FEMINIST DISCUSSIONS ON THE HEADSCARF PROBLEM IN TURKEY: EXAMINATION OF THREE WOMEN'S JOURNALS; *FEMINIST YAKLAŞIMLAR, KADIN ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ, AMARGİ*

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to explore the stance of feminist movement towards a dialogue with Islamist women and the 'headscarf problem' in Turkey in 2000s. This is done by examining three magazines which claim to contribute to feminist movement and women's studies in Turkey, namely *Feminist Yaklaşımlar*, *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* and *Amargi*, all of which have been started to be published in 2006. It tries to explain the way in which feminists framed the issue has changed since the 1980s and 1990s, when the feminist movement and the debates on headscarves were on the rise in Turkey. In order to understand the shift of feminist discourse(s) on the headscarf issue, it also tries to explain how the women's movement and women's status in Turkey have transformed since the 19th century, along with the debates on the headscarf.

Key words: feminism, feminist journals, headscarf problem, Islamist women, Ottoman feminism and women's movement in Turkey

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ BAŞÖRTÜSÜ SORUNU ÜZERİNE FEMİNİST TARTIŞMALAR: ÜÇ KADIN DERGİSİ ÜZERİNE BİR İNCELEME; *FEMINIST YAKLAŞIMLAR*, *KADIN ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ*, *AMARGİ*

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Bu tezin amacı, 2000'li yıllarda Türkiye'deki feminist hareketin İslamcı kadınlarla diyaloğa ve 'başörtüsü sorunu'na yaklaşımlarını araştırmaktır. Bu açıdan Türkiye'deki feminist harekete ve kadın çalışmaları alanına katkı yapmak amacıyla 2006'dan sonra yayınlanmaya başlanmış olan üç dergi, *Feminist Yaklaşımlar, Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* ve *Amargi* incelenmektedir. Araştırma, Türkiye'deki feminist hareketin yükselişte olduğu ve başörtüsü sorunu tartışmalarının arttığı 1980 ve 1990'lardan beri feministlerin konuyu çerçevelendirme şeklinin nasıl değiştiğini açıklamaya çalışır. Feminist söylem(ler)in başörtüsü konusundaki değişimini anlayabilmek için, başörtüsü tartışmalarının dönüşümünün yanısıra, 19. Yüzyıldan itibaren Türkiye'deki kadın hareketinin ve kadının statüsünün nasıl dönüştüğünü de inceler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: feminizm, feminist dergiler, başörtüsü sorunu, İslamcı kadınlar, Osmanlı feminizmi ve Türkiye'de kadın hareketi

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women' status has been the locus where conflicting ideologies could voice themselves in Turkey, since the late periods of Ottoman Empire. Whether it was Islamist conservatives or reformers who defended that the society should be modernized through Westernization, the status of women in society and their public visibility had been important issues where these ideologies could define themselves and struggle with each other. As Şeni (1995) points out Women's clothing has always symbolized something more than women's situation in society, rather it became an emblem for whether one is for or against modernization. Thus, veiling of women has emerged as the most important topic within these debates, especially after the establishment of Turkish Republic, when secularism entailed strict cleansing of religious symbols from the public sphere. Veiling was "perceived to symbolize the sign of the rejected of Ottoman past and backwardness; while unveiling marked the commitment of women to new reforms, to the new secular regime, principles of gender equality, and development" (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008: 519). Although the root of debates on veiling goes back to the late 19th century in the Ottoman Empire, the ideal image of the Turkish woman constructed by the state elites through what came to be known as 'Kemalist reforms' in Turkey reinforced the symbolism of 'the veiled woman' as a reflection of backwards practices. As unveiled women with modern but modest attire were desired to represent the new citizens of the nation, veiled women were not imagined as part of the modern public sphere.

After 1980s, with the rise of political Islam and its visibility in the public sphere, headscarf of the veiled woman continues to carry a symbolism that is more complicated than the dichotomy of modern/non-modern. The debates have intensified on what they symbolized, as Islamist movements integrated into formal politics and market economy. As the number of better educated, professional veiled women started to increase, the meaning that the headscarf carried as the denial of gainings of the Republic has also started to become complicated. The secularists persisted on seeing the headscarf as a threat against the secular foundations of the state, while Islamist women increased their action in the public sphere benefiting from secular institutions. Some reformist Islamist women have also started questioning the male dominance in Islam and women's place in the movement despite the fact that they attracted reactions from their male counterparts.

During the same period, a lively feminist movement emerged in Turkey, who criticized the Kemalist state ideology as being a patriarchal order under which substantive gender equality was not achieved. They aimed for a more democratic society and inclusive public sphere in which women's demands as women could be voiced. They organized against all discrimination against women in both public and private spheres by the male dominated society. They made themselves heard through not only the rallies, the campaigns and meetings they have organized, but most importantly through the magazines they have published which were highly prolific as compared to the decades before 1980s.

It was through these magazines they tried to establish a dialogue with Islamist women who also share similar tenets in questioning the communities they are involved in. Possibility of such a dialogue, along with what stance the feminists should take with regards to the headscarf ban that had started to be imposed in universities in the 1980s and towards the Islamist movement that was on the rise were an issues of constant questioning in these magazines. Some Islamist women also approached feminists, whether by contributing to these magazines, or incorporating feminist ideas into their own.

Some observers argue that the women's movement in Turkey appeared to have lost its initial power of activism and influence in the restructuring of Turkish society at the beginning of 1990s (İlkkaracan, 1997: 8). One reason why this could be is that the feminist magazines started to close down one after the other due to financial restrictions and disagreements among them. However, it can be observed that through the magazines, the feminist intervention into public discourse strengthened civil society and deepened democratic practice, introducing a richer concept of citizenship that expands women's opportunities to raise a political voice. This was what feminist magazines aimed to the in the 1980s and 1990s; which still persists with the ones that are being published in the present.

How Islamist and feminist women approach each other has been a topic of debate in the agendas of both sides, not only in Turkey, but throughout the rest of the world. As the headscarf has become the most highlighted part of Muslim women's identity, it is not surprising that the encounter, whether in the form of a dialog or a polemic between Islamist and feminist women, has been epitomized in the issue of the headscarf. However, there are differences how women in different countries frame the issue, depending on the social and cultural contexts. In the recent years, for example, the Muslim women's veiling has become an important issue of debate in Europe. However, here it was debated as an integral part of minority issue (cf. Mandel, 1989; Shadid and Koningsveld, 2005; Moruzzi, 1994; Freedman, 2007). The framing of the debate is different in Middle Eastern countries, as well as Turkey, where Islam is the religion of majority. Dialogue and debate between feminist and 'Islamic feminists' have been reflected in magazines throughout Middle East. As Moghadam and Sadiqi (2006) point out women's strategic use of the media as a means of access to the public sphere in the Middle East provided them with voice and a platform for dissemination of women's issues.

Islamic feminism is a new feminist discourse that has emerged in different parts of the Middle East in 1990s, seek reform of religious laws contesting patriarchal

interpretations of Quran in favor of alternative interpretations and underline its emancipatory and egalitarian content. As some women generated a critique of Western feminisms and in connection activities and discourses of the secular feminisms in their own country, it rose simultaneously, first in Iran and Egypt (Badran, 2005). Although they argue for an indigenous feminism that departs from 'Western-inspired feminism', there is a dynamic trend among the "believing women who have parted company with Islamic fundamentalist movements" (Moghadam, 2004). The divide between Islamic feminists and feminists lie in the fact that Islamist feminists seek for emancipation of women within the framework of Islam; but still they draw on secular feminist arguments in the way they criticize their male counterparts and patriarchal interpretations of Islam. Observers argue that although these two groups were demarcated strictly in the past, this is no longer the case in many countries in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, since the two groups of women now have a history of cooperation, especially through women's press (cf. Barlow and Akbarzadeh, 2008; Moghadam, 2004; Bayat, 2007; Najmabadi 1998). Although differences may exist between secular and Islamic feminists, women's magazines open a dialogue between the two, and enlarge a possibility of cooperation, enabling them to realize that their problems share a common ground.

The aim of this thesis is to understand how feminist women approach Islamist women and the 'problem of headscarf' in Turkey in 2000s. It is important to note that this thesis does not aim to reproduce the existing dichotomy between 'Islamist women' and 'feminist women'. However, in order to analyze characteristics of and the dialogue between these women, the two categories have been used throughout the thesis, for women from both sides use these attributions both for themselves and each other in the literature, and became known so in the public opinion.

I will try to explore feminist approaches to Islamist women and the headscarf issue by analyzing three magazines that have started their publication life in

2006, when the debates on headscarf rose to peak one more time in the daily agenda of Turkish society. These magazines are *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar*, *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* and *Amargi*. Although two of these magazines, *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* and *Amargi*, explicitly state that they have a feminist stance, *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* is a women's studies journal that does not have such a claim. However, it is also interesting for the analysis of approach to the issue to the extent that this magazine also touches upon several aspects of women's question in Turkey which constitute the main topics of feminist discourses in Turkey. While analyzing these magazines, I will focus on how the dialogue between feminist and Islamist women is constructed**,** especially with regards to the headscarf issue, and try to compare what arguments they use in order to defend their stance.

Through a brief analysis of what earlier feminist magazines had to say on the issues of headscarf and Islamist women, I will also try to do a comparative analysis between them and the current magazines, in order to understand whether there has been a change in the way these issues are framed among feminists through 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

In Chapter 2, in order to achieve my research goal, I will try to delineate how women's status and women's movements have transformed in the Turkish society. I will try to explore the debates on women's status in late Ottoman and Early Republican Periods through the social, cultural and political changes that took place in Turkish society. I particularly focus on the issue of clothing, in order to present the continuity of the peculiarities of the Ottoman women's movement into the construction of the new Turkish woman in the early decades of the Turkish Republic In both time periods, women movements and their participation in the public sphere were made possible within the boundaries drawn by men and framework of patriarchal discourse. Women became active in the public sphere, without challenging this discourse, with the aim of encouraging national solidarity and common good. Their actions and

participation were supported by male elites as long as they not did not challenge men's reforms and ideological views.

In Chapter 3, I will focus on two issues. First, I will try to explore historical background and the present situation of the headscarf problem, the transformation the headscarf and the Islamist women's movement went through between 1980s and 2000s, due to these women's increased visibility and action in the public sphere. Second, I will try to explore the three components of the women's movement in Turkey, namely the feminist movement that has emerged in 1980s, Kemalist women's movement which carries the heritage of Kemalist women's rights discourse and the Islamist women's movement that has gained a new distinct political identity. In this chapter I will also try to explain the differences among the feminist and Kemalist women movements' approach towards headscarf problem and Islamist women some of whom have also started questioning their status in Islam and in relation to Islamist men; as well as how Islamist women perceive feminism and to what extend they incorporate its ideas into their own arguments.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the analysis of women's magazines where the issues I indicated above may be understood in a more concrete manner. I argue that feminist magazines that were published in 1980s have become important platforms where these two groups of women could further this dialogue and share their concerns and ideals both on the patriarchal structures of state and religion. Although feminist magazines are not as prolific as they were in 1980s and 1990s, since 2006 three magazines have been regularly publishing, namely, *Feminist Yaklaşımlar*, *Amargi*, and *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* (*Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* went out of circulation at the end of 2007, after 4 issues). Analysis of the representation of the headscarf issue and Islamist women in these three magazines**,** all of which state that they have the aim to contribute to women's and feminist movements in Turkey, are significant in order to understand how Islamist women and the headscarf problem are being perceived by feminists, and whether they differ from how it was discussed in older

feminist magazines. Through this analysis, I aim to contribute to the studies on how headscarf problem is being understood by the state and the society in the changing social and political context since the 1980s, as well as the similarities, differences and the contradictions of different sections of the women's movement in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD

The present discourse on women and gender roles in Turkey has its roots in the 19th century debates and discourses on modernism, westernization, Islamism and nationalism. Therefore, it can be argued that in order to understand the present day women's movement and the current debates on the headscarf problem in Turkey, the roots of the movement should be analyzed, starting with the developments that took place in the Ottoman society in the late 19th century. The present debates clearly carry the traces of these issues, although there have been drastic changes in the level of women's emancipation and their role in the society. However, one can question how tangible this level of 'emancipation' really is in terms of true 'liberation', recalling Binnaz Toprak (1990), since women, their public visibility and participation to public life persisted to stay under patriarchal control, regardless of the reforms that have taken place to alter their roles in society.

Towards the end of 1980s Sirman (1988) identifies three crucial moments in which debates regarding women in Turkish society have occupied a central place in the political and ideological agendas of Ottoman and Turkish states. First of the these three moments is during the period of Ottoman reforms instituted through the activities of Young Turks, the Ottoman elites in the middle of the 19th century. Following Mardin (1983), Sirman (1988) argues that

at this moment it was these elite men who voiced their concerns on the status of women in society, who believed that it was instrumental for their aim of reformation in the Empire. Second period defining the role of women is early years of the Turkish Republic, in which the reforms that aimed to improve women's position in society can be identified as 'state feminism'. The third is after the military coup in 1980 which, according to Sirman, a movement considerably different from the other two flourished, since the main actors and initiators are women (Sirman, 1988: 2). In this chapter, I will try to explore the differences and similarities that can be identified within the first two of these three crucial moments of Turkish women's movement through the social, cultural and political changes that took place in Turkish society, specifically with regards to women's public presence and participation to public life, in order to present the continuity of the peculiarities of the Ottoman women's movement into the construction of the new Turkish woman in the early decades of the Turkish Republic. Through this analysis, I will also try to understand whether emancipation that has been brought by these changes led to a true liberation for women, referencing to the point by Toprak (1990) mentioned in the preceding paragraph. In both time periods, women movements and their participation in the public sphere were made possible within the boundaries drawn by men and framework of patriarchal discourse. Women willingly articulated into the space of action they were given, aiming to encourage national solidarity and common good. Their actions and participation were supported by male elites as long as their activities coincided with their own reforms and ideological views.

A number of observers argue that women's movements that have emerged in the last periods of Ottoman Empire have features specific to their own, which was also carried on to the women's movement in the early years of the Turkish Republic (cf. Berktay, 2001; Çakır, 1996). These characteristics are due to the fact that patriarchal control of women that are embedded in interpretations of Islamic rules and values continued to persist in society, although reforms were made and action by women were taken in order to improve women's status,

especially in the public sphere. Women's movement in both of these eras was active within a framework of action the limits of which were drawn by men. Religious rules were instrumentalized to justify the male domination in society, although patriarchy is not only inherent to Islam as a religion. Toprak (1990: 41) argues that the status of women in Islam is characterized by complete subjugation to the authority of men, and that since the tenets of Islam exist both at the theological level as well as legal, Islam's influence on women has been doubly restrictive and that it extends to both social and legal spheres. In response, Deniz Kandiyoti (1987: 319) puts forward that Islam provides some unifying concepts that influence women's experiences of subordination, but that these are "vested in the culturally defined modes of control of female sexuality, especially insofar as they influence subjective experiences of womanhood and femininity". In addition, Fatmagül Berktay (2001) argues that it is correct to put forward that patriarchy is not only peculiar to Islam, and it is incorrect to establish a direct relationship between Islam and subjugation of women. However, she draws attention to the fact that Ottoman Empire was being ruled under Sharia law and influence of Islam both in culture and public sphere should be taken into consideration in the analysis regarding Ottoman feminism as a peculiarity. (Berktay, 2001: 351). This is an important point even in the present debates regarding the extent to which Turkish women are emancipated living in an Islamic society, where religious values persist to be culturally vested, although there have been reforms to improve their situation. Although women's demands were similar to those of their counterparts in the west, such as equal access to education and participation in politics, it should be kept in mind that these demands were put forward within the framework of a society ruled by Islam, where religious rules are culturally embedded in patriarchy. However, this was not only because men desired it to be so, but also because Islam, as subjects of the Ottoman Empire, was an important part of these women's identities, as well. It should also be pointed out that there are debates on the extent of women's active participation in initiation of changes regarding women's status in society. While some argue that women have become "one of

the pawns in the Kemalist struggle to liquidate the theocratic remnants of the Ottoman state" and that the it was a "struggle in which make protagonists engaged while women by and large remained surprisingly passive onlookers" (Kandiyoti, 1991b: 38), others argue that although it was men who were included in the discussions regarding women's status in the society, it was a struggle between men in order to prevent later resistance to come from men and that "men provided the example of how to become a citizen and men were follow" (Saktanber, 2002a: 123). What is pointed out in the latter argument is that women were not necessarily passive in their newly attributed place in the Turkish society after the reforms, and that men were required to 'follow' in the process of formation of the new ideal female citizen by the state elites. Still, it is possible to say that neither of the two statements above argues for an active women's movement which put down its own rules and arguments for women themselves. This is a similarity between these two periods, and what sets them apart from the women's movement that has emerged after 1980s. The first two periods in women's movements also carried nationalistic and communitarian sensibilities, which is different from the more civil initiation of the period after 1980. Women's status being incorporated as an important element of social transformation and tenet of national ideology causes this affect. As it will be explained in this chapter, in the Ottoman Empire and early years of the Turkish Republic, women's public participation and activities aimed to encourage national solidarity and common good, and were supported by male elites as long as their activities coincided with their own reforms and ideological views (cf. Kandiyoti, 1991b; Y. Arat, 1997, 1998; Saktanber, 2002a**;** Z. Arat, 1998a, 1998b). Women did not challenge the patriarchal ideology that ascribed them the traditional gender roles of mother and wife, since they also believed that these duties were instrumental for the solidarity of the society and was the most important way they could contribute to it. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, opportunities for women were enlarged by the 'founding fathers', who have required a new public visibility for the 'citizen woman' they envisaged in the name of nation building and protection of secularism. In order

for a woman to participate in the public sphere and enjoy the newly gained rights and opportunities through this 'state feminism', she had to appear within the frame that the state bureaucratic elites put forward, without omitting their responsibilities regarding their families (cf. Kandiyoti 1991a, 199b; Z.Arat 1998a, 1998b; Durakbaşa 1988, 1998; Saktanber 2002a; Tekeli 1998). Although women's public visibility and participation in professional life was encouraged by the state and the reforms they instrumentalized, this was to be done within a puritan morality delineated by persisting patriarchal ideology that reinforced importance of the traditional gender roles for the well being of the nation, which was not questioned until the civil women's movement of the late 20th century.

2.1. Ottoman Women's Movement

During the second half of 19th century, ideas of Westernization and modernization began to become prominent among the Ottoman elite, who believed that the relations between men and women and status of women in society were significant themes to be debated on in order for the society to be reorganized along the lines of these ideas that were mostly inspired by the French Enlightenment. It was the male elites who started to consider the importance women's status in society would carry in the modernization process (Abadan-Unat, 1998: 324). Jale Parla (1990, cited in Abadan-Unat, 1998: 324) argues that the writings that were published after the period of Ottoman Reformation recall the male elites' desire to have a social life in which they could interact and have relationship with educated women in public without any shame, and their desire for true love instead of arranged marriages. Kandiyoti (1991a: 23) also argues that the "predominantly male polemicists on the questions relating to women and the family used the condition of women to express deeper anxieties concerning the cultural integrity of the Ottoman/Muslim polity in the face of Western influence". Women's status and their rights have been discussed within these parameters; Westernization and those who argued for the protection of a society in line with the tenets of Islam.

