the depths of their intimate wounds (Hooks, 2000, p. 8) and enhanced their sense of togetherness. In traditional feminist networks consciousness-raising meetings are often held in an intimate space which has often been a group member's home, where they could feel safer and reinforce their sense of intimacy and trust instead of in public spaces (ibid). But with Twitter this seems to be taking new forms:

> You know when people share their experiences, you say, "Oh yes, it wasn't just me experiencing such things". And you see similar things about yourself from what people tell on Twitter. I see women experince dating violence like me, I see women have been subjected to violence by their families like me. So much personal things are shared. For example, there is a new trend right now, people are sharing breast photos, their butts, their bodies. And it sounds so amazing that I probably can't. But it is very impressive that people can make things so public that are confined to such a private space. For example, I told my own slut shaming story on Twitter. My father was always telling me, "You're a bitch like your mother!" and also threatening me to take out of school. I told all of this on Twitter. Being able to express it so clearly, announce it so loudly, and then engage with people made me feel really strong.

Begüm's narrative shows how Twitter has turned into a site of consciousness-raising space and is replacing this traditional feminist form. By making her pain and wound caused by her father's violence visible, Begüm not only embarks on the path of healing but also declares that this wound is not her fault and, thus, she is not the one who should be ashamed and suffer in silence. In this way, she gains a sense of empowerment. Begüm's

attitude, for sure, is part of the global feminist trend embodied in the *#metoo* movement and #SenDeAnlat campaign in Turkey.

Some authors define this aspect of Twitter as an "intimate public" inspired by Loran Lauren Berlant's (2011) conceptualization (See Khoja-Moolji 2015; Chen et al. 2018, p. 200). Intimate public hold elements of public and private space at the same time. It refers to how strangers can build communities through affective bonds (ibid). The affective intensities that we are accustomed to experiencing in the private sphere stretch into the public one and ultimately result in the transformation of what we understand from public and private. On the other hand, removing intimate experiences into the digital settings bears some disadvantages as well. Transferring face-to-face consciousness-raising practice to digital settings might lead women to be more fragile before the heterogeneous and confused audience (Gleeson & Turner, 2019). Women might be exposed to online insults, stigma, and victim-blaming, which make them more vulnerable (Mendes et al., 2019).

6.4.3 A Space of Enforcement Mechanism for All Forms of Violence Against Women

Femicides have fallen into the agenda of feminists more since the last ten years when there is a high incidence of women's murder cases.[206] This inevitably resonates with hashtag campaigns on social media. In 2014, a hashtag campaign appeared on social media with the tag *#KadınKatliamıVar* (There is a massacre of women) (Altınay, 2014).

[206] After 2010, much research was carried out, and reports were published on femicides in Turkey. For example, in 2010, Istanbul Feminist Collective launched a campaign called "Kadın Cinayetlerine İsyandayız (We are in revolt against femicide) (See https://catlakzemin.com/11-kasim-2010/). Again in 2010, the platform called Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız (We Will Stop Femicide) was established (https://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/). Similarly, Bianet has been keeping a tally of male violence since 2010 (See https://bianet.org/kadin/bianet/133354-bianet-siddet-taciz-tecavuz-cetelesi-tutuyor). In 2014, the Kadın Cinayetlerine Karşı Acil Önel Grubu (Emergency Action Group Against Femicide) was established in 2014 (http://www.sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/kampanyalar/parcas-olduklar-m-z/kadin-cinayetlerine-karsi-acil-onlem-grubu/). The site called Kadıncinayetleri.org has been conducting a study called the mapping of femicides since 2015.

This was followed by the campaigns after the murder of Özgecan Aslan, Şule Çet, Hande Kader, Pınar Gültekin, Gülistan Doku, all of which addressed different aspects of these femicides, not confining them into specific single cases. They aimed to disclose the patriarchal character of the judiciary system, create awareness across society, and urge related institutions to take action against femicides in Turkey. They also emphasized the a) systematic character of these murders/femicides against the discourse of "exception," b) the fact that this can happen to any woman regardless of their class, age, race, and sexual orientation, and identity; c) the need for circulating direct expressions that emphasize the perpetrators' agency (e.g. by clearly indicating that "women are killed by men" instead of using indirect expressions that make the subject invisible such as "women are killed"); d) the urgent need for a solution to the issue by showing that they can no longer tolerate the murder of one more woman. All of this not only allowed the issue to gain public visibility and to be considered a political issue rather than a judicial one, but also urged, in some cases, the police and forensic units to fulfill their responsibilities.

The question of femicides has also been a prominent theme in the narrative of my research participants. When I tried to understand the role of social media in young' women's political subjectivation, increasing distrust towards state institutions that are supposed to take precautions against the increasing femicides has appeared as a prominent theme.[207] This was overtly articulated by Beyza (23), saying that "We *are at a time when our trust in the Turkish legal system has been shaken somewhat*." The degree of distrust crystallizes in the three different quotations listed below.

> We provide justice on Twitter. Unbelievable! What a country we have become, the more we tweet, the more murderers or abusers we get arrested. Of course, I wish the courts were fair and we didn't always fight for this. But unfortunately, we are not such a country. Without these uprisings on Twitter, perhaps we will not be able to arrest many murderers. We are at that point now. (Gözde, 35-year-old, married, human resources consultant, she was a member

[207] More than half of my interviewees referred to femicides at least once.

of the socialist organization Emekçi Hareket Partisi (Laborer Movement Party) but now continues her political life as an independent feminist.)

Thanks to Twitter, Şule Çet case was taken seriously. The authorities were forced to investigate this matter after receiving a lot of rage. These folks, in the case of a rape or a missing woman, slam the cops on the head to get them to do their duty. (Deniz, 26-year-old, graduated from Marmara University, radio, television and cinema, looking for an internship program)

For example, we learned that if a woman is murdered or raped, the solution is social media. Especially in the last two years, we know that if it is announced on social media, the murderer or rapist will be punished, depending on what is heard on social media. (Filiz, 29-year-old, teacher)

The transformation of Twitter into a medium that compensates for the lack of satisfactory institutional responses against femicides leads some women to by-pass appealing police and resort instead to Twitter as an initial step. For example, Begüm, a 27-year-old graduate student, says that:

For example, instead of going to the police, I write on Twitter, in case something happens to me. absolutely. So, what will the police do? If I tell the police that I was raped, they say to me, "You went to his house, you have your consent." The 14-year-old girl is raped, and they said, "She may have given her consent." Why wouldn't they tell me the same. It is thought that I may have taken alcohol that day, or something else. And I can't justify myself in the eyes of male cops. That's why I go and write to Twitter if something happens to me. For example, I was harassed once; As the car passed me, I stopped and had a fight at work. The man screamed at me saying that "Then you say why are women being killed?" I posted this on Twitter. Then people said, "Oh, something like this happened to me too, don't bother!" I have had this way of interacting with people. I was pretty calm after that. You know, it's like you're addressing a community that will understand your problem, not as if you're having trouble with someone, you know it transforms into an environment that will ease your worries and make you feel more secure.

