*Exploring the Backstage of Women's Movements: Contextual and*

*Characteristic Aspects of Four Women's Organizations in Turkey*

by

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## Abstract

*Women's organizations have been important political actors that have transformed the gender politics in Turkey especially since the 1980s. However, under what contextual and organization-specific dimensions that the women's organizations have participated in the political arena in Turkey is not studied in detail and systematically. In this thesis, by drawing upon social movement theories, I analyze framings, repertoires of actions, political opportunities and constraints, and organizational structures of four popular independent women's organizations in Turkey. The examination is mainly based on interviews I conducted with the organizations. I find that all of the organizations employ human rights and international gender equality norms to frame their causes. They all regard themselves as opinion institutions. Their most used repertoires of action are conventional lobbying, and advocacy through media and internet; although, they employ disruptive and innovative actions time to time. All of them find the CEDAW ratification and the EU accession process of Turkey helpful in terms of funding and legal changes. Some of them have their own specific political opportunities and constraints depending on their identities, and regions. Two of them have difficulties in finding especially national funds. Although they have become more professionalized, they want to maintain the voluntary basis of their work style, and some of them use methods to prevent hierarchy in the organizations. The analysis raises questions on voluntariness, professionalization, accountability and sustainability of the women's organizations in Turkey.*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

Women's movements have contributed to the development of women's rights in many parts of the world. Thanks to the efforts of the first and second wave feminist movements, women have gained equal rights with men in every sphere of life in most of the countries; and, women's rights are one of the inevitable tenets of democracy and social justice today (Squires 2007, 1-4). Most of the political theorists and politicians started to acknowledge women's rights and gender equality especially after the nineteenth century - the beginning of the first wave feminist movements in Europe and the United States of America (Phillips 1991, 2; Squires 2007, 1-4).

The development of women's rights in Turkey is not an exception in this trend. The women's own agency since the late Ottoman Empire up until today has been one of the most important powers that have reinforced the betterment in women's rights and conditions in Turkey. The main actors in women's rights in Turkey have been the state and women's movements (Ecevit 2007, 187). The new Turkish state granted women many rights such as the right to vote, be elected, or to have equal inheritance; however, this act was mostly a part of the modernization and Westernization project that founding fathers had undertaken in the first years of the republic (Muftuler-Bac 1999, 303). During this era, independent organizations of women were repressed (Ecevit 2007, 189).  However, women's movements have gained power and public appearance again in the 1980s, with the liberalization movement in the country. Women with different perspectives and experiences have coalesced around and pushed for gender friendly amendments in the legal framework through demonstrations, protests, petitioning and lobbying since the 1980s. They have managed to make governments work on the proposed

changes in the 1990s, and have attained a considerable amount of their goals in the 2000s, especially with the help of international pressures (Arat 2008, 402-8).

Women's movement, in the form of women's organizations, is still one of the crucial powers in gender politics in today's Turkey (Esim and Cindoglu 1999, 178). Most of the women-friendly legal amendments are new, and there are problems and resistances in their implementations. Moreover, there are areas that still need further attention such as increasing domestic violence, education, labor, political representation and participation, and headscarf problems of women. In this context, women's organizations  are the push factors in ameliorating women's conditions by stimulating public discussions, demanding for new legal changes and tracking the implementations of laws and the practices (Arat 2008, 416; Berktay 2004, 21; Ecevit 2007; Ucar 2009). Indeed, the Turkish governments have acknowledged the authority and knowledge of the women's organizations in issues related to women, as it can be observed in several ministry circulars issued in the recent years. Likewise, current international literature on representation has acknowledged the political representative role of women's civil society organizations on women's issues (Saward 2010; Celis et al. 2008). The literature points out that like any other political actors in the system, women's organizations have repertoires of representation and claims about the women they represent. The existence of these organizations makes it more likely to have a progressive contestation on women's issues in terms of character and breadth, as the governments and state institutions can be slow in addressing women's problems and accommodate women's demands (Saward 2010, 122; Arat 2008, 416).

In this context, the current situation of women's organizations in Turkey is worth attention, in terms of the contextual factors and characteristic aspects of the organizations. The reason is that these factors and characteristics altogether are determining the final impacts of the

women's organizations on the political decisions made on women's issues in Turkey. However, most of the existing literature about women's movements in Turkey focuses on successes and failures of the women's organizations in impacting the decision making on women's issues. They mainly ask "*What* have women's movements done so far in terms of women's rights in Turkey?" and they analyze the outcomes of the efforts of women's organizations within the existing political context. However, I believe that the situation and position of the women's organizations are also important to understand under what circumstances they have participated and have affected the politics in Turkey. In this respect, I ask "*How* have women's organizations affected the gender politics in Turkey?" in this thesis. To be more specific, I ask how women's organizations frame their causes; what repertoires of actions they utilize; and under what kind of political opportunities and constraints, and organizational structures they work. In other words, I look for the contextual and characteristic aspects of the organizations.

Social movement theories are useful in order to understand the contextual and characteristic aspects of civil society organizations (Banaszak et al. 2003, 16-9; Ferree and Mueller 2007, 587-93) Social movement scholars acknowledge four important 'powers' in social movements and civil society organizations: (1) *framings* they utilize; (2) *repertoires of action* they use; (3) *political opportunities and constraints* that they are exposed to; and (4) *mobilizing structures* they build on such as organization and networks (Tarrow 1998; della Porta 2003; Valiente 2003; McAdam 2001). I employ this conceptual framework in my analysis of the women's organizations in Turkey.

In order to understand the contextual and characteristic aspect of the women's civil society organizations, we need accounts from inside the organizations, besides the website scanning and literature review. The reason is that mobilizing structures can only be understood by

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the accounts of the members; opportunities and constraints may not be completely visible in the literature and the news; and framings and repertoires of actions can be more fully situated with the accounts of the organization members and the printed materials of the organizations.

In order to have the insiders' accounts of the organizations, I interviewed women in four of the main women's civil society organizations in Turkey. The organizations can be classified as the key and leading organizations in Turkey in terms of their either work fields, identities or regions. Nevertheless, I definitely had to limit the scope of my examinations for time and space related reasons. The analysis do not aim to produce overarching claims about the general situation of women's organizations in Turkey, but it aims to shed light to a small picture of it, by analyzing four of the most known ones. The time frame of the analysis is bound between the mid-1990s, when the organizations were first founded, until today.

The organizations are: *Flying Broom* (Uçan Süpürge), that aims to increase communication and collaboration between people and institutions that are responsive to women's issues; *KA.DER* (The Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates), that aims to increase women's representation in local and national decision making bodies; *Capital City Women's Platform Association* (Başkent Kadın Platformu Derneği), one of the leading speakers for the demands of Islamic women; and *The Women's Center* (KA-MER), one of the leading organization in East and Southeast Turkey that mainly fights against the domestic violence, and problems of Kurdish women. The interviewees included the current chairwomen of the institutions, except I interviewed one of the experienced board members in KA.DER. The interviews were done in a semi-standardized way; face to face; and in the headquarters of the organizations.

The structure of the thesis is as following: Firstly, I present a short overview of the literature on women's movements and organizations in Turkey. In the Chapter Two, I survey the history of women's movements and the development of women's rights by showing the crucial role of women's organizations in gender politics in Turkey. In the Chapter Three, I present theoretical framework on 'powers' in movements that I utilize; while, in the Chapter Four, I justify my methodological approach and explain the details of the interviews. The main part of my thesis, the Chapter Five, introduces the findings of my analysis of the four organizations within the framework of four 'powers' in movements. The summary of the analysis can be found on the Table no. 1 in the appendix of the thesis. Lastly, in the concluding chapter, Chapter Six, I summarize the main findings of my thesis, evaluate the contribution and the limits of my analysis, and open a discussion for the future study areas on the subject.

## 1.1 Literature Review

Most of the literature on women's movements in Turkey focuses on the impacts of women's movements and organizations on policy making within historical and political contexts. They mainly ask *what* women's groups have been able to achieve in the political realm. Among this literature, there are valuable overviews that analyze the historical development of the women's movements in Turkey, and ask *what* women's movements have done since the late 19th century. For example, Sirin Tekeli (1986), a prominent scholar in women's rights and feminist activist, who is also one of the co-founders of KA.DER, analyses the emergence of feminist movements in Turkey. Tekeli (1998) also compares the first and second wave feminist movements in Turkey which dated respectively as the end of the 19th century and the 1980s. Yesim Arat (2008), Fatmagul Berktay (2004), and Yildiz Ecevit (2007), who are experienced scholars in women's

rights in Turkey, also have written about the historical developments of women's movements from the Ottoman Empire until the 2000s in Turkey. Similarly, Helin Ucar (2009), a PhD candidate in the Berlin Graduate School of Sciences, focuses on the recent developments in women's rights in Turkey with a specific emphasis on the movement and state interaction. All of these contributions are very valuable in terms of showing the changing power of the women's movements with respect to changing political and international developments in the country. However, since they overview the movements, they cannot give much detail about the characteristic aspects of the organizations that compose the movements.

Nevertheless, there are also important studies that specifically ask 'how' women's organizations in Turkey deal with their agendas in the political system. Simel Esim and Dilek Cindoglu (1999) present a comparative analysis of the structure of women's organizations in the 1990s in Turkey. Although the analysis presents important insights about the characteristic dimensions of the women's organizations during the 1990s, some of the findings are outdated, and they do not fully represent the realities of today's women's organizations. However, it mainly focuses on the activities devoted to the practical aims of the organizations, probably due to the limitations of the women's organizations in the 1990s in effecting macro level gender policies. The article claims that the impacts of the organizations are small in terms of scope, due to their limited finances and infrastructure. Since 1999, women's organizations have more resources to affect the macro level gender politics, thanks to increased internet, and media resources and favorable international context. Moreover, this work is currently outdated in its analysis of the Islamic women's organizations by connecting most of them to the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) ideologically. The authors also limit the goals of Islamic women's organizations to helping poor women financially and argue that they reinforce traditional women

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image. Another example that studies the dimensions of the women's organizations is a book chapter by Yildiz Ecevit and Filiz Kardam (2002) where they analyze Flying Broom at the end of the 1990s. However, it is limited to only one organization, and the time frame does not capture the 2000s. Granted that, unfortunately I did not have a chance to obtain a full text of this work.

Women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also studied in the graduate level theses in Turkey. I have reviewed the ones that analyze the characteristic dimensions of the women's organizations. One of them is by Tulay Yilmaz (2005) from Suleyman Demirel University, who descriptively analyzes the projects of KA.DER with detail within the context of the EU accession process (2005). The analysis is rich in the content of the projects, but it does not analyze the other dimensions in detail such as framings, and organizational structures. It also does not provide a comparative analysis of KA.DER with its counterparts that might enhance our understanding. Another thesis analyzes the influence of funding types on the local participation and social capital of target women in the developmental projects of the women's organizations (Walterova 2008). The projects of Flying Broom are also included in the sample of eight women's organizations. The study's focus is limited to the effects of funding type on social capital of target women and the discrepancy between the participatory rhetoric and practice of the organizations. Therefore, it does not give detail about the other dimensions of the organizations.

*How* women's groups have tried to achieve their goals is important, because the contextual and characteristic dimensions of the organizations such as political opportunities and constraints, framings, organizational capabilities and repertoires of actions are vital in determining the concrete impacts of the organizations in the political realm of Turkey. The literature that mainly asks 'what' touches upon these dimensions; however, they are far from being systematically analyzed in this literature. On the other hand, the studies and graduate level

theses that ask 'how' women's organizations interact in the political system are either outdated or too specific by focusing on one organization, or analyzing a specific dimension of the organizations. Therefore, we need a more systematic and comparative analysis on how women's organizations take action in the political system. That is what I try to do in this thesis by analyzing four women's organizations systematically in terms of their all possible contextual and characteristic dimensions.

# Chapter 2: Women's Organizations and Women's Rights in Turkey in a Historical Context

Before analyzing *how* women's organizations have taken action in political arena, it would be helpful to understand why women's organizations in Turkey are important at the first place. Accordingly, this chapter aims to elucidate the crucial role of women's movements and organizations in Turkish history in defending women's rights. Therefore, the chapter shortly answers *what* women's movements in Turkey have achieved so far and it prepares us for the next question, *how.*

The history of women's movements that opposed to the state dates back to the end of the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire (Ecevit 2007, 188; Arat 2008, 388). In the beginning of the 20th century women already published journals and built associations such as the Ottoman Association for the Protection of Women's Rights (Ecevit 2007, 188). This association published journals which were feminist in content, and the women writers embraced the word 'feminism'. They demanded reforms in Islamic marriages, opportunities of education, economic power and political participation and representation. With the foundation of the republic in 1923, the women reclaimed these demands, and even wanted to form a political party named 'the Turkish Women's Party'. However, their demands were rejected and they were accused of diverting the attention from the important issues that the country was facing (Ecevit 2007, 188). Therefore the women established the 'Women's Union' in 1924 that would bylaw be no interest with politics. The union became a member of the International Women's League in 1925. However, in 1927, Nezihe Muhiddin, one of the feminist activists of the time, gave a speech that they did not give up to obtain electoral rights. After the insistence of Nezihe Muhiddin on the electoral rights, the

office of the union was searched by the police and the documents were confiscated. The government and the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*) did not support the demand of the union (Bozkir 2000, 103). After this, the union co-opted with the state and focused on philanthropic projects, and feminist voices such as Nezihe Muhiddin were silenced (Ecevit 2007, 189-190).

