PERSPECTIVES ON THE EVOLUTION OF FEMINISM THROUGH MODERNIZATION AND ISLAM IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to give a different perspective to the most crucial theoretical elements for feminist movements in Turkey. The history of feminist movements is divided into three periods: the late Ottoman, which began in the 1920s as a state project; the long silence period, which started in the first period of 1930s and spread throughout society until 1980 military coup; and the second wave period starting in the 1980s which was a very complex period where women had a chance to increase the impact of their actions and voices. Although women gained chances to vote, education and property rights during 1930s, they began the movement to call attention to their rights and freedoms. While there is already an impressive collection of research regarding the status of women in Turkey, this article aims to give an overview of feminist movements dealing with reproduction focused on a combination of judicial, social, and political concepts.

Keywords: Feminism, Feminism and Modernism for the Turkish Woman, Islamist Feminism, Evolution of Feminism in Turkey

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TÜRKİYE'DE MODERNLEŞME VE İSLAM'IN FEMİNİZM GELİŞİMİNE BAKIŞ AÇILARI

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de feminist hareketlerin en önemli teorik değerlerine farklı bir bakış açısı ile yaklaşmaktadır. Feminist hareketlerin tarihi üç döneme ayrılır: devlet projesi olarak 1920'lerde başlayan son Osmanlı dönemi, 1930'ların ilk döneminde hız kazanan, 1980 askeri darbesine kadar uzanan ve toplum genelinde yayılan uzun sessizlik dönemi ile kadınların ses ve eylem şanslarını arttırmak için 1980'lerde başlayan siyasi karmaşa sürecinin yaşandığı ikinci dalga feminizm hareketleri. 1930'larda kadınlar her ne kadar oy kullanma, eğitim ve mülkiyet haklarına kazanım sağlasalar dahi hak ve özgürlük kısıtlarına dikkat çekmek için bu harekete başlamışlardır. Cinsiyet normları farklı kadın grupları için farklıdır; geleneksel ve modern değerler düzeni korumak adına içiçe geçerken, feminist hareketler böyle karmaşık bir ortamda birden çok soruna değinemez. Türkiye'de kadınların durumuna ilişkin oldukça çarpıcı araştırmalar olduğu halde, bu çalışma yeniden üretim ve evrensellik açısından hukuki, sosyal ve siyasi kavramların birleşimine odaklanarak feminist hareketler için en önemli kuramsal unsurları değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Feminizm, Türk Kadını için Feminizm ve Modernleşme, Islam Feminizmi, Türkiye'de Feminizm Evrimi

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INTRODUCTION

This paper begins by examining the triangle formed between feminism, Islam, and modernization in the context of Turkey. Long considered an ideal representative of the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity that illustrative of life in the Middle East, Turkish society has gone through more major changes than its neighbors. Thanks to the close proximity to Europe and a strong Islamic influence, the culture is a true amalgam of Islam in modern times, featuring multiple ideological groups defined along the lines of modernity and Islam - each with its unique take on feminism. Following the military coup in the 1980s, the feminist movement became increasingly popular, propped up by a largely secular inclination in the general public. However, the same period also saw the rise of multiple political forces. Soon, clear lines emerged between two schools of thought, the Kemalists and traditionalists. In this article, positions from both sides will be compared, and their relevance to addressing the issues women face will be discussed. This paper will examine existing research, propose further action, and point out new avenues for research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dikeçligil (1998) has been defined the process of modernism as "a paradigm that surrounds democracy in politics, capitalism in economy, positivism in science, and gives a name to the collection of all these." The roots of modernism can be traced back to enlightenment: a process of separating the present from the past, and moving from tradition towards modern culture and lifestyle. The process originated largely with the first major shift of humankind during the eighteenth century Industrial Revolution: the movement from agricultural communities to an industrial society. As Kongar (1995:87) puts it, modernization includes a complete transformation of ideals towards a common standard set by Western societies. The term is also more liberally thrown around with pride when describing the evolution of non-Western cultures, with the main proposition being that every society will eventually share similar characteristics and come together under a common universal character. Giddens (1990:12-13) directly related the process of Westernization - the process of adopting Western culture in various aspects of life - with modernization. He goes on to describe modernity as "institutional transformations that have their

origins in the West." While it may be linked to decreasing religiosity, eminent researchers have maintained the importance of religion in maintaining organization in society. Bellah (1973:3-4) expressed the importance of religion in maintaining solidarity and linked it with a critical role in society - providing the basic structure for control, purpose, communication, and reaffirming social norms.

