

PERCEPTIONS AND DISCOURSES ON GENDER EQUALITY: THE CASE OF
CONSERVATIVE WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS IN TURKEY

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EMİNE FEYZA ARBERK BOZOĞLU

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submitted by **EMİNE FEYZA ARBERK BOZOĞLU** in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in Gender and Women's Studies,**
the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University by,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Ayşe SAKTANBER
Head of Department
Gender and Women’s Studies

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayça ERGUN ÖZBOLAT
Supervisor
Sociology

Examining Committee Members:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe İdil AYBARS (Head of the Examining Committee)
Middle East Technical University
Sociology

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayça ERGUN ÖZBOLAT(Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Sociology

Prof. Dr. Zeynep ALEMDAR
Okan University
International Relations



I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Emine Feyza
Arberk Bozoğlu

Signature:

ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS AND DISCOURSES ON GENDER EQUALITY: THE CASE OF CONSERVATIVE WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS IN TURKEY

ARBERK BOZOĞLU, Emine Feyza

M.S., Department of Gender and Women's Studies

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayça Ergun

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Civil society organizations and the realm of civil society as a whole play a core role in terms of gender politics; however this enactment burgeons differently in the Turkish context. The position of women’s civil society organizations have been transformed through the leading positions of conservative women’s organizations in the domain state and society relations, especially in terms of gender politics.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a current analysis of the role of conservative women’s organizations in the Turkish context and the impact of the Turkish government in relation to its particular position on civil society through gender politics. It thereby aims to mainly concentrate on the conservative women’s organizations through the rule under the Justice and Development Party. Also, the study puts forth a qualitative analysis through primarily collecting the empirical data from interviews conducted with 10 conservative women’s organizations.

This study shows that conservative women's organizations have generated antithetical standpoints towards feminist literature, especially with regards to womanhood and women's rights and this is largely linked to the space made accessible by the Turkish government and Turkish civil society itself. This study also demonstrates conservative women's organizations discourses and agendas in terms of gender enactments as for gender equality, gender relations, gender justice, womanhood, and women's rights.

Keywords: Conservative Women's Organizations, Civil Society, Gender Politics, Feminism



ÖZ

TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET EŞİTLİĞİ ÜZERİNE ALGI VE SÖYLEMLER: TÜRKİYE'DEKİ MUHAFAZAKAR KADIN ÖRGÜTLERİ

ARBERK BOZOĞLU, Emine Feyza

Yüksek Lisans, Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Bölümü

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Sivil toplum örgütleri cinsiyet politikasında büyük rol oynamakta, fakat bu durum Türkiye bağlamında farklı bir şekilde karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Kadın sivil toplum kuruluşlarının konumu, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin devlet ve toplum ilişkilerinde, özellikle de toplumsal cinsiyet politikası açısından önderlik etmesi aracılığıyla dönüştürülmüştür.

Bu tezin amacı, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin Türkiye bağlamındaki rolünü ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükûmetinin cinsiyet politikası aracılığıyla sivil toplumdaki etkisini analiz etmektir. Dolayısıyla bu tez, özellikle Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi iktidarı döneminde faaliyet gösteren muhafazakar kadın örgütlerine odaklanacaktır. Ayrıca, araştırma 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütü ile yapılan mülakatlardan toplanan veri ile nitel bir analiz sunmaktadır.

Bu araştırma, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin feminist literatürüne, özellikle kadınlık ve kadın hakları konusunda zıt görüşler ürettiğini göstermekte ve bu durumu Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükûmetinin ve Türk sivil toplumunun sunduğu fırsata bağlamaktadır. Ek olarak, bu araştırma muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin cinsiyet kanunları açısından cinsiyet eşitliği, cinsiyet ilişkileri, cinsiyet adaleti, toplumsal cinsiyet ve kadın hakları gibi konulardaki söylemler ve gündemlerini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Muhafazakar Kadın Örgütleri, Sivil Toplum, Cinsiyet Politikaları, Feminizm



To my partner in crime and my supporter Batu Bozoğlu.

To my loving and caring Arberk family.

And last but not least, in all the loving memories of Şule Çet, Ceren Damar, Pınar Gültekin, and all of the other amazing individuals who we have lost to violence, murder, and sexual assault.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKADDER	Anadolu Kadın ve Aile Derneği
AK-DER	Women's Rights Organization Against Discrimination
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
EU	European Union
EVKAD	Ev Kadınları Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği
HASEKİ	Haseki Kadın Vakfı
HAVLE	Havle Kadın Derneği
HEKVA	Hanımlar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı
HİKDE	Hanımlar İlim ve Kültür Derneği
İKADDER	Istanbul Women and Women's Organization Association
JDP	Justice and Development Party
KADEM	Women and Democracy Association
KASAV	Kadın Sağlıkçılar Eğitim ve Dayanışma Vakfı
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Industry Development Organization
MSP	National Salvation Party
MÜSİAD	Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NİSA-ÜL AKSA	Aksa Hanımlar Derneği
TİKAD	Turkish Business Women Association
TÜRKKAD	Türk Kadınları Kültür Derneği

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The domain of civil society is principally one of the most prominent and vital means for gender politics to perform, especially in terms of the representation of women's rights. Although, the arena of civil society has enabled major measures to be taken in the name of gender politics these particular discourses and transformations differ within the Turkish state and society context. Turkish civil society has a long embedded history. However, before engaging with Turkish civil society, it is essential to state what civil society is. Civil society is defined as a domain of social interaction between the state and economy, organized above the entire intimate sphere (chiefly the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.ix). Accordingly, it can be argued that civil society is a mediator between the individual and the state and that this particular arena situates itself as autonomous.

The present study will focus on four main themes, which can be delineated as: 1. civil society, 2. Turkish civil society, 3. women's organizations, and 4. conservative women's organizations. Then, the study will put forth deep analysis on these particular themes by starting primarily with the evolution of the civil society, the debates surrounding this domain, and what civil society means. After examining the core approaches to civil society and the conceptualizations, the present study analyzed how this notion is administered and how it has evolved within the Turkish context. Then, the arena of women's organizations was engaged in within the

Turkish context and whether there are relations evident between the conservative women's organizations. After that, the study analyzed the emergence, role, and impact of the conservative women's organizations and in terms of the civil society field, specifically with regards to the Turkish social and political contexts.

Also, the present study concentrates on conservative women's organization in terms of fundamental themes, which can be mainly outlined as follows: conservative women's organizations roles within the civil society sphere, these organizations positions and interactions with the Turkish government, solidarity with other conservative women's organizations, their outlooks towards gender politics, gender equality, women's rights, and gender justice, and their operations and activities implemented. The present study additionally engages with the two branches of conservative women's organizations of: orthodox and reformist and how the 10 organizations fit in within these categorizations.

Moreover, grounded upon the empirical data on the conservative women's organizations in the Turkish context, the study analyzes the following question: How has the Turkish government's discourse on civil society engendered contradictory standpoints towards gender relations, in accordance with the women's movement and generated the rise of conservative women's organizations? In other words, the study examines the role of conservative women's organizations in the Turkish context and the impact of the Turkish government in relation to its particular position on civil society through gender politics. It thereby aims to mainly focus on the conservative women's organizations through the rule under the JDP.

However, it is crucial to put forth this study employed a gender neutral perspective, because this study concentrates on the arenas of civil society and conservative women's organizations mainly in terms of gender politics and without a gender neutral outlook the concrete analysis between the feminist literature would be problematic. The women's movement in the Turkish context was also incorporated to put forth the differences and impacts that the conservative women's organizations have exerted into the agendas and discourses of gender politics.

First of all, the prime and foremost purpose of this thesis is to explore the state and society relations (civil society) exemplified through the conservative women's organizations in Turkey. Also, another core purpose of this thesis is to

engage with the core aspects between the Turkish state and the women's movement, intertwined with the realm of civil society, such as: the agendas, outlooks, aims, and enactments. Although there are various and prominent research put forth in this field of study, neither is there research evident on how these conservative women's organizations flourished nor how can they be eradicated from dominating the civil society domain. Also, what distinguishes this thesis from previous research in this area is that: it concentrates on conservative women's organizations in Turkey and examines their roles within the civil society sphere in Turkey, through analyzing their positions and interactions with the government, other conservative women's organizations, their outlook on gender politics within civil society, and analyzes the conservative women's organizations perspectives and perceptions towards gender equality and gender justice. In addition, this thesis interacts with four major themes, in which are: civil society conceptualizations, civil society conceptualizations in the Turkish context, the women's movement in Turkey, and conservative women's organizations within Turkey. Indeed, while engaging and centering on these four vital themes, subthemes also emerge, this can be mainly exemplified as: the understanding of womanhood, women's solidarity, volunteerism, the family domain, professionalization, and political Islam. Moreover, this thesis will structure on these central four themes and intertwine the subthemes throughout the thesis and implement both critical evaluation and discussion.

1.2. Methodology

The present study employs a qualitative analysis and the study analyzes conservative women's organizations in terms of the dynamics and correlations between human interactions. The empirical data is primarily collected from the primary sources of the interviews conducted with the 10 conservative women's organizations and these 10 organizations are: KASAV, EVKAD, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HAVLE, HİKDE, HASEKİ, HEKVA, AKADDER, TÜRKKAD, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. The interviews were done between the dates of: January and March, 2020. Also, these interviews were largely put forth through a face-to-face manner, however the following conservative women's organizations were

interviewed via phone: HİKDE, HAVLE, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, AKADDER, TÜRKKAD, and NİSA-ÜL AKSA. The reason for these 6 organizations were being interviewed through the phone was due to, the precautions taken with regards to the Coronavirus.

In addition, the 10 conservative women's organizations that were examined were largely picked in terms of their profiling and this specific profiling can be asserted as: the particular organization has to fit under the understanding of conservative women's organization which is an organization that constitutes as a women's organization not a branch of another organization and/or representative of another organization and the organization has to fall under and/or define its self in some way as a conservative entity within Turkey, for instance: conservative women, conservative feminist, and/or conservative ladies. Also, these 10 organizations were selected beforehand by examining each of these organizations official websites, official social media accounts, and/or official statements with regards to their agendas and outlooks and these particular operations were carefully picked to be distinct from one another, because one purpose of this study is to analyze whether there is a homogenous nature or a heterogeneous nature and understanding present within conservative women's organizations. These 10 conservative women's organizations were also picked with regards to the categorization of orthodox and reformist women. In addition, the selected conservative women's organizations main area of enactment is in Istanbul and/or Ankara, but some of these organizations have other branches and representatives across Turkey as well. Another reason why these 10 conservative women's organizations were picked was mainly due to their activism which fit under the notion of conservatism.

However, it is important to state that this study also contacted 4 other organizations, which were: the Women and Democracy Association ("Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği"/KADEM), Women's Rights Organization Against Discrimination ("Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Hakları Derneği"/AK-DER), Turkish Business Women Association ("Türkiye İş Kadınları Derneği"/TİKAD), and Istanbul Women and Women's Organization Association ("İstanbul Kadın ve Kadın Kuruluşları Derneği"/İKADDER) and they all rejected the interview. KADEM for instance, stated that due to the current agendas they are unable to conduct an

interview for this study. TİKAD put forth that they were busy and could not put forth an interview. Also, AK-DER asserted that they were busy and did not want to implement an interview. In addition, İKADDER stated that they were busy and could not schedule an interview at the moment.

Moreover, the empirical data for this particular study is largely collected from primary and secondary sources. First, the primary data is gathered from in-depth interviews with the representatives of the conservative women's organizations. Second, the secondary sources are collected from the official websites, official social media accounts, and/or official statements of the specific conservative women's organizations which are being studied.

Furthermore, the interviews were comprised of 16 questions. The 16 questions which were asked in the interviews can be characterized under the following main themes: information about the organization, membership, activities and operations, resources, reason(s) for joining the organization, gender equality, gender justice, outlooks towards other women's organizations, perceptions and/or relations with the Turkish government and agencies, and future plans.

Name:	Date Founded:	Type:	Interview Date:	Members:	Branches and/or Representatives:
KASAV	1986/2013	Orthodox	13.01.2020	250	-
HİKDE	1973	Orthodox	10.03.2020	70	-
TÜRKKAD	1966/1973	Orthodox	10.03.2020	1000	10 Branches
HAVLE	2018	Reformist	26.03.2020	20	-
İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform	2010	Reformist	25.03.2020	1600	6 Representatives
AKADDER	2013	Reformist	26.03.2020	37	45 Representatives
HEKVA	1988	Orthodox	13.01.2020	40	-
NİSA-ÜL AKSA	2013	Orthodox	16.03.2020	N/A	-

“Table (continued)”

EVKAD	2006	Orthodox	13.01.2020	70	-
HASEKİ	1973/2013	Reformist	13.01.2020	112	-

1.3. Outline

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 of this thesis is aimed to put forth a conceptual structure on the formulation of the discourse of civil society and analyze this conceptualization through the Turkish context. In line with this organization, Chapter 2 also introduces the main theories, themes, and notions which create the framework of the study, which can be elucidated as: civil society and Turkish civil society. While the current literature on civil society and Turkish civil society calls attention to the gender realm through incorporating the woman question it still remains gender insensitive. Consequently, this section incorporates a gender neutral outlook towards the conceptualization of civil society. Chapter 3 concentrates on the methodology utilized for the field work conducted in this thesis. Chapter 3 of this thesis asserts its framework through both empirical analysis and incorporates the findings from the field work. Under Chapter 4, embodies the vital analysis enacted in Chapter 2. In addition Chapter 4 focuses on the emergence of conservative women’s organizations through mainly engaging with the subtopics of: the background context on these organizations, the institutionalization of these organizations, and the organizations interactions with the Turkish government. In addition, Chapter 5 centers on the discourse of womanhood and how conservative women’s organizations perceive this notion through three subtopics of: how these organizations understand and articulate womanhood, the outlook of these organizations towards gender enactment, and whether these organizations comprise collective action or disunity. Ultimately, Chapter 6 finalizes the thesis with the conclusion portion and the references part. Also, Chapter 6 focuses on the conclusion segment where the findings and final remarks are set forth.

CHAPTER 2

CIVIL SOCIETY

2.1. The Evolution of the Civil Society Arena

The civil society is an ever-evolving arena, which has resulted in various thriving transformations in the realm itself. Civil society is defined as a domain of social interaction between the state and economy, organized above the entire intimate sphere (chiefly the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.ix). Since, the realm of civil society is a customarily altering domain the understanding of civil society has been reoriented through major scholars, such as: Baron De Montesquieu, Jürgen Habermas, Ernest Gellner, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and more. Indeed, these vital scholars have asserted distinct perspectives and analysis towards the subject matter of civil society, which has resulted in apparent differences; on the other hand there are also common themes. This section will mainly concentrate on the main studies on the civil society discourse. To begin with, Baron De Montesquieu is an important political theorist whom has contributed to the arena of civil society in many core manners, in which will be described further. Baron De Montesquieu conceptualized the domain of civil society as a realm that executed an essential political role, which was that it preserved the rule of law and restrained it in monarchies to stop them from turning despotic and his view was put forth in *De l'esprit des lois* ("The Spirit of the Laws") (Taylor, 1995, p.214). This formulation of civil society by Baron De Montesquieu has brought chief developments to the sphere of civil society, however before engaging with these advancements it is crucial to evaluate Montesquieu's

conceptualization. First of all, Baron De Montesquieu is linked to the eighteenth century period, which is the time period of the Age of Enlightenment, where various thinkers and theorists flourished. However, Montesquieu's outlook towards civil society made him distinct from the other scholars from his period. What separated Montesquieu from his period's thinkers was that he is the first political thinker to propose that civil society is an actor outside the state, in which had a principal function to play in relation to the state- specifically to protect society from tyrannical monarchs (Viterna et al., 2015, p.178). This novel perspective towards civil society by Baron De Montesquieu has created an important development to the arena, because previous scholars did not define a distinction between civil society and the state and this situation created the integration of the realms of society and government. Also, Montesquieu's formulation towards civil society has roots embedded from both his era and from the ancients, such as: Aristotle. This connotes to Montesquieu intertwined an emergent structural notion with a normative conceptualization (Viterna et al., 2015, p.178). This normative conceptualization put forth by Montesquieu stems from the ancient period, which associates civil society with a civilized disposition and this structural dimension is linked to the third sector which differed from the previous outlooks. In addition to this, Montesquieu's conceptualization of civil society in contrast to other scholars from his time period is that his conception of the realm was more historically sensitive (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.88). This understanding enacted by Montesquieu towards the domain of civil society displayed that he integrated both arenas of civil society, the ancient period and the eighteenth century period, in which displays a dual perception of the term. Another perspective affiliated to Montesquieu's conceptualization of civil society is visible through his outlook towards subjective rights. Montesquieu justifies subjective rights by engaging to the notion of a community (Chatterjee, 2010, p.278). This perspective towards subjective rights in the sense of civil society through the notion of a community is directly associated to the community division which opposes the individual domain in line with individual autonomy. Without doubt, Baron De Montesquieu's conceptualization towards the sphere of civil society has influenced many thinkers and scholars, namely Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Although, Montesquieu's discourse towards civil society has exerted major influence

on Hegel and his formulation towards civil society, there are also differences evident between the two thinkers. Firstly, it is important to set forth Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's definition of civil society and then evaluate his formulation of the realm by analyzing the similarities and differences between him and Montesquieu towards the field. Hegel conceptualizes civil society as the stage of difference existing between the family and the state, although the development of the arena of civil society emerges later than the state (Hegel, 1991, p.220). Through this formulation of the arena of civil society administered by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel a reoccurring theme is visible with Baron De Montesquieu's conceptualization of the domain as well, which can be elucidated as the relationship between the notions of the state and the civil society realms. Similar to Montesquieu before him and Tocqueville after him, Hegel pursued an intermediate level of power between the notions of the individual and the state, the basis of his assertion lies behind the fact that he dreaded the powerlessness of atomized subjects and looked to control the potential arbitrariness of the state bureaucracy (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.107). It is evident that Hegel, like Montesquieu regarded the field of civil society as a distinct realm from the state with central interconnections. On the other hand, a fundamental divergence between Hegel's and Montesquieu's perception of civil society is also evident through the division of normative and descriptive standpoints. Hegel's purpose, in which he embraces, is to be a rigorously descriptive stance (Goodfield, 2009, p.858). Hegel's outlook towards civil society is delineated through the descriptive notion, however as previously stated Montesquieu asserts a normative perspective towards the sphere of civil society. Another separation between Hegel's and Montesquieu's formulation of civil society is observable through their stances towards the discourse of subjective rights. For Hegel the notion of rights which he distinguishes as "subjective rights" take particular account of the individuals "particularity" (Brownlee, 2013, p.86). Unlike Montesquieu whom links subjective rights to the realm of community, Hegel associates these rights to the individual autonomy. Despite the fact that Hegel and Montesquieu share common perspectives through their conceptualizations on the domain of civil society, especially on the perception of state and civil society, there is another divergence evident between the two scholars, in which is visible through Hegel's incorporation of modernity into the

arena. It can be proclaimed that Hegel provides the first thoroughly modern comprehension of civil society and the state (Killingsworth, 2012, p.9). Although Montesquieu was the first to put forth that civil society was an outside actor of the state, Hegel took this proposition further and asserted that civil society fits in the modern world. Moreover, analogous to Montesquieu on how he impacted other theorists and scholars through his formulation of civil society, Hegel also influenced many, such as: Jürgen Habermas. Therefore, in Habermas's conceptualization towards the realm of civil society there are visible notions comparable to Hegel's formulation of the domain as well. Though Hegel somewhat shaped Habermas's outlook on civil society, there are major distinctions evident between the two. In this regard, it is vital to analyze Habermas's conceptualization of civil society in order to comprehend the similarities and differences between him and Hegel by evaluating and engaging with Habermas's perception on the arena. Jürgen Habermas defines the central essence of civil society as a network of associations that institutionalizes problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres (Habermas, 1996, p.367). This definition administered by Habermas towards the realm of civil society creates a resemblance with Hegel's formulation of the field that the domain is perceived as place for restricting the power held by the state. Essentially, this similarity between Habermas and Hegel through the relationship of civil society and the state can also be linked to Montesquieu, because this perception maintained by Hegel was impacted by Montesquieu himself. Although, Habermas's definition of civil society shares similar notions with Hegel there are major divergences evident too. Habermas has constructed a fourth element of the public sphere to the previous reflection on modern politics of Hegel's tripartite distinction of family, civil society, and state (Landes, 1988, p.5). The integration of the public sphere into the domain of the civil society discourse by Habermas forms a novel outlook from the previous conceptualizations of civil society, because it includes the publicity dimension which was excluded before. In addition, Habermas asserts a normative association between the notions of civil society and the public sphere (Jr, 2016, p.2). This incorporation of the arena of civil society and the public sphere through the normative sense by Habermas transformed the outlook of the civil society field, because formerly the

civil society realm was only perceived as a male platform and women were mostly excluded. However, it is vital to put forth that this embodiment of the public sphere in the civil society discourse was unique and innovative for that time period, nevertheless in the contemporary arena of civil society this conceptualization has transformed through the literature of modern feminists. Also, the integration of the public sphere notion by Habermas has created a divergence from Hegel's formulation of civil society, because as previously stated Hegel only concentrated on three dimensions which were: family, civil society, and state and the public dimension was not into question. Furthermore, another difference evident between Habermas and Hegel through their stances towards civil society is visible through Habermas's outlook on the concept of subjective rights. Habermas interprets subjective rights of freedom as the preconditions of the rational discourse between citizens, in which establishes formal equality for the members of the discursive community (Szücs, 2016, p.15). This perspective asserted by Habermas towards the notion of subjective rights through the domain of civil society is linked to the realm of community which diverges from Hegel's outlook, because Hegel perceives this sphere from the stance of individuality. On the other hand, although Habermas's community viewpoint towards the discourse of subjective rights deviates from Hegel, this community division is shared by Montesquieu. To continue, as seen through the evolution of the civil society discourse there are many scholars whom have transformed the realm of civil society by asserting critical conceptualizations, in which carry similarities and differences. Indeed, these formulations of the civil society domain implemented by vital thinkers, such as: Montesquieu, Hegel, and Habermas have shaped the meaning of civil society itself. As previously mentioned, the discourse of civil society was defined by the major scholars of: Cohen and Arato as a realm of social interaction between the state and economy, organized above the entire intimate sphere (chiefly the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication (1992, p.ix). Although, the realm of civil society has been defined through a concrete manner, there still is an ongoing discussion on the notion which has resulted in vagueness towards the discourse. To add on, the next subsection will concentrate on

the ambiguity towards the concept of civil society and pivot on how this situation has influenced the field of civil society.

2.2. Contemporary Debates of Civil Society

In spite of civil society having a vibrant and significant history, there has been and still is an ongoing debate on the term civil society itself. In contemporary discussions, there is no clear agreement about the proper location of the term and the sources of civil society (Kaviraj & Khilnani, 2001, p.13). This lack of agreement on the domain of civil society has indeed created ambiguity within the framework of the term. On the other hand, this disagreement on the arena of civil society is not the only reason for the concepts ambiguity. Also, another ambiguity stems from whether to integrate economic activity into the concept of civil society (Young, 2000, p.158). This differentiation on whether to amalgamate economic activity into the domain of civil society has been disputed by the many discourses on civil society, for instance: the neoliberal version of civil society asserts that the state and economy should be in the same field, in contrast, the post-Marxist approach states otherwise. Although, there is major obscurity within the sphere of civil society this does not mean that progress nor innovation has not occurred. In fact many responses have prevailed towards the realm of civil society, in which has resulted in different conceptualizations by various schools and theorists to emerge. There consist five versions of this notion, in which are: *societas civilis*, bourgeois society (*burgerliche gesellschaft*), activist (post-Marxist), neoliberal, and postmodern (Kaldor, 2003, p.10). The first two approaches are incorporated within the previous versions of civil society and other three perspectives are current narratives. The main five conceptualizations on civil society indeed differ on the exposition of civil society and assert diverging views on the exegesis of this sphere. In addition, it is crucial to briefly elucidate the main conceptualizations, in order to understand the differing views on the framework of civil society and to illustrate some background content on the concept. The first version on civil society is: *societas civilis*, which can be characterized as the earliest approach to this field. In line with this outlook, civil society cannot be separated from the existence of a state (Kaldor, 2003, p.7). Clearly,

this framework towards civil society, the state domain played a major and critical role. However, as new scholars and beliefs emerged the stance on *societas civilis* transformed and a new approach surfaced, in which was: bourgeois society (*burgerliche gesellschaft*). The bourgeois society conceptualization can be associated to two main scholars, whom are: Hegel and Marx. The bourgeois society perspective can be put forth as distinct from both the household and the state (Uberoi, 2005, p.72). This outlook clearly clashed with the *societas civilis* conceptualization, because it did not incorporate the state within the domain of civil society, which was a core pillar of the *societas civilis* approach. Accordingly, as time progressed and the political atmosphere of the world transformed, new narratives emanated towards the field of civil society. Three fundamental conceptualizations of civil society have been linked to the contemporary world, in which are: activist (post-Marxist), neoliberal, and postmodern. Furthermore, the next subsection will engage with the current trends of civil society, through concentrating on the contemporary narratives and how civil society has been intertwined into today's world.

The notion of civil society itself has revamped vastly throughout the centuries by bringing new trends towards the arena itself. One major alteration within the realm of civil society as a concept has been its meaning; initially civil society was equivalent with political society, however the common contemporary interpretation stresses the autonomy from the state (DeWiel, 1997, p.3). This modern interpretation of the concept of civil society can be discerned through, these three versions of the domain of civil society: post-Marxist, neoliberal, and postmodern, because they all incorporate and accentuate that civil society should be autonomous from the state. Another way the sphere of civil society has transformed since the classical period is visible through the conversion of the public vs. private discussion. Historically, the domain of civil society was evaluated as a private sphere; however in the contemporary debates enacted in the realm of civil society, it can be argued that civil society has encompassed a place in the public sphere, especially through the critiques of modern feminists (Hann, 1996, p.6). This metamorphose from the private sphere to the public sphere in terms of the conceptualization of civil society has generated a clear shift in the enactment and perception of civil society itself, because the male dominated perspective has been diminished and the feminist analysis has been

brought into implementation. Moreover, another way the field of civil society has evolved through the contemporary period can be seen through the advent of global civil society. Global civil society refers to the manners in which civil society impacts the discourse of global governance by converging global, national, and local institutions, rather than, just setting forth that civil society merely spreads over borders and provides a transnational forum for debate and confrontation (Dencik, 2011, p.9). This new framework of global civil society has evidently manifested a substantial shift from the classical period, because the previous conceptualizations of civil society did not embody globalization or global politics, but centered mainly on state relations. Also, all three of the current conceptualizations on the realm of civil society integrate global civil society into their discourses and agendas. To summarize, civil society has been accommodated to the current trends of the world by adopting new discourses and notions, such as: stressing autonomy, exhibiting global civil society, and more.

2.3. Civil Society in Turkey

First of all, as stated previously there are five fundamental conceptualizations of civil society, in which have evolved and transformed the arena itself. However, like every country the notion and scenario of civil society diverges and burgeons distinctly. For the case of Turkish civil society it cannot simply be explained as one specific strand of civil society, because the Turkish context exhibits many phases and alterations within its comprehension and outlook on the domain. Doubtlessly, throughout the years Turkish civil society has transformed and reoriented the sphere of civil society. On the other hand, before engaging with the transformations of the domain of Turkish civil society, first it is crucial to concentrate on how civil society is studied in Turkey. To begin with, the 1980s period in Turkey marks a critical standpoint for the research on civil society in the Turkish context, in which has triggered a critical modification in the conceptualization and administration of the domain of civil society. It can be stated that Turkish civil society became central from the mid-1980s onward, to some extent due to the discourse on the arena of civil society could be used by civic political forces to restrain military control on politics

in a scenario that regular party politics was not a choice (Kuzmanovic, 2012, p.12). Also, there are many other core reasons on why the 1980s represents a significant place for the study of Turkish civil society, which will be examined further.

One main rationale behind the impact of the 1980s is due to, the class structure, status, and cultural groups of Turkey were diversified and redesigned during this period (Şimşek, 2004, p.119). This diversification and reorganization of these groups, structures, and statuses during the 1980s generated great adjustments for the examination of civil society in Turkey, because this new environment nurtured the development of the arena of civil society by reshaping the values associated to the realm. It is crucial to point out what the values of the pre-1980s civil society constitutes in Turkey. Civil society in Turkey has been traditionally depicted as a weak, passive, controlled and/or channeled by the state through corporatist structures (Zencirci, 2011, p.61). These values linked to the pre-1980s Turkish civil society has been transformed through the 1980s Turkish civil society by modifying civil society into a more strong and autonomous field. In addition, another chief reason why the 1980s is fundamental in the name of Turkish civil society studies is mainly because of the outlook associated to it. The time period from the mid-1980s onward is linked to the notion of new history of civil society which subsumes democratization and opposition of the authoritarian state tradition as its crucial bases (Kuzmanovic, 2012, p.11). This new history of civil society discourse is closely intertwined with the 1980s in Turkey, principally because of the developments which took place in the historical context of the country.

Moreover, the 1980 military intervention is a pertinent event that triggered the 1980s to become a cardinal area for the study of Turkish civil society. The aftermath of the 1980 military intervention induced the comprehension of modernity to reorient in the 1980s (Zihnioglu, 2019, p.290). This change in the comprehension of modernity after the military intervention by redefining civil society to be enacted more freely paved way for the sphere of civil society to thrive, because previously civil society means, such as: civic activism was rather limited and restricted by the military intervention. Also, the 1980 military intervention was very discordant towards the realm of civil society by shutting down unions, religious associations, civil society organizations, and all political parties (Özler & Sarkissian, 2011, p.367).

However, following this situation the neoliberal ameliorations of the post-1980s have mitigated the legal restrictions on civil society organizations and a huge blooming for NGOs (Walton, 2018, p.14). These neoliberal reforms set forth by the former government towards the field of civil society has created freer space for civil society organizations and NGOs to enact their outlooks and motives, in comparison to the context prior to the 1980s. In addition, subsequent to the 1980 military coup the upsurge of civil society as a domain of social organization specializing in issue-based activities started to transpire to a great extent (Ergun, 2010, p.509). It can be argued that the 1980 military coup has unintentionally ushered in a novel period for the study of Turkish civil society by forming an independent arena for the implementation of the discourse of civil society, such as: executing issue-based operations instead of putting forth general enactments by organizations in this sphere.

On the other hand, not only has the historical Turkish context triggered Turkish civil society to revive in the 1980s, but the international arena has also played a critical role. After the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s, there has been a global rebirth of civil society and this global increase has not gone unrecognized in Turkey (Kuzmanovic, 2010, p.430). This worldwide upsurge of the domain of civil society during the 1980s has impacted Turkish civil society through many manners, mainly to interact with international realms. One fundamental way that Turkish civil society has been influenced by the events occurring in the international arena in the 1980s is visible through the nation's stance on the European enterprise. The European enterprise can be delineated as Turkey aiming to become a concrete part of the European agenda and incorporating the EU into its prospects as well. Also, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Turkey eagerly strived for its well established objective of full membership in the European Economic Community, and later, the EU (Oktem, 2011, p.57). This pursuit for both European Economic Community and the European Union by the nation has been shaped through the global arena. Doubtlessly, the strive for the arena of the EU has cultivated the domain of Turkish civil society, because this signified that new reforms and regulations had to be implemented towards the arena, such as: the European Union laws on civil society had to be administered into the Turkish

context. In addition, this aim for the European latter has given rise to the study of Turkish civil society in the late 1980s and early 1990s, because this European stance is a clear shift from the statist led understanding once endorsed in this field. Although, the 1980s represents a key focal point for the study of Turkish civil society for the major reasons previously put forth as for the significance of the international arenas and more, it is vital to set forth that the 1980s onward has also shaped the research on this field. Especially with the 1990s and early 2000s, Turkish civil society has evolved and altered with various critical transformations. On the other hand, the 1990s and early 2000s has also gained vast change through the new regulations and notions associated to the Turkish civil society discourse from the 1980s period and this has paved way for the 1990s and early 2000s to nurture and expand these outlooks and discourses as well. To summarize, the 1980s Turkish context towards civil society has transpired a new commencement by interlacing novel prospects and notions together, in which has created the civil society sphere to gain momentum for the research of Turkish civil society. To add on, the next subsection will concentrate on how the 1990s and the early 2000s civil society transformations has impacted the study of Turkish civil society and how this period has constructed a new phase for the enactment of the arena in the Turkish context.

2.4. Turkish Civil Society through the 1990s and Early 2000s

First and foremost, the 1990s and early 2000s in Turkey has fostered previous roots in relation to civil society, which stems from the 1980s period. One notion of this can be delineated as the endeavoring of the European Union arena by the Turkish forces. The Turkish-EU détente, which moderately reached more significance throughout the 1990s, further accelerated Turkey towards democratic reforms (Kuzmanovic, 2012, p.147). This internationalization perspective in the context of the 1990s and the early 2000s in Turkey has affected Turkish civil society vastly, mainly by giving more autonomous space and significance for the domain. In addition, this internationalization outlook of Turkey has also been a driving agency in the 1980s towards civil society, however the 1990s and the early 2000s Turkish state and society relations have embraced it even further. One crucial example of the

1990s and the early 2000s championing the internationalization sphere is visible through the Helsinki Summit of 1999. Arising from the European Union's acceptance of Turkey's candidacy in 1999, funding started to flow to Turkish civil society in an unparalleled amount (Zihnioglu, 2018, p.2). Without doubt, Turkey's approval of candidacy from the European Union has marked a critical transformation in the name of Turkish civil society, because it enabled major resources for funding for Turkish civil society organizations and similar actors. On the other hand, Turkey's candidacy integration with the European Union domain is not the only major transformation of the Turkish civil society discourse during the 1990s and early 2000s; in fact there are many other alterations which will be examined further. To continue, a fundamental change in the nature of Turkish civil society is evident through the impact of globalization. During the 1990s period in Turkey, there has been a notable qualitative and quantitative increase in civil society organizations, due to the influences of globalization and the crisis of the strong-state tradition (Keyman & İcduygu, 2003, p.226). These impacts produced by globalization has transformed the arena of Turkish civil society, because it opened way for civil society organizations to increase and this notion has fostered and elevated diverse civil society organizations to implement their discourses and beliefs, such as: feminist civil society organizations interacting with global realms. Moreover, another critical transformation of Turkish civil society during this period is visible through the aftermath of the 28 February process of 1997. However, before explaining the aftermath of the 28 February process of 1997 it is crucial to elucidate what this period designates. The February 28 process is perceived as the revival of the Kemalist one-party modernization model of the early Republican era and this time embodies to keep Islam from emerging in the public sphere, but rather preserving it within the private domain and constitutes the most extreme efforts at secularizing the country in Turkish history (Duran, 2004, p.130). Also, the 28 February process, which acted as a civic façade for a soft military intervention, the chief impediment towards the advancement of civil society in Turkey derives from the state's reluctance to respond to the requests of the people (Karaman & Aras, 2000, p.58). Indeed, during the 28 February process of 1997 brought distinct changes towards the state and society relations for the Turkish context, however the aftermath of this

intervention period produced the major modifications for Turkish civil society. One important transformation arising from the end of the 28 February process towards Turkish civil society is evident through the striving for the European Union enterprise. This endeavor in the EU has played a crucial role in civil society's beginning to enact a more fundamental position in Turkey (Heper & Yıldırım, 2011, p.7). Therefore, specifically with the late 1990s and early 2000s the development of Turkish civil society is linked to the self-empowerment of its actors which stems from grassroots activism and is also an outcome of the contact between domestic and international actors (Ergun, 2010, p.509). Also, another way the European Union arena has altered and shaped Turkish civil society is visible through the space it is has created for the demands of civil society actors. The EU also supplied reliability and legitimacy to the requests of civil society organizations in Turkey (Heper & Yıldırım, 2011, p.7). Above all, the aftermath of the 28 February process triggered the political atmosphere in Turkey to change. The cardinal change resulting from this period's reorientation of the political environment is the Justice and Development Party rising to eminence through their victory of the November 2002 Turkish elections. In fact, since the early 2000s until today the dominant party in Turkey is: the Justice and Development Party. Furthermore, the emergence of the Justice and Development Party during the early 2000s onward has brought a distinct agenda towards the arena of civil society in Turkey and this new outlook has restructured the enactment of the domain as well. To add on, the next subsection will pivot on how the Justice and Development Party has transformed the sphere of Turkish civil society since its rise to prominence.