In the subsequent years, women were granted the legal rights that they had demanded through the initiations of Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the republic; although, the new state prevented the autonomous women's organizations to engage in any type of politics. Therefore, with these reforms women were just "emancipated but not liberated" (Arat 2008). Women got the right the vote for municipality elections in 1930. Later, they were granted the right to vote and to be elected in national parliaments in 1934. Women were also given inheritance and divorce rights equal to men in 1926 with the new civil code after the abolition of Sharia (Arat 1998, 118). Although they were far more egalitarian towards women than the Sharia law, the new civil and penal codes that were adopted from the Swiss and the Italian ones respectively continued to place women in a subordinate position in the society. As in other nation-state buildings, women were given new roles for the official ideology of the state (Berktay 2004, 19). The state granted rights to women as a part of the project of modernization that included secularization, Westernization, and nationalism, and it silenced the independent women's movements that were not willing to accommodate these ideologies (Ecevit 2007, 190; Muftuler-Bac 1999, 303). It limited the autonomous political and social organizations of women; although, it gave urban middle class women opportunities of education and economic independency due to its development and modernization goals, at the same time.

The years between 1940 and 1960 can be regarded as the period of stagnation in women's activism in Turkey (Ecevit 2007, 191). The women mostly formed philanthropist and apolitical associations during this period. After the 1960s, women also started to form professional associations. The 1970s marked the increasing left and right polarization in the country. Women, besides joining to the leftist organizations, also formed women-only socialist organizations during this period. The Association of Progressive Women (*İlerici Kadınlar Derneği*), established in 1975, detached itself from the Communist Party, although it was conceived by the party (Ecevit 2007, 193). The association mainly adopted a Marxist discourse, with a feminist inclination (Ecevit 2007, 194; Arat 2008, 396). The organization was kept under surveillance with other leftist organizations by the state and the military, and it was banned in 1979 (Ecevit 2007, 194). It is argued that this association and its former members prepared the seeds of the radical feminist movements of the 1980s in Turkey (Ecevit 2007, 194; Arat 2008, 396).

Women in Turkey started to be an effective actor in claiming their rights and interests especially after 1980. The 1980 military coup depoliticized the society in terms of ending the left and right violent conflict of the 1970s. In this vacuum, the second wave of feminism penetrated Turkey, and feminists started to raise their voice against the subordinate social status of women (Arat 2008, 397). During the 1980s, women's movements in Turkey were able to mobilize masses of women and demanded rights loudly and fiercely maybe more than ever in the Turkish history (Ecevit 2007, 195). They demonstrated on the streets related to issues of domestic violence, sexuality, and oppression. These women's movements were fruitful in changing several sexist articles in the penal and civil codes, as well as raising public awareness on other existing problems of women (Arat 2008).

Turkey signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discriminations against Women (the CEDAW) in 1985 with reservations on several articles (Celik Levin 2007, 203). Turkey left all the reservations in the CEDAW in 1999, and also ratified the Optional Protocol in 2002 which enables individuals or groups to channel their complaints to the UN the Committee on the Elimination of Discriminations against Women (Celik Levin 2007, 202). Although the ratification of the CEDAW was more of a tactical concession for Turkey in the international arena, the CEDAW opened opportunities for women's NGOs as a framework to base their demands (Ucar 2009, 4). The legal changes that the CEDAW necessitated were not introduced until the late 1990s, and the ones that were introduced were not enforced properly (Celik Levin 2007, 203). Women's organizations that emerged in the 1980s had to push for tangible changes (Celik Levin 2007, 203).

Women's organizations since the 1980s and until today have been able to change the legal framework in terms of gender equality (Ucar 2009, 4). They gathered for and succeeded on the abolishment of sexist articles in the penal and civil codes in the 1980s, and they built platforms for the rearrangement of the civil and penal codes in a gender-friendly way in the 1990s (Ucar 2009, 4). For the civil code, they collected signatures, and gave petitions in the 1990s and prepared a draft through internet in 2000 (Arat 2008, 402). During the negotiation phase of the draft in the parliament in 2000, they formed a platform, lobbied the parliamentarians and related commission members, and gave press statements. With the help of the CEDAW critique towards Turkey and the EU political criteria, the new civil code was accepted in 2001. The code introduced more equal rights to women in marriage, such as equal property regime in case of divorce, and right to use the maiden name before husband's name.

More experienced and self confident with the change of civil code, women's organizations urged to change the penal code, as well. Interestingly, the European Commission was more interested in the abolition of the death penalty and in issues of freedom of expression than in gender equality legislation in the penal code (Ilkkaracan 2008, 47). In spite of the lack of attention from the EU, women's organizations formed a working group and prepared a draft with more than 30 amendment suggestions in 2002 (Arat 2008, 407). When the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) came to power in 2002, they ignored this draft. This led to a more vigorous campaign by women, where they formed a platform that brought different women together, from gay lesbian groups to the traditional organizations to lobby for the new draft. When the party wanted to criminalized adultery during the preparation of the draft, the platform urged media and European networks through intensive press campaigns and lobbying. The EU reacted and signaled a possible derail with Turkey, and the government had to step back (Ilkkaracan 2008, 41). In two weeks, the new penal code was accepted which incorporated 24 out of 30 demands of women, such as the definition of sexual crimes as 'crimes against individuals' rather than 'crimes against public morality'; criminalizing sexual harassment, marital rape and harassment in the work place, and abolishment of the articles that discriminate between virgins and sexually active women (Arat 2008, 409).

As the CEDAW required, Turkey had to form state institutions that deal with women's problems. Accordingly, the General Directorate on the Status of Women was set up in 1990, as a women's policy machinery. Over the years, the Directorate has adopted an increasingly feminist approach with the demands of the women's organizations (Ucar 2009, 5). Moreover, a standing committee in the parliament was formed to oversee equal opportunity between women and men in 2009 as an outcome of lobbying by women's organizations and women members of parliament

(MPs) (Bianet 2009; UNDP 2009). Furthermore, the Directorate managed to add a new clause to Article 10 of the Constitution in 2004 that says "Men and women have equal rights. The State shall have the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice" with the support of the women's organizations which set up another platform for constitutional changes (Constitution 2004). Moreover, a positive discrimination clause was added to Article 10 in 2010 that says "The measures taken in realizing this equality cannot be interpreted as a violation of the principle of equality"[1] (Constitution 2011). Article 90 was also revised to state that international human rights treaties supersede Turkish laws in case of conflict in 2004 (Celik Levin 2007, 208).

In the 1990's, after a decade of collaboration, divisions among women in Turkey began to emerge. Today there is a variety of different interest and identity groups among women in Turkey. The main groups are feminist women, secular/Kemalist women, Islamic women, Kurdish women (Diner and Toktas 2010). Moreover, starting with the 1990's many of these women's movements have become institutionalized by setting up foundations, organizations and associations. The institutionalization of women's movements occurred mainly along the lines of ethnicity, religion, ideology and worldviews and class. By 2009, there were more than 450 women's civil society organizations in Turkey (Flying Broom 2009). The four organizations in my analysis cover this diversity in some aspect. Flying Broom is a feminist organization that mainly works for building communication and networks between women's organizations. KA.DER is also a feminist institution which specifically aims at supporting women candidates. The Women's Platform Association is a conservative Islamic women's organization and the Women's Center is a feminist organization that was set up by Kurdish women who fights against domestic violence in East and Southeast region of Turkey.

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[1] My translation. The constitution has yet not been updated in English with this amendment.

Although the polarization between women have become more apparent with institutionalization, women with different identities and backgrounds do come together to push for legal changes, as it has been observed throughout the 2000s. Indeed, all four of the organizations that I interviewed participated at least in one of the collective women's platforms that were mentioned. Furthermore, women's organizations in Turkey have found the chance to exchange information and experiences with the other women in the world since the 1990s. UN conferences such as the International Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, and Habitat II in Istanbul 1996; and being members of the European Women's Lobby are some of the most important channels that enabled women to interact with their international counterparts (Ucar 2009, 5).

As we have seen, the women's organizations in Turkey have been able to impact the decision making processes with their continuing and collective efforts. Now, this leads us to the next question as to *how* the women's organizations have gone through this process. Under what conditions have they acted in the political system? How do they organize, how do they frame their actions, how do they act and what contextual conditions do they face? In order to analyze these factors systematically, we need a theoretical framework which I present in the next chapter.

# Chapter 3: The Theoretical Approach

In order to understand how women's organizations have participated in the political system, there is need for a theoretical framework. Classic social movement theories are appropriate for systematically analyzing the contextual and characteristic dimensions of the women's organizations, as these theories analyze under what circumstances and with what characteristic aspects movements and movement organizations mobilize people and take action. Accordingly, this chapter aims to clarify the conceptualization of my analysis within the framework of social movement theories.

The classic social movement agenda accepts four main 'powers' in social movements since 1960's: (1) political opportunities and threats, (2) mobilizing structures such as networking and organization, (3) frames and meanings (4) forms and repertoires of contention (McAdam 2001, 14-15; Tarrow 1998, 8; Ferree and Mueller 2007, 587). According to the scholars these four 'powers' together bring about the mobilization of masses. The first power refers to the contextual factors, while the other three are the characteristic aspects of social movements (Snow et al 2007, 12).

Furthermore, there are social movement organizations (SMOs) that generate building blocks of social movements (Kriesi 1996, 152). Hanspeter Kriesi defines the characteristics of SMOs in the following way: "(1) they mobilize their constituency for collective action, and (2) they do so with a political goal, that is to obtain some collective good (avoid some collective ill) from authorities" (1996, 152). It can be argued that the four women's organizations in Turkey can be classified as SMOs. They try to mobilize their constituency when they want a common good (e.g. changing the penal code), or when they want to avoid a common ill (e.g. protesting the

attempt of the prime minister of making adultery illegal); although, their main forms of repertoires are lobbying authorities and advocacy through media means. Moreover, two of them are the institutionalized continuation of women's movements in the 1980s; while the other two also comprise of people who were politically or socially active in the 1980 and 1990s.

Kriesi analyzes SMOs in a similar framework of main powers in social movements. He explains the determinants of organizational development as internal organizational dynamics such as having a formal and professional *organization* that also affects *forms of actions* they prefer; political factors such as *political opportunity structure*; and types of organizations such as instrumental, subculture and countercultural which is related to the *identity formation and framing* (Kriesi 1996, 157-9). Furthermore, in a collaborative study to understand the interaction between women's movements and state, the contributing authors analyze women's organizations in terms of their repertoires of actions or strategies; identity politics or framing; political opportunities and constraints; and organizational structures (Valiente 2003; della Porta 2003; Dobrowolsky 2003). As the determinants of the SMOs and one of the criteria of examination of women's organizations by the experienced scholars are almost identical with the four powers in classical social movement agenda, I take the four powers in social movements as the backbone of my analysis of the women's organizations in Turkey. Throughout the study, I will refer to the political opportunities and constraints as the contextual aspects; and to the other three powers as the characteristic aspects of the organizations, using the conceptualization of Snow, Soule and Kriesi (2007, 12).

The four main powers need some clarification at this point. Political opportunities and constraints refer to the external resources and costs on the social movements. Contention increases when there are external resources open to them such as ideological or financial support

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from outside the movement, and also when the costs of inaction are unbearable (Tarrow 1998, 71). Tarrow also argues that sometimes opportunities might not be apparent to the leaders of the social movements; therefore, opportunities have to be perceived to stimulate a mobilization (Tarrow 2011, 33). Secondly, social movements build on identity constructions and framings of meanings that mobilize potential followers (Tarrow 2011, 140). Tarrow argues that emotions are utilized in social movements to identify the grievances and maintain solidarity among the members (2011, 144). Thirdly, social movements include public performances which vary in degree from contained to disruptive and to violent. (Tarrow 1998, 93). Tarrow explains that demonstrations and protests are conventional and contained forms of actions, as they are recognized as legitimate and legal by the states currently (Tarrow 1998, 100). However, I do not use this definition in my thesis, as Turkish state and police approach to such actions repressively time to time. Therefore, I regard demonstrations and protests as disruptive forms of actions throughout the thesis. Lastly, social movements also build on mobilizing structures such as cultural affinities, interpersonal networks or formal organizations (Tarrow 1998, 123-124). They may become institutionalized and professionalized in time, and they may build hierarchical or non-hierarchical groups that emphasize participation (della Porta 2003, 57).

This chapter has given the necessary analytical tools to analyze how women's organizations act in the political system with clear-cut four aspects: framings, repertoires of actions, political opportunities and constraints, and organization and networks. I now turn to my methodology in finding these aspects of the organizations in the next chapter.

# Chapter 4: Methodology

In order to answer the research question of the thesis, insider's accounts from the organizations were needed in order to understand the characteristic aspects of organizations. Although the existing literature already gives us some insights about the four aspects of the organizations, they are not detailed enough in the literature to know the organizations' networks and organizational structures, political opportunities and threats, framings, and repertoires of actions. Therefore, I conducted personal interviews with the responsible people in four women's organizations in Turkey that constituted the main source of the thesis. Secondly, I consulted to the literature, news sites, and websites, brochures and publications of the organizations for further and supporting information.

Some of the political opportunities that women's organizations have had are apparent in the literature, such as the EU accession process. However, there can be opportunities and constraints that the organizations have faced but not mentioned in the literature; therefore, insider's accounts are needed. Similarly, how the organizations build networks and how they govern themselves are hardly mentioned in the literature; hence, interviews with the people in the organizations are necessary to understand their networks and organizational structures. Some framings and repertoires of actions can be also traced through websites of the organizations, news and the literature; however, they present an incomplete picture of these two powers in most of the times. Moreover, the personal opinions of the members of the organizations are necessary to compare how they perceive a specific situation and how they reflect it to the outside.