Trud-Nereid (2012:71) indicates that Islam was considered the main reason for Turkey's "backwardness" and reluctance to adopt a more European lifestyle by Kemalists. Moreover, the Caliphate, a symbol of collective identity, was sacrificed in order to catch up with Western civilization, rendering the state as a largely secular one. While this change may have initially only been limited to the constitution, there is no doubt that its after effects slowly but steadily made their way into all facets of society. The author also relates the article "Domesticating Modernity", which tells a revealing story of Turkey in the 1930s. This period saw Muslim voices being largely silenced in favor of adopting Western practices. By replacing Turkey's old identity, which was associated with the Caliphate, a new republic with modern political, social, and cultural systems was brought into being.

However, after foundation of the Republic, the built-up exemplary women were driven forward to the front lines. By using the image of "Republican woman", a dual structure was formed among women, notably modernity was emphasized through newly adopted dress code. It might be useful to take a look at reform movements associated with modernism in order to better understand Islamic feminism, existence of which is currently being debated in Turkey. As a matter of fact, the point underscored by Islamic feminist movement and feminist movement in current sense usually revolves around the issue of headscarf. Having a distinctive place in global feminism, the Turkish section of Islamic feminism should be further investigated since the adjective "feminist" seems to be an epithet attributed by the media, rather being something adopted by Islamist women in themselves. The rights and benefits provided for women by laicism and modernization have been advocated by progressive and laic ideologies for long years, while Islamist thought in Turkey currently sees these two elements of modern life – laicism and modernity – as causes of women abasement, and tries to mobilize women by making

use of this discourse. In fact, whether or not the feminist movement developing in Turkey in recent years has certain parallelisms with Islamist movement calls attention of social scientists (Acar, 1998). Another development is growing number of local organizations and proliferation of Women's Rights Associations (Bora and Günal, 2002; İlkkaracan, 2003).

The research on Islamist women that departs from acceptance of the existence of social differentiation among women in Turkey exemplifies the challenges experienced by women in a retrospective perspective. The best-known contribution is Feride Acar's book chapter on Islamist women. The paper included in this book which predicates on oral history interviews with university students wearing headscarf touches upon the differences apparent in the past and present. She analyzes the impact of Islamist ideology on the assurance provided for women and modernization in the light of interviews with students (1991, p. 297). Adopting an interpretative and interrogative approach to relationship between the women wearing headscarf and modernity, Göle (2004: 81-82) seeks to analyze the meaning system of Islamist women's movement. Employing in-depth interviews and group interviews, this research provides a pioneering source in terms of development of feminist movement in our country in the sense that it fictionalizes women profile and that it places experience to the core of historical and social analysis. Another researcher to be emphasized is Durakbaşa (1988) who elaborates on the alternative feminism project of Kemalist discourse and the relationship of Halide Edib and women of the Republic period with that discourse in her paper 'The Formation of Kemalist Women Identity in Republican Turkey' and her book entitled 'Halide Edib: Turkish Modernization and Feminism'. In her book, she points out the fact that the women problem in Turkey was formulated at the time of a national awakening, and therefore gender related issued were discussed within such a national framework. She also states that it could be much easier for her to develop empathy with women's movement in the West, which has brought forward social welfare, education and public assistance to women in public space, clarifying that she has not warmed to the acts of militant feminist movement that supports the female gender's struggle against male gender.

HOW THE WOMEN OF ISLAM ARE DEFINED BY LITERATURE?

Islamic references through the Holy Book, Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) establish women's role both in public and private life. A large number of references depend directly on the interpretation; and due to a larger number of men being involved in the public sphere and education sectors after Islam; most interpretations support a patriarchal viewpoint. Islam does differentiate between the sexes, but those differences are largely based on biological aspects and their individual roles and responsibilities in society.

On the other hand, these same interpretations also allow for women's participation in education, business, employment, and other public activities. Islamic interpretations also follow the patriarchal system for economic reasons; men are charged with the responsibility of taking care of the women in their household. Women are considered precious and men are charged with looking after their needs and treating them well. One of the major responsibilities placed on Muslim women is looking after their family affairs and raising children to be good Muslims.

Since the 1990s, there has been an ongoing debate about the way women are treated in Islam and their position in Muslim populations around the world. Islam within itself relies on the interpretations of the Quran and Hadith, which consequently lead to the establishment of traditions. The Quran preaches equal treatment of both, and there are clear references to establishing women's rights - including access to education, healthcare, and freedom of marriage - in the Hadith. Most of these rules were formulated directly based on the perspective of Arab society. As indicated in Quran[2] 'I shall not lose sight of the labor of any of you who labors in my way, be it man or woman; each of you is equal to the other.' Narrations from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) require all Muslims, men and women, to

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[2] Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali in 2010 from Arabic to English.

seek education and valuable life skills. Al-Tirmidhi (2016) in this regard quotes one of the narrations, as 'seeking knowledge is a duty of every Muslim, man or woman.'