Between 1839 and 1876, in the period of Ottoman Reformation, Ottoman bureaucrats who were the elites from the upper classes undertook reforms in spheres of legislation, administration and education. They were inspired to follow the principles of French revolution and expressed that progress was not only a matter of technology, but also of universalistic, rational, positivistic worldview that existed in the west. However, as argued by Mardin (1983), and also emphasized by Sirman (1988: 3), these efforts of reform caused the division between the Ottoman bureaucratic elite who stressed modernization, progress and ideals of enlightenment, and the lower illiterate classes who emphasized Islam and tradition. From Reformation Period to II. Constitutional Movement (1908-1919), this strict dilemma persisted in the ideological sphere of Ottoman Empire between those who were searching for progress in Westernization and ideas of Enlightenment on the one hand, and those who wanted to preserve the society that was ordered according to Islamic precepts on the other. What is important to point out here with regards to women is that, women and what their status in society should be were the cornerstones in both Islamist thought and ideas of Westernization. Both sides were instrumentalizing their ideals of society through images of and regulations over women. Women were viewed as carriers of progress or as containers of traditional values, all within the framework of what male elites or conservative males envisioned for the Ottoman society in general.

As many observers pointed out, during the II. Constitutional Movement Period, in which Young Turks put together the Committee for Union and Progress into power after the overthrow of Abdulhamid the Second and his absolutist rule, a new atmosphere of freedom took over in which women had more opportunities to make their voices heard. Increasing female literacy during the period of Abdulhamid the Second was a reason for increasing density of women's movement, organizations and magazines. Zafer Toprak (1988: 30) argues that the women's organizations that were formed at the end of the Ottoman Empire and right after the War of Independence did not have achievement of political rights as a priority, and viewed political rights as something to be gained after

right to education and socialization is gained. In line with this argument, observers point out that although the most of the articles that were published in women's magazines were on homemaking, fashion and health, a few of them carried more political messages (Sirman, 1988: 3; Demirdirek, 1998: 66). However, these magazines were significant in enabling women to unite and interact with each other in order to achieve progress in what can be called an Ottoman women's movement. Most of these magazines were owned and published by men, but some, although owned by men, were published by women. Only a few were both owned by women and had women writers (Demirdirek, 1998: 66). Sirman writes that a prominent theme in these article were disappointment with the new era of freedom, in which women argued that this new freedom entailed only men's freedom and that the reformers had forgotten about women's emancipation when they came to power (Sirman, 1988: 3). Ten women's magazines were published between 1895 and 1908. In total, there were over 40 publications that targeted women before the Republic, the first one being *Terakk-i Muhadadarat* in 1868, which was published as a supplement to one of the first independent newspapers in the Ottoman Empire, *Terakki* (Demirdirek, 1998: 65; van Os, 2001: 337). To recall the other magazines, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* was published for 13 years with 604 issues and *Kadın Dünyası* was continuously published between 1912-1921. *Kadın Dünyası* had the purpose to promote women's legal rights, as well as some other magazines with stated political aims, and "serve[d] as an evidence of the existence of a group of Muslim women who opposed their treatment as the second sex" (Demirdirek, 1998: 66). It also acted as an organ of Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan Derneği, which had the goals of enlarging the visions and improving the lives of women which would lead them to step into public life. These magazines helped these women writers, who were mostly educated upper class women from major cities, to voice their critical opinions on social and political life. Abadan-Unat argues that although male feminists in the Ottoman society felt it was adequate to incorporate the woman question into their project of modernization, the female Ottoman feminists were voicing their complaints

on inequality as a group of second class citizens they considered themselves to be (Abadan-Unat, 1998: 325). These magazines were also significant in that Ottoman women gained the opportunity to learn about the women in the Western world and enabled them to redefine themselves through the lifestyle they have come to learn about as well as their rights (Çakır 1996). However, since women articulated their demands within the context of the modernization process and the intellectual agenda put forward by the male reformists, these men also supported women's demands. It is significant to point out that their support was in light of the emphasized significance of the women's question for their aim of modernization and Westernization. This approach was also to be found in the way in which the male elites reflected on the status of women in the founding years of the Turkish Republic.

Although the women's movement at the end of the Ottoman Empire is called the 'first wave feminism' by some, women who actively debated their status in the society and demanded transformation did not identify themselves as 'feminists', but the term had been used in several publications (Tekeli 1998). Women were informed on the existence of such a term, as well as the events that were taking place regarding women's status in other societies, but did not prefer to call themselves as such. A reason was that conservatives in the society had badmouthed, criticized and perceived as immoral some women who were identified as 'feminist' in the Ottoman press. Van Os (2001: 338) argues that perhaps the Muslim women in the Ottoman Empire did not identify themselves with these foreign movements in the primary years, considering they were coming out of other societies. Although it cannot be identified when the term 'feminist' was first used, van Os states that Ebüzziya Tevfik published an article with the title 'Feminist' in 1899. In this article Tevfik discussed how this French term should be translated and gave information on the feminist movements and activities in the other parts of the world (2001: 338).

The demand that was expressed most frequently and clearly in the pages of these magazines was education. Women argued that education would enable

them to integrate more to social life, public sphere and have a say in another domain other than the home. This is an evidence that women who were actively demanding more emancipation for themselves in this period required more participation and a considerable transformation in the public sphere. The private sphere and questioning of women's role in it were not issues that were debated intensely. This was due to the fact that women were regarded by themselves, as well as the state and the elites, first and foremost as wives and mothers. This is also a point that is significant in indicating that women's systematic formal education was not an issue that was considered by the state. Women's discourse of emancipation did not challenge their identity as the wife and the mother. They even emphasized how important women's role in the family was for the nation, state and even the race. Tekeli (1998: 342) argues that this 'first wave' was not critical towards the state, but rather supportive, since they were aware that their demands, to a great extent, could be realized only through or with the support of the state. However, this did not disable them from having demands that can be identified as 'feminist', the most important of which is the right to education (van Os 2001, 336). At the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century the idea that educated women would become better mothers found its reflection in the Ottoman society; which also passed on the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey. According to Berktay this is one reason why a connection can be established between the ideas development and progress of feminism and efforts to improve and increase opportunities of education for women during the late 19th century and early 20th century (Berktay, 2001: 350).

After the changes in the regulations regarding foundations in 1908, with Second Constitutional Movement, women, both in several organizations and individually, expressed that they could contribute to and strengthen the Ottoman society both militarily and economically. They increased their space of action in the public sphere; which was instrumentalized through the organizations, foundation and charities they formed and the magazines they published. These actions also gave them the opportunity to gain experiences outside the

traditional gender roles (van Os, 2001: 336; Çakır, 1996; Zihnioğlu, 2003). Although these activities can be identified more as nationalistic rather than feminist, they have helped transform the role and place of women in the society. This also enabled women to help create and develop a public sphere in the Ottoman society. This fact also leads led to establishment of a connection between the women's movement and the flourishment of a civil society in the Ottoman Empire. However, women's organizations and the content of the magazines that were published during this era of the Ottoman Empire did not pave the way for the emergence of different feminist approaches. There were only differences in the ways the writers articulate the same, shared demands. While one group emphasized the 'benefit of society', another stressed the same aim with a more rebellious tone against restrictions and roles that were enforced on women (Demirdirek, 1998: 79). What underlined all women's activities were a communitarian, nationalistic aim of social good, sense of participation and contribution to the well being and the benefit of the society overall. This was a main approach in their activities. Although they also carried political sensibilities with regards to the improvement of the women's status in the society and achieve more equality, this was demanded under the umbrella of the 'good of society'.

2.2. Women's Clothing in 19th and the beginning of 20th Centuries

Women's clothing and public visibility was a significant issue of debate in the Ottoman society, between reformists that led the Westernization movements and the conservatives who argued for a society based on Islamic precepts. During the modernization efforts of the 19th century, women's clothing symbolized something more than women's situation in society; rather it became an emblem for whether one is for or against modernization (Şeni, 1995: 56). In line with this argument, Kandiyoti (1991a: 26) argues that male reformers of the time found new avenues to express their discontent with and alienation from Ottoman patriarchal structures which curtailed their own freedom, making a case for the emancipation of women in a moralistic, sentimental and

'civilizational' terms. In contrast to the later feminist-nationalist stance, Islam, at that time, was perceived as the only legal terrain in which issues related to women were to be debated (Kandiyoti, 1991a: 26). Therefore, the early reformers, although inscribing themselves in a modernist perspective, argued that their demands were compatible with dictates of Islam and that the changes in women's condition would benefit the health of the society as a whole. The debates on the changes in women's clothing took place in this framework.

With regards to clothing laws that concerned both men and women in the Ottoman society, Quataert (1997: 419) argues that the examination of Ottoman clothing laws mirrored broader issues such as wars and political instability, their importance as tools of regime's negotiations with various parties both within the state and society, limits on state's influence over society and the forces shaping the evolution of Ottoman society. Considering that different religious and social groups within the Ottoman society were dressed in different styles, he argues that although clothing requirements originated in state requirements for control, they were not simply instruments of social discipline from above imposed on those below, but rather they were instruments of negotiation, used by both the state and its elites, as well as by the various occupational and religious communal groups. These laws drew the community boundaries for the subject classes, and clothing helped give status and a sense of identity to members of the specific religious, ethnic and occupational communities in Ottoman society. Therefore, communities of often prompted the state to enforce these regulations because, "for them, clothing laws delineated, maintained and reinforced gender, religious and social distinctions" (Quataert, 1997: 407). Distinctions among the population were made visible and emphasized through the way they looked.

With regards to gender relations, Quataert (1997: 407) writes that clothing laws were beneficial for those with power in gender, communal or political relations, because in controlling the public dress and therefore the behavior of their own women, men had the power of the state behind them. In relation with this point, although Berktay (2001: 352-355). argues that the changes that the Ottoman

society went through after Reformation Period enabled women to take steps toward equality, she also points out that the frames within which the equality and emancipation of women would come into play were indicated by the state, and therefore a new 'master' emerged over women. On the one hand women were encouraged to take part and become more visible in the public sphere during Second Constitutional Movement Period but on the other hand the state, and therefore men, felt obliged to regulate this visibility, fearing that "[women] would go out of hand". As a society in which Islamic law preceded, the urban sphere in the Ottoman Empire was segregated strictly according to gender. Consequently, as Berktay points out until the period of Reformation, all regulations that concerned the attire of women were with regards to urban public sphere. Mardin (1974) also writes that, since the 17th century conservatives used threats on female morality as a pretext for urban rebellion. Although some flexibility was introduced with regards to female clothing, these were responded by fermans introduced by the state which strictly regulated public life, especially women's clothing (Şeni, 1995: 58), which led to persistence of strict control over how women were to appear and behave in the public sphere.

Nora Şeni (1995) also argues that although it was not possible to talk about fashion in a society where clothing was so strictly regulated, women found ways to alter these regulations in different ways. As women started gaining visibility and increased their participation in public life, their clothing also became an issue that would be regularly debated in the pages of women's magazines. The demands for change in attire came parallel to the change in women's status. As Serpil Çakır (1996) argues the women's movement that had began to emerge, brought individualism to the agenda, which had led the transformation of features of *tesettür* (Islamic modesty) into elements of fashion. As Zafer Toprak (2002: 17) argues as urban women increasingly socialized, they also started to care about their individual identities, including their bodily outlook and tried to adapt to latest fashions as much as they could. This transformation then led to many debates and views to be printed in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. Demirdirek (1998:

71-2) writes that writers of the magazine initially felt the urge to consider their demands on the issue from the perspective of Islam and argued confidently defended these demands as compatible with the religion. However, in later issues, they acquired a more secular tone, and "[w]omen, who had been trying to advance their demands carefully by monitoring the mood of the country, presented their demand for change in their attire in a nonreligious framework", through which they justified as a way for Ottoman women to take place within the civilized world. (Demirdirek, 1998: 72).

There was a strict distinction between 'home attire' and 'street attire' for women's clothing. Although women unveiled at home, their street attire until the end of 19th century consisted of *ferece* (coat), *yaşmak* (veil), both of which would not display their faces or bodies, and *terlik* (slippers) for women (Şeni, 1995: 60). *Peçe* was the focus of the debates. Removal of *tesettür* was not directly discussed, but it was underlined that *peçe* had to be removed at once, in order to protect 'women's honor' (Çakır, 1996: 180-181). It was also perceived as an element that was holding women back in their new role as more active individuals in the public sphere. Changes in Muslim women's clothing, as well as new manners and customs, usually spread from the Palace to the public. Therefore, it was an interesting development that *ferace* started to be replaced by *çarşaf* (chador) among the public, which was not a style approved by the elites in the Palace. However, *çarşaf* also transformed through time, into a two-piece Western suit (Şeni, 1995: 61-62). Şeni (1995: 74) notes that it was not only the women's clothing that was transforming, but changes into more modern styles in men's clothing were taken place as well.

Fashion also occupied an important place in the pages of *Kadınlar Dünyası,* the most significant women's magazine of the era, published between 1912 and 1921. They printed advertisements for hair, makeup and clothing items. Some women expressed that indulgence in fashion would damage the struggle of women's movement as well as national economy and cause arguments between husband and wife (Çakır, 1996: 178).

It is important to point out that these changes in fashion were urban phenomena in the Ottoman Empire. Those in the rural areas were largely unaffected by the changes. Since it was unpractical to work in a coat or *çarşaf* in rural areas such as fields, strict veiling was never a common practice in the country side. As urban styles changed and westernized, a gap between the clothing styles of urban and rural populations became even more marked, as also mentioned in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. It was pointed out that women's clothing was different in İstanbul than in Anatolia and that it also differed from neighborhood to neighborhood in all cities, as well. Following this, a demand to 'nationalize' clothing was printed in pages *Kadınlar Dünyası*, and it was suggested to start a foundation to realize this goal. Under this foundation, information on women's clothing would be gathered from historians, then women who knew about fashion would create new styles, followed by demonstrations of these new styles in all cities and press. This suggestion aimed to erase the differences in clothing from city to city and from neighborhood to neighborhood (Çakır, 1996: 178). The foundation was not formed, however, designing new styles women according to Islam that would also be suitable both for work and leisure became the first clause of Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti.

Both conservatives and modernists debated the issue of women's clothing as well as other issues related to women, with the idea that women should be good wives, good mothers and good Muslims. Status of women as individual, and women as women were not the issues of debate. Although they could also now express their views on how they envision their status (including the way they look) should be, their assessments and judgments were shaped according to men, and assertions and values were interpreted according to male interests. According to Demirdirek (1998: 72), although this did not allow women to move beyond demanding of rights, but "enable[d] them to see that the social structure continue to evolve in the interest of men". Although their self-expression in these magazines opened up a new space of opportunity for women to practice their autonomy and discuss issues they closely relate to, they did not

approach the problems too radically as to challenge the state authority, and therefore that of men.

Ottoman women's clothing was an issue of debate beyond fashion and honor. According to Şeni (1995), the length of skirts, the thickness and type of *peçe* stood as a forum at which societal choices have found expression for the last 200 years. During the Westernization movement, reformists and conservatives put forward their attitudes by taking sides in this debate, crystallizing their ideas by instrumentalizing women and the way their presence should be in the public.

2.3. Republican Reforms on Gender and Women

Kandiyoti (1991b: 23) argues that current parameters of the woman question in Turkey were shaped by "the historically specific conditions of the rise of the Turkish nationalism, starting with the Second Constitutional Period and leading to Kemalist Republican regime". Traces of the perceptions of the Ottoman reformers and their aim to confine them within the Islamic patriarchy is also inherent in the Republican reforms that were implemented after the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

As power of what was left of the Ottoman Empire after declarations of independence of different nations living under its rules and occupation of foreign armies diminished, The War of Independence started in 1919 with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's leadership in order to form a new nation-state for Turks. The War of Independence ended with the victory of the reformists against both the foreign occupying armies and the conservative forces at home. The foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 brought about several revolutionary changes that transformed the lives of women, as well as the whole society. Secularization prevailed as the most important principle of the state, which brought a separation of state and religious affairs, strict control of religion by the state, and cleansing of public sphere from all the religious symbols (cf. Berkes 1978; Mardin 1974, 1983). Şerif Mardin (1983: 142) argues that from the time of Ottoman Reformation Period to that of the Republic, there

was an evolution which consisted both in increasing the number of secular institutions, as well as the understanding of the ethical content of society; and that "this content underlined the increasingly large responsibility that the individual citizen has to shoulder in a modern society". Mardin (1983: 142) argues that Atatürk secularized Turkey as drastically as he did because "he believed that Islam as a state religion denied such autonomy to the citizen" and that this radically differs Atatürk from the traditional bureaucratic elite he was a follower of. Autonomy for both male and female citizens, however, within the limits that were identified by the state elites. It was also a process of transformation of subjects of an empire into citizens of a nation-state, which Saktanber calls "creation of 'rational individuals in a national society' out of the clay of 'pious members of an Islamic community'" (Saktanber, 2002a: 121). This had a direct impact on Turkish women, their rights and participation in social, political and economic life (cf. Adaban-Unat, 1991; Kandiyoti, 1988, 1991b). Among the reforms that aimed complete secularization of the society was the abolishment of the Caliphate, along with the office of Şeyh-ül-Islam in 1924. Courts that operated according to Sheria Laws and religious schools were also closed down. In 1925, Atatürk launched Hat Law, in which he abolished the wearing of the fes and made wearing of hats a legal requirement for men. The adoption of the Georgian Calendar in 1925, the Swiss Civil Code in 1926, and the Latin Alphabet in 1928 were among other fundamental reforms known as 'Kemalist reforms' that transformed the lives of the new nation.

In the Ottoman Empire religion regulated public and private life, within which women's roles were also identified. Turkish Republic made a radical break with Islamic law and tradition that had a direct impact on the area of legislation related to women's position in society, which culminated in the 'state feminism' of the Republic (Durakbaşa, 1998: 139; Abadan-Unat, 1998: 328). Women's emancipation and the image of the 'new woman' was considered an integral part of nation building and the target of Westernization, and as some observers stated they were considered as the marker of being 'civilized' as a nation during the early years of the Turkish Republic (Durakbaşa, 1998: 139). This new

woman of the Kemalist era became an explicit symbol of the break with the past (Kandiyoti, 1991b: 41). Kandiyoti (1991b: 39) also argues that the "decisive actions of Kemalism with respect to women's emancipation were the evacuation of Islam from legislative and broader institutional sphere and the inclusion of women into a new notion of citizenship, dictated by the transition from a monarchy to a populist republic".