Beyond being a channel for seeking justice, Twitter also appeared as a space where women could outcry their rage against male violence and share their experiences. The one reason behind such an extreme rage is that young women identify themselves with the murdered ones and feel themselves constantly under threat. This results in shared anxiety and fear among my young participants such that one of my participants said that "it's probably coincidental that I'm alive today".

6.4.4 A Space of Live Information Flow Before, During, and After a Collective Action

I observed that social media, especially Twitter, has become the most crucial channel for calls to street action. While a call for a street protest is issued through institutional accounts of feminist groups and women's personal accounts on Twitter, most women heed the call on Twitter. The statement of Gülcan, 55 years old and experienced in the political action repertoire of the pre-internet era, "We used to prepare and distribute flyers, posters and stick them on the walls so that anyone who sees them can join our protest," clearly reveals the radical and irreversible change in the activist method. What should be emphasized here is that social media does not abolish previous methods. Plastering city walls with posters or the practices that Gülcan reminds of is not an abandoned form. However, these ways have remained marginal and symbolic while digital tools, including social media, WhatsApp groups, online video portals, and websites, have become increasingly established forms that are more effective, less labor and time-intensive, and costless. Insistence on the conventional methods might be seen as symbolic value and historical customs that activists cannot easily give up.

Social media has also become an intrinsic component of street activism in terms of having real-time communication opportunities. In the methodology chapter, I have detailed how even accessing the meeting place has turned into a struggle during the feminist night marches since 2019. However, feminists persistently carry out the march by developing strategies despite serious measures taken by the state to prevent the march. When women have difficulties in entering the meeting center due to police barriers, or when the police disperse the crowd with gas, women are notified via Twitter and WhatsApp about a new meeting place, and they share alternative paths via WhatsApp groups to reach the meeting place. Digital platforms provide serious room for maneuver and dynamism for women in the face of the arbitrary and oppressive practices of the state.

Ceylin, who seemed utterly fascinated by the opportunities Twitter provided for her throughout the interview, describes the Twitter's communication opportunity as follows:

> I'm aware that the march is organized by a group, but I'm know sure who they are. I know this because I follow them on Twitter. They explain the beginning of the march there, where to walk, and what to do if there is a problem. When one of our friends is detained, they contact us, and the lawyers are summoned from there. For example, they post "police don't let us to enter this street right now, or our new meeting place is here?" I always follow this information on twitter.

Another opportunity that social media provided for women is the instantaneous and wide-ranging circulation of news on violence against women and rising struggles that would not be available in mainstream media channels. Especially in the last ten years, when the AKP government consolidated control over mainstream news media, social media has turned into a serious source of accurate information and news for women in an environment where pro-feminist journalism has almost completely disappeared. It may even be stated that social media has become the opposition's mainstream media as is seen Nur's (22) statement "*I don't trust the accuracy of the news channels, I have a chance to see when something happens in someone's post on social media, and I can immediately involve in the event,"* The AKP government has several times attempted at imposing restrictions on social media over the past decade as well. But Nur's (22) words, these restrictions imposed by the state on social media so far have not worked completely.

In an atmosphere where the issue of violence against women is so widespread and is not featured in the mainstream media on the grounds that it is not newsworthy, Twitter is turning into a highly politicized medium for young women. The women's movement in Turkey has become highly politicized in this very context and achieved a capacity to turn all platforms into a field of struggle. In this respect, it differs from the examples of a number of European countries. In this respect, the women's movement and the feminist movement in Turkey pose a similarity to what Larrondo Ureta (et al. 2021) assert for the

women's movement in Spain. Larrondo Ureta (et al. 2021) shows how Spain feminism poses a different character from the English-speaking world. They argue that while the feminist movement in English speaking world is dominated by NGOs and lobbies that work in favor of women's rights, Spain is characterized by mass street action organized against a high incidence of violence against women and a hostile legal atmosphere (p. 9-10). In this respect women's movement in Spain is more subversive than its English-speaking counterparts, which mostly harbors specific campaigns, raising awareness, petitioning, and small-scale street protests (p. 10). Like the one in the Spain women's movement, we have been witnessing similar experiences in Argentina, Chile, and Poland. Turkey poses similarities to the experiences of Spain in terms of feminist politics where it harbors similar subversive protest and demonstration. In this respect, it would not be wrong to think that Twitter poses a much more useful tool in countries such as Turkey, where femicide and other forms of violence against women frequently occupy the agenda of the women's movement. In such an environment, Twitter becomes a highly politicized space for women such that the state has arrested many women based on their posts on Twitter. This aspect of Twitter is clearly seen in the narrative of my 23-year-old university student interviewee:

> I don't remember ever being scared when I was in high school tweeting. But now, when I write something, I think twice. Because, again, the woman I followed on Tweeter was imprisoned for 14 months because of her tweets. She is a person who was imprisoned for the things she wrote, and this woman is the same age as me and an educated person like me. so, she's no different from me, it could be me too. this creates a fear. But for example, when I see a widely shared hashtag such as # GülistanDokuNerede (Where is Gülistan Doku) I do not feel any fear when I see that everyone is using it. I say, “Ok, we're together and we'll never walk alone.” This sensation, I believe, aids people who wish to join the feminist movement and make the feel the sense of collectivity

6.4.5 A Space Where Women Are Empowered Through the Erosion of Hierarchies

Social media provides a safe haven for young women who cannot find a chance to join traditional feminist organizations for many reasons or for those who become unhappy

caused by their sense of inadequacy even when they have the opportunity to take place. In the previous chapter, I have detailed at length the young women's sense of inadequacy caused by hierarchies arising from age, education, experience, and knowledge within the closed organizations. Twitter provides anonymity where status, knowledge, and age hierarchies have been partially eroded. This offers young women room to maneuver to avoid such anxiety. It offers women a space where they can mix formal and informal languages with their unique style, no matter whether they take place with their open identity or with a persona. Twitter offers a more democratic space for users to express themselves in such ways that the obligation to comply with certain communication protocols is largely eliminated and where hierarchies are being considerably eroded.