2.5. Turkish Civil Society under the Justice and Development Rule

The Justice and Development Party rose to acclaim during the early 2000s, after their victory in the November 2002 elections in Turkey. The Justice and Development Party has modified the course of Turkish civil society with various enactments, such as: democratic consolidation and the Europeanization process. In fact, the Turkish civil society arena, in relation to the Justice and Development Party can be characterized as twofold. The first position can be described as: the Justice

and Development Party's government during its first term in office has asserted a pro-European policy and pro-democracy stance (Cop & Zihnioğlu, 2017, p.28). The second stance asserted by the Justice and Development Party's government can be denoted as authoritarian and Islamism orientated (Özpek & Yaşar, 2018, p.199). This twofold period within the JDP's positions towards the domain of civil society has transformed the arena itself, which will be exemplified further.

To begin with, the first period of the JDP has nourished the realm of civil society by putting forth pro-European and pro-democracy notions, which promotes a specific conceptualization of civil society. These measures conducted by the Justice and Development Party can be described as: the neoliberal conceptualization of civil society, through the interaction between the Turkish state and Islam (Walton, 2013, p.186). The neoliberal conceptualization of civil society enacted by the current political party in Turkey has been executed through many ways, such as: enthusiasm for the European Union and for democratic notions. In addition, during the first phase of the JDP the arena of Turkish civil society has been reshaped through the party's outlook on democracy. The Justice and Development Party elucidates itself as "conservative democrat," accepts secularism in governance, and behaves like a counterpart of European Christian Democratic parties (Atasoy, 2011, p.86). This novel outlook of conservative democracy by the Justice and Development government has gained major recognition by Turkish citizens', because secularist notions were a long time missing essence in state and society relations in Turkey. Also, conservative democracy incorporated into the JDP's governing agenda has altered the administration of civil society by bringing a distinct perspective towards the realm. In this conservative democracy outlook, calls for a transparent state, the rule of law, and human rights proliferated, rather than hostility between state and civil society and demands for the state's withdrawal from the civil societal arena (Köseoğlu, 2018, p.12). This stance put forth by the JDP towards the state and society relations differs from the previous enactments towards the domain, mainly because civil society was rather more under the administration under the state. Also, the JDP's first period during the 2000s the discourse on civil society has been redefined through the notion of democratization. From the early 2000s, the political elites and state elites have started to assess the notion of civil society as an essential

element for the democratic consolidation of Turkey, rather than on the basis as an instrument for shaping the society (Burak, 2011, p.68). This new meaning established towards the civil society notion has led the JDP to set forth different actions towards the field, because the arena had development a crucial significance for gaining democratization. One central aspect which correlates with the former stance administered by the JDP government is seen through the major measures taken towards democratization and the significant encouragement of women's rights, specifically due to the inducement of the Europeanization process (Koyuncu & Özman, 2019, p.1). These expedients implemented through the JDP towards democratization has created a positive place for state and society relations application, because in order to achieve and enhance democratic consolidation for Turkey it was vital to fulfill the necessary means for civil society, such as: promoting women's organizations and their demands. Moreover, another fundamental part in the modifications of the civil society arena by the first period of the Justice and Development Party is visible through the party's commitment to the European Union agenda. It can be asserted that the most significant historical development which opened the way for a more enriched civil society in Turkey in the 2000s can be directly linked to the EU membership process (Burak, 2011, p.68). This dedication towards the European Union discourse and process by the Turkish government during the 2000s roots can be traced backed to the 1980s onward, because since the 1980s the Turkish government and outlets have been striving for and engaging with the European Union realm which has promoted the enactment of civil society. However, what makes the 2000s Justice and Development government's stance towards the European Union agenda and membership process distinct from the previous scenarios is that the Justice and Development Party's support for the domain has gone hand in hand with its democracy perspective and the gains for democratization of Turkey. Also, the European Union arena has led Turkish civil society to prosper through its major role in state and society relations. An important function of the European Union towards the state and society relations in Turkey is that it played a role as a supporter and innovator in establishing assurance between the religious conservative and secularist counterparts in Turkish society (Grigoriadis, 2009, p.1194). It is evident that through the first period of the JDP and its

engagement with the European Union sphere that civil society had an eminent and thriving term, because the European Union fostered civil society into the Turkish state and society framework, through setting forth civil society notions, such as: supporting society segments.

Although, the first period of the JDP has promoted and enhanced Turkish civil society, the second phase of the Party is discrete from its former outlook towards the domain by implementing different measures and notions. First of all, one major way in which the JDP abandoned its previous discourse on civil society is seen through the revitalization of: political Islam. Political Islam, or in other terms, Islamism, refers to a political ideology, in which strives to give Islam a major function in political and public life (Özpek & Yaşar, 2018, p.202). This integration of political Islam into the agenda and implementation of the JDP has created problematic measures for the civil society field, mainly because the incorporation of political Islam restricts the growth of core notions associated to the realm, such as: the case of autonomy where civil society is rather controlled by the discourse of political Islam instead of being an independent field. Another way that political Islam restricts civil society in the Turkish context is by limiting the notion of freedom of religion, because by advocating political Islam a specific religious inclination persists. In addition, another aspect the JDP has abandoned its former perspective on civil society is visible through its dissimilar stance towards the European Union agenda. The second period of the Justice and Development Party connotes to the decrease in dedication and passion towards the European Union and becoming a European Union full member (Öniş & Yilmaz, 2009, p.13). As previously mentioned, the European Union agenda has been a driving force for the enactment of Turkish civil society since the 1980s onward, however with the second period of the JDP's loss of enthusiasm towards the European Union sphere the domain of civil society has been redefined through the major decrease of European Union agenda impacts.

Also, as put forth before in the first phase of the Justice and Development government, Turkish civil society possessed major importance for Turkish democratization and in terms of the European Union acceptance process, however this position asserted towards civil society shifted with the second period of the

government. Following the 2010 referendum and third general election victory of the Justice and Development Party in 2011, the European Union accession process mostly ceased to be an anchor for Turkey's democratization (Yilmaz et al., 2017, p.57). This decrease in the commitment of the European Union domain and the turn in Turkey's democratization outlook by the JDP has resulted in Turkish civil society to loss its former significance and blooming. In addition, while the JDP displayed a less interested approach towards the European Union during this period, it put forth a more prominent involvement towards its Eastern counterparts. Moreover, another way the JDP has shifted its administration towards the realm of civil society is visible through its new agenda. The Justice and Development Party integrates three core components into its agenda, in which are: conservatism, Islamism, and nationalism (Bozkurt, 2013, p.374). This agenda incorporated into the JDP's governing discourse through its second phase is evidently distinct from its previous outlooks during the early 2000s, because this new scheme has affected Turkish civil society in an incompatible manner by administering clashing notions within the civil society enactment, for instance: favoring religiously orientated mechanisms over independent agencies. The JDP has also put forth these three components of: conservatism, Islamism, and nationalism towards civil society by administering civil society through political Islam. Furthermore, with the JDP's latest agenda and implementation of different notions, the government has initiated a divergent phase for Turkey and essentially for the arena of civil society. Turkey has been experiencing a period of de-democratization and has transformed into a competitive authoritarian regime, particularly since 2015 (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019, p.94). This change in nature of the JDP into a competitive authoritarian regime with the notion of de-democratization has challenged the previously flourishing Turkish civil society organizations by creating restraints through its new government approach. The Justice and Development Party has openly and ruthlessly contained Turkish civil society by targeting the lawfulness and functioning of civil society groups that are considered either too vocal in their judgment or deal with highly-securitized matters (Yabancı, 2019, p.300). These specific civil society organizations can be illustrated as the independent women's organizations and civil society organizations associated to the aftermath of the 2013 Gezi demonstrations, which were previously promoted

now faced obstacles, because of their criticisms and/or outlooks and these obstacles were usually in the manner of being forced to shut down, facing backlash, and etc. However, despite the new agenda administered by the JDP has created restraints for Turkish civil society and diverse civil society organizations, this discourse administered by the government led a fundamental path for civil society organizations which shared similar views and notions, for example: religious organizations and vakifs. To summarize, the JDP's stance towards the arena of civil society has been exemplified through two vital shifts, the first being an advocate of democracy and interest in the European Union, however, the second phase of the party is illustrated as a promoter of political Islam, a decline in the European Union discourse, and more interest with its Eastern counterparts.



CHAPTER 3

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

3.1. Brief History of the Women's Movement in Turkey

The women's movement in Turkey has an extensive and deep history in itself. However, it is crucial to put forth that the women's movement in the Turkish context is diversified. There are four categories of women's organizations which indicate the dominant political cleavages in the Turkish context, in which are: Kurdish, Islamist, feminist, and Kemalist (secular) women's civil society organizations (Aksoy, 2018, p.103). This section will mainly concentrate on the Turkish women's movement as a whole. The women's movement in Turkey has transformed throughout history which has given rise to distinct periods, such as: the Ottoman modernization, the early Republic, the 1950s, the 1980s, the 1990s, the 2000s, and the 2010s.

First of all, the struggle for emancipation for women in Turkey dates back to the Ottoman Empire (Ayman, 2007, 103). The Ottoman Empire persevered and enacted its principles, through Islamic means. These Islamic measures through the Ottoman Empire are evident in how women were regulated and restricted through three primary domains, in which were: the clothes they wore, their image in the public arena, and their interactions with men (Çaha, 2013, p.33). These actions and policies enacted by the Ottoman Empire indeed restricted women to gain recognition in the public sphere and pushed these women back into the private domain. However, these aspects and outlooks on women changed drastically during the Ottoman modernization period. The Ottoman modernization period dates back to the

Tanzimat period, in which engaged with women's issues, such as: women's education and women's rights (Gündüz, 2004, p.115). The interaction with women's issues, such as women's education has had a positive effect for women and the women's movement in Turkey, because they were being acknowledged in the arena of public life and these women were separating themselves from the traditional women's roles, which the Ottoman Empire had once enforced upon them.

To continue, another central change in the history of the women's movement in Turkey dates back to the early Republican era of Turkey. As previously stated, the political and societal dimensions of the early Turkish Republic were quite different when compared with the Ottoman Empire, because the new Turkish Republic wanted to eradicate and distance themselves away from the former latter. Indeed, this outlook enacted by the early Republican period of Turkey has affected the women's movement too in various manners. One fundamental way the novel discourse of the early Republic of Turkey has transformed the women's movement is seen through its adaption of rapid Westernization, modernization, and urbanization, which women played an essential factor (Diner & Toktaş, 2010, p.43). However, problems indeed occurred for the women's movement in Turkey, because women were merely seen as an instrumental means, rather than concentrating on their issues and rights, the secular state utilized the sphere of women to implement their projects and goals, such as: employing the women dimension to gain recognition by the West as a modern country, utilizing women to encourage urbanization, and more. Also, another major way that the early Turkish Republic had altered the women's movement is seen through its aim, in which through the Kemalist discourse was to withdraw from political, social, and cultural exemption of the Ottoman Empire (Walton, 2018, p.7). This aim through the secular framework had major consequences for the women's movement in Turkey, due to, diverging from the Ottoman Empire connoted to dismissing the modernization process, which adopted women into the public sphere of Turkish society. On the other hand, the exclusion of the notions associated to the Ottoman Empire by the early Turkish Republic towards the sphere of women has also encouraged vital changes in the arena itself. One of the most prominent transformations in this line is seen through the incorporation of the new civil code of Turkey, which was adopted from the Swiss in 1926, which granted vital and equal

rights to women in personal status problems, for instance divorce, marriage, inheritance, custody over children, and more (Toprak, 1996, p.115). The new Turkish civil code has vigorously supported women by enhancing their status, pushing forward for their recognition in the public domain, and advocating for core equal rights. An additional modification in the discourse of the early Republican Turkish context is visible through their stance on women's voting rights. A milestone in the Turkish women's movement is evident when women were granted the right to vote first in municipal elections in 1930 and then in general elections in 1934, which was made possible, due to, women's campaigning and the Turkish Republican state's consenting encouragement (Diner & Toktaş, 2010, p.44). Doubtlessly, Turkish women gaining voting rights has marked a critical time, because the women's movement procured a great voice and obtained a concrete place within the public arena, where the majority of the time was dominated by men.

Additionally, a distinct period for the Turkish women's movement is marked by the context of the 1950s in Turkey, which is an important shift from the previous era of the early Turkish Republican period, because it is characterized by the rise of the multi-party system. An eminent delineation of this period which differed from the former in relation to the women's movement is seen through: the portrayal of women's organizations. In this period, there was a major elevation in the number of women's organizations; however the majority of these organizations executed and advocated for women's roles within the family arena rather than to accentuating women's rights (Azak & Smaele, 2016, p.44). This outlook on women's roles being intertwined with the domain of family relations, as opposed to women's rights is a concrete discourse held within conservative women's groups in Turkey. Also, the political and ideological atmosphere of the multi-party period of the 1950s has indeed affected the women's movement as well. One prominent way that this is visible is with the increase of a more conservative atmosphere throughout the 1950s period. Contemporary Islamist movements in the Turkish context surfaced after the 1950s (Göle, 1997, p.52). With the emergence of a more conservative political and social environment within Turkey, especially through the rise of conservative movements has influenced the women's movement to provide room for conservative agendas and notions too. Also, the 1950s has affected the women's movement to

apprehend and adjust to the conservative political understanding while setting forth their discourses and beliefs, such as: the women's movement being less vocal to conservative agendas due to the ideology present during the 1950s Turkish context.

Moreover, the 1980s is indeed is another central phase for the women's movement in Turkey, because as previously put forth the 1980s in Turkey was denoted by a military intervention. However, after the military intervention ended the Motherland Party rose to power and set forth the political atmosphere in Turkey, in which held both notions of Islamism and neoliberalism and has shaped the women's movement as well. One core way the political atmosphere in the 1980s modified the women's movement is visible through the Kemalist interpretation of the notion of women's rights was being interrogated by the women's movement by criticizing the Kemalist projects of modernity and its consequences for women (Arat, 2000, p.112). The secularist interpretation of the outlook towards women's rights can be illustrated as a statistic stance with critical notions intertwined within it, such as: modernization and Westernization. It can be argued that these notions administered by the secular elite has cultivated a specific kind of woman's image, which can be mainly described as a more Western and secular looking woman. One main reason for the critique of the secular interpretation of the view on women is stemmed from the 1980s political and ideological outlook, which can be characterized as a pro-Islamic manner. The Turkish women's movement during the 1980s incorporated the upsurge of political Islam and Islamist organizations (Landig, 2011, p.207). This can be expressed as that the women's movement in Turkey during the 1980s were heterogeneous in nature, because it embodied conservative women and feminist women. In addition, another way that the 1980s through incorporating Islamism and neoliberal notions has transformed the women's movement is perceptible with the women's movements stance on international issues. Although, distinct groups that established themselves as radical or leftist feminists rose to prominence during the 1980s, these different groups were unified by the issue of domestic violence (Arat, 1998, p.119).

Also, an additional important period for the women's movement in the Turkish context is marked by the 1990s and early 2000s, due to, the embodiment of new outlooks. There are many ways these new perspectives can be illustrated, however it can be mainly put forth as the emergence of the understanding female

emancipation and advocating for the public sphere. One critical way these new outlooks were fostered during the 1990s and 2000s by the Turkish women's movement is evident by women questioning their secondary position into a social problem (Leyla, 2011, p.7). Without doubt, this period has paved the way for protests and the recognition of women as a crucial component of the public sphere. However, as previously stated, in the Turkish context the 1990s and early 2000s has adopted various notions and discourses associated to the 1980s in Turkey and these developments have also affected the realm of the women's movement. Moreover, the recognition and support of political Islam equated to the 1980s in Turkey is promoted and revitalized through the state and society relations in the 1990s and early 2000s too. Clearly, the endorsement of political Islam and other notions linked to the 1980s in Turkey have reemerged during the 1990s and early 2000s which has also shaped the Turkish women's movement. A critical way these outlooks have resurfaced is evident through the veiled women in Turkey in the 1990s as a response to male dominance (Müftüler-Bac, 1999, p.308). Although the comprehension of Turkish veiled women is usually associated to the dichotomy of female subordination under male domination, through the Turkish women's movement in the 1990s and early 2000s this understanding was clearly challenged by the arena of Turkish women as a whole by countering this belief on the basis of female emancipation. On the other hand, it is apparent that the Turkish women's movement during this period similar to the former period is mainly intertwined with a particular Turkish women's image. This image can be delineated as religious a Muslim woman perception, because these women started to transform their identities and call for participation rather than representation, and these women who wore headscarves formed various organizations to engage in the Turkish women's movement and the political arena as well (Ozcetin, 2009, p.111). The religious Turkish Muslim women perception has modified the previous Turkish women image through incorporating multiple notions of Islam, such as: headscarves and religiosity. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that another fundamental phase in the Turkish women's movement is evident in the period from the 2000s onward, in which can be described as the encompassment of the transformations by the Justice and Development Party. The

next subsection will concentrate on how the Turkish women's movement has been shaped and transformed through the discourses, notions, and outlooks of the JDP.

3.2. The Women's Movement in Turkey and Gender Politics

First of all, the 2000s onward constitutes another central period for the Turkish women's movement. This epoch in the Turkish context is marked mainly by the JDP's advancement and various discourses and notions it has incorporated and administered towards the women's movement. One of the most prominent discourses the JDP government asserts is to proclaim a vision on the gender notion, through adopting religious and conservative values (Diner, 2018, p.103). These religious and conservative notions integrated into the gender discourse has doubtlessly affected the women's movement in Turkey, because this outlook asserted by the JDP has embodied women in which have supported this particular stance, rather than advancing and incorporating all types of women and beliefs. However, as previously stated in relation to state and society relations, the JDP's administration can be characterized as twofold, the first being as a promoter of democracy, the promotion of the European Union arena, and a more mediocre stance towards secularism (Cop & Zihnioğlu, 2017, p.28). The second period of the party can be portrayed as a supporter of political Islam, a decline in the domain of the European Union discourse, and more attentiveness towards its Eastern counterparts (Bozkurt, 2013, p.392). Not only has these notions and discourses of the JDP effected the Turkish state and society relations, but also, the women's movement. Indeed, both shifts within the stance and enactment of the JDP has modified and influenced the Turkish women's movement. Additionally, during the first phase of the JDP, the women's movement has faced many crucial progresses within the movement and for gender relations, mainly due to, the major interest in the European Union accession and its relations with the realm itself. One important way this situation is visible, is through the direct coerce put forth by the European Union or clear treaty responsibilities for particular gender-based legislation under CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), in general the Justice and Development Party indulged in the women's movements policy proposals, even

when the general public opinion promoted traditional values over gender equality (Negrón-Gonzales, 2016, p.199). This specific position and enactment implemented by the JDP towards the women's movements proposals and suggestions can be largely associated to the party's enthusiasm with the European Union, their striving to become a member of the realm, and to be the role model of the Middle East, because some of the fundamental agendas of the European Union is related to enhance women's positions and promote women's recognition in the political domain.

Another critical way that the first term of the JDP has positively impacted the Turkish women's movement is seen through: the party's embodiment of the discourse of gender equality. The consolidation of the notion of gender equality by the Justice and Development Party, in accordance with the party's EU accession vision, has validated remarkable improvements in the realm of women's rights by integrating and implementing the notion in to the Constitution (in 2004 and 2010), the Penal Code (in 2004) and the Labor Code (in 2003), and by initiating an Equal Opportunity Commission in the Parliament in 2009 (Çağatay, 2018, p.50). Without doubt, the integration of the discourse of gender equality into various core legislations and codes has cultivated the Turkish women's movements demands and proposals, mainly because; the women's movement has been long striving for the incorporation of gender equality into the Turkish state dimension, the arena of law, and the realm of society. Although, the synthesis of gender equality into vital components of the Turkish state and society relations has resulted in pivotal transformations for the women's movement, the main rationale behind the Justice and Development Party's was not based on the women's movement, but rather constructed on the party's interest in the European Union. In fact, gender equality is a "conditionality" to be attained by prospect nations in order to be evaluated for EU membership in the context of EU accession and integration process (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2008, p.199). Clearly, during the first phase of the JDP, their policies and prospects in the realm of foreign policy leaned towards the West, especially towards the European Union realm and this proclivity has led the Turkish government to take action for the necessary requirements to fulfill what it takes to become an European

Union member and this also connoted to setting forth frameworks and actions related to gender equality.

On the other hand, it is critical to put forth that while the JDP displayed substantial interest in the arena of the EU, many Turkish feminists and women's organizations, in which constituted a major portion of the women's movement have also engaged with the EU dimension and its actors to implement gender policies, particularly on gender equality. An example of this state of affairs is visible through, how Turkish feminists are asserting new issues to the surface by demanding women's political participation in the public sphere and this goes analogous with the EU's stance on underrepresented women in the political arena (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2008, p.206). Also, these interactions between the Turkish women's movement and the EU constitutes utmost significance for the movement in itself, because of the outlook held by the Justice and Development government towards the EU sphere, the women's movement was in position to initiate a critical and exigent force within the Turkish state and society relations and with regard to the policies of the JDP. A manifest aspect of this affiliation is evident in the EU's bidding and pressure on Turkish civil society to allow women's NGOs to take a critical part in governmental decision making and has implemented Turkish feminists with a powerful say in social policy and for the future decision-making processes (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2008, p. 207). Indeed, the EU's power over the Turkish civil society domain and ultimately over the JDP has led them to instigate the acknowledgement of feminists and more so the women's movement and to establish the movement with a prominent place in political and social policies. In addition, another way the women's movement and the EU set forth liaisons is evident through the promotion of women's related policies and notions through projects. The EU has financed women's empowerment projects in Turkey with the majority of them concentrating on endorsing Turkish women to enact a more vigorous entrepreneurship role and to expand the percentage of women in the workforce (Landig, 2011, p.206). These projects and reciprocities between the European Union and women's movement has exerted significant influence in the name of gender relations and exercised great pressure on the Turkish government to become aware of gender relations and to enact them, such as: EU projects concerning women's rights, projects funded by the

EU on domestic violence, and more. Although, during the first term of the JDP, the Turkish women's movement mostly burgeoned and generally faced positive interchanges, during the second phase of the party this situation changed substantially. As previously put forth, the second period of the JDP can be mainly characterized as: a champion of political Islam, the diminishment of its enthusiasm with the arena of the European Union, and an inclination towards its Eastern counterparts. It is discernible that all of these notions and outlooks associated to the JDP has modified the realm of the women's movement through many ways, in which has engendered the movement to face mostly negative ramifications.

Moreover, the various alterations towards the women's movement administered by the JDP will be exemplified further. To begin with, one major way the Justice and Development government shifted from its former outlook is evident through the incorporation of political Islam, in which has tarnished the women's movement through binding women to gendered discourses. Gendered discourses presenting women's primary role as wives and mothers under the family organization obtained an increased prominence under the JDP's conservatism, which resulted in women's further coercing by patriarchal culture and their economic underdevelopment, while Turkey has the widest male-female employment gap in the world (İlkkaracan, 2012, p.17). This conservative agenda and gendered discourse enacted by the JDP, such as: associating women to being mothers and wives has truly deteriorated the aims and objectives of the women's movement, because merely linking women to being mothers and wives pushes back women into the private sphere where there is no room for the political or public statement to be performed. An additional manner the JDP has reoriented the women's movement is visible through their abandonment of the domain of the EU. As mentioned earlier, the EU has brought various crucial transformations and policies towards the Turkish women's movement, mainly in the name of: gender equality and this is partly linked to the interests and commitments of the JDP towards the European Union accession. However, this period can be elucidated as an antifeminist discursive regime under the JDP rule, which denotes to the dismissal of the notion of gender equality, because the government basis its rejection of the term as not abiding by the party's principles originating from Islamic notions (Unal, 2015, p.14). Indeed, during the first phase of

the JDP, the notion of gender equality flourished within the women's movement, largely because the party fostered the EU agenda, on the other hand, after the dismissal of the agendas of the EU the term itself and its implications was rejected and a central rationale for this was the party's the politicization of religion (Islamism).

Moreover, another obstacle the women's movement has faced through the second phase of the JDP is observable through the party's gendered perspectives. An example of this gendered outlook is apparent through the modification of the Ministry of Women and Family to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2011, which constituted both a symbolic and a structural transformation concerning the ways in which the ruling political elite affiliating to the conservative ideology conceived of women's issues (Nas, 2016, p.179). Another way the JDP administers gendered perspectives towards women is visible through their utilization of the term: "gender justice" over the notion of gender equality. According to Aydın Yılmaz, the founding President of the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM), the term of 'gender justice' is asserted in opposition to gender equality, because the discourse on equality is put forth by Western culture which endeavors to equalize women and men, but the framework on justice is higher-ranking and the mentality of equality is already integrated and incorporates equity, balance, and a better consciousness of fair action, and liabilities in relation to women and men (2015, p.108). It is important to set forth that the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM) is a major conservative women's organization under the administration of the Justice and Development government and it is clear that one reason for the employment of "gender justice" stems from the rejection of Western culture, which is one of the features associated to the second period of the party. Unfortunately, the concept of: 'gender justice' is very problematic for the women's movement and controversial for many reasons. One central problem with the enforcement of 'gender justice' is that it stresses the natural differences of gender relations and puts forth that these differences cannot and should not be changed or eliminated, while gender equality conceals these differences (Diner, 2018, p.106). This focus on natural differences by "gender justice" generates and reinforces women to be in a subordinate and secondary position under men, because the term does not advocate for equality, but

rather exemplifies differences which clearly enhances and maintains sexist and domination ridden views, which the women's movement is strictly against. Also, the term "gender justice" advocated by the JDP and organizations which hold similar views is buttressed by them, such as: conservative women's organizations, because it fits well with their conservative gender discourse, for instance: women should be mothers and wives, and this pushes the women's movement which promotes gender equality out of the domain itself and left with little to no say.

In addition, throughout the JDP's second period there is a reoccurring theme of: conservative women's organizations and it is crucial to delineate what they signify. To summarize, the JDP's engagement and position towards the Turkish women's movement can be demonstrated as twofold similar to the essence of the party's stance towards the field of civil society, mainly due to, the first period of the party can be illustrated as progressive towards women's policies and agendas, enthusiasm with the EU framework, and an advocate for democracy, on the other hand, the second period can be encapsulated as a dismissive outlook towards the EU discourse, a champion of political Islam, and less inclined to the women's outlooks and interests. Furthermore, it is crucial to concentrate and engage with Turkish civil society through the period of the JDP with the discourse of gender politics and this section will also center on how the JDP administered fundamental transformations for conservative women's organizations through this discourse.

Civil society is one of the most fundamental means for gender politics to interact and overcome the challenges that women face and deal with throughout their lives. Although, the former arenas of civil society in the Turkish context mostly enabled and implemented these means for all strata of Turkish women, this is not the case anymore in the realm of contemporary Turkish civil society. It is essential to put forth what the period of contemporary Turkish civil society connotes to, in which can be described as the time span of the 2000s onwards in Turkey. Turkish civil society through the time span of the 2000s onwards can be characterized mainly as the ascendancy of the Justice and Development Party. As previously stated, the civil society domain, in accordance with the JDP's rule can be defined as twofold. Also, in the above-mentioned sections the first phase of the JDP by means of the incorporation of civil society was exemplified through various manners, such as: the

engagement with the arena of the EU, measures taken in accordance with democratization, and the implementation of crucial policies and legislation in the name of gender relations, which have generally ended in positive outcomes in relation to gender politics.

Even though, the first term of the JDP has somewhat generated constructive ends for the discourse of gender politics, this definitely does not signify affirmative action. One major problem arising from the first period of the JDP is evident through the government's promotion of universal principles, such as democracy, civilization, human rights, and the European Union membership to emancipate various marginalized social actors, covering both pious Muslims and liberals and through these means to subvert the secular-establishment's and military's impact over politics (Özpek & Yaşar, 2018, p.203). This specific attitude put forth by the Turkish government, demonstrates that the championing of certain universal notions and principles through the sphere of civil society was not purely intended nor advocated for gender politics, but rather aimed at imposing the government's own agendas and missions, in order to consolidate its position and empower previously excluded groups, such as: devoted Muslims. In addition, another vexed aspect of the first phase of the JDP towards gender politics is visible through its position and intension regarding the headscarf issue. Without doubt, the headscarf issue has asserted strains for conservative women in Turkey and in the name of gender politics by restricting a woman's basic and fundamental right of expressing one's religion. Consequently, the JDP acknowledged this problematic arena and utilized the civil society domain to interact with this issue, mainly through proposing policies and laws to induce change and generate consciousness. However, these actions set forth by the Justice and Development government has prompted controversy stemming from various reasons. The chief reason for viewing the stance and actions undertaken by the Turkish government as problematic for gender politics arises from that the Justice and Development Party regards Islamist women's occupancy in the public arena as a means of empowering the symbolic presence of Islam in state and society relations, instead of emancipating women's individual autonomy or independence (Aksoy, 2015, p.161). Although, the first period of the JDP intertwined with the field of civil society has produced several negative results in the name of gender politics, the

second period of the party has gone even further by generating numerous adverse effects on gender politics and tarnished its interactions and collaborations with the domain of civil society. The second period of the JDP administration can be exemplified through the time period of 2011 onwards. Also, the second period stance asserted by the Justice and Development Party's government can be denoted as authoritarian and Islamism orientated (Özpek & Yaşar, 2018, p.199). To summarize, the first term of the JDP has embodied core notions associated to gender politics and employed these discourses throughout the sphere of civil society predominantly to fortify its agendas and policies and to confirm its power dynamic in state and society relations. Conversely, it would be problematic to generalize that the Turkish government's utilization of gender politics in its first phase did not provide any beneficial effects for gender relations; indeed it stimulated and produced crucial transformations for women, but in minimal degree. In addition, this subsection will centre on how the second period of the JDP has exploited the civil society arena to modify and criticize the notion of gender politics and diminish the interactivity between the two.

Unequivocally, the interactions and cooperation between the realm of civil society and gender politics has indeed illuminated and elevated fundamental measures for women. These means have been mainly enacted through the formulation of women's civil society organizations, in which has generated a substantial amount of transformations, such as: consolidating women's policies and agendas, empowering women's voices, and advocating gender equality. In spite of the advancements and ameliorations carried out previously in the name of gender politics through the field of women's civil society organizations, there have been clear obstacles emerging towards these means by the current Turkish Government.

As mentioned earlier, the current Turkish government's administration towards the domain of civil society can be identified through two main periods and this segment will concentrate on the second period of the JDP. First of all, it is crucial to briefly outline the second phase of the present-day Turkish government's positions toward the civil society arena to understand the obstacles towards the development of gender politics. One major approach of the JDP towards the domain of civil society is seen through its attitude towards democratization, in which

deviates from the party's former outlook. The JDP government shifted its position on democratization after 2011; this has put forth strains on feminist civil society organizations, because the JDP has demonstrated rising authoritarianism and "religio-conservative" notions in its outlook and practices (Aksoy, 2018, p.105). This new framework adopted by the JDP during its second phase in power, has undeniably created severe burdens for gender politics, because adhering to discourses of authoritarianism and "religio-conservative" beliefs, instead of adopting the key feature of democratization diminishes the efficacy of civil society by having overall control of the arena through authoritarian modes and this connotes to the ultimate authority over women's civil society organizations and their objectives concerning gender politics. Another prime stance the JDP asserts towards the field of civil society is visible through its incorporation of political Islam. The once championed liberal democratic values by the JDP government have lost their importance and relevance for the Islamist discourse during the second and third terms of the party (Köseoğlu, 2018, p.19). The rejection of liberal democratic values by the JDP for political Islam discourses and notions has modified the realm of civil society into a domain pervaded with the politicization of religion, which has stimulated the outlook of Islam towards gender relations. This perception of conservative values towards the implementation of gender relations has affected gender politics and women's civil society organizations as well. The strategic partialities of the JDP administration in the post-2011 period in terms of gender issues marks an attempt to modify the borders of civil society with regards to its own interests and formulate its own "civil society actors" (Koyuncu & Özman, 2019, p.10). It is visible that the JDP government fostering an Islam orientated attitude in line with gender relations creates a specific inclination and bias towards women who endorse Islamic values rather than incorporating all women through the agenda of gender politics. Although, the JDP during its second period of governing has enacted cardinal positions and notions towards the civil society field which has resulted in major problems for gender politics and women's civil society organizations, it is clear that these discourses has prompted a distinct type of organization. As the JDP government gained more power, there has been a major increase in the amount of Islamist organizations and they have comprised a substantial segment of Turkish

civil society (Zihnioğlu, 2018, p.39). Clearly, the new outlook of the JDP towards the domain of civil society has paved way for the rise of conservative organizations which has gained dominance over Turkish state and society relations.

However, an essential question emerges which is: how has the progression of conservative women's organizations through the realm of Turkish civil society affected the field of gender politics and the interactions with women's civil society organizations? To begin with, the rise of conservative women's organizations has generated many consequences for gender politics and women's civil society organizations which will be elucidated further. Without doubt, one crucial aspect regarding the cultivation of conservative women's organizations is its association with the administration of the JDP. The JDP government endeavored to construct a conservative society based on its interpretation of religious tradition and commenced to build and finance its own women's civil society organizations, mainly executed by the female representatives of the JDP leadership (Aksoy, 2018, p.106). This establishment of conservative women's civil society organizations through the conceptions and agendas of the JDP has affected other women's civil society organizations in a negative manner, because the conservative women's civil society organizations are not autonomous from the state and enact proclivity towards the government's discourses on gender relations, which comprises religious and conservative views which are opposed to the very essence of gender politics. Additionally, another critical problem concerning the formulation of conservative women's organizations through the leadership of the JDP is evident in their objectives. Striving to profit from the increasing solidarity among women, the JDP government has created and fostered its own women's organizations - even though these organizations were established under a man's orders and have become solely window dressing (Nazlıaka, 2017, p.53). These intentions asserted through the current government's contrivance of conservative women's organizations are visibly paradoxical, because aiming to benefit from the solidarity among women by creating one's own women's organization/s through male power discourses creates and reinforces the problematic scheme of male domination and this truly contradicts with the main purpose of women's civil society organizations. Also, it is important to state that fundamentally it is not possible to identify the JDP government as a pro-

women's rights political party (Çosar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011, p.563). The JDP establishing and supporting conservative women's organizations is not aimed at advocating nor empowering women, but rather assimilating their conservative norms and religiously disposed traditional values into the state and society relations, in which is utmost discernible through the party's denouncement of gender politics. As previously set forth, the realm of gender politics has inaugurated vital measures for women, such as: emancipating women's voices, consolidating women's policies and agendas, urging gender equality, and encouraging the liberation of women from traditional roles, mainly by conducting these means through women's civil society organizations. On the other hand, the current Turkish government's execution of conservative and religiously oriented traditional discourses and values are antithetical to gender politics and the JDP has put forth core strains towards the arena of gender politics through various ways, which has created deterioration in the advancement of women whom do not fit under these discourses and values.

Moreover, one prime way that the JDP opposes the notions and conceptions related to gender politics is evident in their conservative perception of women. The JDP government has put forth their conservative agenda towards women by conceiving them solely in accordance to heteronormative family roles, which equals to being mothers and wives as opposed to free individuals; this conservative framework has led to detrimental consequences for women regarding their public visibility and economic contribution (Nas, 2016, p.179). This conservative conception of women implemented and relished by the JDP has truly impaired the objectives of gender politics, because associating women to heteronormative family roles pushes back women into the private sphere where there is no room for the political or public statement to be performed and the liberation of women from traditional gender roles are undermined. Moreover, another prominent manner the current Turkish government challenges the discourses related to gender politics is visible in their rhetoric. The JDP government accentuates on the "strong Turkish family" outlook and this demonstrated in its anti-abortionist and pro-birth language use (Sümer & Eslen-Ziya, 2015, p.6). This traditionalist and conservative rhetoric set forth by the JDP has degraded the aims and conceptions of gender politics by situating women merely into traditional family roles which is incompatible with the

emancipation of women, because positioning women into the family arena upholds and promotes the subordination of women through the private domain. Also, in relation to the JDP's language use a further problem arises for the execution of gender politics, because of the party's proclamations about pro-birth matters, women are viewed only as reproductive beings (mothers) and indeed this rhetoric put forth by the government interferes with women's body politics by asserting an anti-abortionist outlook the government is enacting as a decision maker on women's bodies and their choices. Also, an additional way the JDP dismisses the implementation of gender politics is evident in their championing of conservative women's civil society organizations over independent women's civil society organizations. The formation and endorsement of these organizations by the government is that they have served means to marginalize and drown out the voices of women's civil society organizations which are condemnatory of and/or actively challenge state power (Doyle, 2018, p.457). The creation and advocacy of conservative women's civil society organizations by the current government has by all means achieved to marginalize independent women's civil society organizations and this has led to the debilitation of gender politics, mainly due to, the core way gender politics is enacted is through the domain of women's civil society organizations, however, the JDP's bias and promotion of conservative women's civil society organizations over the independent women's civil society organizations has tarnished these means of gender politics to flourish. To conclude, during the second period of the JDP, the field of gender politics has faced a major downturn due to the current Turkish government's conservative discourses and religiously disposed traditional outlooks which were largely administered through conservative women's civil society organizations and these organizations have led to the marginalization of women's civil society organizations which had previously advocated and generated great means for the cultivation of gender politic

CHAPTER 4

THE EMERGENCE OF CONSERVATIVE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

4.1. The Birth of Conservative Women's Organizations: Orthodox vs. Reformist

The aim of this chapter to elucidate the formation of conservative women's organizations, illustrate the connections between the Turkish social and political contexts with these conservative women's organizations establishments, put forth the frameworks these conservative women's organizations employ, and explain the activities these organizations put forth throughout their structures. Also, this chapter will discuss the significance of Turkish social and political contexts dates and intertwine this field with the 10 conservative women's organizations foundation dates. Then, this chapter will largely focus on the discourses of institutionalization, professionalization, and volunteerism that the conservative women's organizations implement in their particular framework and discuss why they specifically administer them. After, the activities and operations these organizations set forth will be discussed and why they perform the particular activity as well. Also, this chapter will structure on the cooperation of conservative women's organizations. Finally, the chapter will concentrate and discuss through what means these conservative women's organizations set forth their activities, such as: financial resources.