Reforms in legislation, social and cultural life were made, one of which women's status in the society and the public sphere was one of the most important concerns. Male dominated state made women's equality in the public sphere a national policy. The status of women became an important criterion determining the success of the modernization and Westernization efforts, as well. New images of men and women were brought about by Kemalists, as well as condemnation of the traditional notions of gender roles as being backwards. These efforts for reform in the women's status were to be identified as 'state feminism' of the New Republic. However, although Kemalism was a "progressive ideology that fostered women's participation in education and the professions, it did not alter the patriarchal norms of morality and in fact maintained the basic cultural conservatism about male/female relations, despite its radicalism in opening a space for women in the public domain" (Durakbaşa, 1998: 140). Zehra Arat (1998b: 52) argues that the Kemalist reforms did not aim emancipate women or support women in the realization of their consciousness and their identity, but rather aimed to increase their participation in the Republican patriarchal order by equipping women with skills and education that will make them better wives and mothers. As members of the Turkish society were no longer thought of 'subjects', but as 'citizens', members of a community with rights and duties, it was within this context new ideal roles and images of women as 'citizen woman' and 'comrade in arms' were depicted, by the male state elites (Kandiyoti, 1991b; see also Saktanber, 2002a). Just as women's visibility was controlled through separating private and public spheres and veiling, which were justified by Islamic rules in the Ottoman Empire, Kemalism persisted the same control over women through developing a

stereotype of a 'new Turkish woman'; modest in appearance, companion to her male in modernizing the country. Müftüler-Baç (1999: 307) argues that, in that respect, Islam and Kemalism were similar in that both depended on the notion that women constituted a threat to the social order. Some early Republican reformers even feared that women's activism and visibility in the public may lead to decline in their feelings towards duty and responsibility towards state and their families, and thus leading to a moral breakdown of society (White, 2003: 147). Emphasis on the ideal model of how a 'Turkish woman' should be, then can be interpreted as not only as marking the level of civilization the nation-state has reached, but also to hold on to the persisting codes of morality and order that have been carried on to the Republic from the Ottoman Empire.

One step that was taken towards women's emancipation in the new Republic was the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code in 1926. Although family was still depended on male dominance for survival, Islamic rules for marriage were eliminated. Polygamy was also forbidden. Civil Code introduced gender equality in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance and equal child custody. In 1930, women were introduced right to vote in local elections, followed by the right to vote for and to be elected for public office in the national elections. This was a development that took place much prior to the Western countries that were taken as a model for women's emancipation. The legal reforms that were brought about enabled women to gain an equal status with men in the public sphere. Republican women's activism and autonomy were circumscribed by collective morality and the requirement to stay true to the state's modernization project and interests (cf. Toprak, 1988; White, 2003; Y.Arat, 1997; Tekeli, 1998; Z.Arat, 1998a). Despite the reforms, the society was still socially conservative. The regulations reflect the traditional gender ideology where gender roles are constructed around 'male breadwinner- female homemaker' roles. When the Civil Code is investigated, although a radical break with Islamic law and traditions can be observed, it is also visible that the new regulations are within the frameworks of Islamic precepts (Saktanber, 1994).

National solidarity was the encouraged ideal to keep together women and their activism within the interests of the state and the modernization project.

A small amount privileged urban women benefited most from the reforms, with regards to their participation in public life. It is possible to say that effects of these reforms were not so easily observed in more rural areas. This small privileged group was able to receive the same education with men and become professionals. In the modernist view of the late Ottoman period, the image of the 'new woman' was basically defined as the 'social woman', which stressed the contribution of women to the society and community in general. It was also defended by Kemalists that women should participate in social life and take on responsibilities as professional women alongside their traditional roles of mother and wife (Durakbaşa, 1998: 143). These traditional were to be maintained as well, which is another point where the Kemalist reforms did not transgress Islamic patriarchal structures. Women were seen as the bearers and mothers of future generations of the new state. Durakbaşa (1998: 47) argues that Kemalist female image reflected the pragmatism of Kemalist ideology and was a combination of conflicting images: "educated-professional woman at work", "a socially active organizing woman as a member of social clubs", "biologically functioning woman in the family" as mother and wife, "feminine woman" at balls and parties. She points out that while the first three images had been present in the previous eras, the last was a new one that attempted to establish a Western style of gender relationship. Therefore, the new Turkish woman was expected to carry her new responsibilities in the public sphere, without omitting her already existing ones at home and in family and not transgressing the boundaries that were already set for her within the boundaries of a patriarchal society.

Tekeli (cited in İlkkaracan, 1997: 5) argues that the women's rights granted by the Kemalists were intended to destroy the links to the Ottoman Empire in order to strengthen the foundations of the new secular nation-state and strike at the religious hegemony. Official Kemalist position on the status of women was

delineated within the framework of secularism and the reform of Islamic way of life, instead of actual liberalization of women. Women, therefore, can be argued to be instrumentalized once again, in line with the Republican ideology as the model citizen, 'protectors' of secularism and the new Republic; just as they were the 'protectors' of family values and the religious values for the conservatives (İlkkaracan, 1997; see also Saktanber, 1994). According to Berktay (2001: 353), Islamic patriarchy has been replaced by nation-state patriarchy. 'Kemalism' served as 'feminism' to a new generation of elite women who enjoyed the new status that was handed to them by the new Republic. A relationship was developed between women and the state, in which "the women relied on the protectionism and paternalism of the state" (Durakbaşa, 1998: 152). However, it should also be pointed out that when there were autonomous actions by women on their own behalf, they have been prevented by the state. As Yeşim Arat (1997: 101) expresses, while the women did their share in the project of modernity and adapting to the reforms to seek equality with men in the public realm, there were clear limitations to women's authority. But she also points out that in the authoritative single party era, men also could not act autonomously in the public sphere. Women's activism was framed by the dictates of the Westernizing state. In 1923, women wanted to form a Republican Women's Party, but refused on the grounds that a woman's party would distract the foundation of the Republican People's Party that the state leaders were establishing. In 1935, Turkish Women's Federation collaborated with feminists from other countries to host an International Congress of Feminism in Turkey to issue a declaration against the threat of Nazism, which again displeased the state elites (White, 2003: 155). The Turkish Women's Federation was shut down ten days after the International Congress with the decision of the Republican People's Party (Z.Toprak, 1988: 31).

As explained previous section of this chapter, in the 19th century, women's contribution to the society, along with the demands they put forward to transform their own status, was articulated as social responsibility and working for the benefit of the whole society. The charitable and nationalistic aspect of

the organizations they had formed is an evidence of this (see Çakır, 1996; Demirdirek, 1998; Toprak, 1988). This characteristic was also shared by the early feminism in Turkey, in which the Kemalists defended the idea that women should participate in social life and take on social responsibilities as professionals, along with the traditional roles of mother and wife (cf. Z.Arat, 1998a, 1998b; Durakbaşa, 1998; Y.Arat, 1997; Kandiyoti, 1991a, 1991b). Although strongly demanded and emphasized, women's visibility and recognition in the public domain did not challenge the relations between men and women in the private sphere, what happened inside the household was not a concern of the state feminism. The welfare and the duties of women in the private sphere were discussed as the attributes of the national ideal.

2.4. Image of the New Turkish Woman

Image of a 'veiled woman' that was perceived as a symbol of backward, pre-modern practices, which did not follow the new ideology and reforms. Therefore, women's visibility in the public sphere entailed a modern, westernized look, which required taking off of the veil. However, it should be noted that there were no written regulations for women's clothing that resembled the Hat Law of 1925 that applied to men. This law, which is still protected by the constitution, abolishes the use of religious headgear except for the religious officials who are appointed and authorized by the government, and enforced the western style hat as the headgear of Turkish citizens, instead of fez or sarik (Gemalmaz, 2005: 212). Çınar argues that although interventions related to the female body aimed to alter and manipulate public visibility of women, the Hat Law did not involve the public visibility of all men, but rather only that of the state officials and civil servants (Çınar, 2005: 204). The Hat Law was about the authority and the image of the state itself, while the image of the women was a reflection of the nation. However, others suggest seeing the Hat Reform as another way of "reshaping the heads" of the Turkish men by the new republic (Saktanber, 2002a: 140-141). According to this, this reform was a way of persuading men to give their consent to women's new way of clothing,

as long as they accepted to “change their own heads”. In other words, once men accepted such a change, it constituted a legitimate example for women to follow and dress in a modern way that would reflect the new secular, modern state ideology.

As some observers argue, in order to become active in the public domain and thus work within a predominantly male bureaucratic structure, the women had to look more like men, disguising their sexuality and femininity and present a suitable body image that was somehow connected to the image of a male body (cf. Durakbaşa, 1998; Kandiyoti, 1997; Kadıoğlu, 1998). Women were expected to have masculine traits and looks, in order to coexist and participate equally in the public sphere with men and not threaten the patriarchal morality. Kandiyoti (1997) puts forward that that the Kemalist reforms that enabled women to emancipate and unveil necessitated a symbolic veil that replaced it; the veil of defeminization. This sexually modest picture would not threaten the patriarchal morality that underlined the institutions of the new Republic. Women of the period were expected and encouraged to be modest, and attain a virtuous attitude, which would reflect to their looks, as well. They developed a new modernist, puritan individual morality, which did not cut its links with Islamic morality, and self control of sexuality for both men and women gained importance. Therefore, while adopting to the changing gender relations in the public sphere, women adopted a new form of ‘femininity’ that ‘veiled’ their sexuality in their relationships with men in the public (Durakbaşa, 1998: 149). She had the burden of holding the balance between being modern and modest, not resemble what was assumed to be typical ‘Western woman’, who was thought to reveal too much and be sexually liberated (Kadıoğlu, 1998: 95-96). As the segregated Muslim society of the Ottoman Empire underwent desegregation and secularization with reforms that were implemented, women underlined their professional identities rather than their individuality and sexuality.

In this context, physical segregation of sexes was seen as "distorted Islamic practice and rejected as being backward" (Z.Arat, 1998a: 15). However, Saktanber argues that it was not Islam that was to be condemned during the enactment of the new reforms, but the backward-looking 'tradition', which had to be separated from the new social life (2002a: 122). She also argues that one of the reasons why the republican modernization project could smoothly embed its ideas into the prevailing patriarchal structures is because it occurred without going astray from the boundaries of Islamic patriarchal ethics (Saktanber, 2002a: 122). She also argues that the identity transformation aimed by Republican reformers was realized as a struggle between men, rather than manipulation of women directly. This was possible through limitation of boundaries of social change to the acts of men, "by attributing to men the role of social mobilizer, the boundaries of this social mobilization were drawn within the framework of men's exemplary actions" (Saktanber, 2002a: 122). Within this context, she points out that the target of the Turkish Revolution was actually men. However, she does not agree with Kandiyoti's (1991b: 123) argument that the women and the woman question became "one of the pawns in the Kemalist struggle to liquidate the theocratic remnants of the Ottoman state". She suggests that the fact that males had the leading role on debates concerning the position of women in society should be seen as a way the republican reformers were able to achieve modernization by gaining to consent of men, in order to minimize possible resistance. "(E)xclusion of women's voices from the formation of discourse on gender politics served to assure that men that women would still remain under their thumbs, and that men would be the main social actors in that the scope and actualization of social change would be dependent on their will" (Saktanber, 2002a: 123). This meant that the men were to become the examples of how a citizen should be and women were to follow. In this point, she agrees with Kandiyoti's point that it was a struggle between males while women remained passive onlookers (Kandiyoti, 1991a: 38). She argues that as far as women followed the model of men in society, no real challenge was posed to the power of Islamic patriarchy, opposite of which was not

desired, but "the process helped to create new modalities to which men as well as women had to adjust themselves (Saktanber, 2002a: 125).

2.5. Turkish Women: Emancipated or Liberated?

Durakbaşa (1998: 148) states that "however modernist an ideology it was, Kemalism could not alter the traditional forms of morality that guaranteed a biologically defined and socially constraining femininity of women". One example is the Civil Code that was accepted in 1926 and remained intact until 2001. It reinforced women's subordinate position in society and confined her to her house with the traditional sex roles of mother and wife, without violating the basic Islamic family laws (cf. Kandiyoti, 1987; Saktanber, 1994; Tekeli, 1990). Z. Arat (1998: 23), in this context, argues that the Republican regime wanted to mobilize women, but "only under state leadership and only to the point that was permissible by men". Göle (1997: 86) also argues that "Kemalist feminism, its sights set on public visibility and social mixing of the sexes, is creating a radical reappraisal of what are considered the private and public spheres. At the same time its actions are prompting a reevaluation of Islamic morality, which is based on control of female sexuality and separation of the sexes". It can be argued that the Kemalist reforms did not truly aim to emancipate women or increase their consciousness and individuality, but rather aimed to enable them to have necessary tools and talents to become better wives and mothers and increase their participation in the patriarchal Republican society (Z. Arat, 1998b: 52; see also Kandiyoti, 1991b and Toprak, 1990). This was also reflected on the looks of the Republican women, from whom a controlled puritan morality that veiled their femininity was expected, in order to contribute to the national ideals.

The point that should be taken into serious consideration here is that although they have gained rights for emancipation and equality, women were still under patriarchal control, by the state elites, their fathers and their comrades-in-arm (Y. Arat, 1989; Kandiyoti, 1991b). The Republic was founded and the reforms were brought about by males, which makes the Turkish Republic a regime

propagated by males. Although females are allowed and encouraged to participate in this new regime, it is within the boundaries that are delineated by the males. Women also participated in the formation of the new regime and the ideal of a 'new citizen', but they followed men as they were trying to realize this aim. As underlined in this chapter, women's movements were initiated and supported to the extent of their own interests by males and women's status in both eras is instrumentalized as tenets of national identity. It is also important to point out that this instrumentalization has implications in the private sphere, which was also controlled by the state in line with the national ideals of solidarity and morality, while the legislation carries Islamic interpretation of family values, gender roles and tradition into the new Republic through the Constitution.

This chapter aimed to explain the characteristics of women's movements, status and public visibility of women in the late periods of Ottoman Empire and the early Republican period, the links that can be established between the two eras. The next chapter will delineate the 'headscarf problem' in the last two decades in Turkey, in relation to the present day women's movements.

CHAPTER 3

THE HEADSCARF PROBLEM AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY AFTER 1980S

For many years after the Republic was founded, political Islam did not become an important movement formally on the Turkish political stage. Since there was a single party regime in the country until 1946, party politics was under the dominance of Republican People's Party (CHP), and there were no other political parties CHP claimed itself the guardian of the Kemalist regime and reforms, and therefore defending secularism and the state against what it perceived as opposition, mainly defined as religious in origin or intent (Karpat, 1991: 53). By 1950, only Nation Party (MP) as an Islamist party was able to gain enough votes to have one seat in the parliament. The Islamist vote went to center-right parties that had "a clear economic program combined with cultural politics that were designed to appease the Islamists" (B. Toprak, 2005: 171). Democrat Party (DP) that had come out as a rival to CHP after the establishment of the multi-party system came out with victory in the 1950 elections. DP did not present any explicit Islamist aims but they allied with Islamist groups until the 1960 military coup (Mardin, 1983: 144). They relaxed secularist policies. According to Tank (2005: 7), DP was "more sensitive to the Islamic sympathies of the populace, regarding Islam as a personal matter, and believing that religion had its place within the framework of Kemalist state". Kasaba (1993) also argues that DP combined democratic discourses with

conservative and traditionalist elements. Under DP rule, there was an increase in manifestation of popular religious sentiments, in forms of building mosques, religious schools and relaxation of activities of religious orders (Tapper 1994: 2). A military coup took place in 1960, in order to prevent the religiously motivated politics of DP, which resulted in execution of some DP politicians, including the prime minister of the time, Adnan Menderes. After the parliamentarian system was established again after the coup, Justice Party (AP), which was in a similar line with DP was established. DP's follower Justice Party also established a relaxed attitude towards Islam. 1970s was the first time an explicitly Sunni Islam oriented party could gain significant amount of votes and started to develop an increasing presence in intellectual and political life, with the establishment of National Order Party (MNP). However, even by then it was understood that even the parties that would want to push forward Islamist agendas had to propose a sound program for the demands of the constituency and articulate into formal politics. As Acar (1993: 222) writes, following Mardin (1989), that rise of Islam is "a gradual process which has benefited from the very facilities provided by the secularizing and democratizing reforms of the polity, the structural transformations of the economy and the cultural void created in the process in the earlier years". So, Islamist groups' legitimacy and incorporation to the formal political stage was related to their ability to introduce Islam as an alternative ideology; which may be perceived as "indications of the forces of the 'periphery' emerging in the 'centre', and thus as signs of consolidation of pluralist democracy" (Acar, 1993: 222). However, the MNP experience was a short lived one, as it was shut down in 1971, only a year after it was founded for violating the principle of secularism set in the Constitution and the Law of Political parties. National Salvation Party (MSP) that was active between 1972 and 1981 was also founded by Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of MNP, and was successful at the polls in 1970s and entered into coalitions with both left and right parties (Toprak, 2005).

After the military coup that took place in 1980, Islamist parties resumed in politics under Erbakan's leadership under Welfare Party (RP) between 1983 and 1998. 1990s brought along major victories for RP beginning with nationwide local elections in 1994. RP's 'Just Order' program and its tactics in the elections campaigns were "successful in both mobilizing the poor and in providing opportunities of upward social mobility to some of its followers" (B. Toprak, 2005: 181). This mobility was made possible through Islamist networks of job recruitments, credits, capitals and contracts. Through international and dominant Muslim capital, Islamist section of the society created its own bourgeoisie intellectuals and media. As Toprak (2005: 181) argues, these groups "who had been hitherto marginalized by the secularist elite, were now integrated into the system as they gained political power, social status and intellectual prestige". After RP was outlawed by Constitutional Court in 1998, Erbakan was banned from politics. However, it was not long after its successor, Virtue Party (FP) was established. FP tried to distinguish itself from RP but it shared the fate of MSP and RP and was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 2001, since it had been formed by the same people who have been active in RP. The movement then split into two, as Felicity Party (SP), who follow Erbakan's politics and Justice and Development Party (AKP), which is founded by a younger generation of his followers, who claim to be reformers and 'conservative democrats'.