I specifically chose Flying Broom, KA.DER (Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates), the Women's Center, and Capital City Women's Platform Association (here

after as only 'the Women's Platform Association') to have a representative sample of the women's organizations in Turkey, in terms of their ideology, religious and ethnic backgrounds, region, and respective fields. These four organizations themselves cannot fully represent the total diversity among the women's organizations in Turkey; however, they cover some of the main cleavages between women in Turkey such as feminist women, Islamic women, Kurdish women as mentioned in the literature (Diner and Toktas 2010; Arat 2008; ESI 2007; Esim and Cindoglu 1999). Flying Broom and KA.DER can be classified as feminist organizations with specific goals, respectively increasing communication between women's organizations and supporting women candidates in politics. The Women's Platform Association can be classified as a representative of urban Islamic women's rights; while, the Women's Center can be as a feminist organization against domestic violence that mostly represent Kurdish women and women who live in the East and Southeastern Turkey.

Besides the differences in their ideologies and constituencies, they also focus on different areas of women's problems. The main area of work of Flying Broom is to increase the communication and collaboration between women, women's organizations and other related agencies; although, they time to time set up other specific projects such as creating awareness on early marriages. KA.DER specifically works on increasing the number of women in political decision making bodies, and supporting women candidates; while the Women's Platform Association defends mainly the rights of conservative women, and focus on lifting the headscarf bans. The Women's Center, on the other hand, mainly fights with domestic violence including 'honor killings'.

The interviewees included the current chairwomen of the institutions, except I interviewed one of the experienced board members in KA.DER. I have authorization to cite their

names in the thesis. *Halime Guner* from Flying Broom is a feminist activist since 1975. She worked in the Directorate General on the Status of Women and served as a consultant to the ministries responsible from women and family in the 1990s (Ashoka 2011). She is one of the co-founders of Flying Broom. *Nebahat Akkoc* from the Women's Center is a retired school teacher from Diyarbakir, and a feminist activist since 1994. She founded the Women's Center in order to work on women's rights and domestic violence, after experiencing political violence against herself and her family in the 1990s. *Nesrin Semiz* from the Women's Platform Association is a human's rights activist. She is a member of the association since 2002, and she is the current chairwomen. *Fezal Gulfidan* from KA.DER is a politician and a former bank employee. She is associated with KA.DER since 2001, and she is currently one of the board members.

All of the four interviews took place in the head offices in the organizations in April 2011: Flying Broom and the Women's Platform Association in Ankara; KA.DER in Istanbul and the Women's Center in Diyarbakir. They were made face to face with the respondents in Turkish. The interviews were conducted in a semi-standardized way. While I had a topic guide and ready-made questions, I did not stop the respondents when they continued to tell something else. Semi-standardized interviews are helpful to allow respondents a comfortable space and hear what they want to give out besides the topic guide (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). The respondent of KA.MER had the topic guide beforehand, while the other three did not for timing and communication related problems. Nevertheless, they were informed about the general topic and aim of the thesis research beforehand. All of the interviews were captured with a voice recorder with the permission of the respondents. All of them took approximately one hour. The interviews were transcribed and one of the transcriptions is attached in the appendix as an example.

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# Chapter 5: Analysis

In this chapter, I present the findings of my analysis based on the interviews with the organizations, website scanning and literature review. I utilize the theoretical framework I elaborate in the Chapter Three and I analyze four of the organizations in terms of their framings, repertoires of actions, political opportunities and constraints and networks and organizations. Firstly, I introduce the organizations shortly with their respective political contexts that they were born. In the following sections, I analyze the four organizations theme by theme. Accordingly, in the second section, I start to analyze the organizations in terms of their framings. The third section looks at their repertoires of actions, while the fourth one surveys their political opportunities and constraints. The last section looks at their organization and network structures. The summary of the analysis can be found in the Table 1 at the appendix.

## 5.1 Political Contexts and Goals of the Organizations

### 5.1.1 Flying Broom (*Ucan Supurge*)

Flying Broom was set up as an association in 1996 by a group of women who were active in the second wave feminist movements during the 1980s in Turkey. The idea of Flying Broom was born out of a need of communication and collaboration between small women's groups that were newly institutionalizing in the 1990s (Interview no. 1)[2]. In this context, Flying Broom aimed to strengthen the women's movements in Turkey by connecting these groups to each other.

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[2] Personal interviews that I conducted are referenced as following throughout the thesis: the interview with Flying Broom as Interview no. 1; with KA.DER as Interview no. 2; with The Women's Center as Interview no. 3; and, with the Women's Platform Association as Interview no. 4.

Currently, Flying Broom aims (1) to increase communication, cooperation and solidarity between women's organizations; and the institutions and persons that are responsive to the women's movements; (2) to carry their experiences and knowledge to future generations; (3) to create a national and international communication network between women's organizations (Flying Broom 2011a).

### 5.1.2 KA.DER – Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates (Kadın Adayları Destekleme ve Eğitme Derneği)

KA.DER was founded in 1997 by a group of feminist professional women who wanted to increase the number of women who participate in politics. They observed that many of the solutions to the women's problems are dependent on the decisions made in the parliament (Interview no. 2). KA.DER started to promote the idea that at least 10% women should be in the parliament, as the percentage of women in parliament was around 4.5% in the 1990s (Arat 2008, 409). Currently KA.DER aims to increase the number of women not only in the national parliament, but also in local governments and assigned bureaucratic positions.

### 5.1.3 The Women's Center (Kadın Merkezi / KA-MER)

The idea of the Women's Center was born in 1994. Domestic violence became the main focus of the project of the Women's Center. After seeing that violence was normalized in households in a field study in the East and Southeast Anatolian regions in 1996, Nebahat Akkoc, the founder of the Women's Center, shaped two foremost aims in the set-up: (1) creating awareness that the violence against women cannot be regarded normal in any circumstances, and (2) being an emergency support center for women who currently under threat of violence. The Women's Center was founded as a limited company in 1997 around these two goals for women living in Diyarbakir and surrounding districts.

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In 2000, they renewed the aims of the Women's Center to (1) "diagnosing the practices of culture and traditions that are detrimental to women and children;" (2) "and developing alternative practices that are acceptable to human's rights and methods to make these practices implementable" (The Women's Center 2011a). Akkoc states that they try to find methods to deal with the intertwined problems of domestic violence, political violence and poverty that influence the women in the region. The Center was turned into an association in 2004, and it currently serves as a foundation since 2005. It has spread around the East and Southeast regions in time, and there is currently at least one the Women's Center branch in 23 provinces of the region, namely Diyarbakir, Adıyaman, Kars, Hakkari, Tunceli, Erzincan, Gaziantep, Siirt, Elazığ, Malatya, Kilis, Iğdır, Ardahan, Muş, Ağrı, Erzurum, Şırnak, Bitlis, Van, Bingöl, Sanliurfa, Hakkari, and Batman.

Domestic violence, political violence, and poverty are intertwined in a way that makes the women's lives in East and Southeast of Turkey more difficult (Gokalp 2010). Akkoc reports that some women did not complain from the domestic violence because their foremost concern was poverty. They said: "We are hungry, what can one or two slaps do to us?" Moreover, political violence in the region is high (Gokalp 2010, 568). She explains that some migrated to the city due to the state evacuation of their villages; some of their members in the family might have come from the mountain (PKK, the separatist organization of Kurdish nationalism), or some might have experienced violence in police custody (Diner and Toktas 2010, 54; Interview no. 3).

### 5.1.4 The Women's Platform Association (*Baskent Kadin Platformu Dernegi*)

Capital City Women's Platform Association – the Women's Platform Association here after - was established in 1995 as a platform by a group of religious women in Ankara who questioned their roles in life as a mother, wife and working women. Among them were the members of

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several civil society organizations, women initiative groups and women who did not belong to any other organization before. During their first years, the main issue that they questioned was the women's subordinate status in the Islamic religious discourses. However, after the February 28, 1997 - that marked the starting point of systematic headscarf bans in universities and public posts - they have developed a continuous discourse specifically on the headscarf problem in the secular state. The February 28 process increased the participation to the platform, as the women with headscarves who had to leave their jobs sought solidarity in the platform. The platform was turned into an association in 2002, after this increasing demand and the need to get acknowledged on the legal grounds.

Turkish secularism put religion under state control, since it was first introduced by the founding fathers of the Republic (Turam 2008, 478). The veiling of women was discouraged, while Western outfit was encouraged in the public appearances of women beginning with the first years of the republic. However, after the introduction of a liberal market and the promotion of civil society and pluralism in the 1980's, political Islam gained more public attention and visibility (Arat 2008). During this era, headscarves were started to be seen as a symbol of the political Islam by the secular camps in the country, such as the military, judiciary and Republican's People Party (RPP). Female civil servants were prohibited to wear headscarves in 1982 for the first time (Vojdik 2010, 661). Later, wearing headscarves was made a disciplinary offence against "Ataturk's revolutionary principles" in the higher education institutions, which affected the female university students and professors (Carkoglu 2010, 149). The headscarf ban in universities was relaxed several times by central party governments during the 1990s; but, the Constitutional Court annulled the decisions by stating that "using democratic principles to challenge secularism is the abuse of freedom of religion"(Cindoglu and Zencirci 2008, 799).

Political Islamists were especially in rise by claiming to reconstitute the traditional values of the society as a critique to the top-down Westernization of the Republic in the 1990s (Diner and Toktas 2010, 50). However, the rise of political Islam in Turkey was interrupted by the military's intervention in February 28, 1997 that led to the resignation of the Islamist Welfare Party from the government. Known as the post-modern coup, the military issued a memorandum arguing that there was an Islamist threat to the secular principles of the republic, and imposed several counteractions including the bans on headscarves in official places (Carkoglu 2010, 148). Accordingly, the Higher Education Council banned the headscarves in all universities in 1998 and declared that the administrators who did not abide by the decision might be dismissed (Cindoglu and Zencirci 2008, 799). The Islamist Justice and Development Party, in power since 2002, has not yet been able to cancel the bans on the headscarves in public offices and universities.

## *5.2 Framings*

This sections aims to situate the four women's organizations on the political identity spectrum of Turkey. Before analyzing their framings they use during their activities and public announcements, it would be beneficial to see where they stand in the identity politics in Turkey. Moreover, after framings, I shortly present their perspectives on feminism and collaboration with the state.

### 5.2.1 Identity Politics

Flying Broom and KA.DER do not specifically situate themselves in the women's identity politics in Turkey, as they were founded for working on specific goals that may interest any

women. On the other hand, the Women's Platform Association is specifically set up to defend conservative women's rights, as they argue that their rights were taken away from them. Although, the Women's Center does not specifically pursue identity politics, most of the time it voices the problems of Kurdish women, and women who live in the East and Southeast of Turkey.

Halime Guner, the current chairwoman of Flying Broom and one of the founders of the association, states that they try to address the common discrimination resulting from being women and that they believe in the collaborative power of women to solve the common problems that women have. They do not want women to get polarized due to their different world views or ethnic identities. Since they are located in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, they feel that they have a higher responsibility to represent the women in Turkey, as they are neighbors with the parliament and with the consulates of other countries (Interview no.1).

In like fashion, Fezal Gulfidan, one of the board members in KA.DER, argues that KA.DER aims to support the cooperation of women in different parties to have a thicker women's voice. Although, KA.DER is known to have a bigger secular constituency in the public opinion, the recent "275 women" campaign has signaled the changes in the ideology of KA.DER. KA.DER agreed with a famous women journalist with a headscarf to take part in the TV advertisements and billboards to defend their campaign on demanding 275 women in the parliament. Gulfidan explains that KA.DER is evolving, as everything evolves. She maintains that KA.DER stands in an equal position to all women in Turkey, be them Kurdish, Alawite or women with headscarves. Therefore, KA.DER has started to support women with headscarves to be listed by the parties, and take part in the parliament (Interiew no. 2).

Semiz from the Women's Platform Association maintains that they mostly represent the problems of the educated religious women in Turkey; because, almost hundred percent of their members are college graduates, among whom are academicians, or former public employees such as doctors, teachers etc. Nevertheless, she adds that they also know the problems of rural women, because they have roots in rural through their parents or relatives. Semiz claims that they are more connected to the rural than the other women's organizations which work for the problems in rural, excluding the field workers of the organizations. Semiz explains that the platform was set up by women who surpassed a certain thought level and who wanted to channel their energy and knowledge to the democratization of the country (Interview no. 4).

### 5.2.2 Framings

The main framing that Flying Broom uses is that *women's organizations should be empowered first* in order to empower women. At this point they emphasize the importance of *multisided* networking and communication capabilities of women's organizations: (1) making women meet the women's organizations in their localities; (2) bringing different women's organizations together to increase the dialogue among them and to empower the women's movement in Turkey against women- unfriendly discourse and practices; (3) making women's organizations and public institutions to meet each other and collaborate in projects that would benefit women; (4) increasing cooperation between women's organizations and national and international civil society institutions to generate information and experience exchange (Flying Broom 2011b; Interview no. 1). Secondly, Flying Broom utilizes *the universal conventions and norms on gender equality* in defending women's rights. They give references to the UN Beijing Conference, the CEDAW and the EU framework (Flying Broom 2011b; Interview no. 1).

On the other hand, KA.DER focuses on the political participation and representation of women. They defend the *politics of presence* argument in representation. According to this view, people who have shared experiences with whom they represent should be present in the parliament (Phillips 1995, 52-53). Therefore, there should be a proportional equality of women in parliament with respect to the population, because women representatives have shared experiences with women and this affects how they would decide and act on policy issues. Gulfidan, argues that women can represent women better in issues like domestic violence, because they can show sensitivity as they might have experienced violence themselves before. Gulfidan adds that male representatives do not likely to show the same sensitivity. Accordingly, she complains that there are still 9% women in the Turkish parliament, as opposed to the 50% women in the population (Interview no. 2).