Dodge (2003) maintains that Islam commands all of its believers to gain knowledge. While local cultural influences may dictate otherwise, Islam mandates education, including secular or practical education that can contribute to society. When it comes to the Islamic assertion that men and women are not equal, is it from a purely biological standpoint. Modern research tells us that women are biologically stronger and can withstand more pain and disease than their male counterparts. Additionally, Islam also maintains that men and women are ideally suited to different roles in society. Beyond that, Islam fully recognizes the importance of women's participation in economic, educational, and social activities—and openly encourages it. One element that may seem alien to external observers is the Quranic mention of loyalty and obedience for women; this is not be taken as a sign of subordination, rather it is a trait most valued in the Arab world that lies in harmony with the Islamic perception of women being symbols of purity and honor. Furthermore, Quranic verses clearly underline how Islam interprets women in Quran as "It is He (God) who created you out of one living entity, and out of it brought into being its mate, so that man might incline [with love] towards woman (Quran, 7:189). The rights of the wives [with regard to their husbands] are equal to the [husband's rights] over them [with regard to divorce] (Quran, 2:228). And consort with your wives in kindness; for if you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something, which God has made a source of abundant good (Quran, 4:19)[3]."

Islamist women maintain that the Quran's rulings should be interpreted according to each society; and ancient interpretations were based on the practices prevalent in ancient Arabian society. Islamists point out the direct encouragement of monogamy in the Quran; and maintain the polygamy was permitted as a possible way out for taking care of women and families who had suffered the loss of male members

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[3] In Pure Matrimony. "What are the wife's rights on her husband and his rights on his wife? Muslim Marriage Guide. Last modified November 28, 2011. http://www.muslimmarriageguide.com/what-are-the-wifes-rights-on-her-husband-and-his-rights-on-his-wife/

during conflicts. Furthermore, Islamist women consider rulings regarding inheritance; which seem to favor men as appropriate dictates for that period considering men had the responsibility of looking after women's needs.

Those thinkers who consider religion, notably Islam as an impediment to liberation of women, have discussed feminists and their situation. Islamic feminism always meets the same obstacle: the idea that considers Islam as an absolute fact which is dogmatic and sexist in essence, and on the other hand sees feminism as a role model of the Western world representing modernity. Ali (2014) offers an alternative to the feminist point of view that rejects the possibility of integrating the fight for gender equality with that for Islam, as well as to Islamist conservatism that prevents renovation and dynamization of Islamic thinking and reinterpretation of religious knowledge and authority in favor of women. As a matter of fact, in the societies where Islamic reformism is defended, feminism did not emerge in the wake of, above all it did not follow in the footsteps of European feminism though it was impressed by Western thoughts. Rather, it emerged simultaneously with its Western peers, manifesting itself with an anti-imperialist and nationalist attitude. As political Islam developed, a set of feminist organizations supported Islamic modernity, enabling restatement of traditional Islam differently their own words and reinterpretation of religious knowledge by women.

Women in the Late Ottoman Empire

Since it started in 1453, the Ottoman Empire grew to become one of the largest in the world. Ruled by Sharia law, the Empire left remarkable effects on Turkey, including a focus on adopting modernity based on Western developments. According to Cizre-Sakallıoğlu (1996) this included administrative, legislative, and educational reforms to better integrate itself with Europe in the nineteenth century. However, conservative Muslim scholars opposed these reforms because they felt they would have a negative impact on the power and authority of the Empire. Sirman (1989) examined the status of women during that period and concluded that segregation of sexes, polygamy, arranged marriage, and divorce conditions that favored men were prevalent during this time. These obstacles, linked to an Empire

founded on Islamic principles, made it seemingly impossible to award equal rights to women so they could participate freely in public life and make independent decisions.

If the workforce at that time was examined, women were already working in minor roles at factories and as domestic servants in private homes. With education reforms brought about by modern bureaucrats in the Ottoman Empire, women's access to education improved and they found a larger place in society. This included active involvement in the textile sector, business, charity work, and social organizations. This period also saw the emergence of multiple organizations supporting women's rights; they also found their voice in the media. However, the bone of contention was that, despite having access to education, women were still regarded in their traditional roles as wives and homemakers, rather than active participants in change and progress.

Kemalism Reforms

Things started moving in another direction after 1923, with Mustafa Kemal beginning a transformation of the Ottoman structure into a nation state. He envisioned a new nation built on capitalism and governed by democracy with a secular culture. In 1924, the Caliphate was abolished, and a rapid national transformation began, including the modernization of the government and education sectors. Cizre-Sakallıoğlu (1996:235) concluded from Benedict Anderson that Kemalism was targeted at achieving a new identity for the people of Turkey, an identity that did not rely on old cultural attachments, including Islam.

Kemal's reforms included the abolishment of Sharia law, religious schools, and the Caliphate in favor of the new secular state where Islam was separated from the public realm of life. A new Turkish identity was promoted, and within a short time, the use of European civil codes and the Latin alphabet allowed rapid transformations to take place (Yılmaz, 2003).