In spite of conservative women's organizations are mostly associated to the period of the JDP; the conservative women's organizations roots can be traced back to earlier periods. However, before illustrating the background context on this arena, it is important to define what conservative women's organizations signify. Islamist/conservative women are one of the meticulously analyzed women's groups in Turkey (Aksoy, 2015, p.152). Consequently, various debates have risen to

prominence on how to classify conservative women and what they mean. However, before engaging with the debates on the classification of conservative women and their organizations, it is essential to clarify what they signify. Conservative women comprise of a heterogeneous group of individuals which generally formulate their solidarity under the terms of religion (Islam), constitute a part of the Turkish women's movement, and construct women's rights mainly in terms of family and gendered roles. Also, one main discussion on the categorization of conservative women and their organizations emerges from the representation of Islam. It is deceptive to depict Islam as an undivided whole and those who pick to be Muslims as followers of a homogenous worldview (Kadioğlu, 2005, p.26). Therefore, it is fundamental to recognize and integrate the diverse nature of Islam while defining conservative women's organizations. Also, the notion of conservative women's organizations in Turkey can be elucidated in a broad sense as a heterogeneous group organized by women whom are the adherent of Islam and/or political Islam, which adhere to their participation in the public sphere with their religion, especially with their headscarves and concentrate on women's rights mainly through gendered roles. It is visible through this definition that these organizations and the conservative women who control and manage them diverge from the core formulation Turkish women's movement through many aspects. Thus, this section will mainly focus on the distinctions between conservative women's organizations and the Turkish women's movement by engaging with the conservative women's organizations framework and notions associated to it through incorporating its background context as well. However, it is vital to set forth that this section embodies the Turkish women's movement, mainly through its branch of: feminism and the conservative women are also a core part of the Turkish women's movement as well.

To begin with, the Islamist women's movement started developing in the early 1980s (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2005, p.106). With the development of the conservative women's movement in the 1980s, various conservative women's organizations establishment can be traced back to this period as well. Although, the 1980s period constitutes a vital standpoint for the foundation of the conservative women's organizations, it is crucial to examine why this period plays such an important role and what were the underlying objectives for their creation. The 1980s

period in Turkey is represented as a key place for the formation of conservative women's organizations for many reasons; however it can be asserted that three core factors have contributed to this attribution: 1. the development of civil society (Isik, 2014), 2. the political atmosphere made accessible for Islamists through the politicization of Islam (political Islam) (Müftüler-Bac, 1999), and 3. the headscarf issue (Ozcetin, 2009). As a result, with the 1980s period as Islam politicized, Islamist women surfaced as militant activists, the veiled women became the symbol of activism for political Islam, while simultaneously; these women represented the boundary line between Islamists and secular Westernists (Müftüler-Bac, 1999, p.308). The employment of political Islam by conservative women and their organizations was a means to promote consciousness and visibility in the public sphere with their religion and traditional norms. Also, the utilization of political Islam by these women and their organizations plays a core role in their profiling, because it created the notion of being a political symbol and statement. Despite the fact that, political Islam signifies a critical focal point of why the 1980s period represented a major era for conservative women's organizations, there were chief aims as well which generated the realms emergence. As previously stated in Turkey during the 1980s political Islam was a driving agency, mainly through state and society relations and also the 1980s period was a main axis for the study of Turkish civil society. In addition, it can be argued that one core factor contributing to the emergence of the conservative women's movement and their organizations during this time period is the political atmosphere made available for them through the politicization of Islam and the accessibility of the realm of civil society for their organizations to prosper. In fact, with the 1980s period as Islam politicized, Islamist women surfaced as militant activists, the veiled women became the symbol of activism for political Islam, while simultaneously; these women represented the boundary line between Islamists and secular Westernists (Müftüler-Bac, 1999, p.308). The utilization of political Islam by conservative women and their organizations is a visible difference with the Turkish women's movement, because the Turkish women's movement did not integrate the domain of religion into their agendas nor discourses. Additionally, another distinction between the conservative women's movement and the feminist branch of the Turkish women's movement is

evident through their stances towards the “woman question”. The “woman question” was instituted to the Islamist movements’ framework in the 1980s with the headscarf issue (Ozcetin, 2009, p.109). The headscarf issue constituted as a fundamental pillar for conservative women’s framework, mainly because of their demands for visibility and participation in the public sphere with their religious beliefs. Also, conservative women established platforms to debate their right to wear headscarves and these platforms assisted the increase in public visibility of these women and expand their existence in civic life (Arat, 2008, p.411). However, with the headscarf debate by the conservative women and their organizations an opposing view emerged within the Turkish women’s movement towards this discourse, predominantly by the movement’s feminist branch. For feminists, the turban (headscarf) acts as a symbol of the sexist status quo of the Islamist movement implementing a sexist division towards women, such as: women belonging in the household, while men took control of the public sphere (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2005, p.109). On the other hand, conservative women questioned this outlook put forth by the Turkish women’s movement towards the headscarf issue usually on the basis that the headscarf liberates and provides women with freedom.

To add on, the headscarf issue proclaimed by conservative women and their organizations in Turkey has gained a new momentum with the 1990s. Stemming from the 1990s, the issue of removing the so-called headscarf ban has been expressed more and more as a human rights issue and also regularly discussed as a universal right (Kuzmanovic, 2012, p.37). This outlook put forth by conservative women with the incorporation of democratic rights notions can be intertwined with the encompassment of the internationalization perspective during the 1990s and early 2000s, which has also influenced Turkish state and society relations. The significance of human rights and personal liberties, especially through the headscarf-ban issue was stressed by Islamists and is to some extent connected with the Turkey’s EU membership endeavoring, which has created this stance to facilitate as part of addressing and tackling the secular state authoritarianism (Duran, 2004, p.128). One primary reason for conservative women embracing the EU as a means for underlining the headscarf implementation as a human rights issue can be connected to the fact that this international field provides more autonomy for

individuals by justifying their human rights issues and countering any authoritarian tendencies administered by the state.

Moreover, as mentioned previously during the 1990s period Turkish state and society relations were affected by the influences of globalization, in which resulted in the diversity and increase of civil society organizations in Turkey. Accordingly, the 1990s Turkish context observed the development of Islamic women as a crucial civil society movement (Müftüler-Bac, 1999, p.308). This rise of conservative women as a vital civil society agency has played as an essential part in conservative women's organizations to gain further recognition and prominence in the field of Turkish state and society relations. However, during the 1990s a major event occurred, in which was called: the 28 February process of 1997 and as previously stated this process was delineated as a soft military intervention. The 28 February process of 1997 represented a problematic time, mostly for conservative women and their organizations, because during this period Turkish state and society relations faced distinct changes from this process, mainly through the strict actions administered towards the notion of political Islam. One core part of the 28 February process was the unwillingness of the Kemalist elite to allow the peripheral components with distinct Islamic elements to engage in Turkey's public sphere (Duran, 2004, p.129). Another major result of this outlook implemented by the National Security Council was to take administrative and legislative actions, in which were devised to restrict Islamist activism around Turkey covering educational reform to the rigorous enactment of the dress code, and more (Gülalp, 1999, p.50). Also, many political parties and conservative organizations were either closed or banned during this process. Although, the 28 February process of 1997 brought marked changes towards the state and society relations for the Turkish context, particularly in relation to the conservative organizations, the aftermath of this period generated the essential transformations in the name of conservative women's organizations. The prime change that resulted from the aftermath of the 28 February process was the modification of the political environment in Turkey, in which produced the Justice and Development Party to rise to prominence and this cardinal transformation initiated critical changes for conservative women and their organizations.

As previously stated, conservative women's organizations can be defined and profiled in a broad sense as a heterogeneous group organized by women who are adherents of Islam and/or political Islam, which adhere to their participation in the public sphere with their religion, especially with their headscarves and concentrate on women's rights mainly through gendered roles. HASEKİ (Kadın Vakfı) is a visible example of a conservative women's organization, because one of its aims is on the notion of religious freedom and they stress on the term of Turkey where Islam was suppressed by the former Turkish government as a chaotic period, in relation to this outlook they were also established to inform women who were hesitant to live their religious beliefs. Also, HASEKİ (Kadın Vakfı) uses the term "hanım" which denotes to "lady" and "wife" while stating the organization's main aim, in which was established for "hanımlar". However, in both feminist literature and in the Turkish context the utilization of the term "hanım" denotes to a gendered outlook. In some Turkish contents, the term "woman" (kadın) is portrayed as a married and sexually active being and because of the "sexual" implications associated to the term, instead the term "Ms./ lady" (bayan/ hanım) is employed by religious-conservative environments when describing someone (Binder, 2017, p.26). The utilization of the term "hanım" instead of "kadın", due to the belief that the term carries sexual undertones displays that people who employ "hanım" value and advocate sexual moral norms, in which creates and/or reinstates sexual discrimination and degradation for women. Although HASEKİ presents one of its aims as the notion of religious freedom, the other conservative women's organizations have put forth different aims as well. Indeed, the conservative women's organizations maintain and enact many aims and these aims range from the strengthening of housewives to helping scholars. EVKAD, for instance diverges from HASEKİ on the basis of its aims and this is perceptible with EVKAD's representatives' remarks on the subject matter of the organization's aims that: "Empowering housewives to find solutions to social problems and the aims are written in the brochure" (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020). This organization's main aim is to strengthen housewives through establishing them as problem solvers; however this aim rather advocates women into the private sphere, because merely viewing women as housewives is problematic in itself. In addition, another aim that prevails among the conservative women's

organizations is helping people, mainly women and this aim is evident within HEKVA, HASEKİ, HİKDE, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, and more. For example, HEKVA's respondent presents the following information in relation to their organizations aims that: "Helping women that do not have a husband (abandoned or widowed), helping women whose husband has severe disabilities, and helping men whose wife has severe disabilities. Also, each individual must have a child who is studying" (interview with HEKVA, 13 January, 2020). Furthermore, another prominent aim among the conservative women's organizations is raising awareness and this aim is perceptible with the following organizations of: AKADDER, HASEKİ, KASAV, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. A fundamental example of a conservative women's organization carrying this aim is seen with KASAV's respondent that: "To advance education in the medical field and to raise awareness of the public" (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020).

4.2. Background on Conservative Women's Organizations: Associations, Foundations, and Platforms

The conservative women's organizations emergence mainly roots back to the 1980s, which expanded with the blooming of the conservative women's movement and many organizations were founded during this period, as for the case of: AKADDER, KASAV, and HEKVA. However, when looked at the names of these conservative women's organizations, for instance: HEKVA and AKADDER there is a visible difference evident between the two conservative women's organizations, in which can be put forth as the distinction in the type of formation they represent: foundation (vakıf) and association (dernek). Without doubt, there are various studies evident on foundations and associations in Turkey. It is mainly argued in the studies of Turkish civil society that there are two different kinds of organizations which are: associations (derneks) and religious foundations (vakıfs) (Zencirci, 2014, p.4). In addition, it is vital to elucidate what these two types of formations signify, in order to understand whether they stand for the same or different position for the realm of conservative women's organizations sake.

Foundations (vakıfs) are more closely affiliated to religious activities and charity, whilst associations (derneks) are traditionally more closely linked with left-wing political activities challenging state authoritarianism (Kuzmanovic, 2012, p.57). Although, associations are linked to left-wing politics and secular notions in Turkish literature, various conservative women's organizations as for: HAVLE, AKADDER, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, TÜRKKAD, HİKDE, and EVKAD identify as associations and do not promote nor implement left-wing political activities. There are a few reasons why these conservative women's organizations, such as: HAVLE, AKADDER, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, TÜRKKAD, HİKDE, and EVKAD utilize the formation and umbrella of associations rather than foundations; however it can be put forth that two chief factors have contributed and reinforced this situation: 1. the Turkish social context (the environment established on social events as for culture and institutions) and 2. the Turkish political context (the environment based on political situations as for laws, practices, and events). Moreover, in terms of comprehending what the Turkish social and political contexts indicate it is crucial to analyze when the conservative women's organizations were established to see what kind of impact and role these contexts possess for these organizations formations.

First of all, when the 10 conservative women's organizations establishment dates are examined, four main time periods emerge, which can be identified as: 1. the 1970s, 2. the 1980s, 3. the 2000s, and 4. the 2010s. The 1970s incorporates TÜRKKAD, HASEKİ, and HİKDE. The 1980s comprises of the following conservative women's organizations: AKADDER, KASAV, and HEKVA. The 2000s includes: EVKAD and KASAV. The 2010s encompasses the following conservative women's organizations: HAVLE, AKADDER, KASAV, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HASEKİ, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. It is important to state that the reason for the conservative women's organizations of AKADDER, HASEKİ, and KASAV being covered in three of the important time periods is largely due to their presence and activeness in the 1970s and/or 1980s and in the 2010s they were officially established as an organization. In addition, when these four specific time spans (1970s, 1980s, 2000s, and 2010s) of the conservative women's organizations formations are explored with regards to the Turkish social and political contexts affect, particular themes and trends arise, in which will be described further.

The 1970s constitute as a significant focal point for the creation of major conservative women's organizations (TÜRKKAD-1966/1973, HASEKİ-1973, and HİKDE-1973) and this is to a great extent related to the social and political contexts of this given period. The representative of TÜRKKAD stated that:

“The association was established especially because of the course of events that developed in the 1960s, that is, because of these left currents and to raise our mothers, particularly to raise our women in this sense and for future youth to be raised with cultural, national, and spiritual values” (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

It is apparent that the conservative women's organizations that were founded during the 1970s like TÜRKKAD were also influenced by the events that took place in the 1960s. Turkey in the 1960s has been characterized with many movements and events which have transformed the 1970s; however the main driving force of the 1960s can be put forth as the political chaos and clashes evident in the Turkish context, such as: the political clashes between students that identify as leftist and rightist and violent demonstrations by individuals. Politics in the 1960s and 1970s were dominated occasionally by violent arguments between leftist and rightist nationalist fronts (White, 2008, p.362). In fact, the Turkish political context has witnessed a military intervention during the 1960s and one reason that triggered this intervention was because of the violent disagreements between the leftist and rightist currents. However, it can be argued that although the 1960s is largely related to the left current and leftist traditions, the effect it had towards the 1970s is rather reactionary than reinforcing, especially in terms of the establishment of the conservative women's organizations. The respondent of HASEKİ put forth that:

“The association was established in 1973 and it was established to inform women about education, knowledge, culture, and to elucidate to women who were in complexity of not being able to live their religion in that time period” (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020).

This statement provided by the conservative women's organization HASEKİ shows that they were formed largely as a response to the dominant state ideology in Turkey during the 1960s and early 1970s, which can be defined as the left current that mostly administers secularism in its discourses and agendas. It is crucial to set forth that the notion of secularism is generally acknowledged as in opposition to Islam and conservative linkages. Also, when analyzing the conservative women's organizations that were established during the 1970s, additional factors emerge in reaction to the

1960s and early 1970s Turkish political and social contexts, such as: the inclination of making use of the field of associations as seen with TÜRKKAD.

As previously stated, the conservative women's organizations of: TÜRKKAD, HASEKİ, and HİKDE were all created during the 1970s, but when the date of their establishments are studied a common theme appears among these organizations which can be illustrated as the date of: 1973, because all three of the conservative women's organizations of: TÜRKKAD, HASEKİ, and HİKDE were formed on 1973. When the Turkish political and social contexts of the date 1973 is examined in terms of the formation of these three conservative women's organizations a critical event arises, in which is the formation of the conservative Turkish political party of: the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi/MSP). Numerous Turkish Muslims during the time period of the early 1970s started making use of the newly opened opportunity areas for expressing their formerly forbidden identities and demands for managing the challenges of secularism, industrialization, urbanization, and the popularization of knowledge through mass education and communication, and they backed up the establishment of the MSP to embrace and convey this newly created consciousness (Yavuz, 2003, p.208). With these newly opened opportunity spaces for conservative individuals and with the establishment of the conservative oriented political party of: the National Salvation Party, the time period of 1973 constituted as a vital period for the formation of many conservative women's organizations, especially in reaction to the leftist traditions and as a means to enact their outlooks and ideals with these new founded areas, as for the case of: HİKDE which was founded in 1973 under the name of "Ladies Knowledge and Culture Association" (Hanımlar İlim ve Kültür Derneği).

Moreover, when analyzing the three conservative women's organizations that were founded in the 1970s an important theme surfaces, in which can be described as using the field and discourses associated to associations. It is crucial to state that HASEKİ was first founded as an association in 1973 and then HASEKİ was created as a foundation in 2013. However, what connects these three conservative women's organizations of: HASEKİ, TÜRKKAD, and HİKDE are that they were all originally established as associations in the 1970s. As previously put forth there are a few reasons why the conservative women's organizations usually utilize the arrangement

of associations rather than foundations and the basis for this can be set forth as the influence of the Turkish social and political contexts. For instance, in spite of resemblances in intentions and activities, derneks notably outnumber vakıfs, because it is somewhat easier for the government to interfere in the workings of vakıfs (Ozgur, 2012, p.156). The freer environment provided for the domain of associations, in comparison to the arena of foundations have driven conservative women to open their organizations under the name of associations and this is visible with the conservative women's organizations of: HASEKİ, TÜRKKAD, and HİKDE in the 1970s.

Also, because associations are supplied with a more autonomous atmosphere than foundations, largely because of the political implication associated to the field of associations as being more inclined to left-wing politics, conservative women have used this perception as a means of availability particularly in the 1970s to enact conservative notions and agendas through their organizations that otherwise would not have been permitted during that time period under the arena of foundations, such as: religious activities and charity. The representative of HASEKİ mentioned that: "Socialization, as well as the amount of aid given is a lot and since its establishment scholarships and family benefits have been distributed" (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020). This information presented by the conservative women's organization HASEKİ that it allocates scholarships and family benefits to aid individuals since its formation (1973) exhibits that this organization has profited from the independence linked to the field of associations during the 1970s, because the notion of aid carries conservative undertones which largely fits under the sphere of foundations which the former Turkish government generally restricted. In addition, by using the independence related to associations through market resources, these associations (as: Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association/MÜSİAD) have acquired substantial amount of autonomy and this has created economic independence which paved way for cultural independence for these organizations and permitted them to provide diverse and original interpretations of Islam to the public (Yavuz, 2003, p.96). Similar to the associations described above, namely MÜSİAD, conservative women's organizations have also made use of the domain of associations as opposed to the field of foundations, because the realm of

associations provides considerable amount of independence, particularly in connection with economic and cultural autonomy. This space of economic and cultural independence supplied by the field of associations has especially generated critical interest and application by the conservative women's organizations established in the 1970s to be formed as associations, mainly to overcome the strains and limitations that conservative individuals had faced in that period, because by utilizing this newly created area nurtured by the notion of cultural independence allowed these organizations to spread Islam to the public (specifically women) without encountering serious impediments to their voices and views that were intertwined with conservative perspectives.

Similarly to the conservative women's organizations that were formed during the 1970s, the conservative women's organizations that were established during the 1980s (HEKVA-1988, KASAV-1986, and AKADDER-1980s) were also influenced largely by the social and political events and factors that occurred in its particular time period. Doubtlessly, there were crucial developments which comprised the social and political contexts of Turkey during the 1980s, but one key event that has altered the path of the Turkish context in the early 1980s can be described as the 1980 military coup. The military intervention of 12 September 1980, which concluded the political polarization and terrorism of the seventies, caused the de-politicization of the society (Gündüz, 2004, p.117). Although, the 1980 military coup had resulted in the de-politicization of the Turkish society for a while, it can be argued that this military intervention triggered movements to become politicized by the aftermath of the military coup, specifically the conservative movement, because the Islamsit movement acquired more power and recognition to enact their objectives and concerns through political Islam during this time. In addition, Islamist women were involved in the Islamist movement of post-1980s Turkey as political actors (Arat, 1998, p.123). The representative of AKADDER stated that:

“Anadolu Platform is an awareness-raising movement that goes back many years... AKADDER was established in order to produce certain policies directed for our own people and also for ourselves and in this sense produce a number of things with partner civil society organizations” (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020).

This comment put forth by the conservative women's organization AKADDER reveals that their organization's formation roots go back to the period of the 1980s

where they (conservative women) were mainly present in this period to contribute to the conservative movement and politicize the public, particularly women, because the 1980 military intervention prohibited the political realm from thriving and this arena constituted a vital place for the conservative movement and conservative women to raise awareness about “their people” through producing certain policies that would bring political awareness to their suppressed movement and agenda.

While the conservative women’s organizations which were created and/or present in the 1980s were impacted by the 1980 military coup, there were other fundamental factors and events as well that were instrumental in the establishment and/or existence of the conservative women’s organizations during the 1980s in Turkey, which will be explained further. The headscarf issue forms a significant part of the social and political contexts of Turkey in the 1980s time span and has generated obstacles for the conservative women of that period. Due to the connection of the increase of political Islam with the opposition of headscarved women and constructing the headscarf as the object of the fear of Islamization has ended with the exclusion of religious Muslim women from the public sphere (Ozcetin, 2009, p.113). Even though conservative women were denied acknowledgment in the public domain with their headscarves during this time, many of these conservative women have risen to prominence as a response to these limitations administered towards them by organizing within themselves to gain recognition.

The respondent of KASAV mentioned on the topic of working in this particular conservative women’s organization that: “I could not enter public spaces, because I was wearing a headscarf. Also, we want to put a topic on the discussion table every month and develop each other and raise awareness” (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020). This information presented by the conservative women’s organization KASAV that was first founded as a working group in 1986 demonstrates that they were initially created as a result of the headscarf issue. In addition, it is visible with the specific comments offered by the representative of KASAV that the space made available by this newly established organization/group (1986) accommodated the needs of conservative women, especially women who wore headscarves, because this arena permitted women to wear headscarves freely and furnished room for these women to raise awareness and advocate for their

visibility in the public sphere with their religious identity. Furthermore, another factor that has influenced the formation of conservative women's organizations in the 1980s is the Turkish civil society realms accessibility. Since the early 1980s, Turkey has encountered a proliferation of civil society that correlates with the neoliberal turn of the economy (Isik, 2014, p.312). As stated before, previously the domain of civil society in Turkey was limited and largely controlled by the Turkish state, however with the development of the 1980s period the field of civil society started to flourish and generate independent spaces for various individuals and this is partly due to the power executed by the neoliberal reforms and agendas of this distinct period.

In addition, this "new history of civil society" from the mid-1980s onwards in Turkey consequently has seen the rise of new socio-political actors and an independent political sphere outside the domain of the authoritarian state (Kuzmanovic, 2010, p.430). As seen with this "new history of civil society" conceptualization which means the revival of civil society in comparison with the past of the Turkish context as for the Ottoman heritage of vakifs and the aftermath of the 1980s, the domain of Turkish civil society in the 1980s, particularly from the mid-1980s onwards has resulted in the emergence of new socio-political agencies and these new actors can be identified as: the conservative women's organizations of the 1980s, because the conservative women's organizations of HEKVA, KASAV, and AKADDER all on the whole have surfaced and expanded in connection with the sphere of civil society and all were newly founded as a socio-political actor from the mid-1980s onwards. For instance, the representative of HEKVA said on the subject matter of working in this certain conservative women's organization that: "I am a person who likes civil society work since I was a student" (interview with HEKVA, 13 January, 2020). It is visible with this comment presented by the conservative women's organization HEKVA that the discourse of civil society in the Turkish context of the 1980s has not only played a critical role in the establishment of HEKVA as a new socio-political force through its formation as a foundation from the mid-1980s onwards (1988), but also by using the notion of Turkish civil society in its agendas and discussions HEKVA has attracted many people, especially women

to join and/or work within this domain as a means to increase the organization's power since the time span of 1988.

Moreover, another reason that the 1980s Turkish civil society realm has been a chief factor in the establishment of the conservative women's organizations in this period (HEKVA, KASAV, and AKADDER) is because of the access this civil society field has made attainable for conservative individuals to mark their Islamic identity and conservative politics and challenge what they perceived discriminatory. Consequently of these transformations (mainly related to civil society), beginning in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, religious and identity politics broadened in Turkey with recognizable repercussions in civic activism (Zihnioğlu, 2019, p.290). It is visible that the 1980s civil society arena has paved way for the upsurge in conservative identity politics and provided room for these conservative individuals to enact their beliefs, which has also accommodated the necessary spaces for conservative women's organizations to form and implement their civic activism. The respondent of AKADDER set forth that: "Regardless of what civil society is, it is actually like the future of society. Civil society works for its own existence" (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020). This statement provided by the conservative women's organization AKADDER which roots stems from the 1980s, shows that Turkish civil society constitutes a major place for many conservative women's organizations, particularly for AKADDER, because civil society is perceived as an unbiased domain which functions for itself and this autonomous and neutral environment created by the realm without doubt has nurtured the existence of various conservative women's organizations, especially of the conservative women's organizations in the 1980s as for the case of AKADDER. Additionally, it is evident with the remarks presented by the respondent of AKADDER that the discourse of civil society has impacted many conservative women's organizations to acknowledge the presence of the civil society arena as the future of society, because this field has introduced conservative women's organizations like AKADDER the opportunity to challenge the Turkish state mainly in relation to the 1980s time period and this possibility given to these organizations has demonstrated the importance and relevance of civil society.

In addition, the Turkish social and political contexts of the 2000s has played a crucial role in the establishment of many conservative women's organizations, such as: the emergence of the Justice and Development Party and the European Union agenda and these organizations are specifically the conservative women's organizations formulated in the 2000s (EVKAD-2006 and KASAV/KASAD-D-2006). Indeed, the 2000s Turkish social and political contexts can be characterized with major events and discourses; however it can be argued that one particular case has dominated the Turkish context during the 2000s, which can be depicted as: the development of the JDP. The rhetoric and plans of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the governing party in Turkey since November 2002, illustrate the operating of neo-conservative rule in the Turkish context (Altunok, 2016, p.138). This neo-conservative governing administered by the JDP mainly during the 2000s has not only impacted the Turkish social and political contexts, but has also influenced the creation and presence of the conservative women's organizations in the 2000s period as seen with the cases of: EVKAD and KASAV/KASAD-D. It is essential to state that this preeminent power implemented by the JDP during the 2000s time span has generated critical discourses and agendas, which are intertwined largely with the establishment of the conservative women's organizations during the 2000s as well.

First of all, one notion that has been produced and reinforced by the JDP is the significance of the family institution. Throughout the JDP's governing, many policies and rules have been imposed to elevate the family as a moral kernel of the socio-political order (Altunok, 2016, p.138). This family domain discourse advocated by the JDP since the 2000s has played a core role in relation to the creation of the conservative women's organizations of the 2000s (EVKAD and KASAV/KASAD-D). The respondent of EVKAD stated that:

We wish to serve women and for their families. That is women, family, and children. It is important that women become stronger. It is important that families become stronger. What we mean by family is one of the most important institutions. We call it family, family, family, but it's not such a simple thing. In other words, it is one of the most important institutions that sustain a society and one of the cornerstones of the family domain is women (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020).

This comment put forth by the conservative women's organization EVKAD manifests that the plans and regulations associated to the notion of the family

institution enacted by the JDP has also fostered and advocated for the establishment of the conservative women's organizations in the 2000s that have perceived the family realm as one of the most crucial institutions of society, because by strengthening organizations that promote the family institution through religious values furthers and adheres to the JDP's neo-conservative outlook of the 2000s. Also, it is visible with the specific remarks presented by the respondent of EVKAD that a major reason that they were founded in 2006 is linked with the JDP's conservative oriented outlook towards women in the 2000s period, because like the JDP many conservative women's organizations as seen with EVKAD view women in terms of traditionalist gender relations where they situate women as a basis for the family realm and because the 2000s Turkish social and political contexts were influenced predominantly by the JDP these conservative women's organizations as for EVKAD saw this context as an opportunity to be founded and defend their conservative and traditionalist beliefs in this particular time span.

Although, the conservative women's organizations that were formulated in the 2000s (EVKAD and KASAV/KASAD-D) were impacted by the JDP's outlooks on the importance of the family institution and their views on women through traditionalist and conservative notions, these conservative women's organizations foundations were also transformed by the JDP's gendered and patriarchal rhetoric and agendas. The JDP's attitude to women also deserves specific consideration: it tends to perceive family and marriage as the natural course for women (Kaya, 2015, p.61). With this separate perception of women enacted by the JDP rooting from the 2000s period displays a gendered and patriarchal approach to women, because merely viewing women through the lenses of the family institution and mothering discourse maintains and facilitates women into the private sphere and this stance has provided room for likeminded people to formulate their sexist agendas as well. For instance, the representative of EVKAD set forth on the topic of this specific conservative women's organization founding purpose that: "The aims are written in the brochure. To increase the number of women who are happy, healthy, and peaceful and increase women who have goals for themselves, their families, and their society" (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020). It is apparent with this statement provided by the representative of EVKAD that the Turkish social and

political contexts of the 2000s has enabled gendered and patriarchal driven organizations to become founded and prosper, mainly due to the fact that the dominant rule during this time (the JDP) shared the same values and outlooks with them, which presented these organizations like EVKAD to become both advantageous and prominent in this time span and context.

Moreover, another factor that comprised the Turkish social and political contexts of the 2000s is the EU agenda of the JDP and this plan of the ruling party of the 2000s has without doubt generated a fundamental effect on the creation of the conservative women's organizations in the time span of 2000s, as for EVKAD and KASAV/KASAD-D. The JDP leadership recognized that the European Union could be of crucial assistance in its endeavor to obtain political legitimacy and push for the sensitive, religion-related features of its political agenda (Grigoriadis, 2009, p.1199). However, the JDP is not the only agency in the 2000s Turkish context that has apprehended the EU as a means to benefit from and it is observable with the conservative women's organizations founded in the 2000s period that they have too considered and/or utilized the EU for their own advantage. An apparent example of a conservative women's organization employing the EU for its own interest is the organization of: KASAV/KASAD-D and this is evident with the specific information provided by the representative of KASAV/KASAD-D: "Our association's resources progress through projects. Such as European Union projects, government projects, and so on" (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020). The availability of the EU area, especially the EU project dimension is largely due to the JDP's efforts to implement its agendas and outlooks through the EU which has created the opportunity for these conservative women's organizations as for the cases of KASAV/KASAD-D and EVKAD to make use of the accessibility of the EU project field as well. Soon after the EU's approval of Turkey's candidacy, Turkey began acquiring funds from Pre-Accession Financial Assistance in 2002 and from 2002 until the end of 2014 associations and foundations have executed projects and obtained grants from this financial assistance (Zihnioğlu, 2018, p.5). It is evident that the conservative women's organizations that were created during the 2000s with respect to KASAV/KASAD-D and EVKAD that their establishment was shaped on the whole by the EU administered by the JDP, because Turkey's application to the

EU presented a crucial entrance to funding and resources for many organizations, as seen with the remarks set forth by the representative of KASAV/KASAD-D. Additionally, it can be argued that although the conservative women's organizations that were formulated in the 2000s period were influenced by the accessibility of the project aspect of the EU, the EU has also impacted these organizations establishment by providing means to the civil society arena, in which these organizations can enact their outlooks and notions.

Furthermore, the 2010s Turkish social and political contexts have influenced the formation of many conservative women's organizations. In fact, when the 10 conservative women's organizations are examined in terms of their establishment dates, 6 out of the 10 conservative women's organizations were formed during the 2010s and these organizations can be illustrated as follows: HAVLE, AKADDER, KASAV, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HASEKİ, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. Without doubt, the social and political contexts of Turkey in the 2010s can be characterized by many events, however when these particular organizations are examined specifically in terms of the events taking place two core themes arise, which can be delineated as: 1. the dominance of the JDP and 2. the aftermath of the Gezi Park demonstrations (2013). First of all, when the 6 out of the 10 conservative women's organizations are analyzed in terms of the 2010s, 4 of them were specifically established during 2013, which are the following organizations: KASAV, AKADDER, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, and HASEKİ. The date 2013 connotes a fundamental meaning for the Turkish social and political contexts, largely because this specific date is tied to the Justice and Development Party and the Gezi Park demonstrations. However, it is crucial to delineate what the Gezi Park demonstrations mean. The Gezi Park movement was, on the whole, a social eruption against the subtle Islamization of Turkish society and politics (Kaya, 2015, p. 64). Turkey's competitive-authoritarian regime appropriates the domain of civil society through government-dependent and co-opted civil society organizations, which are especially active in the aftermath of 2013 Gezi demonstrations and also these particular organizations have established a core and affluent clique within the civil society field in terms of the youth, education, family, and women policies (Yabancı, 2019, p.300). This particular space made available largely after the 2013 Gezi

demonstrations have generated many conservative women's organizations to arise as seen with: KASAV, AKADDER, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, and HASEKİ and these organizations are especially linked to the youth, education, family, and women policies. A concrete example of a conservative women's organization carrying these notions within their framework and agendas is observable with the organization of: AKADDER and this is case is further reinforced through the following statements made by the respondent of AKADDER that:

This organization goes back 40 years, but let's say it became official in 2013. Anadolu Platform is an awareness-raising movement that goes back many years... It is an organization that is mostly carried out through invitation work. However, this woman part and with the women's civil society organizations (NGOs) in Turkey and the world on our behalf to publicize the work done in this sense, we said that we should continue our training, invitation, and awareness-raising activities as an association. Therefore, in particular, AKADDER was founded with the aim of raising awareness about women, which will enable them to make good use of education, invitation, and the conditions of their time. In addition, AKADDER was established in order to produce certain policies directed for our own people and also for ourselves and in this sense produce a number of things with partner civil society organizations (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020).

It is evident with these remarks put forth by the respondent of AKADDER that they were officially founded during 2013 and a core reason for their foundation is the space provided for them, mainly in relation to administer their outlooks and agendas with regards to the youth, education, family, and women strategies.

4.3. Institutionalization

Throughout the years conservative women and their organizations have evolved and incorporated the discourse of institutionalization into their agendas and frameworks. The utilization of the process of institutionalization by conservative women's organizations has generated a vast following for their organizations, mainly by administering norms and beliefs that embody conservative individuals, such as: Islamism and charity. Islamism, for example not only indicates membership in an Islamist organization, but also conveys a sense of belonging and a group identity (Göle, 1997, p.47). The integration of Islamism by various conservative women's organizations into their customs and practices have visibly prompted many women's interests and involvement in these organizations, generally because it formed the

feeling of community and purpose. An example of a conservative women's organization assimilating Islamism into its basis of enactment is apparent with the organization of: KASAV and this integration of Islamism has generated this particular conservative women's organization with a specific following. The representative of KASAV said on the subject matter of KASAV's number of members that: "The total number of members is 250, plus 200 members in Genç – KASAV. Active participation is within the range of 100-150 on average" (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020). It is visible with this information presented by the conservative women's organization KASAV that their use of Islamism and other notions in their organizations grounds has gathered a concrete amount of members with about 50% of them actively participating within the framework of KASAV.

Also, another way that Islamism is utilized within the structure of conservative women's organizations to collect members is evident with appealing to their sense of community. As opposed to on any formal type of membership, women are more active and take part in mostly voluntary activities and associations which are grounded in networks of already existing community relations (White, 1996, p.145). Conservative women's organizations have too acted on this composition of using mainly voluntary activities and associations rather than making use of formal forms of membership to gather members and/or followers and this is clear with their employment of notions and practices related to Islam, because Islam creates the perception of belonging to a prevailing community without being associated to any type of formality. NİSA-ÜL AKSA is a prominent conservative women's organization that exerts Islamism on its organization's framework and aims, which forms the means of affinity to a community with deep roots established in the past and this is perceptible with the specific comment put forth by the respondent of NİSA-ÜL AKSA:

"Our association is a lady association working for the benefit of Jerusalem. It is an association established to explain the events occurring in Jerusalem and to provide material aid and moral support to our brothers and sisters there. It is a lady association at the same time" (interview with NİSA-ÜL AKSA, 16 March, 2020).

