

THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S NGOs IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

SARA BAHERIRAD

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

JANUARY 2020



Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Yaşar Kondakçı  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Saktanber  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Prof. Dr. H. Sibel Kalaycıoğlu  
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Assoc. Dr. Emel Memiş Parmaksız (Ankara Uni., IKT) \_\_\_\_\_

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Saktanber (METU, SOC) \_\_\_\_\_

Prof. Dr. H. Sibel Kalaycıoğlu (METU, SOC) \_\_\_\_\_



**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 : Sara Baherirad

Signature :

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE ROLE OF WOMEN’S NGOs IN WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT IN TURKEY**

Baherirad, Sara

M.S Department of Gender and Women Studies

Supervisor: Prof.Dr. H. Sibel Kalaycıoğlu

January 2020, 125 Pages

The main aim of the thesis is to study women’s empowerment and the role of women’s NGOs in the empowerment process. Women’s empowerment in Turkey is a frequently mentioned topic in the literature however the role of NGOs who conduct projects focusing on women are understudied. In contrast to many others, this research approaches the notion of empowerment in relation to women’s experiences and thoughts. This study aims to contribute to the literature by analyzing these projects from a feminist perspective underlining the significance of women’s agency which is defined collectively and through paying attention to the context-specific characteristics. The notion of empowerment is conceptualized in three levels which include personal, relational and environmental dimensions. In this framework, this thesis aims to discover the tools of women empowerment, the role of NGOs in the empowerment process, impacts of specific projects considering their ideological

attitude, the power relations regarding the role of governmental institutions and the specific influences of macro-level and micro-level projects. In the field research textual analysis of projects are made and in-depth interviews were conducted both with the project coordinators and the women participating to the projects to understand the power relations embedded within the interactions between NGOs, project coordinators and the participants. The results of the research suggest that the empowerment projects do not have a deep impact on the lives of women, especially at the personal and environmental levels and they generally lack sustainability since most of the projects tend to see women as isolated passive recipients.

**Keywords:** Women's Empowerment, Feminist Theory, Empowerment Projects, Women's NGOs

## ÖZ

### TÜRKİYE’DEKİ KADIN GÜÇLENMESİNDE KADIN STK’LARININ ROLÜ

Baherirad, Sara

Yüksek Lisans, Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof.Dr. H. Sibel Kalaycıoğlu

Ocak 2020, 125 Sayfa

Bu tezin temel amacı kadınların güçlenmesini ve bu güçlenme sürecinde kadınlara ait STKların rolünü irdelemektir. Türkiye’de kadının güçlenmesi varolan çalışmalarda sıklıkla bahsedilen bir tema olmakla beraber kadınlarla ilgili projeler yürüten STKların rolleri ve etkileri üzerine çalışmalar ihmal edilmiştir. Bir çok çalışmanın aksine, bu tez güçlendirme mefhumuna kadınların deneyimleri ve düşünceleri ile ilişki içerisinde yaklaşır. Bu çalışma, projelerin feminist bir bakış açısından incelenmesi çerçevesinde literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır, bu doğrultuda kolektif olarak tanımladığı şekliyle kadınların failliğinin önemine vurgu yapar ve bağlama özgü karakteristikleri göz önünde bulundurur. Güçlendirme nosyonu kişisel, ilişkisellik ve çevreselliği içeren üç düzeyde kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Bu çerçevede, bu tez kadının güçlendirilmesinin araçlarını, STK’ların bu süreçteki rolünü, ideolojik tutumları içerisinde farklı projelerin etkilerini, idari yapılara istinaden güç dinamiklerini ve makro-düzey, mikro-düzey projelerin muhtelif sonuçlarını



incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Projelerin yapısının anlaşılması ve STK'lar, donörler, katılımcılar arasında gömülü halde bulunan güç ilişkilerinin keşfedilmesi amacıyla; nitel ve yorumsamacı bir tarzda projelerin metinsel çözümlemesi ve proje koordinatörleri, asistanları, katılımcıları ile derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu bağlamda devlet-STK ilişkilerinin ve ekonomik boyutun etkisinin hesaba katılması da proje açısından önemlidir. Araştırmanın sonuçları mevcut güçlendirme projelerinin kadınların hayatında, özellikle kişisel ve çevresellik düzeylerinde, derin bir etkiye sahip olmadığını ve çoğunlukla projelerin kadınları izole halde, pasif alıcılar olarak görmesi dolayısıyla genel olarak sürdürülebilirliğe sahip olmadıklarını açığa çıkarır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın Güçlenmesi, Feminist teorisi, Kadın STKlar, Kadın Güçlenmesi Projeleri

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	viii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. The Subject of the Study .....	1
1.2. The Significance of the Study .....	2
1.3. The Aim of the Study .....	4
1.4. The Structure of the Study.....	5
2. THE DYNAMICS OF WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT .....	7
2.1. Women’s Empowerment .....	7
2.1.1. Different Approaches to Empowerment .....	8
2.1.2. Feminist Perspective on Empowerment .....	13
2.1.3. Reconceptualizing Empowerment .....	20
2.1.4. Understanding Different Dimensions of Women’s Empowerment in Turkey .....	28
2.2. Female Agency and Women’s Empowerment .....	29
2.3. Discussing a Method of Analysis for Women’s Empowerment .....	34
2.4. Women’s NGOs and Their Role on Women’s Empowerment .....	38

2.4.1. Women’s NGOs and Feminist Activism .....	39
2.4.2. Women’s Empowerment Projects.....	43
3. FIELD RESEARCH .....	45
3.1. The Research Question and Methods of the Study .....	45
3.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study.....	46
3.2.1. Empowerment .....	50
3.2.2. Female Agency .....	51
3.2.3. Women’s NGOs .....	51
3.2.4. Women’s Empowerment Projects .....	51
3.3. The Design of Field Study .....	51
3.3.1. The Research Methods and Data Collection .....	52
3.3.2. The Profile of the Sample .....	54
3.3.2.1. The Profile of the Experts .....	54
3.3.2.2. The Profile of the Participants .....	55
3.3.2.3. The Women’s NGOs .....	55
3.3.2.4. The Projects .....	57
3.4. The Understandings of Women’s Empowerment from Feminist Perspective .....	61
3.5. Limitations of the Study .....	62
4. WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT FROM EXPERTS’ VIEWS IN TURKEY .....	64
4.1. Evaluating Women’s Situations in Turkey .....	64
4.2. The Sense of Womanhood among Different Generations .....	66
4.3. Identification of Women’s Empowerment .....	67
4.4. Our Projects, Our NGOs .....	69
5. WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT FROM WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES .....	73
5.1. The Personal Empowerment .....	73

5.2. The Relational Empowerment .....	77
5.3. The Environmental Empowerment .....	82
6. CONCLUSION .....	85
REFERENCES .....	89
APPENDICES	
A: APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS	
COMMITTEE .....	94
B: INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS .....	95
C: INTERVIEWS WITH PROJECT COORDINATORS AND PROJECT	
ASSISTANTS .....	98
D: INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN’S NGOS AND PUBLIC	
INSTITUTIONS .....	100
E: REVIEWS ON WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS .....	104
F: TÜRKÇE ÖZET / TURKISH SUMMARY .....	111
G: TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM.....	125

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Commonly Used Dimensions of Empowerment and Potential Operationalization in the Household, Community, and Broader Arenas .....	12
Table 2. Women’s Empowerment Index .....	49
Table 3. The Profile of the Experts .....	54
Table 4. The Profile of the Participants .....	55
Table 5. Turkish Women’s Union .....	57
Table 6. The Fredrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) .....	58
Table 7. T.C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies .....	58
Table 8. The Humane Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER) .....	59
Table 9. Yenimahalle Municipality International Relationships and EU Office .....	60

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. Women’s Empowerment Index Framework .....	37
---	----

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. The Subject of the Study**

The feminist movement is not just a theoretical paradigm. Through the women's movement, the "social change" has been one of the most passionate commitments and aims of women who wanted to challenge and change their oppressed position in the patriarchal societies. In this regard, the feminist theory seeks the ways to change women's positions and conditions. The concept of "empowerment" is central to a wide variety of debates in feminist theory; but, still in many development programs and projects there is a controversial mainstream that view women's empowerment in a traditional sense. In other words, the concept of empowerment is significantly popular on the aims, visions, and missions of women NGOs in Turkey. In spite of this popularity, it is quite surprising that no major research has been conducted in order to thoroughly examine the results of projects and programs that aim to empower Turkish women. Even though many political parties, GONGO civil societies and NGOs put the concept of "women empowerment" as their ultimate missions and visions, no compelling change towards the empowerment women in Turkey has been observed.

The 2017 Civil Society Environment's report on Turkey has revealed that there is a total of 108,748 charities and 5,014 foundations; illustrating that just about 4.8% of members of NGOs are women in Turkey (TUSEV, 2017). Although the growth of the women NGOs in Turkey in the last ten years has been quite noticeable, still, there is no appreciable role for women NGOs in Turkey. This thesis aims to examine the ways to evaluate the consequences of women's empowerment projects in Turkey. In this regard, this thesis with a critical approach on women's empowerment projects will

attempt to redefine the concept of women's empowerment from a feminist perspective. The investigations that has adopted the concept of empowerment until recently generally would not go far enough in terms of the depth of the issue because these investigations focus merely on the importance of women's empowerment and the possibility of that. Even with the presence of the political and economic policies, development programs and empowerment projects that intend to recreate an equal condition for women has not been necessarily impactful on women's lives, especially under patriarchal structures of the society in Turkey. In order to fill this gap, the idea of writing this thesis was born.

## **1.2. The Significance of the Study**

The Empowerment of Women, and The Strategy Document and Plan (2018-2023) that has been published by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies of Turkey in 2018 starts with these sentences of the Minister Dr. Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya: "The way for a country to take its place among the achieving nations in sustainable development is through women's economic and social empowerment" (2018, p. 8). Until 2023, this action plan aims to enhance women's situations in Turkey by presenting significant points about the importance of NGO's role and their projects in women's empowerment process.

In the Strategy Paper and Action Plan by the ministry, main axis such as Education, Health, Economy, Participation in Decision-Making Mechanisms and The Current Media Situation has been brought up in the document in order to organize main objectives, strategies and activities. In the Strategy Paper and Action Plan, five main policy points, five key objectives, 21 goals, 21 strategies and 126 activities were determined. The action plan asserts that the concept of empowerment is the process by which women have the power and control over their lives and the ability to make strategic choices. Regarding each strategy, responsible institutions, cooperating institutions, the time table and performance indicators has been included in Action Plan's details table as well as somewhat unclear instructions. Moreover, five distinct



policies are assigned to the related government institutions, organizations, local municipalities, universities, non-governmental organizations and private sector. According to the action plan, these institutions and organizations are expected to implement the strategies and activities by integrating them into their plans, programs and budgets in order to reach the main goals and objectives. This point of view reflects the bottom-up development programs that imply the enforcing attitudes and must-do solutions without the agency's role in women's empowerment process.

The action plan's performance indicators are utilized as the assessment criteria to represent the system's success. In other words, after classifying the key dimensions of women's empowerment, the action plan tries to present tracing mechanisms that make the action plan objective and measurable.

As an example, in educational dimension of empowerment, as quoted by the plan, "ensuring full and effective participation in all levels of education is the main goal" (2018, p. 116). In this vein, NGOs and women's organizations, as related institutions, take an important role in women's empowerment process through the action plan from 2018 to 2023. The responsibility of assessing and maintaining the policies and strategies in the action plan has been put on the shoulders of civil society and NGOs. In addition, the action plan empowers women to set the main goal in the decision-making dimension in order to "increase the representation of women at local and national level in decision-making mechanisms and to ensure their effective participation during decision-making processes" (p. 208).

The strategies are not concrete and lacks women as the active agency is conspicuous. Through this part of the action plan "awareness seminars" is the only place that women appear but just as listeners. As it is published in the Action Plan of the government, the ultimate responsibility for women's empowerment in Turkey is given to the civil society actors such as women organizations and women NGOs. To concise, Turkish government portrays an important role for the NGOs through this action plan. NGOs

should be encouraging and admiring women in different dimensions of empowerment. Eventually, this thesis adopts women's empowerment projects and NGOs to respond to the research question of this study.

The thesis reveals how the projects are constructed in relation to conditions of women's situation in Turkey. Even if the aim of women empowerment is mentioned in the all policies and strategic plans by the state and civil society actors, the absolute state of empowerment of women in Turkey through the mentioned projects is not possible without transforming patriarchal structure, gender relation policies and strategies that has been established by the state. Since the empowerment is a concept that is identified as a process rather than a goal, it is essential that the research which tries to measure the empowerment of women by the projects to shed a light on the hidden side of the women empowerment projects in Turkey, the side that is invisible and imperceptible.

### **1.3. The Aim of the Study**

This thesis aims to clarify the ways and tools of women empowerment in Turkey and to identify the mainstream approaches around the concept and attempts to critique the empowerment projects that are based on bottom-up development policies; Ultimately, to clarify major features of women's empowerment projects in Turkey. This thesis also attempts to understand that if there is any particular gap between the results of the different ideological mindset of NGOs such as Islamic and secular. The main argument of the study is based on Kabeer's discussion on the empowerment's dimensions as she asserts "Resources, Achievements and Agency" (Kabeer, 2001, 16). The concept of empowerment encompasses the process that changes the agency and through this process, agency becomes the essence of empowerment, which then enables conditions and outcomes.

The lack of focus on the interactions between women as active agencies through the process of empowerment, has resulted in the creation of projects and programs that

cannot sustainably impact women's lives. Women can empower each other and they must have active roles in the process of change. This thesis scrutinizes the consequences of empowerment projects and programs of women NGOs in Turkey. As it has been explicitly seen in citations and examples before, to illuminate this issue further, the begging question —namely, the research question— would be whether the NGOs are able to empower women in Turkey? Another research sub question that the study aims to answer is at what levels of power structures the empowerment by women's NGOs and public institutions takes shape. Another important discussion is what are the major distinctions of the women's empowerment projects regarding target groups and the process. The study provides a comparison of major distinctions between women's empowerment projects based the ideologically different NGOs and public institutions. Eventually, the study sets to pave the way of the assessment of the concept of empowerment in regard to women's empowerment projects in Turkey.

#### **1.4. The Structure of the Study**

This thesis is organized in six chapters as follows: Introduction chapter, the theoretical framework of the study, the methodology of the study, empowerment from experts' approaches, empowerment from women's eyes and conclusion chapter. After the introduction chapter that encompasses a brief review of the whole study, the second chapter overviews literature around the concept of women's empowerment from feminist perspective. The identification of the concept of empowerment from different dimensions and levels is in the core of chapter. As discussed in the chapter two, the main argument of the study is based on the reconceptualization of the empowerment as multi-dimensional, context specific and dynamic. The emphasized characteristics of the concept are namely "agency" and "process". This chapter also computes the investigations that attempt at assessing the women's empowerment throughout recent years. In addition, the chapter analyses how it could assess the women's empowerment from the feminist perspective.

Among all indexes and variables that are suggested to evaluate women's empowerment, this thesis selects the OXFAM GB (2017) assessment framework to understand the dynamics of women's empowerment projects. As it is discussed in chapter three, the methodology chapter, OXFAM framework clarifies all aspects and grounds of empowerment on women's explanations as an active "agency". Afterwards, the chapter discusses women's NGOs dynamics and the women's empowerment projects both in Turkey and in the world.

After the literature review around the research question of the study, the next section comprehensively, identifies the methodological framework of the study, presents the sample of the study and finally discusses the methodological limitations of it.

The next chapters encompass the findings of the study that reveal the different aspects of the women's empowerment projects. While chapter four addresses the project coordinators and assistants of women's empowerment projects being significant parts of the empowerment process, chapter five reflects the women's approaches who has participated in the women's empowerment projects themselves. Finally, the last chapter concludes the study and attempts at linking to the findings in order to answer the research question of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE DYNAMICS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

#### **2.1. Women's Empowerment**

This chapter provides an overview of different approaches on the concept of empowerment. Afterwards, this chapter attempts to conceptualize the concept of empowerment from feminist perspective. The core of chapter is reconceptualization of women's empowerment from feminist perspective and how feminist theory criticizes the mainstream and male-dominated power relations in the patriarchal society.

This chapter reviews the main arguments on women's empowerment conducted by feminists. The following sections are a summarized discussion on how we can reconceptualize the concept -or in other words-which dimensions of the concept has generally been impacted by women's empowerment projects.

The chapter also emphasizes on “the paradox of agency in the feminist theory” and reconceptualizes the female agency based on the “collective actions” of women. The final section of the chapter, takes a look at the other side of the women's empowerment and attempts at theorizing how the empowerment has been implemented. It is apparent that without understanding the circumstances of women's NGOs in the international level we will not be able to analyze the dynamics of women's empowerment projects in Turkey. Furthermore, the chapter outlines both national and international levels of women's NGOs and empowerment projects and attempts to analyze the NGOs main goals and approaches for women's empowerment projects. The key discussion of this part is based on the concept of “the NGOization of feminism” (Lang, 1997, 165). The

section attempts to clarify how women's NGOs played a different role in the empowerment process. While some act as facilitators, others impede the process of women's empowerment in the same context.

### **2.1.1. Different Approaches to Empowerment**

This section reviews major strands of literature about women's empowerment from different fields such as economy, sociology, anthropology and tries to conceptualize the empowerment from incorporated approaches and seek not just ways to empower women but also find sources of disempowerment. Also, this section aims to discuss why different indicators and variables are conceptualized to measure women's empowerment in the related literature.

Empowerment as a concept is close to many key terms. For instance, Bennett (2002) argues that "empowerment" and "social inclusion" are close concepts but at the same time quite separated. Both concepts refer to enhancement of capabilities affect the diverse groups and individuals while empowerment acts with individuals and groups from "down", social inclusion needs the systematic changes that might appear from "up" (Malhotra, 2002).

In this regard, Malhotra emphasizes household and kinship relations are "a central locus of women's disempowerment" (Malhotra, 2002, p. 3). In addition, in order to empower women, "fundamental changes" in patriarchal structures of the societies is required While most of the literature assert empowerment as "the indicator of freedom of choice and control", in general women have no essential place in most of the research.

A majority of researches conceptualize empowerment as "a fundamental shift in perceptions and "inner transformations" that means women should be able to

recognize their needs and “consider themselves not only capable but entitled to make choices” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 6).

The concepts of “option, choice, control, and power” could be assumed as key and common words for women’s empowerment throughout the empowerment literature. All these elements refer to women’s abilities to make decisions for their lives. Women’s empowerment is also related to the concept of “agency” and “self-efficiency” (Malhotra, 2002; Kabeer, 2001).

One of the difficulties of conceptualization of empowerment is the “variations in terminology” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 6) that refer to women’s empowerment such as “autonomy, agency, status, women’s land rights, domestic economic power, bargaining power and patriarchy, gender equality and gender discrimination”(Malhotra, 2002, p. 6). Often there is no clarification among these terms and all of them are used rather than the concept of empowerment.

According to Malhotra (2002) there are two main elements that could indicate as consensus points of the concept of empowerment that help the concept be distinguishable from other terms.

The first element is that “it is a process” (Kabeer, 2001; Chen, 1992; Rowlands 1995). As Malhotra indicates other concepts do not refer “explicitly encompasses a progression from one state to another” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 8).

The second element is “human agency”; it means that women themselves should play a significant role in the process of the changes. Therefore, empowerment does not mean merely the enhancement of gender equality indicators, if women do not exist throughout the process of empowerment it is difficult to call it empowerment.

Emphasizing on agency as an essential element of empowerment does not mean that all changes in women's situations should be executed by themselves. In other words, empowerment is not just an individual task for women, the structure of the society and the government have responsibilities as well.

According to Kabeer "resources" that in her argument refers to conditions that shape our choices have played important role in the process of empowerment. Batliwala (1994) also stress on "control over resources and ideology" as empowerment element. Worthy to note, "resources are not meaning empowerment" (Malhotra, 2002, p. 38). They act as "catalyst" for empowerment process. Malhotra called resources as "enabling factors" (Malhotra, 2002, p. 38). According to Chen, empowerment could be conceptualized as "rights, resources, perceptions, relationships, and power" (as cited in Malhotra, 2002, p. 6). UNICEF also recognizes "welfare, access to resources, awareness-raising, participation and control" (1994, p. 68) as indicators of the concept of empowerment. Apparently, as emphasized in major part of the literature, "accessing to recourses" by women does not mean women be empowered. Recourses act as an "catalyst for empowerment or conditions which empowerment is likely to accrue" (Malhotra, 2002, p. 8). As many scholars clarify, recourses act as "enabling actors" that helping empowerment process to be actualized (Kabeer, 1997; Mayoux 2001; Hashemi et al. 1996). In this vein, many "praxes" of empowerment that are accounted as variables of empowerment must be identified as "enabling factors" of empowerment.

Accordingly, through the literature of women's empowerment that are reviewed both concept of "agency" and "recourses" were the most critical and accepted concepts. Another component of the empowerment that is emphasized is "achievements" of empowerment that are totally different from the concept of empowerment. Kabeer (1999) discusses that "achievements" are the "outcomes of choices" that are occurred by women through the process of empowerment.



Is it possible that all variables are being categorized in these clarifications as resources, achievements and agency? Apparently, the answer will be no. While one variable is accounted as resources or enabling factors in one context it might be identified as achievements in other concepts. Therefore, the indicators of empowerment “will always depend on its inter-relationships with other variables” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 8) in the specific context. To illustrate, any change in the policies and laws of one society does not change or enhance women’s status in the positive way. The major reason of this is based on the Malhotra’s argument that asserts:

Because of the many examples in the literature of cases in which giving women’s access to resources does not lead to their greater control over resources, where changes in legal statutes have little influence on practice, and where female political leaders do not necessarily work to promote women’s interests. Thus, while resources—economic, social and political—are often critical in ensuring that women are empowered, they are not always sufficient. Without women’s individual or collective ability to recognize and utilize resources in their own interests, resources cannot bring about empowerment (Malhotra, 2002, p. 10).

Another important discussion on the concept of empowerment is about the multidimensionality of the empowerment. Empowerment as a process that has essential components that it is discussed above, have also different levels and dimensions. In this part, it is attempted to show different approaches identified the concept of empowerment from their point of views and emphasize on which dimensions of empowerment. Every dimension also has sub-domains that should be operationalized by specific concepts. This thesis based its argument on Malhotra’s comprehensive categorization. According to her, the most commonly used dimensions through the empowerment literature are “economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 13).

Table 1. Commonly used dimensions of empowerment and potential operationalization in the household, community, and broader arenas.

Broader Arenas	Community	Household	Dimension
Women's representation in high paying jobs; women CEO's; representation of women's economic interests in macro-economic policies, state and federal budgets	Women's access to employment; ownership of assets and land; access to credit; involvement and/or representation in local trade associations; access to markets	Women's control over income; relative contribution to family support; access to and control of family resources	Economic
Women's literacy and access to a broad range of educational options; Positive media images of women, their roles and contributions	Women's visibility in and access to social spaces; access to modern transportation; participation in extra-familial groups and social networks; shift in patriarchal norms (such as son preference); symbolic representation of the female in myth and ritual	Women's freedom of movement; lack of discrimination against daughters; commitment to educating daughters	Socio-Cultural
Regional/national trends in timing of marriage, options for divorce; political, legal, religious support for (or lack of active opposition to) such shifts; systems providing easy access to contraception, safe abortion, reproductive health services	Shifts in marriage and kinship systems indicating greater value and autonomy for women (e.g. later marriages, self-selection of spouses, reduction in the practice of dowry; acceptability of divorce); local campaigns against domestic violence	Participation in domestic decision-making; control over sexual relations; ability to make childbearing decisions, use contraception, access abortion; control over spouse selection and marriage timing; freedom from domestic violence	Familial/ Interpersonal
Laws supporting women's rights, access to resources and options; Advocacy for rights and legislation; use of judicial system to redress rights violations	Community mobilization for rights; campaigns for rights awareness; effective local enforcement of legal rights	Knowledge of legal rights; domestic support for exercising rights	Legal
Women's representation in regional and national bodies of government; strength as a voting bloc; representation of women's interests in effective lobbies and interest groups	Women's involvement or mobilization in the local political system/campaigns; support for specific candidates or legislation; representation in local bodies of government	Knowledge of political system and means of access to it; domestic support for political engagement; exercising the right to vote	Political
Women's sense of inclusion and entitlement; systemic acceptance of women's entitlement and inclusion	Collective awareness of injustice, potential of mobilization	Self-esteem; self-efficacy; psychological well-being	Psychological

Source: Malhotra 2000 page14

In the other side, it is critical that in which level empowerment process are occurred? the concept of empowerment has also different levels (Mayoux, 2000; Elson, 1999). There is not concord on the levels of empowerment. Every dimension identifies special

levels for measuring empowerment. As economics emphasize on the micro and macro levels of empowerment, sociologists have different categorization. Generally, among all dimensions of empowerment “the middle level” that is called “community” level and refers family system and local rules of gender structure is the origin of disagreements on the empowerment literature (Malhotra, 2002).