The Rise of Feminism

With the new Turkey having disconnected itself from its Ottoman roots, there was an increased focus on promoting the status of women and allowing them equal access to opportunities across the board.

The feminist movement began with women writers and was greatly influenced by the roles female participants had fulfilled in the Turkish War of Independence, actively defending their country. Acar (1990) narrates that it was a national priority to establish a society similar to the West, where men and women could work together and combine efforts to achieve common goals.

A new chapter in the movement emerged with "State Feminism"; it was built upon the role women had taken on in the war, giving patriotic speeches around the country in order to lift spirits. State feminism aimed to promote women in the public sector, and an increased need was felt for modern education. As Bora (2001) puts it, the need of the hour was to create an enlightened generation of women who could become professionals but also remain wives and child bearers. For example, Mustafa Kemal said "as time passes, science, progress, and civilization advance with giant steps and we are aware of this. The education that mothers have to provide to their children today is not as simple as it has been in the past. Therefore, our women are obligated to be more enlightened, more prosperous, and more knowledgeable than our men. If they really want to be mothers of this nation, this is the way." On another occasion, Mustafa Kemal again said, "our enemies claim that Turkey cannot be considered a civilized nation, because she consists of two separate parts, men and women. Can we shut our eyes to one portion of a group, while advancing the other and still bring progress to the whole group? The road of progress must be trodden by both sexes together, marching arm in arm" (Abadan-Unat, 1974).

Sirman (1989:24) describes this period as the second round of emancipation for women, following the first round that had taken place under the Ottoman Empire. This round saw women being treated as patriotic citizens first and as wives and mother later. Not only did this address the issues feminist movements had faced under Ottoman rule, but it also emphasized the need for women to be on equal footing with men. As Abadan-Unat (1974:28-29) puts it, the adoption of the Swiss civil code in 1926 paved the way for eliminating double standards of the law for men and women that had been in practice for ages. He also pointed out Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's emphasis on the family unit with a lifestyle that

allowed women to use their energy and capabilities in a manner that allowed them to step outside subdued roles and take center stage, right alongside their male counterparts.

Major transformations were also seen in the education sector with the feminist movement pushing for women to be more social, educated, and active in society. The 1930s saw remarkable progress for women with the introduction of female jurists and lawyers, municipal council members, and members of parliament. Indeed, textbooks printed during that time described the Ottoman rule as a period of darkness until the arrival of the Ataturk, who shone on the people like the sun. Despite notable reforms being recorded in the Ottoman Empire, the French Enlightenment and Anti-Clerical Revolution mainly inspired the Kemalists. Thus, their system was built upon minimizing the role of religion in all aspects of life. This also resulted in adopting a model of feminism close to the original movement proposed by Huber tine Auclert in France in the 1880s; the focus was to eliminate male dominance.

With an ironhanded rule for over 20 years, the new regime made conscious efforts to ignore the cultural and religious significance Islam had on the Turks for centuries. This enforced the notion that Muslims needed to make a choice between Islam and modernity, further driving a wedge between the clearly visible divisions in society. By doing so, the Kemalists managed to achieve something they had set out to stop—the increased influence of radicalism among traditionalist communities and the complete exclusion of an enlightened, modern version of Islam. Despite popular movements targeting better rights and opportunities of participation for women, the truth is that women always identified themselves as one of three groups: Kemalists, Islamists or Socialists. Feminism in its true sense remained a foreign idea, however its interpretations were clearly visible across the deeply conservative Middle East. These interpretations depended on the attitudes towards women and the formulation of these movements. The latter ranges from considering feminism a Western invasion of culture to a more sensitive and welcoming attitude (Ahmed, 1982).

Women in Modern Turkey

The incoming effects of industrialization resulted in increased migration from historically conservative, rural communities towards cities where new classes emerged - the secular elite and the religious poor. During the ten-year reign of Turgut Ozal beginning in 1983, these outcasts, as they once were, began to flourish in business, politics, and society. This led to the reclamation of multiple Islamic traditions and cultural practices that had been abandoned earlier. It is important to add that the rise of Islam was also in part due to concerns over the existing government system. Furthermore, the negativity associated with communism and the state's continued forays into areas that ended in economic disaster reintroduced Islam as a viable alternative to Kemalism. On the political front, things moved along to the point where a conservative party, a self-described group of "Muslim Democrats," came into power in 2002 and has maintained a stronghold on the government ever since.

Turkey was once represented as an example of abandoning tradition (Islam) in favor of modernism. However, today's Turkey is quite different in comparison to the secular state that was emerging a few decades in the past. On one hand, Islam is flourishing in Turkey. However, Çarkoğlu and Toprak (2007) indicated a clear reformation of religious thought. Moreover, traditionally pro-Western and modernist circles in the country, including the Kemalists who once so fervently fought for Western lifestyle in Turkey, have now changed their views in favor of adopting a liberal version of Islam rather than abandoning it altogether.