This statement provided by the conservative women's organization NİSA-ÜL AKSA shows that by working for Jerusalem and helping people there through Islamism discourses creates a form of community with its roots embedded in the past and this

structure has become an essential format and means for this organization to obtain members and followers. In addition, the respondent of NİSA-ÜL AKSA said that:

“As members that are voluntarily, about 500 although not active. So 30-40 percent is active. It changes according to the situation; I cannot give anything exact/clear about it. 40 percent or so, say 50 percent. Say half and half” (interview with NİSA-ÜL AKSA, 16 March, 2020).

Similar to the conservative women’s organization of KASAV, the conservative women’s organization of NİSA-ÜL AKSA has also accumulated a core number of members through applying the notion of Islamism and by implementing this notion through appealing to the sense of community this particular organization has seemingly generated somewhat of an active member base as well.

Moreover, the concept of volunteerism is another fundamental way that the conservative women’s organizations administer the institutionalization process in their organizational grounds. For instance, the representative of AKADDER expressed on the subject matter of this particular conservative women’s organization membership approach that: “How many members do we have... We actually have volunteers, hundreds of volunteers. In Turkey there are 45 places with our representatives” (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020). It is apparent with this specific information put forth by the conservative women’s organization of AKADDER that through incorporating volunteerism into their structure they evidently execute the discourse of institutionalization and this implementation has demonstrably generated a medium for obtaining members as well. Although, the idea of volunteerism is conducted for institutionalization purposes by conservative women’s organizations as seen with AKADDER, the notion also plays a crucial role in recruiting members and/or followers for conservative women’s organizations (AKADDER, HAVLE, and NİSA-ÜL AKSA) too and this is largely due to the connotations and implications associated to the understanding of volunteerism. Charity, charitable donations, and volunteering as a type of charitable donation are closely related to with the notion of the Islamic virtue of generosity and one of the duties of being a Muslim (Isik, 2019, p.10). Through this understanding of volunteerism it can be asserted that many conservative women’s organizations have utilized the meaning and importance associated to the term, particularly in relation to its Islamic undertones, because by employing volunteerism through Islamic implications leads to more members and/or followers by appealing to these members

and/or followers sense of giving back to the Islamic community and putting forth the duties related to Islam.

HAVLE is a concrete example of a conservative women's organization employing volunteerism through this certain framework and this is seen with this statement set forth by the respondent of HAVLE: "But we deliberately do not recruit members. Instead, we have voluntary forms. We distribute volunteer forms and work with people in terms of volunteering" (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020). Through this remark provided by the conservative women's organization HAVLE shows that instead of acquiring members through formal types of membership this organization has established its enactments on the bases of volunteerism, which has created a large following and this has been accomplished mainly by inducing feelings of Islamic generosity through the means of invoking the sense of belonging to an Islamic group without any formality attached. On the other hand, it can be argued that conservative women's organizations do not simply exercise volunteerism for gaining members and/or followers, but these organizations also administer volunteerism for other objectives as well. These aims can be delineated through two major frameworks: 1. the implementation of professionalization and 2. the intention to overcome membership problems.

4.3.1. Professionalization

Parallel with the notion of institutionalization, conservative women's organizations have also assimilated the scheme of professionalization into their plans and structures. It is important to state that there is no commonly established meaning of professionalization in the literature (Zihnioğlu, 2019, p.658). Despite the fact that, there is no generally accepted description of professionalization, there are still some themes that prevail among conservative women's organizations in relation to the execution of professionalization which will be explained. To begin with, when the conservative women's organizations are analyzed through the realm of professionalization, especially through the field of forming members, 6 out of 10 of the conservative women's organizations visibly administer the framework of

professionalization and these 6 organizations are: AKADDER, HAVLE, HASEKİ, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, TÜRKKAD, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform.

One fundamental way that these conservative women's organizations mainly put forth the professionalization discourse within their plans and enactments related to the sphere of membership is evident with the notion of volunteerism. The professionalization assertion additionally deems professional staff as a crucial resource (Zihnioğlu, 2019, p.671). Although the professionalization argument regards professional staff as a primary means for sources, it can also be argued that when examining the conservative women's organizations that volunteers play a central role in relation to resources and sometimes even surpass the amount of professional staff and/or professional members. For instance, the respondent of HAVLE stated that:

Namely, we have such a system. Now for associations, the minimum number the Directorates of Associations hold in order to open an association is 16. If I am remembering correctly ours is, I am telling you for this thing, you see with the board of directors and with everything included, and that number is now 20 for us. But we deliberately do not recruit members. Instead, we have voluntary forms. We distribute volunteer forms and work with people in terms of volunteering. This is because within HAVLE there are friends who have worked in various organizations before. For instance: Muslims against Violence towards Women Initiative (Kadına Şiddete Karşı Müslümanlar İnisiyatifi) and Women at Mosques (Kadınlar Camilerde). And we said let's do something by taking lessons from here. In other words, especially in today's organizations, people come and then disappear for a month. Then comes back, hangs out for 3 months, and then goes away again, and so on. So we don't chase after them like that and this is a process that causes exhaustion and demands labor. In order to avoid this we look at who can contribute voluntarily and how much; so contribute that much directly to HAVLE and thus we said let's see our way like that, but we are new at this, of course. In fact, 10 out of 16 people constantly work actively. In such things, such as in order to ensure the continuity of the activities we will do and so on, we have such a system to assure this communication (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

It is visible with this information provided by the conservative women's organization's respondent of HAVLE that volunteers indeed play a vital place for conservative women's organizations implementation of professionalization as seen with HAVLE, because volunteers constitute as a core workforce and activity bases for these organizations in terms of unpaid workforce and labor and creates professional qualities to volunteers as being form based through volunteer forms as a part of recruitment rather than simply acting as volunteers for the organization itself.

Also, with these specific remarks offered by the respondent of HAVLE it is perceptible that the amount of volunteers exceeds the amount of their 16 professional staff and/or professional members of this particular conservative women's organization and this situation can be largely associated to the fact that volunteers are an easier resource basis for organizations as such with regards to administering professionalization and these volunteers can be conveniently transferred and/or switched for another individual as opposed to having professional staff and/or professional members that are hired through a stricter process.

In addition, these professional movement organizations generally have a core of devoted volunteers or a compact paid staff that performs day-to-day activities (Özler & Obach, 2018, p.316). The implementation of professionalization through this position of committed volunteers and/or a small paid staff is also evident within the conservative women's organizations which put forth volunteerism through the notion of professionalization. The conservative women's organization of HASEKİ is an apparent case of this particular situation and this is clear through the following information presented by the organization's representative:

As members, the accurate number should be 112, but if we take into consideration that we have sympathizers from the past as well; for example, we have close to 8 thousand followers on Instagram. Apart from that, the founders, their relatives, so there is something rooted and based on many years. The active participation is on average, so we have monthly traditional meals. An average of 50 people participate in it, but apart from that, educational training, seminars, that is, the program in which piece by piece everyone attends is different so we can say 200 people. The average of people who are active is 200 (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020).

Through this statement set forth by the representative of HASEKİ it can be argued that the discourse of professionalization is enacted through this organization in terms of volunteerism which is embedded within its structure from the past and through its sympathizers which constitute a chief place for this organization, because by gathering sympathizers, the individuals as for the case of the founders relatives, and so on formulates a certain sense of professionalization by mainly establishing a member base in terms of volunteers and people with particular qualities rather than obtaining members through merely unofficial manners.

Moreover, professionalization is not only administered through the realm of volunteers in conservative women's organizations, but this concept is also enforced

through other means by these organizations and these ways can be identified as: 1. issuing representatives/branches and 2. enacting projects. The representative of TÜRKKAD commented that:

So we 9 branches across Turkey. If Allah (God) is willing and granting as of March, our 10th branch will be opened. That is to say, the amount of our members varies according to our branches, but I know that it is over 1000. 50-60 percent of our members come as active participants, there are around 60-70 people (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

This description made by the representative of the conservative women's organization of TÜRKKAD displays clear features of professionalization and this is largely due to conservative women's organizations as with TÜRKKAD which establish branches as a means of acquiring and recruiting members, which evidently intertwines with the notion of professionalization, because as seen with TÜRKKAD constructing branches for forms of membership maintains and exerts formality and a sense of expertise which ultimately generates professionalization. Also, this type of professionalization produced by the conservative women's organization of TÜRKKAD is apparent with other conservative women's organizations as well, as for the case of: AKADDER. For instance, the respondent of AKADDER said that:

How many members do we have... We actually have volunteers, hundreds of volunteers. In Turkey there are 45 places with our representatives. We are 37 people as members. So maybe we have 50-60 members. Let's say we have 50 active employees. So as well as with 37 members (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020).

Analogous to the conservative women's organization of TÜRKKAD, AKADDER also administers the field of professionalization within its organization and this is clear with the production of representatives and volunteers as forms of gaining membership through formal manners which is apparent with AKADDER perceiving these individuals as employees. Additionally, as seen with the conservative women's organization of HAVLE, AKADDER too executes professionalization by utilizing the sphere of volunteerism and like with the case of HAVLE, this organization has more volunteers than the amount of professional staff and/or professional members.

Another way that the conservative women's organizations selectively put forth the concept of professionalization is observable with the endorsement of projects through the domain of membership. The arising project culture has generated the professionalization of civic activism, the establishment of new civic actors, the adjusting of stratifications and hierarchies among civic activists, and the

construction of new connections between civic actors (Kuzmanovic, 2010, p.429). Doubtlessly, this project culture has not gone unnoticed by the conservative women's organizations and through this field of projects conservative women's organizations have set forth professionalization into their agendas and frameworks as well, especially in terms of members. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform is a pre-eminent example of a conservative women's organization using the arena of projects as a basis in relation to membership and has also utilized the realm of projects to exert professionalization, which is visible with the following comments offered by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform:

In other words, our membership work is not so much a budget thing, because we are a platform. Since we are progressing on a project basis, we do not put too much of a burden on our members, as we obtain financial resources from sponsors and grant programs. We are not a group with so many strict rules. This is why we currently have around 1600 registered members. We have 1600 members across Turkey. We have representation offices in Ankara, İzmir, and after that in Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, and Trabzon. Along with we have detected that: it is not possible for us to involve all women in every event or make them involved everything. Besides we do not have such a goal. The records of our members that we have generally vary according to their professional and educational status. Therefore, since we come up with different projects at different times, a different group of members actively participates each time. For example, we conducted the "Happy Mother Happy Child" ("Mutlu Anne Mutlu Çocuk") project, at this stage, housewives were more interested. There was intensive participation. On the other hand, in another program we did about women entrepreneurs only friends who have a job and a profession participated. Housewives were not very interested in it. So when we look at the total, not so much can happen. Besides I think this is the main problem of women's NGOs. Involving women in certain activities, if you don't have an ideological stance or if they don't have any expectation they simply don't participate. Therefore, we do not have an ideological side. We do not have any material power or when they come to us to get something done somewhere, such as in the public sector or something, we do not have that political power. That is why those who really want to come actually come to us entirely with their own free will, to obtain that information or to be involved in that process. I think we are also active in that sense. For example, we have a book reading club and we come together once a month. Let's say I am announcing a book that must be read at the beginning of each month, they read that book, they try to read it, something happens, but at the end whether they read it or not we have a bone mass that definitely participates. They come, they share, and they form a different bond (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

With the specific information provided by the representative of the conservative women's organization of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, the professionalization

discourse is visibly put forth through the field of projects, mainly because organizations like the İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform acquire members through endorsing projects and this establishes a formal boundary with their members by being project based. Also, with the information presented by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform professionalization is administered again by creating a particular hierarchical structure through certain project executions and this is perceptible with the remarks that state for instance that housewives participate in separate projects like the project of: “Happy Mother Happy Child” (“Mutlu Anne Mutlu Çocuk”), while other women take part in projects such as the project on women entrepreneurs due to their different background, which manifestly creates a formal hierarchy. However, it is important to proclaim that İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform not only administers professionalization through the realm of projects, but similar to the conservative women’s organizations of: TÜRKKAD and AKADDER, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform executes professionalization within its organization by establishing representation offices as a way of obtaining members and through this framework İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform puts forth the discourse of professionalization by excluding individuals from their events and/or activities based on these individuals particular qualities and agendas.

4.3.2. Membership

Furthermore, while many of the conservative women’s organizations have administered the frameworks of institutionalization, professionalization, and volunteerism in their structures and agendas, especially with regards to acquiring members and/or followers, there is another fundamental rationale for why these organizations implement these frameworks, which can be put forth as the membership problem. Membership in numerous kinds of associations in Turkey- excluding political parties- is comparatively low (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002, p.256). This situation of low membership is also evident within the realm of conservative women’s organizations. In addition to low membership, when the conservative women’s organizations are examined through the domain of active participation of their members, mainly in relation to these organizations activities, a similar issue

appears which can be described as the limited amount of participation by their members. The membership problem in terms of the conservative women's organizations can be described as both low membership and/or limited active participation by this particular membership.

It is crucial to put forth that when the conservative women's organizations are analyzed through the notion of the membership problem a specific trend emerges among them and this can be set forth as: in general the active participation of the low amount of members within the conservative women's organizations does not surpass 50 percentage and this specific case is visible with 8 out of 10 of the conservative women's organizations. These 8 conservative women's organizations are as follows: AKADDER, EVKAD, HASEKİ, HİKDE, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, TÜRKKAD, KASAV, and HAVLE. For instance, the conservative women's organization of HİKDE's respondent supplies this information about the organization regarding its membership: "So we have an average of 70 members, 30-35 of them are active" (interview with HİKDE, 10 March, 2020). With this statement provided by HİKDE's respondent it is perceptible that this conservative women's organization and organizations alike are facing the membership problem, because of the shortage of members and with the members that are available quite few of them actively take part in the organization. Also, the conservative women's organization of EVKAD corresponds with the case of HİKDE and this is clear with the comment put forth by the representative of EVKAD: "There are about 70 members. Probably 40 people attend our activities" (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020). Although, it is visible with the conservative women's organizations of EVKAD and HİKDE that many of these organizations are experiencing the membership problem, these organizations however are enacting certain measures to overcome this specific problem. These actions can be illustrated as the conceptualizations of the previous executions of the conservative women's organizations, which are: professionalization, institutionalization, and volunteerism.

However, despite the membership problem set forth by many of these conservative women's organizations there are cooperation and membership evident within. The frameworks of cooperation and membership within the conservative women's organizations as previously stated has produced interest and generated

adherence by many people. Although, many of these individuals have been captivated by the outlook evident within the conservative women's organizations, there are also other core reasons for why these people have been joining and being part of these organizations. It can be mainly asserted that there are three chief reasons on why individuals have connected with the conservative women's organizations: 1. to contribute and/or give back to the arena, 2. to take part in the religious/spiritual atmosphere, and/or 3. to be part of the necessity for raising awareness. Despite the fact that, these fundamental reasons may seem rather self-explanatory, as a matter of fact these three rationales are relatively comprehensive. Therefore, it is crucial to explain what these reasons signify, in order to comprehend why various individuals join and enact with the conservative women's organizations cohesion.

Many of the respondents from the conservative women's organizations have set forth that one major rationale for joining their particular conservative women's organization was grounded upon to contribute and/or give back to the domain. HASEKİ is a concrete example of a conservative women's organization member/s connecting with the organization to contribute and/or give back to the realm and this is visible with HASEKİ's representative's following remarks that:

Actually, I didn't decide, it just developed in this way. While I was studying in Kocaeli, I left school and returned back and I think I was little in search of something. Suddenly I found myself in volunteering activities. I realized what this contributed to me, in other words spiritually it was very good for me even more than its financial contributions. The spiritual essence was very high and the pleasure I got was very high, so I decided to continue (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020).

However, when the theme of contributing and/or giving back is analyzed as seen with the information provided by the representative of the conservative women's organization of HASEKİ that a few subthemes emerge in line with the main theme as well, such as: Islamic undertones, serving society (family realm), and paying back debt.

To begin with, the notion of giving is a precept of Islam through the attitude of giving, generosity, and liberality (Özdemir & Frank, 2000, p.245). It is apparent that the discourse on giving back and/or contributing is actually embedded within Islam and its teachings and this Islamic belief has also shaped many people's views towards the conservative women's organizations, mainly because people who have

connected with these organizations tend to assert that these organizations play a part in the Islamic discourse on giving (back). For instance, the representative of TÜRKKAD asserts the following remarks with regards to why he/she joined this specific conservative women's organization that:

Because it's founder was Samiha Ayverdi. You probably know this name; this association is founded by the reflective writer Samiha Ayverdi. That's why I joined this place for some extent to contribute as well, as she has served our culture so much for years (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020). Through these statements established by the representative of TÜRKKAD shows that this conservative organization and alike organizations have somewhat generated the perception of that they advance and give to the Islamic realm of giving (back) and this is visible especially by the comments made by the representative of TÜRKKAD, because the representative specifically says that he/she joined to contribute to the association as a part of what the individual Samiha Ayverdi did too through cultural and Islamic means.

On the other hand, the notion of giving back through the realm of Islam is also intentionally used within many of the conservative women's organizations to recruit members and volunteers. Religious principals and Islamic rhetoric are utilized as a means to mobilize volunteers and members (Jung et al., 2014, p.145). Through this way of making use of Islamic rhetoric and religious values, predominantly with the discourse of giving back and/or contributing by the conservative women's organizations has actually compelled and grasped many of individuals to enter the solidarity among these organizations without fully comprehending the covertly enacted Islamic notions. A fundamental example of a conservative women's organization administering this particular outlook through Islamic concepts is perceptible with HAVLE and the following information given by the respondent further demonstrates this situation as well:

Many of us have been involved in different organizations before, as what I mentioned as: Muslim Initiative against Violence against Women ("Kadına Şiddete Karşı Müslümanlar İnisiyatifi") and Women at Mosques ("Kadınlar Camilerde"), also from the older generation there is Capital City Women's Platform ("Başkent Kadın Platformu") and so on, but at some point, a mass of Muslims who directly call themselves feminist, in other words these Muslim women started to form around us. No one calls themselves directly feminist, including us. We saw the need for this activity to be done. Frankly, because Jam Blog ("Reçel Blog") is a platform where many incredibly beautiful articles are published and more, but you cannot directly organize and come together

there. Women at Mosques (“Kadınlar Camilerde”) are working on a very specific issue and again feminism is not one of their criteria here. Likewise, Muslim Initiative against Violence against Women (“Kadına Şiddete Karşı Müslümanlar İnisiyatifi”) is such a place and puts forth a specific stance on the subject matter. That’s why we wanted support Muslim women who openly call themselves feminist, also to see are there so many women in this sense, and can we be together, as a matter of fact we wanted to see this and we established this organization on this occasion. By the way, not only were we established for Muslim women’s own issues, but we were also founded as I said in the beginning to contribute to the feminist movement from this place. In Turkey, in general there was already a feminist organization for many years and they have huge achievements. Including the law dimension. How much are we in this as Muslim women, are there any missing pieces, and how can we contribute to this part of the feminist movement? Also, stating it as the feminist movement in Turkey, actually at one point we wanted to be involved in this matter from here. In Turkey, especially among Muslim people or among people from conservative/Islamic background can have major bias towards feminism. We wanted to show that feminism is not so demonic thing and in fact, everything we experience in our daily lives is something that can be included in the matter of feminism; so it is included in feminism. By adding all the experience we gained from here to feminism, we wanted to exchange mutually, to produce knowledge, give and share information. Maybe I put forth the information in a messy way, but this is what I mean (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

With these remarks put forth by the respondent of the conservative women’s organization of HAVLE it is visible that this organization specifically puts forth Islamic notions and agendas, especially a sense of giving back to the Islamic community, in order to gain members and followers into their particular cooperation, however these Islamic means are largely unseen, because conservative women’s organizations like this case rather employs these means covertly, which is seen with the case of this conservative women’s organization implementing this situation as: feminism. Although the subtheme of Islamic implications has captured many individuals to join the conservative women’s organizations cohesion through the discourse of giving back and/or contributing to the realm, the subtheme of paying back debt also plays a crucial role within this framework.

The exchange of debts permits each person to take part in the solidarity, mutual dependency, the following survival of the group as a whole, in cases such as a purely personal relationship, as within a family, or impersonal as between near-strangers (White, 2004, p.94). As visible through this assertion, the framework of debts, especially moral debts strongly contributes to the solidarity of a

group/organization. A concrete example of a conservative women's organization implementing this particular idea is evident with the statements provided by HIKDE's respondent as:

“Because I know the people this organization has helped. I know the scholars. It is very important for me and I received a scholarship from here too. I am trying to somehow pay my debt here, debt of loyalty (interview with HIKDE, 10 March, 2020).

It is clear with the remarks established by HIKDE's respondent that he/she has connected with this particular organization's solidarity largely on the bases of paying back the debt (“debt of loyalty”) that he/she received through the scholarship of HIKDE and through paying this debt back he/she is playing a part in the cohesion of the conservative women's organization of HIKDE. Also, the notion of paying back debt through the main theme of giving back and/or contributing to the realm as a core reason has roots with the discourse of volunteerism. In exchange for paying zakat and/or carrying out voluntary work to help others, many Muslims believe that they will be awarded with rewards from God (Jung et al., 2014, p.147). It is evident through this assertion that some individuals have utilized the discourse of paying debt back through the umbrella of volunteerism to connect with the conservative women's organizations unity on the basis of receiving rewards from God and this outlook creates and stimulates a profit based enactment.

Moreover, another fundamental rationale for many individuals connecting with the solidarity present within the structure of conservative women's organizations is to take part in the religious/spiritual atmosphere evident within these particular organizations. Also, when the 10 conservative women's organizations are analyzed in relation to the subject of: the reason for joining a conservative women's organization, 5 out of the 10 conservative women's organizations representatives in some way put forth that they connected with their specific organization due to the religious/spiritual environment present. HEKVA is a prominent conservative women's organization, which utilizes the notion of religious/spiritual atmosphere within its framework to form its solidarity and acquire members and/or followers to take part in it too and the following information provided by HEKVA's representative reinforces this position:

I am a person who loves civil society work since I was a student. I have worked in many civil society organizations, but lastly I am in this organization.

The biggest reason for why I am happy to be in this foundation is that: this foundation doesn't discriminate towards religion, language, race, and faiths and it only finds the true people in need and serves them. Studies are carried out only by focusing on the needy circumstance. Apart from this business, we also have "Çıt Çıt", our second hand store. In our Haseki Sofrası, we serve every part of Istanbul with a variety of approximately 200 products. The income from here and the income obtained from the second hand sales of the "Çıt Çıt" store are transferred to all the families in need (interview with HEKVA, 13 January, 2020).

It is clear with these comments given by the representative of HEKVA that the organization itself has acquired people to connect with their conservative solidarity through appealing to the availability of their religious/spiritual atmosphere and this is perceivable with the remarks made by their representative as for: not discriminating towards religious beliefs, faiths, and so on, because conservative women's organizations as for HEKVA maintains and champions these types of notions to obtain people into their solidarity.

Furthermore, the third major reason that arises when the 10 conservative women's organizations are examined through their respondent's responses towards their rationale for connecting with them is: to be part of the necessity of raising awareness. The following conservative women's organizations representatives have stated this as their rationale behind joining their particular organization: HEKVA, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, HAVLE, KASAV, and AKADDER. Without doubt, this specific reason has generated many of these individuals to take part in the conservative solidarity apparent in the frameworks of these many organizations as well. A fundamental example of a conservative women's organization gaining interest and generating followers to be in its solidarity through the notion of necessity for raising awareness is visible with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. In addition, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's respondent's remarks in relation to this subject matter also further this particular case:

From necessity. Why? Because, especially in the last 10 years, women civil society organizations (NGOs) have started to become polarized and started to dissociate, and not on the common grounds of "women", but because when they started to act with men on their world views, political views, or on their studies separation started to occur. We wondered how can we walk without separating ourselves and we wanted to try this out. That is, without being a member of a political party or without supporting a political party, without "battering someone up"... Let's assume something is happening across the country. Whatever our worldview or political stance is, we should be able to

say if something if we think the situation is wrong. But at the time, or during the time period of our establishment, something like this causes you to become marginalized and causing us to be excluded by such a culture of lynching. We said, let's maintain a stance against this, put forth a stance, and stay alone if necessary, but at the point of what we know is the right thing let's act effectively it. This made us very weak at the time, because you are not receiving financial support from anywhere. For example while the "A" association finds a lot of resources because they know people from the government, and while the "B" association finds a lot of recourses because of they have legal relationships with politicians and municipalities, however we never acted upon or turned to these means in order to explain our problems in clear terms whenever we wanted. Because those who dare to take the money, must now accept to take the orders. In another way, when you get the money even if they don't give you orders, you work with a guilty conscience. This is problematic; we have experienced this in other civil society organizations (NGOs) for many years. We got into something like this in this organization. The friends that come here and the friends that walk with me are also the people who have become lonely due to this sensitivity. Actually, sometimes I compare our friends on our team to the movie called: "The Misfits" ("Uyumsuzlar"). I perceive them as the misfits in the movie. Because you cannot get your point across to anyone, you cannot ingratiate yourself neither to Jesus (İsa) nor to Moses (Musa). But, we say that Allah is great and Allah is watching. Let's stand tall, stand with our principles, and certainly one day time will prove us right. As a matter of fact, we were proven right on many issues. The friends that reacted to us when we first said these were upset years after, but frankly we also got very tired during that period. Also, we are very good with young people. We are very active in universities and so on. A big portion of us is made up of young people. Our concern is at the moment of institutionalization. We also want to involve our youth actively into this process, so we can step aside. Let's see, we have a problem to be on the sidelines a little more. God willing (İnşallah) (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

Evidently, with these specific remarks provided by İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's respondent that this organization makes use of the notion of the necessity of raising awareness and this is clear with the respondent stating that he/she largely connects with this conservative women's organization because of the necessity to unite. However, as seen with the comments presented by the respondent of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform that this individual believes that this conservative women's organization is unique in terms of raising awareness, despite the fact that the solidarity is the same with the many other conservative women's organizations in terms of being conservative. KASAV is alike with the İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform with regards to building its conservative solidarity through the theme of the

necessity of raising awareness and this is perceptible with the following statements made by the representative of KASAV that:

I couldn't enter public spaces, because I was wearing a headscarf. There were clinics, but medical practitioners were not raised. After opening the clinic, there were medical openings. We wanted to put discuss a topic every month on the discussion table and develop each other and raise awareness (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020).

With both KASAV's and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's representatives comments in relation to joining their particular conservative women's organization for the reason of: the necessity of raising awareness, it is apparent that the solidarity within each conservative women's organization is conservative in essence and they generally consider their solidarity through Islamic notions and enactments.

4.3.3. Activities and Operations

Activities and operations constitute a vital role for the conservative women's organizations, particularly in relation to their recognition in the public arena with Islam and to implement their gendered outlooks and objectives. Doubtlessly, there is a wide range of activities and operations that the conservative women's organizations enact through their agendas and functioning of their organizations. On the other hand, when these conservative women's organizations are examined in terms of these activities and operations, particular themes emerge which can be categorized mainly as: 1. educational activities, 2. help/charity related activities, 3. conferences/seminars, and 4. projects. Although, these many activities and operations performed by the conservative women's organizations merely resemble unmethodical selections, as a matter of fact there are specific reasons why these forms of activities and operations are administered within the conservative women's organizations. Therefore, it is essential to illustrate what these activities and operations put forth by the conservative women's organizations represent, in order to understand why the conservative women's organizations utilize them within their work and schemes.

To begin with, the first category that emerges when the conservative women's organizations are examined in terms of their application of activities and operations is: educational activities and 7 out of 10 of the conservative women's

organizations noticeably put forth this type of activity within their organization, which can be outlined as the following conservative women's organizations: AKADDER, EVKAD, HASEKİ, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, KASAV, HEKVA, and TÜRKKAD. Namely education has been a focal point for religious civil society organizations and this can be justified by the political opportunity structure (Sarkissian & Özler, 2013, p.1024). Evidently, conservative women's organizations have also centered on the discourse of education with regards to the political opportunity structure and this is on the whole clear with their execution of educational activities. NİSA-ÜL AKSA is a notable conservative women's organization that sets forth educational activities within its framework, mainly through the means of the political opportunity structure and this is visible especially with the following information presented by the representative of NİSA-ÜL AKSA:

We have education activities. Across Turkey, we make seminars to explain why Jerusalem is important to us, the current events that happen there, the troubles people there face, and the occupation situation there. We go to schools as well as give staggered seminars. This can happen in the lecture halls of universities. We can go to Imam Hatip high schools and middle schools. We can go to Quran courses. We have this type of educational work. Apart from that, we have periodical and seasonal projects. These are projects such as winter project and education project. During Ramadan, there are "iftar" and "sahur" projects, which are specific to Ramadan. These are in the form of fitrah, charity, and zakat collection. Are studies are in this manner (interview with NİSA-ÜL AKSA, 16 March, 2020).

These comments put forth by the representative of NİSA-ÜL AKSA mostly in relation to the field of educational activities portrays the utilization of the political opportunity structure, because the political framework of Turkey currently can be characterized through the agendas and discourses of the JDP, which as previously stated enacts traditionalist and conservative notions and outlooks and NİSA-ÜL AKSA implements educational activities largely in line with the framework of the JDP, for example this conservative women's organization performs its activities related to education in areas such as it stated as Quran courses, Imam Hatip high schools, and so on which all are spaces associated to religious and traditional essences which supply conservative women's organizations as for the case of NİSA-ÜL AKSA with the possibility to spread and exert its beliefs. Also, other new faith-based organizations have dedication to lowering poverty both in Turkey and other Islamic nations and these organizations projects emerge in the shape of food aid,

helping orphans and widows, education projects, and health programs aimed at basic needs (Morvaridi, 2013, p.315). This particular commitment is not only linked to faith-based organizations, but is also perceivable with conservative women's organizations as for the case of NİSA-ÜL AKSA with the information given by its representative that it implements educational activities regarding Turkey and Jerusalem through the means of spreading awareness. Moreover, through the specific remarks made by the representative of NİSA-ÜL AKSA it can be argued as well that the conservative women's organizations as such execute educational activities with the aim of reinforcing and nourishing Islam in general.

Also, the expansion of Islamic charity organizations has furthered the popularity and heightening of Islamic ideology among the urban lower classes (Morvaridi, 2013, p.315). Doubtlessly, NİSA-ÜL AKSA and conservative women's organizations alike have also administered educational activities with the major objective of cultivating the Islamic ideology and with the comments presented by the representative of NİSA-ÜL AKSA as well it is visible that by going to and/or attending specific spaces as for Quran courses, universities, Imam Hatip high schools, and so on to set forth their organizations activities have played a crucial part in spreading Islamic ideology among individuals, especially among people who affiliate with the urban lower status as evident with the particular areas these organizations take part in. Additionally, another rationale for conservative women's organizations putting forth educational activities can be associated to their objective to establish and set forth their gendered perspectives and agendas. The respondent of AKADDER offered the following information on the topic of their organization's activities that:

“Since we conduct our work through institutionalism, we have regular meetings. The works are based on the center, region, and city. We have our regular weekly sessions, commission sessions, bi-monthly regional sessions, and bi-monthly board meetings of AKAD. In other words, the communication is constantly flowing. We have regular weekly classes for women. They are done in both houses and in associations. We have seminars, book studies, and camps. In this sense, as women, we are in all the educational activities and alternative education studies. For 17 years we have been doing a work called character education at home, especially run by women for 17 years. We have a written-published work which belongs to this work. Our women are engaged in youth work. It starts from childhood. At the same time, they continue to take care of our youth, who have been in our educational activities since the age of

5, until later ages as well. We have development seminars for women. As I said, we have camps, such as camps related to education and camps related to the organization. We have a symposium every two years. We have a national symposium and we held the first one in Ankara in 2017. I maybe mixing the dates, but the second one was in 2019 in Van. The symposium we held in Ankara was titled: "Migration and Our Common Future" ("Göç ve Ortak Geleceğimiz"), in Kızılcahamam. The one we did in Van was with the title of: "Our Values and Patterns" ("Değerlerimiz ve Desenlerimiz"). About 500 women attended. We regularly attend close to almost all of the meetings about women and their families across Turkey. We also have memberships, in addition to be stakeholders together. We also attend international meetings. At the same time, our women work very actively in aid and orphan work" (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020).

These statements provided by the respondent of the conservative women's organization of AKADDER regarding their organization's activities displays that they mainly implement their diverse activity types to construct and demonstrate their gendered and conservative outlooks and this especially recognizable with the educational activity they have been executing for 17 years as character education at home. The expansion of conservative education or the reproduction of Islamic values concerning traditional sex roles, which champion women to become traditional mothers and housewives, could create serious threats to other women who advocate and value widening their opportunities outside the household and in increasing their independence away from the traditional patriarchal methods of control (Arat, 2010, p.879). It is apparent mainly with the specific educational activity of the character education at home developed by the conservative women's organization of AKADDER that by implementing this particular work they are striving to maintain women in the private sphere and by exerting this activity from a young age this organization is trying to embed and spread gendered and Islamic notions and agendas under the arena of educational activities to their members and/or followers.

Help/charity related activities are another major category that arises from the domain of conservative women's organizations when they are analyzed with regards to the subject matter of their implementation of activities and operations. It is crucial to point out that 8 out of 10 of the conservative women's organizations evidently apply help/charity related activities and operations within their organizations structure and these organizations can be outlined as: AKADDER, EVKAD, HASEKİ, HİKDE, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, KASAV, HEKVA, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. Similar with the conservative women's organizations that

administer educational activities, the enactment of help/charity related activities are also set forth for certain reasons. Neither faith-based nor lay types of charity have ever been free of politics, ideology, or propaganda (Isik, 2014, p.322). This situation prevails among the many conservative women's organizations as well which carry out help/charity related activities and one prime example of a conservative women's organization which upholds this particular case is perceptible with the information provided by the representative of HASEKİ: "The main topics are aid/charity activities, educational activities, and health activities. The educational activities include: children's education, artistic training, health education, and psychology education" (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020). Although this remark made by the representative of HASEKİ does not explicitly exhibit a political stance, ideological preference, or propaganda execution by HASEKİ, however when this organization's website and official account/s are examined in terms of help/charity related activities an apparent ideological position emerges and one cardinal example depicting HASEKİ's outlook is with the following information available on the organization's official Twitter account:

It's time to be hope, a breath for Idlib! We welcome all our friends who want to lend a hand to the women and children in Idlib to our charity breakfast, which will be organized with the participation of Esra Elönü. The income obtained from this charity will be sent to Idlib via the Red Crescent (Kızılay) (7 February, 2020).

This specific information provided by the conservative women's organization HASEKİ's official Twitter account manifests an ideological preference and this ideological leaning can be delineated as the favoring of the current Turkish state which is dominated by JDP, because firstly Idlib is a crucial city for the JDP and its foreign policy notions, secondly the person who is taking part in this charity is associated with the JDP, and finally the organization of the Red Crescent is highly linked with the current Turkish state and its agendas.

In addition, another conservative women's organization which implements help/charity related activities with the aim of demonstrating its ideological stance is visible with the statements set forth by the respondent of EVKAD:

In general, we have educational activities. We have aid/charity work. Our aid/charity is not in the form of collecting money, but rather we contribute to the works of the Red Crescent (Kızılay) and the İHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation (İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı). We do this in terms of announcing and

participating in their events, for instance with the Green Crescent (Yeşilay)” (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020).

This information supplied by the conservative women’s organization EVKAD is remarkably similar with the ideological preference of the conservative women’s organization of HASEKİ in terms of the field of help/charity related activities, because EVKAD too champions the current Turkish state which is governed by the JDP and this is noticeable through the format and specific organizations it interacts and works with, which are specified by the respondent of EVKAD as the Red Crescent (Kızılay), the İHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation (İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı), and the Green Crescent (Yeşilay) which are all connected with the Justice and Development Party in some form. Also, as seen with these conservative women’s organizations regarding their administration of help/charity related activities, especially with EVKAD and HASEKİ it is visible that the JDP plays a key role too. The charitable activities of voluntary associations have expanded widely during the AKP era (Kaya, 2015, p. 59). When examining the 8 out of 10 conservative women’s organizations which execute help/charity related activities and operations within their organizations framework and enactment, 5 out of the 8 conservative women’s organizations in terms of charity linked activities have been established during the JDP administration and these organizations can be illustrated as: AKADDER (2013), EVKAD (2006), NİSA-ÜL AKSA (2013), KASAV (2013), and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform (2010). These particular data results display a clear correlation between the rise of charity activities by the conservative women’s organizations and the space established for the enlargement of this situation by the JDP.