Among all dimensions of empowerment psychological dimension has refers to individual level of empowerment. Eventually, the concept of empowerment is “multi-level” and “multi-dimensional” process that needs the comprehensive analysis and as a “dynamic” concept demands the implementation of specific indexes to measure that.

### **2.1.2. Feminist Perspective on Empowerment**

Whereas, the explanation of the concept of power depends on the political and theoretical interests that motivate us to study (Luke, 1986; Said, 1986). According to feminist perspective, the understanding of power as domination is patriarchal masculine approach and it is explicitly different from women’s perspective on power. As Young argues (1980) feminist theory have different understandings of the concept of power; power as a resource that reflects the liberal feminism approach, power as domination and power as empowerment. The all understandings that are mentioned above critique mainstream understandings of power and attempt to find the alternative ways to explanations of women’s subordination. As Young discusses the liberal feminists’ approaches tends to understand the power as a “positive social good” that is distributed unequally between men and women in the society, the main goal of the liberal feminists is redistributed the power equally among women and men. It is obvious that the assumption behind this understanding is “power is kind of stuff that can be possessed by individuals in greater or less amounts” (Young,1990, p. 31).

Young critiques this “distributive model of power” in different aspects; firstly, this model denied that power is a relation not a thing that should be distributed. Secondly, the distributive model of power understands the concept in atomistic way that fails to

attain the structural social contexts that form power. Thirdly, according to Young this model view statically on power that overlooks power as dynamically understood of power and finally, the model tends to be proposed “the concentration of power in the hands of few” while Young asserts the power is widely dispersed and diffused (Young, 1990). Power as domination refers to feminists’ approaches that used a various term in relation with this understanding of power such as oppression, patriarchy and subjection. This model of power indicates oppressive power relations that is supported by radical, phenomenological, socialist’s intersectional post-structuralists and analytic feminists’ approaches (Amy, 2016). Another understanding of power that the significant strand of feminists adopt, is power as empowerment. In this vein, power reconceptualizing as a “capacity or ability, specifically the capacity to empower or transform oneself and others” (Amy, 2016, p. 24). According to Wattenberg (1990), this is feminist understanding of power which he calls “transformative power” that is distinguishable from domination. As Amy discusses, this understanding of power refers to “empowerment-based understanding of power” that is an alternative to masculine interpretations of power-over and domination. (Amy, 1996). Moreover, the concept of “transformative power” or “empowering” are overlapped by lesbian feminism and eco-feminism. Hence, it is completely different from “state authority, police, armed forces, control of economic resources, hierarchy and chain of command” as Hoagland indicates (1988,13). Eventually, this understanding of power implicit “the life-affirming and positive empowering forces” (Starhawk, 1987, p. 8).

One of the main questions of feminist theory that asks why women do not want to use power, can be answered with this alternative conceptualization of power. Women “want to be powerful in ways that simultaneously enhance rather than diminish, the power of others” (Miller, 1992, p. 247-248). Actually, women’s experiences in daily life make their different insights to the concept of power. Masculine powers are represented by police, militarists, authority, state, and control of all resources in the society. Also, the concept of power from-within indicates the ability to choose and engagement and making decision. Power in this regard, emerges from the inside of individuals, as Starhawk claims “power is a positive, life affirming, and empowering force that stands in contrast to power understood as domination, control or imposing

one's will on another". (Starhawk, 1987, p. 8). Also, Nancy Hartsock argues feminist perspective understand "power as energy and competence rather than dominations" (Hartsock, 1983, p. 224). Foucault outlines the theme of power as a capacity and ability too when he defines power with as a 'collective ability' (Foucault, 1942).

Feminist perspective criticizes the traditional and mainstream understandings of power and as a consequence of these significant critiques, the concept of feminist meaning of empowerment emerged that tends to criticize all earlier theories of empowerment that have over-emphasis on women's victimization and oppression based on seeing them passive agencies. Feminist perspective understand power as three different level; as a "resource" that can be redistributed, liberal feminists take this positive approach on power, others such as socialist and radical and intersectional feminists see the power as domination.

Among of all these understandings that I mentioned above, understanding of power as empowerment is closer to practice power into feminist framework that embraces power as dynamic and interactive and ongoing process. In contrast to the mainstream and traditional understanding of empowerment, feminist perspective sees the empowerment as open-ended and flexible concept. Mainstream understanding of empowerment is defined in World Bank's conceptualization of empowerment as "the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choice into desired actions and outcomes" (World Bank, 2001, p. 39). In this regard, the main understanding of empowerment "presuppose that powerlessness is a result of a lack of necessary tolls and resources for the exercise of power"(Ette, 2007, p. 147). In this point, there is a common assumption about empowerment such as thing that can be delivered through development projects and programs. Traditional empowerment concept assumes the external forces are the most important factors that can set the goals and objectives such as economic and political power for women. This meaning is reflected power-to understanding that shape the development theories based on bottom-up projects. Women are assumed as passive agencies that can 'brought into development' and become 'empowered'. Therefore, two main standpoints of

mainstream conceptualization of empowerment are power-over and power-to understandings.

Empowerment as feminists identified has no limitations and entails all aspects of individuals that exercise power. In addition, they reject the allocation of power and endorse dominant-subordinate relationship and also down-top views on empowerment. Empowerment in this regard, not only depends on individuals also depends on structures and conditions that agency experiences. Another point is that feminists do not assume the empowerment with integrated and solidarity. They believe in varieties of dimensions of empowerment (Stacki & Monkman, 2003). Therefore, feminist thinking stresses on multi-dimensional nature of power at different levels in personal, groups, national levels (Wong, 2003, p. 310).

In feminist position, empowerment is 'autonomy for women' that denies mechanistic and instrumental attitudes. In addition, feminists focus on the contexts of empowerment and how women can be empowered under patriarchal and secondary political and socio-economic conditions. In fact, empowerment for women is impossible without structural transformation, as opposed to the "mainstream" point of view, which seems to ignore structural restriction in society (Longwe, 1998). In other words, the process of empowerment continues by including 'the sense of community'.

Radical feminists assert, the participation merely in political parties cannot bring a rewarding experience for their lives. They attempt to do gender-based analysis of power relations. Feminism criticizes the dichotomy between private and public spheres in male-dominated political arguments that isolate women and men between two separate domains. Feminists challenge these male-dominated structures in the patriarchal society and call for restricting of political spheres. About implementations of empowerment programs and projects feminist perspectives have critiques too. Empowerment strategies that "recognize women as an agent of change and also perception of empowerment is not universal but context dependent (Afshar, 1998).

Empowering women in feminist understanding, should be as a process that women exercise 'agency' through that. In other means, women should redefine as main parts of implementation of empowerment projects not just 'beneficiaries of power allocation'. Consequently, empowerment of women should be the process of exercise of power to change their lives and it can happen just by 'entering into dialogue with their peers'. When a woman starts to speak and break the silence and share her experiences with others, she can make effective decisions and attain to impressive achievements for her life.

It seems necessary to discuss about the differences among feminist theories around the concept of women's empowerment. According to Lunden (2004), there are two main arguments among feminist scholars. The first group sees the western culture and society as "reference point" for other women all over the world, and the second group are post-colonial and post-modern feminists that in contrast to first group, who "take the west as a norm", they criticize western feminism (Lunden, 2004; Mohanty, 2005; Escobar, 1995).

Post- colonial and Post-modern feminism criticize the women's empowerment projects that represent empowerment as the line that every woman should be empowered in the western understandings (Stean, 1998). They point out that women are different with various needs. Crucially, Saunders (2002) asserts "development programs exaggerate women's situations in the third world and poor countries" (Saunders, 2002, p. 3). According to Post-modern feminist perspective, this fact that even mainstream feminists image women of third world only as housewives that have not any active role in public spheres of their societies, is problematic (Tinker, 1997, p. 38; Razavi & Miller, 1995, p. 4).

In other words, third world women are assumed as "victims of patriarchy and in need of help from western feminists to liberate themselves" (Saunders, 2002, p.5). Moreover, there are no significant differences between GAD and WID development

theories, women in third world are seen as “homogeneous category” and are presented as “passive” and “oppressed” by men. Hence, the mainstream feminism theory considers (Saunders, 2003, p.14). This point of view that adopts the post-structuralist approach as its main vein, attempts to reconstructed all norms and knowledge that “are presented as natural and reveal them as socially constructed” (Erikson, 2005, p. 17). In this regard, the post-colonial understands power as “relational rather than material or static” (Escobar, 1995).

Another point is there is important relation between “power” and “knowledge” and as Erikson (2005). argues “power can be hegemonic within the discourses of development” (2005, p. 18) Eventually, women from this perspective, are presented as social construct and there is no ultimate aim or ideal type that women should be like them by empowerment process. Moreover, there is universal patriarchy structure, this universality, reproduce various types of structures that subordinate women from different ways. The Third world women generally are seen as objects in development programs and empowerment projects, while western women play the subject role in these programs and projects (Mohanty, 2005). Post-colonial feminism behind this emphasizing on diversities among women asserts women can encompass a social category that experiences different levels of patriarchy in their society. However, all women experience the concepts such as race, class, sexual oppression and universal patriarchy, they exercise different degrees and levels of these concepts in all societies.

Despite of WID and GAD approaches on empowerment that represent the concept based on “collective organizing, economy, education, and the relation between men and women”, the post-colonial understandings of empowerment redefine the empowerment by “Third women are active agent not passive victims”, and emphasizing “the importance of social context”. Eventually, empowerment means “different things in different contexts” (Lunden, 2004, p. 21).



As it is mentioned above, there are common assumptions about the concept of empowerment from a feminist perspective. We can summarize these assumptions as (1) empowerment is not something that can be given to individuals, empowerment can only be actualized by women. (2) Empowerment is generally assumed as a “process” that has no final stage and ultimate goal. So, empowerment is “relative to time and in space” (Mosedale, 2005, p. 224). (3) the main aim of the empowerment is “the change of power relations” (Visvanathan, 1997, p. 26). In this vein, feminists understood the “change of power relations” as “changing gender relations which is socially constructed” (Moser, 1993, p. 3).

Another feminist that points out the goals of empowerment is Batliwala (1999), she argues challenging the patriarchal system and the gender discriminations in the societies as the main goal of women’s empowerment. This is the same standpoint of Kabeer, while she argues empowerment is about “thinking out of the box” (Kabeer, 1999).

This aim also emphasizes the point that social changes will not be “sustainable” when constrained with only “inner transformation” in individual level. On the other hand, Women are the key part of the process of empowerment that are main actors of empowerment process.

Eventually, feminist perspective sees the “social change” as the critical factor of empowerment process. Female agencies connect “individual choices and social change” (Kabeer, 1999, 16). The significant strands of feminist stress on the different levels of empowerment and at the same time, the necessity of empowering women in all dimensions and levels. To illustrate, Rowlands (1998) identified three different levels for the concept of empowerment as (1) the individual empowerment (2) the collective empowerment (3) empowerment in close relationships (Rowlands, 1998, p. 15). Rowlands asserts each level of empowerment is essential for sustainable empowerment process. All above the discussions through the feminist literature we

can summarize the empowerment as “process-oriented”, multi-dimensional and relational to social context concept.

### **2.1.3. Reconceptualizing Empowerment**

The mainstream definitions of empowerment are associated with the “sense of gaining control, of decision making, of participation” (Karl, 1995, p. 14) and generally, the empowerment is seen as a process that aims the “bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it” (Rowlands, 1995, p. 102). Another point is, the mainstream and traditional understandings of empowerment see power as relation to obedience or power-over. As Garba (1999) conceptualizes empowerment as “the allocation of power”. According to Mette, (2007) the mainstream empowerment means the one who has power-over control and authorize others who have not power, “to became empowered”. In this vein, empowerment is indicated as the transition from powerlessness to being empowered. This point of view, presents empowerment as “the allocation of power” implicitly. According to Mette (2007), who attempts to conceptualize empowerment from feminist perspective, power is conversational concept “not only in the interpretation but also in how it is experienced by different people”.

It is obvious, the mainstream understanding of empowerment supposes the concept as a process of providing the necessary tools that lack of these tools make people disempowered. This could be the common assumption of the traditional meaning of empowerment that reflects in World Bank’s conception of power (Wrang, 2003). These tools and requirements are assumed as political and economic requirements. This point of view, reflects the power-to understanding of power that it finds in development programs and projects. Development programs as external interventions aim to allocate power by these projects and programs.

But where is the status of women in this process of empowerment? There is a huge gap in development programs and traditional understandings of empowerment that assume power as power-over and power-to relations, for women. Actually, women are

invisible and passive individuals that need to be empowered. The main assumption is they need an assist to be “brought in development” and they should be participated in this projects and programs to change their economic and political levels. Empowerment in this view is one-dimensional concept that only cover macro programs and policies which aim to participation of women in economy and politic.

Barry Barnes (1988) asserts empowerment as “downward” delegation of power as cited in Mette’s paper (2007) “entails a power holder delegating some of his capacity for action to a subordinate while still remaining more powerful than to subordinate and capable of exercising control” (Mette, 2007, p. 5).

Eventually, the power-to and power-over understandings of power reflect mainstream conceptualization of empowerment. The mainstream and patriarchal understandings have many limitations. The most important problematic limitation is the concept of “allocation the power”. In this regard, power seems as a thing that can be delegated and allocated among marginalized disempowered groups. Moreover, the patriarchal and androcentric definitions of power emphasis on the division between “those who wield power and are able to apportion a part to those who have little or none” (Mette, 2007, 9). It is obvious the development programs and policies, rely on “dominant- subordinate” relationships that adopt the top-down approach. In addition, the external interventions are the vein of these programs. Feminists argue that the providing economic and political resources are not necessarily enough for being empowered. Actually, feminists swayed the mainstream empowerment conceptualization and challenged it by asking many questions about the identification of power. Feminist theory contributes to development theory and programs by attempting to bring women as active agencies in development programs discourses and challenging the women’s positions in the development programs.

Feminist explanation of empowerment emphasizes on power as a relation concept and it distinguishes between “the uses of power either to control or empower” as stated in

Stacki and Monkman (as cited in Mette, 2003, p. 7). From feminist perspective the concept of empowerment is a multi-dimensional concept that has different degrees and levels in practice. Feminist scholars stress on the importance of the social context of empowerment. In this respect, feminist framework of power entails power-from-within and power within understandings of power. In spite of the mainstream empowerment that based on the top-bottom relationships that are actualized by external forces, the feminist perspective on the concept associated with internal empowerment. To illustrate power-from-within that reflects personal power, it can be defined as psychological empowerment that seeks self-development by increasing self-esteem and self-confidence (Stacki and Monkman 2003:181 as cited in Mette). The main aim of this meaning of the empowerment is “overcome to internalized oppression” (Wong, 2003, p. 311). Power-with also indicates the “collective action” of women that demonstrates women can empower themselves by working together to extent their impacts (Rowlands, 1995). In this regard power account as ability to discover inner energy of women by women not external forces and women can experience empowerment personally and in group.

Feminist empowerment theory emphasizes on the cooperation with each other by women to solve their own problems collectively (Mette, 2003). It is important to note that feminist approaches stress on female agency as the most important part of the process of empowerment. As Kabeer discusses empowerment is the “making strategic life choices in a social context where this ability was previously denied to them” (Kabeer, 2005, 11). Feminists argue that agency is not just as one of the indicators of empowerment, also, as the most important indicators of empowerment. According to Mette (2007), feminist thinking stresses on the reconstruction of the patriarchal society and male-dominated relationships in the society are necessary for empowerment women. As she asserts “the empowerment of women is impossible without structural transformation” (Mette, 2007, p. 10). The significant point is the mainstream empowerment is just associated with economic and political structural transformations. This transformation does not entail the cultural or other dimensions of empowerment.

While the mainstream of empowerment adopts mechanistic and instrumentalist approaches, the feminist perspective takes the multi-dimensional process that provides the position of the exercise of power by women. Moreover, instrumentalist view of empowerment tends to see empowerment as an outcome instead of transformative approaches that focus on the participation that are able to empower women without “attention to outcomes” (Luttrell, Quiroz, Scruton & Bird, 2009). Emphasizing on outcomes rather than the process of outcomes reflects the attention to “economic enhancement” and accessibility to economic resources.

Longwe identifies five different degrees of empowerment (as cited in Luttrell, Quiroz, Scruton & Bird, 2009, p. 5) such as (1) The welfare degree, (2) The access degree, (3) The conscientization and awareness-raising degree, (4) the participation and mobilization degree, (5) the control degree. These degrees of empowerment are gaining from lower to higher degrees of quality of empowerment. There are significant strands of feminist scholars that conceptualize the concept of empowerment with emphasizing on the necessity of the coordination between all levels of empowerment from micro to macro levels of the society. This point of view brings the important discussion around the concept that is controversial dichotomy structure versus agency. It is important to avoid this dichotomy, stresses on the complementary and dynamic relationship between structure as social structures that determined the agency’s choices and agencies that are capable to transform the social structures. However, the implications of empowerment will be different dependent on which perspective is adopted, both sides of empowerment are essential for self-actualization and empowering (Luttrell, Quiroz, Scruton & Bird, 2009).

Actually, the social structure that the concept of empowerment is actualized in from private to public spheres, needs to change conclusively. On the other hand, the Agency as the most important part of empowerment process should be involved in all

dimensions and levels of these changes. This is what Kabeer claims is “active agency” (Kabeer, 1994).

Hence, feminist theory situates women’s empowerment as “systematic transformation” that needs fundamental changes in all levels of patriarchal structure (Kabeer, 2001; Bisnath & Elson, 1999; Sen & Grown, 1987; Batliwala, 1994). There is an important question that is asked by feminists about the process of empowerment, which is “who empowered women”? From feminist standpoint, women themselves can play active roles by empowering themselves. According to Bennet, (2002) the women’s empowerment process should be started “from below”.

Feminist scholars see the power as a more qualitative rather than just quantitative concept (Shaheed, 2013). According to Farida Shaheed the most important level that women’s empowerment is actualized in that level is the middle levels and relational levels of the society. The macro level policies and development programs in national and international levels before achieving to women in the individual level are interfaced by cultural values, local governance, believes and costumes of traditional and patriarchal society. Moreover, through the development programs and plans generally assume the change in macro level change women’s daily life directly. There seems to be no compelling reason to argue that women in individual and middle levels of empowerment bargain with patriarchal structure to change their situation in power relations. Shaheed argues the major reason for the importance of middle level of empowerment is wielding or exercising the power by gender-based system in this level (2013). That means women in this level confront with inequalities and oppressions by male-dominated values.

Eventually, feminist empowerment theory seeks the ways of disempowering women besides the ways of women’s empowerment. The only way that women can go behind this matter will be their agency and desire to change their lives. This is an important point that women’s empowerment is totally different from charity for women, as many

NGOs and women's empowerment institutions see at the concept. The most important responsibility in terms of the women empowerment, is to encourage and provide such conditions that women could travel by themselves instead of taking steps on their behalf.

According to Shaheed (2013) and strands of feminists, the main index in the measuring of women's empowerment is the changing the of unequal power relationships by women. From feminist perspective, the first step toward the women empowerment, is considered as any change, even a small one, associated to unequal gender relations.

In addition, feminist theory argues that there is a strong bound between empowerment and disempowering women. There are two sides of the same line. Through the process of empowerment, women challenge the norms and male-dominated culture in the different levels of their lives and struggle to destroy the patriarchal structure (Kabeer, 2005). As Kabeer emphasizes empowerment is about "the expanding of capacities of people for making strategic choices" (Kabeer 2005, 16). For making a choice and being empowered, Kabeer discusses "resources, achievements and agency" as three dimensions of the concept of empowerment. These dimensions have intersections dependently, so making changes in only one-dimension causes changes in other dimensions, too. Kabeer (1999) also distinguishes between the poverty and disempowerment. As reducing of poverty can modify the basic situation in the society but cannot change the other social structures that constrain women to choose and take an action independently (Razavi, 1992). So, achieving the economic resources is not enough for empowering women. To illustrate, however, in recent decades, there were many women's empowerment projects that aimed to empower women by providing the credit- programs and economic resources for women, there are many examples, especially in Turkey, that demonstrate without internal empowerment in individual and relational levels there is not sustainable empowerment.

This study based its argument on Kabeer's discussions (1999) that identifies the connection between women's empowerment process and self-knowledge and self-development of agency that associated with the challenging of "doxas" as Bourdieu (1977) explains as the acceptance which aspects of culture and tradition that became as nature of the society that individuals cannot challenge them. According to Kabeer, (1999) for achieving the critical awareness that assist women's self-empowerment, the "discursive alternatives" it is necessary.

It is important to note that there are differences between "the ability of choosing" and empowerment. As Kabeer (1999) underscores under this distinguish as categorizes choices as "real and strategic choices" that demonstrate the ways of being and acting valuably and other kinds of choices that Kabeer (1999) calls them determined choosing. The results of the choices help us to identify how they are strategic choices. In this regard, again social context is appeared as a key concept in the conceptualization of empowerment.

Feminist scholars categorize the process of empowerment in various levels (Kabeer, 1999; Kabeer, 2001; Shaheed, 2013; Rowlands, 1998; Battiwala, 1994). The main categories are national and international macro levels, and relational or middle levels and micro or individual or personal level of empowerment. This categorization is based on the nature of the concept of empowerment. According to Shaheed, in the middle and individual levels of the empowerment real empowerment and disempowerment of women is actualized (Shaheed, 2013). Also, the individual level encompasses daily life of women, where women exercise power.

Kabeer categorizes the levels of empowerment as deeper, middle and direct levels. The deeper level indicates the social structures, class and gender, the middle level reflects the norms and institutional resources and direct level individual shows capabilities, agencies and achievements (Kabeer, 1999). Obviously, through the process of empowerment all levels are essential for sustainable and continues empowerment.



From feminist perspective, we need both levels of empowerment structure and individual levels. Although the feminist perspective attempts to demonstrate female agency as main index for measuring the empowerment, there is an important point which is, women are empowered when they decide individually and act collectively. Shaheed discusses sustainable empowerment should be encompassed the public and private spheres of women's lives. Shaheed 2013).

In addition, the concept of empowerment is actualized by grounded to top actions and it is not possible, unless women act to attain it. That means without the power of control and bargaining of women, the real and sustainable empowerment cannot be realized.

Another important point is the emphasis on "the participatory" in the process of empowerment by feminists (Shaheed, 2013). However, the participation of women is a popular term among women's empowerment projects in Turkey, many project coordinators and assistances stress that the participation of women through the process of empowerment has happened. But this participation generally is limited by just asking questions from women and asking their comments about the project. This is not a real participation because as Shaheed argues all the decisions that have made in other place cannot empower women (Shaheed, 2013). Actually, in the process of empowerment the "social inclusion in institutions" as Bennett (1993) discusses is needed. According to Bennett, this "social inclusion" refers to "conflate empowerment and participation" (1993, p.16).

Actually, the focus on social integration through the process of empowerment is another emphasis on the process rather than outcomes of empowerment. Eventually, from the feminist standpoint, systematic changes are necessary for empowerment (Narayan, 2002) and for sustainable empowerment we need the patriarchal structures and institutions (Kabeer, 2001; Bisnath& Elson, 1999).