> Thanks to everyone's ability to express their opinion on every subject, they can express their opinions on social media, even if they do not attend a meeting, or even though she has gone she could not express her ideas during the meeting. She cannot be ignored because it is a visible area. I think it's more horizontal in this respect. Therefore, it has a side that reduces the hierarchy. We want women's organizations to have no hierarchy, but we cannot say that there is no hierarchy.

> I feel like I have a chance to make mistakes on Twitter, and I can watch discussions anonymously and observe. For example, writing ensures that nothing inappropriate comes out of my words. But I'm more afraid of making mistakes in the non-digital field... I don't know, it is maybe a very wrong thought, it feels like I can't be among them anyway, since I feel that I am at the beginning of the road When I'm in the non-digital field, I feel like my voice needs to be heard louder to be noticed. But I have a feeling that I can look at Twitter without making a sound, at least I can observe until I feel ready. I just said that I had to eat forty ovens to call myself an activist. It seems like Twitter gives me the opportunity to do that activism without eating that forty oven-baked bread. (Begum, 27)

Begüm emphasizes two different points here. The first is that Twitter provides an opportunity that does not require her to be active at all times. The other is that the room for maneuver increases exponentially when proceeding through the anonymous account. However, while anonymous accounts make online settings appealing for Begüm and many others who seek support for their pain without having to decipher their own identities, I observed that it also becomes a source of anxiety for some. For example,

Deniz (22) expresses how having anonymous accounts work against women in some cases:

> Twitter can be a very toxic environment sometimes, you know, an environment where people can hide behind their anonymity and get really dirty. The bad things I might encounter there scare me because I see how many women I follow have been lynched. (22-year-old graduate student)

6.4.6. A Techno-sceptic account on Twitter: "Social media is very important but…"

I observed that the group over the age of 45 is more skeptical about what the internet brings. As social media users, they are quite aware of the political opportunities that social media would provide, and they never underestimate its role in the feminist movement. However, when I ask them to compare hashtag campaigns and street activism, they make a clear distinction between the two, saying that street actions are much more valuable politically:

> Social media can reach more people. It works almost like an official institution. Because what we call state officials is right there. Everyone is there. Therefore, I find it effective, but I find street protests more important. In street action, you leave the home area and gather outside, whereas social media is something about the home space. Even going outside has a meaning in itself for women. By coming together outside and being together outside, we are recapturing an area from which we were already excluded. It is very important and very valuable to be present as a body in an area where they ignore us. People prefer not to come to street protests because social media already offers a comfort zone. Social media is an area where faster reactions are given, but the sincerity of those reactions is debatable. But when they come together in the street or in a square, I am not likely to discuss her sincerity because now she is already there and the reason why she came there is because social media is not enough anymore. This happened in the actions for Istanbul Convention. Women came out and there were serious demonstrations, serious crowds. (Simay, 44)

Simay directly associates social media activism with conformism (kolaycılık) and doubts its sincerity. For her, being physically present in actions is politically more meaningful and more sincere as it requires physical effort. A similar theme is evident in Ayşe's narration. She says:

> In the process after 2016, social media became more effective as the street became very difficult for us, you know. That's why I think Twitter and Facebook are very important channels for women. But the main thing, I believe, is to organize. There are those who do not take part in the real practice of life but constantly pour out there. I do not like them at all. And such a social media celebrity has emerged, for example. They're not really anywhere,

> but they're very famous in social media. You know, no one knows you and me, but people know them. it has such a disadvantage (Ayşe, 51)

We see that the insincere/sincere, real/fake that comes to the fore in Simay's narration is also revealed in Ayşe's expression. By calling active social media feminists "social media celebrities," Ayşe implies that their activism is nothing more than an effort to gain popularity, and therefore they can never be equal to the level reached by activists in the street movement. She also identifies their social media presence with an "absence" by saying, "they don't really exist anywhere, but they're famous there". Furthermore, While Ayşe says that "*But the main thing, I believe, is to organize."* we see how she categorically excludes social media as an organizational tool. Another aspect that stands out in Ayşe's comment is the feeling of resentment. Resentment is the weakened subject's profound sentiment toward what She/he perceives to be stronger. (Scheler 1961; Brown 1993). While saying "*no one knows you and me, but people know them",* Ayşe feels a kind of resentment in the face of the emerging new subjectivity. She represents a subjectivity that feels weaker in the face of the emerging subjectivities, has anxieties of extinction, and feels that the scope of her political word is getting narrower in the contemporary political scene.

The issue that social media is not the place for true activism is a much-debated issue and has been covered extensively in the social media literature (See Chen et al., 2018; Khoja-Moolji, 2015; Lee and Hsieh, 2013).[208] Lee and Hsieh (2013) social media activism has become a mechanism of slactivism (a combination of slacker and activism) where people enjoy small acts such as signing an online petition and sharing political content. This, for Lee and Hsieh, results in a kind of moral comfort and makes them feel

[208] In other words, sharing a hashtag may suggest an intimate collectivist public that does not really exist or that exists but lacks a true shared context and history among its participants to be truly viable (Khoja-Moolji 2015 cited in Chen 2018 p. 201).

complacency not to take any more forceful action. In the same vein, Dean argues that tech-savvy activism culture is a kind of fetishism that "covers over our impotence and supports a vision of ourselves as active political participants" (Dean, 2009, p. 36). On the other hand, some argue that small social media actions ultimately result in more significant street protests or many other forms of offline activism (Chen et al. 2018, p. 201). My field research reveals that young women do not undermine the role of street activism while they appreciate the role of Twitter in their political subjectivation. In other words, I observed that the emphasis on the importance of Twitter is frequently followed by the statement, "but I'm not saying the street is unimportant." When I asked my 22-year-old interviewer, who is an active social media user, to compare Twitter and street activism, she said:

> I don't attribute a significant difference between the two because I think there can be different forms of political activism, and the internet is a powerful platform to influence people right now. Thanks to social media, we have enabled many cases to be reopened, as in the case of Şule Çet. There are many such examples, and I feel that Twitter activism has changed a lot of things because I see people's minds changing on Twitter. And now, no one can easily make such sexist sentences like fucking. You know, women warn them, and I think feminists are more visible thanks to Twitter. But I feel that street activism is also incredibly important because in this way even people who do not have access to the Internet see on the streets. That's why I don't attribute such a degree of importance to either of them.