Besides, Osmanağaoğlu (2015) investigates developmental stages of women's struggle. She marks a new period of feminism on the basis of the highly-debated issue of women's right to determine what to wear, their willingness to work and participate in wage labor, their right to do politics, and most importantly the discourse still being advocated by feminists: 'Men! stay out of our decisions, we can struggle for freedom on our own'. She also touches upon a great variety of issues concerning women's movement including that the feminist movement has gained significant benefits within the last 30 years, and the second-wave feminism of 1980s characterized by street movement against beating women, the

purple needle campaign, the Kurdish feminist movement, and the policy proposals on sex, female body and women's political engagement.

THE ROLE OF A STRONG ECONOMY

The global recession in 2008 saw many giants brought to their knees in dire financial circumstances. One of the reasons that pro-Western thought in Turkey is shifting towards adopting a modern Islamic viewpoint is the successful domination of the free market. By opening up access to trade in a purely capitalist system at the right time, Turkey managed to ride the wave just as the global economy recovered. A 2005 study by the European Stability Initiative uncovered pro-business and pro-capitalism leanings among conservative Islamic entrepreneurs throughout the country. This translates to the acceptance of Islam among a larger class of people who are educated, independent, and well informed. Traditionally Islamic elements are also being transformed into a group supporting political participation and civil liberties (Aykol, 2008).

In Gelgeç –Gürpınar's (2006) research, three main aspects were considered to evaluate the conditions for women in Turkey. A detailed evaluation of the impacts of Modernity, the Feminist Movement, and Islam were carried out to describe the societal structure. The author has discussed the effects of the military coup in the 1980s, which led to the establishment of a new Kemalist movement; combining secular elements at a national level aimed at a more modern and progressive Turkey. Kemalist leaders pushed for a modern appearance in Turkey, replacing traditional fez with hats; this lead to discourse among certain elements of the population.

On the other hand, conservative traditionalists relied on the Turkish heritage originating from the Ottoman Empire to further their viewpoint, gathering popular support among a largely patriarchal society deeply entrenched in traditional values. The author maintains that this eventually led to major obstacles for the popular women's rights movements in Turkey and reinforced a system where women were subordinated. This system is directly linked to the impact Islam has had on daily life in Turkey. In this regard, Turkey maintains a uniqueness not found in any other Muslim country. As a secular state

that has gained support for women's rights from all sections of society, Turkey considered both men and women as equals. The success of these reforms cannot be denied with Islamist women being educated right alongside feminists and going on to become successful professionals. A silent transformation of Islam from within is taking place, transforming ancient definitions and boundaries.

DISCUSSION

The literature available for research carried out over different times in Turkey makes it abundantly clear that women have taken a step forward in an attempt to validate a new identity that sees them openly participating in the public sphere. Feminists at one time were defined as women who were the enemy of men in Turkey. As such, the movement faced numerous challenges, both ideological and social, in establishing and promoting equal rights and opportunities for women. Furthermore, a culture built largely on the patriarchal system posed additional challenges for the feminist movement. With government structures, social institutions, and centuries of traditions built upon this system, the feminists faced an uphill job. While the state policies that were reformed during the Kemalist period consider men and women as equals, women's roles in private life still remain largely unchanged. It was crucial to close the gap between this area and women's participation in the public in order to establish their status as valuable members of society. Therefore, it can be discussed from eight perspectives as:

a) **Ottoman Empire***:* Starting with the Ottoman Empire, Turkey began its transformation to becoming a melting pot of cultures and traditions from around the world. However, the rulers failed to adopt modern administrative, legislative, and educational reforms in order to keep up with the times. Additionally, Muslim scholars also opposed these changes, feeling they would undermine their authority and power. Despite opposition, some reforms did manage to take place during this time, including women's access to education. More than 100 years before the Kemalists started implementing their reforms for modernization, the Ottoman Empire had witnessed multiple women's rights movements like Taal-i-Nisvan and Mudafaa-i-Hukuk-i-Nisvan (Berktay, 2001). This period also saw an increasing number of educated women raising

public awareness about female rights and the emergence of several journals designed to encourage public discussion of women's issues. Public events called the "White Conferences" were arranged with women speakers to discuss gender specific issues in society. Ottoman women's activists adopted the method of interpreting Islam on its own, away from local traditions; they discussed clear rulings on the important status women enjoyed during the early period of Islamic civilization. Starting in 1911, the movement for feminism gained momentum and culminated in the adaptation of the first family law in 1917.