#### **2.1.4 Understanding Different Dimensions of Women's Empowerment in Turkey**

In the second chapter, the study attempts to conceptualize a theoretical framework of women's empowerment. Therefore, this chapter is an overview on the concepts of women's empowerment from feminist perspective. Through the chapter, this study proposes and debates on the empowerment as contextual concept. Accordingly, the study discussed to evaluate the women's empowerment should be evaluated based on the specific cultural and social contexts of women's lives. The key implemented element to empower women is that how women interpret the empowerment. Empowerment also needs an analysis of gender relations in the specific context, and particularly how power dynamics and relations reproduce and perpetuate in the patriarchal society.

There are numerous ways to empower women however, since all women experience the similar constrained values and norms, that are assume as "natural", we can discuss about common ways to empower women. in other words, women as an oppressed group in patriarchal society can act collectively beyond their class, ethnicity, and etc.

Empowerment is multi-dimensional concept that is not necessarily in relation to economic status of individual. Empowerment is an "ongoing process", and it is not just a "goal" or a "product". In this vein, women's empowerment could perpetuate through women's lives until women "cognitive and analyze the causes of their subordinations" (Batliwala, 1994, p. 32).

Women's empowerment should be bestowed by themselves. No external interventions, projects and programs can claim that empower women unless they claim. External factors only can provide the conditions of empowerment as "resources". These resources are important as "facilitators" of women's empowerment process. Actually, context development and Agency act as complementary elements of women's empowerment process.

From feminist perspective, the significant of exercising of agency by women through the empowerment process is crucial concept. Women's empowerment in personal level is so close to "self-esteem", "self-development", "self-confidence" and "sense of agency". By exercising the agency women be able to "redefine their goals and act upon them" (Batliwala, 1994, p. 33). Eventually, women's empowerment projects, in addition to resources and conditions requires women's exercising agencies.

## **2.2. Female Agency and Women's Empowerment**

Agency as a significant concept in the feminist theory, makes women visible at the all social and political aspects that are generally denied on research. Female's agency is a core concept that it is defined as "the capacity of ability of an actor to act" (Hay, 2002; Hinterberger, 2013). Many scholars stress on the relationship between the concepts of structure and power with the concept of agency. Female agency is seen as the "ability of the subject to resist, negotiate and transform certain forms of power that works on the subjects externally and internally" as argued by Hinterberger (as cited in Kantola & Lombardo, 2017, p. 92).

Agency also, is associated with the concept of power that shows how agencies think and act within different social and cultural contexts or constrained structures. Moreover, the "Structure" refers to external and "contextual factors", for example "gender relations" in the society and "agency" refers to the capacity for acting that can impact the results against the contextual factors in each society. According to Kantola and Lombardo, both of the concepts; structure and agency are not oppositional and "mutually shape each other, because agents are bounded by structures, but they are capable through action of altering the structural environment in which they operate" (Rosamond, 2000, p. 172).

The discussion about the interaction between agencies as actors and structures as "existing social practices" raises this question that "Can people change the social structures within which they live?" (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017, p. 90). The answer

of this debate analyzes through feminist theory by many feminist scholars. According to Issaacs (2002), feminist agency is “paradoxical” concept. The dilemmas raise up while feminist theory emphasizes on the patriarchal and gender-based culture in the societies and this determinism conduct to “minimize women’s capacity to act in patriarchal contexts” (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017, p. 90). In other words, feminist scholars generally do not enough pay attention on female agencies and rather than emphasizes on the patriarchal structure to clarify women’s subordinated situations in the society.

Kantola and Lombardo (2017) assert that to measuring the female’s agency we need go behind the traditional indexes and reconceptualize “substantive representation” for measuring women’s agencies (also see Moser, 1993). The main characteristic of the female agency from feminist perspective, is “resist and transform social contexts” (Hinterberger, 2013, 69).

Feminist theory epistemologically criticizes the male-dominated knowledge that denies women’s perspectives and attempts to make “visible” the role of agency and women’s perspective in different contexts. Despite of female agency, that it is excluded from different areas of social reality such as economy, literature, policy, culture and science, female agency “can act within existing gender structures” (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017, p. 91). There is an important point to noted that the female agency against constraining structures act in two different dimensions; individually and collectively (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017). The “resistance” against existing gender-based structures overlaps both dimensions.

Therefore, in spite of traditional meaning of agency that has not shown the subjectivity and the independency in development programs, female agency as feminist theory represents, is “thinking and acting independently from structures” (Hinterberger, 2013, p. 7). As Madhok, Philips and Wilson (2013) clarify, agency is not “antitheses of

coercion”. In other words, coercion and agency are “entwined and non-antithetical relationship” as stated by Hinterberger (as cited in Kantola & Lombardo, 2017, p. 92).

Gowning back to the point that it is discussed above around the paradoxical meaning of the concept of agency based on Tracy Isaacs (2002) ‘s discussion, feminist agency is paradoxical because feminist theory represents women as oppressed and passive subjectivity in patriarchal society and in other hand feminist theory attempt to motivate women to take an action against oppression. To dispel this paradox, at least feminist theory should explain how women can act against oppression within patriarchal societies? To achieving this aim, Isaacs distinguishes between two different kind of agencies, as traditional “ideals of independence, control choice and free action” and “care-based account of agency” (Isaacs, 2002, p. 130).

According to Isaacs, the last kind that is the “preferable ideal agency” refers to the concept of relational self. In this vein, self is not merely independent and separate individuals and our relationships with others actually shape our identities. Self- in-relation based on responsibilities to other women as female agency. Issacs asserts from this perspective we can identify the capacity for acting collectively with other women. Actually, subjectivity will be recognized only by acting collectively against oppressive patriarchal structures.

The concept of empowerment has closely relation with Agency as a significant dimension of the process of empowerment. As Kabeer (1999) points out empowerment is a partial and continuous process that based on the different context, agency act variously. Kabeer (1999) emphasizes empowerment is “social change process” and the assessing of that is not always possible. She explains the relationships between female agency and resources is complicated because agency’s make-decision and choose based on the conditions (Kabeer, 1999). Kabeer also points out that the empowerment contextual concept. All indexes to measurement of the women’s empowerment need to reconceptualize in their specific social and cultural context as well as agency.

Isaacs distinguishes between two types of agency that we could observed in the literature of female's agency. She discerns the female's agency in the traditional sense that she called it "moral agency" from "care-based agency" that she attempts to "introducing new criteria for responsible agency" (Isaacs, 2002, p. 93). According to Isaacs, the main assumption of feminist theory, is women live in patriarchal society and systematically have been subordinated under patriarchy structure. The disadvantage situation of women is obviously complicated (Isaacs, 2002). To clarify, patriarchal structure reproduces this subordinated situation for women in the society. Isaacs asserts the patriarchal structure do this subordination in two different ways; in the first place, patriarchal structure suggested women the "fewer opportunity" and in the second place, patriarchy put women to subjects of the "feminine socialization" (Isaacs, 2002).

This gender-based socialization deeply perpetuates the internalizations of all male-dominated values, norms and traditions. Under those circumstances, women encourage "to be passive, dependent, maternal, nurturing, concerned about others, compromising, unambitious and less competitive" (Isaacs, 2002, p.85). In fact, female's agency has been encouraged to accept her secondary and subordinated situation in the patriarchal society. The interpretation of the existing of this situation is harder than to resist against this in-depth socialization process. Obviously, the patriarchal structure impedes the actualization of women's agencies. According to Isaacs, this impediment by patriarchal structure occurs in two ways: by posing the barriers and at least fewer opportunities and by socialization process that shape women's agency as independent individuals. Hence, the mainstream notion of female's agency under patriarchal structure emphasizes on oppressive social structures that impede the female's agency through the process of the empowerment (Isaacs, 2002 p.83).

Female agency from feminist perspective, would be effective against women's subordination situations, but how? For achieving to this impressive role against patriarchal structure women require the active agency that "act collectively" with other

women rather than individually from other women. In other words, the female agency in feminist meaning is not merely independent self without any relation with others. She is not self-directed, independence, and “moral agency” as feminists criticize. From this perspective women individually without collective action and collective responsibility “cannot against their oppressions” (Isaacs, 2002, 85). Moreover, the sense of solidarity as main feature is appeared by collective actions between women. As Isaacs asserts, the context of “we” is reshaped by women and accordingly the paradox of the feminist agency is dispelled.

Actually, women bargaining with patriarchal structure and sometimes even reproduce the patriarchal structures in their societies if these values overlap with their goals and interests. However, the socialization of women impedes their agencies, by reconceptualizing of agency based on “self-in- relation” understanding of that, women can exercise their agencies. This exercising of agency become a real when women recognize their identities in accompany with other women and act collectively against patriarchal structure of the society. Additionally, female agency would be effective only “engaged in collective action against oppression” (Isaacs, 2002, p. 150).

Eventually the “collective action” is the significant point in order to the concept of female agency. Feminist point of view, adopts “collective action” of women as the starting point of acting against oppression. Women’s choices, even, for example, they choose stay at home as mother and leave their careers indicates various patterns that reflect female agency’s choices pursuit their interests and dealings with patriarchy in their context.

From feminist perspective female agency is the crux of the women’s empowerment process in this study. Empowerment as it is discussed above, is the multi-dimensional and contextual concept that feminist theory attempts to refine that and listen to women’s voices rather than mainstream knowledge that represent women as passive and disadvantage groups.

According to Kabeer (1999) accessing to resources is not enough to empower women. Notably, these resources are not essentially objective and measurable resources. Women only became an effective agency when they exercising their agency by making “strategic choices and decisions” (Kabeer, 1999, 23). Kabeer stresses on the distinction between accessing to resources and having “control” on the resources. In this regard, agency can act as an important part that able to measure empowerment. Again, to measurement of empowerment it is needed qualifying the decisions which are accounts as indicators of women’s empowerment (Kabeer, 2005).

Female’s agency within patriarchal structure bargaining and making strategic deals. Women based on their cultural and social context that they live, making decision informally and invisibly. Accordingly, assessing women’s agencies roles through empowerment process, needs listening women’s voices in relation their reasons to make a specific decision based on their context. Additionally, women’s empowerment realization independent to women’s ways to exercise their agency trough empowerment process. Worthy to note, the identification of agency as an essential element for women’s empowerment process does not mean all progress and changes in women’s situations should be occurred by women. The empowerment is not merely women’s tasks (Malhotra, 2002, p. 34). The structure, government, and civil societies have a critical responsibility too. Any over emphasizing of the concept of “female agency” could distract us from the feminist perspective that attempts to underline the role of patriarchal structure on women’s status in society.

### **2.3. Discussing a Method of Analysis for Women’s Empowerment**

Various investigations attempt to evaluate women’s empowerment, the most important contribution of these studies is the operationalizing of the concept of empowerment. However, it needs a serious attempt to redefine the indexes that can measure the impact of women’s empowerment projects. As this study seeks the answer to the question of “what is the impact of women’s empowerment projects on women’s lives?”



The main challenge to measure the concept of empowerment is the context-specific characteristics of empowerment. In other words, “behaviors and attributes that signify empowerment in one context have different meanings elsewhere” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 18). According to Malhotra, context should be important in the determining extent of indexes (Malhotra, 2002, p. 16). Furthermore, “context” determines the “relationship between women’s empowerment and development outcomes” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 16).

Through the literature few efforts focus on the role of the context as a critical element for measuring empowerment (Mason & Smith, 2000; Jeejeebhoy, 2000; Krietz; 2000, Schuler as cited at Hashemi, 1996).

From this point of view, “contextual factors are more important in determining women’s empowerment” (Mason & Smith, 2000, p.124). But does it mean for measuring empowerment, we have to revive indicators based on socio-cultural differentness? According to Malhotra (2002), the dependency of empowerment and the context refers to the essence of equitable act between universal indexes and “localization of context-specific indexes” (Malhotra, 2002, p. 16).

Hashemi and Schuler assert that “initial groundwork through qualitative and exploratory methods, conceptual analysis, and stakeholder consensus through participatory processes” are critical to reinvent variables that measure empowerment in a specific country (as cited in Malhotra, 2002, p.16).

Actually, based on how programs and projects and NGOs and government policies define the empowerment, there are different ways of measurement. Nevertheless, there are main indexes that are common among feminist scholars. To illustrate, UNDP adopted the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) as the “global comparison” for women’s empowerment. GEM ‘s main focus is based on “economic power” and political participation.

According to GEM indexes, these dimensions (economic and political dimensions) are necessary to monitor any changes in women's empowerment. Gender Empowerment Measurement is constituted by three dimensions; (1) the proportion of women's participation in national parliaments. (2) the percentage of women in strategic and professional positions. (3) "the female share of income" in the society (Hanny Cueva Beteta, 2006).

In addition, it has emerged many critiques on GEM's limitations. As Chambers and Wieringa (2003) identify these limitations and developed "the women's empowerment matrix. This matrix reflects the "absent spheres of GEM", six spheres; "physical, socio-cultural, religious, political, legal, and economic" and six levels for measuring empowerment; individuals, household, community, state, region and global.

There are many identifications for women's empowerment measuring index because there are different conceptualizations and definitions for empowerment. Moreover, each dimension of empowerment has different indexes to measure of empowerment. For example, economic empowerment has common indexes that attempt to measure women's economic achievements and recourses and social, political, psychological dimensions have different specific indexes. Additionally, each dimension of empowerment has particular levels of actualization. In other words, every dimension of empowerment needs specific indexes to measure that in three different level; personal, relational and environmental levels.

It is important to note that all the indexes for empowerment dimensions should be examined in their specific contexts. From the feminist perspective, there are significant differences in practice and meaning among societies. According to Kabeer (1999), there are no one universal indexes for measuring empowerment, as she emphasizes the culture of the societies translate indexes in different meanings. To illustrate how indexes maybe have different implications in different contexts, there are many examples in literature (Kabeer, 1999; Shaheed, 2013). Cultural and social structures

that women are lived in, interpret the indexes in different ways. Even the ordinary index like the mobility that considers the women's ability to move freely in the public sphere, does not demonstrate the women's empowerment levels necessarily (Kabeer, 1999).

Eventually, the comprehensive indexes for women's empowerment measurement need three important characteristics (1) the empowerment indexes should be chosen consider to the context that the target group lives. (2) the empowerment' real measurement will be actualized when each dimension of empowerment assesses by its particular indexes. That means empowerment have composite indexes. (3) to measuring empowerment truly, we need cross-checked to ensure that the indexes monitor the women's empowerment in society.

This study recognizes the concept of empowerment as a context-specific concept. From this point, the study adopts Oxfam (2017) "composite index" of empowerment to measuring the empowerment. As composite index Oxfam compasses "wide range of empowerment and issues" (M. Kabir, 2004, p. 76). Oxfam reflects the improving common approaches on the concept of empowerment.

Among all expanded literature that attempt to operational empowerment, Oxfam's framework encompasses almost all common features of approaches. Concisely, this index represents the empowerment as multi-dimensional that has different degrees of impacts on women's lives. Additionally, since empowerment is contextual concept, this study adopted Oxfam because it can be used in Turkey as a specific context. It is significant characteristic of Oxfam that represents the women's agencies and their daily lives experiences and their expressions as the reference point that certainly is the closest approach to feminist perspective on the empowerment process.

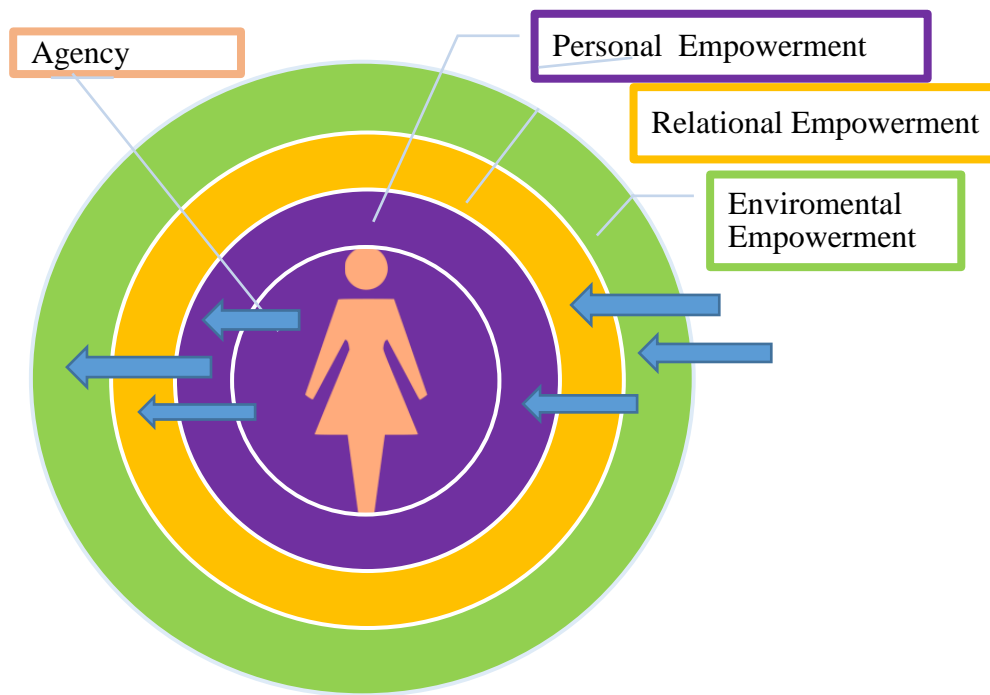


Figure 1: Women's Empowerment Index Framework Source: OXFAM GB 2017:6

#### 2.4. Women's NGOs in Turkey: Standing up by Women's Empowerment Projects

From the feminist standpoint, the empowerment process is not just about individual action. It is related to "collective" forms of action by women that "emerge largely from activist literature" (Sen, 1993, 78). Despite traditional development discourses that see the concept of empowerment as "individual rather than collective process", (Oxaal& Baden, 1997, 26) feminist understanding of empowerment and feminist activism emphasize on the "co-operation to challenge power structure" (Oxaal& Baden, 1997, 144).

Women's NGOs as the most important parts of civil society that take the responsibility of challenging women's situations, use the women's empowerment projects as a tool to change women's status in a patriarchal society (Oxaal & Baden, 1997). In this section, the thesis reviews the women's NGOs' effects and women's empowerment

projects through the empowerment literature. Omen's NGOs in Turkey: Standing up by women's empowerment projects.

#### **2.4.1. Women's NGOs and Feminist Activism**

In the last two decades women's NGOs have become part of women's lives. Based on how NGOs identify women based on their social context, NGOs involve with different aspects of women's issues. Feminism have ambiguations and unsustainable relation with women's NGOs. However, feminists criticize women's NGOs from different aspects, obviously, women's NGOs are assumed as one of the significant facilitators for struggle with patriarchal society by feminist activists.

According to Bernal and Grewal, "feminism as a social movement seems less visible than plethora of NGOs" (2014, p. 302). In this vein, Sabine Lang (1997) conceptualizes the phrase of "the NGOization of feminism" to illustrate the proliferation of NGOs and its impact on feminism as a social movement (Lang, 1997, p. 61). Feminist scholars attempt to go beyond the "celebratory perspective" on NGOs and take an "analytical stance" on women's NGOs after 1990s (Bernal & Grewal, 2014, p. 305).

According to Lang, the NGOization of civil society encompasses the transformation of NGOs "toward professionalized, and bureaucratized collective action" (as cited in Bernal & Grewal, 2014, p. 305).

The main question of many feminist scholars' attempts to answer is, what are the effects of this reconstructing on feminism and women's lives. It is crucial to understand that NGOization cannot counts without seeing as the consequences of Globalization and Neo-liberalization of the societies as Lang (2014, p. 97) asserts. Neo-liberalization process of societies promotes NGOs as best actors to accomplish welfare as an ultimate goal (Jackson, 2005, p. 169). Accordingly, the expansion of the

women's NGOs in the last decades should be understood within comprehensive picture of the concepts of Globalization and Neo-liberalization.

Just like women, women's NGOs are not homogenous organizations. Women's diversities shape the wide spread of NGOs with different goals. Notably, these differences among women's NGOs independent to the state and donors and the resources of NGOs to make a real their projects. According to Bernal and Grewal, women's NGOs activities "can be disparate, piecemeal, and often rivalrous" (2014, p. 309). Moreover, women's NGOs based on their ideological point of views, work without coordination even in contradictory ways. The main arena that this fierce contest appears is where the limited budgets of donors are targeted.

Feminism continues its exitance among Neo-liberal societies and the proliferations of women's NGOs. There are divergent approaches while some feminists find the NGOs "helpful" like Sonia Alvarez (1999), others like S. Lang sees as factor for more "radical possibilities" (Lang, 1997).

The relationship between NGOs and feminism by scholars are not seen in the same way. while some feminists indicate women's NGOs as procedures of development and impact women's lives in the positive way and create a space to accomplish women's voices by grassroots organizations (Bhatia, 2000; Fisher, 2003) others represent women's NGOs as that part of the civil society that oppositely acts to the state (Clark ,1998) and see the NGOs as the consequences of Neo-liberalism and globalization process of the societies (Bernal & Grewal, 2014).In other words, by decreasing the local government the NGOs, reshape a "contemporary neo-liberal aid regime" (Schuller, 2009, p. 84)

Actually, women's NGOs are just held accountable for reporting the spending of the budgets by their project's donors (Bernal & Grewal, 2014). Although, some scholars

emphasize on the necessity of the regulation of women 'NGOs by the state (Strathearn, 2000), many feminists do not promote that.

Additionally, there are complex relationship between the state and women's NGOs. This complicated partnership aims to find a solution for "gender issues" alongside other issues such as "class, race, environment, health, and religion issues" (Bernal & Grewal, 2014, p. 305). Feminism are normalized and professionalized by women's NGOs and feminist activities can be accepted by the state through the bureaucratic process" (Bernal & Grewal, 2014). In addition, Bernal and Grewal in the attempting to theorize the NGOs asserts that by regulation process, states form the organizations "in way that blur the meaning of "non-governmental" and they emphasize that clearly we cannot analyze NGOs without the state's impact. In some context even, NGOs are more powerful than the state (Alvarez, 1999). The concept of "state effect" refers to the reproducing the state by NGOs that used by Timothy Mitchell (1999).

Eventually, NGOs act more as partners with the state particularly in national level. Since the state is assumed the main national donor for NGOs, the most NGOs act internationally with the state. In this regard, it seems the feature of "non-governmental" is often just manipulated concept for NGOs. Because many NGOs are not separate the state in their context.

NGOs have various characteristics to the degree that the categorizing of them is not easy. Noteworthy, the main categorization of NGOs can be their power relations and hierarchy of power among them. Furthermore, the competition between different types of NGOs, lie on their achievements to funds for their projects. Obviously, GONGO organization and international non-profitable organizations access to more resources.

Feminist activism in the general meaning live within women's NGOs and transform the organizations and at the same its impacted by NGOs. According to Lang (1997),

rather than advocacy and political participation has transformed to women's NGOs activities. Accordingly, women's NGOs provide a space for states' claims about engagement with women's issues and promote the state's activities for women based on how identify women in the society.

Notably, women's NGOs pave the way for the women that are seeking a job. There is broad space for women in the women's NGOs that at least empower these parts of women's population in the patriarchal society. The women's NGOs in Turkey are played important role on women's activist's positions in the civil society arenas (Keysan, 2016, p. 155). Keysan (2016) respond the question of "how women's NGOs can contribute the field of women in civil society" by her comprehensive research that focus on women's activists' voices in different NGOs in Turkey.

It is obvious that the civil society of Turkey has been impacted by neoliberalist policies of the state after 1980s. But as a result of the bargaining of women's NGOs with the state, we can observe two main outcomes that reflects this relationship (Keysan, 2016, p. 155). In the first place, the stable formats of projects that are required by donors restricts the actions and goals of women NGOs and actually they are suppressed by the donors as asserted by Ketola (as cited in Keysan, 2016, p. 155). In the second place, the donors and financial sources are connected to political parties and governments, therefore, the government's tasks and responsibilities with these funds shape the women's NGOs (Keysan, 2016, p. 156).