I have observed that this emphasis on the importance of the streets is not just on the discursive level. Women's political practices also confirm the importance attributed to the streets. For example, many young women attend the March 8th night marches or other protests with women who they met on Twitter. Twitter in this sense serves as a tool for women, for example, in Ceren's words, " I used it for being informed about events related to femicides, night marches, or other feminist struggles" Accordingly, I think of Twitter as a space of constant interaction between online and offline activism, without getting stuck in the dilemmas of slactivism or activism, sincere practices or insincere practices, real activism or fictive activism, comfort zone or risk zone. As a result, I think that Twitter as a platform provides its users with distinctive power asymmetries, in some cases

empowering as well as debilitating in some cases (Chen et al. 2018, p. 2001; Newsom and Lengel 2012).

6.5 The Need for a New Conception of the "Real"

Figure 16: A placard from the Istanbul Feminist Night March (2017): "I'm a Twitter feminist, any objections?"[209]

This banner challenges the condescending and devaluing ideas of social media feminism in Turkey. However, it has a much greater meaning concerning the discussion I have

[209] Source: https://onedio.com/haber/feministlerin-8-mart-gece-yuruyusunden-atarli-giderli-25-pankart-760540 cited in Candemir, 2020, p.163).

conducted above: we see that **Twitter** feminism is advocated on a banner in a **street** protest. This might seem like a paradox at first sight, but it supports an argument that I have expressed in diverse ways throughout this chapter: Street activism and social media activism exist not as two poles that exclude one another but as an organic/symbiotic coexistence that multiplies, encourage, and urge each other. This leads to questioning the perspective that prioritizes the street over social media and deems, in turn, street activism more "sincere" and "real."

Digital feminism, above all, turns every moment of "real" life spent at work, on campus, in transportation, or at home into a time of direct affective-political interaction between feminists. It provides a constant flow of feminist interaction and encounters between women who cannot come together in "real" spaces. The constant flow also increases the possibility of meeting in collective action. Women in digital spaces encourage and urge each other to participate in street protests. The activist with the banner in her hand abandons the duality of real versus fictive space by challenging what one might define as a paradox in the first place. While she says that she is a Twitter feminist, she continues to claim the streets simultaneously. Such a stance is not unique to the woman holding the banner. My field research reveals how the interaction of women who met on Twitter remains not limited to the digital area; they instead organize over digital space to participate in the March 8 night, November 25 marches, and many other protests together. Their interaction deals not simply with participation in collective protests. Their constant interactions in digital space, including WhatsApp and social media, are carried to everyday life by organizing face-to-face meetings, sharing the content of digital interaction with their family members at home, or transforming their daily practices in line with the insights they gained from those interactions. This allows everyday life to become a political center. Hence, I develop three related arguments in this chapter. First,

women pose simultaneous political existence in WhatsApp and Twitter, which become an inseparable part of their daily experience. Second, this way of existence turns everyday life into a political hub, and lastly, it ultimately transforms what we understand from activism.

When we are in the field of a face-to-face encounter, the way we experience the world remains limited to what the physical conditions offer. The online channels allow us to transcend spatial limitations and maximize our capacity to experience the spatial size, diversity, and multiplicity of the physical social world. It increases our volume of experience and increases the frequency of encounters with women who are less likely to have direct contact with each other, thus enabling us to experience the real world as multiple worlds. What is changing a kind of moral hierarchy created by the old ontological division that prioritizes the "real" over the "virtual" and attributes political superiority to it. The struggle in the digital world is not a bad copy or a degenerate image of what is supposed to be in the real world. What is at issue is the emergence of new political subjectivities, which share the real-time experience of practices that appear with all complexity and diversity in different spatialities. For feminists, this means that feminism can diffuse more into "real" space interactions through digital channels. Thus, our concept of spatiality now consists of a complex synthesis of our imaginary/virtual spaces and our embodied existence/physical spaces. This new layered understanding of space transforms the spatial metaphysics of collective action. Feminism is irreversibly settled in this new space, while feminist subjectivity turns into a practice that takes place in this layered space.

6.6 Conclusion

My field research revealed how digital platforms, Twitter and WhatsApp, particularly, have increasingly become a significant part of feminist politics in Turkey. Although having a number of shared characteristics, the role played by Twitter as a social media platform and WhatsApp as an instant messaging platform considerably differ in the feminist movement. The most considerable distinction is that WhatsApp appears more as a founding component of everyday feminism, while Twitter does as a part of activities related to the public forms of the feminist movement. Constant interaction through WhatsApp affinity groups operates primarily as an extension of their daily lives, transforming daily living into a political arena. Women+ are experiencing a new form of organization and solidarity through WhatsApp groups, where they feel more empowered because of close ties far from the hierarchy. Feminist WhatsApp groups spread out and decentralize in all directions, posing a rhizome character and transform the patriarchal culture's normative relations in the long run. The uninterrupted interaction in the feminist WhatsApp group also functions as an undercurrent and forms the backstage of social media and street protests erupting unpredictably. Inspired by Deleuzian statement, I would state that underneath the large, noisy events on social media and streets lie the tiny, invisible, and silent interaction in women+'s WhatsApp groups.