Furthermore, another essential reason that the conservative women’s organizations specifically implement help/charity linked activities is to promote and expand their conservative oriented gendered objectives and outlooks regarding women. Conservative women comprehend and acknowledge charity as the natural extension of their domestic roles of being carers and providers for their families to care and give to the wider community (Dursun, 2019, p.9). Evidently, this understanding exists within the conservative women’s organizations that implement help/charity related activities as well and a predominant example of a conservative women’s organization enacting this conservative gendered perception of charity is

the organization of: HEKVA. The representative of HEKVA put forth the following remarks on the subject of their organization's activities that:

Not all of the topics can fit here. Let me tell you the main titles. We have a soup kitchen and hot food is distributed every day. We have monthly aid/charity distributions. We have weekend education and support programs for students. We have a soup dispenser. We have economic enterprises. These are our main topics. A subtitle for this is ISTKA/Istanbul Development Agency projects (İSTKA/İstanbul Kalkınma Ajansı). When we constantly do everything, it feels ordinary. Also abroad, we have an orphanage in Kenya (interview with HEKVA, 13 January, 2020).

It is visible with the comments set forth by the representative of HEKVA with regards to the activities that they perform, especially in terms of their help/charity associated activities that they intentionally carry out charity based operations, because it sustains and furthers their and conservative women's organizations alike view on charity which can be characterized as conservative grounded gendered attitude. In addition, as stated by the representative of HEKVA one of their charity enactments is the orphanage in Kenya and this charity activity is rather gendered and in opposition to the feminist literature, mainly because by working on this specific form of charity HEKVA is creating the perception of being natural caregivers and in a sense of providing mothering to these children, in which reinforces the patriarchal belief that women belong to the private sphere of being natural caregivers. HEKVA maintains and advances the conservative gendered outlook linked to the domain of charity by conservative women with their orphanage in Kenya and this case is also apparent with the establishment of their charity activity of their soup kitchen/soup dispenser which equally portrays women as natural caregivers and depicts women as individuals situated within the household, because principally creating a soup kitchen operated by women generates the belief that women are merely associated to the kitchen where they act and supply the needs of others in the household arena which is a core part of the private sphere.

While educational activities and help/charity related activities are two major categories which transpire when the conservative women's organizations are studied in terms of the activities and operations they administer within their organization, conferences/seminars are also another grouping which emerges. Also, it is vital to expound when the conservative women's organizations were analyzed in this regard, 9 out of 10 of these conservative women's organizations manifestly applied the

structure of conferences/seminars and these 9 organizations can be presented as: AKADDER, EVKAD, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HİKDE, KASAV, HAVLE, HEKVA, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, and TÜRKKAD. Similar to the implementation of educational activities and help/charity related activities by the many conservative women's organizations, conferences/seminars are too employed due to the significance associated to this particular field of activity and/or operation type. Conferences are a chief way for coordination and cooperation among and between organizations (Walton, 2018, p.126). This understanding of coordination and cooperation is a core meaning linked to the realm of conferences/seminars and various conservative women's organizations enact conferences/seminars within their agendas and frameworks with the objective of this understanding intertwined with the domain of conferences/seminars. The conservative women's organization of HAVLE is a prominent example of a conservative women's organization putting forth conferences/seminars in its construction, especially with the specific meaning connected to this field and this is seen with the following information provided by the respondent of HAVLE:

What have we accomplished so far? In the first year we were founded, I think 2019; we were able to start our activities completely as of April 2019, and if I am remembering correctly, in 5 cities; we held workshops called: "Women, Body, and Sexuality" ("Kadın, Beden ve Cinsellik") in İstanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakır, Konya, and Bursa. We held a conference called: "Muslim Feminists are Telling Their Stories" ("Müslüman Feministler Hikayelerini Anlatıyor") and this conference lasted for 2 days. Apart from that, we are carrying out a project called: "Marriage at Early Ages" ("Erken Yaşta Evlilikler"). Accordingly, across Turkey we conducted a study on 2800 samples, a wave research. On the issue of: marriage, early marriage, and religious perspective. We organized a workshop after that. In addition, we selected 5 cities with early marriages, which these cities are in the top 10 according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu Başkanlığı/TÜİK) in İslam. These 5 cities are: Afyon, Erzurum, Ağrı, Niğde, and Yozgat. Then we went to these places. We also conducted visits to these places and we tried to understand early marriages and their justifications. Apart from these, we organized various workshops with our volunteers. Regarding alimony, regarding the Istanbul Convention, and we also met with them about again these early marriages, and so on. Whatever the agenda is, according to that we gathered with our volunteers from time to time and decided together to take the next step. Our workshop right now, our latest "Marriage at Early Ages" ("Erken Yaşta Evlilikler") workshop took place on February 15th. As you know, recently we have entered a period we cannot go outside. But now we are in the process again. In fact, with the occasion of the meeting we held

last night, are new organizational models possible; what can we do in these processes when we cannot go out, how can we communicate with our own volunteer network, what disadvantages can there be to being online, what advantages can there be and what may they feel the need of, so we are now in the process of rethinking these (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020). With the particular information given by the respondent of HAVLE, especially in relation to putting forth conferences/seminars and other operations alike (for example: workshops) there is a sense of administering these operations to reach and acquire partnership with other organizations, primarily because HAVLE is a newly established organization (2018) and it states that the organization does not possess a diverse amount of relations with other organizations.

In fact, HAVLE organizing and initiating conferences and enactments alike displays that it is utilizing this particular type of platform to gain cooperation and resources and this is supported by the following comment presented by the respondent of HAVLE:

In our conference that we organized we arranged a session called: “Subjectivity” and we brought together many people from the feminist branch, from the leftist feminist Kurdish women’s movement, from the Muslim Kurdish women’s movement, from the leftist Turkish women’s movement, from the LGBT organization, and so on and talked about organizing. We discussed the issues and we want to do something jointly, but there is a situation like this that; we are established very recently and many of the organizations I mentioned actually existed much before us (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

In addition, conservative women’s organizations execute conferences/seminars for other objectives as well. Academic-style conferences establish a counter public relation which engages in a deterritorialized and transnational spatiality (Walton, 2018, p.125). Through this perception of academic-style conferences and conferences in general, a crucial formation prevails which can be asserted as: an autonomous spatial realm. In connection with the independent space created by conferences and fields alike, conservative women’s organizations have also put forth conferences with the rationale of utilizing the spatial arena provided by this particular operation. The conservative women’s organization of HAVLE for instance embodies the field of conferences/seminars, not only with the intention of cooperation and collaboration with other organizations, but also with the objective of utilizing the spatial area made available by the domain of conferences and operations alike. This specific implementation by HAVLE is evident with the

conference it assembled titled: “Muslim Feminists are Telling Their Stories” (“Müslüman Feministler Hikayelerini Anlatıyor”), primarily because HAVLE uses the spatial area provided by the realm of conferences to construct their acknowledgment in the public sphere with their conservative identity and also spread their recognition through these types of operations and agendas to the masses.

Another conservative women’s organization that carries out conferences/seminars and operations alike with the similar objective as HAVLE by utilizing the autonomous space supplied by the realm of conferences is perceptible with: TÜRKKAD and the following information put forth by the representative of TÜRKKAD furthers this particular point:

Oh, oh. We have a huge booklet on this, what would you like? We have a calligraphy course, a tafsir course, diction and eloquence course, and an Ottoman language course. I am telling you from the past, we have been doing these things since ’66 and they are still being done. We have conferences and seminars. Let me put it this way, we have a publication with İlber Ortaylı called: “From a Geography to a Geography” (“Bir Coğrafyadan Bir Coğrafyaya”). We have Semih Seren speaking, Ottoman language, calligraphy, and rosary bead courses. Also, we have a movie reading activity and a book analysis activity. We have concerts as well. We have an award ceremony under the name of: “Those Who Serve Culture” (“Kültüre Hizmet Edenler”). We have publications. We have conferences and cultural talks. Other than these, since there are many things, let’s count these for now. These are the first things that came to my mind and I guess they are enough anyway (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

It is apparent with the remarks established by the representative of TÜRKKAD, especially in relation to their enactment of conferences that they purposefully perform this kind of formation in order to make use of the independent spatial area supplied as for the case previously seen with the conservative women’s organization of HAVLE and TÜRKKAD additionally utilizes this space through carrying out conferences to demonstrate and promote their conservative traditionalist views, which can be observed through TÜRKKAD’s official website where their conferences, seminars, and similar operations are stated. To illustrate, one particular conference executed by TÜRKKAD that demonstrates the organization’s conservative traditionalist outlooks is recognizable with the conference titled: “Woman and Islamic Mysticism” (“Kadın ve Tasavvuf”) (23 March, 2002) and it can be argued that the subject matters exercised as such are remarkably applicable due to the autonomous spatial realm made available with regards to the field of

conferences where conservative women's organizations alike can also set forth their conservative traditionalist agendas and perspectives.

The final category that emerges when the domain of activities and operations are analyzed in terms of their implementation by the conservative women's organizations are: projects. Without doubt, the other three themes of: educational activities, help/charity related activities, and conferences/seminars have played a fundamental role for the many conservative women's organizations as previously examined. However, it is crucial to set forth that the relevance of projects with regards to its application by the many conservative women's organizations surpasses the other three core activity and/or operation bases and this is clear with the following data: all of the 10 conservative women's organizations that were analyzed employ projects within their organization, which are: AKADDER, EVKAD, HASEKİ, HEKVA, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HİKDE, KASAV, TÜRKKAD, HAVLE, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform.

To begin with, proje (project) and projecilik (project-making) have become a chief component of a struggle for dominance, access to resources, and authenticity among civic activists (Kuzmanovic, 2010, p.433). It is visible through the enactment of projects and/or project-making by the many conservative women's organizations that they specifically administer this particular type of activity, largely because the realm of projects stands for and provides concrete connections to resources, especially financial aid and prominent contacts. A concrete example of a conservative women's organization implementing projects mainly in relation to acquiring resources is apparent with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform and its previous statement put forth with regards to the organization's project implementation, which was as follows:

In other words, our membership work is not so much a budget thing, because we are a platform. Since we are progressing on a project basis, we do not put too much of a burden on our members, as we obtain financial resources from sponsors and grant programs. We are not a group with so many strict rules. This is why we currently have around 1600 registered members. We have 1600 members across Turkey. We have representation offices in Ankara, İzmir, and after that in Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, and Trabzon. Along with we have detected that: it is not possible for us to involve all women in every event or make them involved everything. Besides we do not have such a goal. The records of our members that we have generally vary according to their professional and educational status. Therefore, since we come up with different

projects at different times, a different group of members actively participates each time. For example, we conducted the “Happy Mother Happy Child” (“Mutlu Anne Mutlu Çocuk”) project, at this stage, housewives were more interested. There was intensive participation. On the other hand, in another program we did about women entrepreneurs only friends who have a job and a profession participated. Housewives were not very interested in it. So when we look at the total, not so much can happen. Besides I think this is the main problem of women’s NGOs (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020)

This shows that this particular conservative women’s organization and organizations alike are utilizing the realm of projects typically for gaining access to resources, because one of this organization’s assertions is stated as being project-based, which supplies them with the necessary financial resources from the domains that issue financial support to organizations that execute projects as seen with the İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform’s respondent’s comment that they obtain resources from the arenas of sponsors and grant programs in relation to the projects that they have employed. Also, another reason that the many conservative women’s organizations make use of the realm of projects is to assert their gendered perspectives. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform is a concrete example of a conservative women’s organization employing the field of projects in line with this outlook and this is evident through one of their projects titled: “Happy Mother Happy Child” (“Mutlu Anne Mutlu Çocuk”). Conservative women set forth Islamic and traditional sex roles, where they champion maternal duties to children and obedience to husbands and establish this as the prime concern for Islam and themselves (Arat, 2005, p.114). As seen with one of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform’s project titled: “Happy Mother Happy Child” (“Mutlu Anne Mutlu Çocuk”) that this conservative women’s organization utilizes the arena of projects to display their gendered outlooks, as such by putting forth this project on the basis of the Islamic outlook of women as being primarily associated to maternal responsibilities towards their child and/or children and by incorporating the notion of motherhood it is apparent that they conduct the traditional based perceptions towards women, because merely titling the project with the terms of: “mother” and “child” creates the vision of women as being mainly caregivers, in which is a fundamental belief enacted by traditionalist sex roles and traditionalist division of labor.

Moreover, another conservative women's organization that executes projects with a similar rationale as İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's gendered perspective is visible with KASAV. For instance, the representative of KASAV states the following information on the subject matter of the activities and operations they implement that: "In general we are on the basis of projects and symposiums. Also, you can check our website" (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020). With the remarks made by the representative of KASAV it is clear that they employ projects, however when KASAV's official website is examined in terms of the projects they put forth a specific theme emerges on why they administer the domain of projects. One prominent project example displaying the reason why KASAV enacts the field of projects is with the following information made available on KASAV's official website:

Project information: "Healthy Mothers, Healthy Generations Project" ("Sağlıklı Annelerle Sağlıklı Nesillere projesi") (2013-2014) In cooperation with Istanbul Public Health Administration and Eyüp Municipality, trainings were given to engaged couples and pregnant women about reproductive health, sexual health, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy follow-up, and safe motherhood while students attending 11th grades of high schools were given trainings on adolescent health. The project reached 800 engaged couples and 30 such couples agreed to receive this training. Of the 975 pregnant women, 216 women participated in the training. In the scope of the same project, 133 students attending 11th grades of high schools were given trainings on adolescent health. This project aimed raising awareness and level of information of target group and contributing to changing attitudes and behavior in a way to positively impact their physical and social health (2013-2014, KASAV).

This specific information presented by the conservative women's organization KASAV's official website demonstrates a conservative oriented gendered perspective and this outlook is a core rationale on why this particular conservative women's organization employs projects through the organization's framework, because with the project KASAV implements named: "Healthy Mothers, Healthy Generations" ("Sağlıklı Annelerle Sağlıklı Nesillere projesi") it is apparent that they primarily perform projects to advocate and reinforce their conservative based gendered point of view, which is visible with this project's information that they merely inform women on health related issues, instead of informing women and men on equal bases. Additionally, through the particular project KASAV enacts called: "Healthy Mothers, Healthy Generations" ("Sağlıklı Annelerle Sağlıklı Nesillere

projesi”) is similar with the conservative women’s organization of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform’s project titled: “Happy Mother Happy Child” (“Mutlu Anne Mutlu Çocuk”), because both of the conservative women’s organizations base their projects on women as a core through traditionalist and gendered views, rather than establishing the grounds on genders through a equal stance and objectives. Also, it is crucial to analyze the conservative women’s organizations interactions with the Justice and Development Party government, in order to see whether these organizations activities and operations have been influenced and/or provide with reinforcement.

Under the power of the JDP governments conservative women have obtained considerable power, putting the progressive feminists and the women who want to live a secular life in Turkey under continuous attack (Özcan, 2018, p.176). It is evident that conservative women have gained a significant amount of power under the administration of the JDP, while other women, such as: feminist and secular women have faced backlash and censoring by the Turkish government for their outlooks and agendas. However, this bias and favoritism administered by the JDP towards conservative women is not only visible through the power these women have secured within the Turkish context, but is also apparent with the JDP’s discourses and notions towards conservative women’s organizations through the concept of affirmative action. Affirmative action may be described as actions or programs which give opportunities or other benefits to persons on the grounds of their membership in a specified group or groups (Rabe, 2001, p.73). Affirmative action is present within the Turkish context largely in terms of the JDP enacting various opportunities and advantages to the community, particularly for the conservative women’s organizations, mainly for their enactment of their activities and operations. The Women and Democracy Association (KADEM) is a chief example of a conservative women’s organization receiving affirmative action from the current Turkish government. Despite its two-year background as a civil society organization, KADEM has had strong connections with state-institutions namely the Ministry for Family and Social Policies, giving rise to other women’s organizations to protest their discerned exclusion from the policy-making processes (Altunok, 2016, p.141). In addition to having firm links with many state-institutions provided

by the government, KADEM has also received affirmative action by the JDP with regard to gender discourses, mainly through the notion of gender justice. Gender's separation with power relations combined with the following reconstruction of the term in association with Islamic principles have permitted KADEM both to legitimize conservative gender regime of the government and to claim authority in the eyes of international and regional organizations and agencies (Ün, 2019, p.844). KADEM by advocating the government's conservative gender regime and implementing gender through Islamic principles has allowed this organization to gain momentum with the concept of gender justice and obtain legitimacy in both the global and local arenas, largely because of the affirmative action administered by the JDP in return for the efforts and reinforcements executed by KADEM towards the government. Although there is affirmative action put forth by the Turkish government towards the realm of conservative women's organizations, it is vital to illustrate how the conservative women's organizations perceive the Turkish government's stance towards women's organizations, in order to comprehend whether the conservative women's organizations believe that women's organizations are empowered or disempowered under the authority of the Turkish government, such as: in terms of their activities and operations.

First of all, when analyzing the various conservative women's organizations in terms of their outlook towards the Turkish government's position regarding the arena of women's organizations, the majority of the conservative women's organizations set forth a positive response. On the other hand, only two of the conservative women's organizations offered a moderate reply in relation to the government's outlook towards the realm of women's organizations, while only HİKDE provided no commentary. Moreover, when the many conservative women's organizations are analyzed in regard to the government's stance on women's organizations a general theme emerges, in which can be put forth as the government conducts good work towards the women's organizations. A prominent example of an conservative women's organization enacting this particular position is perceptible with the organization of: KASAV and this is further reinforced with the comment made by the representative of KASAV on the subject matter of: the government's point of view on women's organizations that it states as: "Positive" (interview with

KASAV, 13 January, 2020). Also, another conservative women's organization asserting a similar stance with KASAV is visible with the organization of: HEKVA and their outlook in relation to the government is perceptible with HEKVA's representative's following remarks that:

We are doing good work with them, especially joint work with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies ("Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı"). For example, 2 months ago we became a member of the World Muslim Women's Organization and we are the first participant from Turkey. Do you follow us on social media? Maybe you can see our work from there (interview with HEKVA, 13 January, 2020).

It is apparent with the comments implemented by the HEKVA's representative that they do indeed conduct work with the Turkish government and its agencies, primarily with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and as stated by HEKVA's representative that they do not deny their unity and they perceive the work they do as good. However, with this discernment of empowerment enacted by the many conservative women's organizations, it is important to point out that this view is taken upon is not towards the realm of all women's organizations, but rather looked upon through the lenses of conservative women's organizations. A major example of a conservative women's organization that sets forth this particular discernment within their discourses and agendas is observable with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform and the following information provided the respondent of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform furthers this case:

"It will be a lot better if they leave the state alone. A group of civil society organizations (NGOs) intervene a lot. For example, we support KADEM (the Women and Democracy Association) a lot" (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

These assertions presented by İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform respondent shows that they advocate and maintain the Turkish government's affirmative action administered towards them and other conservative women's organizations like KADEM by legitimizing their existence by championing them further through their agendas and events. Also, these statements made by the respondent of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform shows they do not employ the equal distance principal that they claimed they put forth towards all civil society organizations, because with these specific remarks it is indeed clear that they are biased and in support of KADEM and conservative women's organizations alike which have good relations with the Turkish government as well. In addition, another conservative women's

organizations similar to the stance enacted by İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform is perceptible with TÜRKKAD. TÜRKKAD's representative provides the following information with regards to their outlook on the government's point of view towards the domain of women's organizations that:

Good. The state takes good care and we do not see any problem of the state in that regard. Because it still supports women's associations, such as: the Small and Medium Industry Development Organization ("KOSGEB"), that they support all; especially I believe that the Ministry of Family and Social Policies ("Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı") provided good support in this sense. On the contrary, women's associations are the most prominent these days (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

With these statements set forth by the representative of TÜRKKAD displays that they view women's organizations through the lenses of conservative women's organizations, because these particular comments with regards to for instance: the Small and Medium Industry Development Organization ("KOSGEB") falls under the realm of the Turkish government, which as previously illustrated falls under the agenda of conservative women's organizations as well where they favored over other women's organizations. To conclude, it is visible that there is a correlation between the JDP and the conservative women's organizations, in terms of implementing similar views and cooperation which has positively influenced their execution of these conservative women's organizations activities, operations, and outlooks.

Furthermore, marginalizing independent women's organizations, which have been condemnatory of its conservative gender politics, JDP has backed up pro-government women's organizations such as Women and Democracy Organization (KADEM), Women's Rights Organization against Discrimination (AK-DER), and Women Health Workers Association for Solidarity (KASAD-D) (Ün, 2019, p.840). Similar to these pro-government organizations (KADEM, AK-DER, and KASAD-D), the many conservative women's organizations, for instance: KASAV and HASEKİ have been supported by the Turkish government and also with the government marginalizing and silencing independent women's organizations the civil society field has been mainly yielded over to the conservative women's organizations with their reinforcement of the government and its conservative gender politics. However, with the various conservative women's organizations progressively dominating the civil society arena with their distinct outlooks and agendas, an essential question emerges: in general how will the conservative

women's organizations leading position in the domain of Turkish civil society affect the notion of womanhood? As previously put forth the conservative women's organizations are heterogeneous in nature, but connect on many core subject matters regarding the discourse of womanhood which has created problems for both feminist literature and the term itself. Although the conservative women's organizations perspectives towards the notion of womanhood has generated problematic means, now with the conservative women's organizations securing a powerful position in the realm of civil society these organizations can implement their agendas and beliefs in relation to the conception of womanhood even further. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze what the conservative women's organizations plans are for the future through their activities and operations, in order to comprehend whether the discourse of womanhood will be affected by the conservative women's organizations perceptions and agendas.

To begin with, when the 10 conservative women's organizations are analyzed in terms of their future plans many activities and operations emerge, however two core themes arise and these can be illustrated as: 1. reinforcing the family arena and 2. preserving traditionalist and conservative discourses. Many of the conservative women's organizations, while discussing their organizations plans for the future have put forth remarks that intertwine women with the family domain. For instance, the conservative women's organization of EVKAD fits under this particular outlook and this is especially evident and furthered with the following statements put forth by the representative of EVKAD itself that:

We wish to serve women and their families. That is women, family, and children. It is important that women become stronger. It is important that families become stronger. What we mean by family is one of the most important institutions. We call it family, family, family, but it's not such a simple thing. In other words, it is one of the most important institutions that sustain a society and one of the cornerstones of the family domain is women. Because we are women too; ladies empowerment in this sense, strengthening, high moral and motivation, and so on are the subjects we care about, value, and are our interested areas, the areas in which we serve. Also, the female bird makes the nest (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020).

With these comments made by the representative of EVKAD it asserts that one of the organizations future plans is to serve women and their families and claims that the female bird makes the nest. With this gendered future plan set forth by the conservative women's organization: EVKAD, the notion of womanhood is visibly

altered in a few manners, however one critical way EVKAD reorients womanhood is by reinforcing the problematic concept of the gender division of labor. The naturalization of the gender division of labor is continued in the instance of working women by reassuming their primary roles as mothers and wives (Çosar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011, p.566). Another conservative women's organization which is similar with EVKAD in terms of its specific future plans is observable with HİKDE and is perceptible with the information provided by its respondent that:

So, we plan to increase the number of families we help. Also, we plan on to increase the number of scholars, to spend more time with them, and to get to know them more. In other words, we want to put women in need more on our agenda as a foundation (interview with HİKDE, 10 March, 2020).

Again, with these remarks established by the respondent of HİKDE it is similar in essence with EVKAD with regards to their future plans that they also intertwine women with the family realm. Additionally, analogous with EVKAD, these following conservative women's organizations have too strongly advocated the gender division of labor previously in their agendas and events and these organizations can be delineated as: KASAV, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, and TÜRKKAD. For example, these specific comments asserted by the respondent of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform evidently displays that this particular conservative women's organization's reinforcement of the gender division of labor as:

“In the near future, we plan to become a foundation and establish a training center. Also, we want to enter a process where we can serve families. To strengthen the mother, especially at home” (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

With these statements provided by the respondent of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform that they visibly champion and maintain the gender division of labor as previously implemented by the representative of EVKAD as well. Also, with the power these conservative women's organizations, as for: İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, EVKAD, and HİKDE currently possess the realm of womanhood will be severely undermined, mainly because associating womanhood to the gender division of labor subordinates womanhood into the private sphere where womanhood is preserved under the heteronormative gender roles and patriarchal mentality.

Moreover, the second main theme which emerges when the 10 conservative women's organizations are examined with regards to their future plans is the

framework of preserving traditionalist and conservative discourses. A fundamental example of a conservative women's organization implementing this outlook is perceptible with TÜRKKAD and the following statements presented by TÜRKKAD's representative demonstrates this position as well that:

We will continue our seminars, our conferences, and our thought workshops. We will also continue our meetings. We will strive to raise a beautiful generation. As Yahya Kemal said: "Our future generation is not one step away; but we will raise a youth with one foot in the past and with one foot in the future." In that sense, we will do whatever is necessary. We will also use technology, we will use our visual data, and we will use our social media, but ultimately our goal is to raise the new generation with national and spiritual values. As I said, our association is a very old association. Many names have ever passed here. Many names that are on the agenda today are among TÜRKKAD's members. Also, there is support from Nezihe Aras, Samiha Ayverdi, and İlber Ortaylı. All of them have contributed to the external association and we want to move this labor forward. As I said, we are on the lines of a conservative nationalist outlook. All of their national and moral values... That's all. We respect and love (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

With these particular comments given by the representative of TÜRKKAD it is visible that they want to maintain and continue to employ the traditionalist and conservative enactments and this is especially clear with the remark that TÜRKKAD wants to preserve and present the new generation with national and spiritual values. However, TÜRKKAD is not the only conservative women's organization which puts forth the traditionalist and conservative mentality for their future plans, HASEKİ is also another core example of this understanding. HASEKİ's similar apprehension is observable with following information presented by the representative of HASEKİ:

As I said, we continue with a traditional way, what has been done for 50 years, but now of course, we adapt today's technology to meet their needs in the same way. Also, we want to become a little bigger on a project basis and institutionalize, to make our name heard more. We have a certain circle now, but we have started to work to make our name heard more. We want to help more families and scholars. Currently, we have nearly 100 scholarship students, in fact more than 100 and we have about 35 families, but we never want a person who enters here in need to return empty-handed. These situations need to be a little more; of course we need resources so we can increase it. This is the goal, to develop resources and grow them further, charity activities, and so on (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020).

On the other hand, this viewpoint of tradition and conservatism repositions the understanding of womanhood into a disempowered state. There is proof that these religious world-views advocate traditional roles for women, and that these limit

women's choices and engagement in the public world (Arat, 2010, p.881). Through this understanding, it is apparent that traditional and conservative views restrain women and push them away from the public sphere and visibly this discernment by some of the conservative women's organizations will tarnish the comprehension of womanhood into a confined arena. Furthermore, there are other future plans stated by the conservative women's organizations, in which critically reorient and modify the notion of womanhood, such as: supporting nationalist and spiritual values, and promoting the idea of becoming stakeholders with the Turkish government.

4.3.4. Resources

Although, activities and operations comprise a fundamental position for the conservative women's organizations to enact their particular objectives and perspectives, these means mainly require resources to administer them. The realm of resources can be classified in four different kinds of forms: financial, physical, human, and organizational (Eikelenboom, 2005, p.16). However, it is analyzed through the conservative women's organizations that they predominantly incorporate two of the core types of resources: financial resources and human resources. Despite the fact that, the domains of financial and human resources are primary ways for the conservative women's organizations to implement their activities and operations, it is evident that the notion of Islam possesses a fundamental means for these organizations to gather core resources as well. Islam is used as a network resource for constructing relationships of trust and solidarity among Muslims and to connect them with the formation of the constituency of political Islam (Buğra & Savaşkan, 2014, p.15). Similar to the conservative women's organizations employing the discourse of institutionalization through making the use of notions and beliefs associated to Islam, conservative women's organizations have also utilized Islam as a network resource through the implications related to it, particularly with acquiring financial and human resources.

When the conservative women's organizations are examined in terms of obtaining financial resources a core trend arises that is: all of the 10 conservative women's organizations acquire financial resources and these organizations can be

delineated as: AKADDER, EVKAD, HASEKİ, HEKVA, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HİKDE, KASAV, TÜRKKAD, HAVLE, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. However, it is fundamental to state that the conservative women's organizations on the whole obtain financial resources through four major bases, which can be illustrated as: 1. projects, 2. membership fees/dues, 3. the public-private sector, and 4. donations. In addition, when the conservative women's organizations are analyzed with regards to gaining human resources a vital theme emerges which can be put forth as: 8 out of the 10 conservative women's organizations establish human resources through its structure and these organizations are as follows: HEKVA, HAVLE, KASAV, TÜRKKAD, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, EVKAD, AKADDER, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. The conservative women's organizations that acquire human resources mostly derive this realm on the basis of volunteerism and this is clear with these conservative women's organizations of: HEKVA, HAVLE, KASAV, TÜRKKAD, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, EVKAD, AKADDER, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. It is crucial to point out the enactment of the domains of financial and human resources, through the employment of notions as for projects, membership fees/dues, the public-private sector, donations, and volunteers have been implemented largely in line with Islamic implications and agendas. In spite of the conservative women's organizations mostly putting forth frameworks and notions connected to Islam while requesting and receiving financial and human resources, the very application of Islam as a means can sometimes generate obstacles. For instance, while selecting Islamic organizations the area of interests plays an important role for people and this produces competition among Islamic organizations for limited financial and human resources (Yükleyen, 2012, p.43). Also, many of the conservative women's organizations who have administered Islamic notions in terms of their field of resources have put forth that resources are difficult to find and/or that resources are not sufficient enough for them. In fact, 8 out of the 10 conservative women's organizations that have been examined have set forth their income and/or resources are not enough in some kind of way and these conservative women's organizations are as follows: KASAV, HAVLE, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HASEKİ, HEKVA, AKADDER, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, and TÜRKKAD.

Although, the 8 conservative women's organizations have asserted that their income and/or resources are usually not enough for them to conduct their activities, these organizations mainly differ on the reasons for this particular situation. A core example of a conservative women's organization putting forth that their income is not enough regarding their enactment of their activities is visible with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform and the reason behind their statement is evident with the following information provided by İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's respondent:

Nice... Resources are not sufficient by any means, because there are no resources. The associations table or the charter of associations is a very tiring process. Therefore, associationalism (working as an association) is a process you both work and spend money, but in return it is a process which legal problems arise. That's why we are not very happy and it is not enough. Our resources are also completely supplied as founders and we have a board of directors and an executive board. Also, there are business women on our advisory board. As I said, we completely proceed as project basis; we usually handle it with our own resources (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

These particular comments established by the İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's respondent shows that a main cause that they state that their income is not enough is due to the fact that this conservative women's organization claims that there are simply no resources to obtain income for their enactment of activities. On the other hand, when the other conservative women's organizations are studied in regards with their statements that resources and/or income is not enough to implement their operations different stances emerge as well. For instance the conservative women's organization of AKADDER differs from the conservative women's organization of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform in relation to the rationale on why they perceive that their income and/or resources are not enough and this is perceptible with AKADDER's representative's following remarks that:

So for resources we don't have many projects. We have projects and we also have past projects. As AKAD, we also have an ongoing "Addiction Project" ("Bağımlılık Projemiz"), but we cannot receive help from either national or international funds. In this respect, we continue our activities through the framework of membership fees/dues and voluntary donations. Of course it is not enough and this does limit us from time to time. I don't know if you will ask in the future, but I can tell you now. Let's say we are conducting family-oriented work. Actually Anadolu Platform is our upper roof and is a family-centered structure. In other words, this Platform understands education through incorporating men, women, and children. We actually get power from this structure as well. In this sense, as a women's family association and the family

work we conduct, although our goal is women in the first step; the family work we have done brings to preserve the unity/partnership and perhaps in this sense brings together questioning many things and being open to change. Let's say for example the chaotic environment created over the Istanbul Convention. We also have HAKAD under the roof of Anadolu Platform, the Free Academics Association (Hür Akademisyenler Derneği). With a justification prepared by HAKAD, academics made a workshop in Ankara on February 28, February 23, 2019, if I am remembering correctly. This workshop evaluated the Istanbul Convention, but within the framework of many different disciplines. From our doctor to our psychologist, sociologist, from lawyers to theologians it was an opportunity for the means in the evaluation of the Istanbul Convention in many areas. By the way, a report will be coming out if God permits. At the same time, as women we are questioning many things; we have prepared a book aimed at overcoming the problems related to the family arena in this one year period. We brought together both Turkey's and the Islamic world's leading figures, but our book came out in the form of interviews about women and family, in which we asked the same questions and the book is titled: "Being a Family" and "Being a Family in the Continuity and Change Axis" ("Aile Olmak", "Devamlılık ve Değişim Ekseninde Aile Olmak"). By the way, our book came out in February. We can say that parallel with the publication with of this book, we organized a family workshop in Kozaklı (Nevşehir) with the participation of 300 people. We conducted joint workshops made up of women, men, and children and we made a study from the workshop titles that we had drawn out of a book and prepared this work. A family workshop. Therefore, for all of these we need funds and resources. We find it difficult to find these funds and resources, but this does not prevent us from achieving our work and the goals we have set forth (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020).

Through these statements presented by the representative of the conservative women's organization of AKADDER displays that they are not particularly happy with the income and resources that they have, largely because funds and resources are hard to acquire, but AKADDER is clearly distinct from the conservative women's organization of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform in the sense that AKADDER is still pleased with their activities outcomes and are optimistic about the future activities they will implement with what they have in terms of income and resources. Even though Islam has created impediments for several of these conservative women's organization while obtaining resources, some of these organizations nevertheless continue to set forth Islam within their structure and administration for financial and human resources.

TÜRKKAD is a discernible example of a conservative women's organization continuing to maintain Islamic means within its organizational structure while searching and acquiring resources, despite asserting that resources were not enough

and this specific situation is apparent with TÜRKKAD's respondent's following comments:

Resources are not enough; it revolves with membership fees/dues. It revolves with the donations and dues that our members give from their own pockets. We say it revolves with abundance ("bereket"). Is it enough? Thank God (Allaha şükürler olsun ki), of course it is enough. We are enough for ourselves. Everyone works voluntarily. We are for public welfare/interest, so we don't have any commercial income (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020). Doubtlessly, these remarks put forth by TÜRKKAD's respondent establishes that although they assert they find that resources are not enough, they still assert that this particular organizations resources revolves with abundance ("bereket") which is intertwined with Islamic undertones and determination. On the other hand, not only have the conservative women's organizations employed notions and frameworks associated to Islam on the arena of gaining income and resources, but these conservative women's organizations have also pursued other discourses and agendas within their objectives to acquire financial and human resources, such as: government support and international funding.

As previously stated, the increases in the interactions and connections between Turkish agencies and the international realm donors and agents have amplified international funding into the Turkish state and society relations. Stemming from the late 1980s period, the Turkish context has boosted its relations with the sphere of international donors and policy agents, such as: the World Bank, IMF, UN, and the EU (Kuzmanovic, 2010, p.430). As a matter of fact, this trend of acquiring international funding is evident in some of the conservative women's organizations framework as well, as for: HAVLE, KASAV, and more. Also, in terms of obtaining international funding for financial resources, the implementation of projects plays an essential role. For example, the EU funds women's empowerment projects in Turkey (Landig, 2011, p.206). A prominent example of a conservative women's organization making use of the EU for international funding is KASAV and this particular case is perceptible with the following statements introduced by the organization's representative:

Our association's resources progress through projects. Such as European Union projects, government projects, and so on. In addition, the other source that is conducted for our foundation's expenses mostly progresses through a

voluntary basis. Resources are not always enough (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020).

Clearly, KASAV utilizes the EU field mainly for obtaining international funding for financial resources by administering projects to receive this funding. Also, in terms of the project enacted by KASAV can be exemplified as an international project type, because the funding KASAV is striving for plays under realm of international funding.