KA.DER utilizes mainly *right-based* arguments in their defense of women's participation to politics (Mateo Diaz 2005, 113). They argue that it is the right of women to equally participate and be represented in decision making posts in their campaigns and press statements. However, they frame their cause with *utility-based* arguments, as well (Mateo Diaz 2005, 116). Firstly, they mention women's inclusion into politics would make difference for the future of Turkey (KA.DER 2011a). Secondly, KA.DER also criticizes the widespread language of violence of male politicians and masculine politics that divides people in polarities and leads to wars (KA.DER 2010a; KA.DER 2010b). Similarly, Gulfidan asserts that Turkey loses half of its brain power by not having enough women in the decision making bodies. She believes that women would help the country to develop more, and women also can be more sensitive in issues like environment than men (Interview no. 2).

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KA.DER benefits from the international literature about 'critical mass' theory in their defense of *quotas* in the parliament and political parties (KA.DER 2007). According to this theory, the number of women in parliament needs to reach at least 30 or 40 per cent in order to be effective enough in defending women's interests (Mateo Diaz 2005, 119). Gulfidan says that they told to men that if women are less than 30% in even a small meeting, women cannot deliver their message. She states that some parties now have quotas in their party regulations, but most of them do not apply them. Gulfidan argues that quotas need to be in the law of political parties to be checked and sanctioned by the Higher Election Committee. However, Gulfidan explains that the politicians and the public reacted to the word 'quota' when KA.DER first argued for it before the 2007 national elections. She says that then they started to use 'positive discrimination' which is a concept that is in the constitution since September 2010, as well as in the international agreements Turkey is a part of such as the CEDAW. Gulfidan states that now in the recent 2011 general election campaign, they use the concepts of "equal representation" and "real democracy". She asserts that quotas and positive discriminations are a means to reach the equal representation. Gulfidan points out that this concept also encapsulates the equal representation of all of the groups in society such as ethnic and religious minorities, besides women (Interview no. 2). Therefore, KA.DER has recently claimed to address all the other representation problems in Turkey by referring to the democratic ideals and human rights with the concept "equal representation."

The Women's Center, on the other hand, argues *against all kind of violence* whatever the reason behind it. The Center develops a discourse mainly on the domestic violence and claim that all kind of violence becomes *normalized in the households* (The Women's Center 2011a). The Center also stands in between women's and Kurdish problems. Akkoc mentions that the two

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problems are intertwined in the region. Akkoc states that she is against the cliché description of the Kurdish problem. She mentions that feminism has taught her to look at an issue from the angle it touches you and to produce solutions starting from your experience. Accordingly, she highlights Kurdish *women's* problems and presents the results of a recent field study they have undertaken in the region: the early marriage rate (below age 17) is 53%; 70% of the women state that they did not choose their husbands; and 84% of those marriages are kin marriage; the number of people who live at the limit of hunger is 10 times more than the Turkey average; and, 30% of the women in the region do not speak proper Turkish (The Women's Center 2010). Moreover, known as 'honor killings', killing women who are claimed to have sexual conduct without wedlock are common in the region, as well (Gokalp 2010, 566). Akkoc explains that it is very difficult to get psychological consultancy for women who had experiences of violence, sexual harassment or incest. The problem is that there are very few professionals who can speak Kurdish or other local languages. In that aspect, the Women's Center regards *mother tongue as a human right*, not as a political demand (The Women's Center 2011b). "This is my Kurdish problem" Akkoc asserts, and criticizes the descriptions of the Kurdish problem that degrades it to only a regional separation problem. Akkoc argues that the Kurdish movement ignores the women's problems and even wants to obscure them by arguing that exposing these problems might "offend" the Kurdish community. She also complains that there has been no reference to the women's problems in the region when the current government initiated the "Democratic openness" process for the Kurdish problem (Interview no. 3).

The Women's Platform Association, on the other hand, is one of the most known Islamic women's organizations that challenge the secular principles of the state, and the dominant Islamic masculine discourse that limit their right to participate in the public life. Therefore, the Women's

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Platform Association situates itself both *against Islamic masculinities* and also the *secular rules of the modern state*. The two- folded aim of the association can be seen in the vision statement on the websites: "to solve the problems that arise from religious interpretations that reinforce a traditional woman image; and to end discriminations against religious women in the modern society" (The Women's Platform Association 2010).

Semiz, the chairwoman of the Association, elaborates these two problems that conservative women face further. First of all, she argues that women with headscarves have been subordinated by the men in their own "neighborhood" – the conservative circles. Semiz highlights it is not acceptable to say "I want my rights as a woman" in Islam, because the God have given every creature every rights. However, she argues that those rights that are granted to women by the God were taken away from women, when the men implemented the rights. Semiz presents a recent example of this domination of conservative men over conservative women. The Women's Platform Association took part in a campaign called "*We want an MP with a headscarf*" before the declaration of party lists in April for the national elections in June 2011, with several other conservative women's groups. She complains that they have received the biggest critiques from the men columnists of the conservative newspapers. The columnists accused the women in the campaign for trying to water down the religion, and not knowing the meaning of covering. Some of the columnists claimed that it was not the right time to demand this. On the contrary, Semiz argues that it was just the right time, because some of the secular organizations have started to support the idea of an MP with a headscarf, such as KA.DER (Interview no. 4).

Secondly, women with headscarves have also problems in the existing system in Turkey. Semiz complains that they cannot get university education, work in state offices and be elected as

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a Member of Parliament. Islamic women have formed a *rights-based* discourse against the headscarf bans. The Women's Platform Association argues that the bans are a form of discrimination of women, and against the women's human rights and citizenship rights (The Women's Platform Association 2011). They argue that almost 15 million women wear headscarves in Turkey, and the bans affect these women's economic, social and political lives negatively. They demand the choice of wearing headscarves to be one of the fundamental human's rights norms in Turkey.

Semiz argues that their main addressee is men, who impose the existing Islamic and secular systems on them. She points out to an interesting situation they are in: "If the state limitations to our participation in the public life are lifted, the limitations in our private life would come to the surface." She explains that there are women who would get into conflict with their husbands or fathers, once the bans are lifted; because the men would not let them to work or get education. Semiz claims that the state bans obscure the existing male domination in the households, and argues that the bans should be lifted to render the male domination in conservative families apparent. In order to fight the male domination in the households in a more confident way, the women in the Women's Platform Association believe that first the bans should be lifted (Interview no. 4).

It can be argued that the Women's Platform Association mostly represents the problems of urbanite women with headscarves, since the Association prioritizes the lifting of headscarf bans over the other problems they have. However, Semiz argues that they do not have a separation of constituency, as religious or not, and states that their door is open to everyone, if they share the same problems and demand the same changes. The Association's name can be

argued to be a reflection of this attempt of embracing everyone, as the name Capital City Women's Platform Association has no connotation with Islam (Guler 2009).

### 5.2.3 Feminism and the Organizations

Flying Broom, KA.DER and the Women's Center are feminist organizations that regard feminism as their foremost characteristic and political stance. Flying Broom and KA.DER have organic connections with the feminist movements in the 1980s. The Women's Center has also a strong relation with feminism, although they prefer to localize it. The Women's Center's main principles are influenced by common feminist principles: adhering to human's rights and women's rights; being independent of any other institutions, and persons; being against to any type of discrimination and violence; rejecting hierarchical structures; thinking globally and acting locally; and being open to collaboration (The Women's Center, 2011). Akkoc asserts that they embrace "Think global act local" principle and this principle finds reflection in their application of feminism. For example, Akkoc states that the most important thing she learned from feminism is to understand and solve an issue from the point it touches upon you. In the workshops on feminism, Akkoc requests women to list the things they want to change in their lives and the things they want to preserve: She asks "What are you against as a woman?" and "What do you like in this culture and what do you want to preserve?" women read *Feminism is for Everyone* by bell hooks Also in the workshops. As a consequence, Akkoc claims that the women in the Women's Center have come to define their own feminisms by listing their priorities; although, in the beginning they were against defining themselves as feminists. Akkoc argues that they have broken down the feminist image in Turkey where people think of feminists as women who are educated, in an upper economic class and have modern outfits. Akkoc asserts that now there are

women who can define their feminisms in Kurdish, Zazaki or other local languages (Interview no. 3).

On the contrary, the current chairwoman of the Women's Platform Association rejects a direct connotation with feminism; although, religious women with headscarves who defend women's rights have long been identified as Islamic feminists in the literature and the public opinion in Turkey (see Toktas 2008). Although they were not that against feminism as it was before, Semiz, the chairwoman, clarifies that they do not accept some of the features of feminism such as their discourse on body, abortion and their being "male enemy." With these caveats included, she asserts that they are feminists; although, they cannot call themselves feminist, as there are women who reject the idea among their members and constituency, in addition to the ones who does call themselves feminists (Interview no. 4).

### 5.2.4 Collaboration with the State

All of the four women's organizations have a liberal feminist stance towards the interaction with the state; although, the women's movements in Turkey in the 1980s had a radical feminist approach to the state as a characteristic of the second wave feminisms. They were against collaborating with the state out of a fear of cooptation. Today, the four organizations are willing to cooperate with state to transform it and increase the gender equality in the country. This can be interpreted as a tactical innovation in the dynamics of the women's movement in Turkey (Snow et al. 2007, 12). They point out the importance of self-confidence and self-positioning of women's organizations as a prevention of cooptation.

All of the four respondents argue that it is important to collaborate with the state to transform it; and to ameliorate women's position in the country. For example, Akkoc from the Women's Center, highlights that they cannot help women without the collaboration of police,

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gendarme or social services when women escape from violence or threat of being killed. Similarly, Semiz, from the Women's Platform Association, argue that the state is involved in every sphere of life, for example people seek help from police or judiciary when they need protection or want to oppose an unjust action. Semiz thinks both types of women's movements are needed to transform the state: first wave feminism from inside the state, and second wave feminism from outside the state. The Women's Platform Association has connections with women in the women's branches of the political parties in the parliament. Semiz observes that women in the branches express the demands of the conservative women in a more watered down style to the party leaders and some of them is very successful channeling the demands this way, while the Women's Platform Association can assert the demands and feelings more clearly, as they work independently. Therefore, Semiz argues that the fight needs to be done with two types of action.

Guner, from Flying Broom, claims that women's organizations need to have self-confidence in their cause when they interact with the state. Likewise, Akkoc from the Women's Center emphasizes the confidence of women in this process as an important factor to stand firm about their principles and priorities. Akkoc believes that it is better for women to determine their principles and internalize them before interacting with the state, in order to avoid toning down of their cause within state ideologies. Akkoc also claims that the collaborations have been transformative for the state and that they can contact with the state much easier in the recent years.

Moreover, Gulfidan from KA.DER, adds that the problem with the state is that there are not enough women within it that can represent women. Moreover, the existing women in the parliament or state administrations are captured by the ideological party politics, and male

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dominated patriarchal mentality. She discusses that the increasing number of women would lead to have a more balanced representation of women with respect to men, and also within themselves. Similarly, Mateo Diaz argues that there would be more room for the diversities and individualities within women, with an increased number of women in parliament, which in return decreases the possibility of essentializing women's interests (Mateo Diaz, 2005, 120-121). Nevertheless, Gulfidan argues that KA.DER has an opponent stance towards the state. She states that they work and raise their voice from outside to make the state more responsive to women's demands. Gulfidan believes that civil society institutions represent women's rights better, because they are independent of party ideologies and pressures (Interview no. 2).

Guner, from Flying Broom, explains further that government and the state is two different things. Firstly, women's NGOs need to push governments to introduce new laws that are gender sensitive; and secondly they need to push the state institutions to apply the laws that are introduced. Therefore, there is a need for dialogue between women's NGOs, government, and the state institutions. Like Guner, Gulfidan thinks that women's organizations have obtained a supervisory role in the implementation of laws, besides their lobbying and pushing for legal changes. She states that women's NGOs trace and notice the implementations of laws such as the positive discrimination clause of the constitution. Another example is the 2010/10 circular of Ministry of Interior about setting up women-men equality commission in province general councils, and Gulfidan claims that it has not yet applied yet (Circular 2010).

## 5.3. Repertoires of Action

As their foremost form of actions, all of the four women's organizations utilize pressure politics such as lobbying and advocacy through media and internet; therefore, they mostly build on

conventional and contained repertoires of action (Valiente 2003, 35). Their second most common form of action is also conventional, which is preparing projects and offering services to women where they aim to impact women's lives directly (della Porta 2003, 59). These include but not limited to skill training workshops, conscious raising conferences, and telephone lines that offer help. These are also classified as conventional and non-stigmatized forms of actions by voluntary associations in the literature (della Porta 2003, 59-60). Thirdly, the organizations time to time organize or attend in collective protests, demonstrations and meetings. Even though, the literature on social movements regards these types of actions as conventional and contained (Tarrow 1998; 99, 204), in the Turkish context I regard them as disruptive and stigmatized actions. The reason is that protests and demonstrations are not fully legalized in Turkey, and the police may interrupt the meetings with violence. This can be observed in the violent interventions of police in recent March 8 demonstrations (EP 2005, ETHA 2011). Moreover, sex of the demonstrators can also make a conventional act less conventional in the public opinion, since women are less expected to demonstrate. Similarly, della Porta mentions the hesitancy of some women activists in Italy in organizing protests by arguing that public might stigmatize the activities and it may scare women away (2003, 60). Besides these disruptive acts, some of the organizations also use media for their disruptive advertisements, or use cultural activities as a mean to draw attention to women's issues. In that aspect, Flying Broom and KA.DER have very innovative and disruptive repertoires. None of them has involved in violent repertoires of action, validating the observation that violence is a rarely applied form of action in women's political activism (Katzenstein 1998, 196).