b) **Kemalism:** With the arrival of Kemalism and the abolishment of the Empire, things began to move rapidly in another direction. The process of modernization highlighted the need to adopt Western practices in order to complete the transformation to a modern society. In addition to transforming the government system, the founding fathers of the new republic considered the improvement in women's status as a primary indicator of progress. Additionally, they also felt the need to distance themselves from the practices and ideals of the Caliphate (Toska, 1998); in doing so, they enforced strict regulations, which resulted in the abandonment of cultural and traditional icons in favor of modern practices. The practice of Islam also decreased, and a more secular lifestyle was put in place to support the shift towards a modernized society governed by contemporary thought. While the motivation here was to dissociate religion from the constitution and all official forms of government, the move was backed by urbanites that saw the religion as being oppressive to women.

c) **State Feminism:** This period witnessed the phenomenon of "State Feminism": a movement that aimed to give women more access to opportunities in the public sector and emphasized the need for modern education. The Kemalists promoted this movement by emphasizing the need for mothers to raise children in line with the requirements and expectations of tomorrow, something they felt traditional methods could not achieve. This feminist movement also focused on problems such as sexuality; need to participate in the workforce, and mistreatment in society. It

managed to establish libraries and shelters and help build awareness around the issues of contraceptives, education, and rights.

By the 1930s, the movement had made significant progress, managing to introduce the first female professionals in the field of law. In the following decades, women gained prominence with the emergence of a political system that counted on their votes. This also resulted in women's issues being discussed openly and their involvement in activities being accepted as an essential part of being more civilized. During the period of Kemalism, women were placed at the very heart of development. They represented modernization, liberation, and gender equality; these ideals, previously associated with the West, were considered vital indicators of progress. However, as Mardin (1989) puts it, as a rationalist, positivist, and pragmatic state policy, Kemalism still failed to find its place among the population. It also lacked a clear stance when it came to women's liberation, family issues, domestic violence, and roles in private lives. Furthermore, feminism was seen as somewhat of a challenge to Kemalism, under which only the idea of modernizing the state could occupy the public sphere. At this time, movements for women's rights, content with what they had managed to achieve, quietly acquiesced.

d) **Problems with Kemalist Feminism:** Kemalist feminists vehemently opposed all practices adopted by Islamist women - going to the extent of refusing to attend universities where women could cover their heads. Kemalists saw this a symbol of refusing to accept the rights they had fought so hard for in order to improve women's status. However, secular groups and feminists during and after this period adopted a different approach. They uncovered common ground with Islamist women and started to work together for a free, democratic political system. Their criticism of "state feminism", as Kemalists called it, was that it did not achieve realistic standards of gender equality. While it did manage to secure more rights and opportunities for women (Arat, 1998), these rights were more in line with the Kemalist model, rather than feminism. Additionally, this movement was also criticized for keeping women largely limited

to their social roles (Tekeli, 1995) within the family unit. Even modern educational institutions for women during this period revolved around producing modern housewives.

Organizers and leaders for women's right movements following this period largely focused on developing of new attitudes towards life. This included involvement in the workplace as an essential step towards securing equal rights. Economic independence was seen as the key for emancipating women and giving them a better social status than what they currently possessed. Islamic feminists advocating gender equality also agreed with this premise. Their platforms drew attention to the injustice and discrimination against religious and traditionalist women in modern Turkey. Despite disagreements over issues like the headscarf, socialist feminists and the new generation of Islamist women advocating gender equality managed to combine efforts. However, there still remains a criticism of Islamic teachings seen as a source of encouragement for a patriarchal system. Additionally, there is also opposition over the fact that Islamist women have chosen to protest over only one issue - that of head covering - seemingly putting aside other practices that establish male dominance over females.

e) **The Rise of Islamic Feminism:** This resulted in gaps between the state and society, leading to the revival of Islam as an alternative. As a familiar past that appealed to the newly modernized Turkey, Islam provided people with a familiar identity and a security of the self when it was most needed. The new interpretation of Islam was remarkably different than the form prevalent during Ottoman rule, with a new political tone that called for restoring the Islamic spirit. Perhaps most important is the fact that the resurgence of Islam was followed by rapid economic development, which further strengthened public support.

There has long been misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the role of women in Islam despite literature establishing otherwise. Whilst feminism is generally thought to be non-existent in Islam, according to Islamist women, the religion favors them more than secularism. This is because they have more rights for protection and is traditionally viewed with respect,

mainly attached to their status as mothers and homemakers. Their role in maintaining social order is also enforced through Islamic tradition. Islamic feminism has gone hand in hand with secular movements in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries. Together, the two movements have ensured humanitarian rights and the promotion of the democratic process whilst also gaining further support for women's rights, gender equality, and social justice. Classical Islamic dictates have often been combined with new social thought and secular predilection to provide a modern interpretation of the religious principles while still maintaining its central role. Islamic feminism focuses on the aspect of equality from the Quran and argues that patriarchal ideology is largely a cultural influence. It also points out that, due to limited education for women at that time in Arabia, most of the interpretations of Islamic teachings were largely based on the viewpoint of males, resulting in an overall patriarchal influence that continues to this day in many Muslim countries.