After the 1980 military coup, economic liberalization that has been led by the first governmental party to emerge after the military rule, Motherland Party (ANAP), has also been reflected on to the level of civil society, which also carries importance for Islamist parties that have been founded after this period. Pluralistic democratic civil society was first initiated by intellectual academics and journalists against the militaristic rule of the early 1980s, but was later shared by wider segments of the society, through which new social movements such as environmentalism, feminism, and ethnic identities could flourish. Islamists have also joined this tendency, which has started with RP's election-time propaganda, and has continued to increase to this day when AKP is in

government, claiming to contribute to a more liberal democratic state and society. As Acar (1993: 224) argues, in the 1980s and 1990s, "a change can be traced from the closed, small-community, traditional, homogeneous sociological base to a noticeably more open, national-scale, modern and heterogeneous base of Islamist forces in Turkey". As Islamism gained more popularity and a bigger constituency among the Turkish population, it increasingly articulated into formal politics, market economy and civil society (Acar, 1993; Saktanber, 2002a; B.Toprak 2005). This has led to increase in visibility of Islam in society as well, the most distinctive marker of which was increased visibility of veiled women in the public sphere. As it will be explained in this chapter, these veiled women were different from the elder generation of veiled women, because they were better educated, more active and professional, however, their university education and employment in public sector was restricted later on due to the headscarf ban that is being imposed since the late 1980s. Kemalist women, feeling a threat to women's rights due to the rise of Islamist movement, have stood against as important actors against Islamist women. A strong feminist movement had also emerged in 1980s, which has openly criticized the Kemalism's patriarchal control over women. They have also voiced their opinions on the headscarf issue through their publications. In this chapter, I will analyze the long lasting headscarf problem in Turkey, the relationship among Kemalist, Islamist and feminist women's movements that have been emerged after 1980s, and their perceptions of the headscarf problem. In order to understand the relationship between these three groups on the issue, I will first explain the changing regulations, styles and meanings of veiling in Turkey reaching back when the problem first started to appear in the political agenda, in 1960s. I try to explain how the discourses of defenders of the headscarf as well as the actions the state has taken against it have developed. Then I analyze the new political identity the Islamist women have gained starting in 1980s, along with changing styles of veiling, after which I try to establish how feminist, Kemalist and Islamist women relate to and reflect on each other on this issue.

3.1. The Headscarf Problem: Emergence, Regulations and Changing Meanings of the Headscarf

In the last two decades, Turkey witnessed the rise of Islamist movements and politics, influence in economics, parallel with a distinct Islamist female identity. Increase in the veiled women in the public sphere has been pointed out as the indicator of the rise of political Islam and Islamist groups in Turkey. However, the ways in which Islamic dress codes of modesty are understood has changed in Turkey over time. Still, the headscarf became the most visible symbol and indicator of Islamization of politics, gender relations, urban spaces and daily practices (Göle, 1997: 69). In the decades following 1980s, veiled women who were perceived as "reactionist refractions in the flow of modernity" had now become the fundamental object of the struggle between religious and secular forces in the political arena (Saktanber, 1994: 104).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, although women's head cover was not forcefully removed by the state forces after the foundation of the Republic, unveiling marked the commitment of women to the republican reforms particularly to its new secular regime, principles of gender equality, and development, hence became the sign of western modernization while veiling was the sign of the rejected Ottoman past (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008: 519). *Başörtüsü*, the common type of veiling, was a headcovering favored by rural people and peasants. It did not cover all of the hair and made no attempt to cover the face or the neck. Since it was favored by peasants and first generation migrants to cities, it was perceived as an indication of low status, underdevelopment and rural background (İlyasoglu, 1994: 107). In the 1960s and 70s, it reappeared as an urban public issue in parallel to the participation of the right-wing conservative politics into the parliamentarian system, and became more visible in the urban space with increasing migration from rural area to the cities (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008: 519). However, there were not many women who demanded to veil, or go to the university veiled. This is why, according to Norton (1997: 167) the general public found it socially and

politically disconcerting when women at universities started to wear *başörtüsü* later on.

Until 1960s, general consensus was that the constitutional principles related to secularism should be interpreted in such a way that Islamic attire should not be worn universities. When this consensus was challenged by Islamist groups, other ways were sought to formalize such a prohibition from time to time (Özdalga, 1998: 41). Throughout the 1970s regulations were established with regards to civil servants' attire. In 1978, CHP government banned all women in public service from wearing headscarves. This regulation was first implemented for women working in public offices and ministries, but within the same year it extended to cover female teachers as well. Aksoy (2005: 155) explains the reason as the increase in the number of veiled female teachers in the 1960s.

The debates on headscarf started to intensify in 1964, when journalist Şule Yüksel Şenler started covering her head, influencing many young girls. More than her act of wearing a headscarf as a public figure, her novel called *Huzur Sokağı* (Serenity Street) which later on was filmed by Yücel Çakmaklı (a well known Turkish Muslim film director) in 1971 under the title of *Birleşen Yollar* (Crossing Roads) become much more persuasive for converting many to what can be called an Islamic life style (Saktanber 2002a, 263). Although she had began her profession as a journalist writing in the magazine *Kadın* (Woman), she quit working for this magazine after she started to veil and practice Islam. She traveled to many cities, speaking on Islam to women in conferences. She was imprisoned for 13 months and 10 days for one of her articles in *Bugün* Newspaper, and another journal of which she was the head writer, *Seher Vakti*, was closed (Aktaş, 2006a: 327-323). Nevertheless, this first example of Islamic headscarf that has left its mark on Turkish public is called 'şulebaşı' (Şule's head).

1968 was also an important year in which headscarf started taking its central place in the ongoing debates. This is the year when headscarves started making their appearance among university students. A student named Hatice Babacan, at the Faculty of Theology, Ankara University was the first student to come to classes wearing a headscarf. Her expulsion from the Faculty, led to a strike by her classmates that would last for days. However, Babacan registered to the Department of Arabic Languages the following years at the same university, where she continued her studies veiled until she graduated (Aksoy, 2005: 145). This case presents that without a central regulation on veiling in universities, there were inconsistencies in implementations even between the faculties of the same university. Although she caused a lot of controversy, this incident was contained within the existing secular educational system and did not become a widespread role model up until 1980s.

The debates intensified even more after 1980 military coup. Since then, headscarf debate is one of the most central issues in political and social life first as a part of rising Islamic revivalism, then, paradoxically, as part of the demands for a more liberal, democratic society, particularly on the part of Islamist groups.

In the 1980s and 90s, veiling as a social phenomenon, as Aktaş (2006b) calls "reinvented" as the mark of urban, modern, well-educated identity of the Islamist activist women and became the sign of Islamic revivalism (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008: 519). Consequently, to wear an Islamic headscarf in public institutions was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1989 which particularly affected the covered female university students. After 2000, although the Islamic headscarf of women was started to be construed as a freedom of expression and tried to be normalized as a democratic civil right, it continued to play a central role in the secularist-Islamist divide (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu 2008: 519).

The meaning and style of veiling have also changed over time. The term veiling refers to the covering of women according to Islamic principles, yet the actual veil (*çarşaf*) which covers all of the body from head to feet except for the eyes and is sometimes accompanied by a *peçe* (face cover) is quite different from what is understood as an Islamic way of dressing in Turkey now. Throughout the 1980s, the most popular type of understanding of *tesettür* was a wide scarf which covers the hair and shoulders but not the face, and accompanied by a long wide coat. This kind of headcovering is also called *başörtü,* which is translated as headscarf. Today, women from younger urban generation, such university or high school students usually wear a headscarf which tightly covers the head, neck and sometimes the shoulders but is not necessarily accompanied by a long loose overcoat. The headscarf may also vary in size, as long as the hair is properly covered by the scarf (Özdalga, 1998; Saktanber, 2006; Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008).

As it will be explained in this chapter, during the 1980s, in order to give it a more modernized look, parallel with the increase of number of veiled female students in the universities, Council of Higher education introduced what is called a *türban*. Contrary to the earlier intensions of state authorities to cleanse the veil off of its religious connotations, it was used to denote Islamic headscarf by the media. The term *başörtüsü* is still being used today, and is perceived as non-threatening by secularists, because for them it denotes tradition and low status, rather than a political agenda.

As the rise of Islamist politics was identified with the increase in the number and public visibility of veiled women in the public sphere, especially in universities, which have been perceived as the locus of the modern education that would enable Turkey to reach the level of contemporary civilizations, preventive action towards female head covering started to be taken by the state through regulations. First, it was regulations that did not only cover the university students, but all public officers, in order to tame the tension between leftists and rightists in the country, that had reached a peak point in 1970s as

serious violence. According to Norton (1997: 165) during that period, dress had become vitally important since people belonging to these two political camps could be identified from their appearance, such as the style of their hair, beards, or moustaches. Therefore, in 1980, after the military takeover in September, one of the acts of the new government which had been installed by the military was to introduce the "Dress and Appearance Regulation". This regulation prohibited employees while on duty in public agencies, offices, and institutions from wearing, in the case of men, mustaches, beard and long hair, and in the case of women, mini skirts, low neck dresses and headscarves (Olson, 1985: 163). In 1982, the Council of Higher Education banned the wearing of headscarves in universities. In 1984, the same institution allowed female university students to cover their hair with *türban*, which according to state authorities and the Council viewed as more modern and in line with contemporary dress; as opposed to the larger headscarf they wore (Özdalga, 1998: 41-43). In 1987, as consequence of reaction from the secular groups and President Kenan Evren, the article in the regulation of Council of Higher Education that allowed female students to wear *türban* was withdrawn. The decision was relaxed later in the same year, after a meeting of the university presidents. In 1989, the Council of Higher Education withdrew the article that banned wearing of turbans in universities. Then, again in 1989, the Constitutional Court announced its decision which stated that the wearing of *türban* in universities was unconstitutional, since it was decided that it was against secularism, which was a principle of state clearly stated in Article 2 of the Turkish Constitution. It was also stated in the decision that allowing the headscarf in universities by regulation would be perceived as making public regulation according to religious rules, which is unacceptable in a social, secular, democratic society Turkey is stated to be, and that a public law cannot be made in line with religious rules in such a society. It was perceived as being against the principle of secularity in general, as well as the principles of secular education, in which no segregation according to religious beliefs is allowed. The headscarf was interpreted in the decision as causing separation among the

student body, as well as being against the principle of equality. This separation among the student body, which is caused by some students being allowed to wear the headscarf according to their religious beliefs, would isolate both those of the same belief who do not wear it, as well as those of different beliefs. It would create polarization and violence due to religious segregation and would distract public order, nation and the state. In the decision, the headscarf was also perceived as not being 'modern', and as conflicting with the kind of modern clothing that the secular, modern Turkish nation is to wear.

Even after this decision, some universities applied the rule in a relaxed manner. However, the ban was severely applied after 1997, after National Security Council's action to suppress the Islamist politics in Turkey, which is know as the Decrees of February 28, through which Welfare Party was also shut down.

Although the debates regarding the headscarf has always occupied an important place in the Turkish agenda, despite the fact that parties with Islamist tendencies hesitate to touch upon the subject except for promises made in the election campaign, issue of lifting the ban has returned to the agenda in a serious manner in the winter of 2008. On 9 February 2008, in the second term of its rule, AKP passed two constitutional amendments in the parliament with an aim to lift the headscarf ban in higher education. Article 10 of the Constitution of the 1982 which guarantees equality before the law was amended to ensure for citizens equal access to all public service; and Article 42 on the right to education was changed to include a phrase preventing anyone being denied access to education except for a reason openly stated in law. Although the amendments received strong support in parliament mainly from the right-wing conservative AKP, a party with Islamist leanings, and the ultra nationalist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), it triggered considerable reaction from sections of Turkish society, which had led to severe polarization between the strictly secular and Islamist and liberal sections of the society. After the amendments have been ratified by the president, Abdullah Gül, a former founding member of the AKP, CHP applied to the Constitutional Court

for their annulment. The Constitutional Court consisting of 11 members announced its decision in June 5 2008, which annulled the amendments to the constitution by a 9 to 2 vote (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008: 515). The decision stated that the two amendments were invalid as they violated the principle of secularism enshrined in the Constitution. It also stated that the headscarf points to a serious threat to a potential Islamization of the society. Therefore, Constitutional Court has repeated the decision it has taken in 1989 with regards to the headscarf. After these developments, discussions on lifting the ban has silence one more time until the next effort.

As veiled women who were expelled from universities opened court cases in Turkey, and exhausted all their efforts since they lost them, European Court of Human Rights became the forum for some to seek justice. One of the most discussed cases, not only for the Turkish case but also with regards to the European Union, was the November 10th 2005 judgment of the European Court of Human Right on Leyla Şahin vs Turkey case (ECHR 2005). The Great Chamber judged with 16 votes to 1 that refusal of Şahin's admission to the Faculty of Medicine at Istanbul University, due to her headscarf, has not been a violation of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as she claimed. It was decided that her case was in line with Article 9 of the European Convention of Human rights, which states that "freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others." The judgment on whether Şahin was denied the rights stated in Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights is as follows: Article 9 did not always guarantee the right to behave in a manner governed by a religious belief and did not confer on people who did so the right to disregard rules that had proved to be justified. In those circumstances and having regard to the Contracting States' margin of appreciation, the Court found that the interference in issue was justified in principle and proportionate to the aims

pursued, and could therefore be considered to have been necessary in a democratic society. It therefore found no violation of Article 9.

This decision denotes that in a secular country, freedom of religious expression may have its limits in order to protect the state and the public order. As Turkey is a secular country with its own rules and applications, and does not violate Şahin's basic human rights, through the margin of appreciation handed by the ECHR. It has been decided appropriate that in order to protect the principles of the state, democracy and public order, the ban has to applied if necessary, and since Şahin was already informed that she would be studying at a secular educational institution, she was not right to claim that her human rights were violated.

The current regulation bans civil servants and staff, as well as medical staff from wearing any kinds of headscarves in public offices, including schools, courts government administrative positions on the grounds that it would be a breach of constitutional secularism. According to the 7th clause of the civil Servants Law no.657, the representatives of the state are not allowed to expose their religion, belief and ideologies visually, due to the principle of secularism.

Recent court decision supports penalties imposed on civil servants who wear the headscarf in their private life, outside work. Although there are no restrictions on veiling on the streets, or one's private life, a recent court decision had complicated this issue. The distinction between these spheres is blurred as demonstrated by the case in which the supreme administrative court affirmed the decision for the removal of a kindergarten teacher who wears a headscarf on the way to and from her work (Aktaş, 2006b: xiii).

With regards to the labor market, although there are no written regulations on veiling, most high profile companies in the private sector do not employ veiled women either. In sectors like banking or tourism, they are not visible. Although the companies that are called 'Green Capital' (companies owned by Islamists) sometimes employ veiled women, it is possible to say that even they prefer

unveiled women in high profile positions. However, this is not the case for jobs in the lower levels of production. There are many women with headscarves working as blue collar workers, even in the high profile companies.

Students and academics at universities, either public or private, are banned from wearing the headscarf on campus. Most of the court cases regarding the issue have been opened because of the events that occurred in universities. In some universities, students who wear headscarves are allowed to attend the classes with a hat or a wig, which covers their headscarves; but in the others they are supposed to take their headscarves off while entering the campus. However, academic are not allowed to wear any at all. Due to the restrictions in the university regulations, a lot of students had give up on their studies after the 1980s. Although it does not openly forbid the wearing of the headscarf, the current ban in universities relies on the Additional Article 17 of the Regulation of Council of Higher Education, which states that students are free to wear what they like, unless it contradicts with the laws and regulations in force. This implies specifically the Article 2 of the Constitution on secularism. Accordingly, they are not allowed to wear the headscarf.

Members of the parliament and the women in the government administrative positions are banned from wearing the headscarf (see Göçek, 2000; Saktanber, 2002b). It is within this context that Virtue Party's MP Merve Kavakçı's headscarf created a major controversy in the country. Merve Kavakçı was the first woman wearing a headscarf elected to the parliament in 1999. There were reactions when she came to her seat in the parliament wearing a headscarf. After a lot debates, she lost her seat in March 2001 and her Turkish citizenship was revoked, since it was revealed that she had acquired a US citizenship before without consulting the Turkish government. After Virtue Party, from which Kavakçı was elected to the parliament, was closed by the Constitutional Court in June 2001, 5 parliamentarians, including Kavakçı, were banned from politics for 5 years. Another veiled parliamentarian who was elected from MHP the same year, Nesrin Ünal, had taken off her headscarf, in order to participate

in politics, but continued to cover her head outside parliament (Saktanber, 2002b: 79).

Although veiled women cannot participate in formal politics, they are active in the women's branches of the political parties. These women's groups played a great role in the victory of Virtue Party in the 1996 elections (See Arat, 2005, 1998). The styles and meanings of veiling and the frames in which the issue is being debated has changed in Turkey through the years, however it has continued to hold its important place in the agenda, as it has also become the locus where secularist-Islamist divide in the country has epitomized. As veiled women started becoming more visible and play a more significant role in the public sphere, the state has attempted to take more actions against them in order to preserve the secular public sphere. However, this did not prevent veiled women to acquire their distinct political identity, as will be explained in the next section.

3.2. New Veiling and Political Identity

Since the beginning of the intensifying debates on the headscarf from 1980s onwards, universities have become the place that had fired most of the controversy. The ban on the headscarf has put the secular and Islamist sections of the society, in order words those who are for and against the ban, in opposition from each other. As women's clothing has become the marker of modernization since the beginning of the Republic, return of the veil has become to mean a denial of gainings of the reforms of the secular Republic, regardless of what it may mean to women who choose to wear it. Increase in the visibility of headscarves in state institutions such as universities, which have been perceived as the cornerstones of the modern secular education in aim to reach contemporary civilization, for many people was even more threatening for the secular order. What society also witnessed during this period was emergence of veiled female students as new political actors who spoke out for themselves, contrary to the wide belief that Islam leads to submission of

women. With the ban on headscarf, veiled women started participation more in the debates, and at the same time become the objects of many researches (Aktaş, 2006a: 341). However, these students, who protested, demonstrated and even organized hunger strikes against the ban on headscarf in universities, did not frame their demands with regards to human or women's rights in the 1980s, but rather instrumentalized a discourse that was in line with that of their communities, their male counterparts and Islamist politicians. Islamist men joined women in their demonstrations and efforts to seek justice, however, only until there was a hope that the headscarf could have been liberated. According to Ruşen Çakır (2000) the loss of support of Islamist men and male politicians when the ban was not withdrawn is called 'the loss of veiled women'. It is an important fact that male dominated discourse and social relations has put its stamp in veiled women's struggle from the beginning, as an instrument to realize men's political aims. The türban demonstrations were controlled by males. This is why secularist section of the society has viewed türban not as a female students search for their own rights, but a problem men have provocated for political reasons (Çakır, 2000: 88). As Göle (1991: 118) argues, the demands to veil by women have generally been perceived as a part of the strategy of political Islam and therefore women's role in these Islamist movements have been explained with passive adjectives as 'instruments' or 'tools'. Although this is a fact that should be taken into consideration, it should not be overlooked that this period opened up a new space of action for Islamist women. They were themselves also disappointed when male counterparts withdrew their support from the demands on the headscarf. One woman who had been very active in the university demonstrations during this period, later on confessed that "men were not on women's side, but were against the state", and that was why they supported their struggle for the headscarf when the ban was first implicated (Çakır, 2000: 63).

An important reason why Islamist women's headscarves and their demonstrations against the ban has provoked reactions from the secular section of the population, especially the Kemalist women, was that it has been

perceived as erasure of the gainings of secularism and modernization efforts that has been brought forward since the Reformation Period in the Ottoman Empire. Göle (1991: 116) argues that considering the fact that Turkish women have gained the right to education and participation in public life through the strict secularization of the Turkish society, the disappointment of Kemalist women and political polarization in society the demand to right to veil will bring along is understandable, although this demand only came from a small section of women. The challenge these well-educated university students posed seemed all the more alarming to state leaders and secularists, because these women who demanded to cover their head according to religious rules were not underprivileged from the rural areas who they could accuse of being illiterate, but rather the battle on the most visible 'symbol against modernization and secularism' was being fought in the university campuses. According to Norton (1997: 172), it could no longer be assumed that educated women would automatically adopt the modernized look that has been put forward for women since the foundation of the Republic, which increased the tension. They were assumed to become threats to the secular order as they were thought to deny modernization and as they have challenged the monopoly of the power of the Westernized elites.