To start with Flying Broom, Guner, the chairwoman, argues that Flying Broom is first of all a policy institution that contributes to women's policies by lobbying and advocacy. She argues

that they can be regarded as a think tank in the women's struggle. Guner explains that their role is to make women's issue a focus in Turkish politics, strategize and solve the roots of the problems. For this aim, Ucan Supurge frequently communicates with bureaucrats, parliamentarians, and other people who are in a position that can affect women's position in society (Interview no. 1). Besides their lobbying activities, Flying Broom has also a very wide range of activities, including national women's conferences, local women reporters' network, campaigns, projects, radio and TV programs, and their women's news website.

In order to fulfill their main aim of connecting women's organizations in Turkey, Flying Broom organized two national women's civil society organizations meetings in 2000 and 2003. In these meetings, women with different worldviews got together to write country reports for Beijing +5 conference, and the CEDAW's fourth and fifth terms respectively. In the meeting for the CEDAW, Flying Broom brought 453 women together among who were the members of feminist, Islamic, lesbian civil society organizations, members of parliament, and businesswomen. Guner argues that these meetings located the position of Flying Broom clearly for the future of the women's movements in Turkey: being the communication center of women. Guner complains about the instrumentalization of women by political parties in Turkey, and she argues that these conferences have showed that women with very different worldviews can come together and contribute to the solutions of the common problems of women. Moreover, Flying Broom established a national database of women's organizations in Turkey in 2003 which can be reached through their websites. The database was updated in 2009 and it aims to inform women and women's organizations about the existing women's organizations in their localities or elsewhere.

Secondly, Flying Broom is known by its consistent and innovative use of media and internet to raise awareness about women's issues. First of all, it has a website that serves as a women's news portal since 2002, besides publishing their activities. The website is being updated frequently in Turkish and English about the recent developments on issues relate to women in Turkey and the world. Their name Flying Broom and their logo (a witch on a broom) also has helped the organizations to be remembered easily. Furthermore, Flying Broom has established its own local women's reporters' network. The women in the localities of Turkey make their own news about women's problems, stories and demands. The news is dispersed through the website of the organization, radio programs that they organize, and the "Flying News" bulletin. The aim of the reporters' network is to "carry the women's demands and priorities from the local agenda to the national agenda; to gain independence from national media sources, to create an active women's alternative media group; to allow women from local women's organizations in different regions to take place in spreading knowledge about society and to support these women; and to use information technologies for a more egalitarian, democratic and fair society" (Flying Broom, 2009).

Flying Broom also organizes radio programs since 1998. The biggest organizations were weekly radio programs in 2004 for 26 weeks and in 2005 for 22 weeks in the state radio TRT. Flying Broom team hosted speakers from academia, politics, civil society, media; and their local reporters about women's issues. The 2004 radio programs were supported by the European Commission. Furthermore, Flying Broom organized TV programs in the local TV channels of 12 cities in 2007 about the most pressing women's problems in those localities. Moreover, they release "Flying News" bulletin to make women's organizations be informed about each other.

They have released 26 issues since 1998, and they issue a special English volume once in every two years.

Thirdly, Flying Broom uses cultural activities to draw attention to the women's problems, which is also an innovative form of action. For this aim, it organizes an annual international women's movie festival. They organized the fourteenth festival in 2011. The main aim is "to spread discussions about gender and women's issues through using the impressive language of the art of cinema" (Flying Broom 2009). The festival presents feature-length, short, documentary and animation films of women directors from Turkey and the world. There are specific themes each year; and in addition to the movie screenings, they organize panels, discussions and exhibitions in Ankara according to the themes. Local and international directors, press members, film critics, artists, writers, academicians, politicians give talks in the universities and public houses. The feature length film section is being evaluated by the International Federation of Film Critiques (FIPRESCI) since the sixth festival in 2003. During the festival, Flying Broom gives honor and merit awards to the women who have contributed to cinema.

Besides these lobbying and advocacy activities, the Flying Broom team writes projects. Projects are common conventional forms of actions by civil society organizations. First of all, "Building bridges" project aimed to connect women with the women's organizations in their cities; hear the experiences of local women; and raise consciousness on the common problems of being women. Another aim of the project was to make Flying Broom's women's reporters hear the problems of women in their localities. Within this project, Flying Broom team held meetings in total 81 provinces plus 9 districts from 2003 to 2005. Local municipalities and sometimes mosques in the region helped to inform the local women about the meetings.

Another project "First step" was written to develop the interaction between women's organizations and state institutions. The Flying Broom team had observed that there is a resistance from the public institutions towards the demands of the independent women's organizations in their provinces. Therefore, the main aims of the project were to reinforce dialogue between public institutions and women's NGOs, and to create sensitivity in the public institutions about gender mainstreaming and women's human rights. A side aim of the project was to lobby public institutions to make women's organizations perpetual participants in the human rights commissions of the provinces. Between 2006 and 2008, the project took place in 13 provinces. The project made 5 members each from every public institution meet the women's organizations in their provinces for two days, including governorship, municipality, police office and social services directorate. During the workshops, Flying Broom emphasized the role and political locations of women's organizations in history. They also worked on the prejudices of the participants towards each other by using the nominal group technique (Flying Broom 2009). There is still not a decision made about the demand of Flying Broom related to inclusion of women's organizations in the province human rights commissions. Another similar project, "From paths to roads" aimed to make women's organizations in the provinces to meet with each other and with the universities, municipalities and professional associations of their provinces. Trainings on communication, conflict resolution and consultation techniques were given to women's NGOs and local reporters. The project was funded by the EU. It was implemented in seven provinces of the seven regions of Turkey between 2004 and 2006.

One of the continuing projects, "Women's Traces in Democracy", aims to train local women's NGOs on lobbying and channeling their demands and suggestions to the parliament. They have reached more than 130 women's organizations in 17 provinces since 2010. Besides the

trainings, the women's NGOs have had chance to communicate to their local governors and representatives in the parliament. The NGOs have prepared law drafts during the workshops and they have presented them in the Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men of the National Parliament. Guner explains that they are going to continue this project until finishing all 81 provinces of Turkey. The Women's Platform Association was one of the participant NGOs in this project. With these projects, Flying Broom attempts to impact women's lives and train women's organizations directly.

Similarly, KA.DER (Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates) performs advocacy and lobbying as their foremost forms of action. KA.DER tries to have good relations with the government, political parties, state institutions, other NGOs and the media through lobbying. They also use media, campaigns, and press meetings for their advocacy of women's representation in decision making bodies. Besides these main forms of actions, they also undertake training projects that directly target women would-be-representatives.

First of all, Gulfidan states that, as KA.DER, they have good relations with the government, and women MPs in the parliament; and, that almost all of the political parties acknowledge and respond their demands more positively in recent years. They have connections with women's branches of the political parties: Gulfidan explains that they try to encourage the women in the parties in showing a firm stance against the party managements that do not list them for the elections, because the party managements have a tendency to transfer famous women outside of the party as candidates. Gulfidan stresses that they do not have very tight relations with municipalities and that they find it hard to find a woman role model in local administrations. While this may be true, Gulfidan indicates that they put too much effort on

municipalities and that they will have a two years training program for women to make them ready in local elections in 2013.

Secondly, KA.DER has used disruptive forms of action in order to attract attention in their advocacy for women's representation. They are known to use the media resources successfully like Flying Broom. They started to give press conferences and using disruptive TV advertisements and billboards in the main city centers before the 2007 general elections. In the first part of this campaign, they used the faces of three famous actresses and one businesswoman on the billboards and posters, where they drew moustaches or neckties on their pictures. Their motto was "Is there a condition to be a male in order to enter into parliament?" In the second part of the campaign they added the faces of a famous male comedian; an actor; and a soccer coach with saying "This parliament needs women." Besides these visual strategies, they have also held press conferences where they pointed out the lack of representation of women in the decision making bodies, and introduced a list of women's policy concerns that academicians and civil society organizations prepared. They also brought the notion of "quota" to the public discussions during this campaign.

In like fashion, before the 2009 local elections, KA.DER prepared pictures of the three male leaders of the opponent political parties in the parliament with visual effects. In the posters and billboards, they were shown in a friendly agreement, where they stand side by side saying "We all agree!" and "We all chose men!" Interestingly, the leader of the National Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi), Devlet Bahceli sued KA.DER for invasion of his personal rights due to the slogans and visually made pictures. During the case, many journalists and civil society organizations supported KA.DER, and the court rejected the case. These billboards and the case process have made KA.DER more known in the public opinion. Currently KA.DER has released

a campaign called "275 women" referring to the 50% women's representation in the parliament for the general elections in June 2011. Arguing "for the new constitution, for a real democracy and for equal representation: 275 women," this time KA.DER made one of famous woman composers to make a jingle for the TV advertisements. Also, famous women singers, journalists, businesswomen participated in the advertisements.

Thirdly, KA.DER prepares projects that aim to have a direct impact on women. KA.DER encourages and trains women for participating in national and local elections. They target women who are already in politics; in other words they do not support or train women who had no prior connection with politics. They reach women who work in political parties, and in bureaucracy. Head offices and women's branches of the political parties; province and district administrations, and municipality councils are the first places where they look for women they can train. The profile of the women they reach is mostly middle-aged, middle educated (high school or less) women, but who are sensitive to societal issues and local problems. Gulfidan explains that women who work for businesses are nominated as candidates by political parties, and those women can be more demanding for their own personal attainments. In contrast to this, Gulfidan argues that women who work for years in the sub levels of political parties or public administrations are more valuable since they have some political experience and know the problems in the local. KA.DER condemns the higher criteria that people have for women candidates to regard them eligible for politics, such as having PhD diplomas, or knowing five languages (KA.DER 2010c). They criticize that no one expects the same criteria for men. Gulfidan points out that the women they target in party managements, women's branches or local administration know the problems in the local and that is the most important criteria. It is just that they need to be supported and trained on some communication and campaigning techniques.

For this purpose, KA.DER organizes "Political Schools for Women" projects. The schools give free courses to women candidates on gender equality, conflict resolution, leadership, campaigning, and communication techniques by professional in these areas, such as academicians or former politicians. The schools travel in seven central cities in the seven regions of Turkey. The target women gather together in the closest central city to them. The women are chosen in a way to make up a balanced representation of the political views in the groups, such as two or three women from every party. During the school, women are encouraged to focus on the common problems of being women, rather than their ideological differences. They stay together in a hotel in order to have a friendlier atmosphere for all five days of the project. The number of women in a group is limited to 20 to 25, in order to maintain interactive discussions among women. The first schools were organized for 2009 local elections. The project was supported by Sweden Consulate. The schools currently continue for the general elections in June 2011. Secondly, "Empowering Women Citizens" project aims to train women about how to use their legal rights and means, such as giving a petition to the public prosecutors. Supported by the UN Democracy Fund, KA.DER trains women's NGOs and groups about the women's citizenship rights since 2009, and in return the NGOs are expected to train the women in their localities.

Likewise, the Women's Center is defined as a policy institution that makes gender politics by its respondent. It employs conventional actions like lobbying and advocacy, and disruptive and innovative forms of actions, such as radical feminist language in their press statements. Indeed, the Women's Center is a political actor that lobby and advocate for the rights and demands of the women especially in the East and Southeast regions of Turkey. The women in the Women's Center have an aim of producing policy solutions to the problems of the women in the

region. Although the Women's Center also sets up projects and offers services for women, Akkoc maintains that they do not want to turn into a social service provider.

Firstly, women in the Women's Center lobby on women's demands by attending meetings with the state institutions including the two state gender machineries in Turkey, the Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW), and Ministry Responsible from Women and Family (Interview no. 3). However, Akkoc mentions that these institutions have very limited power over the government and they cannot easily push for pro-women decisions, especially under current administrations. In those meetings, the Women's Center presents their field study reports; they share the experiences of women they interact with; and they give policy suggestions to the decision makers in those meetings. For example, the Women's Center has recently attended meetings with the province governorships, and Akkoc states that they have informed the governorship about the resistance of local administrations in implementing laws and circulars relating to action for domestic violence. The Women's Center requested a crisis desk to be set up within the DGSW to give out the names of the local administrators who do not follow these laws and the circulars. Akkoc is hopeful about the realization of this request.

Secondly, in order to advocate their cause, the Women's Center uses a disruptive radical feminist language in the press conferences they hold at least two times a year, one on March 8, (Women's Day), and on November 25, (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women). They also issues press statements occasionally when they want to give a message during a political discussion. Their press statements have a clear radical feminist language, and this is a disruptive act for people who regard Kurdish women as docile or victims of traditions. They also attend to TV programs, especially on the state television TRT 6, that was set up to broadcast in Kurdish in 2009. Moreover, Akkoc herself frequently give talks in the conferences

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on women's situation in the universities, and civil institutions in Istanbul, Ankara and other big cities. They also organize hall meetings in the region where they can carry their message especially to the men.