This chapter also discusses the role of Twitter in the production of feminist subjectivities and enacting feminist politics. Twitter becomes a virtual space where young women first encounter diverse versions of feminism and learn about it at an early age. Thanks to Twitter and other social media platforms, the age of young people to meet feminism has dropped down to high school age. Hence, I argue that feminism is not only expanding economically to the lower classes, but it is also expanding more towards the

younger generations. Twitter also emerges as an empowerment channel where they experience an adapted form of classical consciousness-raising meeting. Women share their experiences on Twitter, and with the support they receive from there, they create an intimate public where they can come out empowered. Especially in an environment where the distrust towards the relevant institutions of the state regarding violence against women and femicide is on the rise, Twitter turns it into a much more effective political channel for women. Twitter provides an opportunity not only for women to seek justice but also for developing instant strategies against the police obstacles to the night marches. During the night marches, women can stay in instant communication via Twitter and WhatsApp groups, developing different strategies against each new obstacle and finding ways to reassemble.

While middle-aged women recognize the relevance of social media in feminist politics, I observed that they attribute greater political value to street activism, as evidenced by the remark, "social media is important, but..." Such a value hierarchy leads their narrative to be loaded with dichotomies such as slactivism versus activism, comfort zone versus risk zone, sincere versus insincere, and real versus fake. The narratives of young people about social media and street activism are quite different. Almost every statement that young people make about the importance of Twitter for them is backed with an emphasis on the importance of street activism. This narrative, which is largely immune from the hierarchy of values, is also reflected in the practices of young people. Young people come together and participate in protests and marches on Twitter. This political bond that women form on Twitter turns into close friendships. Hence, I argue that Street activism and social media activism exist not as two poles that exclude one another but as an organic coexistence that multiplies and urges each other. This alters what we understand from activism, organization, and collectivity

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I examined the change in today's feminist subjectivities and how they experience feminist politics in contemporary Turkey. In doing so, I drew a topography of the multiple dynamics (historical, social, economic, technological) that enabled this transformation. However, the scope of the thesis extends beyond simply mapping the components behind the transformation. It also focused on change itself that emerged after 2000 but sufficiently consolidated in a way to be described as a sociological change, particularly after the 2010s. I argued that contemporary feminist politics is decentralized from the political cores and pervades all aspects of everyday life through new subjectivities and political practices. These emerging forms, however, are imperceptible from the conventional political lenses. This required to apply a theoretical and conceptual framework through which I could detect the silent, deterritorialized and micro-practices performed in the deep current of everyday life.

Since the second decade of the 2000s in Turkey, highly active and engaged feminist organizations have gone through severe crises, while feminism has been spoken and heard much more than before, having a significant impact on women's lives. Throughout the thesis, I tried to understand how this crisis came about. The term “crisis” should not be interpreted as a degeneration caused by the popularization of feminism, or as a disorganization process that will result in the loss of feminist politics' influence. The crisis is a purely positive concept here. It suggests a productive and transformative

process that would break the deadlock in feminist politics by facilitating the proliferation of feminist subjectivities and their dispersion into everyday life through new means of expression. It also places feminist thoughts and expressions at the center of all strands of today's social opposition. The crisis erupts between older concepts and models of feminist politics and newly emerging forms. Throughout this research, I attempted to comprehend the emerging new reality by distancing myself from the feminist movement's self-interpretation framework and self-representation and submitting feminism to an immanent critique.

In my thesis, I discussed a series of elements that contributed to the crisis, which sparked a fundamental shift in Turkey. The change in family models to more egalitarian forms, the progressive erosion of the authoritarian model in child education in households and at school compared to the past, the questioning of traditional culture and patriarchal forms, and the individualization becoming a value, have resulted in a shift in the status of young women in the family and an expansion of their freedom areas. These developments have been accompanied by the considerable increase in the number of women receiving university education incomparable to the rates in the past and an increase in employment opportunities that will lead to the economic empowerment of women, the increase in the number of female employees in certain sectors. Since the 2000s, Turkey has increasingly experienced two fundamental transformations in labor and working regime. The first was a further shift of the labor regime towards cognitive labor. This resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of universities. However, the increase, which began as a strategic move by the state and capital to meet the labor market's demand for cheap and cognitive labor, has unexpectedly evolved into a mechanism that provides serious opportunities for feminist encounters and thus opens space for women's political subjectivities. As university education has become much more accessible to women from lower

socioeconomic backgrounds, feminism has begun to spread more towards the grassroots, which contributed to the transformation of the class structure of the feminist movement. As a result, I argued that, while feminist ideas were accessible to middle and upper-middle-class women with a significant intellectual and cultural capital in the 1980s and 1990s, today, the feminist movement's class composition has shifted to include lower and lower middle-class women. This has also inevitably changed the representations that revolve around the idea of feminist and feminism. Today, feminism is rarely associated with pejorative images and labels such as marginality, male hostility, male deprivation, and many others.

Another significant feature of the post-2000 period has been the increasing precarity in the working regime. For young people, precarious working conditions have almost become the rule. Most women with university degrees work part-time or in insecure positions in underprivileged sectors. Young people become part of a regime of subjectivity that I define as *investmentality* to become preferable actors in the labor market in precarious conditions. In order to enhance their employment opportunities, they have to constantly invest in themselves, acquire more cognitive/cultural equipment, and develop versatile skills that are incompatible with a particular professional specialization. As a result, non-work life uninterruptedly turns into an area where young people constantly invest in themselves. Given the conditions where leisure time is also colonized by work, the way young women participate in feminist politics is radically transformed. I observed that instead of political practices that require time and intense effort, young people are more inclined to make their living spaces, namely their everyday life, the center of feminist politics thanks to the opportunities provided by digital tools.

I also addressed the historical trajectory of the feminist movement itself in Turkey. I have discussed this historical path as another factor affecting the change in question.

Thus, I focused not only on processes external to the movement, such as the transformations in the labor regime, but also on the internal dynamics of the movement itself. While looking at the historical trajectory of the feminist movement, I avoided considering the movement as a self-appointed entity, and tried to think about it with the multiple political processes surrounding it. Historically, feminist organizations operated on the basis of a closed ecosystem. The feminist organization, including SFK and Amargi experiences, was designated and implemented as a closed space with clearly defined boundaries, members, participation and decision-making methods, goals, and philosophical and political framework. However, such structuring is a form of interaction that is doomed to permanent deterioration by constantly closing in on itself, which inevitably results in unresolvable internal tensions and ultimate termination. In Turkey, feminist organizations have partly moved away from their initial principles, becoming entangled in the politics of representation, centralization, and more implicit forms of raising awareness from the outside. They desired more to be seen in macro-politics and targeted micro spaces less. This understanding of politics, which should be developed within an organization before being presented to the extensive public (i.e., women), is as much related to the pioneering revolutionary left tradition of the previous period as it is to the understanding of politics as a practice based on representation. Moreover, in organizations, I observed that idealized political expectations on how to be feminist, political practices based on highly theoretical discussions rather than women's concrete daily life experiences. Age hierarchy, and class differences caused the emergence of various tensions within the organization and appeared as barriers that young subjects from the lower classes could not easily overcome. Consequently, feminist organizations remained incapable of addressing the demands of new subjects arising from the grassroots with a lower-class character and a different political understanding.