Under the impacts of globalization, women's NGOs do not tend to reproduce "the alternative discourses" to criticize the state rather than they follow the precedencies of the donors or government (Keysan, 2016, p.179). In other words, rather than changing their situations, women focus on implementation of the empowerment projects that are improved women's situations. This discussion also overlaps with a concept called "the feminism project" by Bora and Gonul (2002, p. 8-9).



According to Bektaş (2014), NGOs have confronted with different problems that influence their approaches. Bektaş scrutinizes these problems as (1) the NGOs often restrict themselves with their ideologies. (2) the NGOs are accounted as the civil society by themselves so they do not attempt to contribute to the civil society. Generally, the NGOs are defined themselves as natural part of the civil society. (3) NGOs do not identify their goals and missions clearly and they do not have any idea that how they can be connected with different parts of society (Gumus, 2010). (4) NGOs usually have informal relations with the state that could be damage the volunteer's organizations. (5) there is the strong competition among NGOs they run for restricted financial funds. (6) there is no collaboration and experiments sharing among NGOs (7) generally NGOs pursue the requirements and financial needs that means they rarely say no to the donors of projects. (8) the relationships and corporation between the state and NGOs could be assumed naturally but it does not mean that the NGOs could act as corroborant or speaker of the state and its policies (Bektaş, 2014, p. 60).

#### **2.4.2. Women's Empowerment Projects**

Women's projects in Turkey are not distinct from other projects that are implemented throughout the world conceptually. The main concepts of all these projects consist; welfare, equality, decreasing poverty, efficiency and empowerment. These main concepts are negotiated by international women's movement. To illustrate, after 1970s that women's projects aims to achieve equality between women and men, women's empowerment becomes the most popular aim among women's projects at 1980s and 1990s (Kümbetoğlu, 2002, p. 160).

According to Kümbetoğlu (2002, p. 159), through the 1970s and 1980s, women's empowerment projects in Turkey, entail more expended target groups and at the beginning of 1990s women's empowerment projects encompass more specific target groups of women. Women's empowerment projects count as essential building blocks for women NGOs in Turkey to sustain. Through the years the particular aims of the

women's projects have changed, for example while in 1980s the health in women's lives was central aim of the projects, education and equal economic opportunities in 1990s was the main focuses of the projects (Kümbetoğlu, 2002, p. 163)

Kümbetoğlu clarifies the main issues of women's project that are implemented by women's NGOs respectively as (1) failing at recognizing the real needs of women before project's implementations (2) lacking of the pilot projects particularly in the fields (3) the lack of integration between the results of projects and the context of women's projects and (4) the evaluation of the results are not conducted (Kümbetoğlu, 2002, p. 169).

Although, the proliferations of women's projects by NGOs is remarkable these years among women's NGOs, but obviously these projects cannot transform the women's lives. Almost all the women's projects entail raise- awareness meetings, the participated women do not internalize this information and the raise-awareness seminars cannot influence women's everyday lives.

According to Kümbetoğlu, the micro projects that have particular target group with active participations through the project process achieve the apparent consequences. The interactions between participations and project's coordinators are the most important element about accomplishing to aims of the projects. Eventually, macro projects cannot touch women's lives in a meaning full way.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **FIELD RESEARCH**

#### **3.1. The Research Question and Methods of the Study**

The third chapter begins with the methodological approaches of the study, focusing on the main feminist methodological perspective. The qualitative method of the study is structured as in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews are conducted with two different groups including project coordinators, project assistants, and project participants.

Besides, in order to give a comprehensive understanding on the method of the study, operational keywords such as empowerment, female agency, and women's empowerment projects are covered. In the next section, the sample of the study and the participant profiles of this study are introduced.

As the sample of the study encompasses different groups of women, NGOs, and projects, this section provides brief information on women's NGOs and the projects that are conducted separately. Also, it highlights the reasoning behind the diversity of the sampling in this study. Finally, the methodological limitations of the study are emphasized.

This thesis aims to understand women's empowerment process and dimensions in Turkey. In this vein, from feminist perspective, the study adopts women's expressions and their understandings of empowerment as key references and points to evaluate the

concept of empowerment. This study adopts the empowerment as a multi-dimensional concept and also, a process that has happened among social and cultural context of the societies.

From feminist standpoint, the study chooses eight different women's empowerment projects which were implemented between 2014-2018 by women's NGOs in Ankara. The qualitative research methodology and in-depth interviews has been conducted. In addition, to understand the dynamics of the women empowerment projects, the study interviews both side of the empowerment process: the project coordinators as well as projects assistants and on the other side, the women who have participated in these projects. The study chooses ideologically different NGOs that aim to empower women from their particular perspective. These ideological differences among NGOs and projects provide a broad viewpoint. The access to participants of the projects were done by project coordinators of the NGOs, and this is an important methodological limitation for the study.

### **3.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study**

In terms of methodological approach, this study adopts the feminist perspective methodology. This methodology has been developed as a criticism of the gender blind and androcentric approaches of mainstream methodology and its male-dominated knowledge, which makes women invisible and exclusive. In other terms, feminist research discloses women's invisible and exclusive experiences.

In feminist studies, the issue rises from the perspectives of women's experiences, and these experiences are used as significant indicators of reality. This thesis is shaped by feminist perspective and it methodologically follows the qualitative research method, semi-structured and in-depth interviews.

Based on the feminist perspective, this thesis uses the women's experiences in their everyday lives as the major source of investigation on women's empowerment. Therefore, this thesis is written according to Post-Modernist approach as a paradigmatic position.

As it is discussed in the second chapter of the study, the evaluation of empowerment has been implemented by various methodological approaches and indicators in the literature. Based on how the concept of empowerment is identified, various indicators are created by scholars. Through this study, empowerment is identified as a contextual, dynamic and relational concept, and it refers to the process of changes. Hence, the study seeks dynamic and context-based indicators that can reflect the main directions of changes in women's lives rather than accurate measurements.

Obviously, the measurement of women's empowerment as a qualitative concept requires qualitative research methods. This research is conducted by women participants of empowerment projects and the project coordinators or assistances explanations. Since this study identifies the concept of empowerment as a multi-dimensional process that is based on women's agencies, the study improves indicators in three different levels of women's lives.

The research is mainly focused on the priority of women's socio-cultural empowerment under women's empowerment projects efforts by NGOs in Turkey. Among all dimensions of the concept, such as economic, socio-cultural, familial-interpersonal, legal, political and psychological, this study attempts to assess the socio-cultural dimension of women's empowerment in Turkey. These dimensions are very extended and every dimension encompasses the broad range of sub-domains. The "socio-cultural" dimension deals with range of sub-domains that have different indicators. In addition, socio-cultural dimension is operationalized consider to indicators in three different level of empowerment.

The study adopts OXFAM GB's guidance to develop an approach for measuring women's empowerment (OXFAM GB, 2017). In addition to that, the concept of empowerment is a "hard-to-measure" concept. OXFAM seeks instruments that can be adopted for showing the real impacts of its programs. In order to identify which projects have contributed to women's empowerment, the study chooses a "composite and context-based" index. The context-specific index develops a multi-dimensional and flexible index to measure empowerment.

The key reason to choose this view is that OXFAM suggests multi-dimensional empowerment, and it is based on women's agencies rather than just objective results of the projects. In this point of view, as OXFAM classifies, the study evaluates the women's empowerment process in three different levels that reflect the different levels of the impacts of women's projects in Turkey. While some projects are mega projects that aim macro results with huge budgets, others aim micro printouts and impacts on the process of women's empowerment.

In this regard, the empowerment in three levels is evaluated in this investigation as "environmental, relational and personal levels". It is important to highlight that changes at a personal level take place within the person and changes at a relational level take place "in the relationships and power relations within the women's surrounding network" that reflects the changes within the household and within the communities. (OXFAM, 2017). Finally, changes in environmental level can be called formal changes in "the border context" with changes in social norms that impact women's lives. (OXFAM, 2017). Moreover, there are interactions between all levels of empowerment. In other words, any changes in any level of empowerment involve other levels of empowerment directly or indirectly. (OXFAM, 2017).

Additionally, the concept of empowerment is operationalized to evaluate the three different understandings of power from the feminist perspective; *power-within* that assesses individual empowerment, *power-with* that evaluates collective empowerment

and *power-to* that indicates political outcomes that are achieved collectively. To put it differently, OXFAM indexes on women's empowerment evaluation overlaps the main dimensions of power relations.

Table 2. Women's Empowerment Index

PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Confidence</li> <li>• Self-Esteem</li> <li>• Individual Knowledge</li> <li>• Opinions and Attitudes on Women's Economic Role</li> <li>• Personal Autonomy</li> <li>• Acceptability of Gender-Based Violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influencing and community</li> <li>• Control over household assets</li> <li>• Involvement in household decision making</li> <li>• Independent income</li> <li>• Control over time</li> <li>• Political participation</li> <li>• Social capital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to services and resources</li> <li>• Ability to influence at political level</li> <li>• Break stereotypes</li> <li>• Advocate change for other women</li> </ul>

*Note: Reprinted from A 'How To' Guide to Measuring Women's Empowerment, by S. Lombardini, K. Bowman & R. Garwood. Retrieved from <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620271/gt-measuring-womens-empowerment-250517-en.pdf?sequence=4> [Accessed 17 Aug. 2019].*

Furthermore, this study analyzes the women's empowerment projects in accordance with the power relations between participants and coordinators and donors of the projects. The analysis is backed by various documentation including project documents and reports, internet websites, project videos, and the observations of the researcher.

There are two different semi-structured interview questions in the study. The former goes for the project coordinators and the latter is for the participants of the projects. The first type of interviews is conducted to analyze the general structure of projects,

women NGOs and public institutions' approaches and perceptions on the concept of empowerment.

The second group of interviews is conducted to understand the perspectives of project participants on women's agencies' side and reflect their opinion as an active agency. In other words, this study attempts to reveal the position of participants in women empowerment projects, and to analyze their views on women NGOs and public institutions.

Both groups of interviewees are equally reluctant to cooperate. The first group, participant women, did so because they thought the interviewer was part of the project, the second group, project coordinators and assistants, felt the negative assessment of the project would undermine the reputation of their NGOs.

Accordingly, all interviews occur more than once. Especially, through the first meetings, the researcher makes a trustworthy connection with the interviewees so that they would share their real opinion during the interview. Also, since empowerment is a contextual process, the interviews occur based on women's personal stories and they are totally free to explain their stories, feelings, and interpretations throughout the process of the projects.

### **3.2.1. Empowerment**

In this study, the concept of empowerment is considered as a contextual process of changes through women's lives. The concept of women's empowerment is a multi-dimensional and dynamic concept that has three different levels; personal, relational and environmental levels. All levels of empowerment are vital parts of women's empowerment. However, women can only be empowered by themselves and external factors act as facilitators of the empowerment process.



### **3.2.2. Female Agency**

A female agency is the ability of a woman to act. This study adopts female agency as the crux of women's empowerment projects. Noteworthy, the concept of agency refers to "acting against the constraining structures and norms" in the patriarchal society. Correspondingly, the agency is not separated from collective action.

### **3.2.3. Women's NGOs**

Women's NGOs refer to non-profit organizations as parts of the civil society that focuses on women's issues specifically. They have complex relationships with the state and they are not always opposed to the state. Women's NGOs identify women's situation in the society, and seek solutions for women's issues.

### **3.2.4. Women's Empowerment Projects**

In order to achieve their goals about women's issues, women's NGOs apply for different international or national development programs so that they can provide the transaction costs of their projects. Having different deadlines for implementing the projects, women's projects particularly aim to resolve women's issues. While some are regarded as long-time projects, which last more than one year, others are implemented as short-time projects that aim to resolve one or two simple goals on women's issues.

## **3.3. The Design of Field Study**

This study is based on the selection of five ideologically distinct NGOs located in Ankara. The activities and visions of these institutions were examined comprehensively in order to understand their ideological stances. The NGO leaders and European Office coordinators of public institutions were interviewed for gaining insight into the projects implemented by them and grasping their visions completely. The information is mainly asked for the projects carried out between 2014 and 2018

due to the framework of this study. The thought and ideas of NGO leaders are especially significant for this examination since the study is based on a purposive sampling drawn from the opinions of the leaders. So, the projects ascribed significance among others by NGO leaders were selected as the sample of the study and the interviews conducted with the coordinators of these projects.

Interviews with eight different project coordinators were carried out and these interviews shaped preliminary data collection of the study. These semi-structured interviews encompassed their views on their NGOs, the main characteristics of the projects that they coordinated and their identification of women's empowerment. The interviews with project coordinators were generally carried out second and third times in order to gain their trust and also learning their real ideas deeply. Their trust and deep knowledge of interviews were gained only after second interviews. Also, the names of project participants were to be learned from these interviews. Yet, a significant challenge and limitation for the study was that the interviewees tried to govern the direction of the study by selecting whom to interview and how to interview. To avoid biased suggestions of them, their suggestions were not accepted and the selection of the participants was conducted randomly. The interviews were carried out by randomly selected eight women. Similar to the former interviews, the trust could only be gained after second interviews with the participants. So, the interviews were conducted more than one time.

### **3.3.1. The Research Methods and Data Collection**

This study adopts eight women's empowerment projects from five different NGOs in Ankara that are implemented between 2014 and 2018. The common characteristics of all projects, which are selected for the analysis, aim to empower women in Turkey between 2014 and 2018.

At the beginning of the investigation, the main goal has been to interview five women from every project. However, during the fieldwork, there has been an unexpected

finding that many participants of the women empowerment projects are not visible. In other words, the participants are not followed up during the post-implementation of the project. Because information access on the projects is so limited, this study had to choose the smaller sample. Eventually, it analyzed eight projects from five ideologically different NGOs.

Another point is that in some projects, which will be described in this chapter, project coordinators bounded an interview with some women and they channeled the researcher towards specific participations for interviews. Besides this, the thesis aimed to do its best to reach all the women, turn this bias, and stick a scientific way to understand how the empowerment projects are done in Turkey. Finally, this thesis interviews at least one participant, one project coordinator and a project assistant from each project. The study was able to interview with 16 women. These interviews were based on the “personal life experiences of women” that participated in empowerment projects.

The in-depth interviews are conducted with two different groups of respondents. The first group is the experts, project coordinators and project assistants that are employed in NGOs or the state institutions as EU project offices. The second group is the women who participate in the women's empowerment projects.

Since women empowerment projects in Turkey are carried out by coordinators and their assistants, it is assumed that interviews will enlighten the process of the projects and identify their attitude about the concept of empowerment and women's issues in Turkey. It is also assumed that interviews with the participants will highlight the real problems, struggles of women in their daily life and the impact of the women empowerment projects on their life. To measure women's empowerment, this thesis conducts interviews with two different groups of women in relation to the selected projects. In this section, the profiles of both groups are presented separately.

### 3.3.2. The Profile of The Sample

#### 3.3.2.1. The Profile of the Experts

Table 3. The Profile of the Experts

Age	Education Level	Position on the NGOs or Public Institution	Marital Status
29	Bachelor's degree	T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies <i>Project Assistant</i>	Single
40	-	T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies <i>EU Office Manager and Project Coordinator</i>	Single
31	Graduate Student	1.Yenimahalle Municipality International Office <i>Project Coordinator</i> 2.The Humanly Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER) <i>Chairwoman and Project Coordinator</i>	Married
41	Graduate	The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Turkey Representative <i>Project Coordinator</i>	Married
40	Bachelor's degree	Yenimahalle Municipality International Office <i>Project Coordinator</i>	Married
62	Bachelor's degree	The Association of Turkish Women <i>Chairwoman and Project Coordinator</i>	Married
59	Bachelor's degree	The Capital Women Platform Associations <i>Chairwomen and Project Coordinator</i>	Single
34	Bachelor's degree	The Association of Turkish Women <i>Project Coordinator</i>	Single

### 3.3.2.2. The Profile of the Participants

Table 4. The Profile of the Participants

Age	Education level	Marital Status	Employment Status
41	Graduate	Married	Teacher
35	Graduate	Married	Public Officer
40	Primary School	Single	Public Officer
23	Undergraduate student	Single	Waitress Part-Time
22	Bachelor's degree	Single	Unemployed
25	Graduate	Single	Unemployed
20	Undergraduate student	Single	Unemployed
37	Bachelor's degree	Married	Private Sector

### 3.3.2.3. The Women's NGOs

In this study, ideologically five different women empowerment organizations in Turkey are investigated. Even if these organizations are different in legal terms and they belong to different political approaches in the society, the women empowerment projects and activities for all five kinds of organizations intersect in practice and women's general conditions and issues in Turkey have similar features.

It is interesting to know that all NGO and public institutions selected in the study, represent different categories among civil society in Turkey. Through the sample selection, the study tries to include all categories to understand the differences and similarities among them as well as their legal status, their access to cultural, economic, political capital, their area of expertise, their self- identification and their ways to actualization based on their visions and missions.

The process of the NGOs and public institution selection is not easy because many women's NGOs in Turkey are not active or they cannot reach funds at the national level for their projects because of their political attitudes against authority. To illustrate, according to Göknıl, the president of "Kadın Başkent Platformu Derneği", they could have not reached any funds for their projects since 2014.

As mentioned above, to support the argument, this thesis tries to show the diversity between five NGOs that encompasses the sample.

- The Association of Turkish Women (Türk Kadın Birliği)
- The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Turkey
- Yenimahalle Municipality International Office (Yenimahalle Belediyesi AB Ofisi)
- The Humanly Life and Democratic Society Association (İYADER)
- T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies (AileBakanlığı Ankara İl Müdürlüğü AB Ofisi)

### 3.3.2.4. The Projects

In this section, the selected sample projects are analyzed from different aspects such as their donors, sponsors, their budgets, implementing levels, periods, objections or risks during the process, their main aims, and outcomes.

Table 5. Turkish Women's Union projects

TURKISH WOMEN ' S UNION	<p><b>The SEDAV Dissemination Project (<i>SEDAV ve İstanbul Sözleşmesi Yaygınlaştırma Projesi</i>)</b>  <b>Project Coordinator:</b> Sema Kendirci Uğurman  <b>Project Assistant:</b> Zeynep Göknıl Şenol  <b>Project Partners:</b> UN Women, EU  <b>Target Group:</b> Women living in Turkey  <b>Date:</b> Ankara, 2018</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Disseminating İstanbul agreement and SEDAV report.</p>
	<p><b>The My Story Project (<i>'Benim Hikayem' Projesi</i>)</b>  <b>Project Coordinator:</b> Sevnâ Somuncuoğlu  <b>Project Assistant:</b> Aslı Cihan  <b>Project Partners:</b> Norwegian Embassy in Turkey  <b>Target Group:</b> Women who made marriage migration in Kulu region  <b>Date:</b> Konya, 2015-2016</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Collecting the life stories and experiences of women who experience the destructive effects of the migration via marriage, and sharing the stories with more women. Focusing on gathering information about their family structures, socio-economic status, opinions about marriage and migration.</p>

Table 6. The Fredrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

<b>THE FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG (FES)</b>	<p><b>The Feminist Publishing Camp (<i>Feminist Yayıncılık Kampı</i>)</b></p> <p><b>Project Coordinator:</b> Pınar Ecevitoğlu</p> <p><b>Project Assistant:</b> Fatma Arslan</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> The March of Women in Turkey organization and FES Turkey</p> <p><b>Target Group:</b> 35 women who intend to write and publish their ideas on women's issues in Turkey</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Ankara, 2018</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Contributing to the feminist movement in Turkey by writing, publishing and creating a bridge between practice and theory in feminism in Turkey.</p>
---	--

Table 7. T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies Project

<b>T. C. ANKARA PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL POLICIES</b>	<p><b>Empowerwoment:</b> The Successful Entrepreneurial Empowerment for Women in Start-up Business (<i>İş Hayatında Yeni Atılan ve İş Kurma Başlangıcında Olan Kadınlar İçin Girişimcilikte Başarıya Güçlendirme</i>)</p> <p><b>Project Coordinator:</b> İkbâl Kahraman</p> <p><b>Project Assistant:</b> Beyza Turdu</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> The Government of Turkey, Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies, AsociatiaPentru (Romania), FH Joanneum Gesellschaft (Austria), Fondazione RİSORİA Donna (Italy), Gazi Üniversitesi (The Women's Studies), IEBA (PORTUGAL), Association M3 - MCube (France), Working with Europe treballantamb Europe (Spain), ERASMUS PLUS EU</p> <p><b>Target Group:</b> First group consists of women entrepreneurs who have experience for 1-3 years. In the second group, there are experienced and successful women entrepreneurs who inspire the new bees and provide mentorship services. The third group is composed of the local support ecosystems and entrepreneurial pioneers.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Ankara, 2016-2018</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Empowering entrepreneurial women to create such eco-systems themselves in support of council dating and expanding their business. Creating a virtual platform, publishing a “guidance and support service”, “powering my new business”, “women’s voices encompass video interviews with startup women”, “policy recommendations paper”.</p>
--	--



Table 8. The Humane Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE HUMANE LIFE AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY ASSOCIATION</b> (IYADER)</p>	<p><b>IYA-GENDER (<i>IYAgenderAktivist</i>)</b>  <b>Project Coordinator:</b> MerveŞimşek  <b>Project Partners:</b> The U.S. Embassy in Turkey  <b>Target Group:</b> 16 men and women who studied Sociology, Psychology, Law, and Social Policy, and work voluntarily in NGOs  <b>Date:</b> Ankara, 2018</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Growing experts, trainers, and activists by holding workshops about gender roles so that they can establish workshops for 13-18 years old students around the gender roles and their effects on human life.</p>
	<p><b>The Workshop of Women who are Sheltered in Life (<i>Yaşama Sığınan Kadınlar Çalıştayı</i>)</b>  <b>Project Coordinator:</b> Merve Şimşek  <b>Project Assistant:</b> Mehmet Burak Demircan  <b>Project Partners:</b> SivilDüşün EU Program  <b>Target Group:</b> 25 representatives from institutions and NGOs which work on women's rights  <b>Date:</b> Ankara, 2016</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Determining the items they could improve by examining the existing legislation in order to be able to a draft law on the rights of women to leave their shelters.</p>

Table 9. Yenimahalle Municipality International Relationships and Eu Office

YENİMAHALLE MUNICIPALITY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND EU OFFICE	<p><b>The Model for Development of Socio-Economic support System for Female Victims of Domestic Violence (<i>Şiddet Mağduru Kadınların Sosyo-Ekonomik Destek Sistemleri Geliştirme Modeli</i>)</b></p> <p><b>Project Coordinator:</b> Merve Şimşek</p> <p><b>Project Assistant:</b> Dicle Maybek</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Hacettepe University, Gazi University, International Labor Organization (ILO) and Ministry of family, and labor and social services of the republic of turkey (IKG PRO)</p> <p><b>Target Group:</b> 50 women, who were subject to domestic violence, living in shelters as officially registered.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Ankara, 2016-2017</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Becoming a role model for the development of female victims of domestic violence, ensuring the access of women to the labor market by supporting their social compliance by protecting their human rights and increasing their employability.</p> <hr/> <p><b>PANDORA - Discovering European opportunities for Female Entrepreneurship</b></p> <p><b>Project Coordinator:</b> Zeren İşsevenler</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> EU - Erasmus Plus: Autokreacja Foundation – Warsaw, Poland (partner), Human Rights Youth Organization - Palermo, Italy (lead organization), The Ubele Initiative, London, UK (partner), Yenimahalle Municipality – Ankara, Turkey (partner)</p> <p><b>Target Group:</b> Young educators who want to know more about the field of adult education, and women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods of large cities and migrants</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Ankara, 2017</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Strengthening the role of women by discovering new opportunities for female entrepreneurship. Training educators with a specific focus on adult education, building a training program for disadvantaged women, and creating a greater awareness of the capabilities, skills, and opportunities, which can be used to “create cooperatives, social enterprises or other economic initiatives run by women”. The main aim of the project is to create a space for women who need to know more about computers, language, and business education.</p>
--	--

### **3.4. Understanding Women's Empowerment from a Feminist Perspective**

This thesis adopts a feminist methodological perspective for evaluating women's empowerment projects in Turkey that are implemented by Women NGOs and Public Institutions. In relation to this, qualitative research is selected as a method of analysis and in-depth interviews are conducted as tools of this research. Thus, women's empowerment projects are analyzed in terms of the power relations between project participants, coordinators and donors.