Thirdly, the Women's Center organizes activities that directly touch women's and children's lives in the region. Akkoc discusses that it is not possible to make politics in the national level, without knowing the realities of the women in the local. Some of these activities include the emergency line, conscious raising groups, household visits, women entrepreneurship and children's houses. First of all, the Women's Center has an emergency support line for women who are under threat of violence, and an honor killing. The line is available 24 hours, and they support the women first of all by ensuring their safety and secondly helping to take necessary precautions in a way that women would feel comfortable either by contacting police, or meeting the women themselves. For this emergency line, they work in collaboration with governorships, Directorate of Social Services, police, gendarme, and the Bar.  Furthermore, the Women's Center set up houses for children between ages 2-6 where teachers are trained in a way to approach children in a non-sexist way.

Moreover, the Women's Center organizes conscious raising groups in all of the branches. The groups meet for 14 weeks with around 20 participants. In the groups, they discuss issues like gender roles, violence, sexuality, women's human rights, women's legal rights in Turkey, feminism, communication, and discrimination. The Women's Center also visits sub-urban districts that are economically underdeveloped, has language problems, and transportation problems to the city. They visit households and inform women about their rights and all of the places they can contact in a case of emergency. As a strategy during these visits, they give out little objects such as little money pouch on which there are emergency numbers. Moreover, the

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Women's Center also initiates women's entrepreneurship. They support women who want to set up their own businesses. They also have a shop in the famous historical Hasan Pasha bazaar in Diyarbakir, where they sell the handmade garments that women in the organization make. 10% of the Women's Center's institutional expenses are covered by the income that comes from a share of the profits from the bazaar in order to have a sustainability of the organization.

Like the other organizations, Semiz, the chairwoman of the Women's Platform Association, asserts that the Association is not a charity organization as most of other religious organizations are, but an opinion institution that works for human rights, women's rights and sometimes for disabled people's and children's rights. Like the other organizations, they mainly use conventional methods such as lobbying and advocacy, and they secondarily write projects. Nevertheless, their pro-women's rights stance and language as conservative Islamic women in Turkey is a disruptive and innovative act in itself. First of all, the Women's Platform Association lobbies state officials or women's branches of religious or right-wing parties. They also advocate for their cause in public panels, press statements and sometimes protests. During the first years of the platform, before turning into an association, the Women's Platform Association organized panels related to the status of the women in religious discourses in Ankara and Manisa in 1996. They also attended to the Habitat II, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements that was held in Istanbul in 1996, and gave four panels on the same subject. Recently, they have demonstrated in front of the parliament within the campaign of "We want an MP with a headscarf" which was a disruptive act where they received a lot of negative criticisms from conservative men. After turning into association, the Women's Platform Association participated in the Penal Code Women's Platform with other women's organization in Turkey. They lobbied for the proposed changes with politicians. They are also a participant in the CEDAW execution

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committee, and they prepare shadow reports for the UN about the situation of women's rights in Turkey, with some other women's organizations such as Flying Broom. They also participate in the European Women's Lobby Turkey Coordination.

The Women's Platform Association also sets up projects as another conventional forms of action. They initiated three independent projects up until today in Ankara. The first project, 'Support and Help for Mothers with Disabled Children', aimed to socialize and train the mothers with disabled children about their rights. The project lasted for ten months in 2006. The second project was "Public Health" project where they organized seminars for women on women's health, children's health, psychological consultancy, legal rights in the underdeveloped districts of Ankara. They received financial support from the Islamic Development Bank for these two projects. Thirdly, they initiated "More Conscious and Participatory Women" project where they organized seminars and prepared booklets on gender equality between 2008 and 2009. This project was mainly supported by the EU.

Besides joining to the specific women's platforms and preparing their own projects, the Women's Platform Association also gives support to several other political platforms time to time. These include Women for Peace Platform that organizes protests against wars and practices that subordinates women in the world; the East Conference that aims to unite Turkey with its Eastern neighbors against "the domination and occupation of the Eastern nations by the United States of America and Israel"; several campaigns of Amnesty International Turkey; and Solidarity for the National Anthem Platform. With these platforms, the Women's Platform Association has attended signature campaigns, press conferences, street protests, and meetings. Some of the protests can take disruptive forms, such as the protests in front of the Israeli Consulate in Ankara against attacks on charity convoy to Gaza in 2010. The Women's Platform

Association also provides hobby classes for women in its head office in Ankara. These include Arabic, English, computer, musical instruments, tile making lessons etc. These lessons are free, but the participants contribute to the utility expenses while they have the classes.

## 5.4. Political Opportunities and Constraints

All of the organizations share some common political opportunities and constraints; although, the Women's Center and the Women's Platform Association have also further opportunities and constraints due to their peculiar characteristics in Turkish politics.

First of all, all of the interviewees have stated that the EU accession process and international frameworks such as the CEDAW have created new opportunities and spaces for the women in Turkey and for their organizations. The EU conditionality and pressures from the EU have speeded and facilitated the women friendly amendments in the civil code, penal code, and constitution that women have been lobbied and advocated for years. Gulfidan from KA.DER mentions that the EU takes into consideration the shadow reports prepared by the NGOs as a response to the country reports that the government sends in every six months. She is content that the women's rights in Turkey have become more transparent due to the shadow reports. The Women's Platform Association also seizes the international frameworks as an opportunity for their defense on headscarves. Semiz maintains that the European Parliament, the United Nations and the CEDAW encouraged the government to solve the headscarf problem via their progress reports. During their campaigns on demanding MPs with headscarves, the Women's Platform Association reminded these international pressures and expected the government and political parties to nominate MPs with headscarves. However, the Association is disappointed by the candidate lists, and Semiz argues that the conservative JDP government and other conservative

parties have missed the opportunity that the international organizations have created for them to please their religious constituency.

Furthermore, as all the respondents acknowledge, women's civil society institutions have started to be regarded as important actors in fighting against discriminations against women by the state authorities and public opinion in the recent years (Ecevit 2007, 199). Now the Turkish governments regard civil society organizations in Turkey as one of the authorities that should be consulted and worked with in their respective fields. This can be observed especially in the Prime Ministry Circular of 2006/17 and Ministry of Interior Circular of 2007 (Ucar 2009, 12; Circular 2006). In these circulars, the state institutions are advised to collaborate with civil society institutions in fighting against discriminations towards women such as giving gender awareness educations, building women's shelters, etc. The EU accession process has also helped women's organizations in strengthening their ties with European women's organizations. Flying Broom, KA.DER, and the Women's Platform Association take part in the Turkish secretary of the European Women's Lobby.

Another political opportunity for women's organizations is born out of the watered down or reactionary discourses on gender equality made by the decision makers in Turkey. Guner from Flying Broom states that women-unfriendly discourses and actions that the government or state institutions undertake turn out to be good opportunities for women's organization to raise their voice, and reminds the discussions on adultery after the intention of the government to make it illegal (Interview no. 1). Women's organizations reacted fiercely to this intention and could gain the support of both public opinion and the international organizations (Ilkkaracan 2008, 41). Guner highlights that the women organizations in Turkey have been specialized in their fields and they have connections with academicians and international women's organizations that

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works on the similar issues. Therefore, she maintains that they are ready and capable to use their knowledge and resources to create opponent public opinion against the discriminatory attempts and speeches towards women (Interview no. 1). Now that Turkey has a positive discrimination clause for women in the constitution, as well as CEDAW and EU conditionality, the women's organizations have more grounds to base their cause.

Even though there are opportunities in the national or international arena for women's organizations, there are also constraints. The limited financial support for civil society organizations in Turkey becomes a political constraint for the women's organizations. They assert that being institutionalized as a women's organization in Turkey have many prices. Guner from Flying Broom notes that trying to survive financially in the political arena makes them unable to do politics as much as they want. For example, she explains that it is very difficult to receive funding from the Culture and Tourism Ministry for their international women's movies festival. She claims that the ministry is meaner to the cultural activities of the women's organizations, in spite of the positive discrimination clause in the constitution. Guner argues that getting those funds gets easier with personal connections. This year, they were able to increase the fund for the festival, and receive a payment in advance to pay their debts from last year, thanks to a public prosecutor acquaintance who had connections in the ministry (Interview no. 1).

On the contrary, the Women's Center is the only NGO among the four that does not currently experience financial problems. It is because of the open international opportunity structure for war- and poverty-ridden region. There is an influx of foreign and international funds to the region from organizations that support democratization and development, and the Women's Center has benefited from this influx, as well. Most of their institutional expenses are currently covered by SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). They

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were covered by Open Society Institute (now Open Society Foundation) for four years before this. Also, some of the other international organizations and foreign foundations support the Women's Center, such as European Commission, Henrich Boll, Bernard Van Leer, and Friedrich Ebert foundations. The Women's Center also receives support from American, Canadian and Belgium embassies in Turkey for some of their projects, and also from Turkish Republic Prime Ministry State Planning Organization Social Support Program (SODES). SODES aims to fund development, education, social integration, culture and sports projects and local organizations in the Southeast region. They also receive funding from some of the biggest national private foundations for some of their projects, such as Sabanci or Eczacibasi Foundations. Another opportunity structure that is born out of a threat structure is the low living costs in the region due to the low development rates. Akkoc states that they are able to offer a monthly salary to the women, because they can be satisfied with the minimum wage. In 2011, net minimum wage is around 280 Euro in Turkey. The living costs in the East and Southeast regions are low, and Akkoc states the minimum wage is enough for the women.

Nevertheless, the Women's Center has its own specific political constraints. It faces threats more than the other NGOs due to the region it settles and works in. The guerilla war between Kurdish armed forces (the Kurdish Worker's Party, *PKK*) and Turkish army in the region imposes a big threat on Kurdish women and puts them in a very vulnerable position compared to other women in Turkey due to the high rates of police, army or PKK violence in the region (Diner and Toktas 2010, 48). Moreover, Akkoc explains that working as an independent organization in the region is very difficult. The state has accused them of collaborating with PKK, and PKK has accused them of collaborating with the state. Akkoc states that she received

threats for setting up the Women's Center, yet she has continued, as she has found demand and support from the women in the region.

Akkoc explains further that there is also a threat in the nature of the job that they are doing: saving women from violence. She explains that they are an open target for the woman's family, when a woman is missing, because one of the first places the women can go in the region is the Women's Center. At this point, Akkoc refers to the voluntary nature of their work. She claims that this type of work can only be done voluntarily, since there can be some dangers for the women who work for the Women's Center. Akkoc believes that the amateur soul and excitement can make this work possible.

Similarly, the Women's Platform Association has its own specific political opportunities and constraints. First of all, their positioning as in between Islam and women's rights benefits them in terms of popularity. "To be religious and to defend women's rights simultaneously makes you an Islamist feminist in Turkey, and you always get attention" Semiz remarks. She points out that due to their peculiar stance in Turkish politics; the press carries them to the news, and columns. For instance, when they criticize their own conservative circles, the press of the other circles, such as seculars, automatically supports them and gives them space in their own press agents. Because of this, Semiz states that they do not need to consult to any specific strategy to make their voices heard or to gain supporters. She complains that politics are done in this way in Turkey and adds that they do not like this situation. Nevertheless, she accepts that this situation has helped them to be known in the public opinion.

As a surprising fact, the majority government of the Islamist JDP since 2002 does not seem like it has created opportunities for the Women's Platform Association. The association criticizes the government for not being able to solve the headscarf issue for nine years while they

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have been in power. Semiz argues that they were patient with the JDP, as the party had to overcome many obstacles due to the secular camps in the country, such as the judiciary, military and the main opposition party. Among these were the "e-memorandum" by the military, and blocking attempts on the presidential nomination of party member Abdullah Gul by the opposition party, on the grounds that his wife wears headscarf in 2007; and the closure case against the JDP in the constitutional court in 2008 due to the party's alleged non-secular activities. Nevertheless, Semiz argues that the international pressures are enough for the JDP and other conservative parties to solve the headscarf problem, but they miss the opportunity.

Nevertheless, conservative women's movements are facing political difficulties in some other international arena. Increasing Islamophobia in Europe affects the conservative women's prospects in Turkey. The court decisions have banned veiling in state schools in several European countries in the name of securing secular practices (BBC 2004). This recent developments could harm the right-based framings of the Islamic women's movement in Turkey. Semiz claims that it was the Turkish officials who imported the bans to Europe. Turkish women with headscarves in Europe were told that even Turkey does not allow the headscarves in official public places, when the women applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to oppose the bans. Semiz claims that there are two reasons with respect to negative decisions of the ECHR for the women with headscarves. Firstly, the judge representatives of Turkey are generally people who are against the headscarves, and secondly the ECHR is getting misinformed about the situation in Turkey. Semiz points out that all of the schools and universities in Turkey are tied to the Higher Education Council of the state; therefore, even private universities have to abide by the headscarf ban. She compares this situation in Turkey to Europe: in Europe there are options for student to choose schools and universities if they want to get education with their headscarves, whereas in

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Turkey there is no option to opt out from the headscarf ban. However, Semiz believes that the Islamophobia in Europe can be overcome through dialogue and lobbying between European countries and countries which have dominantly Muslim populations. She argues that if the latter countries can develop a consistent discourse on human rights, the Islamophobia would diminish.

### 5.5 Organization and Networks

The women who met together in small, informal and decentralized groups in the 1980s, started to institutionalize in the 1990s. Flying Broom and KA.DER are within this stream that they have an organic connection with women's movements of the 1980s. The respondents of the three organizations - Flying Broom, KA.DER, and the Women's Platform Association that had an informal group experience before - argue that institutionalization has been beneficial in terms of being acknowledged in the political arena and regarded as a representative on women's issues; although, it has also brought financial responsibilities that might occasionally slow them down in producing politics (Interviews no.1, 2, 4).