f) **Islamist Women's Views:** Islamist women consider Western practices to be "materialistic, racist, and exploitative" and prefer to turn to more familiar territory (Hoşgör- Gündüz, 1996). Their approach to the dress code including burkas is a consideration of Islamic rule; covering up their bodies prevents them from gaining unwanted attention that could lead to harassment. Islam considers education an essential part of religion, and this legitimizes their participation in one sector of the public realm. In regards to employment, most Islamist women agree on working in an environment that allows segregation of the sexes. The primary role of being mothers and wives is considered the utmost priority. Women's domestic roles, in raising good children who could grow up to contribute to society and the religion, are strongly upheld. These roles also allow for an opportunity to teach moral customs and norms according to Turkish culture, providing an alternative to the Western practices prevalent today.

g) **Working Together for a Better Future:** Despite having common ground, there is contention on issues such as divorce, division of labor, domestic violence, and marriage. On one hand,

Islamist interpretations are upheld, while the other side draws upon feminism and strongly rejects all types of submissive behavior by women. This is where another interpretation of religion - Ideal Islam - comes into play. Arat (2005) reported that Islamist women wish to practice "correct" Islam, where law is practiced properly and dictates are interpreted in line with urbanization and industrialization. Ideal Islam, a utopia, provides validity to the efforts of Islamist women who are openly taking part in public activities and also gathers the support of traditional communities. This new Islam allows people to appear in the public sphere and instills a sense of solidarity while attempting to close the gap between the urban and rural populations. Islamic feminism also manages to stand out based on the fact that it preaches equality between both men and women in all spheres of life, public and private. On the other hand, secular movements and Kemalists have traditionally maintained the demand for equality in public while largely ignoring the private lifestyle.

h) **Today's State of Affairs:** Modernization in Turkey was always seen from two distinct and distant viewpoints. The Kemalists urged followers to make a choice between Islam and modernity. Whereas, the Islamists propagated a mixture of the two based on Ottoman tradition. The more knowledgeable class of Muslims, acquainted with the benefits of ongoing advancement for society, survived and supported the democratic process without equivocation. The tradition of Islam persisted under a modern ideology and continued to spread across Turkey as a complete social system, not just a religion. The social dynamics at play, including a flourishing democracy, an improved standard for civil liberties and gender participation, and open trade, have resulted in admirable reforms whilst maintaining an Islamic identity. The remarkable economic progress witnessed by Turkey has also had its fair share of contribution through feminism, which proved a potent force in improving society and the state in general.

CONCLUSION

From the literature, it is evident that the movement of feminism has undergone major changes, having a varying impact on all spheres of society. From its start during the period of Ottoman rule and continuing through the current period, feminism has existed in one form or another and, at different times, has strived to improve the standards for women in different avenues of life. The mobilization of women's right organizations to achieve reforms in family laws that were largely drawn from patriarchal interpretations of religion led to further advancement. Despite pushing for modernity, some basic defects from the Ottoman period still carried on through the Kemalist rule. Therefore, it is important to critically evaluate the policies during these periods and the effects they had on the movement of feminism.

Moreover, the association of modernity with a "Western Invasion" and the propagation of a system that completely discarded religion based on French ideals led to major hurdles for women's development. Additionally, it also served to automatically associate the feminist movement with the purely Western ideals that people felt were being imposed on them and serving to diminish the value of their traditions. Furthermore, it is evident that most women in Turkey prefer to work towards policies and practices that guarantee freedom with a degree of moderation. Therefore, it is imperative to comprehend that the process of modernity will not be completed overnight, or in a short period akin to the sudden enlightenment that was achieved in the West by turning a page overnight.

The civil code of 1926 was groundbreaking for its time, giving equal rights to men and women in multiple arenas. This was followed by legal changes for women's participation in the workforce, and today Turkey proudly has a ratio of 35 percent women in academics - the highest in Europe. The true gravity with which these changes occurred is staggering, particularly when you consider the women's groups supporting political participation for females in the 1980s. By spending endless amounts of time and energy on publicizing their causes and philanthropic activities, these groups were able to get legislation against discrimination passed. Not only did this tremendously increase the respect with which they were viewed among the general public, but it also made women prominent participants in the

political and legislative process. With the beginning of the new millennium, women's organizations were considered among the best-organized social development initiatives in the country and enjoyed full access to the media platform. Within just over two decades, these movements were able to institutionalize an egalitarian model of the family in the Turkish Civil Code of 2001. This speaks volumes about the collective power of women from all levels of society over shaping state policies and public opinion.