Both the structural transformations stemming from work and labor and the movement's idiosyncratic dilemmas caused young women to engage with feminist politics in different ways. They have transformed new digital technologies into feminist political channels, which also contribute to producing new forms of subjectivity. Women have been creating their affinity groups through digital networks, particularly through WhatsApp and Twitter. These affinity groups manifest themselves in the form of a solidarity circle with a rhizome-like structure. In these groups, women share their personal experiences such as experiences of abuse and violence, unequal distribution of work and childcare, personal anxiety, and fears about sexually transmitted diseases; their practical needs such as asking for a lawyer specialized in harassment, violence, and divorce cases; a gender-equal gynecologist, psychologist and psychiatrist; joys, fears, sorrows, hope, hopelessness, disappointment; precarious working conditions, financial troubles, mobbing, future anxiety. In these groups, which are mostly formed through WhatsApp, women experience feminist empowerment and solidarity where they heal and escape the psychopathologies created by patriarchal and increasing economic pressure. In this way, everyday life is increasingly becoming the site of feminist politics through uninterrupted interaction and communication that pervade all capillaries of everyday life. In saying this, I do not claim that collective practices have disappeared. On the contrary, I argue that the collective political practices such as the mass night marches, hashtag campaigns, protest in response to the attacks of the government and even the government's view of feminism as an open social threat in terms of its own political goals are enabled by the constitutive power of these decentralized micro-political practices that persist in the undercurrents of everyday life.

Therefore, throughout the thesis, I propose a perspective that will incorporate everyday practices instead of a feminist movement analysis based solely on conventional

political indicators. From this point of view, I distance myself from the idea that the feminist movement is getting lost its radical capacity as it began to be widespread, and the young generation is becoming more individualized and breaking away from the collective one. I, instead, argue that collective and political practices are changing significantly. Women are taking part in larger communication and interaction networks while simultaneously preserving their singularities. In this way, they are fostering a global feminist culture that is not limited to a small intellectual and political circle nor to specific fields of creative production. We are amid a process that includes all young generations, as well as the feminists from previous generations, and that touches the lives and relationships of more young women than the established period feminist movement could have imagined.

7.1 Contribution to the Literature

This study contributes to the feminism literature from four different aspects that I would frame as a theoretical, methodological, conceptual, and political contributions. The bulk of academic literature on feminist politics is limited to the movement's internal dynamics. The internal dynamics of the movement addresses the political agenda of feminism, its action repertoire and intellectual path, its organizational structure, and the meaning and affective worlds of the activists. All these components, of course, offer insights for understanding the movement. However, treating the movement as an isolated entity risks losing sight of the much broader context. In this dissertation, I have attempted to deal with the wider dynamics that surround the movement to understand the transformation that the feminist movement has gone through. By incorporating the structural transformations in the labor and working regime and the forms of subjectivity produced

by these transformations, the increase in the number of universities and changing gender distribution in universities, the transformations in family formation, the impact of social movements, both nationally and globally, in varying degrees and forms I tried to understand emerging political forms and subjectivities. In this way, I demarcate feminist politics out of the discipline of cultural studies and philosophical analysis, as is often the case in Turkey, and place it in a sociological context. While mapping the wider context in which feminism is embedded, I also incorporated highly concrete, local, and everyday interactions, as well as worlds of discourse and affect into the unit of analysis. Thus, I tried to understand the organic interactions between macro and micro processes together.

Such an attempt required a mixed research method in which I could combine both an extensive survey and a qualitative method. With this aspect, this study aims to contribute methodologically to feminist academic studies. Feminist academic studies in Turkey rely heavily on qualitative research methods. A hermeneutic methodological approach, shaped by the content analysis of feminist journals, dominates the meaning and emotional worlds and discursive practices of the subjects that make up the movement. In feminist studies, a hermeneutic methodological approach of a kind has prevailed, molded by content analysis of feminist journals, interpretation of study participants' and historical feminist figures' narratives, and affective and discursive practices of the movement's subjects. This study never underestimates the academic contribution of these methods; on the contrary, the qualitative method constitutes one of the prominent veins of this study. However, a phenomenological approach limited to the semantic worlds of the research participant might sometimes overlook the larger environment, trapping the researcher in a narrow frame. Similarly, survey-based research alone cannot provide the depth needed by the researcher. I tried to overcome these limitations by using the mixed method. With this aspect, this study has a unique quality in the feminist literature in Turkey.

Another methodologically original aspect of this study is that it starts the research from an "event," namely the feminist night march. I set out by taking a shot from the present time without resorting to the classical historicist approach, which traces a linear path from the past to the present. I am moving towards structural relations and historical and social connections from a single event in the present time. I, therefore, proceed between the present and the past, as well as between the micro and the macro components.

The study attempts at a humble contribution not only to the feminist literature in Turkey but also to the global feminist literature. As I discussed in the Introduction chapter, the literature on the current state of feminism on a global scale is largely on the dichotomy of whether the movement is on the rise or on the decline. This divide is further surrounded by a series of accompanying dichotomies such as individual/collective, radical politics/nonradical politics, activist/nonactivist, feminist/non-feminist, politics/nonpolitics. When I distanced myself from given concept sets, questioning styles, and analytical lenses in my field research and listened to the field, I encountered a feminist praxis reality far beyond these dualities. I observed that the way young women relate to feminism includes a diversity of multiple and complex forms that cannot be reduced to these dualities. They may shout "I am a feminist" at times and remain silent at others; they may enact feminist practices at their most radical form regardless of whether they identify as feminists or not; some subjects who are thought to be "supporters of the system" might exhibit the most daring feminist practices, even when some defend the value of individuality, the importance of the collective and the organized might suddenly be revealed both in discourse and in practice. I hope to contribute to the literature by suggesting a philosophy of becoming that would challenge such dualities and is irreducible to ready-made answers to questions of "What is feminism" and "Who is a feminist." Based on this philosophy of becoming, which values the process itself, I argue

that feminist subjectivity is not a practice that begins at a certain moment and is completed at a certain point, nor that feminist politics is assignable to the certain forms and spaces. The basic premise of this dissertation is an understanding of feminism in action. It is not an attempt to measure a movement's position in terms of ideal visions or to expose its contradictions by looking at it from the outside. I borrow from the central premise of the historically significant passage from *German Ideology*, saying that feminism is not a "state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself." I call feminism "the real movement," which abolishes patriarchal relations and transform gender relations.