All of the interviewees maintain that they work on a voluntary basis, even after institutionalization and more professionalization of their organizations. First of all, Guner from Flying Broom argues that they still work on a volunteer basis many of the times. Flying Broom has four registered employees and 3 volunteers in their main office in Ankara and it does not have branches. Guner says that they sometimes give trainings to the women in another city without including in a project, when there is a demand from the women. For these extra activities, either they pay the travel and accommodation expenses themselves, or the people who call them collect money and arrange accommodation such as offering them their own houses. Moreover, Guner explains that time to time they attend to the protests in front of the parliament by leaving

their work aside in the office (Interview no. 1). Therefore, she implies that working on women's rights in such an intense way cannot be done without being voluntary and willing.

Similarly, KA.DER has several paid employees in the main office in Istanbul, and the rest of the work is done voluntarily. It has seven branches and seven representative units across Turkey, and the people in the branches and representative units are not being paid by the main office. However, Gulfidan explains that they do not want to have more branches as it is difficult to coordinate them organizationally. Now, they open representative units instead of branches which do not have any legal liabilities. KA.DER opens representative units only after women who attend to the trainings voluntarily demand to represent KA.DER in their own localities. The branches and the representative units write their own projects and seek their own funding. Nevertheless, Gulfidan points out that they have decided to mainly focus on lobbying and advocacy through media and campaigns instead of expanding in the local. Furthermore, Gulfidan remarks that they have started to receive consultancy on strategic planning and institutionalization from a Danish organization. The reason for that is to learn the methods of attracting funds, and survive as a long termed organization. Nevertheless, Gulfidan points out that they do not want to lose the voluntary nature of their work style, and she explains that they have agreed with the Danish organization in preserving it.

In like fashion, Akkoc, from the Women's Center, states that they do not want to lose the voluntary nature of their work. In the main office in Diyarbakir and in the branches there are totally around 40 employees who get minimum wage (Interview no. 3). Besides that, there are near 200 volunteers who work for the Women's Center especially for the household visits. Akkoc explains that every volunteer has to attend consciousness raising groups and trainings about the principles of the organization before starting to engage with the activities. Akkoc argues that she

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is against the professionalization of the Center.  Accordingly, the Women's Center has strategies to prevent professionalization. The women who work in the projects and activities are not told that they can be awarded a monthly stipend for their contributions in the Women's Center. However, when the Women's Center observes that women work full-time on a regular basis in the Women's Center, then they are offered a stipend. Thus, the Women's Center ensures that people only who are willing to work for the women's cause end up working with them. Moreover, like KA.DER does, the Women's Center also received professional expertise in institutionalization by Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation in Istanbul during its set-up years (Arat 2008, 405). Furthermore, like KA.DER, after setting up branches in 23 provinces in East and Southeast region, Akkoc states that they do not want to add new branches, as it gets difficult to organize them all. They continue to give trainings and facilitate conscious raising groups when there are demands from other cities, but these groups do not get institutionalized under the Women's Center's name.

Similarly, Semiz from the Women's Platform Association, explains that turning into an association from the platform has not changed their voluntary work style. She maintains that they keep working on a voluntary basis without giving any salary to women in their office in Ankara. They do not have any branches.

Since they work on a voluntary basis, they have to collect donations and membership fees, and search for sponsors in order to pay the project expenses and monthly expenses of the office, and paid employees. However, they mention that monthly expenses such as rent, electricity and water cannot be included in the project budget. Gulfidan, from KA.DER, explains that currently they have about 1000 members who pay membership fees regularly. The fee is around 2.5 €per month. They have sanctions to members who do not pay their fees, such as not

allowing them to take part in the general board. When they need a bigger financial contribution, their businesswomen members donate money or contribute in kind, such as building the library or kitchen in the main office. For their TV advertisements and billboards, they have agreed with advertisement agencies for free. Gulfidan recalls that they had to make a lot of effort to convince the managers that this campaign will be beneficial for women. To their luck, the advertisement agencies got advertisement prizes for the billboards, and after that the agencies themselves have wanted to work with KA.DER voluntarily. Similarly, the Women's Platform Association receives membership fees from their members and small contributions from people who attend to the hobby classes in order to cover office expenses such as the rent, electricity and water. On the contrary, the Women's Center currently does not experience financial problems due to the availability of national, international and foreign funds for the region as explained earlier.

Guner, from Flying Broom, discusses that their financial resources are mainly the state and embassy funds, although they are also very limited. Moreover, she adds that they cannot get much support from the EU lately (Interview no. 1). Similarly, Gulfidan from KA.DER complains that either it is almost impossible to find funding in Turkey, or that they could not reach any institution that gives funding. She states that they receive funding mainly from the international and foreign civil democratic organizations, especially organizations from Netherlands and Sweden in the last ten years. Although they accept outside funding, Gulfidan stresses that they put conditions to the funders in terms of the independence of their projects. They write the projects themselves without manipulations (Interview no. 2).

Democracy within the women's organizations is also a discussed issue in the literature (della Porta 2003, 57). It is known that many women's organizations in history opposed hierarchical structures unlike male dominated organizations, and they have built more

participatory organizations that the decision making are more egalitarian (Squires 2007, 4). Similarly, although they have centralized structures, KA.DER, the Women's Center and the Women's Platform Association try to practice more participatory methods in their organizations. For example, KA.DER and the Women's Platform Association have rotational presidency system. In KA.DER, members can only serve for maximum 2 terms (4 years) in the general board. In the Women's Platform Association, the chairwomen change approximately in every year, in order to prevent identification of the organization with few people's names and to share the responsibilities of the management.

The Women's Center has also strategies to prevent the hierarchy, although it does not have a rotational general board system. For example, in the consciousness raising groups that they organize in the provinces, they call some women as group facilitators, but not leaders in order to ensure equality among women. Moreover, Akkoc claims that the women in the Women's Center branches are free to write their own projects and decide on activities, as long as they follow the principles of the organization. To overcome the hierarchical structure, Akkoc explains that they set up an online regional network. The branches send their ideas and plans about their projects, and any other branches are free to give feedback on the plan. Akkoc states that the main office in Diyarbakır does not impose anything to the branches, unless they notice something against the Women's Center principles. Nevertheless, the Women's Center and Flying Broom have long been associated and identified with their current chairwomen and also founders, Akkoc and Guner respectively. This situation raises questions of sustainability of the organizations in the future years, and democracy within the organizations.

Lastly, Sidney Tarrow argues that social movements build on cultural affinities and interpersonal networks (Tarrow 2011, 119). Similarly, women in KA.DER reach the target

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women for their projects mostly using their personal networks. Gulfidan remarks that the headquarters of the political parties might sometimes be insensitive to KA.DER's call of their women's members. Therefore, they mostly reach women with their own personal networks in political parties.

# Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this last chapter, I summarize the findings and the contribution of the thesis; discuss the theoretical and empirical limitations of it, and open a discussion for future research.

Throughout the thesis, I have asked under what conditions women's organizations act in the political system in Turkey. More specifically, I have questioned four women's organizations in terms of the framings they use, repertoires of actions they employ, political opportunities and threats under which they work, and organizational structures they have. This thesis contributes to the literature on women's movements in Turkey by presenting a comparative analysis of four independent women's organizations in terms of their contextual and characteristic aspects from the 1990s to today. It shed a small light on 'how' some of the most famous women's organizations act in the backstage of the gender politics in Turkey. The overall analysis shows that four of the most known women's organizations in Turkey - Flying Broom, KA.DER, the Women's Center and the Women's Platform Association - have some common trends and differences in their contextual experiences and characteristic aspects.

First of all, all of the organizations frame their causes with references to *human rights*, *women's rights*, *citizenship rights* and *internationally accepted norms on gender equality*. This shows that a considerably diverse variety of women in Turkey benefit from the international norms on women's rights and democratization. It also shows that these organizations strategically refer to these ideals, as Turkey has to abide the international agreement it has signed and comply them as a condition for its aspiration to become a member of the EU. In this respect, it looks like there are three important actors that define gender politics in Turkey: the women's organizations, the state and the international audience that Turkey needs to please.

The organizations also share some common perspectives related to their interactions with each other, with the state and feminism. They all believe in *cooperation of women* in Turkey for women's common problems, and there are positive actions taken for this aim, such as the recent support of KA.DER and other secular women's organizations for MPs with a headscarves Moreover, the collaborative platforms that women's organizations have set up for changing legal framework is promising, and it is important to note that all of the four organizations attends to these platforms time to time. All of them see the whole collection of women's organizations as *one pushing force* in Turkey in changing or introducing laws and circulars; and tracking the implementation of these laws, and circulars. Furthermore, they all believe that women's movements in Turkey need to *cooperate with the state,* and they find the self-confidence and current knowledge level of women's movements as the key answers to maintain a balanced relationship with it. Receiving ministry funds, and when necessary maintaining good relations with the government and collaborating with public and state institutions are some of the main patterns of the relationship of the organizations with the state. Moreover, all of them associate themselves with *feminism*, although the Women's Center and the Women's Platform Association prefer to *localize or reinterpret feminism* according to the demands of their constituency.

Secondly, their foremost forms of action are conventional, which include *lobbying, advocacy, and petitioning* by especially communicating to decision makers directly and using media and internet resources to reach a bigger audience. In that respect, they all define themselves as *policy and opinion institutions* that advocate for a cause rather than a charity or help organization for women. However, as a second repertoire, they all set up *projects* to communicate with the women directly, which is also a conventional act. The conventional acts are helpful to communicate with the decision makers; however, they can be limited in terms of

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drawing public attention to women's problems. Nevertheless, they also employ disruptive and innovative actions as well, such as disruptive TV and billboard advertisements, street protests and demonstrations in front of the parliament building. They also time to time issue press statements with harsh criticisms to decisions makers. Furthermore, the feminist language that the Women's Center and the Women's Platform Association use in their press statements disrupts both their communities and the stereotypes that other people have against the women in their communities.

Similarly, the organizations share some common political opportunities and constraints, although the Women's Center and the Women's Platform Association have their own separate opportunity and constraint sets. First of all, all have experienced the *ratification of the CEDAW* and *EU-accession process* positively both in terms of funding and realization of legal changes that they had been asking for in favor of women. The EU process has increased the funding available to women's organizations. Nevertheless, two of them experience *hardships in finding funds* time to time, as a side effect of institutionalization and lack of available consistent funding for women in Turkey. Most of the funds are from international and foreign pro-democracy institutions. On the contrary, the Women's Center has more opportunity in terms funding, due to more available funds for development of the Southeast region of Turkey. However, they have more trouble due to the ongoing war and stand as an independent organization due to the political polarization in the region. the Women's Platform Association, on the other hand, benefit from their peculiar political positioning in Turkey as 'Islamist feminists' in terms of being popular in the media and conveying their messages with less effort. However, they are also under the threat of Islamophobia in Europe and lawsuit decisions that may serve as a model in Turkey.

As a common experience of the organizations, the importance of *personal networks* is worth attention. They have found personal ties and networks useful in attracting funds and

sometimes reaching target women. Importance of personal factors and networks might imply a lack of a sustained institutional framework for women's civil society organizations in Turkey where they could interact according to the norms and rules. Without such sustained norms and rules, the women's organizations have to consult to their own means and networks. Furthermore, all of them assert that they work on the *volunteer* basis and some has strategies in order not to lose the voluntary nature of their work, even after institutionalization. Three of them have also strategies to create more participatory organizations such as the rotational presidency or avoiding hierarchical naming. However, two of them have had the same chairwomen for years, and this raises questions of *sustainability* for those organizations in the future.

Nevertheless, the thesis has limitations. First of all, although Flying Broom, KA.DER, the Women's Center, and the Women's Platform Association represent some of the important polarities of the women's organizations as feminist, Islamic and Kurdish women, they do not represent the full diversity of women's organizations in Turkey. There are also significant groups of radical feminists, social feminists, or radical seculars that actively work. Moreover, since the four organizations are among the most known ones in Turkey, their experiences cannot be generalized for local or national organizations that have smaller scope of activities. Moreover, as another empirical limit, I could interview only one person from each organization, therefore my main empirical data can be limited in terms of scope and depth.

Furthermore, the thesis also has theoretical limitations since I have only used the framework that analyzes contextual and characteristic dimensions of the organizations that mobilize them into action. However, there is also a literature that analyzes the mechanisms and processes in social movements, which can be regarded as a one step deeper analysis (Tarrow 2011). This literature looks for the mechanisms and processes within the link between the

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contextual and characteristic dimensions and the action (Tarrow 2011). Mechanisms and processes include but not limited to diffusion, scale shift, facilitation, exhaustion, mobilization, radicalization, institutionalization etc. (Tarrow 2011; McAdam et al. 2001). Although I touch upon some of these mechanisms and processes during the Chapter Two and Chapter Six, they are not systematically analyzed due to the scope of this thesis. For this type of research, there would be also need to interview people who attend to the activities, projects, and demonstrations of the organizations to understand the mechanisms such as mobilization and exhaustion of the movement. Therefore, there is also need for further analysis on women's organizations and movements in Turkey with a detailed and systematic look on these mechanisms and processes.

Nevertheless, analyzing 'how' four women's organizations have participated in the gender politics helps us to think on the current situation and future of women's rights and women's organizations in Turkey. Women's organizations who have contributed to the development of women's rights in Turkey have some financial problems, and some of them need sustained financial support from the state in order to stop resorting to projects to make their voices heard. Seeing the positive role of women's organizations in recent Turkish history, and knowing there are still many areas that women lag behind and are discriminated against, I find sustained funding of the women's organizations as an important necessity. Right as it might be, this situation brings the question of civil society and accountability, and the compromise between voluntariness and professionalization. Besides that, there is also sustainability problem of some of the important women's organizations.