The veiled female students have also challenged the view of the 'traditional' veiled, urban women, with their style of veiling and their attitude; and they have themselves underlined that they were different from their mothers or grandmothers. Although they had mostly come from modest Anatolian families that lived Islam in its traditional interpretations, these students, with their level of education and the way they lived the religion have made themselves distinct from their families. According to Göle (1991: 121), they became the educated, more militant faces of Islam. The way they veiled was also a marker of their difference. Instead of the traditional *başörtüsü* which the society was used to see rural population in, these women chose to wear *türban*, which is argued to be a negotiation of traditionality and modernization. This style was also an epitomization of the confusion of the rest of the society that laid on the paradox

of urban, educated women demanding to cover themselves in line with religious dictates, where they should have been freed of it.

In conclusion, although headscarf, according to Islamic principles, is aimed at making women less publicly visible in the Turkish context, veiled women have become more visible since 1980s, since in a strictly secular society where religion has been controlled by the state, they stood for a criticism of this secular order. Although they moved within the male discourse on Islam and followed their religious community, they still achieved to turn the traditional perceptions of veiled women's agency upside down. As Yeşim Arat (1998: 124) argues, "[i]ndependent of what their private, individual reasons for covering the head might have been, even though they might have acted in solidarity with members of their religious community, they were engaged in act of individuation and political resistance as they confronted the gaze of the uncovered women who thought of them as different." This has opened up new spaces of action and development of new discourses for veiled women in the following years, as will be explained in this chapter.

3.2.1. Headscarf as the object of Fashion and Islamic Consumerism

With increased politicization of Islam and struggle between secularists and Islamists, Islamic consumption culture emerged in 1990s. Accumulation of wealth among some segments of religious population led to the emergence of an Islamist bourgeoisie (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2005: 62). The accumulation of capital among Islamically-oriented circles was parallel to the creation of an 'Islamic consumerism', and Islamists differentiated and highlighted their identities by buying and using different brands and products (Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Navaro-Yashin, 2003: 256). However, "as alternatives for Islamic consumers simultaneously increased and diluted, market boundaries became less rigid, yielding to the dynamics of the free market economy" (Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006: 477). Although Islamists have constantly criticized consumption culture in line with religious tenets, they have become

articulated to it. As demands have increased, Islamist businesses and companies have contributed to the creation of an Islamic consumption culture and Islamic market.

Through their interest in conspicuous consumption, purchasing power and demand for style, the traditional Islamic attire for women has been transformed. Fashion, style and consumption became important concepts within Islamic circles. Some argue that it contradicts the Islamic norm of modesty, or that there is contradiction between terms (cf. Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Navaro-Yashin, 2003; Sandıkçı and Ger, 2005; Saktanber, 2006; White, 1999). Regarding the interpretations of Quran, Islamic principles suggest the necessity of covering the female body to conceal it from the male gaze (El Guindi, 1999: 55-7). The necessity of female veiling also symbolizes the Islamic social order that relies on the duality of sexes, and according to Göle (1991: 126); the strict line of demarcation between sexes finds its reflection in clothing, specifically female covering. However, the new style of veiling does not prevent them from appearing attractive and conceal the female body from the male gaze, since "the new tesettür fashion plainly has something to do with being chic, glamorous, and a good consumer" (Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006: 478).

When the image of the ideal Turkish woman who was active in the public sphere with Westernized clothes and no veil is recalled, it can also be argued that veiling also draws a thick line between modern and non-modern in the imaginary of the Turkish society. Therefore, this new appearance also contradicts with the secularists' idea of Islamist threat. The tensions between fashion, modernity and compliance with Islam that are visualized through new veiling indicate that the headscarf does not make the woman non-modern. It points to a "different expression of modernity, which are subject to the logic of fashion and capitalist production" (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2005: 79). Sandıkçı and Ger (2005: 66) also argue that "[as] the meaning of tesettür pluralized, aesthetic judgments, taste dispositions, and cultural and financial capital assume greater significance in the actual head covering practices of the Islamist women."

Veiled women started to look up to their own style models in TV shows or among political figures who have become role models and pioneers of fashion. The increased demand to follow new fashion and styles, have opened a new market within the Islamist consumerism: major corporations in the textile industry, whose production and marketing resemble that of all the other mainstream brands.

Navaro-Yashin (2003: 233) writes that there already existed small, cheap clothing stores for the basic necessities of veiled women from middle and lower classes. She notes that these stores were not located in main streets, but in the sidestreets in the neighborhoods Islamists preferred to reside in. Young Islamist women, especially university students and those that worked outside the home did not like to shop from these stores; they rather preferred stores where they could find scarves and pardesüs that were in fashion. In order to supply for veiled women's need for clothing and new styles, Tekbir Giyim AŞ was founded in 1978. It has enlarged its market with the increase in the number of veiled women, and also started sharing this market with other companies that were founded for with the same objective. Tekbir organized the first tesettür fashion show using professional models in 1994 (Özkan, 2005: 30). The name of the company, clothes that were exhibited, professional models that took place in the show and the exposure of female body were discussed in the Islamist media for days. A lot of Islamist writers in the media argued that Islamist sections of the population has articulated into the capitalist system as they have acquired money and power, that instruments that serve the consumerist ideology such as fashion shows and advertisements are against Islam's opposition to exploitation of the female body and that tesettür has been emptied of its meaning (Özkan, 2005: 30). In their analysis of practices of clothing and Islamic consumerism, Kılıçbay and Binark (2002: 501) point to a dominance of discourses which denies the fashion phenomenon in Islamist women's magazines. However, they also argue that in contrast to the article that criticizes fashion as a practice of consumption culture, which these magazines perceive as a part of anti-Islamic ideology, the advertisements that

appear in these magazines invite readers to be consumers in the fashion for veiling (Kılıçbay and Binark, 2002: 501).

Diversification in the styles and the attention women pay in order to acquire the latest designs in the headscarf support Balasescu (2003) in his argument against the absence of even the potential of the headscarf as an aesthetic object rests on a false assumption. He summarizes this assumption, which he claims to be false as: "Since veiling is a practice that does not belong to the 'western' space, and since fashion…historically belongs to the west, the veil cannot be fashion" (Balasescu, 2003: 47). Ger and Sandıkçı (2005: 78) also argue that dichotomic understanding of the relationship between fashion and modernity and the notion that there is no space for fashion and modernity in Islam has been complicated by new veiling. Genel and Karaosmanoğlu (2006: 484-485) also point at the deconstruction of the duality of categories by arguing that instead of assimilation or integration into one of the existing discourses, this "new identity has the potential to transform the existing stereotypes and clichés of both secular and Islamic identification", and that the new urban Muslim woman carries the capacity to transform the conventional image of both the modern, Kemalist woman, "thus promising to deconstruct and bring relativity to the image of the 'western' Turkish woman", and the image of the Islamic woman covered in full black veil. They may act as catalyzers in the enabling 'modern' to gain multiple meanings, preventing it to be associated with being secular, as more young women who contribute to the new platform of urban trends and fashion. Although this argument may be valid for some people's approach to new veiling, it should not be overlooked that no matter what the style is, women who don the new veiling in Turkey are still object of 'headscarf-skepticism' (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008) and they are even perceived more as threats, because they cross-cut the spaces and opportunities that have been perceived as being only restricted to the secular section of the population who have also represented the ideals of the Republic with their bodily practices, which so far had excluded veiling. What is also interesting that secular people who had the monopoly over the financial and social capital until

the accumulation of wealth by Islamic section of the society in the 1990s, view the new veiling as the symbol of epitomization of articulation of political Islam to financial power, which increases their skepticism. It should also be considered that although veiling now symbolizes a sense of empowerment for the women who chose to veil by their free will since the 1980s, the same time the practice itself reinforces the assumption by some interpreters of Islam that women arouse temptation and threaten male honor.

3.3. Women's Movements in post-1980 Turkey

3.3.1 Feminist movements as a part of the women's movement in post-1980 Turkey

At the beginning of the 1980s, after the military takeover, there was a political vacuum where the militant right and left were suppressed. Politically restrictive atmosphere, that was followed by the emergence of opportunities for a new civil society later in the decade enabled women, most of whom were involved in leftist politics in Turkey in the previous decade, to question their place both in society and in the political groups they had been involved in. The leftist ideology had not perceived woman question as a separate issue from that of others they indulged in, and it was subordinated to the main goal of struggle against the class system (Berktay, 1995; Sirman, 1988). Müftüler-Baç (1999: 307) argues that left had treated woman question in a similar manned to that of Kemalism and Islam, as women were included in leftist politics as comrades, sisters and asexual beings; and their rights were a part of the plan of systematic social transformation.

After this experience, in the context of emergence of global feminist movements, feminist ideas appealed to these women, most of whom were educated, professional, middle class women and who already had the experience of mobilization against the state. The feminist movement in Turkey was initially shaped by radical and socialist feminists. Although the views of these groups often overlap, radical feminists argued that the movement should

be autonomous, while socialist feminists argue that a socialist and feminist transformation need to go hand in hand in order to transform and eliminate inequalities in society (Aldıkaçtı Marshall, 2005: 106). However, despite the differences, what these feminist groups had in common was searching for individual autonomy and criticism of both civil and official patriarchal codes and the Kemalist understanding of women's emancipation (Saktanber, 2006: 26). In their opinion, formal equality sought within the framework of state feminism, that were defended by Kemalist women up to then was not enough and substantive equality was to be achieved. According to Y. Arat (1998: 119), tension among individualism that these women searched for, and collective social norms and statism that has prevailed since then, characterized this period of women's activism. However, as she also points out, for the sake of feminist solidarity, they had to curb their individual feminist demands and act in solidarity to reach their struggle against statist and solidarist socieatal norms (Y. Arat, 1998: 120).

Despite their differences, feminist groups first gathered together on the issue of domestic violence. The Campaign Against Battering of Women, which followed with a big rally in 1987, was the first time they really made their voices heard in the public sphere. Later on, they achieved other improvements, such as the foundation of Purple Roof Women's Shelter in 1990, collection of signatures to get CEDAW agreement ratified, campaigns against sexual harassment, virginity tests and rape. They also succeeded in the cancellation of articles of laws which discriminated against women and played a very important role in the amendments in Civil Code in 2001. They have also published feminist magazines, which were not all long-lived, however very influential in this generation and the years to follow. The most significant ones were *Pazartesi, Kaktüs* and *feminist*. Through activities, gatherings and publications, these women raise the issue of the oppression of women as a major area of struggle in Turkish society. Although they spoke from different positions, they all agreed on the need for an independent woman's movement.

One significant impact Western feminism had on these groups was the form of organization. They organized in small, non-hierarchical independent groups, consciousness raising groups, and issue oriented ad hoc committees. This was also because of the restrictions imposed on organizations after 1980 which suppressed forms of political activity outside the parliament, as well as perhaps the kind of political space they wanted to create for themselves, where they wanted to distance themselves from state and state feminism (Sirman, 1988). What feminist movement aimed to achieve was not formal equality with men, but rather liberation through emancipation and challenge heritage of state feminism of Kemalism that constructed this understanding of equality. They also demanded further democratization of society, where all women's demands would be heard as women's demands, independent from any other political belonging they may have. According to them, individualist instead of a communitarian understanding and prioritizing women's personal choices would help enable a more democratic society (Y. Arat, 1998). Organizations which expressed demands in the name of women now spoke for women, instead of the organizations that had other political alliances with groups or parties in the earlier decades. They aimed to challenge the patriarchal restrictions women had to face, coming all the way from the foundation of the Republic, in the name of women's emancipation, both in the public and private sphere. They have also extended support to other identities women have expressed, underlined that women have to face patriarchal domination in solidarity with other women. This was their aim when they started dialogue with Islamist women. Although they criticized Kemalism for its policies on women and agreed with Kemalist women about the significance of secularism for women's rights, they also supported Islamist women's struggle, both within their own communities and for a more inclusive democratic system (Keskin-Kozat, 2003: 194). Filiz Koçali, one of the founders of the feminist magazine *Pazartesi* summarizes feminist women's views on Islamist women with these words: "Although we were aware as every other decent feminist that political Islam needed to be combatted, we did not fall into the trap of official ideology, Kemalism, and

prohibitionism. While debating ideologically with political Islam, we were also against exclusion of women because of their headscarves" (Koçali, 2007: 78). According to feminists, indulging in a dialogue with veiled women who they believed were discriminated against and excluded in society, was a part the challenge they posed against the patriarchal state and its implications of gender equality which they deemed insufficient.

3.3.2. Kemalist women as a part of the women's movement in post-1980 Turkey

As it was stated in Chapter 2, reforms in legislation, social and cultural life were implemented in the founding years of the Turkish Republic, one of which women's status in society and the public sphere was the most important concerns. A new 'ideal Turkish woman' was envisaged as an integral part of nation building and efforts of women's emancipation in relation with it, which was deemed necessary by the state elites who idealized a modern, citizen woman active in the public sphere that should replace the 'oppressed, veiled Ottoman woman'. These efforts to reform women's status were to be identified as 'state feminism' of the New Republic, in which the image and status of women became an important criterion of success of modernization and westernization efforts. Kemalism embodies feminism as a principle, as the official ideology proclaimed the equality between men and women. Women's participation in the public sphere was strongly emphasized and encouraged, however, with the condition that it was in line with the state ideals and principles of the state, the most important of which was the principle of secularism. Actually, women's civil and political rights and reforms that enabled them are the cornerstones of the secular political regime that has given the Republic its identity, which continues to be preserved in the present day (Saktanber, 2001: 323). Although women had now achieved many rights their counterparts in other countries did not, scholars of women's studies in Turkey have also questioned the extent to which this 'state feminism' has truly emancipated women, in the private sphere as well as the public. Women's new

visibility as professional, unveiled women did not transform their roles in the private sphere as the reforms and implications of new Civil Code that was implemented in 1926 only touched upon their emancipation in the public eye. The Civil Code has brought the institution of marriage under legal protection, prohibited polygamy, and equal rights to men and women in divorce, child custody and inheritance. However, it also preserved the male dominance within the family by, for example, identifying the husband as the head of the family, by ruling the necessity of husband's permission for the wife to work outside the home, as well as the resignation of the family's residence, and allowing custody to the husband in case there is a disagreement in the divorce process. Since male dominance in the relations within the family and the gendered division of labor that persisted seems to overlap with the Islamic patriarchal values, the prevalent gender values that are reinforced with religious dictates have not been fundamentally challenged in the founding years of the Republic (Saktanber, 2001: 326; see also Saktanber, 1994).

In line with the state's attitude to women's place in public and private spheres, an important role women were handed was to become modern, educated mothers, wives and teachers for the protection of the state and national unity throughout the nation building process. A communitarian, rather than an individualistic, approach underlied the recreation of Turkish women as 'ideal citizens', who were instrumentalized for the good of the new nation and the new state. Women willingly took up this role, with almost no criticisms of their roles in the private sphere that were left untouched by the new reforms, for the benefit of the state, to which they believed they owed their new status to. The Kemalist regime demanded a thankful, compatible comradeship rather than a critical participation from women, which it mostly appropriated (Saktanber, 2001: 327). Although their roles within this modernization process and the limits of their participation were drawn by men, women identified with these limitations for they were now granted social and political rights through it, as well as it brought along their contribution to their nation.

Emphasis on sameness with men lacking female sexuality in the public in order to participate in professional life, and carrying out roles of modern mothers and wives in the private sphere have led to lines between public and the private spheres to become even thicker under precepts of Kemalism. Not only did the distinction of public and private was enforced, but this has also led to the illusion that the questioning of the gender relations in the private sphere was redundant. As Göle (1997: 86) argues, Kemalist feminism is "creating a radical reappraisal of what considered public and private spheres", since they emphasize social mixing of the sexes and public visibility of women. This approach, according to her, therefore leads to a reevaluation of Islamic morality, which focuses on separation of sexes and control of female sexuality. As Saktanber (2002a: 328) also argues, the discourse of Kemalism on gender relations, opposed segregation as one of the most distinct features of Muslim societies and demanded to see women as active subjects in society on the one hand, and establishing conservative control mechanisms that are reinforced with corporatist nationalism on women.

The stance of the present day Kemalist women can be traced back to the first generation of Kemalist women who benefited from these reforms that were put forward by the state elites who were led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Until the emergence of an independent feminist movement in 1980s, who criticized the state reforms that underlined a communitarian ideal that emancipated women as 'citizens' rather than as 'women', Kemalist women's stance and Kemalist ideology's discourse of 'women's rights' was the main approach towards what women's emancipation and what gender equality meant. Their understanding of equality was based on sameness between men and women that could be achieved through legal reforms and political structures. Yeşim Arat (2007: 97) argues that during the 1980s, this generation of women, who she defines as 'the older generation of Kemalist women', identified themselves as "egalitarian feminists, or at times Kemalist feminists". According to her, Kemalist feminists wanted equality between men and women and "sought it by upholding the formal egalitarian principles that the founder of the republic Kemal Atatürk

established" (Y. Arat, 2000: 116). They argued that Kemalist reforms emancipated women, and this was a fact that could not be contested. Therefore, they were not sympathetic to the demands of the feminist movements and different groups of women that emerged later, since they challenged the already existing approaches and values of state feminism. Kemalist women criticized "all forms of women's movements other than state-led republican feminism and have been opposed to the emergence of socialist, ethnic or religious women's identities" (Saktanber, 2006: 25). They argued for the invisibility of any identities or demands that would challenge and contest the ground that has already been set down by the state regarding women's issue and national identity, since they put forward that secularism, national unity and coherence with principles laid down by state elites prevail any demand that will be argued for different identities, including that of other kinds of feminisms, besides 'Kemalist feminism'. They also have not challenged or questioned the patriarchal values that have been attributed to motherhood, by committing to these values to the last extent, therefore kept a conservative approach to the issue of women's rights and gender relations. This attitude has also reflected to their relationship with the state, which they have taken under motherly protection against any divergent demands. Instead of questioning the male authority and control, they have looked into benefiting from it.

They have also been very active in efforts to increase women's representation in parliament and in local governments, in order to achieve formal equality. However, women in the parliament did not provide a substantive representation, not they specifically aimed to attract attention to women's issues or gender discrimination. They sustained the male dominated discourses in politics with regards to women's issues, especially the headscarf problem.

Still, it would be wrong to argue that Kemalist women have not contributed to achievements of women's movement in Turkey in negotiation with state on some issues in which changes were demanded. Although issues such as domestic violence, violence against women, virginity and abortion that were

related to direct control of women's sexuality had been brought to the agenda of the society through the efforts the second wave feminist movement in Turkey, which criticized and were criticized by Kemalist women, Kemalist women have also supported that these issues are being opened to discussion. However, as Saktanber (2001) argues, these debates and women's demands have only found a space for themselves in the Kemalist discourse of women's rights as long as they were justified with the aim of modernization of the state and society.