With this perspective, I hope to contribute not only to the academic but also to the political field. As my field research shows, these sharp categories, definitions, and expectations prevent women from entering certain feminist practices. Many notable feminists may easily link young women's distancing from conventional organization forms to neoliberal individuation and so find it simple to associate reason with external structural forces. This study reminds that feminisms political stand of a kind needs to revise their perspectives on organizational models. It calls to move forward, keeping in mind how the established discourse, practice, and expectations sometimes build barriers rather than paving the way for feminist politics. It also invites us to rethink the meanings of activism, collectivism, organization, and politics.

Finally, this study aims to contribute to the literature with the concept of *investmentality* that I tried to develop in the third chapter. It refers to the constant investment in self to survive in the labor market, which gradually diffuses in all aspects of life and constitutes one aspect of the contemporary young subjectivities. It shares commonalities with existing concepts such as human capital, self-entrepreneurship, and Homo-economicus but differs significantly, if not radically, from these concepts. These

are concepts that have been produced from within the mainstream economics literature and are still in use in that field. By resorting to these concepts, the authors (M. Foucault and W. Brown) analyze and critique neoliberal logic. What I am trying here is to make a conceptual contribution from within the field of social science instead of adapting already existing concepts. This concept refers to a mentality that has become one of the founding elements of today's subjectivity, rather than simply pointing to the people's knowledge, skills, and experience. I introduce the concept of *investmentality* to define a sociologically emergent regime of subjectivity rather than to critique and criticize neoliberal logic. Historically, the human body, in all of its dimensions, has never been converted into an instrument of production and capital accumulation. We are currently living in a historical period in which people are transforming themselves into investment tools by enhancing their cognitive, emotional, and physical capacities. Investing in the body has become the most characteristic feature of today's subjectivity, particularly at a time when the distinction between work and non-work life has disappeared. I introduce this concept, above all, to describe this new sociological phenomenon. I argued that transformations in feminist politics cannot be handled independently of the form of subjectivity shaped through Investmentality. In a regime where the body has become such an investment tool and working life colonizes non-work time, women can no longer devote their non-work time to political activities as first and second-generation feminists used to. This results in the political forms that will require less time and effort. Politics of everyday life and digital feminism becomes the most obvious forms of this transformation.

However, I do not treat this phenomenon as a necessarily successful imperative of neoliberal logic. While human capital, Self-entrepreneurship, and Homo-economicus describe a successful regime of subjectivity that acts according to the imperatives of capital, *investmenatality* includes the subject of failure simultaneously. Most young

people today are also engaged in a variety of self-investment practices that will neither benefit them nor the capital accumulation process in any way. This points to a failure that the capital's reasoning could not foresee. One can hardly predict where a subject who has invested so much in herself will channel these multiple capacities. These multiple capacities can evolve into the process of capital accumulation, or they can be poured into anti-systemic coexistences outside of the capital. For example, woman who works as a graphic designer in a company and attends a series of training to improve her capacity can channel all her knowledge and talents to design the night march's visuals. Similarly, we see how a woman working as a social media manager in a company effectively manages the social media accounts of feminist organizations using the knowledge and abilities she obtained there. It is possible to multiply these cases that exemplify how self-investment turns into an instrument of counter subjectivities. Therefore, the concept of *investmentality* includes the ambivalent character of the production of subjectivity.

7.2 A Few Words about the Limitations of the Study

I would like to conclude the thesis by addressing a few points about the limitations of the study. This thesis does not fit neatly into the field of sociology of social movements. Feminist formations of the previous era were considerably more susceptible to examination from within the social movement literature as a research subject. There existed a particular feminist organization model with more clear spatial borders, more homogeneous subjects, and less political diversity until the *SFK* and *Amargi* experiences in Turkey. However, as I argue throughout the dissertation, since 2010, there has been a highly heterogeneous multitude pulverized in everyday life in terms of class, culture, and politics that has no political affiliation with specific feminist centers. This heterogeneous

multiplicity does not fit into the frameworks of analysis of the mainstream social movement literature. Mainstream social movement literature mostly focuses on the questions of how a movement is structured, how decisions are made within the movement, how political opportunities are structured, and resources are distributed and mobilized, and how the movement organizes and finances itself. Throughout this thesis, instead of raising the question of how the movement structures itself, I examined how the subjects that make up the movement and the ways of conducting politics are transformed. More importantly, mainstream social movement theories classified in the social movement literature are shaped by protests, marches, and political practices that are visible in the public sphere. However, what I needed to stress throughout the dissertation was a theoretical ground where I could capture invisible, "silent", imperceptible, and affective practices and that could allow me to establish a relationality between these invisible micro-practices and visible macro practices such as night marches, hashtag campaigns, and many other collective practices. In this conjecture, Deleuzean philosophy becomes a theoretical and conceptual instrument for me, allowing me to avoid dualism between micro and macro forms but rather interpret these two grounds in a relational way. I should note that recent forms of social movement literature are expanding on the "classic agenda", preventing us from reducing it to the structural, deterministic aspect of social movement theory (Della Porta and Diani 2015). It develops a perspective that brings into analysis the much more fragmented and invisible political practices as well as the affective dimensions of movements and complexities (See Martinez and Cooper 2017; Escobar and Osterweil 2010; Karatzogianni and Robinson 2009; Castells 2015; Flam 2007; Goodwin et al. 2001; Melucci 1996; Jasper 2008; Chesters and Welsh 2005). This dissertation could have proceeded through this channel of social movements literature as well. Yet, it follows a different theoretical line relying on the idea that a sociological

phenomenon might be dealt with from various theoretical perspectives. I suggest that this dissertation is to be considered a conduit with its own singularity among upcoming research on contemporary forms of the feminist movement in Turkey, which I believe will diversify and multiply in the near future.