Regarding the analysis of women empowerment projects in Turkey, this study uses OXFAM GB (2017) empowerment indexes that represent empowerment in three levels: personal, relational, environmental. Following OXFAM GB (2017) principles, this study chooses a "composite and context-based" index for the reason that the context-specific index has flexible and multi-dimensional characteristics for measuring empowerment.

Despite the fact that there is not an exact way of evaluating empowerment, this study emphasizes "personal empowerment" as a more effective way among three levels of empowerment. By attempting to understand women's empowerment at personal level, this thesis elaborates and analyzes the inter-relational nature of different empowerment levels.

First of all, the personal level is mainly related to women's personal practices, self-identity, self-development, sense of agency, opinions, and knowledge. Thus, the questions related to personal capacities, desires and tendencies of participants, their thoughts related to the male violence, the major decisions in the lives of participants, their daily routines and practices were asked in the subset of the personal level. The relational level is associated with women's relationships embedded in the community, control and decision on the household level, political participation, social capital, and economic independence. Therefore, the questions which are designed to learn the political and social affiliations of participants, their economic capacities and their

opinions about the projects were asked at this level. Lastly, the environmental level is linked with women's resources, their influential capacities, and opinions on the wider level. Hence, the questions related to their ideas about the wider community in which they live and their ideas related to women's movement in general were asked on the environmental level.

Furthermore, the question asked to the experts can be categorized in a similar fashion. They include three categories. The first category is related to NGOs and the question concerning their vision, aims, and participants, were asked in this category. The second category is linked with the projects and the questions related to the project's duration, benefits, distinctiveness, and financiers were asked in this section. The last category concerns their opinions on the women's conditions and the question linked to their thoughts on women's movements, women empowerment and the condition in Turkey were asked at this level.

### **3.5. The Limitations of the Research**

The main objective of the study in the methodological level was the difficulty in achieving the real information about the projects. "The power of knowledge" is on the project coordinators and their managers in NGOs and public institutions. Furthermore, the researcher had to convince them to allow the accessibility for information that the study needs and being ensured about this information is the real data of the projects.

As the second methodological concern, the researcher had to state her point of view without voluntarily enforcing the participants to share their views during the interviews.

As the third point, when the participants assume that the research is done by the same NGOs or public institutions often, they speak so reservedly. In this regard, informal relations are played an important role in contacting the participants and taking sincere

answers from them. The participant feels more secure to answer the question if the researcher specified that she has not any connection with Project coordinators and NGO managers.

It is important to note that especially in the interviews with the participants of the projects, the time spent with them also explained their subjective positions in their families, their works, in economy, psychological, social, political and organizational dimensions. The main methodological limitation of this thesis is the NGOs and the public institutions that act as the dominated social groups that epistemologically are in superior position. In other words, the revealing the social reality is depended on these NGOs and public institutions.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FROM EXPERTS' VIEWS IN TURKEY**

#### **4.1. Evaluating Women's Situations in Turkey**

This thesis aims to assess women's empowerment projects in Turkey that have been implemented by women's NGOs through 2014-2018 in Ankara. This assessment should have a complementary side that indicates how civil society activists identified women's situations and the impacts of women's empowerment projects on women's lives. This chapter of thesis clarifies how the women's empowerment projects coordinators and an assisting approach on empowerment does not impact the women's empowerment projects directly. Lastly, the national donors, international donors and the government have made determining decisions throughout the projects. However, women's NGOs and public institutions have different visions and missions for women's empowerment, but they practically follow financial donors' interests and their approaches on the concept.

This chapter reviews eight project coordinators and assistances from five ideologically different women's NGOs in Turkey. Through the semi-structured interviews, it is obvious they should be accounted as important parts of the women's empowerment projects. Every project, even with inefficient effects on its participants' lives, could easily be assessed as a significant experiment in terms of project coordination or assistance. The project coordinators and assistances improve socio-economically through these experiments. They travel and make a strategic decision and eventually

they empower themselves by the women's empowerment projects. Obviously, without listening to their voices, the assessments of these projects will be inefficient.

According to interviews with project coordinator and assistants, women in Turkey have not control over their lives as they should freely, equally, without being exposed to any kind of violence. All the experts emphasize on the gap between legal rights and implementations of the laws. In other words, they argue civil society in Turkey and NGOs should be improved in other dimensions of empowerment as opposed to legal dimension of empowerment.

The interviews with project coordinators and assistants indicate that all projects experts of women's NGOs could be accounted as masters of gender and women's issues in Turkey. In other words, preparing projects, writing projects and participating in the screening meetings of projects improve and empower women that work on the women's NGOs strongly. They follow the politics, laws seriously and they can discuss comprehensively on women's issues. The most emphasized concepts are solidarity, combating with violence against women.

*As for the social life in general, traditional gender roles can still be observed, violence against women has increased dreadfully. On the other hand, women's movement in Turkey grew stronger through the years and awareness on the women's issues especially equality and combating with violence were developed. Women show the courage to live their lives as they want to, raise their voices against violence, inequality and crises even more as compared to the past. We have serious problems however we have enough strength and hope to solve them in solidarity. (T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies, 2018).*

*Actually, in all aspects of women's lives, we can see the women's situation remain undeveloped. As far as their families allows, they can be active. I do not even speak about political life. women are the first group to get hurt financially. (The Humane Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER), 2018).*

*I believe in all aspects of life women are confronted with gender inequality. The most important problem is the male violence against women. the violence against women are increasing every day and accounting as a normal behavior in the society. The justice system and government avoid seeing it as a problem in the society. Above all, these problems, I believe women's movement in Turkey are so strong and will be improved more than the past. (The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), 2018).*

Notably, ideologically different NGOs have various identifications about women's issues. To illustrate, while some NGOs stress on the "gender inequality" or unequal rights between men and women in the justice system as the major issues of women's lives, the others emphasize on the socio-economic and implementations of the laws.

*The most important factor that make us subordinated to men is inequality. To achieve equality, we focus on the combating with inequality" (Turkish Women's Union, 2018).*

#### **4.2. The Sense of Womanhood Among Different Generations**

All the experts claim there is a significant gap between the past generations (their mother and grandmother) and them as a woman. "Access to education" there is the most emphasized difference among the generations.

*My grandmother has two daughters. She never went to primary school but her girls have graduated from university. She believes that education is an essential opportunity for women's lives, but her father did not allow her to go to school. (Yenimahalle Municipality International Relationships and EU Office, 2018).*

*I think there is a huge difference of women's experiences among me, my mother and my grandmother. The generation of my grandmother (concerning our relatives) dedicated themselves to their homes, husbands, children and other relatives. Actors in their social lives generally consist of their neighbors and relatives. They did not work; they were economically dependent on their husbands. Their level of education is low (primary school or illiterate). In my age my grandmother was married for eight years, had children and she was a*



*housewife. My mother had bachelor degree in a prestigious university, she had a job she was (is) economically independent and she was married. Even though I have bachelor degree and I work just as my mother did, there are differences between me and her. I am single. I am involved in women's movement, I am volunteering in a women's association, I try to do something for women's rights. I raise my voice when I face an inequality in every aspect of the life. I want to build a better career than I have now. The person in my life or whom I marry in the future should have the same vision as I do (T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies, 2018).*

These examples indicate that how the project coordinators and assistants understand the differentiations of being women through the time.

#### **4.3. Identification of Women's Empowerment**

According to interviews with experts, there are crucial differences between opportunities and rights for women in Turkey. All experts claim women's issues in the daily life is far from the rights and laws. They identify the patriarchal, traditional and male-dominated culture of the society of Turkey as the source of women's issues in Turkey. Another significant point that experts argue, is the lack of assessment of women's empowerment projects.

*This is a cultural problem. Patriarchy impedes women everywhere. Conservative and nationalism discourses are very widespread in society. If you want to empower women you should challenge the patriarchal society of Turkey (The Humane Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER), 2018).*

It is obvious, that women's NGOs approaches on the concept of empowerment are based to their ideologies or how they perceive women's situation in the society. There is not homogeneous empowerment concept among women's NGOs in Turkey. While some take the liberal feminism position and awareness-raising of women about their rights as a woman are identified as an example of women's empowerment, others take the far step and attempt to challenge fundamental of patriarchal structure.

*The violence against women stems from unequal power relations. Ignorance is the source of our situation as women. Inequality in all areas of life is already the point that left us powerless. The key struggle is the struggle for equality. As long as we do not ensure equality in social, political and economic spheres, we cannot say that we are empowering women. there are many NGOs in Turkey that are working on the empowerment of women, but generally every NGO chooses one of these dimensions of empowerment. In addition, the empowerment of woman goes through the existence of her in areas where the woman has disappeared” (Turkish Women's Union, 2018).*

*There are implemented many women's empowerment projects in Turkey. But I think there is no official assessment for projects. We prepare reports and evaluations after projects, but they just a report that generally show how projects are implemented. (The Humane Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER), 2018).*

*... to empower women, we need more trainings and workshops about gender roles even in the private sector, we need more trainings. By awareness-raising workshops women understand that stay at home and being a mother is not their role. They starting the challenge gender roles in their lives... (Yenimahalle Municipality International Relationships and EU Office, 2018).*

*... it is so hard to identify the concept of women's empowerment. I think empowerment projects have not concrete outcomes. That means we write a project but through the project we understand all expected outcomes are very idealist and maybe just one woman that do not identify herself as housewife is our outcomes...or a woman that travel alone for the first time. (The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), 2018).*

These examples imply the variation in the nature of empowerment among different cultures and contexts as Malhotra (2002) discusses on the importance of context in identifying of the concept of empowerment.

*... Above all, the most important problem is that all women's NGOs and activists think women's empowerment means the economic dimensions is the most essential factor, therefore, women's empowerment requires money. The kinds of projects that always are accepted by donors, are economic empowerment projects like KOSGEB. For example, they set up a cooking shop*

*for women. I believe activists have good faith but women do not need this they need knowledge, awareness-raising” (Turkish Women's Union, 2018).*

It is observed, from Kabeer’s stand points on three essential elements of empowerment as “agency”, “resources” and “achievements” (Kabeer, 1999), women’s NGOs in Turkey identified the concept of empowerment as more “resources” and conditions that refers to economic dimension of empowerment.

#### **4.4. Our Projects, Our NGOs and Sustainability**

According to interviews, all experts define the NGOs -that are working there- as parts of their lives. Through the interviews frequently, they use the word of “us” rather than the name of NGOs.

One of the most noteworthy points is that all experts in all projects have not continued their relationships with participants after the end of the projects. This point demonstrates the empowerment projects are not seen as a dynamic process. Generally, they are short time projects that after preparing reports for donors they take their place in shelves of NGOs. Before the confirmation by donors, writing a new project and implementing it is a very stressful process. After the acceptance of projects by donors, actually, the projects are accounted implemented and finished.

The interviews with women’s NGOs experts indicate one of the most important problems through the implementation of women’s projects is “the verification of participations”. Clearly, women are not ideologically and socio-culturally homogeneous, therefore many projects do not continue because of that.

*In general, gathering to make any decision, in Turkey is not easy. Women gather around these projects but they are various ideologically. They have not even the same comment on the specific subject. I think in this circumstance*

*even a little outcome from these projects is important step for women. (The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), 2018).*

It is observed, women's NGOs and public institutions have to select among requests for participating in the projects. Through the interviews, the projects coordinators and assistants did not clarify explicitly what are their scaling factor to select the participations for the projects.

*We have many requests to participating the projects and we have to select among women and finally we select 10 women from 150 women. (T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies, 2018).*

As we mentioned before according to Malhotra, the empowerment is not merely women's tasks (Malhotra, 2002, p. 34). Diversely, the women's NGOs experts, even in mega projects transform the all responsibility of being empowered by over-emphasized on the concept of agency on women's shoulders. From this point of view women "should be empowered".

*I have many examples that we provide all the conditions for women but they do not want to change their lives. Actually, this is not just about us. They should want and take a step to change their lives. Sometimes I think we indulge women... (T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies, 2018).*

*... we prefer to work with small groups of women in the low budget projects. Because through the operation of a mega projects with thousand participants, women are not existing ... (The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), 2018).*

Another important point that the interviews demonstrate is that "the sustainability of projects" which is understood as continuing communicating with the participants of projects after the projects have finished.

*Our connection with the participating entrepreneur women has not lost. We still gather with them in ceremonies, meetings. Even we work with some of them in different projects. Moreover, a follow up project is in the process of being evaluated for approval and we intent to include some of these start up women in this project too. (T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies, 2018).*

*The sustainability is very important for us; we usually try to do not leave the participants after the projects are finished. But some participants do not connect with us after projects... (The Humane Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER), 2018).*

In all interviews, it has been observed that not only the project coordinators and assistants are dependent on their jobs financially, but also, they are quite passionate about their profession.

This chapter encompasses the interviews with the project coordinators and assistants that sorts out some of the women's empowerment projects' issues from another standpoint. This thesis sees the women's empowerment project coordinators and assistants as important parts of women's empowerment "process". In this vein, the dominating insight of empowerment among women's NGOs in Turkey is based on power-over and power-to understandings of power.

The economic dimension of empowerment is the most emphasized dimension. Generally, it is assumed that by providing the "resources" and conditions by government, empowerment will be realized. However, the women's empowerment has various levels, the project coordinators and assistants associate empowerment with the environmental level of concept rather than relational and individual levels.

Accordingly, women's empowerment projects act as empowerment processes and empower experts in all levels of empowerment that Kabeer calls them as "deeper,

middle, and direct levels” although it is realized differently for the women who are participated in the projects.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FROM WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES**

#### **5.1. The Personal Empowerment**

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study evaluates the concept of empowerment in three levels; personal, relational and environmental. This study defines empowerment as a process whereby the lives of women transformed from a subordinated situation to where they take their life responsibilities. The thesis adopted this evaluation from OXFAM GB (2017). The study's findings encompass two different information. The approaches of the participants and the project coordinators and assistances. In this chapter, the findings of the investigation are argued in three different sections as personal, relational and environmental empowerment levels, respectively.

The personal level of empowerment indicates the ability to make strategic decisions for herself, recognizing that the violence is not acceptable, the awareness that collective action is more effective, and knowledge of women's rights or ability to recognize problems. This level of empowerment is related to self-confidence and self-esteem of women and the amount of their autonomy as an independent individual in their community or household.

Findings of the research demonstrate that at the first step the participants of the projects are between 20-41 years old and most of them do not have any job and two of them work part-time and home-based. Also, most of the participants are graduated from university. Just one of the participants has preschool level education. Actually, being

part of a women's organization helps to find a job. The findings support the fact that unemployed women tend to participate in the projects for networking or provide a strong resume for applying for a job.

According to the findings, most of the participants have a personal vision for their future and they can explain their abilities and capacities. It is important to note that the abilities, which they discussed, were various. While some used strong sentences and were ensured about it, others did not describe their abilities with self-confidence.

*I have been a teacher for more than 20 years, and our family is kind of a crowded family. So, we learn to stand on our feet and grow independently. I can fight with all the problems. I have always had goals and visions in my life. Even now I have them. These goals keep me alive in my life. I love reading and investigating. I like to go to local fields and reach local and direct knowledge. I am very good at public communications affairs and I am so powerful in my relationships with others. (Age: 41, Graduated, Married).*

*When I heard your question, I thought for a while and told myself that I do not have any ability in any field. After a while, I understood that I was unfair to myself. I am good at development myself and in working. Also, I like to learn new things and extended my point of view until I able to do new things, ... but finally, there is a voice in my head that says me you can do better than this (Age: 25, Graduated student, Single)*

*My story is started when I was divorced. Before the divorce, I had many capabilities like many women in society. These abilities are not visible and even women are not aware of the existing these abilities. I suppress my abilities and interests. So, I decided to open my windows and start my way. I do not have any moment before my 40. All of me is changed. Even my clothes. Now I am not dependent on any person in life, I am an independent person, you know I am completely free and even I can go to other cities with my daughter. I am powerful and a free woman now. (Age: 40, Single, Primary School).*



Another point that supports the arguments of the study is that almost all of the participants explain that they can make a decision for themselves in critical and important times of their lives.

*I prefer to postpone my decisions. Generally, I postpone any important decision that I have to make, through my life. Because of this, I often go in a deep depression, because I am afraid to make important decisions for myself. (Age: 22, undergraduate Student, Single).*

*I often draw away and I am silent and I wait and go away and do not look at my back. (40 ages, Primary School, Single).*

*Whenever I have to make an important decision, I sink into a deep depression, because the things that I am afraid of, are happening now. I do not to take the responsibility of these sections of my life... (Age: 25, Graduated student, Single).*

According to the findings of the study, all the participants emphasized that education is a more important factor in comparison to a good marriage. The findings demonstrate that seeing education as a strong tool for self-actualizations, self-identifications, and self-awareness makes education the important dimension of women's lives. The economic independency follows it at the second level.

As the interviews reported, the existing gender inequalities and patriarchal structure in society restrain the women to be a leader and improve their jobs based on their abilities. The most remarkable point is that all the participants indicate on "glass ceiling" as the most important obstacle in front of women. The findings of the study demonstrate that there are differences among participants' attitudes and opinions on the acceptance of violence against women.

*I think this is natural and a man can be aggressive and resorts to violence, so a woman should do her responsibilities and climb down. Yes, he gets angry about cheating. But a woman should select their family and friends correctly. It can help. (age:40, Primary School, Single).*

*There is not an excuse for anybody to resort to violence. Never! (35 ages, Graduated Student, Married).*

*I think there is not any justification for doing violence against women in the house or in the society. There is not any reason. (Age: 22, undergraduate student, Single).*

Women's daily life routines represent how they exercise their agencies during their lives particularly in households and concerning others. In one part of the interviews, the participants of the projects explained their last 24 hours and described their daily routines and duties. The language that they used while answering could be a clear indicator that shows how often they make their own decisions in their lives.

According to the findings of the study, the concept of "self" has been emphasized during the women's explanations. Most of the participants have their daily routines based on their interests. Noteworthy, the participants share the house works with other members of the family or their partners but throughout their explanations, it comes to light that this sharing is not so explicit.

*Every morning, I bring my child to the school and come back to take her in the afternoons. Between these hours I have to work. We go to our home and have some rest. But sometimes we go to the short travels to see our family. (Age: 40, Primary School, Single).*

*... after my work, I always spend time with my children, helping to do their homework, but after that I read my book and work with my computer, at the weekends I always have many things to do, I am always out of home and go to*

*events and seminars or workshops that are occurred by different NGOs. Generally, I can say; I am a busy person. (Age: 41, graduated, married).*

*I live alone, so when I am not in the library, I am at work especially all my weekends ... (Age: 22, undergraduate student, single).*

*These days... since I do not have any exams, actually, I spend all my time for socializing and I work on my English every day and read a new book. (Age: 25, graduated student, single).*

The findings of the study indicate the most participants have control over their time. Obviously, this result needs to dive deeper and collect more data and observations from women to have more clear consequences. According to the findings of the study, most of the women that are participated in the projects are unemployed and dependent on others financially.

Moreover, the findings of the study suggest that there is a significant difference between micro and macro-level projects' results according to interviews. That means the empowerment on the personal level has been actualized by micro women's empowerment projects. While the macro women's empowerment projects could not act as an effective element in their personal lives. Women's agencies in macro-level projects are separated from projects through the process of empowerment.

## **5.2. The Relational Empowerment**

The relational level of empowerment indicates the ability to make decisions in the public sphere, participation, and ability to influence or make decisions in a political sphere, taking action to stop violence, and having an independent income. In fact, the relational level of empowerment reflects the "collective" side of the empowerment that

needs to transform all informal and formal barriers that impede them from taking action and making strategic choices to improve their abilities.

Relational level of empowerment overlaps women's relationships with others, specifically, with other women. Hence, this level represents "power with" and "power over" dimensions of empowerment. This level of change in women's empowerment process recognizes the collective actions of women and interactions between them.

The findings of the study demonstrate that empowerment is actualized at the relational level by both macro and micro-level projects. As most of the participants indicate they have active roles in woman NGOs and political parties as volunteers or members. A significant point is that this membership has been happening for different aims. While some follow the NGOs in the civil society for socialization and networking or finding new connections, some just join the parties and NGOs to help them to find a job.

*I and my daughter need a job to be alive in this society, I started to go everywhere; NGOs, institutions and asking for their help to find me any job they can. (Age: 40, Primary School, Single)*

Moreover, about political voting, the findings show that all participants make their decision based on their personal opinions, their observations, and their comments independently.

The findings also reveal that in spite of the participant's expectations, there is not any association between the economic indecency of women and their membership in the NGOs and public institutions.

Another important finding of the study is about women's reflections when they are confronted with any kind of violence. Through the interviews, they described their ways of struggling against violence in the household or public spheres.

Almost all participants asserted that the first step of the action against violence is going to the police or seeing a lawyer or asking help from women solidarity NGOs that work in this field. It seems the believing in the civil society's NGOs' power among women about fighting against violence is stronger than their beliefs about asking help from their family or friends. All the participants described that a violent victim should introduce herself to the women's NGOs in the first place rather than going to the police or relevant institutions and organizations of the state. This point is revealed through the women empowerment projects, awareness-raising and the sense of solidarity among women that impact women's empowerment in the relational level.

*Firstly, a woman in these situations should be aware of all her rights, if she doesn't know, she should go to an NGO and find a lawyer or consult with a person that knows this stuff. Actually, she should be brave! She should have enough courage to follow her rights...she needs some people to encourage her. Finally, she should not stay silent! (Age: 41, graduated, married).*

*The violence has different types. Economic, psychological, emotional and digital...when a woman experiences any kind of violence, she should not remain silent. (Age: 25, Bachelor's degree, single).*

One of the participants told her story and how she acted against her situation in the traditional and patriarchal society that she has lived.

*My husband resorted to violence against me and my daughter for years. I was thinking about how I can save me and my child from this man? My family did not support me. I had a brother but I lost him in a car accident...Someday I lost all my hope for life and told myself; I will die in this home and nobody will even know. I decided to kill myself and prepared myself for that. Exactly, in those days, I saw an advertisement on the T.V that discussed violence against*

*women and asked women to call a number if they are under the violence. I wrote the number in some paper and hid it. I was afraid to call. After a week, I called and asked for help. They explained to me how they could rescue me... But I did not accept it because I was really afraid. It was a cold winter and our village's roads covered with snow...every day I called that number and asked some new questions...how about my daughter? Is there any school for her? .... They told me the closest gendarmerie public order commando unit can come and take you from the village can come and take me and my daughter. ...but I knew my husband might have even killed me if he saw the police. After a month, finally, while the snow was melting and spring was close... I encouraged myself and escaped from home and went to the police .... I did not have any money, but I had enough courage to change my life. (40, Primary School, Single).*

This is the conspicuous example for self-empowerment of women by themselves. During her story, she made all important decisions and the NGO just prepared the resources for her. This is a very notable example for exercising of agency by other women, too.

The study attempts to set the women's main aim to participate in the projects. According to the findings of the study, in the first place they see the participation as a part of socialization process for themselves. Giving information, being active and earning money are the following aims.

As findings demonstrate, the mega-projects that have huge budgets and generally follow the political interests of their institutions, use "the earning money" option as a motivational element to encourage women to join the projects.

*One day the manager (the manager of the women's shelters in Yenimahalle) asked me: we opened new classes for women. Do you want to join? I asked what the purpose of the sources is. She answered they paid you money and you should just join the classes, two days a week, the welding work. I was shocked and questioned Iron? that is men's work? ... we cannot do anything about that! We are women... they gave us 150 TL monthly and the classes are finished after six months. (Age: 40, Primary School, Single)*

According to the findings of the main characteristics that women want to see in the women's empowerment projects is the sustainability and continuation of the interaction between projects' affairs and the participants. Findings indicate that they define the solidarity in association with the self-identification and self- knowledge that raise the self-esteem of women and help them to find their way through the process of the empowerment.

All the participants except one emphasized on the projects should focus on the internal empowerment. Just one of the participants believes that we need to change the structure of society and condition by women's empowerment projects.