Moreover, another conservative women's organization which implements projects to gain funding, especially international funding similar as to the case of KASAV is seen with HAVLE. HAVLE's representative sets forth the following information with regards to their organization's resource acquirement that:

All the activities we have conducted so far are from the fund applications we applied for through consulates and embassies. We were able to do the activities from the acceptances we got from these places. We have a very young audience base. Most of our young people are students or people who have just newly started the working sector. That's why they are not people who can support such financial means. Also, we did not want this very much from the start. We didn't want the old forms of organizations where the systems in which people invest large amounts of money to have a say through a sister-brotherhood institution to occur in HAVLE. Frankly, we entered places that we thought we could be more independent like this. Unfortunately, in Turkey there is such a thing. In rough terms, "who pays the piper calls the tune" is the state. So, that's why we did not want for people to get involved in such a way. The projects we wanted to implement were obvious from the very beginning. When we first founded HAVLE, we made a lot of meetings on what we were going to focus on first and through the conversations we had and from the other meetings we held occasionally as a result of these decisions we made, we prepared projects and presented them. We applied to consulates. We did it with resources we received from there. To the question of: is it enough? It depends on where we look at it from. The projects we have done and written are sufficient in this context, but of course HAVLE always needs more. We want to do more and more. We want to especially change the literature. Muslim feminist literature in Turkey is quite narrow. The published sources about this are very few. So we actually wanted something like this from abroad, almost every country that has been published has Muslim feminism and are organized there and almost every country has its own literature. First of all, our intention is to include that literature into our own country and then create our own literature. For instance, resources are needed for this. Because we are also in a world like there is a system where people work from 9 am to 5pm or 6pm at best. You can't just expect people to translate voluntarily for you or sit down and write articles for you. You have to at least pay back these efforts a little too. At least at the minimum level, at least there should be somewhat of a

return. So we don't want to get into that kind of labor exploitation. Of course, our work is performed voluntarily, but we also want to give back to these people. So of course for this we need it. Or we have other ideas we want to put forth. For them, whoever works or exerts labor, by giving or receiving the reward for that labor and in the same way we can get the professional support we need and we want to progress in such a system. For this reason, the projects we are doing now are enough for these, but when we want to do more at that point they are actually not enough. Also, establishing an association in itself is actually a very expensive business. So you rent a place and you pay that places rent every month. You pay electricity, bills, withholding, taxes, and more, and as I said, this is not something that the association can just do with something that consists of only young audiences. For now, we are revolving this system by ourselves, but of course we need support in this sense as well (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

It is evident with the remarks put forth by the representative of HAVLE that the arena of projects plays a crucial role for HAVLE mainly in relation to obtaining resources and income, because this conservative women's organization specifically administers projects in this sense as stated by the representative that they issue projects in this context. Also, with the information presented by HAVLE's representative the domain of international funding, especially with regards to the public-private sector income is very vital for their resource and income bases; because the representative set forth that they largely situate their income in terms of funding applications from consulates and embassies. Again, HAVLE's project enactment is similar with KASAV's implementation of projects as well in terms of international funding, because like KASAV it also acquires funding from international domains. However, it is crucial to state that not all conservative women's organizations like HAVLE and KASAV administer projects through the field of international funding. For instance, NİSA-ÜL AKSA is an organization which executes projects and receives funding from local means and this is evident with NİSA-ÜL AKSA's respondents comments that:

Apart from that, we have periodical and seasonal projects. These are projects such as winter project and education project. During Ramadan, there are "iftar" and "sahur" projects, which are specific to Ramadan. These are in the form of fitrah, charity, and zakat collection. Are studies are in this manner (interview with NİSA-ÜL AKSA, 16 March, 2020).

It is visible through the remarks made by the respondent of NİSA-ÜL AKSA that they do not on the whole employ projects in terms of gaining international funding, but rather put forth these projects for local funding, such as: government based

funding. Furthermore, TÜRKKAD is also a conservative women's organization similar to NİSA-ÜL AKSA that exerts projects and receives support from the government in this sense and this is evident with the following statements presented by the representative of TÜRKKAD that: "Of course, we are loyal and respectful to our state and nation. We definitely don't have a bad relationship. We also do the projects we need to do" (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020). Through these comments it is apparent that conservative women's organizations also implement projects to receive funding from not only international realms, such as: the EU, but also from local dimensions as for government funding.

4.4. Cooperation among Conservative Women's Organizations

The understanding and perception towards the concept of cooperation differs for many, especially through the means of establishing this unity, such as: appealing to identity politics. Despite the fact that there are diverse approaches towards the conception of cooperation and solidarity, in broad terms there is a general understanding evident within the term itself. A more common definition of the notion of solidarity can be denoted as the unity among members of an oppressed group, in a context of struggle and marginalization (Sleeter & Soriano, 2012, p.9). Through this definition, it is evident that the main theme visible through the concept of solidarity and cooperation is unity with regards to struggle and exclusion. Also, feminist solidarity is a fundamental paragon of this understanding through their mutual unity in terms of their combat for the womanhood discourse against marginalization. Although, feminists unify mainly through the notion of womanhood in terms of gender equality, the unity evident in the conservative women's organizations differ vastly. It is crucial to explain what kind of cooperation lies behind the field of conservative women's organizations, in order to comprehend the main differences between conservative women's unity and feminist unity.

First of all, the conservative women's organizations and the conservative women in this arena as previously set forth are heterogeneous in essence. On the other hand, when analyzing these 10 conservative women's organizations of AKADDER, EVKAD, HEKVA, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, HASEKİ, HAVLE, KASAV, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HİKDE, and TÜRKKAD there is a general

sense of cooperation visible within these 10 conservative women's organizations on specific matters and notions, mainly as for: gender roles, the unity discourse, values, and religious freedom. On the whole, when conservative women's organizations are examined through the realm of womanhood, the type of solidarity and cooperation in which emerges is largely established on a traditionalist and religious (conservative) framework and this is perceptible with many of the conservative women's organizations. For instance, HİKDE's respondent puts forth the following comments and these comments demonstrate this solidarity with other conservative frameworks:

So, we participate in each other's programs. Educational institutions and women's foundations. For example, there is HAZAR association and we participate in their programs. Of course, we participate in other women's organizations. We also cooperate with them. Usually on psychological seminars and self-awareness workshops (interview with HİKDE, 10 March, 2020).

These remarks provided by HİKDE's respondent shows that they engage with the cooperation present within conservative women's organizations and this is evident with HAZAR association, because it is also a conservative women's organization. Also, the implementations and discourses of Islamic NGOs in the Turkish context advance traditional manifestations of solidarity as they regard the family institution the true guardian of the moral order in addition to being the economic safety net for communities (Atalay, 2017, p.3). This outlook and reading administered by Islamic NGOs is also present within various conservative women's organizations formation of unity, because many of these organizations in Turkey support traditional forms of solidarity mostly through the construction of familism. A prominent example of a conservative women's organization formulating its structure of cooperation in terms of tradition and family orientation is apparent with AKADDER and this particular outlook is perceptible with the statements previously presented by the representative of AKADDER as for their stances regarding the family domain in terms of being conservative and traditionalist.

Moreover, the overall theme of cooperation among conservative women's organizations can be described through the means of tradition and religion (Islam) with the common notions of familism, gendered roles, Islamic religious freedom, traditionalist values, and sexual moral norms. The general cooperation manifest within the various conservative women's organizations has without doubt prompted

interest and created adherence for many people as well. The comments put forth by the representative from the conservative women's organization of EVKAD is an apparent example of an intrigued and adherent of the unity evident within the conservative women's organizations, particularly of EVKAD and this is seen with the following information made by the representative: "I care about the family realm. Family values. Also, I want to contribute to society" (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020). These comments made by the representative of EVKAD reinforces and maintains the solidarity of the many conservative women's organizations, because the representative asserts that family values are crucial mainly through the family domain and this advocates motherhood and the area of housewife duties, which maintains and contributes to the traditionalist and conservative outlook present within the unity of these organizations. Furthermore, the general solidarity among the conservative women's organizations has not only produced interest and generated devotion for various individuals, but has also created space available for these followers and/or supporters to contribute and/or join these organizations to reinforce and spread the overall solidarity and cooperation evident within these organizations which additionally nurtures the present unity.

Moreover, there are four categories of women's organizations which indicate the dominant political cleavages in the Turkish context, in which are: Kurdish, Islamist, feminist, and Kemalist (secular) women's civil society organizations (Aksoy, 2018, p.103). Through these terms, there consist various women's civil society organizations with fundamental perspectives and distinct understandings on cohesion within. Doubtlessly, these different types of women's organizations have gathered many members, volunteers, and workers to implement their distinct agendas and outlooks. On the other hand, although there is ideological disintegration evident between these different women's organizations, these organizations have burgeoned and formed a range of mobilizing compositions to challenge patriarchal structures in both politics and society (Aksoy, 2018, p.103). It can be asserted that through this framework that there is a form of interaction evident between these four domains of women's organizations in Turkey. However, it is debatable whether all of the four categories of the women's civil society organizations connect together and put forth positive results. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the conservativ women's

organizations interactions with other organizations by mainly concentrating on their previous background relations with organizations and/or associations, in order to understand whether there are connections present between the conservative women's organizations and the other types of women's organizations (Kurdish, secular, and feminist).

First of all, when interviewing the various conservative women's organizations respondents' on whether they have previously worked or was involved with another organization and/or association the majority of the individuals from the conservative women's organizations stated they have worked and/or was involved before with another organization and/or association. While a plurality of the conservative women's organizations respondents expressed they were part of and/or worked with another organization before, there emerged a clear trend among them, in which can be identified as: the organization/s which they specified was connected to conservative roots and was a conservative women's organization in particular. It is visible that the great number of the respondents from the conservative women's organizations has only taken part in and/or worked for conservative organizations and a fundamental question arises: in general why has the conservative women's organizations merely connected with their own conservative solidarity?

Indeed there are various key rationales behind this question, however on the whole when these organizations are examined a few subject matters emerge. One important critique by the religious Muslim women towards the women's movements in Turkey is that women's organizations are disregarding the infringement of religious Muslim women's rights (Ozcetin, 2009, p.115). Through this perspective asserted by the various conservative women the central subject matter of conservative women's rights transpires and what this notion generally implies for the conservative women and their organizations is their right to participate in the public sphere with their religion, especially with their headscarves. Although many conservative women and conservative women's organizations condemn the women's movements in Turkey for opposing and/or not supporting their rights, usually through the basis of the headscarf discourse, the scenario diverges largely for the other types of women's organizations. For instance, the feminist women's

organizations advocated for the covered women's endeavor to participate in the public life as a demand of equal citizenship (Çağatay, 2018, p.54).

Moreover, another core reason that emerges from the conservative women's organizations just associating themselves with the conservative unity and cooperation is visible with topic of: traditional gender relations (in terms of Islam). Islamic NGOs formulate social reproduction in firmly established moral terms that connect the private sphere to traditional collective values of family, nation, and Islam (Atalay, 2017, p.6). This position implemented by Islamic NGOs is not only specific to them, because this perspective is also evident within various conservative women's organizations, in which mostly situate themselves with the notions of nation, family, and Islam through the means of traditional gender relations. However, it is crucial to put forth conservative women's organizations through the subject matter of: Islamic traditional gender relations connect with conservative unity, largely due to the other three categories of women's organizations do not strongly share the same perspective on this arena. Also, there are a few other subject matters on the whole why the conservative women's organizations merely associated themselves with their own conservative solidarity, in which be looked into further.

Many of the conservative women's organizations have put forth that they have worked with other women's organizations and/or different kinds of organizations, as for: charity organizations and family platforms and these organizations can be specified as follows: EVKAD, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, HASEKİ, HEKVA, KASAV, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, AKADDER, HAVLE, and HİKDE. Despite the fact that when the various conservative women's organizations state that they have cooperated with other organizations a sense of variety emerges, rather similar to the case of the conservative women's organizations respondents working and/or being involved with another organization previously, the "other" women's organizations they have described were affiliated with conservative notions and discourses. Additionally, when the topics on what these conservative women's organizations cooperate on a clearer picture appears on this instance. As a result, it is fundamental to elucidate which subjects conservative women's organizations work on together, to discern whether the conservative women's organizations heterogeneous nature prevails.

First of all, the conservative women's organizations work on many key subject matters together; however it can be set forth that there are three essential topics on what these organizations cooperate on: 1. aid/help/charity, 2. family and women, and 3. education. To continue, it is pivotal to point out that the concepts of aid, help, and charity are utilized interchangeably, because they have very close meanings in Turkish literature. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, HEKVA, KASAV, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, and EVKAD have all said that they have collaborated with other women's organizations on the realm of charity. For instance, EVKAD's respondent demonstrates what how they collaborate on charity in the following comments that: "On women, family, children, and adolescents. Let's say women, family, children, and young people. Also, on addiction and social assistance" (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020). However, when these conservative women's organizations cooperation with the other women's organizations are looked into with regard to the framework of aid, the "other" women's organizations visibly gain an homogenous form with an conservative essence. Conservative women comprehend and acknowledge charity as the natural extension of their domestic roles of being carers and providers for their families to care and give to the wider community (Dursun, 2019, p.9). HEKVA is a fundamental example of a conservative women's organization working with a conservative women's organization on the domain of charity through this outlook, although HEKVA only states that it works with other women's organizations in this arena, it is implicitly suggested that the collaboration is rather homogenous and gendered, because one major joint charity work HEKVA implements is on the orphanage in Kenya. Also, the orphanage in Kenya set forth jointly by HEKVA is rather gendered and in opposition to the feminist literature, mainly because by working on this specific form of charity HEKVA is creating the perception of being natural caregivers and in a sense of providing mothering to these children, in which reinforces the patriarchal belief that women belong to the private sphere of being natural caregivers. On the other hand, not only does the conservative women's organizations cooperation on the topic of charity diverge from their heterogeneous-like position with their gendered perspectives and executions, but also buttresses with their homogenous stance on charity. The giving of charity takes a number of manifestations in Islam and the

notion of charity is a Kur'anic term and a generic virtue advised of Muslims at all times (Özdemir & Frank, 2000, p.126). Despite the fact that charity takes many forms in Islam, there is an ongoing universal understanding of this concept impelled to all Muslims and this view is also incorporated by the conservative women's organizations which creates a uniform perception towards the discourse of charity. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform is a visible example of a conservative women's organization administering the homogenous outlook of charity through conservative means, because they have collaborated with other women's organizations in terms of drilling wells in Uganda for the sake of charity, which contributes to the universal belief of Islam through its virtue of charity. In addition, it is crucial to analyze whether the cooperation implemented within the conservative women's organizations are present with other women's organizations as well.

Moreover, the idea that women's rights are human rights is an addition to the political collection of feminists (Walby, 2002, p.549). Although feminist literature comprises of many distinct fundamental branches and discourses, the necessity for women's rights is one concrete notion which feminists unite on. Also, women's rights in the civil, political, social, economic, and cultural domains are inseparable from one another in the truths of daily life (Sweetman, 1995, p.4). Despite the fact that, there is collective action present within feminist literature on the need for women's rights, there is polarization evident within the Turkish context mainly regarding the conservative women's organizations outlook towards other women's organizations enactment of women's rights. In the Middle Eastern context, polarization concerning women's rights issues generally takes place between secularist and conservative-Islamist women's rights organizations (Koyuncu & Özman, 2019, p.4). This divide between secularist and conservative women's organizations on the topic of women's rights is not only apparent in the Turkish context, but this polarization has also emerged within the realm of conservative women's organizations in Turkey. Consequently, it is crucial to explicate where conservative women's organizations stand on the subject matter of women's rights, in order to understand whether conservative women's organizations support collaborative action or disharmony under the domain of women's rights with other women's organizations.

On the discourse of women's rights conservative women's organizations display a heterogeneous enactment and this is seen with the two schools of conservative women: orthodox and reformist. The orthodox conservative women and their organizations, as for: EVKAD, KASAV, and TÜRKKAD assert a critical stance towards the arena of women's rights, while the reformist conservative women and their organizations, such as: AKADDER, HAVLE, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform have put forth a more pro position towards the sphere of women's rights. Indeed, when the two separate outlooks of conservative women's organizations are examined, mainly in terms of reformist and orthodox branches, apparent themes and divergences arise between them. For instance, the conservative women's organization of TÜRKKAD falls under the domain of orthodox conservative women and displays visible attributes with them, largely in terms of administering an unfavorable position towards women's rights.

Also, this specific outlook enacted by TÜRKKAD is rather reinforced with the following statements made by its respondent as well:

Do you mean "the Purple Roof Association" ("Mor Çatı Derneği") and such when you say women's associations? They do have shortcomings. Sometimes associations put women off and push them to the background; sometimes by putting civil society organizations (NGOs) in the foreground they take steps that will disrupt the family tradition and disrupt national values. Of course, we will accept this logic as something, but we will not lose our own specific values. We are aware of the fact that the future is in the hands of women. Future generations, the generation that will carry Turkey forward, the future youth as well will be brought up by women, we know that they will be raised by their mothers. Rather than equality, it may require them to lean in this direction. Sometimes because they are sometimes stern, they seem it be fueling the situation more. I couldn't explain it very well, but it is probably understood (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

As seen with these particular comments established by TÜRKKAD's respondent that they do not promote nor stipulate the field of women's rights, because they view this realm as something problematic, especially in terms of national values and family tradition largely within the Turkish context. Additionally, it can be argued that TÜRKKAD and organizations alike do not generally value collective action, primarily with regards to women's rights, because TÜRKKAD's respondent for instance disagrees and disembodies women's organizations from other branches and enactments, as stated with: the Purple Roof Association" ("Mor Çatı Derneği"), mainly due to TÜRKKAD finding such distinct organizations as insufficient and in

favor of women's rights. The orthodox conservative women's organizations have also mainly argued that the women's rights notion lacks the family domain. A concrete conservative women's organization which situates and advocates for the family domain in opposition to women's rights is KASAV and the following comments put forth the representative of KASAV further demonstrates this perception:

Instead of empowering women and women's violence, violence within the family/domestic violence should be given importance. Instead of strengthening women, family should be strengthened. Also, it is important to know that: A bird with a single wing cannot fly properly (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020).

It is visible with the comments provided by the representative of KASAV that they favor and champion the family realm over the agendas and notions concerning women, because they defend and prioritize family over the women and this is clear with the specific remarks by KASAV as well.

However, incorporating the stance of familism by orthodox conservative women's organizations as seen with KASAV has generated problematic means for the realm of women's rights in Turkey. For instance, under a conservative authoritarian government in power, "Islamist feminists" activism furthers the redefining of women's rights mainly from the conservative position, appreciates women as mothers, and shrinks the liberal secular domain in which various other women in Turkey have possessed rights without the constraint of religion and tradition (Özcan, 2018, p.173). It is observed that the orthodox conservative women's organizations, such as: EVKAD, KASAV, and TÜRKKAD advocating for the necessity of the family domain has engendered the very essence of women's rights and their supporters to face issues, because one core critique by the feminist literature on women's rights is not to intertwine the family realm mainly due to it puts forth subordination for women. Also, perceiving women's rights through the window of family does not achieve rights for women, but rather reinforces patriarchal structures, as for: championing women into the private sphere and declaring that women should be valued as mothers. In addition, orthodox conservative women's organizations have criticized feminist literature and feminist associations on their stances towards women's rights as well. The conservative women's organization of EVKAD is a fundamental example which falls under this

particular outlook of being against feminism and notions attached to it and this are chiefly perceivable with the information provided by EVKAD's representative as well:

If they work against family and men, we don't approve of it and if they are misandrist (enemy of men). We are in favor of the family domain empowerment. Because if we are women, we have children, we have brothers... In other words, we care about the family domain a lot. We care about the family institution a lot, we care about our people and we care very much about the survival of the family, the continuation of the family, and the continuation of family life (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020).

Through these statements asserted by the orthodox conservative women's organization of EVKAD's representative that they are condemning feminists on their views regarding women's rights by arguing that many feminists take this subject matter as far as male enmity and the representative of EVKAD declares that they do not approve the works that are against the family realm and men. Feminists are blamed for man-hating when they oppose gender discrimination because some regard the objection as being anti-man rather than as a protest against the patriarchal system that provides power and privilege to men comparative to women (Kanner & Anderson, 2010, p.18). This outlook can be associated with many of the orthodox conservative women's organizations, as noticeable with EVKAD, because rather than viewing feminist activism in relation to women's rights as a stance in opposition to the patriarchal system, many of these organizations, especially EVKAD perceive feminist activism as anti-male and this position creates disunity with the other women's organizations as well. In addition, the comments with regards to the representative of EVKAD also displays that they embrace disunity with other types of women's organizations, primarily the organizations they perceive as feminist and/or anti-male, because as stated by EVKAD's representative that they merely favor the strengthening of the family realm. It is also evident that EVKAD's representative's comments are similar with the respondents' remarks of the organizations of: KASAV and TÜRKKAD in terms of promoting and maintaining the family domain, because EVKAD specifically puts forth that they promote this realm and with the remarks as such that if we are women we have children and brothers reinforces the patriarchal mentality of women being caregivers and mothers which as previously set forth pushes women back into the private sphere and is strictly in opposition to feminist literature.

On the other hand, while many of the orthodox conservative women's organizations as illustrated with EVKAD, KASAV, and TÜRKKAD were very vocal on their stances towards the realm of women's rights by embracing discord with other women's organizations, in particular with feminists other orthodox conservative women's organizations: NİSA-ÜL AKSA and HİKDE were especially silent on this topic. For instance, the respondent of NİSA-ÜL AKSA put forth the following remarks that display their reticence towards this particular subject matter: "So let me just say this. As a conservative, I didn't go to a women's organization and I didn't evaluate it myself, I say this personally. So I can't say much about it. Let me skip this" (interview with NİSA-ÜL AKSA, 16 March, 2020). With these particular comments presented by the respondent the of NİSA-ÜL AKSA demonstrates that they are resistant and silent on the topic of women's rights and working with other women's organizations with regards to the notion itself, because they are mainly conservative and have not embarked on such a case before. However, while the orthodox conservative women's organizations as seen with KASAV, EVKAD, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, and more prefer disharmony with other women's organizations, largely on the subject matter of women's rights, it can be asserted that generally the reformist conservative women's organizations as visible with HAVLE, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, and more were more flexible in terms of embracing collective action with other women's organizations, especially with regards to the discourse of women's rights.

HAVLE is a fundamental example of this specific case and the following information established by the representative of HAVLE clearly advocates and reinforces this position:

There are actually quite a lot of associations in Turkey. They do great work. Turkey, when I look at other countries and compare it with them, it is not a bad country. It is a very successful country in terms of women's studies. As a matter of fact, in terms of the working of civil society organizations (NGOs), when something spectacular like the Istanbul Convention ("İstanbul Sözleşmesi") stands on the sidelines, it is impossible to denigrate this. I can't dare to say something like this. While there is such a gain present, overall I find civil society organizations in Turkey successful. They work according to whatever they can help with. I see a unifying side to be honest. So after all, the March 8's, the Taksim Square is not like before, it's not empty. It is something that continues to grow and get more crowded each year. Collectively, there have been many points together, visits have started to happen, and opinions

have started to be received. If we can be involved in that mainstream feminism, we can from such a place. That's why frankly, I find it successful (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

Through these comments made by the representative of HAVLE it is observable that conservative women's organizations that fall under the realm of reformist conservative women diverge from orthodox conservative women, mainly because such organizations as for HAVLE embraces unity with other organizations in terms of women's rights, while orthodox conservative women's organizations as seen with KASAV and EVKAD disunite and distance themselves from other women's organizations usually on the basis of seeing them as feminist and anti-family relations.

However, it is vital to state that while the reformist conservative women's organizations as for HAVLE somewhat champions other women's organizations works and efforts, other reformist conservative women's organizations as for: AKADDER, HASEKİ, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform presents a more negative stance towards the other women's organizations mainly with regards to the issue of women's rights. Also, this particular case is evident with the following statements made by the respondent of AKADDER that:

We especially criticize these unfounded criticisms of the conservative community. We are experiencing the consequences of not being able to form a common language and not understanding each other. Therefore, we also need to mutually conduct readings, make an effort to try to understand each other and if necessary act in unison on common things. Bringing these two opposing poles together, bringing them together on a common point...I also find it unfair to say feminist discourse. Feminist discourse, but a little bit more oriented towards their own community, as I said it is about where your feet are stepping. Also, there are some things that need to be found and needs to exhibit sensitive behavior. There is a general perception of: "Turkish feminism can't escape the influence of the West". Maybe this should be debated: it is possible for this to be indigenous and should it be? (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020).

It is perceptible with these concrete statements that are set forth by the respondent of AKADDER that this particular organization establishes a more critical stance in comparison with HAVLE towards other women's organizations, especially in terms of women's rights, because AKADDER and conservative women's organizations alike claim these types of women's organizations are more self disposed and more western oriented. Overall, when the orthodox and reformist conservative women's organizations are analyzed in terms of other women's organizations through the issue

of women's rights reformist conservative women's organizations are more inclined to unite and/or somewhat embrace unity with other women's organizations, while the orthodox branch of conservative women's organizations simply are resistant and embrace disunity with other women's organizations. In addition, it is crucial to analyze the conservative women's organizations cooperation with the Turkish government, mainly through the JDP's governing period.

First of all, the Justice and Development Party rose to eminence during the early 2000s, after their victory in the November 2002 elections in Turkey and since the early 2000s until today the JDP can be characterized as the dominant ruling party in the country. As previously put forth, the JDP has administered a distinct outlook and agenda towards the domain of civil society in Turkey and this new position has transformed the functioning of the civil society realm. Over the past decade, Islamic civil society has been enlarging rapidly in Turkey and the Islamic-oriented JDP rule without doubt has played a crucial part in this expansion through more and more Islamic civil society organizations benefiting from the opportunities supplied by the JDP's hold on power (Zihnioğlu, 2018, p.42). It is apparent that the JDP's Islamic inclination and governing style has created a specific leaning for the arena of Turkish civil society, in which has generated a clear increase in the emergence of conservative civil society organizations which have secured a presiding position over the arena of Turkish state and society relations. However, the current Turkish civil society domain which has been determined mainly by the JDP's discourses and agendas largely differs from the general interpretation of civil society and what civil society organizations stand for. Civil society alludes to an autonomous realm of associations existing beyond state power, acting an intermediary role by standing between the state and the private sphere (Erdoğan-Tosun, 2012, p.180). On the other hand, conservative women's organizations have redefined the general formulation of civil society through their understanding of the notion by interpreting autonomy through different means, which will be explained further.

The conservative women's organizations largely differ on the notion of autonomy in relation to the other women's civil society organizations. While the Islamic organizations emphasized their objectivity and autonomy from the JDP government, non-Islamic organizations strongly dismissed this, claiming that Islamic

organizations get more government support in comparison to other civil society organizations, and/or share a specifically close relationship with it, and that Islamic organizations champion JDP policy (Doyle, 2018, p.453). This belief presented by the non-conservative organizations can be considered as a verifiable claim, because when these particular conservative women's organizations are analyzed in terms of their relationships with the current Turkish government and/or the government's politics a clear trend emerges which will be delineated further. For instance, the conservative women's organization of TÜRKKAD implements the following statements with regards to the organization's outlook towards the Turkish government and its agencies that:

Of course, we are loyal and respectful to our state and nation. We definitely don't have a bad relationship. We also do the projects we need to do. In addition, we support our state as much as we can and we don't spare anything from them. Of course, we will do whatever they want. We don't have such a thing against our state. We are already committed to the state, homeland, and nation (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

With these particular comments generated by the respondent of TÜRKKAD it is observable that this conservative women's organizations has ties and treasures the Turkish government and while do anything to keep these means intact as well.

Also, it is crucial to put forth that the belief by the non- conservative organizations can again be regarded as true, because particular conservative women's organizations as for the case of: İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, HAVLE, and more despite stating that they are independent from the Turkish government and it's institutions, specific ties, relations, and cooperations emerge between them. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform is a perceptible conservative women's organization which supports this case and this is apparent with the following information set forth by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform that:

Equal distance principle is our most important principle. We only have a few red points to which we are sensitive about. We are sensitive about the indivisible integrity of our homeland. If they are not a terrorist, a separatist, or someone harmful to the nation; with almost every world view, all races, sects, languages, and all kinds of women or with men who work with women's issues, it doesn't matter, we can come together, discuss, and if we do not agree we can leave by shaking hands and if we agree we can walk together on this. That's why we are at equal distance to many things, political views, and so on (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

Although, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform claims that they employ equal distance principle towards everyone and has previously put forth by their representative that they do not have a political favoring and/or stance, with the following comments exerted by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform a different position emerges with the subject matter of the Turkish government that: “I find it nice, especially for the last 15 years. In fact, a lot of has been accomplished in the last 15 years” (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020). It is apparent with these remarks set forth by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform that actually they do have a political stance and/or favoring, because as previously asserted the political party that has dominated the Turkish government in the last years is the JDP and these particular comments presented by the representative reinforces this data by claiming there has been a lot of things performed in the last 15 years in Turkey. Also, these statements made by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform shows that this conservative women’s organization and conservative women’s organizations alike are not as autonomous nor as objective as they declare to be.

Moreover, another conservative women’s organization which is similar with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform’s particular bias statements towards the Turkish government is noticeable with HASEKİ and HASEKİ’s respondent’s remarks reinforces this case as well:

Our association tries not to be affiliated with state institutions. Because there is a situation like this: when the state is mentioned, politics also comes into play. We are definitely in a place where we stay away from politics. We are absolutely independent from politics. Because since this place was established the door of this place’s motto is this: this place is open to everyone. Every thought, every view, all kinds of people, people from all kinds of religions, and people with all kinds of opinions come here for only one purpose. We strive not to spoil this (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020).

Despite the previous statements exerted by the respondent of HASEKİ, the following comments made by the respondent with regards to the topic of government agencies and the Turkish government in general a different situation emerges that: “Of course, we receive good reactions from politicians and municipalities when necessary. We can get good reactions. Indeed, this is a positive case for us” (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020). Doubtlessly, these remarks implemented by the respondent of HASEKİ reveals a similar outlook with the other conservative

women's organization of: İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform that it also asserts diverging views with regards to their place in relation to the Turkish government, however when asked specifically a clearer position emerges in that they both favor and support the Turkish government and its agencies. Also, it is manifested that civil society organizations in Turkey are co-opted, regulated, or at the very least controlled by the state (Doyle, 2017, p.257). In fact, this assertion is visible through the many conservative women's organizations interactions with the current government's institutions, on the whole because these organizations maintain close ties with the government and its agencies and this correlates highly with the Turkish government's co-option towards conservative organizations, particularly with the conservative women's organizations. A prominent example of a conservative women's organization administering this outlook is: HEKVA and these statements further this perspective: "We are in touch with governorships, district governorships, and municipalities. Also, we are involved in all kinds of works and joint works" (interview with HEKVA, 13 January, 2020). In addition, the relationship and co-option administered between the Turkish government and conservative women's organizations reshapes the civil society arena in Turkey, especially in terms of the articulation of being autonomous, because autonomy as a matter of fact becomes intertwined with the notions of dependence and subservience to the government instead of the being unbiased and acting as a mediator to the arena of civil society and the state. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform is a concrete example of an conservative women's organizations reorienting the notion of autonomy, because as previously illustrated this particular organization has displayed biased agendas and statements towards the current Turkish government and also although it claims that it is free from any kind of politics, when the İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's official website and accounts are examined particular people emerge, primarily people affiliated to the JDP, for instance the current Turkish government's President's daughter.

Furthermore, another way the realm of Turkish civil society is reoriented through conservative women's organizations view on independence is apparent with their apprehension and outlook towards how the relationship between the government and women's civil society organizations are implemented. HAVLE is a

prominent conservative women's organization executing this viewpoint in its agendas and enactments and this is specifically evident with the information provided by the respondent of HAVLE as well that:

We as HAVLE are also a member of the City Council at the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality ("İBB"/İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi). We have participation there. Our member Mrs.- joins on behalf of us. Apart from that, we always send an invitation whenever we organize an event or when we need the state institution to be there. Likewise, during these visits to the five cities I mentioned earlier, we visited the directorates of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies ("Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar müdürlüklerine") and the organization center and asked them. Frankly, we talked to them and asked them: what do you do, what kind of projects are you doing, what is the state of your current course, and what can we do to help. And in cases as such, we definitely stay in contact. Because if you are a civil society organization (NGO), the resolver of this particular case are the state and state institutions. Not necessarily like this that we play our own game, but of course, when we do something, we have the goal of telling them and making them an implementer. Like every other women's civil society organization (women's NGO). That's why whatever we do, hold on to, go to, and invite to, we invite them everywhere we can. As I said before, the place we constantly in talks with is Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality ("İBB"/İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi) for now. Also, we call them for other projects too, for instance, we sent an invitation to the Directorate of Religious Affairs ("Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı") for our workshop, but they couldn't attend it because they were not available. We invited Huriye Martı, but again people who worked at the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the Quran course teachers, people from the theology faculty, and so on could come (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

As previously put forth, HAVLE is a conservative women's organization which proclaims that it is dissident with regards to the Turkish government, but as seen with these particular comments employed by the respondent of HAVLE on the topic of HAVLE's relations with the government the organization puts forth that like every women's organization it interacts and invites the government and its institutions to its events and projects, due to HAVLE's belief that the state and government institutions are civil society organizations resolution. However, this viewpoint held by HAVLE rather redefines what autonomy stands for the arena of civil society and reinforces a problematic idea, because civil society organizations are supposed to enact as an intermediary position between the state and private arena, instead of HAVLE's conviction endorses civil society organizations to be subordinate towards the state and the government to hold the ultimate power over the civil society sphere. In addition, with HAVLE's respondent's specific remarks set forth displays that they

are not independent from the Turkish government and/or the government's politics; in fact they do have contact with the Turkish government and/or the Turkish government's institutions, as for: the Turkish municipalities, the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), and the Turkish politicians.

The Justice and Development Party situates its discourse on those women's issues that were embroiled in family and religious affairs (Dedeoğlu, 2013, p.13). Through this outlook of familism and religion (Islam) administered by the JDP's agenda and rhetoric towards women's issues displays a specific inclination for women's policies, specifically a gendered perception. A prominent example of the JDP implementing its gendered stance towards women's policies is visible in Erdoğan's statement regarding women's roles in relation to the family institution. On various instances, including public speeches, wedding ceremonies, and press conferences, Erdoğan urged families- specifically addressing women- to have a minimum of three children (Kaya, 2015, p.60). This gendered language utilized by the JDP with regard to women having at least three children when addressing one of its policies is rather problematic for the enactment of women's rights for many reasons; however it can be asserted that there are two core problems that transpire from this gendered women's policy: 1. the confining of women into the private sphere where women's subordination is upheld and 2. the intervention in women's body politics by enacting pro-birth statements where women are maintained as solely reproductive beings (mothers). Although, the JDP mainly administers women's policies through the conception of religious disposed traditional perspectives and conservative discourses which disempowers women's rights and marginalizes other women's civil society organizations (such as: feminist, secular, and Kurdish), many conservative women's organizations rather than condemning the women's policies conducted by the current Turkish government (JDP), as a matter of fact strengthens and advocates these women's policies implemented by the government through various ways. On the other hand, it is crucial to state that some of the conservative women's organizations, such as: HAVLE, HEKVA, HASEKİ, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, and TÜRKKAD despite expressing a moderate position towards the current government's policies regarding women, visibly reinforce these women's policies to some extent as well.

Moreover, one pronounced women's policy asserted by the JDP is its anti-feminism expressions and agendas. The JDP rule through its patriarchal regime voices its aversion to feminist ideas and similar to the other widespread stereotypical accounts in relation to feminism, in JDP's discourses also is strongly connected to man-hating, extremism, and clash between men and women (Unal, 2015, p.13). This anti-feminism position set forth through the current Turkish government's women's policies without doubt creates various problems for gender politics and women's civil society organizations which support feminist views and notions, mainly by marginalizing feminist agendas and discourses which champion women's rights, such as: gender equality and women's solidarity. In spite of many conservative women's organizations proclaiming a moderate stance towards the JDP's women's policies, TÜRKKAD for instance actually buttressed this anti-feminist position by the government through claiming that the Turkish woman is not feminist, but has a place in society such as in law besides her husband.

In addition, another women's policy enacted by the current Turkish government is evident with their patriarchal perspective on gender roles. Patriarchal arrangement dominating social life and domestic relations in Turkey is validated in terms of differential roles appointed to women and men in accordance with their "inborn" differences (Özar & Yakut-Cakar, 2013, p.26). This patriarchal view on gender roles implemented through the current Turkish government policies towards women generates many issues for women, mostly by advocating gendered and religious norms precludes gender equality from occurring. Although this women's policy put forth by the Justice and Development Party is sexist and creates major problems for women, KASAV for example reinforces and supports this patriarchal position by voicing and sharing this viewpoint through stating that God created men and women differently and that women are more emotional and men are more logical with their different family roles and duties. Moreover, an additional women's policy established by the JDP is apparent with its promotion and support of the notion of gender justice over the concept of gender equality. The government embraced a divisive plan of action mainly on the grounds of the gender equality vs. gender justice debate and backed up pro-government women's rights organizations that sided with the neoliberal conservative ideology (Koyuncu & Özman, 2019, p.10).

This policy towards women by the government has doubtlessly created various problems for both the notion of gender equality and for the women's civil society organizations which advocate this concept, despite these obstacles formulated in the way of gender equality, NİSA-ÜL AKSA which declares to have a moderate outlook in relation to the women's policies by the government actually critiques the government on not administering gender justice even further.