One of the limitations of this study is that I conducted the field work only in Istanbul, which can be considered as the center of the feminist movement in Turkey. At the point where I claim that feminism is expanding into daily life in decentralized forms, it could have been more useful to consider how feminism is experienced in the periphery of Istanbul and how these experiences differ from those in a place like Istanbul that can be considered a global metropolis. I argue that feminism is expanding into the lower classes, younger ages, and geographically diverse locations, but I lacked the data regarding how demographically, and culturally different segments of population have changed the way through which they relate to feminism. I hope that feature research will close this gap.

Another element that I believe is missing is that I was unable to provide a comparative analysis between Turkey and countries that have undergone similar political processes. For example, in the last ten years, countries such as Argentina, Spain, and Chile have come to the fore with mass protests organized by the women's movement, just like Turkey. Similarly, a comprehensive comparative analysis of the women's movement in Russia, which had a similar authoritarian experience to Turkey, could be an eye-opening study. Examining the processes that make these countries similar to each other would have been useful for the feminist movement to see where Turkey is positioned in a more global context.

I want to make a final note about the study. I conducted this research in the midst of the transformation of the feminist movement. For a social science researcher, looking

through what is current might mean missing out on the advantages of looking from a temporal distance. The transformation process that I identified while starting this work is in progress. One can hardly predict what opportunities and organizational structures this shift will bring to the feminist movement in the future. Decentralization does not imply the end of organized feminist politics. On the contrary, based on current developments, I would say that the movement tends to evolve into which rhizome-like micro formations in everyday life, including digital and non-digital local collective initiatives, affinity groups of different sizes and qualities, as well as the large-scale protests. Perhaps, no new organizations that are equivalent to the feminist organizations of the old period will emerge. However, I can say that feminism would infuse more deeply permanently into daily interactions, art, literature, and the production of academic knowledge, as well as all the lines of radical politics

APPENDIX A

Table 1:

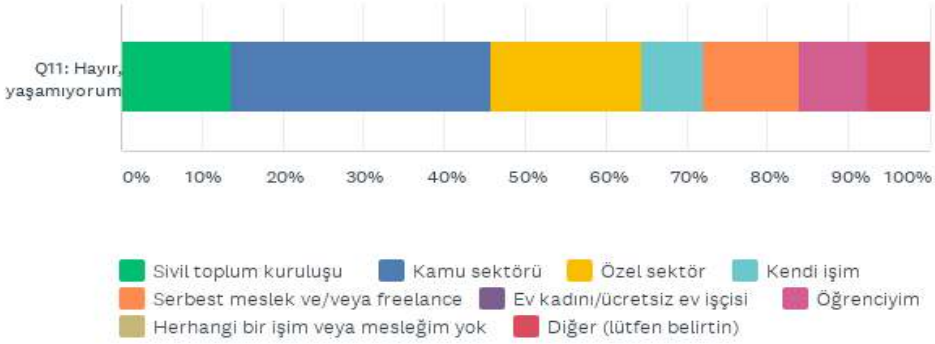


Table 2:

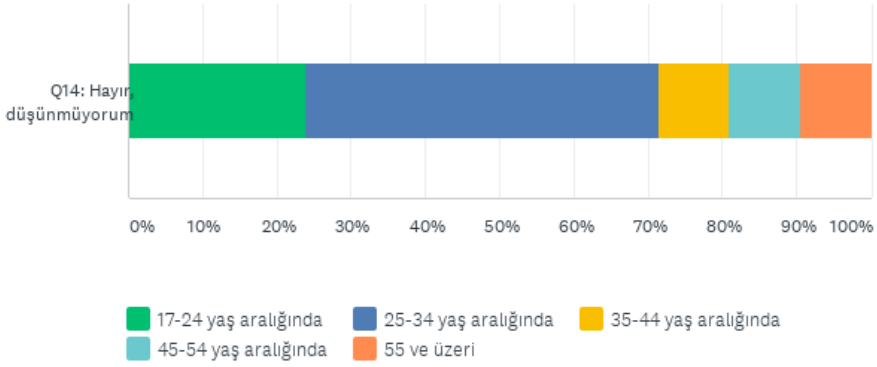


Table 3.

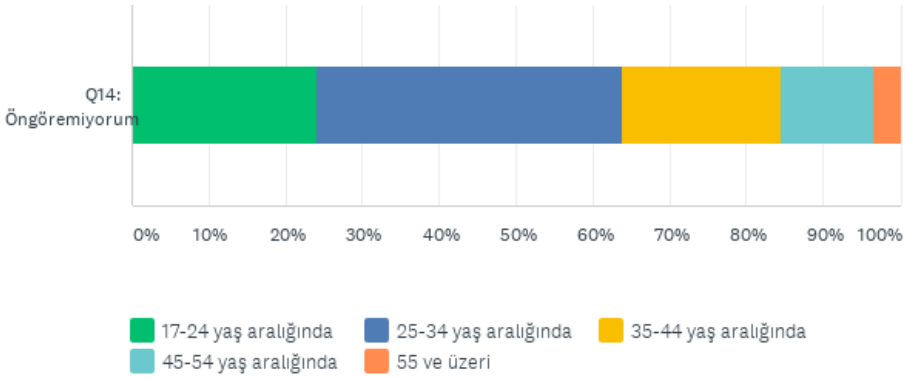
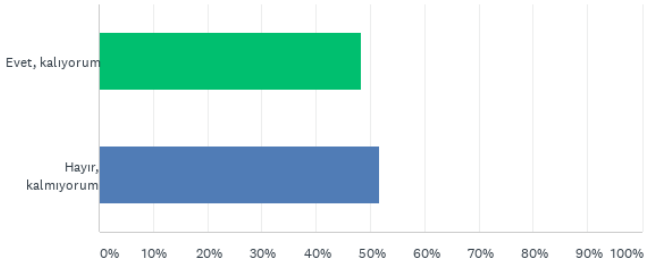


Table 4:

Q15 Çalışmıyor oluşunuzun nedeni öğrenci oluşunuz ise; okurken part-time çalışmak durumunda kalıyor musunuz?



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