3.3.3. Islamist women as a part of the women's movement in post-1980 Turkey

Due to the increased visibility of the headscarves, and their perception as the symbol of political Islam, the headscarf was banned in the public institutions and universities after the 1980s. As explained in Section 3.2 of this chapter, this time period witnessed veiled women engaging actively in politics, in election campaigns for Islamic parties and mass demonstrations against the ban in the universities. They have also become active in the struggle to lift the ban for the headscarf, along with male politicians; which changed the perception of 'passive' Muslim women in Turkey. The Islamist women challenged the prevailing notions of secularism, democracy and national identity in Turkey. Their discourse went through a transformation through time, in which, they defended their right to veil through a demand for respect to human rights, freedom of religion and religious expression and right to education (Arat, 1998; Saktanber, 2006; Rumford, 2003). Y. Arat (1998: 128) also argues that their appeal to secular universal human rights and equality can be important means to fight patriarchal subordination because "it does not lend itself to manipulation in the name of divine rule and faith". Seeking autonomy and substantive equality within the confines of Islam is bound to be let down by the patriarchal interpretations of complementarity of the sexes that is enshrined in the divine rules of religion; but this way, Islamist women do not only fight

against the secular interpretations of their rights, but also a patriarchy that is legitimized through sacred laws.

Islamist women, who were actively protesting the headscarf ban in 1980s, also started to be active in politics in 1990s. They held an important place especially in RP's victory in 1994 local elections, in which the RP won the municipalities in major metropolises. Sibel Eraslan, who was the chairwoman for the RP's Ladies Commission in Istanbul recalls that she worked with 18,000 women to mobilize other women, and that in one month they met 200,000 women face to face (1995: 2-5). However, after the elections she was not given a position within the party, was expected to go back home. Although women have been employed as the symbols of the Islamist movement and their aims, and have helped Islamist politicians gain votes, they have not been able to participate in formal politics and were not promoted to higher positions within the party (Y. Arat, 2005). Party leaders actually preferred unveiled women as candidates for the MP position, although it was the veiled women who carried out the hard task of gaining constituency for the party. Eraslan's experience was not an isolated event, but something that happened to many women who worked for the party for these elections, as well as those who protested the headscarf ban through 1980s and 1990s, or the reformist intellectual Islamist women who dare to question the patriarchal relations that prioritize men in Islam, as well as within the Islamist women itself. As Saktanber (2006) argues men did not support the presence of women in the public sphere for the sake of women's own individual autonomy, freedom or empowerment, but to empower the symbolic presence of Islam in society. Serious debates between Islamist women and men at the end of 1980s, as Islamist women started to become active in the public sphere for their own demands. In 1987, Islamist women started writing in *Zaman* Daily Newspaper on women's rights, traditional gender roles, women's participation in public sphere and workforce, how relations between men and women should be. Islamist women had started to form a conscious among themselves by standing in opposition to their male counterparts, instead of the feminists. They questioned relations between men

and women, as well as the Islamist movement itself. When these articles were severely attacked and criticized by male writers who defended traditional interpretations of Islam and women's place in it, weekly news magazine *Nokta* made a cover issue out of these Islamist women writers and put the heading 'Türbanlı Feministler' (Feminists with Türbans) (Göle, 1991; Özkan, 2005; Sirman, 1988). However, as will be explained in the next section in this chapter, Islamist women did not agree with this adjective, and argued that they were not feminists, but did not deny that they agreed with some arguments and demands of feminists. The result of their challenges and questioning towards Islam was accusations by influential male and female Islamist intellectuals for not knowing the real meaning of Islam (Saktanber, 2006: 27). They were criticized by straying away from the goals of the community and the movement for their own individual demands, that resembled the other 'corrupt Westernized women'.

In interviews with veiled women activists, it is evident that they are disappointed with the criticisms of male Islamists who are unhappy with the struggle of Islamist women activists for individualism and want push these women into traditional roles. They think that when men extend support to women, it is only to oppose the state and for the men's own cause (Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006: 482; Çakır, 2000). However, such a discourse of protest does not lead those women who express their disappointment with Muslim men mounting to an actual political challenge and create a women's opposition movement even within the boundaries of Islamic political activism and fight against those restrictive attitudes of the party administrators. Instead they prefer to bear an attitude of what Eraslan (2000, 200; Çakır, 2000: 92; Saktanber 2002b) calls "hikmetli sessizlik" (solemn silence), an attitude of patience which led them not to raise their voices against the male Islamist politicians in general, and the party administration in particular. Cihan Aktaş, an Islamist woman intellectual also confesses that Islamist women lost their battle in the 1980s because they prioritized their Islamism, rather than their womanhood (Çakır, 2000: 139). Yıldız Ramazanoğlu also argues that women were allowed

to socialize and politicize within the boundaries of community and party aims (Çakır, 2000: 89). Y. Arat (2005: 115) argues that although Islamist women in Welfare Party did not precipitate a liberal or feminist protest within their conservative Islamist party, or succeeded in promoting female activists or supporters to positions of power within the party; with their autonomous choice they did challenge the parameters within which women were expected to practice Islam, to engage in politics and to promote their self-interest in Turkey. Women's involvement and activism in the public sphere and party politics led to a transformation of the public sphere, of themselves and, to a certain extent, that of Islamist politics in Turkey.

3.4. Interaction of Kemalist, Feminist and Islamist Women in Turkey after 1980s

3.4.1 Islamist Women and Feminism

As Y. Arat (2001) draws attention, the ban on headscarf by the state assumes and mistakenly identifies a homogeneous group of veiled women, whereas there is no such homogeneous group, but rather these women form a heterogeneous group. In line with this fact, a group of Islamist women had started discussing the place of woman in Islam in a reformist way in the past two decades. They argued that submission and oppression of women in Muslim societies was due to the due to the patriarchal interpretations of Quran and religious scripts. As explained in the previous section, these women have attracted a lot of reactions and accusations from the Islamist men, but still continued to defend their stance in the media organs as well as the civil society organizations they formed, which mostly aim to defend and support the veiled women who were expelled from the universities, or who have lost their jobs due to the headscarf ban. Başkent Kadın Platformu was founded in Ankara in 1995, and AK-DER and ÖZGÜR-DER were founded in 1999 in İstanbul. At the same time, it became possible to observe a transformation in the discourses of Islamist women with regards to their rights. Different groups of Islamist

women have started to defend their decision to wear headscarves by relying on the discourse of human rights, freedom of expression and democracy, instead of that of religion. Some Islamist women activists argue that these women's organizations that existed outside of party link, gradually disconnected themselves from community relations, and dedicated themselves to women's issues (Çakır, 2000: 91).

Well educated veiled Islamist woman intellectual such as Cihan Aktaş, Fatma Karabıyık Barbarosoğlu, Emine Şenlikoğlu, Sibel Eraslan, Ayşe Böhürler and Hidayet Şevkatli Tuksal became widely known in the media and along intelligencia, since they speak on behalf of women's individual rights. However, it is important to note that not all of the activists criticize Islamic patriarchy. Instead some underline that in Islam, men and women are not equal but they complement each other, and that the duties that are distributed to the two sexes cannot be challenged since these functions enforce the complementarity. Still the adjective 'Islamist feminist' is attributed to many of them by the media. But they reject this definition, due to the connotations 'feminist' has in the Islamist circles such as sexual promiscuity and hatred towards family (Keskin-Kozat, 2003; Aldıkaçtı-Marshall, 2005).

Many reformist Islamist women argue that feminism as a product of Westernization and modernization which had nothing to offer a true Muslim; but they still accepted that the position of women is something that Islamic writers and intellectuals had been very sensitive about, since they themselves also question it and challenge the traditional understandings (Sirman, 1988). Although they do not call themselves feminists, they also accept that feminism and debates among feminists have become useful tools for them to form their own arguments and agenda and in deconstructing patriarchal structure in the society and in religion. For example, Hidayet Şevkatli Tuksal says that when the basic approaches of feminism is considered, she is not a feminist but has a "woman's point of view" (Çakır, 2000: 28). It is also reflected in statements by some these Islamist women that they believe that that post-1980 feminist

movements that have emerged in Turkey is under the influence of a Western-oriented orientalist discourse. Mualla Gülnaz expressed in an interview that although women may have common problems coming from belonging to the same sex, Western feminists, and therefore the Turkish feminist movement which has developed under the influence of it, may not be able to understand issues that women of this part of the world have to go through because they belong to a different culture and history (Çakır, 2000: 46). According to her, feminists have defended that they cannot exist in the same woman's movement with Islamist women, and that only a few of the feminists in Turkey have approached Islamist women. Yıldız Ramazanoğlu also argues that feminists have instrumentalized a male dominated discourse with regards to veiled women, but also points out that some feminists were on the same side with them. It can be argued that as much as Islamist feminists argued that feminist women could not understand or approach them, as will be elaborated on in the next section, they have disregarded many attempts of dialogue feminist women tried to construct with them, since such attempts existed among the post-1980s feminist movements in Turkey.

Nilüfer Göle (1991: 181-182) argues that Islamist women use the space of opportunity that were constructed for Kemalist women in the Turkish Republic. As they are articulated to public sphere, they started 'violating' the male female relations in the private sphere. Different from Kemalist feminists, they are forced to transform the gender relations in the private sphere in order to achieve their demands for participation in the public sphere. However, it should not be overlooked that Islamist women have to achieve this transformation within an Islamic framework, that does not challenge the understanding of complamentarity. Their identity as Islamist women provides them political and social opportunities by increasing their visibility in the public sphere, but also restricts their action and discourse within ideological and religious boundaries. Therefore, as can be seen in their arguments, a tension exists between Islamist women's strategies of individualization, self-definition and subjectivity; and

necessities of Islamist movement that holds them within the boundaries of the movement and community.

3.4.2. Kemalist and Feminist Women's Views on the Headscarf

Kemalist women have perceived the rise of Islamic movements after the 1980s as a major threat, and they organized efficiently to counter it. Those urban, well-educated, middle class Kemalist women who viewed defending principle of secularism as the primary aim in the name of guarding women's rights mobilized many platforms and civil society organizations. In their perception, the protection of secular political system and lifestyle were the most important prerequisite**.** This was their main pillar in their organizations of civil society, in which they have become very active, such as Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği, Cumhuriyet Kadınları Deneği, Kadının Sosyal Hayatını Araştırma ve İnceleme Derneği. Saktanber (2001: 332) argues that they have formed their alternative networks to those of Islamist activist groups, which mobilize young people and women through the education, scholarship and job opportunities they provide. Haydi Kızlar Okula Campaign can be recalled as an important one that has been pioneered by Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği, which aims to increase the schooling rate of girls in the impoverished areas of Turkey.

This approach of strict adherence to state principles by unrecognition of differences among women can also be observed in their stance towards the headscarf issue, since they do not perceive the headscarf ban as a violation of rights and freedoms of expression or in relation with body politics employed by state within a patriarchal structure. In an interview, Güldal Okuducu (1998), chairwoman of the Women's Branch of CHP, a political party which embodies a strong Kemalist stance, argues that they are against the headscarf as an organization because they believe that freedoms in the private sphere should not be carried to the public realm, in which a citizen should obey the already existing laws for the protection of the state. It is evident in this statement that they are against putting individual choices and identities before principles of

the state, and therefore visible signs of personal choices of beliefs in the public that would contest these principles. Kemalist women also regularly argue that veiled women are used as political symbols by Islamist parties and are instrumentalized to achieve an Islamic society that will be ruled by Sharia law. In another interview, President of Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği Türkan Saylan, an ardent opponent of veiling in the public sphere, argued that veiled women should also be compatible with modern times and take off their headscarves, just as men who wore ties, and that this is not a matter of freedom, but a matter of obeying the laws and principles, the most important of which is secularism. As can be seen, Saylan proposes following men in obedience of principles of the state, and act in line with 'modern times'. Nermin Abadan-Unat (1998: 332-333), one of the first prominent female social scientists in Turkey, who also openly defined herself as a Kemalist also writes that women are falsely being promised that they will lead active lives in the Islamic society that that Islamists are trying to form, and that within this framework that embodies an ideological enmity to the West, rights that have been given to Turkish women and the values of the Kemalist modernization project are being denied and turned upside down.

As feminist movement that have emerged after 1980s criticized Kemalist principles of women's emancipation and construction of 'the citizen woman' in Turkish society, they were also critical towards state's and Kemalist woman's approach to veiled women. A main argument among the feminist was that they supported veiled women's right to choose to wear the headscarf, although they do not support veiling itself, as it is a sign of patriarchal subordination of women based on their womanhood. They argued that banning the headscarf in the public sphere would push women to the private sphere. According to Saktanber (2006: 26), "[th]e more covered women have taken a critical stand against Islamic oppression of women, the stronger feminists' support of those who oppose the ban has grown, and they have begun to regard this ban as a form of sexist discrimination that prevents covered women from participating in public life." For these women, joining forces with Islamists was compatible

with feminism which in the name of democracy supported the expression of any political demand. They also saw no problem in allying with them in challenging the male-dominated society, since some of the Islamist women were also open to the idea. However, according to Keskin-Kozat (2003: 110), a common view among feminists was also that "the Islamist movement envisages an Islamic order that would automatically exclude women who prefer not to cover their heads". It is also important to point out that not all feminists had the same opinion on headscarves. Some approached the issue with more caution that others. They felt that this was carrying anti-statism too far and that feminism and Islam could never be compatible (Sirman, 1988). This shows that it is possible to argue that some feminist women were more ambivalent and suspicious than others in the movement on what stance they had to take towards the issue of the headscarf and a dialogue with Islamist women.

In this chapter, I first tried to explain the emergence of the 'headscarf problem', changing regulations, styles and meanings of veiling in relation to the new political identity Islamist women gained in the public sphere after the 1980s, where Islam started to become more visible, the most distinct marker of which were the veiled women. I tried to show how the discourses of defenders of the headscarf as well as the actions the state has taken against it, and reactions of those who oppose to the headscarf as the symbol of Islamization. I analyzed the emergence of and the relationship among Kemalist, Islamist and feminist women's movements after 1980s, and their perceptions of the headscarf problem, as well as each other as different sides in the women's movement in Turkey.

In the next chapter I will focus on the feminist perceptions of the headscarf and Islamist women in three feminist magazines that have started to be published in 2006, namely *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar, Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* and *Amargi.* Through this analysis, I aim to understand how feminist approach to the headscarf issue has changed compared to that of the feminists'

approach in 1980s and 1990s. In order to do this, I will explore what the feminist publications that were in press before 2000 argued on the issue.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THREE WOMEN'S STUDIES JOURNALS WITH REGARDS TO THE HEADSCARF ISSUE IN TURKEY: *FEMİNİST YAKLAŞIMLAR, KADIN ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ, AMARGİ*

In this chapter, I will analyze three magazines all of which have started to be published very recently, *Amargi, Feminist Yaklaşımlar* and *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi*, to understand their stance towards the headscarf problem in Turkey and whether it has differed from the older feminist magazines that have been published in Turkey. In order to achieve this, I first summarize how these significant feminist magazines that were published towards the end of 1980s and 1990s when political Islam was on the rise, especially *Pazartesi*, approach the issue of headscarf and dialogue with Islamist women. I will then go on to analyze *Amargi, Feminist Yaklaşımlar* and *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi*, to understand what their perceptions are and whether they differ from that of the magazine formerly mentioned. I look at their general approach towards women's issues, the topics they cover, what they propose as their aim to achieve by publishing a magazine regarding the women's movement in Turkey. I try to analyze both their content and how they frame them, focusing on the headscarf problem and Islamist women. There are two reasons why these three magazines were chosen for analysis. First, although one of them no longer exists, these three magazines have all started to be published in very recently, in 2006. Since then they are the only magazines to be published in Turkey with regards to women's studies and feminism. Second reason is that, this date also coincides with the period of time when the headscarf issue became a hot topic

of debate in the agenda in Turkey, due to controversial developments regarding this issue, such as the 2005 decision of ECHR in the case of 'Leyla Şahin vs. Turkey', and the presidential elections of 2006, which was surrounded by debates on whether a veiled first lady in Turkey is acceptable or not[1].

4.1. *Pazartesi* and *Kaktüs*: What earlier feminist magazines had to say on the headscarf issue and Islamist women

As an independent women's movement emerged in Turkey after 1980s, independent of both their prior political affiliations in left and Kemalist women, they have started publishing different feminist magazines in order to reach further, communicate with each other, set their agenda and make themselves heard. It was a prolific period when 44 women's periodical were published between 1980 and 1990, and 63 between 1990 and 1996 (Davaz-Mardin, 1998). The three important magazines that were published in this period were *feminist*, *Sosyalist Feminist Kaktüs* (Socialist Feminist Cactus, shortly known as *Kaktüs*) and *Pazartesi (Monday)*. *Feminist* started publication as a radical feminist magazine in 1987 and 7 issues came out until it went out of circulation in 1990. *Kaktüs* circulated for 12 issues between 1988 and 1990. *Pazartesi* was the only long lasting feminist magazine that was published regularly. It was published from April 1995 until March 2002. After a financial crisis, it stopped publication, then resumed in November 2003. In the last few years, it has published volumes that are composed mostly of articles that came out in older issues on themes such as religion, motherhood, woman labor. It currently runs an active website. Although I will also try to explain how *Kaktüs* has approached the issues of headscarf and Islamist women, I will mostly focus on how *Pazartesi* covered the issue, since it was longest running magazine among the three. Also, many women who worked in *Kaktüs* or *feminist* also worked in *Pazartesi*, leading to the ideas in these magazines to appear in *Pazartesi*'s pages as well.

[1] In July 2007, Abdullah Gül of AKP became the president of Turkey, which made Hayrünissa Gül the first veiled first lady.

Pazartesi aimed at introducing gender issues that have not been brought to the public agenda until then, and rethink popular culture through feminist perspective and deconstruct the patriarchal public discourse on issues regarding women. According to Y. Arat (2004: 264), *Pazartesi* did not merely bring these issues such as sexuality and gender violence, which have hardly been voiced in Turkey to public attention, but "liberated them from a discourse of communal morality and societal honor codes. The journal relocated these issues as women's concerns, subject to women's choices".

Pazartesi gave explicit support to the efforts of Islamist women who wanted to redefine their identities as women. It published essays on and interviews with Islamist women, but also allowed Islamist women to write in its pages to express their views on the headscarf and Welfare Party, as when *Pazartesi* was published rise of the Welfare Party and the achievement of its Ladies' Commission was an important issues on both general agenda and feminists' agenda. For example, the interview they conducted with Sibel Eraslan (1995) was on the headlines in newspapers and television news, which proved that feminists could also define the agenda. On two different occasions, when some feminist readers of the journal reacted to the support the magazine gave to Islamist, the magazine issued editorials why they aim to act in solidarity with Islamist women (Savran&Tura 1996; Tura 1997). Writers argued that although their understanding of feminism was critical of the Kemalist discourse on women, as well as Islamist suppression of women, and that they can form bonds with women who shared a common subordination despite differences.