First of all, there is a compromise between working voluntarily and professionally for women's organizations. Voluntariness proves the sincerity of women's organizations in their advocacy of women's rights and may help them mobilize more people. On the other hand,

professionalization may help the organizations reach what they demand easier, build new tactics and strategies and have more financial and organizational resources. However, professionalization may also carry a risk of moving away from cause-orientation towards profit-orientation (Diner and Toktas 2010, 54). Three of the organizations I interviewed face this dilemma between staying voluntary and being more efficient with professionalization.

Secondly, although civil society is argued to represent people's interests better as they are independent of state's ideological influences and coercive power, there are problems of accountability in civil society organizations due to the lack of control mechanisms within it (Kymlicka 2002, 248).  Although, concerning women's issues, it is right to say that women's organizations represent and defend women's rights better than others when we look at the literature in Turkey, there might be still some problems in terms of projects that women's organizations undertake. The literature also signals to the increasing 'project-feminism' in Turkey especially after increasing international funding, and questions the accountability and inefficiency in some of these projects (Diner and Toktas 2010, 54). Therefore, we need to look for possible mechanisms that help civil society to be more accountable.

Moreover, sustainability of the women's organizations is also important to carry the works of the organizations for future generations, as they are one of the most important actors who defend women's rights in Turkey. Although personal efforts of the founders have proved to be very successful in case of Flying Broom and the Women's Center, there is need to consider the future of the organizations.  In this respect, the rotational presidency system is worth attention, as it enables more women to get experienced in handling women's organizations. On the other hand,. Therefore, studying organizational structures of these organizations further is crucial to build more successful and sustainable organizations.

All in all, all four organizations represent the interests and demands of a segment of women in Turkey. Their existence shows some of the depth and diversity of women's problems in Turkey. We need women's organizations in Turkey that voluntarily demand women-friendly changes in society and track the women's problems, but at the same time that are professional enough to strategize better methods for women in Turkey. We see that women's movements continue to impact the gender politics in Turkey in the form of institutionalized women's organizations. In this context, understanding 'how' they work would help us to make them even more successful in defending women's rights.

# Appendices

*Table 1*

| Table 1 - Summary of the Analysis | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Flying Broom** | **KA.DER** | **The Women's Center** | **The Women's Platform Association** |
| **Main goal** | Building communication and networks between women's organizations | Supporting woman candidates in formal politics | Fighting against domestic violence | Fighting against headscarf bans and masculine Islamic discourse |
| **Headquarters** | Ankara | Istanbul | Diyarbakir | Ankara |
| **Framings** | • Empowering women's organizations to empower women<br>• International gender equality norms | • Politics of presence<br>• Rights<br>• Utility<br>• Positive Discrimination / Quotas<br>• Real Democracy<br>• Equal representation | • Violence in any reason as unacceptable<br>• Domestic violence as the source of all violence<br>• Mother tongue as a human right<br>• Kurdish problem as violence against women; forced, early and kin marriages; and poverty | • Against masculine Islamic discourse<br>• Against secular state rules that limit their participation to public life<br>• Headscarf as an individual right and a citizenship right |
| **Repertoires of Actions** | • Conventional: lobbying, advocacy, petitioning, projects.<br>• Innovative: Bringing different women together, movie festival, their name and logo<br>• Disruptive: protests, and demonstrations | • Conventional: lobbying, advocacy, projects.<br>• Disruptive and innovative: TV and billboard advertisements | • Conventional: lobbying, advocacy, projects<br>• Innovative and disruptive: A very feminist and independent voice in their press statements in the turmoil of war and politics. | • Conventional: lobbying, advocacy, projects.<br>• Disruptive: Demonstrations and protests<br>• Independent voice in their press statements and demonstrations |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Political Opportunities** | • the CEDAW and the EU accession process<br>• Reactionary discourses of government | • the CEDAW and the EU accession process<br>• Reactionary discourses of government | • the CEDAW and the EU accession process<br>• Available funds for the region<br>• Low cost of living in the region | • the CEDAW and the EU accession process<br>• Support from anti-Islamist and secular media |
| **Political Constraints** | • Unavailable national funds for women | • Unavailable national funds for women | • Guerilla war in the Southeastern Turkey | • Islamophobia in Europe |
| **Organization and Network Structures** | • Voluntary with several paid employees<br>• No branches | • Voluntary with several paid employees<br>• Branches and representatives in 14 cities<br>• Receives external professional expertise<br>• Rotational administration | • Voluntary with several paid employees<br>• Branches in 23 cities<br>• Received external professional expertise | • Completely voluntary<br>• No branches.<br>• Rotational administration |
| **Collaboration with State** | Positive/Liberal | Positive/Liberal | Positive/Liberal | Positive/Liberal |
| **Approach to Feminism** | Positive | Positive | Positive, localizing | Mostly positive, but localizing |

***Topic Guide for the Interviews***

- History and aim of the institution

- Projects, activities and advertising activities of the institution

- Their stance in Turkish politics

- Methods to reach women

- Organizational structure

- Advantages and disadvantages of institutionalization from their own institution's experiences

- Women constituency to whose interests and problems the institution address, or women to whom the institution aims to reach

- The institution's stance towards the relationship between the women and the state (for example, women inside or outside the state or both)

- The capacity of civil society in representing women's rights and interests (for example, compared to the capacity of the parliament)

- The interactions with other institutions such as state, national and international civil society, municipalities, and private sector. The collaborations with those institutions, and obstacles the institution faces with some of them.

- International pressures: The effects of the international connections such as the European Union accession process and the the CEDAW partnership of Turkey on the women's substantive representation in Turkey

*Example Transcript*

**Interview with Fezal Gulfidan - April 18, 2011 – KA.DER Office, Istanbul[3]**

*THE CONTEXT / PROBLEMS*

*97 set up. şirin tekeli led this flag. zülal kılıç, gönül dinçer, academicians founded. women have problems and the solution to these is dependent on the decisions made by political powers in parliament. %4 attandance then. by women to fill this gap between %50 and %4. increasing women's representation.*

*education is not that important, if you can represent the local problems. if they choose you. women do not have to finish 2 universities. there are experienced women in the local like business, ngo or education. and firstly, you limit the women to put their experience to contributing the country. with only men's brain we can develop the country. this is time consuming for us. this is misery. secondly, (shared experiences of women) men cannot represent women. example violence, the men cannot show the same sensitivity. this sensitivity should be felt or may be a women who experiences this can take the issue more seriously, present solutions, propose bill. thirdly, environment: women is birth giver like the nature.*

*besides the representation issue, we believe that women's inclusion to politics will make a differnce. this can be kaders perspective as well, we are also evolving, in the past we only worked for womens representation but now women friednly budget, environment, energy issues are our interest areas.*

*AIMS / TYPE OF THE ORGANIZATION*

*telling gender equality  and indoctrinate women about gender equality, increasing awareness. mainly being elected to parliamnet and local governments.*

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[3] This is not a full transcription of the interview. Full transcriptions in Turkish with several English comments can be presented upon request.

*2. assigned places: burocrats (no women)→ mps , being experiences in state administration. parties choose you.*

*3. violence: depression, decreasing self confidence→ no chance for politics.*

*4. citizenship consious raising*

**TARGET WOMEN**

*composition: women who is in politics, women's branches, managements; interested in politics but in burocracy. they support women's branches: politics is learned by doing politics.*

*women who worked for years in the party generally: middle aged women, less educated-high school or less, but sensitive to sociatal issues. they should be educated and pilotted.*

*young women work in other business, they are shown as candidates by the party automatically. they can be more demanding for their personal post normally.*

*there is no work by kader to encourage the women into politics.*

**MEMBERSHIP PROFILE**

*she is political party member . member since 2001, 4 years board member*

**ORGANIZATION**

*rotation system : max 2 terms, 4 years*

*volunteer organization, it was 2000 members , but now around  1000. they discard people who don't pay fees. 5 lira monthly. if they don't pay they cant get into general board (genel kurul) first 60 lira.*

*when we need something bigger, we ask from our businesswomen members. financial or*

*these are our only income. besides that we write projects.*

*employees get paid per project.*

**RELATIONS WITH OTHER WOMEN**

*headscarf: everything is evolving. we saw for years there are many headscarved women who wants to do politics. we are in equal stance to headscarf, kurd, alevi etc. they should do politics*

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*as well, they have demands rightfully. she can select but cant be elected? how it will be done is not our issue! but we defend her right to be elected. in a democratic country should be done. there is only a içtüzük problem. the parties can change this.*

*we work with other women's ngos: we are in collaboration and this makes us stronger. they supported our 275 women campaign.*

### RELATIONS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

*we are in equal stance to every political party.*

*ın turkey it is almost nothing that gives fund. but there are international democratic organizaitons that can give fund. recent years netherlands and sweden . that support democratizations. but we have conditions: they dont have any say in our projects! we prepare them ourselves!*

*parties: all parties take us seriously now. mostly positive.*

*women's branches: we try to teach them that they should take a firm stance towards their parties, if they are not listed. the women candidates are transferred from outside.*

*government: güldal, fatma şahin, no problem with our communications. maybe its because our cause or because the women's movement got stronger in recent years. its not 275 as we said it, but there is a positive approach!*

*municipalities: the weakest: very less women. academician friends help with our interactions with municipalities, because we cannot even find a role model in local: like a mayor, city council president etc. but our effort is high. next year municipality elections, next 2 years education program is with local governments.*

*we have communication but not collaboration with other ngos or trade unions. ex. democratic openness, or new constitution: little national parliaments by ngos! we are invited there.*

*ksgm: 2 meetings in a year but nothing else*

*kasb: in one meeting there is no cure for our problem. it is weaker then the previous term. maybe because kavaf. there was a miscommunication between us or maybe she cant leave party ideology. she was complaining about the media. guldal better communications.*

### REPRESENTATIVE CLAIMS

*civil institutions represent better because there is not enough women in state that can represent women's voice. the women, party poltics, male dominated patriarchal zihniyet so they are limited. number should increase becasue the people who understand this problem will increase. more balanced and more representation. other outside women's ngos can clearly state this independently of party ideologies, pressure or limitations,+ without "if I say this, it will sound like the other party, so I shouldnt".*

*there should be cooperation between women from different parties: our whole aim is this. to do that we need to be inside the state numerically and with an evolving perception – zihniyet.*

### PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN AND THE STATE

*muhalifiz. memnun değiliz artan sayıdan. devleti daha duyarlı hale getirelebilmek için muhalif olarak bağırmamız gerekiyor. hükümetle ilişkiler iyi. ikisi bir arada olmalı.*

### STRATEGIES

- *how to reach women targets: fax, phone, email reaching women members of parties; our own network from our parties – imece usulu – because the genel merkez may not be sensitive to women issues. so we use our personal ties!*
- *strategic planning – they get consultance from Denmark! to be more stronger institutionally, to know methods of existence. but we don't compromise our volunteeriness.  they accepted.*
- *we discussed: should we increase our members in the local, or should we do lobbying through media ? the first is difficult. we mostly do now lobbying and advocacy, through media, campaigns, press meetings. good relations with government, other ngos and the media.*
- *using media: billboards  - tvs. 275 women is a philosophy and behind it there is democratic transformation. we get help from advertising agencies, by voluntariness. we told ourselves to them, this is important... they said we will do something good, they got prize with moustache campaign. so now they are more happy. they trust the name and the cause of the kader. completely volunteer.*

### ACTIVITIES

*politics schools: core courses: gender equality, conflict resolution, leadership, campaigning: traveling schools. 7 areas, 7 central cities, we collect closeby women to these citites. 5 days in a*

*hotel. women get together from different parties, they focus on common problems women besides their idealogical differnces. 20-25 women for being interactive. 2-3 women every pary.*

*citizenship consious raising: teaching women how to use their rights, giving petition to court etc. with UNDEP.*

***PARTICULAR AIMS***

*quotas are a mean. but there are reactions from politicians to us, excuses. we said then positive discrimantion. %30 critical mass. som e parties applied chp %30, bdp 40, dp %10. there is no sanction.*

*it should be in the law of political parties... so ysk wont accept the list, and if they are very low.*

*equal representation is an important notion and target. its also about minorities and ethnic... its about democratization.*

***SUCCESSES***

*they set up women men equality commission with other organizations.*

*shadow reports*

***OBSTACLES :*** *IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL RELATIONS*

***INSTITUTIONALIZATION EXPERIENCE:*** *Finance: Money from projects, for 10 years good opportunity*

*we are still a volunteer association, I don't know if are institutionalized yet. but when we get bigger we find things more difficult. we will get some assistance: how to find funds, methods.*

***OPPORTUNITY /THREAT STRUCTURE:*** *EU PROCESS& the CEDAW: now positive discrimination is in the constitution. even though they are not implemented yet. there should be women-men equality councils as ministery declared. women trace these... every six months the state prepares a report, but there is also shadow report by women. eu takes care of this report. it becomes transparent. new york women conference in summer. womens ngos go, but this year it was mainly from state institutions. it is like mehter, 2 steps forward, 1 step back. so civil society is necessary to tell the other side.*

*European women's lobby we are membership and Turkish secretary is by us.*

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**List of Interviews**[4]

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Interview no. 2. 2011. *Personal interview with Fezal Gulfidan from KA.DER, on April 18, 2011, in Istanbul.*

Interview no. 3. 2011. *Personal interview with Nebahat Akkoc from the the Women's Center, on April 20, 2011 in Diyarbakir.*

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[4] Any errors, misrepresentations, or omissions rest with me.

Interview no. 4. 2011. *Personal interview with Nesrin Semiz from the Women's Platform Association, on April 14, 2011 in Ankara.*