The new Civil Code of 2001 considers men and women equal stakeholders in the family unit; both can be considered the "head of family" with equal decision-making powers. Additionally, new regulations were also passed regarding fair treatment of women in the workplace, travelling freely, and keeping their surnames. The issue of property ownership was also addressed with equal rights asserted for both parties over property acquired during marriage. Additional provisions for matters such as divorce, alimony, financial support, and making adultery grounds for divorce were also included. The new code, particularly in regards to women, can be considered magnanimous and progressive, particularly in a country with a Muslim majority. While legislation is not all that can be done for modernization and assuring women's rights, it is the first step in a long path toward the right direction.

Identity politics and religious debates remain a part of finding the common ground between women's movements so that they can work together for progress. State policies that restrict the religious activities of Islamist women also place restrictions on secular and feminist members of society. The diversity of ideologies within Turkey should not prevent them from working together. It is important that women identify themselves and each other as parts of the same cause, and not opposing parts of society. While this is easier said than done, progress is being made in this area; the influence of educated politicians, professionals, and NGOs in providing forums where an environment conducive for discussion is made available is a step in the right direction. With the practice of a new style of Islamic feminism on the rise, secular movements are rightly placed to take advantage of this growth and obtain benefits for the entire female community in Turkey. Social movements and communal activities are most effective when

supported by all participants; a new secular feminism that includes Islamic thinking at its center can revitalize women's right movements.

The push for Kemalism, and its after-effects, has clearly demonstrated that abandoning cultural influences and traditions is not the right way to move forward with change. For change to truly take place, all fragments of society need to be participating in it and contributing whatever they can. Feminists who have made their mark around the world worked together on a model that recognized religious differences instead of ignoring them and meshed the two together in order to move forward. Consolidated efforts will bring into practice more liberation and transform the system into one where women enjoy truly equal participation in all walks of life.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de bugünün feminizmini şekillendiren cinsiyet ve sosyal değişimler incelenmektedir. Türkiye'de kadın hareketlerinin analizi, feminist düşünceyi harekete geçiren tarihi olayların araştırmasını gerektirmektedir. Tarih içerisinde yaşanan olaylar, Türkiye'de devam eden kadın hareketlerine ışık tutmaktadır. Birçok Orta Doğu ülkesine kıyasla Türkiye modern ve laik bir ülkedir. Diğer sosyal, ekonomik ve siyasi faktörler ile birleştirildiği zaman, Türkiye'de kadın hareketleri geçte olsa feminist söylemlerin ve faaliyetlerin parametrelerini etkilemiştir. Kadın örgütleri modernleşmek ve gelişmek için sayısız mücadeleler vermiştir. Tarihsel açıdan değerlendirildiğinde günümüz feminist aktivizmine uygun ortam sağlanması için yapılan bu mücadeleler ve faaliyetler, bazı siyasi ve sosyal değişimleride beraberinde getirmiştir. İslamcılar ve Laikler arasında uygulanan farklı feminist faaliyetlerin yanı sıra Kemalist miras hakkındaki tartışmalarıda kurumsallaştırmak için mücadele verilirken, birde Türk kadın hareketlerinin bu faaliyetlerden ne derece etkilendiği önemlidir. Bu da kadınların düşüncelerinin ve aktivitelerinin kültürel ile geleneksel normlara ve değerlere olan etkisi, toplum içerisinde feminist çeşitliliğini, etkinliğini ve kabul edilirliğini tarih boyunca sınırlandırmıştır. Bu açıdan değerlendirildiğinde feminist hareketlerin tarihi üç döneme ayrılır: devlet projesi olarak 1920'lerde başlayan son Osmanlı dönemi, 1930'ların ilk döneminde hız kazanan, 1980 askeri darbesine kadar uzanan ve toplum genelinde yayılan uzun sessizlik dönemi ile kadınların ses ve eylem şanslarını arttırmak için 1980'lerde başlayan siyasi karmaşa sürecinin yaşandığı ikinci dalga feminizm hareketleri. 1930'larda kadınlar her ne kadar oy kullanma, eğitim ve mülkiyet haklarına kazanım sağlasalar dahi hak ve özgürlük kısıtlarına dikkat çekmek için bu harekete başlamışlardır. Cinsiyet normları farklı kadın grupları için farklıdır; geleneksel ve modern değerler düzeni korumak adına içiçe geçerken, feminist hareketler böyle karmaşık bir ortamda birden çok soruna değinemez. Türkiye'de kadınların durumuna ilişkin oldukça çarpıcı araştırmalar olduğu halde, bu çalışma yeniden üretim ve evrensellik açısından hukuki, sosyal ve siyasi kavramların birleşimine odaklanarak feminist hareketler için en önemli kuramsal unsurları değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, kadın hareketleri geçmişten günümüze bu siyasi değişimlerin, kültürün ve kurumların düşüncelerine karşı dursa da, sosyo-politik

yapının üstünlüğünden, kurumsal hedeflerin eksikliğinden ve devlet politikalarının belirsizliğinden dolayı hala kısıtlanmaktadır.

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