CHAPTER 5

PERCEPTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY

5.1. Womanhood

The understanding and outlook on womanhood is a highly debated arena, especially through gender notions, such as: gender norms. Although, womanhood is a contested concept there is a common ground within feminist literature, in which can be asserted as that through the womanhood discourse gender inequality exists. Despite the fact that, there is a mutual outlook evident on womanhood through the notion of gender inequality in the domain of feminist literature, this is not the case for the conservative women literature in Turkey. The conservative women and their organizations as previously put forth are diverse in nature. In fact, Islamist women can be divided into two different schools: reformist and orthodox, especially in terms of the headscarf issue (Maritato, 2020, p.91). The two distinct outlooks of the field of conservative women have generated novel perspectives and notions within their organizations towards the discourse of womanhood, particularly on the relevance of gender inequality. On the other hand, it is crucial to define what the two schools of the conservative women's organizations represent, in order to comprehend their perceptions of womanhood.

To begin with, the orthodox outlook enacted by Islamist women stresses the importance of maternal roles and duties to the husband (Arat, 2016, p.138). Through this perspective and reading by the orthodox interpretation of conservative women, it is visible that womanhood is situated through gendered norms, for instance: women are associated to notions as motherhood and wifely duties. Also, the arena of orthodox conservative women state that God assigned specific skills and tasks for

men and women distinctly, for instance: men are responsible for producing income and taking care of the household, while women are in charge of housework and motherly duties (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2005, p.114). It is evident that through the orthodox conservative women's execution of womanhood that creation and disposition plays a crucial role, because this comprehension emphasizes the "natural" differences between women and men through religious norms, rather than calling attention to the notion of gender equality. A core example of a conservative women's organization which fits under the umbrella of the orthodox conservative women's understanding is with: TÜRKKAD and the following information provided by the respondent of TÜRKKAD displays and reinforces this situation of the orthodox conservative women's understanding of gendered outlooks:

We do not say gender equality; we view these individuals as human beings. We are Adam-centered and we don't separate Adam from it. Also, if we give the right and the real right, if we give the real value, we know that both of the sexes are separate in nature ("fitrat"). The important thing in this regard is to be equal in justice. Otherwise, we do not have a precept of being equal in our work or in our physical work. Our purpose is to be in accordance with the nature of our creation and be in line with the appropriate national and spiritual Turkish family woman image. And this case is clear throughout history. Turkish women are not feminists, but they have a place in society. In social events, in wars, and in laws next to their partner and have fought elbow-to-elbow right next to their partner as well. I guess it is understood what I mean (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020).

With these comments put forth by the respondent of TÜRKKAD it is clear that they produce and promote gendered views, mainly the "natural" differences of women as of men, because the respondent asserts that they (men and women) are separate in their disposition and that they care about being equal in justice which clearly shows that the respondent of TÜRKKAD and alike orthodox conservative women do not care for the notion of gender equality. Additionally, the specific remarks provided by the respondent of TÜRKKAD presents womanhood through a conservative oriented outlook, because the respondent noticeably sets forth that Turkish women are not feminists, but rather they are situated beside their partner and/or husband, which maintains and furthers womanhood through an sexist agenda where women are positioned within the private sphere beside male domination. In addition, orthodox Islamist women maintain that paid work is against a woman's fitrat, God-given abilities, in which focuses on the suitability of motherhood (Aldikaçti-Marshall,

2013, p.80). Here again, gendered norms and values are enacted by the orthodox conservative women through perceiving women only as mothers, in which is fundamentally against feminist literature which asserts that motherhood situates women back into subordination and into the private sphere.

Also, in line with this gendered norm filled position put forth by the orthodox conservative women, many of the conservative women's organizations as well generates this particular perspective within their agendas and notions and a concrete example of a conservative women's organization implementing this can be delineated as: EVKAD. The following statements provided by the representative of EVKAD demonstrate the orthodox conservative women's comprehension of womanhood through gendered norms:

I will say respect is important. Competence is important. Competence and merit are important and it is important whether it is a man or a woman. Regardless of whether a man or a woman, whoever does the job well should do it, without discriminating. I believe in that women should work in professions suitable for their nature ("fitrat"). For example, a woman works in a mine and they praise her over and over again. Why are you praising this situation, is this suitable for a woman's disposition? In other words, women should work in jobs suitable for their nature. Not that these women can't do it, but they shouldn't get damaged. Some jobs are also unfair to men, but if he works at a mine, his lady/wife should greet him with a beautiful smiling face. So what will happen when a woman works in a mine? Who will greet her when she comes home, who will do what? Or for instance a woman becomes a car mechanic and they praise her. However, the state of necessity breaks the hard thing, breaks the order. Difficulty spoils the game. In the case of necessity, she can work in any place. Her mister might have died and she has to take care of her children. She has to work; she has to continue the work of her mister, and so on. In other words, all kinds of things are permissible in the case of necessity, but to act arbitrarily can take this situation up to the education preferences at universities. I would say that there should be areas that women would prefer more and approach with more priority. This particular situation starts from field selection and choice of profession. This case would be more handsome, more pleasant, and more beautiful; this would add convenience to women's interests and lives. At the same time, this does not make a woman's life difficult; on the contrary, it adds convenience. But as I said, if there is chance to make a choice in a woman's work and in the choice of profession, the woman's choice should be a little more suitable for the interest and nature of a woman. I personally think this is important. In addition, a very sharp and precise distinction cannot be made here. Although such a thing is not possible, when preferences come into play however, we recommend that women choose areas suitable for their nature and work in those areas. This is our opinion roughly as an association. This is both our personal opinion and the opinion of

the association, we work on this. This is the main idea and the main theme” (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020).

These remarks made by the representative of EVKAD maintains the gendered disposition and gendered ideals with regards to womanhood employed by the domain of orthodox conservative women, because the EVKAD’s representative puts forth that women are clearly different than men in nature and that women should not work unless necessary as for cases of their husbands death and that women should employ jobs that are “suitable” for their nature if working is necessary for them. In addition, with these comments put forth by the representative of the conservative women’s organization of EVKAD displays sexist notions and beliefs, because it situates women into the private sphere as previously stated where women become subordinate and are merely seen as reproductive beings and this is visible with the specific remarks such as: women should act accordingly to their nature and women should work to take care of their children if their husband is deceased. Moreover, EVKAD and TÜRKKAD have been illustrated as conservative women’s organizations which administer and advocate the beliefs and outlooks of the orthodox conservative interpretation; however when the other conservative women’s organizations are analyzed in terms of this particular situation, in addition to the 2, 4 more out of the 10 conservative women’s organizations also enact orthodox conservative outlooks which are as follows: HİKDE, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HEKVA, and KASAV.

However, it is crucial to put forth that although orthodox conservative women and reformist conservative women share common outlooks within Islam and its interpretation, they visibly diverge on the discourse of womanhood. In contrast with orthodox Islamist women, it is possible to discern the impact of secular feminist view points in the beliefs of reformist Islamist women, which a small number of whom openly establish and recognize themselves as “Islamist feminists” (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2013, p.80). The reformist conservative women have been influenced by feminists and this is visible through the reformist conservative women’s outlook towards womanhood and its notions linked to it. On the concept of working outside the household, reformist Islamist women believe that women should work if they want to and are ready to do so and through this stance their work should not consist of women’s roles as mothers and spouses (Maritato, 2020, p.92). This position

asserted by reformist women towards the notion of women's workforce exhibits feminist undertones, because they associate women independent from the conception of motherhood and link women's employment to freewill similar to feminists in Turkey. A fundamental conservative women's organization implementing similar views with the realm of reformist women is seen with: HAVLE and this particular position is further reinforced with the following comments established by the representative of HAVLE:

Again I am not sure about being the spokesperson of HAVLE, but we believe in gender equality on the subject matter of gender equality and we also think that gender equality should be implemented. As HAVLE, we stand in such a place that we call ourselves feminists. Consequently, gender equality is automatically incorporated in our agendas. Also, we specifically assert such a stance in everything we do (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

With these remarks put forth by the representative of the conservative women's organization of HAVLE clearly shows that they share the same outlooks as the branch of reformist conservative women and this is specifically discernable with the comments that they are feminist in essence and with their administration of feminist notions, as for: gender equality.

However, reformist conservative women despite the fact that they were impacted by secular feminist notions have put forth core conservative beliefs and values which are similar in vein with orthodox conservative women. For instance, reformist Islamist women validated women's employment as a way of striving to live up to God (Arat, 2016, p.127). In spite of reformist women advocating women's employment into the public arena, they still intertwined religious beliefs into their justification which is in opposition to secular feminist assertions. This particular case is evident with the conservative women's organization of HAVLE which shares the same values and notions with the field of reformist conservative women, however HAVLE despite stating they are feminist and advocating for feminist frameworks and discourses still maintain and intertwine conservative beliefs within their organization and this situation is rather reinforced with the following statements provided by the representative of HAVLE itself:

Well, there is already a whole feminist literature about this, from business life to domestic life. Or in other subjects on unseen labor and so on. Of course, we face all these topics as well, but HAVLE has decided to focus on the issues such as early marriages, women, body, and sexuality. As I said before, feminist literature already took upon these issues. Also, everything is in our literature

too. In fact, recently we started talking about eco-feminism and ecology. Gender equality fits in here as well. The main reason behind us leaning towards topics like these was because of we concentrated on the issues on the agendas that happened especially in recent years. In these last years, especially in recent years, the issue of early marriage has started to appear a lot. They talked about the amnesty law, but those who got married, continue their lives with their husbands in prison, and so on, I don't know some law was going to come up, something was going to happen, and so on. Also, in this process there are many factors such as the fact that girls between the ages of 16 and 18 can get married with the consent of their family. It was an issue that was constantly brought to the agenda. As HAVLE, we thought about from where can be get involved in this particular issue. Because there are a thousand things that have been said about this particular issue, but on the other hand, the religious dimension was not something that was talked about. Also, one of the things we constantly hear about this is issue is a basis for legitimizing early marriages is the religious dimension and always the example that was given was about Aisha ("Hz. Ayşe" one of the Islamic prophet Muhammad's wives). After that, we decided to conduct a research to find out if this is really the case. Also, it is really like this? No one has conducted research on this topic. As HAVLE, our part in essence is to solve the religious context of this gender equality concept. However, maybe other feminist groups would not be so involved in this process, because of their identity, but as HAVLE we can be involved in this process. We said then let's see and we entered this process from somewhere. That's why whenever HAVLE does something concerning gender equality; it is also trying to do something from the religious perspective. Usually, this point is where we stand. To understand this part and produce something from this place, in other words to produce something from a religious framework; trying to make sense out of it, trying to see it, trying to research it, and so on. As our research shows at the end, people actually do this for many other reasons, not related to religion. People only give this answer to legitimize their situation when someone asks why they got married. In other words, the number of people who could give the example of Aisha ("Hz. Ayşe") over 2800 samples was very low. We couldn't believe it and we clearly saw there were differences from city to city. On the occasion of our visits to those 5 cities that people are getting married because of the religious dimension, but for many other traditional, economic, and other reasons. However, only when you ask it last as a question they reply as: "What should have we done, we married them? Besides, our religion is like that..." but normally that person does not marry his/her child for that reason. The stance of HAVLE is a bit like this and as I said before in the context of gender equality, it takes upon many issues onto its agenda. It only produces something by approaching from a religious perspective within the framework of producing information. Otherwise, gender inequality comes across in all areas of lives, of course (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

Without doubt, the following information put forth by the representative of HAVLE demonstrates that this particular conservative women's organization despite stating that they are feminist that they still adhere and enact conservative notions within

their framework as seen with the reformist conservative women's domain and this is clear with HAVLE's representative setting forth that they incorporate everything through a religious perspective, even when analyzing gender equality. In addition, with the representative's remarks from HAVLE shows that even though they implement feminist notions and agendas, they still produce and maintain Islam within and this particular situation is problematic for the feminist literature itself. Moreover, similar to orthodox conservative women, reformist conservative women also advocate and strengthen their perspectives and ideas through their conservative women's organizations and this is clear through the following organizations of: HAVLE, AKADDER, HASEKİ, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform.

5.2. Gender Justice

Gender equality has been and still is a concept which is strived for by many, but the main advocates of this notion assert for the same rights to be established for women, regardless of their gender. The concept of gender equality is a universal discourse and has been in the feminist agenda for a long time. Although, gender equality is recognized and championed worldwide, in the Turkish context there has been an ongoing debate among the conservative community, particularly among conservative women and their organizations on the relevance and validity of the concept of gender equality. As a result, Islamists in Turkey started to openly endorse gender justice as a substitute for gender equality (Simga & Goker, 2017, p.274). However, like on the discourse of womanhood, conservative women diverge on the concept of gender justice as an alternative to gender equality and this is visible through their organizations.

Conservative women can be divided into two fundamental branches as previously stated of: orthodox and reformist and their stances are evident in their organizations. It is analyzed through the orthodox conservative women's organizations that they maintain and advocate gender justice over the notion of gender equality. A core conservative women's organization which falls under the realm of orthodox conservative women's outlook and champion gender justice over

the concept of gender equality is EVKAD and the following comments provided by EVKAD's respondent demonstrates this particular viewpoint:

I look at the subject matter in terms of justice. Now, for example, our nature is different, our powers are different, and our creation is different. I think it is necessary to approach this issue within the framework of respect for the rights. Because feminists take it to as far as male enmity, let's say some feminists (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020).

While, the reformist conservative women's organizations of: AKADDER, HASEKİ, HAVLE, and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform mainly champion and assert the concept of gender equality as the relevant notion rather than gender justice. This particular perspective is evident with the following remarks made by the representative of HAVLE that:

I mean consider this as something as follows: as an association, we believe in gender equality, not gender justice, and this something and the only thing we have stated since the first day we were founded, until this day. We don't want to start from feminism 101 like this case. We say, let's get past feminism 101 now. Is it equality or justice, it is equality. We believe in equality. By the way, we think that gender, the concept of gender itself is variable. Therefore, we believe that it would not be fair to appoint a "justice" dimension to it. HAVLE Women's Association looks at this issue from the equality side (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

Despite the fact that, reformist conservative women promote the realm of gender equality in their notions and agendas as seen with HAVLE, it is vital to put forth that they do not deny the discourse of gender justice and point out that it does have somewhat of a relevance and this is apparent with the reformist conservative women's organization of: İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. Also, with the information presented by the representative of the reformist conservative women's organization of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform this particular case can be observed:

So, I think that it is necessary to define correctly what gender equality is. Well, frankly, it is also about where and how we talk about it. First of all, whether to use the concept of gender equality or the concept of gender justice, I find it very much belonging to you. This is only debated in Turkey; you can't debate this anywhere else. This is because the concept of equality is explained with the same word all over the world. On the other hand, what is understood from equality and what is understood from justice differs in Turkey. It's a conceptual thing, just like being mercifully and well-intentioned. Or like privacy. Privacy is perceived as an intervention to public space in world languages. However, the concept of privacy is interpreted differently in both our beliefs and in our culture. The word equality is such a thing. Firstly, I remember the words of the late Erbakan: "Where there is equality, there is no

justice, but where there is justice there is equality.” I find these as philosophical comments. But when I look at it realistically, I use the concept of gender equality in conferences abroad or in public conferences. But I do not look badly at the usage of the concept of justice. Because the friends who are using the concept of justice are trying to explain their troubles to their masses in some way, they are trying to explain our same troubles. So actually we are talking about the same thing. Whatever I am talking about in gender equality, those who use gender justice are telling the same thing. Did I make myself clear? (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

With these specific comments established by the representative of the reformist conservative women’s organization of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform it can be argued that although this particular organization and organizations alike as for the case of the other reformist conservative women’s organizations that claim they advocate and believe in gender equality that they still believe in the existence and importance of the concept of gender justice. Additionally, with the remarks made by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform it is clear that despite this conservative women’s organization supporting the concept of gender equality, they too believe that the people who focus and implement gender justice are on the same page with the people who champion gender equality and this is problematic for feminist literature, largely because feminist literature concentrates and positions on the concept of gender equality and actually are against gender justice for many reasons as previously put forth.

Moreover, it is crucial to put forth what the concept of gender justice denotes for the conservative women’s organizations realm. According to Sare Aydın Yılmaz, the founding President of the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM), the term of ‘gender justice’ is asserted in opposition to gender equality, because the discourse on equality is put forth by Western culture which endeavors to equalize women and men, but the framework on justice is higher-ranking and the mentality of equality is already integrated and incorporates equity, balance, and a better consciousness of fair action, and liabilities in relation to women and men (2015, p.108). The Women and Democracy Association (KADEM) is a prominent conservative women’s organization in Turkey and falls under the branch of the orthodox arena, because it visibly encourages gender justice over gender equality by rejecting the equality notion largely for religious purposes. However, the Women and Democracy Association (KADEM) is not the only conservative women’s

organization which dismisses the usage of gender equality and instead advocates the employment of the notion of gender justice in terms of religious reasons, in fact when the 10 conservative women's organizations are analyzed regarding this subject matter the following data arises that various organizations which all in some way put forth that they favor gender justice citing religious reasons.

Also, with this specific data that all 6 out of the 10 conservative women's organizations that implement this outlook fall under the domain of orthodox conservative women's sphere. However, it is crucial to set forth that when these 6 out of the 10 conservative women's organizations are examined in terms of the rationale of religious factors that additionally some core subthemes emerge, for instance: gender equality is not in accordance with a woman's nature. As previously stated, one concrete example of a conservative women's organization asserting gender justice over the concept of gender equality while employing the subtheme of a woman's nature is evident with the comments established by the respondent of EVKAD that:

I look at the subject matter in terms of justice. Now, for example, our nature is different, our powers are different, and our creation is different. I think it is necessary to approach this issue within the framework of respect for the rights. Because feminists take it to as far as male enmity, let's say some feminists (interview with EVKAD, 13 January, 2020).

However, another conservative women's organization which holds a similar stance with EVKAD is clear with KASAV, which also positions its outlook in terms of gender justice rather than gender equality and this specific point of view is reinforced by the following statements made by KASAV's representative that:

I don't like the issue of gender equality, because God ("Allah") created men and women differently. Especially as a doctor I see that they are different. Women are more emotional and men are more rational. Men are fathers and family protectors; on the other hand, women are created as wives and mothers and their roles should be different (interview with KASAV, 13 January, 2020).

KASAV's representative like EVKAD exerts gender justice and backs up this position by putting forth that men and women are different due to their creation of nature and that gender equality is not a concept that fulfills this understanding. Moreover, another subtheme that appears under the main theme of religious reasons for the various conservative women's organizations which implement gender justice within their agendas and frameworks is the subtheme of: not believing in feminism. TÜRKKAD is a prominent example of a conservative women's organization that

champions and implements the concept of gender justice mainly with the justification of not believing in feminism and this is especially perceptible with the following remarks set forth by the respondent of TÜRKKAD:

Gender equality, we do not believe in feminism. Short. Gender equality, gender justice... Justice should be for everyone. One should not only look at it in terms of gender. If we look at it with regards to gender, we marginalize the case. There is no othering in the concept of justice. Justice is justice. There is no other way. Rights are rights (interview with TÜRKKAD, 10 March, 2020). As seen with these particular statements made by the respondent of TÜRKKAD that this particular orthodox conservative women's organization does not support nor adhere to feminism and one main reason that they contend this is that gender equality is associated to feminism, so they do not advocate notions linked to feminism one being gender equality. In addition, TÜRKKAD's respondent largely implements and promotes gender justice in opposition to gender equality on the basis of not being feminist and this shows that gender justice is perceived as non-feminist.

Furthermore, NİSA-ÜL AKSA is an orthodox conservative women's organization which asserts similar agendas and outlooks with TÜRKKAD, mainly in line with their anti-feminist perspective and this is observable with the information put forth by the representative of NİSA-ÜL AKSA as follows:

First of all, we are Muslims. We have to accept certain things as the Qur'an teaches us. You know, rather than equality, of course women are also very valuable and they do deserve to be valuable. Of course, they don't want to face injustice, but in terms of equality, I say this: this should not violate our boundaries, but I support that we are not equal and that as a Muslim, you know that a Muslim should fulfill her duties as a woman and a male should fulfill his duties as a man. For instance, it is not a shame for a woman to stay at home when she gets married. I don't think it is wrong to work if the place fits under halal circumstances. For example, I would not accept working in an environment where I have to be alone with a man. That is to say, as a Muslim. I see it as unlawful ("haram") and I will not accept it as men and women sitting separately ("haremlik selamlık olmak"). Also, I would not say this: but I want to stand on my own feet and I don't need anyone. I don't accept a feminist thought. Of course, it is true that it brings a lot of tasks for men. In my opinion, I don't think they're equal (interview with NİSA-ÜL AKSA, 16 March, 2020). These statements provided by NİSA-ÜL AKSA's representative clearly reveal that they maintain and promote an anti-feminist outlook and tie this position with gender equality being wrong, because this organization believes Muslims should act in line with their nature, such as: women should be women and men should be men. In addition, these remarks made by the representative of NİSA-ÜL AKSA shows that

this organization not only advocates gender justice in terms of being non-feminist, but also because they believe that this specific notion fits under the realm of being Muslim and with a woman's natural disposition.

5.3. Gender Equality

Conservative women's organizations, as stated previously divide on the subject matter of: gender equality and this is highly apparent through the two chief schools of the conservative women (reformist and orthodox). While the orthodox conservative women's organizations state that they support the discourse of gender justice over the concept of gender equality, the reformist conservative women's organizations on the other hand generally advocate the framework of gender equality in contrast to gender justice. Although, the two main branches of the conservative women's organizations differ on the relevance of gender equality, both of their interpretations and perspectives towards the notion has created problematic means for the term itself and particularly for feminist literature, mainly by intertwining conservative beliefs and discourses to the term.

First of all, reformist Islamist women have attempted to change attitudes towards the roles of women in Islamic groups while preserving their Islamic identity, through exerting and altering feminist viewpoints through the process of selective appropriation (Aldikaçti-Marshall, 2005, p.116). The appropriation of feminist standpoints by the reformist women is also present within their conservative women's organizations agendas and notions, mainly in relation to the concept of gender equality. HAVLE is a fundamental example of a conservative women's organization putting forth this perspective through the domain of reformist women and this is visible with the following statements presented by the representative of HAVLE:

Well, there is already a whole feminist literature about this, from business life to domestic life. Or in other subjects on unseen labor and so on. Of course, we face all these topics as well, but HAVLE has decided to focus on the issues such as early marriages, women, body, and sexuality. In fact, recently we started talking about eco-feminism and ecology. Gender equality fits in here as well. The main reason behind us leaning towards topics like these was because of we concentrated on the issues on the agendas that happened especially in

recent years. In these last years, especially in recent years, the issue of early marriage has started to appear a lot. They talked about the amnesty law, but those who got married, continue their lives with their husbands in prison, and so on. Also, in this process there are many factors such as the fact that girls between the ages of 16 and 18 can get married with the consent of their family. It was an issue that was constantly brought to the agenda. As HAVLE, we thought about from where can be get involved in this particular issue. Because there are a thousand things that have been said about this particular issue, but on the other hand, the religious dimension was not something that was talked about. Also, one of the things we constantly hear about this issue is a basis for legitimizing early marriages is the religious dimension and always the example that was given was about Aisha (“Hz. Ayşe” one of the Islamic prophet Muhammad’s wives). Also, it is really like this? No one has conducted research on this topic. As HAVLE, our part in essence is to solve the religious context of this gender equality concept. However, maybe other feminist groups would not be so involved in this process, because of their identity, but as HAVLE we can be involved in this process. That’s why whenever HAVLE does something concerning gender equality; it is also trying to do something from the religious perspective. Usually, this point is where we stand. To understand this part and produce something from this place, in other words to produce something from a religious framework; trying to make sense out of it, trying to see it, trying to research it, and so on. As our research shows at the end, people actually do this for many other reasons, not related to religion. People only give this answer to legitimize their situation when someone asks why they got married. In other words, the number of people who could give the example of Aisha (“Hz. Ayşe”) over 2800 samples was very low. We couldn’t believe it and we clearly saw there were differences from city to city. However, only when you ask it last as a question they reply as: “What should have we done, we married them? Besides, our religion is like that...” but normally that person does not marry his/her child for that reason. The stance of HAVLE is a bit like this and as I said before in the context of gender equality, it takes upon many issues onto its agenda. It only produces something by approaching from a religious perspective within the framework of producing information. Otherwise, gender inequality comes across in all areas of lives, of course (interview with HAVLE, 26 March, 2020).

With these comments made by the representative of HAVLE demonstrates that it advocates gender equality through the framework of feminism, but the organization rather upholds that it engages with gender equality through a religious perspective and HAVLE’s conservative rendering of feminism is furthered by its incorporation of gender equality in relation to Aisha (one of the Islamic prophet Muhammad’s wives) which contributes to maintaining the organization’s Islamic identity. Also, it is clear with the particular remarks enacted by the representative of HAVLE that they have appropriated feminist standpoints to fit under the conservative ideals of these specific conservative women’s organizations, primarily which the reformist

branch upholds, because as HAVLE has put forth religion plays a core part of their structure and agenda.

However, reformist conservative women and their organizations interpreting gender equality through appropriating feminist views have generated problems for the concepts feminist roots. One chief problem arising from this arena is visible through the many feminists critiquing the incompatibility of Islam with feminism. Various feminists and women's organizations view Islam as a religion that oppresses women (Ozcetin, 2009, p.113). With regards to this perspective, not only have the reformist conservative women's organizations promoting gender equality with their Islamic identity created dilemmas for the very essence of gender equality as previously delineated specifically with HAVLE's representative's comments regarding this topic, but there are also other problems related to the reformist conservative women administering gender equality which will be looked into further, such as: misinterpreting the field and positive discrimination.

Moreover, one critical problem with the reformist conservative women's organizations employing and promoting the concept of gender equality is evident through their misinterpretation of the notion itself. HASEKİ is a concrete example of a conservative women's organization which adheres to the reformist conservative women's framework and visibly misapprehends the concept of gender equality through the following statements made by its respondent in relation to the subject matter of gender equality that:

The issue of gender equality, the view of the foundation, of course, because we are a women's foundation, I mean I don't know the foundation's view exactly, but they are viewed as equal. Also, rather than equality maybe keeping women a click higher, in terms of protection, although there is no logic to say that they are superior, but they should be protected and looked after (interview with HASEKİ, 13 January, 2020).

It is apparent with the comments put forth by the respondent of HASEKİ that they misrepresent and misunderstand what gender equality connotes, because with the remarks asserted by its respondent that they believe women are equal with men, but then he/she declares that women should be held in a higher position than of men by being protected and that men and women are not equal in terms of creation and the powers they possess. Additionally, it is evident that with HASEKİ's understanding

of gender equality that it leads to many problems for the term and feminist literature; however it can be set forth that there are three main issues that arise from this misbelief of gender equality: 1. positive discrimination, 2. women's subordination, and 3. gendered roles.

Positive discrimination, or reverse discrimination, comprises active discrimination in favor of a woman in preference to a man, for instance in picking for or for a promotion to a job (Hakim, 2000, p.269). Positive discrimination is present within the understanding of the many reformist conservative women's organizations and a prominent example of this is: HASEKİ and HASEKİ's outlook towards gender equality reinforces this position, because they claim that women should be held in a higher position than that of men, in which creates a clear favoring of one of the genders over the other. Also, this positive discrimination notion implemented by HASEKİ is highly problematic for gender equality and mainly feminist literature, because the core of the concept of gender equality does not advocate for a favoring of any of the genders over the other, but rather the term urges and champions the equality of all individuals regardless of one's gender.

Moreover, benevolent sexism is a paternalistic ideology in which women are considered subordinate to men and in need of protection; they are treasured and respected for their virtue (Thomae & Houston, 2016, p.152). This benevolent sexism is fostered by the reformist conservative women's organization HASEKİ in relation to their outlook on gender equality, mainly because HASEKİ puts forth that women are in need of men's protection when explaining their position on gender equality and this engenders women's subordination by administering both a paternalistic ideology and patriarchal mentality. However, it is crucial to set forth HASEKİ is not the only conservative women's organization which implements these problematic measures through their understanding of gender equality, for instance AKADDER is another conservative women's organization which falls under the umbrella of reformist conservative women, which creates a judgment as misinterpretation of gender equality while administering its agendas and discourses. AKADDER's misapplication of gender equality is also perceptible with the following information provided by its respondent that:

Gender equality is actually an issue that has been on our agendas for a long time. It is a subject that we have been frequently studying. When you say how do you evaluate this, not accepting this as a reality is probably the most unrealistic situation. But how possible is to evaluate this in the reality of the Turkish context and which issues do we need to be more sensitive on and in respect to this we have long thought about it. In other words, the sensitivity of the works we have done, that I have just described have been seriously worked on. Of course we want to bring consciousness and bring a game change, but we especially emphasize that it should be evaluated within our own customs and traditions. Openness to change is very important. However, how you set up this change is very important too. So, it is important to know where you are studying, from where you are studying and in this sense, we strive to implement more cautious and more sensitive studies as AKADDER (interview with AKADDER, 26 March, 2020).

With these particular remarks made by the conservative women's organization of AKADDER's respondent it is evident that they are similar to the case of HASEKİ that they indeed too misapply and misinterpret the notion of gender equality and this is largely observable with AKADDER's respondent putting forth that gender equality should be adapted in terms of the Turkish context as for Turkish customs and traditions and this creates a major problem for feminist literature, because this specific outlook reinforces and promotes gendered outlooks and discourses as for Turkish customs and traditions.

In addition, another prominent example of a conservative women's organization executing gender equality in the similar problematic means with the organizations of AKADDER and HASEKİ is observable with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform. Also, these problematic ways that various conservative women's organizations implement, particularly with the organization of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform is apparent with the following information presented by the representative of İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform itself as:

In other words, we can say that it appears in every field, but in education and in the academic community are one of the areas in which gender inequality is experienced the most in this sense. For instance, you study at the same school, you give the same dissertations, and in fact you are more successful, your average is higher, but when it comes down to recruiting someone for academic staff; the university administration, rectors, and so on, they tend to be more inclined to pick the male one. This is because there are seriously men in the administration who do not want to deal with female academicians when the rectors are generally male. Hence, the inequality starts here... For example again, although we say that the number of deputies in politics is high today,

there are about 20 or 30 women deputies. But it is also debatable that how much of these women are there with their femininity. Because today, in order for a woman to come to a particular place in politics. Also, it doesn't work if you're not someone's daughter or someone's wife and so on. There are a lot of competent and very knowledgeable women in the market who will do very serious things when they enter parliament, but none of them are in the parliament, they cannot pass the parliament's door or the doors of political parties. This is another problem too. Especially women's branches in politics, I am not sure that they run very smoothly. If it were me, I would shut down the women's branches. The people who oppress women the most are women themselves, especially in political branches. For instance, there is polarization. We have religious sensitivity, but they act as if we are a nonbeliever. Feminism is the most fundamental thing and it has many branches. There is serious prejudice about women's rights. Also, I am as much of a feminist as much as Aisha ("Hz. Ayşe") or Khadija ("Hz. Hatice). You are looking for a female gynecologist for your wife, but you do not educate your daughter (interview with İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform, 25 March, 2020).

İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's representative's particular comments displays that they wrongly portray and misinterpret what gender equality is and this is evident with their enactment of gendered roles and pushing women into subordination, especially because the representative sets forth that women do not put forth their femininity and this very problematic for feminist literature and women in general, due to associating women merely to feminine attributes creates a specific understanding of what womanhood is and advocates women into the private sphere where they are mainly subordinated.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Conclusion

The spaces and opportunities generated for the many conservative women's organizations have engendered problematic means for gender politics and civil society to be implemented together, especially in terms of womanhood and women's rights. The present study has engaged with this topic under mainly the core subthemes of: conservative women's organizations outlook towards womanhood, the Turkish government, women's solidarity, volunteerism, the family arena, professionalization, and political Islam. Through analyzing the 10 conservative women's organization in terms of these particular subthemes and notions specific themes and findings have emerged. One core finding from this study is that conservative women's organizations have created antithetical standpoints towards feminist literature and this largely associated to the space made available by the Justice and Development Party's discourses and constructions.

Although, the first premise is that women's organizations are fundamental for the enactment of feminist literature and womanhood, in the case of conservative women's organizations in the Turkish context diverges. Also, the literature on conservative women's organizations in Turkey confirms this understanding that conservative women's organizations have generated problematic means for feminism and womanhood as a whole (Aksoy 2018; Aldikaçti-Marshall 2013; Altunok 2016; Arat 1998; Kuzmanovic 2012; Zihnioğlu 2018, 2019). Also, the JDP has transformed and provided space for the rise of the conservative women's organizations, especially in terms of their gendered perception of womanhood. However, while this particular

room made available for the conservative women's organizations to enact their discourses and agendas has generated them with the necessity they wanted, this implementation has created problematic means for feminist literature within itself. Also, this study has deeply engaged with how the conservative women's organizations have influenced gender relations mainly in terms of the Turkish context. Through analyzing the 10 conservative women's organizations this study has also focused on they put forth their gendered objectives, notions, and agendas throughout their framework and how this has affected the general interpretation of civil society organizations in Turkish state and society relations. Also, it is vital to put forth that this study employed a gender neutral perspective, because this study concentrates on the arenas of civil society and conservative women's organizations mainly in terms of gender politics and without a gender neutral outlook the concrete analysis of the feminist literature would be problematic.

In addition, this study has shown that conservative women's organizations have become prominent actors in terms of the civil society enactment and being key decision makers in the Turkish government. This particular situation has been demonstrated with the 10 conservative women's organizations relations with the Turkish government, the Turkish government's agencies, and the Turkish government's institutions. A prominent example is visible with the conservative women's organizations implementing projects and sending invitations to particular state institutions, as for: the Directorate of Religious Affairs ("Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı") and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies ("Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı") and a major example of this situation was demonstrated with the remarks presented by the representative of HAVLE through their remarks concerning the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality "İBB"/İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi and the Directorate of Religious Affairs ("Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı"). Also, another finding that is evident that when analyzing the 10 conservative women's organizations that through their core relations with the Turkish government and other agencies has generated space for them to dominate the civil society arena by being the forerunners of major decisions and executions, largely with regards to gender politics and gender agendas.

However, it is crucial to set forth while there are core similarities evident within the realm of the conservative women's organizations these organizations as demonstrated are heterogeneous in nature. One apparent way this particular case is observable is with the two branches of the organizations of: orthodox and reformist. A fundamental finding put forth in terms of this case of the divergences of orthodox and reformist conservative women's organizations is visible with the differences of these organizations stances towards unity with other organizations and a critical example was set forth with the two differing positions towards other women's organizations by: TÜRKKAD (orthodox) and HAVLE (reformist) as TÜRKKAD implementing disunity and HAVLE expressing unity with other women's organizations. Also, another important finding established with regards to the heterogeneous nature of conservative women's organizations through the two branches of orthodox and reformist is perceptible through their distinct views on women's workforce and a major example was shown with these two conservative women's organizations of: İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform (reformist) and EVKAD (orthodox). On the other hand, despite these organizations heterogeneous nature they have displayed unified fronts and this was portrayed and studied through their perceptions and standpoints on solidarity and religious enactments as for: family notions and traditionalist norms. One core finding that has emerged in line with the conservative women's organizations is that even though reformist conservative women's organizations mainly advocate solidarity with other women's organizations, for instance similar to orthodox conservative women's organizations viewpoints, AKADDER a reformist conservative women's organization has demonstrated criticism towards other women's organizations by claiming them to be more self disposed and more western oriented. Another major finding that has been put forth within this structure is visible with the similarity evident between orthodox and reformist conservative women's organizations on the subject of womanhood and that both branches enact womanhood through religious notions, such as: advocating womanhood as a means to strive to Islam and maintain conservative traditions.

Also, the present study has focused on women's organizations through the framework of the Turkish women's movement. Indeed, as portrayed the conservative women and their organizations are a part of the Turkish women's movement, but as

put forth they diverge on major discourses, especially with the feminist branch of the Turkish women's movement. These divergences were demonstrated through the core findings, as for: womanhood, gender equality, gender justice, women's solidarity, and workforce. Evidently, many of the conservative women's organizations also did not advocate nor collaborate with other women's organizations too and mainly cited the feminist branch as their disunity rationale. However, it is undeniable that the conservative women's organizations has gained and learned fundamental issues and objectives from the Turkish women's movement and also the feminist branch and this was engaged in with notions as for: gender equality and gender politics.