Although *Pazartesi* defended Islamist women's demand to veil and was opposed to the headscarf ban, it also expressed that it was aware of the threat an Islamist movement could pose for women. However, they addressed that the present ban also discriminates between genders, although the state imposes it to protect secularism that is apparently the guarantee of women's rights. Düzkan (1998: 10-11) in occasion argued that men and women who share the same ideology are treated differently, and women are being victimized because of

their headscarves. Although they often expressed that they were against the subordination of women in Islam, and reinforcement of this subordination through making covering for women obligatory by implying that their being is a threat to society, the journal did not use secularist criticism in its attempt to defend Islamist women's right to cover their heads. They argued that women should be able to choose the right to veil if they believe that it is a dictate of Islam, as freedom of choice and expression. Nesrin Tura (1998: 2) argued that the right to cover and covering are two different issues.

However, not all feminists agreed with *Pazartesi*'s point on headscarf and attempts of dialogue with Islamist women. In *Kaktüs*, a discussion between socialist feminist Sedef Öztürk and Islamist feminist women took place, which was very much debated on. In her article, Öztürk (1998: 40) argues that although she wishes to, it is not easy to have a dialogue between Islamist women's rights advocates and feminists because there will always be a problem of 'framework' between the two groups. In response, Islamist women wrote a letter saying that all women, no matter what their differences are, are being oppressed and that cooperating with other women does not bother them. This is interesting considering the worries some feminists have about involving in a dialogue with Islamist women, when some were ready to cooperate.

The debates in earlier feminist magazines present us that feminist movement in 1980s and 1990s took up the headscarf and dialogue with Islamist women as important aspects in challenging Kemalism and state ideology that is based on patriarchal premises. Although they expressed that they were against headcovering as an instrument of Islam to subordinate women, they were ready to defend the right to veil. Their recognition of differences and aim for a more democratic society expanded towards embracing Islamist women who also challenged their own communities. However, there were also other views among the feminist movement, which believed that a dialogue between the two groups could not be possible because the Islamist women activism still operate within the boundaries of a religious framework. This point also presents the

ambivalence some sections of the feminist movement still continues to have today on the issue.

4.2. *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar* (Feminist Approaches in Culture and Politics)

Kültür ve Siyasatte Feminist Yaklaşımlar (Feminist Approaches in Culture and Politics), which shortly known as *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* (Feminist Approaches) is Turkey's first feminist magazine to be published online. It is based in Boğaziçi University, and the publishers have previously worked in Boğaziçi University Women's Studies Club and *FeministÇerçeve* magazine.

Its first issue came out in October 2006, and so far 5 issues and a special issue have been published, the most recent one being June 2008 issue. It is published three times a year. In order to reach most of the articles, one has to register to the site. To be able to read all of them, a paid subscription is needed. All issues are available online to both registered members and subscribers. The magazine aims to "reflect women's point of view in the areas women are active in or affected by, besides the issue that directly interest women in Turkey and the rest of the world" (www.feministyaklasimlar.org). It underlines that it adopts an anti-militarist and democratic approach that looks out for multiplicity of cultures and identities. The publishers also explain that this is a reason why they preferred the name *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* (Feminist Approaches) instead of Feminist Yaklaşım (Feminist Approach). One of the publishers argues in an interview that identities are formed in a complicated web of social relations which necessitates plurality of viewpoints that prevents the reductionism that would come along with one single approach. She also argues that they are open to different feminist approaches as long as they do not embody militarist or anti-democratic discourses (Zengin, 2006: 62). The magazine also manifests that it aims to form a ground where feminist activism and feminist theory can meet. The publishers emphasize that everything that happens in the world also points out to something related to gender and women's situation and that

feminist analysis is important in all sphere of life when combating sexism (Zengin, 2006: 62). However, it does not only publish academic or theoretical articles. It is possible to come across short stories and poems in the magazine. It is important to point out that the magazine does not have definitive structure that is repeated every issue.

Feminist Yaklaşımlar has an advisory council that assists the editors in shaping the frame of the issues. The advisory council and referees have to approve an article in order for it to be published. The magazine also clearly points out that they apply a rule of positive discrimination for women, and female authors are given privilege. In line with this principle, the authors were all women in the six issues (five issues and one special issue) that have been published so far.

The publishers argue that online publishing has both advantages and disadvantages. It enabled them to get in touch with people from all over the world and increase the diversity of readers. However, they also point out that readers still hesitate buying a magazine online, due to their concerns with online payment. They also emphasize that readers want to have the magazine in their hands when they read (Zengin, 2006: 63).

Feminist Yaklaşımlar is diverse in the topics it covers. The major emphasis is on the feminist analysis of militarism since the majority of the articles that have been published so far are dedicated to this issue. They have published many articles on women's situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine in relation to the wars that are going on in these regions. This points out that they focus on international events with regards to women and do not limit themselves to women's situation in Turkey. However, it is also possible come across articles on effects of migration on women, domestic violence, honor killings, effects of urban regeneration on women, body politics and minority women in Turkey. As mentioned before, the magazine includes stories, poems and interviews along with analytical articles.

With regards to the headscarf issue, it can be argued that this is a topic that the magazine has ignored. Although it has started to be published in a time period when the debates on the headscarf were very intense, so far there has been only one article on this topic, which was published in the fifth issue of the journal and was a legal analysis of the principle of freedom of religion. (Aydın, 2008). It discusses the decision of ECHR on Leyla Şahin vs. Turkey case, with regards to Turkish Constitution and European law, but the gender aspect of the issue is not corporated in the article. Headscarf problem has also been mentioned in a collective interview with six feminist women, who are also either publishers or advisors of the magazine, regarding the elections and 'Cumhuriyet' meetings (Gülbahar, Üstündağ, Sirman, Özar, Kutluata, Demirler in Special Issue, 2008). In this conversation, these six women question the role the feminist movement has played in the headscarf problem, and to what extent the discourse of 'women's emancipation' used by secularist Kemalist women is inclusive. It is agreed by all participants that the tension between nationalist/secularists and Islamists is reflected in their discourse on women, and that the discourse that is constructed by secularists with regards to women's emancipation exclude veiled women. However, they indulge in a debate regarding the reaction of feminist women against the politics that exclude the veiled women from the public sphere. Sirman argues that feminist women have criticized these politics despite the fact that secular state has brought them benefits as secular women. She says that she expects Islamist women to do the same, namely to criticize the Islamist discourse although it brings them benefits. She also expresses that she wants to indulge in dialogue with Islamist women, listen to them and understand whether she can 'become allies with them'. However, she also argues that this is not possible because Islamist women only criticize the secular system, instead of questioning their relation with Islam and Islamist politics, and ironically, they do this by using what the criticisms that feminists have written. She argues that it is necessary for veiled women to discuss what kind of life they imagine, and the implications the headscarf will bring to their lives. Therefore, both the feminist and Islamist women should cease to debate

on the 'political symbol' the headscarf has become and discuss what it suggests regarding daily practices.

Üstündağ disagrees with Sirman arguing that although it may be useful to get involved in a dialogue with Islamist women through their own criticisms of Islam and Islamist politics, it is not meaningful to wait for such a dialogue to act on the issue. She says that the headscarf problem is a women's problem that excludes women and since feminist women are, and should be, a side to the issue, they should not wait for Islamist women to transform and accept to take part in a dialogue. Kutluata agrees with Üstünkaya arguing that a meaningful action to be taken with regards to this issue will have include trespassing the lines drawn by Kemalism, which, for feminists, is to express what side they are on the issue.

There is also a debate during the conversation on to what extent the feminists should act and organize with regards to the headscarf problem. While Üstünkaya criticizes the feminist for not having a say in the headscarf debate and not organizing against the exclusion of veiled women; Sirman argues that feminists should not organize on behalf of others, and that there is a difference between having a say and organizing for a cause.

The lines of arguments in this discussion among the six participants of *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* reflect that there is no single stance towards Islamist women in the magazine. However, although Demirler argues that "neither Islamist/feminist nor the feminist women have a complete and unified discourse" (2008, Special Issue), the language these women use with regards to 'Islamist women' point to a unified group (of veiled women) who they see as fundamentally different from themselves. While they want to construct a meaningful dialogue with them in order to act upon the headscarf problem, they are suspicious of Islamist women in relation to the support they will give the feminists. They perceive the headscarf problem and exclusionary policies that veiled women have to face as a major issue for all feminists, in which the feminists should make clear the

side they are on, as well as have a say. However, their language constructs the veiled women as the 'other' of the secular feminist, who are expected to 'transform' in order to open their eyes to the implications the headscarf problem will bring to their lives if they continue resisting questioning their 'side', the Islamist politics the feminist argue that they support. The magazine's point of view resembles that of suspicious stance some sections of the feminist movement carried towards Islamist women in the 1980s and 1990s.

4.3. *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* (Women's Studies Journal):

Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi (Women's Studies Journal) is a short lived academic journal on women's studies. Four issues of the magazine have been published in a period of one year (January-April 2006, May-August 2006, September-December 2006, January-April 2007). It was published three times a year by Women Coordination Center of Greater Istanbul Municipality. It was not for sale, but was only distributed to universities, academics, research centers and civil society organizations. It is a structured journal with different sections that exist in all issues. The majority of the journal is dedicated to the scholarly articles that are approved by referees. However, there are also sections called 'Röportaj' (Interview), 'Haber' (News), Görüş (Point of View), 'Soruşturma' (Investigation), and 'Tanıtımlar' (Information). The third issue is dedicated to Women's Studies in Turkey, while the fourth issue is a special issue on Domestic Violence. Although the other issues are not dedicated to one single topic, the 'Investigation' section is an important part of the journal in all issues. This section consists of interviews with state officials and academics on 'Women's Agenda' (Issue 1), 'Women, Capitalism and War' (Issue 2), 'Women's Studies in Turkey' (Issue 3).

The fact that it is published and distributed by a local government affects the content and approach of the journal. It is difficult to say that *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* is critical of the policies of the AKP government and State Ministry Responsible for Issues of Family and Women. It reports regularly on the

government's actions, organs of the state and international organizations with regards to women's issues with a noncritical tone. It is not clearly expressed that it has a feminist stance towards women's issues, nor do they seem that they aim to contribute to feminist activism and theory. This is in line with its publication politics, which can be evaluated within the boundaries of a pro-women perspective, rather than a feminist one. It puts a lot of emphasis on women's empowerment, women's participation to politics, activities of civil society organizations and women's legal rights, mostly without questioning underlying patterns of patriarchy, social structures that cause women to be oppressed, that cause them to question these issues. This also leads them to be limited in the areas they publish on. Although it is diverse in the topics they cover, there are certain areas of study they do not publish on, such as problems of LGBTT, honor killings, sexual harassment, or minority women at the time when all these topics were some of the hottest issues on women's questions in Turkey. It is important to point out that the category of 'women' in the content of *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* only implies heterosexual women, since there are no reports of articles on lesbian or bisexual women.

In the editorial article of the first issue, a dichotomy between modern and traditional is drawn, in which they place the existence of women's issues within the discourse of modernity:

> Women's issues are not only produced by modernity. However, they are intertwined with the terminology and state of mind of modernity in their discourse and the way they are handled. Turkey is approaching towards modernization and facing problems of modernity more every single day. Turkey is not abandoning traditional systems and values completely while walking through the hall of modernization. Therefore, it has to face both the traditional problems and modern problems. The solutions that will be brought forward in response to the problems should be understanding of necessities of traditional life and be suitable to the spirit of modern times ("Editorial", 2006: 3).

Although there is a major emphasis on 'modern' and 'traditional', what they mean by these terms is not clearly defined. However, there is constant reference to 'traditional Turkish woman' and 'traditional Turkish family'

facing ‘modernization’. The magazine questions how the traditional Turkish woman and family will transform in the process of modernization, and how will it be possible to merge tradition with modernity.

With regards to the headscarf issue, it is observed that this is not a major topic of concern for the journal. In the news section, there are no reports on the headscarf problem, the ban, petitions or demonstrations that have taken place. There are articles which touch upon the issue of headscarf problem in Turkey, but they are not directly on the issue itself. One argues that both the veiled woman and the ideal of ‘modern Turkish woman’ that is constructed in the early republican period have become burdened with contrasting identities that were placed on them by patriarchal order. Although it argues that liberation of women is only possible through a struggle with patriarchy, it cannot be argued that it supports a feminist struggle, since the author’s critic of patriarchy is limited with this. The article does not question the meaning of the veil in religion (Nişancı, 2006). In this light, it presents ‘veiled women’ (türbanlı kadınlar) as a unified category. According to Nişancı (2006, 114), this group of women argue that their secondary place is not caused by religion, but tradition and traditional social structure which are interpreted as religion. They use first hand sources of Islam and ideas of respectable Islamist thinkers as strategic instruments to prove the secularists that they are not being oppressed. In this article, neither the difference among veiled women, the reasons why they veil, nor their interpretation of religion are taken into consideration.

In another article which touches upon both the issues of headscarf and feminism in Turkey, Tekin (2006) argues that women’s liberation movement that began at the end of Ottoman Empire rule, which had the discourse of equality in the center, was attached to feminism. The demands for liberation have increased as the bonds with religion have weakened. He argues that attitudes and references on women, through feminism, can be considered as one of the most important signifiers of the disattachment to religion, which causes the relationship between Islam and feminism to be problematic. He also

underlines that 'some women intellectuals' in Turkey (Islamist women) do not want to be called feminist, due to this problematic relationship and the values feminism is interpreted to carry on some issue they deem unacceptable, such as women's sexual liberation (Tekin, 2006: 43). In the conclusion, he argues that intellectual women in Turkey should investigate religion 'from inside', to which they should approach as the cultural basis of this country (Tekin, 2006: 49).

In the third issue of the journal, the topic of investigation is 'women's studies in Turkey', about which majority of the articles are published. Those specific to the feminist movement in Turkey draw clear lines within the feminists, as radical, socialist and liberal feminists, giving exact definitions (Çaha, 2006; Kara, 2006). They also pose these groups in opposition to Islamist women, with whom feminists could not have a common ground on issues, usually due to the unwillingness and suspicion of feminist women:

> [Feminist women] expressed that they owe to the Republican secular society boundaries of which were drawn by Kemalists. A feminist woman…, although she defines herself as 'feminist' argues that 'she cannot be in the same political struggle with a religious woman' (Çaha, 2006: 12).

It is important to underline that *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* is an academic journal. This denotes that the authors and topics are diverse, although there are some common grounds that are inspected throughout the analysis of the journal. One is that 'woman' is imagined solely as heterosexual. Second, there are thick lines between Islamists and feminist women, who can hardly meet in a common ground, due to the fact that feminism 'disregards religion' and proposes demands that are fundamentally not acceptable for religious women. Third, the articles do not question Islam and the place of women in religion, and take their position relying on this relationship as unproblematic. However, it should be pointed out that except for a short interview with Cihan Aktaş, a veiled Islamist writer, Islamist women are not given voice in this journal, since they are not be seen in the journal in person, except for the articles where 'veiled women' are referred to.

4.4. *Amargi*

Amargi is "a feminist theory and politics" magazine which started to be published in the summer of 2006. It is published once in three months by Amargi Kadın Akademisi (Amargi Women's Academy). The Academy is an independent organization founded in Istanbul by feminist women. It embodies a book store, a publishing house, the magazine *Amargi*, along with regularly organized workshops and events. The magazine is an important organ of the organization, since they aim to reach a wide audience, which is also evident through the 'reader gatherings' and the activities they organize to promote their goals. They aim to widely discuss the theory and politics of feminism, feed feminist activism through these discussions and organize against discrimination, violence, poverty women daily face. They have support groups for women which work in cooperation with other support organizations.

Amargi has nine published issues between the summer of 2006 and summer of 2008 (summer 2006, fall 2006, winter 2006, spring 2007, summer 2007, fall 2007, winter 2007, spring 2008 and summer 2008). So far, only women have written in the magazine. Every issue of *Amargi* is dedicated to a different topic. First issue is on the headscarf problem, the second in on militarism, third is on projects, fourth is on violence, fifth is on politics, sixth is on poverty, seventh is on citizenship, eight is on social security and ninth on morality. A major part of each issue covers the topic that is on the cover. However, from third issue onwards, there are also sections called 'Fikir Takibi' (Opinion Follow-up), in which letters corresponding to the articles in the previous issue is published; 'Dünya Alem' (All the World) in which there are articles, interviews and news on the women's movement around the world; and 'Bunları Yaşadık' (We lived through these) in which there are news and evaluations of activities and events that have taken place in the previous months.

The aim of the magazine is to become a political theoretical one. They claim that the bond between feminist politics and feminist theory is weakening, and

that theory should be evaluated as internal to politics, rather than as external to daily practice. They argue that they will approach theoretical background and extensions of practice, instead of perceiving 'feminist theory' as a distinct, separate area ("Amargi'den", 2006: 3). It is also emphasized that different viewpoints will be expressed in the magazine. This is also evident in the way they explain the kind of magazine they aim to publish in the first issue, stated as a "multiple narrative" in the editorial ("Amargi'den", 2006: p.3). Five different women who initiated the magazine are given voice separately on the kind of magazine they desire this to be. Karakuş and Acar-Savran (2006: 4) argue that although women's movement has been very active, along with what government, its opposition, state organs and market had to say with regards to women in the recent years, feminism has become vague and alienated in this lively, however chaotic environment, in which what women do for women does not necessarily mean feminism. They aim for a magazine that does not hesitate to draw the boundaries of feminism and making feminist politics and criticism clear where it is getting vague. They also aim to promote the "feminist word" to women in the women's movement. All five initiators of the magazine share the common goal of publishing a theoretical magazine that will handle these theories in a "political way, rather than academical" (Karakuş and Acar-Savran, 2006: 4) They argue that instead of doing theory for theory, they aim to do theory for politics and "instrumentalize theory that feeds on practice to intervene in the practice" (Karakuş and Acar-Savran, 2006: 4). Kum (2006: 5) argues that they are trying to become a movement that does not delegate theory to academics as a duty. Bora (2006a: 7) also points out that in order to bail feminist politics from "women's problems", a different relationship with women's issues and needs should be constructed. It should be kept in mind that feminism politicizes, brings out and perceives the bonds between personal and political, feminists have no distinction between "public life" and "private life", and that therefore it covers everything.