*The projects that help a woman to discover herself and also her body are needed, awareness-raising projects that convince women that they are the producer and highlight their powers and abilities. Actually, we need the projects that help women to discover their special values, as a woman. (Age: 41, graduated, married).*

*Self-empowerment and education the projects that inform us about our rights as a woman in the society. (Age: 35, graduated student, Married)*

*We need the projects that motivate women to change their lives, this cannot be from outside, I did not participate in any empowerment project before, I sat in my home, in a village in Kirikkale, I have even decided to kill myself, because my husband beat me every night , I decided to rescue myself. And after this decision, I saw an advertisement in the T.V that explained about the violence against women... They wanted women to call 183 and after a while, I encouraged myself and called them and asked for help. I saw many women that join every project in the NGOs to earn money. But they do not want to change their lives by themselves. Actually, they hope the NGOs rescue them like a day that they were expecting this from their husbands. (Age: 40, Primary School, Single).*

### 5.3. The Environmental Empowerment

In the environmental empowerment level that encompasses “the ability to influences at the political level” and “access to services and resources” (OXFAM, 2017, 9), the findings of the study show that all participants precisely believe that women do not have good conditions in Turkey. It is a quite important point that most of the participants categorized the women and analyzed their situation according to their categories.

*We cannot explain women's situations in Turkey by generalization. In the east of the country and central Anatolia we can observe poor women that do not have permission to be educated even in high school, and in the west of the country and Aegean Coast you can see educated women that have economic independency by their jobs. The second part is not in a minority. The point is being economically independent. Even in metropole cities, we cannot ensure that women's situation is better and they oppress by the patriarchal structure of the society. (Age: 22, Undergraduate student, Single).*

*My grandmother is a very traditional woman. She works in the ranch and never asks for money from her husband. My grandfather left her and went on vacation many times, her husband always beat her and she accepted this because she believed a man can do anything. My grandmother is unlike me. My mother had to marry when she was just 14. When she had 25 years old, like me now, she had me and my brother. My mother was passive and traditional, too. Yet in my case, she always supports me as a modern woman. She wants me to graduate. She acts as a bridge between me and my grandmother. But all of us live in a society that men and women have not equal opportunities in life. (25 ages, Graduated student, Single).*

The findings of the study also unearth the significant point about the concept of social changes from the women's perspectives and how women interpret the changes among the generations; themselves and their mother and grandmother generations in Turkey. Early marriage, access to education, fertility rate, economic independency and being visible in public spheres are the most emphasized aspects that are mentioned by participants.



Moreover, most of the participants declare that there are equal rights between men and women in Turkey but the same conditions are not about opportunities. Most participants separated the existing “equal rights” and “opportunities”. In addition, these inequalities are perpetuated by “sexist practices”, “traditional culture values” and patriarchal structure of the society.

*Maybe we seem equal with men on paper, but we are deeply surrounded by cultural kind of inequality. I think it is the same in the whole world. (Age: 25, Graduated student, single).*

*We are not equal in terms of opportunities. Unfortunately, women are taking care of children and this impoverish women in society. (20 ages, Undergraduate Student, Single).*

*On paper we are equal but you do not live with laws in your everyday life. You have to barge with men, they are men and we are women and you cannot change the reality. (40 ages, Primary School, Single).*

Eventually, in the environmental empowerment level, the findings of the study illustrate that most participants’ emphasis is on the pervasive and ubiquitous of the inequalities and patriarchal values. The participants asserted these inequalities disseminate in all parts of society in Turkey. An important finding of the study is that only two of the participants can explain their expectations from the state in a concrete way. These are “education rights for women, opening the day-care center and the permission to fathers for child-caring”.

The study argues that there are no clear differences between women’s empowerment projects results among ideologically different NGOs and public institutions in Turkey. Moreover, the results and the impacts of the projects demonstrate that there are important differences between macro and micro-level projects. In this vein, women’s empowerment projects cannot go far from the existing living conditions of women in

Turkey. In this regard, the empowerment projects are transformed as an instrumental concept and the way that can provide the financial efficiencies of the NGOs and public institutions in Turkey.

The women's empowerment projects do not have deep impacts on women's lives in Turkey at least in the environmental and personal levels of the empowerment process. According to the findings of the study, women's empowerment projects change women's lives at the relational level. They exercise collective action with other women and collect useful information about their rights and issues. But it seems they cannot internalize and shift this information in their daily lives.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis explores some of the dynamics of implementations of empowerment among women's empowerment projects in Turkey. The thesis builds its argument on the women's understanding of empowerment rather than external intervening bodies such as the state, international or national development programs and donors. Obviously, there is a huge gap in empowerment literature in the context, that women as an active agency are invisible on investigations. There are few evaluations about women's empowerment projects and if some investigations attempt to evaluate women's empowerment projects would not go far from donors reports and their assertions about the implementations of projects.

This study argues that the concept of empowerment is a multi-dimensional concept and emphasizes on context-specific empowerment and uses the indicators relevant to each context. Since, the empowerment is intrinsically qualitative, measuring of empowerment as a dynamic and variational process is not simple. Methodologically, the assessment of empowerment requires the consideration of the process as opposed to a mere focus on the results of the empowerment process. In this regard, this study attempts to answer the research question of the study by emphasizing the progress of the projects not just their quantitative results.

The limitations were discussed at length in the research chapter. There, the most important notion was pointed out as the observation that women's empowerment projects act as back yards with restricted access governed by women's NGOs and

public institutions. It means that they often toy with the information of the empowerment projects based on their interests and gains. This research overcomes these limitations and it aims to succeed by listening to women's experiences in the empowerment process.

This part of the thesis gives a concise summary of the findings of the study about women's empowerment projects, women's NGOs and the participants of the respective projects in Turkey.

Obviously, women's NGOs are significant part of civil society in Turkey. While some NGOs have close relationship to the state, others have fewer interactions with the state. There are important distinctions between the women's NGOs and public institutions as well as other parts of civil society in Turkey, if they are close to the state, they will have opportunity to implement macro-credit and long-term projects with large budgets that often are supported by the state and if they do not confirm the state policies, instead, they are given access to international donors for their micro-credit and short term projects rather than the state funds itself.

Noteworthy, the women's empowerment projects in Turkey for women's NGOs are assumed as instrumental objects to survive and provide their financial requirements. It is significant to point out that women's empowerment projects actually help NGOs more than participants of the projects.

According to the findings of the study, in comparison with macro-credit projects, micro projects have actually touched women's lives deeply and they have empowered them in a meaningful way. As findings of the study demonstrate the empowerment of women's actualizations are dependent on project features and levels of empowerment. In other words, the macro-credit projects empower women just on an environmental

level and micro-credit projects empowering women on both personal and relational levels.

In contrary to the accentuation of “the sustainability of projects” by project coordinators, the sustainability of empowerment projects is absolutely weak. The major cause is that the empowerment projects assume women are isolated and subordinated agencies, they have tendency to illustrate women as victim of patriarchal society. Generally, women’s empowerment projects overlook the fact that women have complex relationships with male-dominated culture. Women as part of the patriarchal society, reproduce male-dominated culture, consolidate the different aspects of it and bargaining with patriarchy.

Conducting women’s empowerment projects without involving men has superficial and transient impacts on women’s lives. Accordingly, the sanction of men from women’s NGOs and women’s empowerment projects has led to the creation of numerous unsustainable projects.

During the women’s empowerment process in Turkey, the female agency is invisible. The lack of women’s agencies in the evaluations, reports and pilot actions of the projects were obvious. “Decision-making”, “control”, and “choice”, the most effective elements of empowerment process that reflect women’s agencies are absent elements through the empowerment projects in Turkey.

Back to the research question of the study; whether the NGOs are able to empower women in Turkey, there are obviously a wide variety of factors that impact the answer. But in general, the study’s findings illustrate and it is outlined above, women are not the direct subject of the women’s empowerment projects in Turkey and at least it can be concluded that the empowerment do not became a reality in all aspects of women’s lives in Turkey.

This study can be characterized as a fledgling towards a deeper dive into women's empowerment process and understand the dynamics of this concept in Turkey as a context that has long feminist struggle against patriarchal and traditional society. The future studies need methodologically larger samples and reflect how women express empowerment by listening to more women. This needs interdisciplinary research and creation of composite indexes for measuring empowerment. Another point will be the creation of specific indexes for assessing women's empowerment in the context.

## REFERENCES

- Afshar, H. (1998). *Women and empowerment: Illusions from the third world*. London: Macmillan.
- Alvarez, S. E. (1999). Advocating feminism: The Latin American feminist NGO 'Boom.' *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 1 (2), 181–209.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1970). *On violence*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- Batliwala, S. (1993) *Empowerment of women in South Asia: Concepts and practices*. Colombo: Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education; New Delhi: FAO's Freedom from Hunger Campaign - Action for Development.
- Batliwala, S. (1994) The Meaning of Women's Empowerment: New Concepts from Action. In G. Sen, A. Germain & L. C. Chen (Ed.). *Population policies reconsidered. Health, empowerment and rights* (ed., pp.127-38). Cambridge: Harvard University
- Becker, S. (1997, April). *Incorporating women's empowerment in studies of reproductive health: An example from Zimbabwe*. Paper presented at the Seminar on Female Empowerment and Demographic Processes, Lund.
- Beneria, L. & Roldan M. (1987). *Crossroads of class and gender*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bennett, L. (1993): Women, Poverty and Productivity in India. *Economic Development*. Institute of The World Bank.
- Bora A. & Günel A. (2002). Önsöz. In A. Bora and A. Günel (Ed.), *90'larda Türkiye'de feminism* (pp. 7-13). Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Caputi, M. (2013). *Feminism and power: The need for critical theory*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Connolly, W. (1993). *The terms of political discourse* (3rd ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dahl, R. (1957). The concept of power. *Behavioral Science*, 2, 201–15.

Dijkstra, G. (2002). Revisiting UNDP's GDI and GEM: Towards an alternative. *Social Indicators Research*, 57, 301-338.

EmpowerWOMENT. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://empowerwoment.eu/en/home>

Ette, M. (2007) Empowerment. In G. Blakely & V. Bryson (Ed.), *The impact of feminism on political concepts and debates* (pp.146-160). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hoşgeldiniz und herzlichwillkommenbei der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Türkei! – Home. (2019). Retrieved from <http://fes-tuerkei.org/pages/english/home.php>

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York, Vintage.

Hartsock, N. (1983). *Money, sex, and power: Toward a feminist historical materialism*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Hartsock, N. (1990). Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women. In L. Nicholson (Ed.). *Feminism/postmodernism* (pp. 157-175). New York: Routledge.

Hoagland, S. L. (1988). *Lesbian ethics: Toward a new value*. Palo Alto: Institute of Lesbian Studies.

Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. London: Verso Publications

Kabeer, N. (1997). Women, Wages and Intra-household Power Relations in Urban Bangladesh. *Development and Change* 28(2), 261-302.

Kabeer, N. (1998) 'Money Can't Buy Me Love? Re-evaluating Gender, Credit and Empowerment in Rural Bangladesh'. *IDS Discussion Paper No.363*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.



- Kabeer, N. (1999) Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30, 435–464.
- Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal. *Gender and Development*, 13(1), 13–24.
- Ketola, M. (2011). "A gap in the bridge?" European Union Civil Society assistance in Turkey. *European Journal of Development Research*, 24 (1), 89-104.
- Keysan, A. Ö. (2016). Türkiye'deki kadın aktivistlerin sivil toplum söylemleri: Alternatif yaklaşımlar. *Mülkiye Dergisi*, 40(4), 149-191.
- Kishor, S. (1997, April). *Empowerment of women in Egypt and links to the survival and health of their infants*. Paper presented at the Seminar on Female Empowerment and Demographic Processes, Lund.
- Krause, W. (2008) *Women in civil society*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Landing, J. (2011). Bringing women to the table: European Union funding for women's empowerment projects in Turkey. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 34(3), 206-219.
- Lang, S. (2000). The NGOization of Feminism: Institutionalization and Institution Building within the German Women's Movement. In B. Smith (Ed.), *Global Feminisms since 1945* (pp. 290–304). New York: Routledge.
- Lombardini, S., Bowman, K. & Garwood, R. (2017). *A 'How to' guide to measuring women's empowerment: Sharing experience from Oxfam's impact evaluations*. Retrieved from Oxfam GB Website: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620271/gt-measuring-womens-empowerment-250517-en.pdf?sequence=4>
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. London: Macmillan.
- Malhotra, A., Schuler S. R., & Boender, C. (2002). Measuring women's empowerment as a variable in international development: Background paper prepared for the World Bank workshop on poverty and gender: New perspectives. Retrieved from WorldBank Website: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/486312-1095970750368/529763-1095970803335/malhotra.pdf>

- McCann, C. & Seung-Kyung, K. (Ed.) (2010) *Feminist theory reader* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- McNay, L. (2000). *Gender and agency; reconfiguring the subject in feminism and social theory*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Miller, J. B. (1992). Women and power. In T. Wattenberg (Ed.). *Rethinking Power*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Mohanty, C. T. (1991) Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. In C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo & L. Torres (Eds.) *Third world women and the politics of feminism*(pp.51-80). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Okin, S. M. (1989). *Justice, gender and the family*. New York: Basic Books.
- Pandora – Discovering European opportunities for Female Entrepreneurship. (2019). Retrieved from <http://pandora.hryo.org/>
- Rowlands, J. (1997). *Questioning empowerment*. Oxford: Oxfam Publications.
- Stacki, S. & Monkman, K. (2003) Change through empowerment processes: Women’s stories from South Asia and Latin America. *Compare*,33(2), 173-89.
- Starhawk, D (1987). *Truth or dare: Encounters with power, authority, and mystery*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Tarihçe. (2019). Retrieved from <http://www.turkkadinlاربirligi.org/tr/kurumsal/1/Tarih%C3%A7e>
- T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı. (2018). Kadının güçlenmesi strateji belgesi ve eylem planı 2018-2023. Retrieved from <http://www.kadininstatusu.aile.gov.tr>
- Tusev. (2017). Monitoring matrix on enabling environment for civil society development: The civil society environment in Turkey 2017 report (Report No.76). Retrieved from <https://www.tusev.org.tr/en/news/monitoring-matrix-on-enabling-environment-for-civil-society-development-turkey-country-report-2017-is-published#.XgDuVi-hmhA>

UNDP (1995). Human development report 1995. Retrieved from  
[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/256/hdr\\_1995\\_en\\_complete\\_nos  
tats.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/256/hdr_1995_en_complete_nos tats.pdf)

Wattenberg, T. (1990). *The forms of power: From domination to transformation*.  
Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*,  
Berkeley: University of California Press.

World Bank (2001). *World development report: The state in Chicago world*. New  
York: Oxford University Press.

Wong, K.F. (2003) Empowerment as a Panacea for poverty –Old wine in new  
battles? Reflections on the World Bank ‘s conception of power. *Progress in  
Development Studies*, 3(4), 307-22.

## APPENDICES

### A: 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/TURKEY  
T: +90 312 210 22 91  
F: +90 312 210 79 59  
ueam@metu.edu.tr  
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: 28620816 / 673

19 ARALIK 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr. Sibel KALAYCIOĞLU

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Sara BAHERİRAD'ın "The Assessment of Woman's Empowerment: Women NGOs in Turkey" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2018-SOS-238 protokol numarası ile araştırma yapması onaylanmıştır.

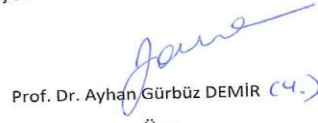
Saygılarımla bilgilerinize sunarım.

  
Prof. Dr. Tülin GENÇÖZ

Başkan

  
Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

  
Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR (4.)

Üye

Prof.Dr. Yasan KONDAKÇI

  
IZINLI

  
Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

  
Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT

Üye

## **B: INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS**

Sizinle tanışabilir miyiz?

- a) Yaş
- b) Eğitim seviyesi
- c) Çalışma durumu
- d) Medeni hali

### **Personal Empowerment**

1. Kendinizden, yeteneklerinizden ve becerelerinizden veya özellikle iyi olduğunuza inandığınız yönlerinizden bahseder misiniz?
2. Her insanın hayatında karşılaştığı öyle koşullar oluyor ki insan karar vermek zorunda kalıyor. Siz hayatınıza dair kritik karar almak zorunda kaldığınız durumlarla nasıl baş ediyorsunuz? (Making decisions in critical conditions in her life)
3. Sizce, iyi bir evlilik yapmak mı? İyi bir eğitim almak mı? bir kadının hayatında önemlidir?
4. Sizce kadınlar iş dünyasında lider olabilirler mi? Başarılı oluyorlar mı?
5. “Erkektir, sinirlenebilir” diye bir düşünce vardır toplumda. Sizce bir erkek hangi durumda bir kadına el kaldırmakta haklı olabilir?
  - İzinsiz bir yere gitmesi, aile veya arkadaşları ile buluşması durumunda,
  - Aldatma “şüphesi” varsa,
  - Çocukların bakımını veya ev işini ihmal ediyorsa,
  - Ona söylemeden ve izin almadan para harcaması durumunda,
  - Eşine iş konusunda yardım etmemesi durumunda,

Bu listeye eklemek istediğiniz başka bir şey var mı?

6. Biraz gündelik hayatınızdan bahseder misiniz? Son 24 saatiniz nasıl geçti? Normal bir günde gününüz nasıl geçiyor, yani günlük rutinlerinizden bahseder misiniz?
7. En son okuduğunuz kitabın adı nedir? Her gün okuduğunuz bir gazete var mı? Gündemi takip ediyor musunuz?
8. Paranızı ve gelirinizi nelere harcıyorsunuz?

### **Relational Empowerment**

1. Sizin iş veya ev alanları dışında, vakit geçirdiğiniz veya üye olduğunuz bir vakıf, dernek, topluluk ya da hobi grupları var mı? Yani aile dışında tek başınıza vakit geçirdiğiniz alanlar var mı?
2. Belediye seçimlerinde oy kullanacak mısınız? Daha önce kullandınız mı? Oy verdiğiniz parti ya da kişileri belirlerken eşiniz ve ailenizden bağımsız karar alabiliyor musunuz?
3. Kendinize ait herhangi bir gelir var mı? Ekonomik bağımsızlığınız var mı?
4. Eğer bir kadın hayatında başkası tarafından, bu kişi eşi ya da yakınları veya patronu olabilir, şiddete uğrarsa (bu şiddet farklı seviyelerde olabilir; örneğin küfür veya aşağılanma veya fiziksel şiddet olabilir) sizce ne yapmalıdır?
5. Siz bu projeye ne zaman katıldınız? Projeye nasıl tanıştınız? Bu süreci biraz anlatır mısınız?
6. Bu projeye katılımınız size ne gibi faydalar sağladı? Projeye katıldıktan sonra ne gibi adımlar attınız?
7. Bu projenin gerçekleştiği süreçte gördünüz eksiklikler var mıydı? Varsa bunları proje görevlileri ile paylaştınız mı? Proje görevlilerinin tepkileri nasıldı?
8. Sizce kadınlar için nasıl projeler yapılmalı? Kadınların ihtiyaçları neler?

## **Environmental Empowerment**

1. Türkiye’deki kadınların durumu hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
2. Sizce kadınlık deneyimleri açısından sizinle anne ve anneannenizin şimdiki yaşlarındaki durumları arasında farklılıklar var mıdır? Varsa ne gibi farklılıklar olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
3. Sizce Türkiye’de kadınlar ve erkekler hakları konusunda eşitler mi? Fırsatlar konusunda durum nasıl?
4. Kadının sadece kadın olmasından dolayı hayatı boyunca karşılaştığı ve uyması gereken pek çok kural var. Sizce bu kurallar ve kısıtlamalar kadınları zor duruma sokuyor mu?
5. En önemli ve etkili olarak hangi hak kadınlara verilmeli? Sizce toplumda kadınlar için değiştirmemiz gereken şey ne?

## **C: INTERVIEWS WITH PROJECT COORDINATORS AND PROJECT ASSISTANTS**

1. Sizinle tanışabilir miyiz?
  - a) Yaş
  - b) Eğitim seviyeniz
  - c) İş ünvanınız ve alanınız (background)
  - d) Medeni hal
2. Organizasyonun asıl vizyonu nedir? Kuruluş amacınız nedir?
3. Resmi olarak kaç üyesi var?
4. Üyelerin en önemli ihtiyaçları ve ilgilerini çeken konular nelerdir?
5. Sizin yer aldığınız organizasyonun bu ihtiyaçları gidermek için nasıl stratejileri var?
6. Gerçekleştirdiğiniz projenin sürecinden bahsedebilir misiniz? Bu süreçte karşılaştığınız bir problem oldu mu?
7. Sizce bu proje nasıl ve hangi alanlarda katılımcılar için yararlı oldu?
8. Bu projenin özgünlüğü nedir? Sizce bu alanda yapılan başka projelerle sizin projenizin arasında ne gibi farklılıklar var?
9. Bu proje gerçekleştikten sonra katılımcılarla iletişiminiz devam etti mi?
10. Proje hangi kurum veya program tarafından finanse edildi?
11. Bu projenin gerçekleştiği süreçte katılımcılar tarafından herhangi bir yorum, eleştiri veya öneri aldınız mı? Bu konuda nasıl bir yol izliyorsunuz?
12. Kadının etkinleşmesi hakkındaki yorumunuzu almak isterim. Bu konuya ne kadar inanıyorsunuz?
13. Türkiye’de kadının durumunu nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?



14. Sizce kadınlık deneyimleri açısından sizinle anne ve anneannenizin şimdiki yaşlarındaki durumları arasında farklılıklar var mıdır? 3 farklı nesil arasında kadınlık deneyimi açısından ne gibi farklılıklar olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

15. Sizce Türkiye’de kadın ve erkek hukuki haklar konusunda eşitler mi? Fırsatlar konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?

16. Eklemek istediğiniz başka bir konu var mı?

## **D: INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN’S NGOs AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

### **Yenimahalle Municipality International Relationships and EU Office**

EU Project Office for Yenimahalle Municipality; It is an established unit to provide a more effective cooperation in the process of access to the European Union and to be more in cooperation and communication with the institutions and organizations within the European Union countries.

The EU Project Office follows the European Union institutions, National Agency publications, embassies and companies that support social responsibility projects, and help these projects for the benefit of disadvantaged citizens living in district borders.

At the same time, projects encompass social, cultural, tourism, health, and economic development for Yenimahalle district. The EU Project Office expects that these projects will bring new opportunities to the district and continue their work.

This unit is one of the ordinary offices that is established by different parts of the Turkish government. The main function of these units in cooperation with NGOs and help social projects to empower women in Turkey.

### **The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)**

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is a “non-profit, independent and cultural institution, which is committed to the ideas and values of social democracy”. (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018) FES’s Turkey office has been promoting “the cooperative dialogue of committed people and civil society organizations in both Germany and Turkey for

almost twenty-five years”. (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018) Civil society organizations, universities and research institutions, trade unions, professional chambers, associations, parliament and government ministries, local governments, media representatives, organizations are working together with Turkey FES (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018).

This study chooses the FES as an international NGO’s representative that follows the three main aims by different projects for women in Turkey as mentioned in the FES on its website (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018). These projects carried out in Turkey are divided into three thematic parts: “democracy and the rule of law”, “just and sustainable economy” and “foreign policy” (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018). These are thematic parts of all projects that are actualized by FES in Turkey. FES Turkey’s representative introduces itself as a “social-democratic organization” that tries to support EU-Turkey relationships and would appreciate Turkey’s accession. The presence of FES in Turkey is based on partnership and stake holding with different partners in Turkey. FES has more than 150 stakeholders in Turkey. As can be seen, from the documents of the previous projects that were supported by FES in Turkey, (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018) and based on FES project coordinator’s interviews through the investigation, this NGO prefers to actualize the micro-level projects with objective results that empower women.

### **Turkish Women's Union**

Turkish Women's Union is founded in 1924. The purpose of the establishment is to ensure that a woman achieves her political rights, and participates equally in social life (Turkish Women's Union, 2019). As the largest and most long-lasting unique organization of volunteerism in Turkey, TKB aims to fight for equality of women in law. According to SemaKendiriciUgurman, the chairperson of Turkish Women's Union, the association’s focus is on “the elimination of provision the equality between women and men in the laws for our women” (Kendirici, 2018). In this vein, Turkish

Women's Union has initiated and continued effective campaigns that have been successful so far.