Moreover, this study has established a fundamental finding that gender justice has become a prominent discourse within both the conservative women's organizations framework and embodiments and in the JDP's agendas and formulations. Although, it was put forth that orthodox and reformist conservative women's organizations have differences evident within their outlooks towards gender enactments, through the notion of gender justice they rather unite. Indeed, as presented through the findings a few conservative women's organizations, merely the reformist conservative women's organizations have promoted gender equality in some way in their agendas, but they still implemented and/or asserted gender justice in a particular manner. A fundamental example which was demonstrated as a reformist conservative women's organization advocating gender equality and intertwining this discourse through gendered outlooks was: HASEKİ and this reformist organization also misinterpreted the very essence of the notion of gender equality by stating problematic gendered perspectives, such as: women need to be protected. In addition, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform was another reformist conservative women's organization which exerted gender equality, but then presented validity towards the notion of gender justice by setting forth comments, such as: that they believe in the existence and relevance of the notion of gender justice and that people who maintain and promote gender justice are on the same page with people who support gender equality. However, as demonstrated with the findings the reformist conservative women's organizations as for: HASEKİ's and İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's statements have created problematic means for feminist literature despite advocating gender equality, mainly because feminist

literature centers largely on gender equality and creating and misinterpreting different positions towards this concept and enactment establishes negative results, such as: misinforming people and setting forth gendered perceptions towards womanhood itself.

Also, it is crucial to point out that this study has displayed that the orthodox conservative women's organizations champion and reinforce gender justice in opposition to gender equality and this was revealed through the organizations, such as: EVKAD, KASAV, TÜRKKAD, and NİSA-ÜL AKSA. It was revealed through the orthodox conservative women's organizations that they justified gender justice in opposition to gender equality through a few different rationales. KASAV for instance, asserts gender justice instead of gender equality and presents its stance by stating men and women are different through their creation of nature and that as a doctor this representative knows that gender equality does not fulfill this understanding. Another orthodox conservative women's organization which administers gender justice within its framework is TÜRKKAD and puts forth its reason for doing so in opposition to gender equality by exerting that they do not believe in feminism, because they associate feminism with gender equality. However, it is visible that even though reformist conservative women's organizations differ from orthodox conservative women's organizations in terms of their justifications towards gender equality and gender justice they all in a way support and/or find gender justice valid.

In addition, the present study showed that gendered perspectives are not only evident in the conservative women's organizations in terms of articulating gender through notions as: gender justice and gender equality, but as demonstrated through the findings it is also present largely through their understandings of women's roles, women's politics, and gender relations. A core example of this case was displayed with the conservative women's organization of: NİSA-ÜL AKSA through their representative's gendered remarks towards gender relations as for: the organization thinks that Muslims should act with accordance with their nature, such as: women should be women and men should be men and that there is nothing wrong with women being married and staying at home while men work. Another major example of a conservative women's organization setting forth gendered outlooks within their

structure is perceptible with: İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platform's project titled: "Happy Mother Happy Child" ("Mutlu Anne Mutlu Çocuk") and this project puts forth a gendered position by associating women as being primarily linked to responsibilities towards their child and/or children and incorporating the concept of motherhood establishes a traditionalist outlook towards women by maintaining the traditionalist sex roles and traditionalist division of labor.

The findings have additionally displayed that the domain of family plays a vital place for these conservative women's organizations, especially with regards to preserving women and the family institution. EVKAD is a prominent conservative women's organization in this regard by placing crucial importance towards the family institution and this was shown with the many comments made by its representative, such as: the female bird makes the nest. Similar to EVKAD, KASAV also reinforces and promotes the family domain throughout its operations and framework and this was presented mainly with their project titled: "Healthy Mothers, Healthy Generations" ("Sağlıklı Annelerle Sağlıklı Nesillere projesi") where they stress the importance of the family sphere and motherhood. However, this understanding established by the conservative women's organizations as put forth is problematic for feminist literature, mainly in terms of reinforcing domination and maintaining women in the private sphere where women are faced with subordination and merely perceiving them as mothers and housewives reinforcing this position too.

The study has engaged with the conservative women's organizations aims and plans for their formulation and future. While there were many views as put forth there were a few core themes that emerged as findings which can be exemplified as: raising awareness, promoting religious freedom, advocating the family domain, and preserving traditionalist and conservative discourses. TÜRKKAD is an important example of conservative women's organizations which advocates a traditionalist and conservative mentality for their future plans and wants to spread these perspectives towards future generations as well. As demonstrated HİKDE is another vital example of a conservative women's organization promoting the family domain throughout their structure and for their future plans and discourses. Moreover, through these particular notions a core problem arises in terms of feminist literature that the conservative women's organizations are reorienting the understanding of

womanhood and this is visible with intertwining the family realm, traditionalist and conservative notions into the articulation of womanhood which creates the perception of women as being natural disposed through conservative beliefs.

Furthermore, through the field of conservative women's organizations the enactment of Turkish civil society has transformed. Civil society is defined as a domain of social interaction between the state and economy, organized above the entire intimate sphere (chiefly the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.ix). It can be stated that civil society is a mediator between the individual and the state and that this particular arena situates itself as autonomous. However, Turkish civil society has evolved from this understanding, mainly due to the impact of the conservative women's organizations and its relations with the Turkish government. Currently, it can be argued that Turkish civil society is not a mediator between the individual and the state, but rather an agency which implements the agendas and discourses of the state to the individual. However, the future will determine what will happen to Turkish civil society and how these outlooks of the conservative women's organizations will influence Turkish civil society's path. For now, this study has demonstrated that Turkish civil society has provided accessibility for the various conservative women's organizations to thrive, such as: by acquiring funding from the EU and organizing through an autonomous environment. Civil society has also provided these organizations to voice their concerns and beliefs, but it is debatable whether the future holds the same space for other women's organizations. Also, civil society is a realm which creates opportunities and the necessary environment for autonomy to enact justice and for organizations to thrive with independence. Currently, in Turkey this space is taken over largely by conservative women's organizations as demonstrated through this study and it is observable that the state also nurtures this position. The future will reveal what Turkish civil society awaits.

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APPENDICES

A. FIELD WORK QUESTIONS

1. What is the founding purpose of this organization?
2. When was the organization established?
3. How many members do you have? How many of them actively participate in your activities?
4. What are the activities you have put forth so far?
5. What kind of resources does your organization use to carry out its activities? Are these resources enough?
6. How long have you been working in this organization?
7. Why did you decide to work with this organization?
8. Did you work with another association or organization before?
9. How would you evaluate the topic of gender equality?
10. In your opinion, in which areas do you think gender inequality appears the most?
11. How do you evaluate the concept of gender justice?
12. Does your organization collaborate with other women's organizations? Which subjects do you mostly cooperate on?
13. How do you evaluate your organization's relationship with government agencies?
14. How do you evaluate the state's policies towards women?
15. How do you evaluate the state's views towards women's organizations?
16. How do you evaluate the activities of organizations working for women's rights in Turkey?
17. What kind of activities do you plan to conduct in the future?

B. TURKISH FIELD WORK QUESTIONS

1. Derneğinizin kuruluş amacı nedir?
2. Ne zaman kuruldu?
3. Kaç üyeniz var? Bunların ne kadarı faaliyetlerinize aktif katılım sağlıyor?
4. Bugüne kadar gerçekleştirdiğiniz faaliyetler nelerdir?
5. Derneğiniz faaliyetlerini gerçekleştirmek için ne gibi kaynaklardan faydalanıyor? Bu kaynaklar yeterli oluyor mu?
6. Siz ne zamandan beri bu dernek/kuruluş için çalışıyorsunuz?
7. Neden bu dernek/kuruluşla çalışmaya karar verdiniz?
8. Daha önce başka dernek ya da kuruluşlarda çalıştınız mı?
9. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği konusunu nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?
10. Sizce toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği en çok hangi alanlarda karşımıza çıkmaktadır?
11. Toplumsal cinsiyet adaleti kavramını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
12. Kuruluşunuz diğer kadın kuruluşlarıyla ortaklaşa çalışmalar yürütüyor mu? Daha çok hangi konularda işbirliği yapıyorsunuz?
13. Derneğiniz devlet kurumları ile ilişkisini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
14. Devletin kadına yönelik politikalarını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
15. Devletin kadın kuruluşlarına bakış açısını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
16. Türkiye'deki kadın hakları konusunda faaliyet gösteren derneklerin faaliyetlerini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
17. Gelecekte ne gibi faaliyetler yapmayı düşünüyorsunuz?

C. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TÜRKİYE
T: +90 312 210 22 91
F: +90 312 210 79 59
ueam@metu.edu.tr
Sayı: 28620816-457

21 KASIM 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç.Dr. Ayça ERGUN

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Emine Feyza ARBERK-BOZOĞLU'nun "Türkiyedeki Kadın Örgütlerinin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Politikalarına Etkisi" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 437 ODTU 2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.


Prof. Dr. Tulin GENÇÖZ

Başkan


Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN
Üye


Doç.Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
Üye


Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye


Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye


Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL
Üye

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Sivil toplum alanı, cinsiyet politikasının uygulanması ve bilhassa kadın haklarının temsil edilmesi için en uygun ortamlardan biridir. Sivil toplum arenasını, toplumsal cinsiyet politikasında önemli ilerleme kaydedilmesine olanak vermiş olsa da; bu belirli söylemler ve dönüşümler Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devleti ve Türk toplumu için söz konusu değildir. Türk sivil toplumuyla ilgilenmeye başlamadan önce, sivil toplumun ne olduğunu açıklamalıyız. Sivil toplum: özel küre (başlıca aile), dernek küre (özellikle gönüllü dernekler), sosyal akımlar, ve kitle iletişim biçimleri üzerine kurulu devlet ve ekonomi arasındaki sosyal etkileşime verilen addır (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.ix). Buna uygun olarak, sivil toplumun bağımsız bir ortamda devlet ve birey arasında bir arabulucu görevini üstlendiğini söyleyebiliriz. Araştırma dört ana tema üzerinde durmaktadır: 1. sivil toplum, 2. Türk sivil toplumu, 3. kadın örgütleri 4. muhafazakar kadın örgütleri.

Bu araştırmanın, öncelikle cinsiyet ayrımı gözetmeyen bir bakış açısından durumu incelediğini de belirtmemiz gerekir. Araştırma, sivil toplum ve muhafazakar kadın örgütlerine cinsiyet politikası açısından odaklanır, zira cinsiyetten bağımsız bir bakış açısı olmadan bu çalışma ile feminist literatür arasındaki analiz sorunlu olacaktır. Muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin diğer söylemler ve gündemler üzerindeki etkisini belirtmek amacıyla Türkiye'deki kadın hareketine de yer verilmiştir.

Araştırma, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerini şu temel unsurlar üzerinden incelemektedir: muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin Türk sivil toplumundaki rolleri, faaliyetleri, hükümet ile ilişkileri, diğer muhafazakar kadın örgütleri ile dayanışması; bununla birlikte cinsiyet politikası, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, toplumsal cinsiyet adaleti ve kadın hakları konusundaki bakış açıları. Ayrıca bu çalışma ek olarak muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin iki koluyla ilgilenmektedir: gelenekçi ve reformcu.

Araştırma, Türkiye'deki muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinden toplanan nitel veri desteğiyle şu soruyu sormaktadır: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükümetinin sivil toplum üzerine söylemleri nasıl cinsiyet ilişkileri hakkında çelişkili görüşler doğurdu ve

muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin yükselişini sağladı? Diğer bir deyişle bu araştırma, Türkiye'deki muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin rolünü ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükûmetinin cinsiyet politikası aracılığıyla sivil toplum üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Dolayısıyla bu araştırma özellikle Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi iktidarı döneminde faaliyet gösteren muhafazakar kadın örgütlerine odaklanmaktadır.

Öncelikle bu tezin temel ve en önemli amacı, Türkiye'deki muhafazakar kadın örgütleri üzerinden gözlemlenebilen devlet ve sosyal ilişkileri (sivil toplum) incelemektir. Tezin bir başka önemli noktası ise Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devleti ve kadın hareketi arasındaki gündemler, bakış açıları ve hedefleri sivil toplum üzerinden incelemektir. Bu alanda birçok önemli araştırma olmasına rağmen, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin nasıl ilerlediğine dair bir kanıt veya sivil toplum üzerindeki etkilerinin nasıl ortadan kaldırılacağına dair bir araştırma bulunmamaktadır. Bu tezi geçmişte bu alanda yapılan çalışmalardan ayıran nokta, Türkiye'deki muhafazakar kadın örgütlerine odaklanması ve bu örgütlerin sivil toplum içindeki rollerini, devlet ve diğer muhafazakar kadın örgütleri ile ilişkilerini, toplumsal cinsiyet politikası hakkında bakış açılarını ve algılarını analiz etmesidir. Tez dört ana tema ile ilgilenmektedir: sivil toplumun kavramsallaştırılması, Türkiye bağlamındaki sivil toplumun kavramsallaştırılması, Türkiye'deki kadın hareketi ve Türkiye'deki kadın muhafazakar örgütleri. Bu dört kritik tema ile ilgilenirken, alt temalar da ortaya çıkmaktadır: kadınlık ve kadınlık algısı, kadın örgütleri dayanışması, gönüllülük, aile kurumu, profesyonelleşme ve siyasal islam.

Araştırma, nitel bir metot ile muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin dinamizm ve ilişkilerini, insan etkileşimleri üzerinden incelemektedir. Görgül veriler başlıca 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütleri ile yapılan mülakatlardan toplanmıştır. Bu 10 kuruluş şunlardır: Kadın Sağlıkçılar Eğitim ve Dayanışma Vakfı (KASAV), Ev Kadınları Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği (EVKAD), Aksa Hanımlar Derneği (NİSA-ÜL AKSA), Havle Kadın Derneği (HAVLE), Hanımlar İlim ve Kültür Derneği (HİKDE), Haseki Kadın Vakfı (HASEKİ), Hanımlar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı (HEKVA), Anadolu Kadın ve Aile Derneği (AKADDER), Türk Kadınlar Kültür Derneği (TÜRKKAD), İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu. Mülakatlar Ocak – Mart 2020 tarihleri arasında yapılmıştır. Ayrıca bu görüşmeler büyük ölçüde yüz yüze yapılmış olup; şu muhafazakar kadın örgütleri ile görüşmeler telefon yoluyla

yapılmıştır: HİKDE, HAVLE, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu, AKADDER, TÜRKKAD ve NİSA-ÜL AKSA. Bu 6 kuruluş ile görüşmeler koronavirüs tedbirleri sebebiyle telefon yoluyla yapılmıştır.

Bu araştırmada incelenen 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütü öncelikle belirli bir ayırmalama ile seçildi. Bu özel ayırmalama şu şekilde yapıldı: belirli bir muhafazakar kadın örgütü anlayışına uyma, başka bir örgütün temsilcisi veya kolu olmama, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti sınırlarında kendini muhafazakar bir oluşumun içerisinde görme ve/veya kendini muhafazakar bir oluşum olarak tanımlama. Örneğin: muhafazakar kadınlar, muhafazakar feministler veya muhafazakar bayanlar. Ayrıca bu 10 kuruluş seçilirken her birinin web siteleri, resmi sosyal medya sayfaları ve/veya bu kanallar yoluyla yapılan resmi açıklamaları, gündemleri ve bakış açıları incelenerek faaliyetleri birbirinden farklı olacak şekilde özenle seçildi. Çünkü bu çalışmanın bir diğer temel amacı, bu örgütlerin homojen veya heterojen yapı ve anlayışlarını analiz etmektir. Bu 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütü, gelenekçi ve reformcu kategorilerine göre seçilmiştir. Ayrıca bu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin ana faaliyet bölgesi İstanbul ve/veya Ankara'dır. Ancak bu kuruluşların bazılarının Türkiye genelinde başka şube ve temsilcileri de vardır. Bu 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütünün seçilmesinin bir diğer nedeni de faaliyetlerinin muhafazakarlık kavramı içerisinde tanımlanmasıdır.

Bununla birlikte, çalışmanın bu örneklem içerisinde bulunan 4 muhafazakar kadın örgütü ile daha iletişime geçildiğini belirtmek gerekir. Bunlar: Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği (KADEM), Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Hakları Derneği (AK-DER), Türkiye İş Kadınları Derneği (TİKAD) ve İstanbul Kadın ve Kadın Kuruluşları Derneği (İKADDER). Bu kuruluşlardan KADEM, mevcut gündem nedeniyle bu çalışma için görüşme yapamayacaklarını belirtti. TİKAD, meşgul olduklarını belirtti. AK-DER, meşgul olduklarını ve mülakat yapmak istemediklerini belirtti. Son olarak da İKADDER, meşgul olduklarını ve görüşme programlayamadıklarını belirtti. Ayrıca bu çalışma için görgül veri birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan toplanmıştır. Birincil veri, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin temsilcileri ile yapılan derinlemesine mülakatlardan toplanmıştır. İkincil veri ise, bu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin resmi web siteleri, sosyal medya sayfaları ve bu kanallar yoluyla yapılan resmi açıklamalar üzerinden elde edilmiştir.

Bu mülakatların her biri, aynı 16 sorudan oluşmuştur. Bu 16 soru şu temalar üzerinden nitelendirilebilir: örgüt hakkında ön bilgi, üyelik, faaliyet ve icraatlar, kaynaklar, örgüte katılma nedenleri; cinsiyet eşitliği, cinsiyet adaleti ve diğer kadın kuruluşlarına karşı bakış açısı, Türkiye Cumhuriyet hükûmeti ve kurumları ile ilgili algı ve ilişkileri ve gelecekteki faaliyetleri.

Bu 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütünün araştırılması sırasında belirli temalar ve bulgular ortaya çıkmıştır. İlk önemli bulgu, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin feminist literatürüne karşı zıt görüşleri ve bunun var olmasını sağlayan AKP'nin söylemleri ile bu duruma açtığı alandır.

Genelde kadın örgütlerinin öncelikli amacı feminist literatürü ve kadınlığı desteklemek olmasına karşın, Türkiye bağlamında muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin amacı bununla uyuşmamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, Türkiye'deki muhafazakar kadın örgütleri literatürü, bu örgütlerin feminizm ve kadınlık için sorunlu araçlar ürettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. (Aksoy 2018; Aldikaçtı-Marshall 2013; Altunok 2016; Arat 1998; Kuzmanovic 2012; Zihnioğlu 2018, 2019). AKP, özellikle kadınlık hakkındaki cinsiyetçi algıları ile muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin yükselişine uygun bir zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu uygulama, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerine kendi söylemlerini ve gündemlerini öne sürmeye bir fırsat vermiş olsa da, feminist literatürü için sorunlar oluşturmuştur. Bu araştırma, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin Türkiye bağlamında cinsiyet ilişkilerini nasıl etkilediğini derinlemesine incelemiştir. Araştırma, 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütünü analiz ederek, cinsiyetçi hedeflerini, görüşlerini ve gündemlerini nasıl öne sürdüklerine, bununla beraber Türkiye'deki sivil toplum kuruluşlarının devlet ve toplum ilişkilerindeki genel anlayışını nasıl etkilediğine odaklanmaktadır.

Araştırma, ayrıca muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin sivil toplum uygulamasında ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükûmetinde önemli roller oynadığını göstermektedir. Bu durum 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütünün Türkiye Cumhuriyet hükûmeti, kurum ve kuruluşlarıyla olan ilişkisi ile doğrulanmaktadır. Önemli bir örnek, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin projeleri için özellikle Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı ve Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı gibi devlet kurumlarına davetiye göndermesidir. Bu durumun diğer bir önemli örneği HAVLE temsilcisi tarafından yapılan açıklamalarla ortaya konmuştur (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi ve Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı). Bu

araştırma ile söz konusu 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütü incelenirken; muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükûmetinin kadınlara dair cinsiyet politikası ve cinsiyet gündemi hakkında öncü söylemlerinin mühim bir yer tuttuğunu öne sürmektedir. Bir diğer nokta ise, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin diğer kadın örgütlerini hükûmete karşı fazla eleştirel ve/veya kaotik olmakla suçlamasıdır.

Muhafazakar kadın örgütleri arasında temel benzerlikler olsa da, bu örgütler heterojen olarak gösterilmektedirler. Bunun gözlemlenebileceği bir durum ise gelenekçi ve reformcu örgütlerin varlığıdır. Gelenekçi ve reformcu muhafazakar örgütlerinin ayrılıklarına ilişkin bu durum açısından ortaya çıkan bir temel bulgu da, diğer kadın örgütlerine yönelik tavır ve duruşlarının farklılık göstermesidir. Bu farklılık ile ilgili bir örnekte, TÜRKAD (gelenekçi) diğer kadın kuruluşlarına karşı ayrılıkçı ve mesafeli bir tutumda iken; HAVLE (reformcu) ise bu örgütler ile birlikten yana bir tutum içerisindedir. Ayrıca muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin heterojen yapısına ilişkin olarak, gelenekçi ve reformcu olmak üzere iki kol üzerinden elde edilen bir diğer önemli bulgu da, kadınların işgücüne ilişkin farklı söylemlerinden anlaşılmakta ve bu iki muhafazakar kadın örgütü ile önemli bir örnek gösterilmektedir: İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu (reformcu) ve EVKAD (gelenekçi). Buna karşın, bu örgütlerin heterojen yapılarına rağmen, aile kavramları ve geleneksel normlar konusundaki algıları ile dini kanunlar çerçevesinde ortak bir tavır sergilediği gözlemlenmektedir. Muhafazakar kadın örgütleriyle paralel olarak ortaya çıkan bir diğer bulgu da, reformcu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin, diğer kadın örgütleriyle dayanışmayı savunmasına rağmen; örneğin, gelenekçi muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin bakış açısına benzer şekilde, bir reformcu muhafazakar kadın örgütü olan AKADDER, diğer kadın örgütlerine yönelik, onların daha bencil ve batılı tutumlar sergilediklerini dile getirerek eleştirisini ortaya koymuştur. Bu olgu içerisinde ortaya çıkan bir diğer bulgu ise kadınlık konusunda; gelenekçi ve reformcu muhafazakar kadın örgütleri arasında ortaya çıkan benzerlik ve her iki kolun da dini kavramlarla kadınlığı yorumlamasıdır. Örneğin: takva sahibi olmak ve İslamcı gelenekleri sürdürmek için bir araç olarak kadınlığı savunmak.

Ayrıca bu araştırma, kadın örgütlerini Türk kadın hareketi çerçevesinden incelemektedir. Nitekim muhafazakar kadınlar ve örgütleri, tasvir edildiği gibi Türk kadın hareketinin bir parçasıdır. Ancak ileri sürüldüğü gibi temel söylemlerde,

özellikle de Türk kadın hareketinin feminist kolunda ayrışmaktadırlar. Bu farklılıklar, kadınlık, cinsiyet eşitliği, cinsiyet adaleti, kadın dayanışması ve kadın işgücü gibi temel kavramlara getirilen yorumlar aracılığıyla ortaya konmuştur. Bundan dolayı birçok muhafazakar kadın örgütü, diğer kadın örgütlerini desteklememiş ve işbirliği yapmamış; gerekçe olarak da feminizm noktasını öne sürmüştür. Ancak muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin, cinsiyet eşitliği ve cinsiyet politikası gibi kavramlarla bağlantılı olarak Türk kadın hareketinden ve aynı zamanda feminist kolundan temel konu ve hedefler edindikleri gerçeği yadsınamaz.

Bu çalışma, toplumsal cinsiyet adaletinin hem muhafazakar kadın örgütleri çerçevesi, hem de AKP'nin gündem ve söylemlerinde ortaya çıkan bir kavram haline geldiğine dair temel bir bulgu ortaya koymuştur. Gelenekçi ve reformcu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin, toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri ve söylemlerine bakış açılarında belirgin farklılıklar olduğu ileri sürülmüşse de; bu örgütler toplumsal cinsiyet adaleti kavramı altında birleşmektedirler. Nitekim muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinden elde edilen bulguların da ortaya koyduğu gibi, yalnızca reformcu muhafazakar kadın örgütleri gündemlerinde bir şekilde cinsiyet eşitliğini benimsemişlerse de; yine de toplumsal cinsiyet adaletini belirli bir şekilde uyguluyorlar ve/veya söylemlerine yansıtıyorlar. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini savunan ve bu söylemi toplumsal cinsiyet bakış açısıyla iç içe geçiren reformcu bir muhafazakar kadın örgütü olarak gösterilen temel bir örnek şuydu: HASEKİ temsilcisinin cinsiyet eşitliği kavramının özünü, cinsiyetçi temelden, sorunlu bir bakış açısıyla yorumlaması. Örneğin: kadınların korunması gerektiğinin vurgulanması. Ancak reformcu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinden elde edilen bulguların da gösterdiği gibi, HASEKİ temsilcisinin açıklamaları, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini savunmasına rağmen, bu açıklamalar feminist literatür için sorunlu çelişkiler meydana getirmektedir. Çünkü temel olarak feminist literatürün önemli ölçüde cinsiyet eşitliğine odaklanmasına karşın, pratikte kavram ve uygulamaya yönelik farklı bakış açıları yaratıp yanlış yorumlamanın insanları yanlış bilgilendirmek ve kadınlığa yönelik cinsiyetçi algıları gündeme getirmek gibi olumsuz sonuçlar ortaya çıkaracağı gerçeği yadsınamaz.

Ayrıca bu çalışma, gelenekçi muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğine karşı toplumsal cinsiyet adaleti kavramını savunduğunu ve söylem

haline getirmesini göstermektedir. Bu bulgular EVKAD, KASAV, TÜRKKAD ve NİSA-ÜL AKSA gibi kuruluşlarla yapılan mülakatlar sonucunda elde edilmiştir. Bu söylemlerdeki gelenekçi muhafazakar kadın örgütleri aracılığıyla, toplumsal cinsiyet adaletini birkaç farklı gerekçe ile meşrulaştırıldığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Örneğin: KASAV toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği yerine toplumsal cinsiyet adaletini savunuyor ve kadın ve erkeğin doğası gereği yaratılış itibariye farklı olduğunu; ve (kendi belirttiği üzere) bir hekim olarak cinsiyet eşitliğinin kadın ve erkek fitratına doğru bir açıklama getirmediğini ortaya koyuyor. Toplumsal cinsiyet adaletini kendi çerçevesinde yöneten bir diğer gelenekçi muhafazakar kadın örgütü de TÜRKKAD olup; feminizmi toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ile ilişkilendirdikleri için feminizme inanmadıklarını ileri sürerek, cinsiyet eşitliğine karşıt bir tutum içerisinde bulundukları ifade edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, reformcu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ve toplumsal cinsiyet adaletine yönelik gerekçeleri açısından gelenekçi muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinden farklılık göstermelerine rağmen; hepsinin bir şekilde toplumsal cinsiyet adaletini desteklediği ve/veya geçerli bulduğu görülmektedir.

Araştırma ayrıca muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin faaliyet ve icraatlerine odaklanarak, bunları analiz etmektedir. Birbirinden farklı birçok faaliyet arasından önemli olanları şu şekilde sıralayabiliriz: eğitim faaliyetleri, gönüllülük faaliyetleri, konferanslar/seminerler ve projeler. Bu dört ana faaliyet sayesinde örgütler kendi gündemleri ve çerçeveleri içinde varlıklarını sürdürerek, gönüllü ve fon toplama gibi amaçlarına ulaşmışlardır. Bu faaliyet ve icraatlerle birlikte profesyonelleşme ve kurumsallaşma gibi önemli gündemler ve fikirler öne çıkmıştır. Öncelikle muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin faaliyet ve icraat uygulamaları açısından incelendiğinde ortaya çıkan ilk kategori eğitim faaliyetleridir. Mülakatta bulunan 10 örgütün 7'si bu tür faaliyetleri kendi örgütleri içerisinde gerçekleştirmektedir. Bunlar: AKADDER, EVKAD, HASEKİ, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, KASAV, HEKVA ve TÜRKKAD. Muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin faaliyet ve icraatleri uygulama konusuna göre incelendiğinde ortaya çıkan bir diğer faaliyet ise yardım ve gönüllülük ile ilgili faaliyetlerdir. Muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin 10'undan 8'i yardım ve gönüllülük ile ilgili faaliyetlerini kendi örgüt yapısı içinde gerçekleştirmektedir. Bunlar: AKADDER, EVKAD, HASEKİ, HİKDE, NİSA-ÜL

AKSA, KASAV, HEKVA ve İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu. Ayrıca muhafazakar kadın örgütleri bu bağlamda incelendiğinde, bir diğer önemli faaliyet de konferans ve seminerlerdir. Bu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin 10'undan 9'u konferans ve seminerler düzenliyor. Bunlar: AKADDER, EVKAD, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HİKDE, KASAV, HAVLE, HEKVA, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu ve TÜRKKAD. Muhafazakar kadın örgütleri tarafından uygulanmaları açısından faaliyet ve icraatların alanı incelendiğinde ortaya çıkan son kategori ise: projeler. Kuşkusuz, diğer üç tema (eğitim faaliyetleri, yardım ve gönüllülük ile ilgili faaliyetler, konferans ve seminerler) daha önce incelendiği gibi muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin çoğu için temel bir rol oynamıştır. Bununla birlikte, projelerin pek çok muhafazakar kadın örgütü tarafından uygulanmasına ilişkin ilgi ve isteğinin, diğer üç temel faaliyet ve/veya icraatten daha fazla olduğunu belirtmek gerekir. 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütünün tümü projelere yer vermektedir.

Muhafazakar kadın örgütleri birçok önemli konuda birlikte çalışmaktadır. Ancak bu kuruluşların hangi konularda iş birliği yaptıklarına dair üç temel konu olduğu söylenebilir. Bunlar: 1. yardım ve hayır, 2. aile ve kadınlar, 3. eğitim. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu, HEKVA, KASAV, NİSA-ÜL AKSA ve EVKAD, yardım ve hayır alanında diğer kadın kuruluşları ile iş birliği yaptıklarını belirttiler. Ancak bu muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin, diğer kadın örgütleriyle iş birliğine yardım çerçevesinden bakıldığında, gözle görülür bir şekilde İslamcı bir unsurla homojen bir biçim kazandığı ortaya çıkmaktadır. HEKVA da buna önemli bir örnek teşkil ediyor. HEKVA, yardımlaşma alanında diğer kadın örgütleriyle çalıştığını belirtmesine rağmen, dolaylı olarak iş birliğinin oldukça homojen ve cinsiyete dayalı olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Bilindiği gibi bu faaliyet ve icraatler kaynak gerektirmektedir ve bu ihtiyacı karşılayan kaynakları bu dört başlık altında toplayabiliriz: 1. projeler, 2. üyelik ücretleri ve aidatlar, 3. kamu ve özel sektör ve 4. bağışlar. Örgütler bu dört kaynak tipinden çoğunlukla İslami unsur ve gelenekler çerçevesinde yararlanmaktadırlar. Örgütler için İslamiyet'in oynadığı önemli rolün yanı sıra; fonlar da kritik bir önem taşımaktadırlar. Örneğin, muhafazakar kadın örgütleri projelerini gerçekleştirdikleri sırada elçilikler ve Avrupa Birliği (AB) gibi uluslararası kuruluşlardan da fon desteği almışlardır. Devlet fonu ve burslar gibi yerel fonlar da bu muhafazakar kadın

örgütleri için kaynak sağlamaktadırlar. Ayrıca, kaynak alanlarıyla ilgili olarak İslami kavramlardan yararlanan muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin birçoğu, kaynak bulmanın zor olduğunu ve/veya kaynakların kendileri için yeterli olmadığını öne sürmüşlerdir. Nitekim, incelenen 10 muhafazakar kadın örgütünden 8'i gelir ve/veya kaynaklarının yeterli olmadığını belirtmişlerdir. Bunlar: KASAV, HAVLE, NİSA-ÜL AKSA, HASEKİ, HEKVA, AKADDER, İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu ve TÜRKKAD. Bu kuruluşlar faaliyetlerini yürütmek için kaynaklarının yeterli olmadığını iddia etseler de; bu durumun nedenleri konusunda farklılıklar göstermektedirler. Muhafazakar bir kadın örgütünün faaliyetlerini hayata geçirirken, gelirinin yeterli olmadığını öne süren temel bir örneği İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu ile ortaya çıkıyor. İstanbul Kadın Akademisi Platformu temsilcisinin ortaya koyduğu bu önemli yorumlar, yeterli kaynağa sahip olmamalarının nedenini, örgüt olarak gelir elde etmek için hiçbir kaynağa sahip olmadıklarını iddia etmesiyle ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerindeki üyelerin, kuruluşa katılmalarındaki motivasyonlarıyla da ilgilenmektedir. Muhafazakar kadın örgütleri içerisindeki iş birliği ve üyelik çerçevesi, daha önce ortaya konduğu gibi pek çok insanın ilgisini çekmiş ve bir bağlılık yaratmıştır. Bu bireylerin çoğu, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin bakış açılarından etkilendiyse de; bu kişilerin bu örgütlere katılmalarının ve bu örgütlerin bir parçası olmalarının başka temel nedenleri de bulunmaktadır. Bireylerin muhafazakar kadın örgütleriyle yakınlık kurmasının üç temel nedeni olduğu öne sürülebilir: 1. örgüte katkıda bulunmak ve/veya vefa borcunu ödeme isteği, 2. manevi atmosferde yer almak, 3. farkındalık yaratma gerekliliğinin bir parçası olmak. Ancak HASEKİ muhafazakar kadın örgütü temsilcisinin verdiği bilgilere göre, katkı sağlama ve/veya vefa borcunu ödeme teması incelendiğinde, ana tema dışında birkaç alt temanın da ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar: dini çağrışım, topluma hizmet (özellikle aile kurumu) ve vefa borcu hissetmek. Bununla birlikte İslam kültüründeki katkıda bulunma ve geri verme kavramı da muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin birçoğunda üye ve gönüllüleri örgüte dahil etmek için bilinçli olarak kullanılmaktadır. İslami retorik ve dini değerlerin bu şekilde kullanılması yoluyla, ağırlıklı olarak muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin geri verme ve/veya katkıda bulunma söylemi ile aslında pek çok kişiyi, üstü kapalı olarak

yürürlüğe konan İslami kavramları tam olarak anlamadan örgüt bünyesinde dayanışmaya katmıştır.

Araştırma muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin gelecek plan ve hedefleriyle de ilgilenmektedir. Birçok tema arasından önemli olanları bu şekilde sıralayabiliriz: farkındalığı artırmak, dini özgürlüğü desteklemek, aileyi desteklemek ve geleneksel ve muhafazakar değerleri korumak. TÜRKKAD, gelecek planları için gelenekselci ve muhafazakar bir zihniyeti savunan ve bu bakış açılarını gelecek nesillere de yaymak isteyen muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin önemli bir örneğidir. Araştırmada gösterildiği üzere HİKDE, muhafazakar bir kadın örgüt yapısı ile ve gelecek plan ve söylemleri ile aile alanını destekleyen bir diğer önemli örnektir. Bu temalar üzerinden elde edilen bulgularda feminist literatürü için önemli bir sorun ortaya çıkmaktadır. O da muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin ailevi, geleneksel ve muhafazakar değerleri kadınlık tanımına dahil ederek, İslamiyet'teki kadınların doğal olarak düzenlenmiş olması (fıtrat) bakış açısını öne sürmeleridir.

Sivil toplum: özel küre (başlıca aile), dernek küre (özellikle gönüllü dernekler), sosyal akımlar, ve kitle iletişim biçimleri üzerine kurulu devlet ve ekonomi arasındaki sosyal etkileşime verilen addır (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.ix). Buna uygun olarak, sivil toplumun bağımsız bir ortamda devlet ve birey arasında bir arabulucu görevini üstlendiğini söyleyebiliriz. Fakat Türk sivil toplumu, muhafazakar kadın örgütleri ve örgütlerin hükûmet ile ilişkilerinden dolayı bu tanımdan uzaklaşmıştır. Muhafazakar kadın örgütleri aracılığıyla Türk sivil toplumu pratiği yeni bir hal almıştır. Bugün Türk sivil toplumuna devlet ile birey arasında bir arabulucu demekten ziyade; devletin gündemini ve söylemlerini bireye uyarlayan bir yapı denilebilir. Türk sivil toplumuna ne olacağını ve muhafazakar kadın örgütlerinin görüşlerinin Türk sivil toplumunu nasıl etkileyeceğini ancak gelecekte görebileceğiz. Bu araştırma Türk sivil toplumunun, muhafazakar kadın örgütlerine gelişmeleri için olanak sağladığını göstermiştir. Örneğin: AB'den fon elde ederek bağımsız bir ortamda organize edilmelerine olanak sağlamak gibi. Sivil toplum, ayrıca bu örgütlere şikayetlerini ve inançlarını ifade edebilmeleri için de olanak sağlamaktadır. Fakat aynı imkanların ileride diğer kadın örgütlerine sunulup sunulmayacağı belirsizdir. Sivil toplum, otonominin adalet uygulaması ve organizasyonların bağımsızlık ile gelişmesi için uygun şartları sağlayan bir alandır.

Bugün bu alan, devletin de desteęiyle, çoęunlukla muhafazakar kadın örgütleri tarafından doldurulmaktadır. Türk sivil toplumuna ne olacaęını zaman ortaya çıkaracaktır.



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YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı/ Surname: Arberk Bozoğlu

Adı / Name : Emine Feyza

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