Component of feminist theory, practice and politics is the main aim *Amargi*. One of the ways in which this has been realized is the self criticism of the

feminist movement that becomes apparent as a major issue of focus in the magazine. A lot of essays have been published with regards to criticism of the feminist movement in Turkey and the distinctions between the feminist movement and women's movement. They make a clear separation between the two, which is also evident in the articles that are published in the magazine. Although women's movement is described as a diverse, dynamic, however loose unity embodying all platforms, centers and women that are working for women; feminist movement is argued to be distinctive, since feminism affected and directed women's movement (Ayman, 2006: 8). This wide array of organizations, from those that demand women's formal equality to organizations that are active through the funds they get from the state or private sector, have distanced themselves from criticism of capitalism and ignore the bond between patriarchy and capitalism. In this framework, women's "equality" with men is demanded through equal work and work hours without criticizing the market and its oppression of women (Osmanağaoğlu, 2006: 13). According to Osmanağaoğlu (2006: 13), despite all its good intentions, women's movement is causing feminist ideology and its most fundamental principles lose its voice. Tekeli (cited in Sirman, 2006: 22) calls this group of women's movement which "mobilize under the name women's movement without calling themselves feminist" "post-1950 state feminists". This part of the movement is responsible for many of the civil society organizations, which mostly concern with education, that were formed after 1980 (Sirman, 2006: 22; İpek, 2006: 17). Tekeli (cited in Sirman, 2006: 22) calls these women 'cyber feminists', and argues that technical education is not enough to transform the underlying power relations and patriarchal dominance in the society. *Amargi* has a strong stance against this approach within the women's movement which instrumentalize a discourse of modernization and progress, instead of questioning and challenging patriarchy:

> Modernization discourse in intertwined with nationalism in Turkey in the present day. This discourse is easy to dispense and is used very often with regards to issues like education, forced marriages, birth control and honor crimes. If nationalism and militarism is one face of this discourse, the

> perspective of 'saving women (inspite of themselves)' is on the other side. In the women's movement, from time to time, we may be acting together with those who are struggling for women to become 'equal citizens' in a 'modern' world. However, feminist critique of this approach should be one of the priorities of this magazine. (Karakuş and Acar-Savran, 2006: 3)

They are also self-critical of the feminist movement which the magazine places itself in. One author is critical of short-lived 'platforms' and the organization of activism within the feminist movement; while another one is critical of classifying feminist movement in Turkey into decades (Kum, 2006: 86; Bora, 2006b: 88). Bora points out that a three step categorization is usually used to describe the feminist movement in Turkey after the 1980s: 1980s as a decade of radicalism and enthusiasm; 1990s as a decade of recognition and institutionalism; and 2000s as a decade of 'project'[2]. She argues that although this scheme may be pointing out to some facts, it is disguising more that it is trying to explain since it is simplifying a process that is much more complicated.

Within this framework, *Amargi* also has a critical stance towards the activities of the Turkish state and the international organizations with regards to women's issues. They report often on the policies of the State Ministry Responsible from Women and Family. While *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* is uncritical and even supportive of Minister Nimet Çubukçu, it is possible to see that *Amargi* questions not only the policies of the ministry, but the opinions of the minister herself. It has reported on the court case initiated by Çubukçu against four representatives of different women's organizations, and Çubukçu's null reaction to a case of honor crime ("Bakan Çubukçu'yla kadın örgütleri uzlaşabilecek mi?", 2006: 9; Arpat, 2007: 45). It also clearly states that it does not believe in supporting all activities and campaigns that are organized in the name of 'women empowerment'. One example was its stance against the Hürriyet Daily Newspaper's campaign to stop domestic violence. While the

[2] Projects that are carried out by feminists and women's organizations, which are funded by the Turkish state or European Union, is an issue that is often taken up by Amargi. Third issue is dedicated to this topic, evaluating whether these contribute to the movement or prevent it from realising its true ideals caused by constraints by funders.

campaign gained support from NGOs, women's organizations and the press, *Amargi* distanced itself. Within the campaign, a cooperation of Hürriyet and United Nations Population Fund, a conference was organized in 2005. *Amargi* reported that, the fact that the conclusion of the conference was 'to help men gain consciousness in order to prevent domestic violence', also meant that violence can only prevented through men who reproduce violence. It questions this stance arguing that this would only empower the status quo, in which politics towards women are reproduced by, through and for men ("Aile içi şiddette sıfır hoşgörü", 2006: 10).

Amargi regularly reports and publishes articles on different groups, which they consider to be important components of their struggle against patriarchy, like LGBTT movement, lesbian, transvestite and transsexual women in particular, the minorities, women from different ethnicities and Islamist women. Another important issue, which they cover more extensively compared to *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* and *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* is the headscarf problem. According to them, headscarf problem in Turkey is an important topic that should be discussed by feminists, which explains why they dedicated their first issue to this topic. They argue that the headscarf is the place body politics that are produced through codes of chastity and honor become most visible and politicisized. Feminist should take a side in this debate, by not simply being for or against the headscarf ban, but "by discussing the headscarf debates through feminist analysis" ("Amargi'den", 2006: 3). The articles that are published in this issue touch upon different points of references with regards to the headscarf issue. They can be summarized in these frames: Human rights perspective in relation to the Leyla Şahin vs. Turkey decision of the European Court of Human Rights, a critique of construction of public sphere in Turkey, class and traditional/modern dichotomy, experience of veiling, discrimination of veiled women from a social psychological perspective, Islamist woman's perspective on the headscarf, feminism and Islamist women, a perspective from a Turkish feminist in Europe, equality and difference, women in the 'third world', Süreyya Ayhan and image of 'modern Turkish woman', woman as a

political symbol, Chastity as a tool of patriarchal dominance, an excerpt from Fatima Mernissi's book *The Veil and the Male Elite*.

In the editorial of the second edition, they write that they have not received any comments on the articles in the first issue or the headscarf problem itself, and try to encourage their readers to contribute to this issue with their opinions. There result is a commentary in the third issue (Koyuncuoğlu, 2006). They continue to contribute to the feminist analysis of the debate in the following issues with an interview with Sibel Eraslan, former head of Women's Commission of Welfare Party in the fifth issue, and article on eight issue (Coşar 2008) and news on the headscarf ban and events that have taken place related to it in several issues.

Although not all the articles in the first issue are directly related to the headscarf problem per se, since the feminist analysis *Amargi* aims to achieve relates the problem to social construction and politicization of the female body through patriarchal codes, all other issues they have covered touch upon this reference. The articles on the headscarf issue do not simply problematize the problem as a human right, freedom of religion or right to education, although they also touch upon this perspective. What they have in common is the feminist perspective, within which they question and challenge women's status in society under the dominance of patriarchal codes, in which "women are systematically dominated, exploited and oppressed" (Hartmann, 2003: 210). They argue that although this has been an issue in which women, whether veiled or not, should cooperate to act in their behalf against the male dominance on the issue, since they believe that an issue as such that belongs to women are taken from women. They try deconstruct the category of 'veiled women' in order to understand the many layers this expression may lay on, including the different meanings of the headscarf, interpretations of religion, class and identities Islamist women own up to, along with distinctions between feminist and Islamist women. This last point is one that the reader comes across often in the magazine through the articles written by or interviews done with

Islamist women themselves. Although, as evident in both the interview with Ramazaoğlu (2006: 32) and article by Eraslan (2007: 33), they do not identify themselves as 'feminists', they also do not deny that they benefited from feminism and feminist theory. Yıldız Ramazanoğlu (2006: 33-34) says that Islamist women keep a distance from feminism because "feminist movement has become institutionalized and started to assert an elitist, one sided claim they argue to be universal", since it is a product of modernity. She argues that Muslim women think that they are silenced and that they are forced to perceive a Western lifestyle as the only single alternative and that the feminist movement should take into consideration the wide array of culture and beliefs of the women in Turkey (Ramazanoğlu, 2006: 34). However, her arguments are in the same line with feminists in the way that she criticizes both the Islamist and secular politicians for using the headscarf and women's bodies as a way to assert their power on each other. This argument is also echoed by Sibel Eraslan, in her article in which she writes about her experience in the Ladies Commission of Welfare Party. Eraslan (2007: 34) argues that veiled women's experiences in the Commission were very important because it was a way for them to be visible in the public sphere. For most of the women who worked for the Commission, it was literally a way to come out of their house, as well as an important experience for those "who were already outside, but were always considered closed 'inside'". Although Welfare Party owed a big part of their victory to the hard work of the Women's Commission in the 1994 elections, neither Eraslan nor any other veiled women were given a part in the Party board. She argues that power brought along new 'necessities' for male politicians, like employing more professional and presentable women, which led the veiled women to be eliminated from important positions (Eraslan, 2007: 34).

Amargi's stance towards Islamist women and the headscarf problem is the most similar to that of earlier feminist magazines. They give voice to Islamist women and publish their articles and interviews in order to have them explain their perspective of the issues and where they place themselves in the women's

movement, as well as their relationship to the feminist politics. Although, as mentioned before, these Islamist women do not consider themselves 'feminists' they do not deny that they are also part of the women's movement in Turkey, whether be it by their position vis-a-vis Islamist men or the secular section of the population, with regards to their agency and place in the public sphere. Their support of the feminist movement has been expressed openly also in *Sosyalist Feminist Kaktüs* as early as 1988: "Being socialist, secular or Muslim does not guarantee us exemption from oppression as women. As oppressed people, speaking a similar language with other women or feminists has not bothered us at all". In this light, *Amargi* and earlier feminist magazines argue that Islamist women are significant in more than only the headscarf problem. As argued in *Pazartesi*, "the Islamist women who became a part of Turkish intelligencia have started a meaningful debate with their criticisms of modernism and Islamic law.... This movement has gained its status of 'women's movement' not only by defending the headscarf but also with the challenges it proposed against the male dominated ideas and applications" ("Önsöz", 2007: 3).

With regards to the headscarf ban, Coşar's (2008: 11) argument embodies *Amargi*'s stance towards to issue and why it divides the women's movement:

> …if the point of departure of the headscarf problem is taken as the right to education for veiled women and is only limited with this point, its ties with the general political view is cut; it causes women's, despite their differences, exclusion to be ignored. As a result, women's movement's ability to act collectively is prevented. Until now, women who were a side to the issue construct their position not through an alternative political discourse, but rather through given patriarchal codes. According to her, the way this problem should be handled is to discuss it by investigating the affects of the codes it is embedded in '-neoliberalism, capitalism, patriarchy, militarism' on the situation of women.

In conclusion, it can be argued that *Amargi* is the magazine among the three magazines that resemble the arguments of the first generation of feminists in Turkey, with regards to their approach to the headscarf problem and Islamist women. They try to understand the differences among Islamist women and

suggest how feminists can cooperate with them on issues under the common umbrella of 'women's movement', which however, *Amargi* perceives as distinct from 'feminist movement'.

At the beginning of the 90s, the women's movement in Turkey appeared to have lost its initial power of activism and influence in the restructuring of Turkish society at the beginning of 1990s and that this might be a reason why the feminist magazines started to shut down, along with financial difficulties (İlkkaracan, 1997: 8). However, as can be seen, the feminist intervention into public discourse strengthens civil society and deepened democratic practice, introducing a richer concept of citizenship that expands women's opportunities to raise a political voice. This was what feminist magazines aimed to the in the 1980s and 1990s; which still persists with the ones that are being published in the present. Although it is not possible to define all three magazines that have been examined as feminist, they still touch upon issues that are in interest of women or women's movement.

Although it declares to a feminist magazine that aims further democratization of society, *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* reflects the ambivalence and suspicion of some sections of the feminist movement with regards to the headscarf problem and Islamist women. It does this by ignoring the issues, and presenting the veiled women as 'unified other' in the one occasion it is discussed. *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi*, does not state openly to be a feminist journal, which is also evident in its 'pro-women' approach. It does not publish on certain issues as ethnic or sexual identities, and is not critical of government, which perhaps can be explained by it being published by a local government. The articles in this journal, although in a reverse way, argue what *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* almost argues, that feminist and Islamist can hardly build a dialogue. *Amargi*, among the three magazines, is the one that is similar to the stance of the older feminist magazines, since it tried to understand and construct dialogue with Islamist women by not perceiving them as a unified group. It is important that it does not consult Islamist women on issues other than the headscarf problem and

women in Islam, but still, attempts a dialogue with them through having them heard in its pages. It also problematizes feminist movement itself, which it does differently from the other two magazines, cutting a clear line between ‘woman’s movement’ and ‘feminist movement’. It is critical state and believes that women from different standpoints can meet in this junction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to understand how feminists approached a dialogue with Islamist women and the 'headscarf problem' in Turkey in 2000s. I tried to do this by examining three magazines who claimed to contribute to feminist movement and women's studies in Turkey. I also tried to understand whether the way feminists framed the issue has changed since the 1980s and 1990s, when the feminist movement and the debates on headscarves was on the rise in Turkey. In order to do this, I first summarized shortly what the feminist magazines that were published very proficially in 1980s and 1990s, specifically *Pazartesi*, had to say on the issue. Then I went on to analyze the three magazines that have been in circulation since 2006, namely *Feminist Yaklaşımlar, Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* (recently out of circulation) and *Amargi*; and their stance with regards to the headscarf problem and Islamist women. In order to be able to do a comparison among the three of them, I tried to explain the topics they cover and prioritize, what they propose as their aim to achieve by publishing the magazine regarding the women's movement in Turkey. In specific, I looked at to what extent they have chosen to cover the issue of headscarf debates in Turkey, whether their approach towards a dialogue between feminist and Islamist women was positive, how Islamist women are portrayed and whether these women are given voice through the pages of the magazines.

However, this analysis would not meaningful on its own, without explaining how women's status and the women's movement in Turkey has changed, along with the debates on the headscarf. Therefore, I first explored the debates on women's status in late Ottoman and Early Republican Periods, focusing on the issue women's clothing and appearance. It was possible to see that in both periods, there were strict regulations on the way women had to dress and appear in public imposed by the state. Actions of women's movement and their public participation were made possible within the boundaries drawn by men and in a framework of patriarchal discourse. Women went along with this without dissenting, organizing for the benefit of the society and the nation, which they also presumed as their most important role.

In the third chapter, I explained the women's movements that emerged in later decades in Turkey. I explained the rise and characteristics of the feminist movement as positioned against the state and Kemalist women's rights discourse which they claimed to be construed with patriarchal precepts. Kemalist feminist women, which have ardently organized against the rise of Islamic movements in 1980s carry a heritage of understanding of the women's rights discourse of the Early Republican Period, where they aim to reinforce the formal equality women were granted in the foundation of the Republic and guard secularism against different identities that were emerging. At the same time, a different political identity of Islamist women were on the rise, which had complicated the symbolism of 'non-modern veiled women' against the image of the desired 'modern unveiled women' in the society. I tried to explain how this identity of the Islamist women has transformed throughout the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s; with the transformation in headscarf itself. I explained that there is no unified group of veiled women by pointing at reformist Islamist women; who had challenged the patriarchal interpretations of religion and their male counterparts.

I then started to question whether Islamist women have incorporated ideas from the feminist movement that had emerged strongly in Turkey in the 1980s.

Feminists' aim for a more democratic, inclusive society where elimination of patriarchal oppression and discrimination of women would be achieved in all spheres led to debates among them whether they should be involved in a dialogue with Islamist women. The ban on the headscarf that is imposed on veiled women by the state and strongly supported by most of the secular sections of the society was a common point where these two groups met. Although reformist Islamist women did not call themselves feminists, they did not deny that they have incorporated ideas from feminism into their own; while it was possible to see that there were feminist women who did not believe that feminism and Islamist women are compatible. The opinions and debates on these issues were reflected in the pages of the feminist magazines such as *Pazartesi, Sosyalist Feminist Kaktüs* and *feminist* through 1980s and 1990s. They mostly gave explicit support to Islamist women who wanted to redefine their identities as women, challenging their own movement and religious framework they were expected to act in. Although there were dissenting voices with ambivalent stances towards a cooperation and dialogue with Islamist women, most feminists argued that they defend a women's right to veil but that they were against the veil itself as an oppressive practice forced on women by patriarchal interpretations. An important point is that it was an issue that was debated in a great extent in these magazines, as well as where a dialogue between Islamist and feminist women was achieved to an extent; since they also extended Islamist women an opportunity to express themselves as well.

I have witnessed a change in the intensity and frames within which these debates took place in the present day's magazines. Although two of the three magazines, *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* and *Amargi* claim to be independent feminist magazines, whereas *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* is a scholarly journal that is published by a local government; there are differences and similarities between them. *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* and *Kadın Çalışmaları Dergisi* are similar to each other in the density they cover the subject of the headscarf issue. It is almost non-existent in each of them. In both, it is presented as a dialogue between feminist and Islamist women is hard to build; while *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* does

this by 'othering' a unified group of Islamist women, *Kadın Çalışmaları* by drawing a thick line between the two groups. What they also have in common is that instead of giving voice to Islamist women or a chance to express themselves in their pages, they prefer to write on them. Among the three, *Amargi* reflects the ideas and the kinds of debates that were carried on in the pages of the older feminist magazines, by allowing Islamist women to vocalize themselves, and not perceiving them as a unified group. It has covered the topic of headscarf and possibility of a dialogue with Islamist women, as well as all other women and men who belong to different ethnic, religious and sexual identities with great density. The way they approached towards the headscarf ban, and the way framed the issue is similar to that of, for example, *Pazartesi* in the way that it is critical of the Kemalist women's right discourse which they perceive to be a male dominated ideology. It reflects that women from different standpoints, no matter what their beliefs, ethnicity or sexual preference are can meet in this junction.

I argue that the way these magazines reflect on the problem of headscarf and dialogue between feminist and Islamist women can contribute to the wider context of how the headscarf problem is understood by the state and society since the 1980s. Examination of this issue will also lead to a better understanding of the dynamics between different sections of the women's movement in Turkey and the status of women in general, as well as the role religion plays in a country where secularism has been underlined as the most important pillar of the state ideology. Examination of how women express their opinions on the same issue in different ways enables us to understand the changes of perceptions between the feminists that were active in the previous two decades and in the present day, as well as how they instrumentalize the women's press. The analysis in this thesis may pave the way for future studies that would examine how different feminist women, such as radical or socialist, approach the issue, as well as how a dialogue between feminist and Islamist women would be possible in other platforms, such as NGOs, mainstream press or political parties.

It is also important to point out that there were limitations to this study. There are only a few women's studies journals or feminist magazines in Turkey today, which leads to a narrow examination of only certain groups of feminists in the present day. I am aware of the fact that many debates and discussions among women on the headscarf issue also take place in internet forums, emailing groups or magazines that do not have a wide circulation. This fact should be taken into consideration while evaluating the limitations of this study, as well as difficulties in obtaining issues of older magazines, some of which were not archived. Another limitation of this study is the lack of face to face interviews with Islamist, Kemalist or feminist women, who have been referred to in the thesis. There may be future studies which can be designed with a motivation to conduct such a research, which would lead to a better understanding of interaction between these different groups within the women's movement in Turkey.

In conclusion, it is possible to see that some among both Islamist and feminist women persist with their skepticism about each other, while others are approaching a dialogue in order to challenge the patriarchal domination of the state and religion. However, both groups have helped bring about a change both in politics and in the way women's demands are being heard and understood in Turkey, as well as contribution to the extent of civil society. The amount of dialogue to be achieved among these groups, even if it is to a small extent, may enable a change in both state and society with regards to the understanding of the headscarf issue as heard from women themselves. Magazines which aim to explore women's movement are useful tools in reflections of the problems that are shared by all women, and help all women to understand that they have common demands and interests no matter what they believe in.

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