### **The Humane Life and Democratic Society Association (IYADER)**

IYADER is established in 2014 as a non-profit organization in Ankara. According to the website of the association, “the purpose of the association is to promote the rules of law by means youth to revitalize democratic society that respects human rights” (IYADER, 2018). The main values that IYADER follows by its projects and activities are “commitment, tolerance, solidarity, impact” and by promoting this, values IYADER combat “gender-based exploitation and violence (IYADER, 2018). IYADER also supports “the rights and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups” in the society (IYADER, 2018). The significant point is the partnership between the Yenimahalle Municipality and IYADER as an NGO. Almost all the projects that were actualized by IYADER are supported by Yenimahalle Municipality. This point indicates that NGOs, public institutions, and governmental institutions are in close interactions. Based on the documents of the IYADER, the chairperson of the association is the project coordinator of the Yenimahalle EU Unit (IYADER, 2018). In fact, many NGOs work parallel with public institutions. Especially, women empowerment projects are the kind of projects that are generally managed by NGOs that are closed to governmental institutions.

### **T. C. Ankara Provincial Governor Department of Family and Social Policies**

The Directorate of Ankara Family, Labor and Social Services is founded in 1921. This institution aims to provide fair and supply oriented social services with a holistic approach and participatory understanding, with priority for disadvantaged people to increase family, community and individual welfare. Almost all parts of the government have an EU Office providing projects in partnership with the EU, which are implemented in line with the political interests of the authority. In this vein, they produce the projects and they act as bridges between NGOs and public situations of

the civil society in Turkey. Whereas the EU offices are supported by the government, they are generally actualized mega-projects with a large financial budget.

## **E: REVIEWS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS**

### **The Model for Development of Socio-Economic Support System for Female Victims of Domestic Violence**

The project officers claim that they have reached to 50 women and 20 trainers, which were specially educated in mobbing, violence and gender-based inequalities, and more than 1000 persons that work on different institutions and markets. Another part of the project establishes a consulting center for women. However, based on photographs, documents, and reports of the project, these claims debunk. According to the project documents, this project has different parts as professional training for 15 women. This training is professional welding, plastic injection and logistic trainings. In this section, the selected sample projects are analyzed from different aspects such as their donors, sponsors, their budgets, implementing levels, periods, objections or risks during the process, their main aims, and outcomes. Based on interviews with participants just 10 women continued the training. As Havva, one of the participants said, “In the first days we were 15 women but since this work is just appropriate for men, other women left the training and just 10 women continued to participate”. Awareness seminars is another printout of the project. This project is a good example that we can count as the “Balloon project” that has a mega reflection and advertisement in the political side with micro results for women.

This project has contradictory points of view about women's issues. As the project claims, it aims to empower women. The main argument is that women can work like men. This point of view is close to liberal feminism, which advocates that women have the potential to work like men in the works that classify for men based on gender roles in society. There is an ironic point that the consulting center and training of the project are established in OSTIM by OSIAD Industrialists and Businessmen's Association. Businessmen free women by teaching them how to work in masculine works. According to the interview with the project coordinator, the participants of the project

are aware that they can work in any work and gender roles are not criteria for labor division in society but the participants of the project emphasized that this work is a masculine work and they participate just for earning money. According to participants of the projects, they had been receiving 150 TL monthly; also, they earned food and fare this point is not mentioned in any documents and interviews by project coordinators. This is an important point, which indicates that women do not have the same motivations to join such projects as participants.

The project managers and project participants of the two groups are far from communication and interactions and there is a big gap between them. It seems women in this project are an ostensible part of the project. They do not have any idea about what is going on the project and they do not assimilate the project.

### **PANDORA - Discovering European Opportunities for Female Entrepreneurship**

The project is actualized in two-part long staff mobility and short staff mobility. In spite of all attempts to access the participants of the project through the interviews with project coordinators and assistants, in the last months of writing this thesis, it has been detected that the project's participants are the same people as the project coordinators and assistants that they are working on the unit. To avoid scientific biases, it was decided not to interview them as participants again.

Actually, encountering this kind of a project among the EU projects is not an exceptional phenomenon and the fact is that projects will be founded by international resources, especially when the projects have more than one partner in other countries.

The first aim of the Pandora project is to “train educators with a specific focus on adult education” and “build a training program for disadvantaged women” (“Pandora”, 2014). The final aim of the project is to create a greater awareness of the capabilities, skills, and opportunities, which can be used to “create cooperatives, social enterprises or other economic initiatives run by women”. During the course, the identification of

a good course practice for the country was expected as a result (“Pandora”, 2014). Each partner through research implemented good practice in their own country (“Pandora”, 2019). This good practice should be supported by a prior research and a success story that demonstrates the effectiveness of the methodology and by the tool or the practices used to achieve the goal (“Pandora”, 2014).

This process of research will also consider the involvement of other organizations, institutions and training institutions, which form the core of the local network on specific adult education issues and increases in skills of women’s entrepreneurship of the women involved in the project.

### **The Feminist Publishing Camp**

The Feminist Publishing Camp project has different characteristics; for instance, the participants of the camp were collected by the grassroots organization of women that belongs to different socio-economic levels of society in Turkey (“Hoş geldiniz und herzlich”, 2019). The vantage point about this project is the way that the project is managed. According to documents of the project, this project is managed and organized collectively by all the participants. Another point is that through this 3-day camp by women, all the participants had enough time to share their experiences. They introduced themselves and explained their life stories. The successful women that can be called as an example in their fields did all the workshops. It is important to note that the last day of the camp was dedicated to distributions of tasks among participants for creating a website as their online magazine around the topic. All the participants spoke about their abilities and interests and after this part, they took the responsibility of one or two parts of tasks.

For the assessment of the printouts of this project, there has been an opportunity to follow all periods of the project closely. For the research, it was joined to the project camp and all the points that it is mentioned before were observed. The participants of the project were followed after the project and they could not publish the online



magazine that they aimed; because after the camp, they have been separated in different groups. Among participants, value conflicts have emerged. Accordingly, these conflicts emerged by their diversities and differences in socio-economic levels in society. As many feminist organizations experience this, too. These conflicts among participants have been obstacles to achieve the goals of the project. Even though this project cannot attain its main goal; it has been one of a kind of project that can be rarely seen in women empowerment field.

### **The SEDAV Dissemination Project**

This project is based on publishing materials that introduce women to SEDAV. The project consisted of workshops, seminars, and booklets about the SEDAV convention (Kendirici, 2018). Considering the booklets and documents of the project, the language used through the project is truly marginal for women in different socio-economic and education levels (“Tarihçe”, 2019). Numerous projects aim to contribute to the empowerment of women in Turkey, merely by the distribution of “useful” information around a topic (“Tarihçe”, 2019). This point of view is based on approaches that explain how women’s situations have emerged by the lack of knowledge among them. In this view, exclusion from this situation just depends on achieving knowledge. Eventually, in spite of the core aim of the projects, the context of the booklets is too marginal for any woman who needs to learn about her rights (“Tarihçe”, 2019).

### **The My Story Project**

According to the published booklet of the project, this project “emerged upon a suggestion by women who live in Kulu (My Story, 2016). During the evaluation meeting of a previous project, “Girls Childs is a Child!” which is done by cooperation with Konya branches of the Turkish Women’s Union 2015-2016, they considered as the “living practices” of women who migrated abroad via marriage. This project’s main printouts are the shared stories of women and also helping “to better understand the effects of migration on the established social relations that are already against women” (My Story, 2016, 4). The project’s booklet reflects the “qualitative study

report that could be offered to replace statistical data or analyses that could be generalized” (My Story, 2016,4) projects in Turkey.

### **IYA-GENDER**

This study conducts interviews with three activists, and is actually based on the characteristics of the project identities on the interviews. The first point uses through the trainings is “the general education” method. Furthermore, activists learn how to use “the generational education” method to change the mentality of youth about gender roles. (IYAGENDER, 2016). The second point is the existence of the closed interactions between participants and project coordinators. According to interviews, choosing schools and trainings are planned by participants and coordinators collectively (Simşek, 2018).

In other words, the participants as new activists take the responsibility for the awareness-raising in their society, so they will be motivated to learn more about the topic. Finally, however many projects plan to inform the society by awareness-raising workshops and seminars, this project has particular characteristics as these activists’ experience self-development during the activities. To illustrate, according to one of the participants of IYAGENDER activist training, her self-confidence, as she explains by “the ability to speak in front of a crowd”, has increased after her participation to IYAGENDER. Eventually, IYAGENDER is a project that supports agencies to experience strategic decisions. However, the trainings that activists establish for schools, need to be evaluated in the other studies separately.

### **The Workshop of Women Who are Sheltered in Life**

The project coordinator claims that approximately 350 public institutions/organizations and non-governmental organizations supported the printout of the project, the draft of the law. According to the project’s documents, there are no objective results for the Workshops of Women who are Shelters in Life project

(IYADER, 2019). In spite of all attempts to reach the participants of the project, this study could have interviewed just one participant.

Actually, the civil society in Turkey is the fulfillment of the projects that have been implemented by NGOs that immediately embedded on the shelves of the NGOs just as an archive. Going back and investigate the outcomes of these projects, among the shelves of the NGOs is not an effortless work. Especially because of the similarity between the project coordinators and partners, they can cover the results or demonstrate the results based on their interests. In this view, the assessments of the projects, methodologically need information that is on the NGO's coordinators' hands. Actually, they can influence the way you link with participants. To illustrate, for interviewing, this study could reach one participant among 29 women that joined to trainings.

### **EMPOWERWOMENT: The Successful Entrepreneurial Empowerment for Women in Start-up Business**

This study investigates the national level of the project in Turkey. According to the project's assistant Beyza Turudu, the project has three parts in the national and transnational level. The first part consists of “two local workshops in connection with the 3 partner meetings, offering project players and startup women from the project to meet and interact with the local ecosystems and startup groups” (Turdu, 2018). The second part is “transnational workshop for sharing experience, creating joint missions and new ideas, and contributing to the project's outcomes” (Turdu, 2018). The final section is about “national seminars that took place in every partner country” (Turdu, 2018). Erasmus plus Program and Turkish National Agency financially support the project (“EmpowerWOMENT”, 2019).

Same as other partners, Turkey chooses eight women to empower by this project. But just one of them works in male-dominated sectors like Engineering and the others belong to sectors such as making traditional bread (Yufka) and restaurants that

patriarchal structure of the Turkish society approves for women in public spheres. In this case, the kind of empowerment that the governmental institutions follow, attempt to promote the traditional women's roles in society. There is a huge gap among start-up women's educational backgrounds and this point creates differences in comprehending the content of the trainings. The research attempts to reach the participants of the projects but the project affairs do not allow choosing interviewers randomly. In other words, they are just allowed to access one special participant. Furthermore, the research finds this matter as a scientific bias. In order to avoid scientific bias, the research decides not to interview this participant ('EmpowerWOMENt', 2019).

## **F: TÜRKÇE ÖZET/ TURKISH SUMMARY**

### **TÜRKİYE’DEKİ KADIN GÜÇLENMESİNDE KADIN STK’LARININ ROLÜ**

Feminizm teorik bir paradigma olmanın ötesinde sosyal değişimi hedefleyen bir harekettir. Kadınların güçlendirilmesi feminist hareketin temel noktalarından birini oluşturur. Ancak güçlendirilme terimi içinde birçok tartışmayı da barındırır, bu tartışmalara rağmen Türkiye’de kadınların güçlendirilmesini hedefleyen projeler ve pratikler hakkında temel bir akademik çalışma mevcut değildir. Bu konuda var olan projeler ise yeterli derinlikte olmayıp genellikle güçlendirme kavramının imkanı ve önemi üzerine odaklanmıştır. Aynı şekilde Türkiye’de bu amaçla faaliyete geçirilen projeler büyük bir başarı gösterememiştir. Bu çerçevede, bu tezin temel amacı kadınların güçlendirilmesini hedefleyen sivil toplum projelerinin sonuçlarını incelemek ve değerlendirmektir. Bu amaç güçlendirme kavramının genel bir değerlendirmesini ve eleştirel bir bakış açısını da gerektirmektedir.

Güçlendirme kavramının tartışılmasının ön koşulu Türkiye’de kavramının resmi kurumlar ve sivil toplum örgütleri tarafından nasıl tanımlandığının de incelenmesidir. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı tarafından yayınlanan 2018-2023 Strateji Planı (2018) güçlendirilme kavramına önemli bir yer verir ve kadınların güçlendirilmesinin Türkiye’nin gelişmesi için öneminin altını çizer. Ancak bu raporda kadınların güçlendirilmesi yukarıdan aşağıya tanımlanır, kadının eylemliliği yok sayılır ve plan yeteri kadar somut amaçlar ortaya koyamaz. Diğer yandan Strateji Planı sivil toplum kuruluşlarına bu süreçte büyük rol biçer, onlara sorumluluğun büyük bir kısmını yükler. Kadının güçlendirilmesi hem STK hem de resmi kurumların projelerinde önemli bir yer tutsa da, mutlak bir güçlendirmenin sağlanmasının temel koşulu kadınların güçlenmesini engelleyen ataerkil yapıda gömülü kurumların, pratiklerin,

stratejilerin ve politikaların dönüştürülmesi ile ancak mümkün olabilir. Bu çerçevede tez önem kazanmaktadır zira tezin temel amacı STK'ların projelerinin incelenmesi, güçlendirme kavramının kavramsallaştırılması ve uygulanması ile alakalı eleştirel bir değerlendirmenin yapılmasıdır.

Var olan projelerin değerlendirilmesi açısından güçlendirme kavramı üzerine kavramsal bir tartışma yürütmek önem kazanmaktadır. Bu tez, Kabeer'in (2001) anlayışı içerisinde güçlendirme kavramının kaynaklar, kazanımlar ve eylemlilik çerçevesinde tanımlanması dayanır. Bu anlayış içerisinde kadının eylemliliği güçlendirme süreci içerisinde dönüşür ve kadının eylemliliği güçlendirme kavramının özü olarak konumlanır. Diğer yandan kadınların eylemliliğini görmezden gelen projeler üsten inme bir yapıda olmakla birlikte sürdürülebilir bir hal alamazlar. Bu tezin yapısı Türkiye'de 2014-2018 yılları arasında yapılan projelerin kadınların güçlenmesinde başarılı olup olmadıkları sorusu üzerine temellenmiştir. Bu soru ayrıca birçok alt başlıktan da oluşmaktadır. Çalışmanın bir başka alt sorusunu hangi güç yapılarında STK'lar ve resmi kurumların projelerindeki güçlendirme kavramın şekillendirildiği oluşturulmaktadır. Güçlendirme projelerinin farklılıkları ve bu farklılıkların STK'ların ideolojik çeşitlilikleri çerçevesinde nasıl kurgulandığı sorusu tartışmanın bir diğer parçasını oluşturmaktadır. Bu sorular üzerine yoğunlaşan bu çalışma feminist bir bakış açısıyla bahsi geçen olgulara yaklaşmaktadır. Çalışma güçlendirmenin çok-boyutlu, bağlama duyarlı ve eylemlilik, süreç gibi kavramları temele alır bir biçimde yeniden kurgulanmasının gerekliliğini öne sürmektedir. Dolayısıyla çalışma bu bağlamlarda kavramsal ve teorik bir tartışma yürütmektedir.

Kavramsal tartışmalar bir yandan güçlendirme, eylemlilik, süreçsellik gibi kavramları temel alırken bir yandan da çağdaş durumda feminizmin STKlaşması noktası üzerinde durmaktadır. İlk olarak, Bennett'in (2002) tanımladığı biçimiyle güçlendirme sosyal içerme ile benzer olmakla birlikte, ayrı ayrı ele alınması gereken kavramlardır. İki kavram da kapasitelerin artırılması vurgu yapsa da ilki aşağıdan yukarıya bireyler ve gruplar ile çalışırken ikinci kavram yukardan gelecek sistematik değişikliklerle ilgilidir. Bu noktada hane, akrabalık ilişkileri gibi ataerkil yapılar kadınları

güçsüzleştirmektedir. Güçlendirme kavramı bu yapıların dönüşümünü gerektirir. Bu dönüşüm esas olmakla birlikte, kadınların algıları ve bakış açılarında da bir dönüşümü gerekli kılar. Kadınların karar alması, farklı opsiyonlar ile karşılaşması ve bu süreçlerde kontrol yeteneğine sahip olması oldukça önemlidir. Bu çerçevede literatürde güçlendirme kavramı tartışılıyor olsa da kavramlar üzerinde bir konsensus kurulmuş değildir ve kavramlar yeterli açıklığa henüz kavuşamamışlardır.

Malhotra (2002) güçlendirme kavramı üzerine konsensus kurulan iki nokta tanımlar. Bunlardan ilki güçlendirmenin bir süreç olduğu ve ikincisi insan eylemliliğinin kavramın yapısındaki önemidir. Bu noktada insan eylemliliği bireysel bir fenomen olmaktan ziyade kolektiftir. Ancak insan eylemliliğine yapılan vurgu tek başına yeterli olmamaktadır zira eylemliliğin yanı sıra kaynaklar da güçlendirmenin gerçekleşmesi için önemli bir nokta oluşturur, kaynaklar seçenekleri belirleyen bir fonksiyona sahip olmaları sebebiyle önem kazanır. Kaynaklar güçlendirmede bir katalist görevi görmektedir ve güçlendirmenin koşullarını oluştururlar. Yalnız bir katalist olmakla sınırlı olan kaynaklar tek başına güçlendirme için yeterli değildir zira kaynaklar güçlendirmenin gerek koşulunu oluştursalar da yeter koşulunu oluşturmazlar. Yani güçlendirme kadının eylemliliğini gerektirir. Son olarak, güçlendirme çerçevesinde literatürde tartışılan bir başka kavramı da kazanımlar oluşturmaktadır. Kazanımlar güçlendirme sürecinde ortaya çıkan seçeneklerin sonuçları olarak tanımlanmıştır (Kabeer, 1999).

Değişkenlerin genel-geçer bir biçimde, bağlamdan bağımsız olarak bu kavramlarla ilişkilendirilmesi mümkün değildir. Her değişken bağlamdan bağlama farklı bir kavramla ilişkiye girebilir. Dolayısıyla güçlendirmenin göstergeleri karşılıklı ilişkileri çerçevesinde bağlam içerisinde anlam kazanırlar (Malhotra, 2002, s. 8). İlişkiselliğin önemi bu çalışmanın konfigürasyonel bir yöntemle çalışmasına sebep olmuştur. Diğer yandan güçlendirme kavramı monolitik bir kavram olmaktan ziyade çok boyutludur. Malhotra'nın tanımladığı biçimde "economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological" [ekonomik, sosyo-kültürel, ailesel/kişilerarası,

hukuki, politik ve psikolojik] (2002, s. 13) boyutlara sahiptir. Aynı şekilde bu boyutların hane, topluluk ve daha geniş olarak gruplandırılması da mümkündür

Güçlendirme kavramında gömülü halde bulunan bir diğer kavram da güçtür, güç güçlendirmenin gerçekleştiği ataerkil toplumdaki ilişkiler çerçevesinde anlam kazanır. Feminist teori de benzer şekilde güç ilişkilerinde büyük önem atfeder. Ancak güç kavramı yine literatürde farklı şekillerde tanımlanmıştır. Liberal feminist perspektif gücü bölüştürülen bir fenomen olarak alırken eleştirel yaklaşımların bu tanımlamaya karşı çıkarlar. Young (1990) gücün bu şekilde tanımlanmasının onu bir şeye indirgemek olması, bu tanımın gücü statik olarak ele alması ve atomistik bakması çerçevesinde bu yaklaşımı eleştirir zira güç bir şey olmaktan ziyade ilişkilerde kendini göstermektedir. Diğer yandan eleştirel literatürde güç; baskı, egemenlik, ataerki, boyun eğdirme olarak ele alınmaktadır. Aynı şekilde güçlendirme kavramı da literatürde güç ile ilişkili olarak tanımlanır. Wattenberg'in (1990) öne sürdüğü biçimiyle bu şekilde bir tanım gücü boyun eğdirme ve egemenlik yerine dönüştürücü güç olarak ele almaktadır. Bu şekilde bir tanımlama feminist hareketin, güç kavramına diğerlerinin güçsüzleştirilmesi yerine toplumsal yapının dönüştürülmesi ve kolektif bir güçlenme şeklinde yaklaşmasına olanak tanır. Bu noktada kadınları var olan yapının basit bir kurbanı olarak görmek yerine kadınların aktif, eyleyici durumuna vurgu yapmak gerekir ki bu gücün dönüştürücü potansiyeli ile alakalıdır. Bu tarz bir yaklaşım dönüştürücü potansiyel üzerine temellenmesi sebebiyle gücü bir süreç olarak ele almaktadır. Ataerkil toplumun yapısal bütünlüğü bir süreç içerisinde dönüştürülmeden güçlenme anlamsız bir hale gelmektedir.

Güçlendirme kavramının neliğine ilişkin feminist literatürde de çeşitli paradigmalar bulunmaktadır. Radikal feministler geleneksel tanımıyla politika içerisinde kalmayı reddederek bireysel ve kamusal dikatomisinin reddetmenin gerekliliğine vurgu yaparlar. Birçok araştırmacı kadının aktif eylemliliğine vurgu yapar. Diğer yandan Batı temelli olan ve bunu eleştiren çeşitli paradigmalar farklı yaklaşımlar getirirler. Batı temelli yaklaşımlar Batı'nın deneyimleri üzerinden bütün deneyimleri değerlendirme ve Batı'yı model alma eğilimindeyken, post-kolonyal ve post-modern feminist



yaklaşımlar Batı'nın bu noktadaki hegemonyasını eleştirir. Bu noktada kadınların oryantal bağlamda homojenize bir karaktere sahip olmadığını ve ataerkinin kurbanı pasif varlıklar olmadıklarını vurgulamak gerekmektedir. Üçüncü Dünya ülkelerinde kadınların pasif objeler olarak görülmesi oldukça sıkıntılıdır zira güçlendirme farklı bağlamlarda farklı anlamlar ifade etmektedir (Lunden, 2004). Bu çalışmanın bağlamı ve incelediği evren çerçevesinde bu tarz bir vurgunun yapılması önem arz etmektedir.

Dahası güçlendirme kavramı çeşitli anlamlarla ilişkilendirilmektedir. Genel anlayış güçlendirmeyi güçsüz bir durumdan güçlü bir duruma geçme olarak anlamlandırır. Bu noktada gerekli koşullar ve araçlar sayesinde kadınların güçlenmesi gerçekleşebilir. Dünya Bankası aynı şekilde güçlendirmeyi bu şekilde tanımlama eğilimindedir (Wrang, 2003). Bu tarz bir anlayış kendini gelişme projeleri ve programlarında da göstermektedir ve temelde gücün dağıtılabilecek bir şey olarak ele alınması üzerinde kuruludur. Ancak bu anlayış kadınları pasif bireyler olarak ele almaktadır. Kadınların güçlendirme projelerine katılması gerektiği ve bu şekilde güçlendirilecekleri düşünülür. Gücü bir şey olarak gören bu anlayışların aksine feminist teori güce ilişkisel bir fenomen olarak yaklaşır ve gücün kullanılmasını güçlendirme ve kontrol etme olarak ikiye ayırır, kendi bakış açısını güçlendirme ile ilişkilendirir. Aynı şekilde tepeden inmece olmanın tersine içsel bir güçlendirme anlayışına sahiptir. Aynı şekilde güçlendirme bireysel olmaktan ziyade kolektif bir fenomen olarak karşımıza çıkar. Dolayısıyla kadınlar arası iş birliğine vurgu yapar ve bu iş birliği içerisinde, bir süreç içerisinde ataerkil yapının değişimini hedefler. Yaygın anlayışın mekanistik ve araçsalcı yaklaşımın aksine sürecin ve eylemliliğin önemine vurgu yapar, kazanımlardan ziyade kazanımların gömülü olduğu süreci önemser.

Feminist teori eylemliliğe vurgu yapması çerçevesinde ilişkiselliğe de vurgu yapar. Shaheed (2013) güçlendirmenin en önemli düzeyinin ilişkiselliğin gerçekleştiği alan olması sebebiyle orta düzey olduğunu öne sürer. Bu çerçevede makro düzey politikalar tek başlarına problematik bir yapı oluştururlar zira bağlama gerekli önemi vermezler. Aynı şekilde sadece makro düzey bir değişimi hedefleyen politikalar kadınların hayatında çok fazla bir değişikliğe sebep olamazlar zira kadınların ataerkil hakimiyet

ile en çok karşı karşıya kaldıkları alanı da orta düzey oluşturmaktadır. Bu noktada güçlendirme ancak kadınların kendi hayatları ve gündelik pratikleri çerçevesinde uygulanabilir bir hal alır ve güçlendirmeyi sadece makro düzey olgularla anlayan yaklaşımlar bu değişimi sağlamakta yetersizdir.

Güçlendirme kavramının farklı düzeylerde ele alınması da feminist teori açısından önem teşkil etmektedir. Birçok farklı feminist araştırmacı güçlendirme kavramını farklı düzeylerde tanımlar (Kabeer, 1999; Kabeer, 2001; Shaheed, 2013; Rowlands, 1998; Battiwala, 1994). Temel kategorileri ulusal ve uluslararası makro düzey; ilişkisel, orta düzey; mikro, kişisel, bireysel düzeyler oluşturur. Bu noktada özellikle son iki düzey önem arz etmektedir. Dolayısıyla güçlendirmenin katılımcı yapısı oldukça önemlidir. Katılımsalcılık birçok projede de vurgulanan bir noktadır ancak bu projeler genellikle katılımcılığı oldukça kısıtlı bir düzeyde ele almaktadır ve onu kadınların projelere ilişkin yorumlarını almakla sınırlamaktadır. Bu tarz bir anlayış gerçek anlamda bir katılımcılığı içermemektedir.

Bunun tersine kadınların eylemliliğini öne çıkaran bir yaklaşım gerekmektedir ki bu tarz bir yaklaşım da kadınların kolektif bir eyleyen olarak ele alınmasını gerektirir. Kadınlar ırk, sınıf, etnik köken, vs. gibi diğer değişkenlerden bağımsız olarak birleşebilir ve bir kolektivite oluşturabilirler. Bu noktada eylemliliği vurgulanan kadınların güçlenmesinin temelde kendileri tarafından gerçekleşmesi gerekmektedir ve dışsal faktörler bu süreçte ancak kaynaklar olarak rol alabilir. Bu noktada eylemlilik kadınların bir aktör olarak eyleyebilme kapasitesi olarak tanımlanabilir (Hay, 2002; Hinterberger, 2013) Dolayısıyla kadının eylemliliğine önem vermek, kadınları sosyal ve politik boyutlarda görünür aktörler haline de getirmektedir.

Eylemlilik üzerine bir diğer tartışma onun yapı ile ilişkisi çerçevesinde sürdürülür. Eylemlilik ve eyleyenin etkileşime geçtiği yapı da birbirinden bağımsız faktörler değildir. Eyleyen yapıya bağımlı bir şekilde, ondan ayrıksı olmadan, eylemektedir. Bu ikilik de yapı ve eyleyen ilişkisi üzerine bir tartışmaya yol açmaktadır. İnsanların

yaşadıkları yapıyı değiştirme potansiyellerinin olup olmadığı önemli bir soru olarak karşımıza çıkar. Teori bakışını eylemlilikten ayırıp tamamen ataerkil topluma odakladığında bu jest karşımıza belirlenimci bir tablo çıkaracaktır. Bu tarz bir tablo da kadınların belli bir eyleyen olarak dönüştürücü gücünün yok sayılmasına sebep olmaktadır (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017). Bu noktada eleştirel feminist teori kadının eylemliliğini yapıdan bağımsız olarak eyleyebilmesi ve düşünebilmesi ile ilişkilendirir (Hinterberger, 2013).

Ancak feminist teorinin kadınları ataerkil yapı tarafından boyunduruk altına alınmış olarak görmesi ile eylemlilik nasıl bağdaşabilir? Bunu aşmak için Isaacs (2002, s. 130) iki farklı eyleyeni, birbirinden ayırır. Bunlardan ilki geleneksel “moral agency” [ahlaki eylemlilik] iken bir diğeri “care-based agency” [ilgi-temelli eylemlilik] dir (s. 93). Bu ikinci kavramsallaştırma ilişkisel kendi ile alakalıdır. Kendilikler birbirinden ayrı bireyler olmaktan ziyade ilişkisellik kendiliğin ne olduğunu belirler. Öznellik ancak kolektif olarak ve ataerkil yapıya karşı bir eylemin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ataerkil yapı kadınları toplumsal cinsiyet temelli bir sosyalleşmenin içine girmeye zorlar. Kadınların pasif olması ve bağımlılığı baskılanır. Bunun aksine ilgi-temelli eylemlilik üzerine kurulu yaklaşım kolektif bir biçimde hareket eden kadınların yapıyı dönüştürmesi ve kendilerine biçilen rolü kabul etmemesi üzerine kuruludur.

Bir başka teorik tartışma feminist hareketin STKlaşması üzerinedir. Lang bu STKlaşma sürecini STK’ların profesyonelleşmesi, bürokratikleşmesi ve kolektif eylemin de bu hale bürünmesi olarak nitelendirir (Bernal & Grewal, 2014’te belirtildiği üzere, s. 305). Bu noktada STKlılaşma süreci küreselleşme neoliberalizm ile de ilişki halindedir. Bu aynı zamanda STK’ların da devletten bağımsız olarak analiz edilememesi anlamına gelmektedir (Bernal & Grewal, 2014). Devletin temel ulusal donör olması sebebiyle de STK’ların ondan tamamen bağımsız hareket edememeye başlamaktadır ve bu da STK’ların alternatif söylemler oluşturarak devleti eleştirmelerini engellemektedir (Keysan, 2016). Sonuç olarak, 1980 ve özellikle 1990 sonrası Türkiye’de STK’ların artışı ve projelerin çeşitlenmesini gözlemlemek

mümkün olsa da bu projeler çoğunlukla kadınların yaşamlarını dönüştürmekte yeteri kadar başarılı olamamış durumdadırlar.

Bu teorik tartışmalardan sonra bu çalışma için yukarıda bahsedilen eylemlilik kavramsallaştırmasının güçlendirme kavramı ile ilişki içerisinde operasyonelleşmesi gereklidir ve çalışmanın yöntemsel seçimi de benzer şekilde yukarıda bahsedilen tartışmalar tarafından şekillendirilmektedir. Yöntemsel olarak feminist perspektifin bir getirisi olarak bu çalışma nitel bir analize dayanmakla birlikte derinlemesine ve yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler üzerine oturmaktadır. Bu yöntemsel seçimde çalışmanın kadınların hayatlarına ve deneyimlerine yaptığı vurgu belirleyicidir. Diğer boyutlar arasında çalışma, temelde sosyo-kültürel boyut üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Diğer yandan, operasyonelleştirme sürecinde bağlama duyarlı indekslerin seçilmesi önem kazanmaktadır zira eylemlilik de bağlamla ilişki içerisinde kendini göstermektedir. Bu noktada çeşitle ölçümler ve indeksler, çeşitli kurumlar ve STK'lar tarafından kullanılmaktadır. Örnek olarak UNDP GEM endeksini kullanmaktadır ve bu indeksin temel odağı ekonomik güçlendirme ve kadınların katılımı üzerinedir. Ancak bu indeks kişisel, hane, vb. gibi düzeyleri yok sayması sebebiyle eleştirilmektedir (Chambers & Wieringa, 2003). Bunun dışında güçlendirme kavramının her boyutu için farklı indeksler kullanılmaktadır. Burada önemli olan indekslerin bağlama duyarlı bir biçimde kullanılmasıdır. İndeksler arası çapraz kontrolün yapılması da önemlidir. Bu çalışma kompozit bir indeks olması, eylemliliğe vurgu yapması ve bağlama duyarlı olması sebebiyle Oxfam indeksine (2017) dayanmaktadır. Bu haliyle Oxfam feminist perspektife en uygun seçeneği oluşturmaktadır.

Oxfam (2017) kişisel, ilişkisel ve çevresel düzeyleri içine katan, eylemlilik temelinde düzenlenen bir indekstir. Bu noktada kişisel düzey kadınların düşünceleri ve bilgileri, özgüven, toplumsal cinsiyet temelli şiddete bakış açıları vb. boyutlardan oluşmaktadır. İlişkisel düzey ise kadınların içinde bulundukları topluluk ile ilişkileri, hane ile ilişkileri, bağımsızlık seviyeleri, sosyal kapitaleri ve politik katılımları ile tanımlanabilir. Son olarak çevresellik düzeyi politik düzlemde etki, kaynakları erişim ve toplumsal dönüşümdeki roller çerçevesinde özetlenebilir. Bu proje bu boyutların

hepsini ilişkisel ve bağlama duyarlı bir biçimde ölçmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Dolayısıyla görüşmelerdeki sorular bu düzeyler çerçevesinde gruplanarak sorulmuştur.

Diğer yandan teorik tartışmalarda bahsedilen kavramlar görüşmeler açısından çeşitli şekillerde operasyonalize edilmiştir. İlk olarak güçlendirme kavramı bağlama duyarlı bir biçimde yukarıda sözü edilen düzeyler çerçevesinde ele alınmaktadır. Dolayısıyla güçlendirme kavramı üç düzeyde ve kadınların eylemliliği ile ilişki içerisinde tanımlanmaktadır. Eylemlilik ise ataerkil toplumda var olan normlara ve yapılara karşı kadınların eylemesi ile açıklanabilir. Aynı şekilde eylemlilik kolektif eylemden de bağımsız değildir. Üçüncü olarak kadın STK'ları özel olarak kadınların sorunlarına eğilen, sivil toplumun parçası olan kar amacı gütmeyen kurumlar olarak tanımlanmıştır ve bu çalışmada devletten tamamen bağımsız olarak ele alınmazlar. Son olarak Kadınların güçlenmesini hedefleyen projeler kadınların sorunlarını çözmeyi amaçlayan, STK'ların farklı ulusal ve uluslararası gelişme programları çerçevesinde, projeleri için kaynak olarak uyguladıkları programlardır.

Bu tanımlar sonrasında bu çalışma Ankara'da konumlanan ve ideolojik olarak farklı karakteristiklere sahip beş kurum ve STK'nın seçilmesi çerçevesinde tasarlanmıştır. Bu kurum ve STK'lar: Türk Kadın Birliği, Türkiye The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Yenimahalle Belediyesi AB Ofisi, İYADER ve Aile Bakanlığı Ankara İl Müdürlüğü AB Ofisi'dir. Bu STK'ların aktiviteleri ve vizyonları incelenmiştir. Aynı şekilde STK liderleri, proje koordinatörleri, katılımcıları ile derinlemesine ve yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Liderlerin 2014 ve 2018 yılları arasında en önemli gördükleri projeler seçilmiştir ve proje koordinatörlerine de buradan ulaşılmıştır. Bu projeler: SEDAV ve İstanbul Sözleşmesi Yaygınlaştırma Projesi, 'Benim Hikayem' Projesi, Feminist Yayıncılık Kampı, İş Hayatında Yeni Atılan ve İş Kurma Başlangıcında Olan Kadınlar İçin Girişimcilikte Başarıyı Güçlendirme Projesi, İYA-GENDER Projesi, Şiddet Mağduru Kadınların Sosyo-Ekonomik Destek Sistemleri Geliştirme Modeli Projesi, PANDORA Projesi'dir. Bundan sonra, bu projelerin koordinatörü olan sekiz kişi ile görüşme yapılmıştır. Aynı şekilde proje koordinatörlerinin yardımı aracılığıyla katılımcılarla iletişim sağlanmıştır. Burada proje koordinatörleri hangi katılımcılarla

görüőüleceęi konusunda yönlendirmeye alıőmıő olsa da bilimsel yanlılıktan kaçınmak adına bu yönlendirmelerden sakınılmaya alıőılmıőtır. alıőmada sekiz katılımcı ile görüşme saęlanabilmiőtır. Süre boyunca güvenin kazanılması ve daha doęru sonuçlara ulaőılması adına bütün görüşmeler iki veya üç kez tekrarlanmıőtır.

Yukarıda bahsi geen üç düzeyle ilişki içerisinde görüşmelerdeki sorular hazırlanmıőtır. Katılımcıların bakıő açıları, düşünceleri, bilgi seviyeleri, kişisel kapasiteleri, rutinleri ve pratiklerine ilişkin sorular kişiselilik başlıęı altında sorulmuőtur. Katılımcıların sosyal ve politik baęlantıları, hane içindeki kontrol seviyeleri ve kararları, ekonomik kapasiteleri ve katıldıkları projeler ile alakalı düşüncelerini inceleyen sorular ilişkisellik başlıęı altında yer almaktadır. Son olarak katılımcıların toplumla alakalı genel fikirleri ve kadın hareketine bakıő açılarına ilişkin sorular çevresel düzeyin altında ele alınmıőtır. Dięer yandan uzmanlara sorulan sorular da üç kategori altında ele alınabilir. Bunlardan ilki STK'lar ile alakalıdır; vizyonları, amaları ve katılımcılarına ilişkin sorular bu başlıkta sorulmuőtur. Projelerle alakalı sorular; onların katkıları, farklılıkları ve finansmanları ile alakalı sorular bir başka başlık oluőurmaktadır. Son olarak uzmanların kadın hareketi ile alakalı fikirleri ve Türkiye'de buna ilişkin durumla ilgili düşünceleri soruların sorulduęu bir başka başlıęı oluőurmaktadır.

alıőma bu teorik ve yöntemsel çereve de geliőtirilmiő olup sonuçları literatüre eőitli katkılarda bulunmuőtur. İlk olarak görülmüőtür ki Türkiye'de kadınlar kendi hayatları üzerinde yeterli kontrole sahip deęillerdir. Aynı őekilde uzmanlar Türkiye'de yasal çereve ve uygulanıőı arasındaki farklılıklara dikkat ekmiőlerdir ki bu da sivil toplum ve dięer boyutların yasal çereveden farklı bir őekilde geliőtięini ve bu boyutların geliőtirilmesi gerektięini göstermektedir. Türkiye'deki ataerkil, geleneksel ve erkek egemen kùltür vurgulanmıőtır. Bir başka sonuç kadınlar arasındaki kuőaksal baęlarla ilgilidir. Eski kuőaklar ve yeniler arasındaki farklılıkların benzer őekilde altı izilmiőtır.

Farklı ideolojilere sahip STK'ların olduğu görülmekle birlikte bu ideolojik farklılıkların STK'ların amaçlarına ve projelerine yansıdığı görülmüştür. Örnek olarak, liberal feminist ideolojiye daha yakın olanlar kadınların hakları konusunda bir farkındalık yaratmayı amaçlarken, başka STK'lar ataerkil yapıyı sorgulamaya ve dönüştürmeye çalışmaktadır. Dolayısıyla güçlendirme kavramı farklı bağlamlarda ve çeşitli bakış açılarına göre farklı anlamlara gelmektedir. Bir diğer yandan Türkiye'de STK'ların güçlendirme kavramını eylemlilik veya kazanımlar yerine daha çok kaynaklar ile sınırladığı ve bu boyutu geliştirmeye çalıştıkları görülmüştür. Benzer şekilde projelerdeki uzmanların proje süreci sonrasında katılımcılar ile ilişkilerini genellikle devam ettirmediği anlaşılmıştır ki bu da güçlendirme projelerinin yeteri kadar dinamik süreçler olarak görülmemesi ile alakalıdır. Bu projeler genellikle kısa dönemli olmakla birlikte donörlere raporlar yazıldıktan sonra projeler rafa kaldırılmaktadır. Dahası, projelerin eylemlilik kısmının genellikle kadınların omuzlarına yüklediği ve bu konuda sorumluluk alınmadığı görülmüştür. Projelerin sürdürülebilirliği de genel olarak bir problem oluşturmakta ve sürdürülebilirlik sadece katılımcılarla ilişkinin projeler sonrası devam etmesi olarak anlaşılmaktadır. Ancak, projede rol alan koordinatör ve asistanların finansal olarak işlerine bağımlı olmaları dışında işleri konusunda oldukça tutkulu oldukları da gözlemlenmiştir.

Çalışmanın sonuçlarını kişisel, ilişkisel ve çevresel olarak gruplandırarak da ele almak teorik çerçeve içerisinde önemlidir. İlk olarak kişisel düzey içerisinde incelenecek olursa birçok sonuçla karşılaşılacaktır. Çalışmaya katılan kadınlar 20-41 yaşları arasında olmakla birlikte biri dışında geri kalanlar üniversite mezunudur ama birçoğu herhangi bir işe sahip değildir. Ancak çalışma göstermiştir ki STK projelerine katılmak iş bulmak için bir avantaj sağlamaktadır, birçok kadın projelere bağlantı kurmak ve profesyonel özgeçmişlerini geliştirmek amacıyla katılmaktadır. Katılımcıların bir çoğu kişisel vizyona sahip olmakla birlikte yetenekleri ve kapasiteleri konusunda farkındalıkları yüksektir. Aynı şekilde katılımcıların büyük kısmı kritik durumlarda kendi kendilerine karar alabildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Eğitim katılımcılar tarafından kişisel farkındalık ve kendini gerçekleştirme açısından çok kayda değer görülmüştür ve iyi bir evlilikten çok daha önemli olduğu vurgulanmıştır, ekonomik bağımsızlık da eğitimden sonra gelmektedir. Görüşülen kişiler ataerkil yapının, cinsiyet

eşitsizliklerinin; işlerindeki gelişimlerini ve liderlik pozisyonuna gelmelerini engellediğini belirtmişlerdir. Şiddete karşı ise farklı tutumlar gözlemlenmiştir, bazı kadınlar belli durumlarda şiddeti makul bulsalar da bazıları bunu hiçbir durumda kabul edilemez olarak nitelemişlerdir. Son olarak araştırma göstermiştir ki mikro ve makro düzey projelerin kişisel düzeye katkısı tamamen farklı olmakla birlikte genellikle mikro düzey projeler kişisel düzeyde katkı sağlayabilmektedir.

İlişkisel düzeyden bakılacak olursa yine birçok netice karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Çalışma göstermektedir ki ilişkisel düzeye hem makro hem mikro ölçekli projeler katkı sağlamaktadır. Diğer yandan, katılımcıların birçoğu STK'larda ve siyasi partilerde aktif rol almaktadır. Bunun sosyalleşme, iş bulma, vb. gibi farklı sebepleri bulunmaktadır. Katılımcıların tamamı politik bir farkındalığa sahip olmakla birlikte kararlarını ideolojik duruşları çerçevesinde almaktadırlar. Şiddete karşı katılımcıların farklı çözümleri olmakla birlikte çok büyük bir kısmı bununla baş etmekte STK'ları başvurma'nın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Başka bir taraftan, kadınların STK'larda ve projelerde görmek istediği şeylerden ilki sürdürülebilirlik ve projelerin devamlılığıdır. Katılımcıların biri hariç tamamı bu projelerin içsel güçlendirmeye odaklanması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Son olarak katılımcıların beklentisinin aksine; ekonomik bağımsızlık ve STK'lara, kurumsal yapılara katılım arasında bir ilişki bulunamamıştır.

Çevresel düzeydeki ilişkileri özetlemek gerekirse vurgulanabilecek çeşitli noktalar vardır. Hiçbir katılımcı Türkiye'de kadınların durumunun iyi olduğunu düşünmemektedir. Sosyal değişim açısından kadınların en çok vurguladığı noktalara bakılacak olursa bunlar: erken evlilik, eğitime erişim, doğurganlık oranı, ekonomik bağımsızlık ve kamusal alanda görünürlüktür. Katılımcılar Türkiye'de kadın ve erkeklerin aynı haklara sahip olmakla birlikte aynı fırsatlara sahip olmadığını belirtmiştir. Ayrımcılığın cinsiyetçi pratikler, geleneksel kültürel değerler ve ataerkil yapının sonucu olarak ortaya çıktığının altı çizilmiştir. Sadece iki katılımcı devletten isteklerini somut bir biçimde dile getirmiştir, bunlar: kadınlar için eğitim hakları, kreşlerin açılması ve erkeklere çocuk bakım izni verilmesidir.



Genel olarak bakacak olursak ideolojik olarak farklı noktalarda konumlanan STK'lar ve katılımcıları arasında bahsi geçen üç düzeyde çok büyük farklılıklara rastlanmamıştır. Ancak mikro ve makro düzey projeler ve sonuçları arasında farklılıklar gözlemlenmiştir. Aynı şekilde projelerin kadınları var olan yaşam koşullarının ötesine taşımakta yetersiz olduğu görülmüştür. Projelerin çevresel ve kişisel düzeyde kadınların hayatına derin etkileri olmamakla birlikte ilişkisel düzeyde değişim yarattıkları gözlenmiştir.

Özetlenecek olursa, bu tez güçlendirme projelerinin ve onların uygulanış biçiminin sonuçlarını sorunsallaştırmakta ve araştırmaktadır. Tez dışsal müdahaleciler yerine kadınların güçlendirmeyi nasıl anladığı üzerine kurulmuştur. Literatürdeki bir çok çalışma kadınların eylemliliğini bu noktada göz ardı etmektedir. Bu çalışma bunların tersine eylemliliği, bağlama özgü karakteristikleri vurgulamakta ve güçlendirme kavramını çok boyutlu olarak ele almaktadır. Güçlendirmenin kavramsal niteliği yöntemsel olarak sürece odaklanmayı ve nitel bir araştırmayı gerektirmiştir.

Çalışma çeşitli sonuçların çıkarılmasına olanak sağlamıştır. STK'ların devletle ilişkileri çerçevesinde kaynak buldukları ve makro projeler gerçekleştirebildikleri ya da uluslararası organizasyonlardan krediler alarak genelde mikro projeler gerçekleştirdikleri görülmüştür. Ancak makro projeler kadınları sadece çevresel düzeyde güçlendirirken, mikro projelerin ilişkisel ve kişisel düzeylerde güçlendirdiği görülmüştür. Diğer yandan güçlendirme projelerinin sağlanan kaynaklar çerçevesinde katılımcı kadınlardan çok STK'ların işine yaradığı da gözlemlenmiştir. Projelerin kadınları izole halde görmesi, onlara ataerkinin kurbanları olarak yaklaşması ve eylemliliğe gereken vurguyu yapmaması sebebiyle projelerin sürdürülebilirliğinin düşük olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Ancak bunun tersine kadınlar eylemlilikleri çerçevesinde yapıyla ilişkiye girer, onu dönüştürür ve onunla pazarlığa girerler. Diğer yandan kadınları güçlendirme projelerine erkeklerin katılımının sağlanmaması kadınların hayatında yeterli etkinin oluşmaması sonucunu vermektedir ve sürdürülebilirliği azaltmaktadır. Son olarak araştırma sorusuna geri dönecek olursak, genel olarak kadınların güçlendirmenin dolaysız öznesi olmadığı görülmüştür ve güçlendirmenin

kadınların hayatının her boyutunda etkili olamadığı gözlenmiştir. Gelecekteki çalışmaların kadınların deneyimlerine vurgu yaparak ve daha geniş örnekleme çalışarak bu konuda literatüre katkı sağlamaları gerekmektedir. Bunun için farklı ve bağlama duyarla indekslerin oluşturulması ve kullanılması da önem arz etmektedir.

## F: TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM

### ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

**Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences ☐  
**Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Social Sciences ☒  
**Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics ☐  
**Enformatik Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Informatics ☐  
**Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Marine Sciences ☐

### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

**Soyadı** / Surname : Baherirad  
**Adı** / Name : Sara  
**Bölümü** / Department: Gender and Women's Studies

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS** (**İngilizce** / English): THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S NGOs IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** **Yüksek Lisans** / Master ☒ **Doktora** / PhD ☐

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır.** / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide. ☒
2. **Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two years**. \* ☐
3. **Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work For period of **six months**. \* ☐

*\* Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir.*

*A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.*

**Yazarın imzası** / Signature

**Tarih** / Date